

Activity Update December 2020 January 2021

This activity update is for the months of December and January including 4 weeks leave. If you would like to be on our mailing list and receive this free update, please email Aimee Linke on the above email address or view on webpage. These projects are made up of several sources of funding including Grass Roots Grants, a WIRES Landcare Grant and the Iron Grass Grassland Project plus some other small grants and contract work. We will be contracting Rowena Danks formerly from Murray Mallee LAP to assist us in the delivery of some of these projects, we are very excited to have an experienced project officer working with our group.

Meldanda

1. Managed the volunteers, camp bookings, provision of materials and equipment and all necessary administrations including invoicing and banking for Meldanda. Kept neighbors informed of any camp bookings.
2. Volunteers Brenton, Sheralee, Cryss and Aimee did some opportunistic seed collection of *Clematis microphylla*, *Acacia notabilis*, *Eremophila glabra*, *Convolvulus remotus*, *Acacia paradoxa*, *Eutaxia microphylla*, *Atriplex vesicaria*, *Dianella revoluta*, *Westringia rigida*.
3. We had some issues with the bore pump again, it seemed to be getting too much power to it, the people we got the pump from came and made a few adjustments and it seems to be operating okay now.
4. Volunteer Bob White received the hinge for the broken fridge door from America and installed it for us. Andy and Brenton sprayed the ants and weeds on the paths throughout the site.
5. We had several people camp at Meldanda over the school holidays and they were all people interested in star gazing and the astronomical event on the 21st of December.
6. Tree branch fell on the jetty at Mermaid lake and broke a section of it, reported it to the school and they have begun repairs.



Figure 1 and 2 Red gum tree branch that fell and broke Mermaid Lake Jetty

Community Nursery

7. Volunteer Sharon White propagated some *Maireana excavata* and *Acacia glandulicarpa*.
8. Did some sorting out in the nursery to make some more room for new plants. Volunteer Cryss Filsell propagated *Acacia acinacea* and *Acacia notabilis*.
9. Mark Metcalf dropped off some *Alectryon oleifolius* seed so we can have a go at propagating it.
10. Rang landholder from Sedan, Lisa Rost, provided some advice on native plants for her property that previously had horses on it.

Committee & other

11. Managed the office, volunteers and all necessary administrations including monthly payment of bills, reports, managing webpages and social media posts, scanned all receipts and reconciled monthly accounts in XERO.
12. Prepared and sent agenda and minutes for our final meeting for the year which we held at the Mannum Motel.
13. Applied for \$3000 'Healing Land Grant' to run information workshop and field trip on 'Growing Acacias in the semi-arid zone of SA'.
14. Volunteer Mick Lowe has been fulfilling is volunteer requirements at the Marne Valley CP with mulching and tending to the revegetation site.
15. Meeting with Kitty Schiansky and Tony Farrell to look at Christians Reserve and start on letter for the Open Space and Recreation Committee. Prepared a draft letter and sent to Kitty for her comments ready for the first meeting next year.
16. Acquitted Small Volunteer Grant 068.2020 Protecting our heritage – Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park
17. Acquitted Small Volunteer Grant 058.2020 'See Know and Act'
18. Sold some more Saltbush Books to Gluepot and other landholders.
19. Sought a quote for an ex refrigerated container that could be used for seed storage to be included in the Landscape Priority Fund Cross regional bid for Wendy Stubbs.
20. Have booked in a meeting with David Hassett and Russell Pilbeam for the end of January to discuss the plan. Held meeting end of January and presented revised plan, will make some minor edits and send to David and Russell for completion.

River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve

21. We held our Dark Sky meeting in the Cambrai Council Chambers on 11th December, Justin Porter our new volunteer secretary is proving to be a great help.
22. We welcomed new committee member Rohie Griffiths who is a teacher at Swan Reach Area School, a member of the Swan Reach PA and the Open Space and Recreation Committee.
23. Bill Nehmy is the new Tourism Development Manager- Murray River, Lakes & Coorong, Chris Tugwell met with him to discuss the RMIDSR and opportunities.
24. Renewed our membership with the Australasian Dark Sky Alliance

25. The Committee has been working on the Strategic and Action plan
26. Chris and Deb Alexander met with SA Tourism Commission staff and gave them a tour of Meldanda.

Irongrass Grasslands Project

27. We have had 2.5mm of rain on the trial site at Meldanda in December and 7.5mm in January.
28. Contractor Andrew Fairney sprayed the caltrop again that was coming up in the trial site on the 11/12/20. We also had some native caltrop aka Bulls head that we marked to avoid it getting sprayed.
29. Andrew Fairney provided some guidance to the volunteers on seed cleaning required for the seeding machine they will use for sowing the trial sites.
30. Volunteers Sheralee, Cryss and Aimee collected seed from the SPA's; including *Chrysocephalum*, *Chloris truncata*, *Enteropogon acicularis*, *Geranium retorsum*, *Convolvulus remotus*, *Themeda triandra*, *Lotus australis*. The new battery-operated vacuum is working well for the volunteers, we have different pillowcase that can be attached and kept for each species. January- Aimee and Sheralee seed collection of *Convolvulus remotus* and *Lotus australis* with blower. Cryss collected *Chloris truncata* and *Enneapogon nigricans*, Brenton and Cryss cut the *Themeda triandra*. The seed orchard is growing really well.



Figure 3 *Convolvulus remotus* growing on trellis SPA Meldanda.

31. Sent weed specimen, *Dimorphotheca fruticosa*, to Chris Brodie at State Herbarium that we found on our field trips and was identified by Ann Prescott.
32. Monitored trial site at Meldanda with Rowena Danks, there were lots of C3 grasses that had become established, but were being grazed by roos, wombats and rabbits, so we

have to fence the site. Scanned and emailed monitoring data for Meldanda to Nicola Barnes

33. Bob, Andy and Brenton spent several days fencing the trial site a Meldanda to hopefully stop the grazing impact.
34. Provided seed collection data to Nicola Barnes to assist with MERIT reporting.
35. Checked Wicking bed trial and topped up float barrel a couple of times, seems to use about 20 litres in 2 weeks, plants are doing really well and are producing seed. Kangaroos browsed *Lotus australis*, they left one seed pod on there. Brenton upgraded the watering system to include a bigger tank, so it doesn't need to be filled up as often.
36. Prepared some plants and seed display material for Nicola to use for NAIDOC week event at Clare.
37. INTG Team meeting at Mt Pleasant with Andrew, Nicola and Kate to organise the trial sites that will be seeded.



Figure 4 Native grass in wicking bed



Figure 5 *Dimorphanthea fruticosa*

Western Pygmy Possums

38. Landholder Michelle Bohner used an inspection camera to see if any of her boxes had been taken up by possums, but with no luck.
39. Landholder Lou Westbrook used an inspection camera to see if any of his boxes had been taken up by possums, but with no luck.
40. Landholder Coral Johnston inspected her boxes but also had no luck.
41. Site visit to landholder's property Sheralee Warren to inspect her boxes, also no activity.
42. Lent remote camera to landholder Peter Lee to set up on one of his WPP boxes. Peter had some potential scats in a box, Rowena and I dropped off some vials of ethanol for him but when he went back to collect them, they had been eaten by a cockroach! A camera has been set up on a bat box where there are leaves hanging out the bottom, so

it appears there may be some nesting activity which is very exciting.



Figure 6 leaves protruding from bat box.

43. Have been working with Steve Donnellan from SA Museum and Gaye Fischer from Waterhouse group to plan the next workshop and field trip in April 2021.
44. Posted FB about the camera traps used down at Wellington 03/12/20. Posted scat thought to be from WPP 21/01/21.
45. Rowena and I went out to inspect boxes at Malcolm Johns, there was not possum activity in any boxes, only a huntsman.
46. Landholder Sheralee Warren borrowed camera to set up on WPP box over Summer. Analysed her photos, all 12,660 of them and there was no possum activity. Got this cool shot of a Butcher bird flying past the camera though.



Figure 7 Butcher bird flying past camera trap.

WIRES

47. Prepared and sent in progress Report for the WIRES- Landcare Grant 'Nest boxes and Nectar Plants.
48. Made contact with landholders Philip Jones, anthropologist at the SA Museum, travelled to his property at Bower and set up 4 Western Pygmy Possum boxes.
49. Had a Microsoft Teams meeting with Taryn Mangelsdorf Sustainable Agricultural Officer and RALF Emma McInerny from Northern and Yorke Landscape Board about the project.
50. Prepared and sent a communication article to staff from NYLB ready for next year to promote project and get some uptake in the region.
51. Met with Philip Jones 29/01/21 and lent him a bat detector that he will set up on his property at Bower, also provided him with 2 bat boxes to set up.



Figure 8 Philip Jones with WPP box



Figure 9 Ptilotus exaltatus with a grass yellow butterfly

Microbats

52. Analysed bat data from 2018 for landholder Sheralee Warren, 20 nights worth that was part of the MEGA Microbat Survey project.
53. Acquitted small grant 106.2020 Microbat monitoring.
54. Barry Wright set up bat detector in Mokota CP, data card filled up, so he bought another one and wants to set detector up at Witchelina.

55. Rang Dale Wenzel' from Langhorne Creek who has bats in his house and shed, emailed him a fact sheet from ABS website and organised 4 bat boxes for him to pick up from Mt Barker.



Figure 10 Friends of Parks Barry Wright setting up bat detector at Mokota native grassland CP.

Murray Mallee Landcare Projects

56. Applied for Grass Roots Grant with Rowena Danks to support projects in the Mallee. We were successful with the application and will contract Rowena Danks to implement the projects. Sent in grant agreement and first invoice for the project. Drew up a services agreement for Rowena Danks.

57. Rowena Danks and Aimee Linke audited Seed Production Area (SPA) at Malcom Johns near Mantung 21/01/21.



Figure 11 Rowena Danks auditing Seed Production Area near Mantung.