

Activity Update October 2019

Meldanda;

1. Managed volunteers and administrations for Meldanda. Informed Cambrai PS of the monthly bookings.
2. We weren't successful with the grant application to upgrade the facilities at the back shed, so we will keep trying and make improvements where we can with recycled materials.
3. Cambrai and Sedan CFS kindly burnt the pile of rubbish up the back as a group training event.
4. We have had issues with the solar pump that operates the bore, which is where we get our water from for irrigating all the gardens and operating the toilet. Bob and new volunteer Andy drove the pump out to Kapunda and it has been repaired.
5. Sheralee and Cryss put in some extra rows of holes in the grass seed orchard mat so we can increase the number of grasses we are growing.
6. Bob and Andy fitted a gate on an old pump shed so we can store fire wood in there and open it up when someone needs it for a camp.
7. MMC mowed the high grass at Meldanda including the campground, seed orchard paddock and the Astronomers paddock.
8. Volunteers also kept the facilities cleaned for visitor bookings.
9. Brenton and Sheralee went to Punyelroo where a shack was being demolished and salvaged some cupboards, sink, sliding door and a window for the back shed.
10. There were 2 different groups that camped at Meldanda, with a group of 5 that have recently camped there before.



Figure 1 extra holes in grass seed orchard to increase production

Nursery;

11. Provided tree guards for the windbreak at Rockleigh Old school hall site.
12. Volunteers have been busy in the nursery dealing with caterpillars, propagating lots of grasses, herbs and daisies for the INTG project.
13. Potted on some native grasses so we can use them for talks with farmers about the Summer active grasses.

Committee;

14. Kept committee informed of relevant correspondence, workshops, and other information. Managed the office, volunteers, staff, and all necessary administrations including monthly accounts, reports. Enjoyed a few days off in the school holidays and went camping at Calperum Station.
15. Meeting with auditor who came and picked up our books in preparation for the AGM.
16. Sent a notice of AGM to the Leader Newspaper and promoted event on social media and via email.
17. Volunteer Mick Lowe has been out every week at the Marne Valley CP mulching plants and collecting tree guards.
18. New volunteer started 2 days a week who lives in Cambrai called Andy Marshall.
19. Natural Resources SA MDB sponsored Tricia Curtis and Aimee Linke to cover the cost of the conference fee for the State Landcare Conference held in Bordertown.
20. Aimee also organised a new second hand 4WD which will suit our current activities a lot more.

Murray Darling MEGA Microbat Project;

21. Attended 2019 State Community Landcare Conference and the MEGA Microbat Project was highly commended for the Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award.
22. Spoke to Riverland ABC radio about the project
23. Have been asked to support the Australasian Bat Conference in New Zealand next March to talk on this successful project.



Figure 2 Australian Government Partnership Award

Increasing productivity of Irongrass grasslands;

24. Organised the next Poonthie Ruwe monitoring of the 150 established quadrats which will take place during the during the first week of November.
25. On site meeting with volunteers to plan the next seed production area and the materials we will need. Sheralee and Aimee have both sought out quotes from different organisations to get the materials ordered prior to construction.
26. Supported a meeting at Saunders Gorge with local indigenous people to see how they may like to be involved with the project.
27. Spent 9 days mapping grasslands north of Burra, where we get to see some great grasslands that still had remaining summer active grasses, met a farmer that locks up a different paddock each year to let the native grasses set seed and saw orchids.
28. When we were out mapping one of the grasslands near Hallett, we came across a five lined earless dragon, *Tympanocryptis lineata*, which is a significant record.



Figure 3 five lined earless dragon



Figure 4 orchid which is identified by its hairs

INTG Trials (separate contract)

29. Had a planning meeting with Nicola Barnes about some of the trial opportunities.
30. Met Mick Taylor from Meat and Livestock Australia at the Landcare conference and discussed some of the work they have been doing with native perennial pastures. He is going to send us some of the results from research projects they have been doing.
31. Spoke with a local landholder Angus Jones about his knowledge and experience on indigenous plants and engaging with indigenous people.

Western Pygmy Possums in the Mid Murray/Murray Mallee region

32. We held another Western Pygmy Possum workshop with Murray Mallee LAP, Steve Donnellan from the SA Museum and volunteers Don and Dennis. We had over 30 people attend; 40 possum boxes were made and have been taken and put up throughout the region.
33. It was great to meet some more landholders and hear some of the interesting stories about Western Pygmy Possums and where they have been seen.

34. Have been contacting participants of the project to get box locations back, will need to go out and help a few landholders.



Figure 5 photo by Amanda McLean



Figure 6 one of the boxes installed near Brookfield CP

River Murray Dark Sky Reserve

35. Irene was successful with a community event grant through the MMC to hold an event at Meldanda at the end of November for the Dark Sky Reserve. We plan to hold the event on Friday the 29th, so put it in your diary.
36. Attended the State Landcare Conference in Bordertown and presented on the Dark Sky Reserve project. Presentation was well received with some great questions about public lighting and how we can change the way they are used.
37. Was interviewed in Bordertown by Rural ABC radio about the Dark Sky Reserve.