

Activity Update May 2020

This activity update is for the month of May. If you would like to be on our mailing list and receive this free update, please email Aimee Linke on the above email address.

Meldanda

1. We have been busy focusing on planting both the native grassland plant orchard and the native grass orchard, it has been a lot of work over many days and we now have the majority planted.
2. General maintenance of site, Sharon White cleaned the facilities, interpretive signs and toilet. We also bought oil and a spark plug for irrigation pump.
3. Mid Murray Council maintenance staff Lachlan Graetz cut back the dead trees around the fire-pit and a couple in the carpark area near the recreation hall.
4. Bob White tidied up the workshop, updated inventory and sprayed the ants.
5. Mavis Littlehales and I went to Meldanda to assess all the buildings and contents for an insurance quote.
6. Drafted up a lease agreement for Meldanda.
7. Have been starting to get enquiries again for camping from school groups.
8. Brenton Jay and Bob White have been busy installing a fence and gates around the Fire-Retardant Plant display garden, it has previously been severely grazed making it difficult to establish anything. We will replant this area once it is grazer proof.



Figure 1 dead trees around fire pit being cleaned up.

Spiny daisy

9. Sheralee Warren and I monitored the site to count all new ramets and take measurements of the parent plants. This should be the last time the site is monitored with this method.

Community Nursery

10. Sold some Mallee trees to a landholder from Mypolonga and other natives to landholders from Pine Hut.
11. Volunteers Sharon White and Royce Jay weeded tubestock in the nursery and potted on some seedlings.
12. Volunteer Sharon White prepared a plant order for Kearon Nuske.
13. Volunteers Maxime Marcove (a WWOOFER from Belgium) and Trevor Carmichael weeded tubestock in the nursery.



Figure 2 spiny daisy monitoring

Committee & other

14. Managed the office, volunteers, staff, and all necessary administrations including monthly accounts, reports and kept MYOB up to date.
15. Held our Committee Meeting in the Cambrai Council Chambers 14/5/20.
16. Sent a location map to David Hassett requesting permission to implement weed control on bridal creeper at The Pines Reserve.

Funding

17. Was successful with a 'Nectar and Nest Boxes' WIRES – Landcare Wildlife Relief & Recovery Grant for \$15,300.
18. Submitted an NRM Agricultural Knowledge Small Grants for \$3000 to host a workshop and field trip on 'Growing Acacias in the semi-arid zone of SA'.

River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve

19. John Kobes from Webineering Workshop has continued to develop the website for RMIDSR.
20. Chris Tugwell and I had a Zoom meeting with Jake McVicar about the Terms of Reference.
21. We had some star gazers camp out at Meldanda.
22. The River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve received a certificate from the Premier as a recognition for outstanding volunteer service.

Microbats

23. Spent about 50 hours analysing bat data for Pike Wetland, have been doing some on the weekends as there is not enough hours during the week.
24. Was successful with request for a grant to support 8 microbat surveys for interested landholders or community groups on their properties.
25. Met Sam Chesson at Mt Pleasant who is a Project Officer, Urban Forests for Northern Lofty, National Parks and Wildlife Service, who wants to do bat detecting.



Irongrass Grasslands Project

26. Planted both Seed Production Areas over several days with volunteers and NRM staff. A big thankyou to everyone that helped plant, it was a team effort; Nicola Barnes, Kate Graham, James Trezise, Alex Emmins, Maxime Marcocoye (a WWOOFER from Belgium), Sheralee Warren, Brenton Jay, Royce Jay, Cryss Filsell.
27. The grass seed orchard is now virtually full of C4 grasses, we now need to keep area cleaned, watered and collect seed as it is ready.
28. The native grassland seed orchard has been planted out with lilies, daisies, legumes and other plants found in grasslands. This area will also need to be maintained like the grass seed orchard and seed collected when ready and stored for the native grassland project.
29. Had a Microsoft Teams meeting for project on 21/5/20 to discuss landholder trials, interviews and project status.
30. Volunteer Cryss Filsell and I marked out the trial site at Meldanda on the 25/5/20 and Andrew Fairney sprayed site with Glyphosate on the 28/5/20. Half the site will then be sprayed with Bioweed Ultra which is designed to kill the weed seeds, then it will be sown with native grassland species.
31. Volunteer Sheralee Warren sprayed the weeds round the seed production areas.
32. Volunteers Sheralee Warren, Cryss Filsell and I collected native grass seed *D. brownii* and *B. macra*. We cut the *B. macra* right down to encourage new growth and cleaned up built up soil. The cut seed we left on stalks to dry in the back shed at Meldanda.



Figure 3 team of people planting SPA at Meldanda

Western Pygmy Possum

33. Rowena Danks and I inspected possum boxes with landholder Malcolm Johns at Mantung, we installed 1 more box with him and gave him 3 others.
34. Rowena Danks and I also looked to inspect 3 boxes at Mark Hura's property near Bakara, we were unable to find them. We left another 2 for him to install.
35. Possum box data sent in from landholder D. Angeloni from Eudunda area.
36. Rowena Danks and I inspected possum boxes with landholder Peter Lee, we also looked in some bat boxes that had remains of a WPP nest. We gave Peter 4 more boxes to install.
37. Headed back out to Bakara with calculations to convert gps coordinates to find the boxes we were unable to detect earlier. We had a win and found all 3 boxes at Mark Hura's, we were delighted to find some traces of scats in 2 of the boxes. We will collect them at a later stage for SA Museum to genetically test them.
38. Updated possum data and mapped boxes.
39. Don Lester and I met landholder Coral Johnston who has 900 Ha of Heritage property near Brookfield CP. We inspected her possum boxes and gave her 5 more to install.
40. Volunteer Sheralee Warren and I went up to meet landholder Stephanie Simms, near Morgan to drop off some WPP boxes and an Anabat detector.



Figure 4 Don Lester, Coral Johnston and sister Janine inspecting and installing boxes in the mallee

Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (RVMP)

41. Irene Bugeja has been working on updating the Mid Murray Council's RVMP, to ensure that it complies with current regulations.
42. I have been getting out in the field to review the 67 roadside markers that were installed in 2014 as part of the RVMP. It is a time-consuming job as the markers are throughout the MMC region.
43. Volunteer Sheralee Warren has come out with me on a couple of occasions to assist. There have been quite a few markers missing which means I will need to order them and go back out to replace them.
44. There has been roadside vegetation damage in between marked areas which is very frustrating. Damaging native vegetation is illegal and often goes on with no repercussions.
45. Held a meeting with Irene Bugeja to review the progress of the RVMP.



Figure 5 roadside damage witnessed between roadside markers.