

Activity Update July 2022

This activity update is for the month of July 2022. 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 from varied sources of funding including Grassroots Grants, the Iron Grass Grassland Project, Healthy Rivers Grant plus other small grants and contract work.

Meldanda

1. Aimee 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 Wayne, Andy, and Paul maintained and cleaned Meldanda facilities. Volunteers planted more plants in the Butterfly Garden and tidied it up in readiness for a school visit from St Joseph's School Renmark
3. Campers- we have had 5 different lots of campers for the month, someone left a note that said *"Thank you for this beautiful place! Poured with rain but we still had a blast. Thank you, mum + 3 kids."*
4. The River Murray Youth Council visited Meldanda for a school holiday activity, organized by Ilyth Burton, Regional Education Officer for the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board. Don Lester and Aimee Linke provided a tour of Meldanda and showed the group some of the projects. Don provided some detail about the bat box survey project that was conducted over a couple of years on bat island and what the results were. Don Lester ran a box making session, the students made habitat boxes for owlet nightjars, everyone really enjoyed the day and the hands-on activity.



Figure 1 RMYC Bird Box making workshop at Meldanda



Figure 2 Some of the boxes, photo courtesy RMYC

Community Nursery

5. Volunteers Sheralee, Brenton, Cryss and Andy have continued with weeding, potting on seedlings and sowing *Templetonia retusa*, *Billardiera cymosa* and *Callitris gracilis*. Landholders Kitty and Tony gave us a lovely card thanking us for growing them some native pines.
6. Posted on FB about Redgum seedlings for \$1 which caused a bit of a flurry with messages, phone calls and plant enquiries, there was a post reach of 11,400!
7. Supported 15 landholders at the nursery with plant selections for their projects.
8. Supported landholder from Blanchetown with propagation information on *Atriplex rhagodiodes*, River Saltbush.
9. Made some edits to the Cambrai Community Nursery flyer to include prices and colour codes for bee attracting, regent parrot food plant, butterfly attracting and bushtucker/bush use. John Kobes put this on the website for us and Rowena Danks promoted it on the Regent Parrot FB page.



Figures 3, 4 and 5 volunteers planting in the Butterfly Garden at Meldanda

Committee & other

10. Managed the office, volunteers and all necessary administrations including monthly payment of bills, reports, invoicing, managing webpages and social media posts, scanned all receipts and reconciled monthly accounts in XERO. Took some annual leave in the school holidays. Rowena and Aimee submitted final reports for Grassroots Grants MRLB0005 and MRLB00031.
11. Sent out agenda, minutes, correspondence list, and financial report for the month to the Committee, we held our monthly meeting at Meldanda. Promoted the upcoming AGM and advertised in the Leader Newspaper.
12. Applied for a 2022-23 Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board Agricultural Knowledge Small Grants to produce a short Film ~5-10min on 'Growing Acacias in a Semi Arid Zone' with the Production Team: The Ground We Walk On Pty Ltd. This film will help showcase to the region and world some of the unique sustainable approaches farmers in

marginal country can undertake to help rejuvenate their land while maintaining profitable enterprises.

13. National Tree Planting Day project with Sedan Recreation Park was held on the 31st of July we had 5 people help plant 75 tubestock along their western boundary.



Figure 6 and 7 National Tree Planting Day at Sedan Recreation Park, volunteers planting.

14. Aimee - Supported the Mid Murray Council with 'Coorong River Trail' project, site visit to a section of the walking trail from Swan Reach to Nildottie, provided some input on interpretive information that could be considered.

Malleefowl workshop - Rowena Danks

15. This workshop is planned for September with the Waterhouse Club and will take place over two sessions.
 - A presentation will be given to the group at the Museum - by National Malleefowl Recovery Team member Graeme Tonkin. The talk will be on the behaviour of Malleefowl.
 - This will be followed by a walk to visit several mounds in the Ferries MacDonal Conservation Park to demonstrate the monitoring of a mound. I will show the group how we do our annual mound monitoring as part of the National Malleefowl Mound Monitoring program. And after this session we will all head to the Monarto Zoo for a lunch and a presentation that Gaye Fischer has arranged.

I have done a reconnaissance trip with Gaye Fischer from the Waterhouse Club and we have made a plan for the day.



Regent Parrots

Regent Parrot Decoy Crop Project – Rowena Danks



'Natural vs Horticultural – Regent Parrot use of the landscape'

- 16.- A partnership with the Almond Board of Australia has been initiated to support the establishment of a decoy crop demonstration site at the Almond Centre for Excellence at Loxton. This is part of the Decoy Crop project and will provide opportunities to engage and support the Almond Industry to manage Regent Parrots in orchards.
17. Site visits are complete. Two decoy crop demo sites have been selected. Decoy Crop plantings will begin in September - October to ensure we have flowering decoy crops in January when Almonds are ripening.
18. Phil Barron will provide technical advice to support the delivery of a fact sheet that I will produce after the site is established.



Figure 8 Decoy Crop Site Visits with Phil Barron 29/7



River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve

19. Held the monthly Dark Sky Committee Meeting at Cambrai and Zoom on and Aimee took the minutes.
20. Torrens University Internship; student presentations to Chris
21. Victoria Square Dark Sky event postponed to September 1st, Tourism Minister to speak (also planning to take family on Kelly Kuhn's Dark Sky tour)
22. Meetings to organise September Parliament House presentation & October Lot 14 Space Conference presentation

23. Don Bursill organising speakers; Prof Fred Watson, Kylie Eggers (Principal - Australian Science and Mathematics School), Ben Scales, Silentium CEO, Chris and possibly Susan Close (Deputy Premier and Science Minister)
24. Work on Tourism SA Emerging Events application for Dark Sky arts festival
25. 2nd PS Marion Dark Sky cruise; CJT & Don on board, Joe Grida as telescope expert
26. Chris - Dark Sky talk at Meldanda to Women in Agriculture & Business
27. Leila preparing application for telescope pads at Meldanda
28. Aimee posted some Light Pollution brochures to Martin Lewicki at the Planetarium.

Western Pygmy Possums

29. Tim and Jen Tolley, following a Waterhouse Club Burra WPP box making and placement trip purchased 4 boxes to put in re-established scrub on their block at Silverton SA in late 2021 (adjacent to the Talisker Mine area). They recently checked their boxes and had no possums just a few spiders.
30. Andrew Wurst checked James Huppertz possum boxes near Riverton, there was no possums but a very large spider.
31. Alex Emmins sent in her data sheets for possum boxes she has installed on her property.
32. Coral Johnston sent in an update of her boxes, no possums yet, she will inspect them again in August.
33. Jayne and Les Payne inspected both of their possum boxes at Tanami Rock and neither had evidence of possum use, Box #91 was completely empty, Box #94 was occupied by a large spider. About a dozen kangaroos and three emus were observed. The feral goats have disappeared, probably due to the seasonal availability of water.
34. Tim Pascoe posted a copy of all the data sheets from Gluepot, a map and SD card with all the box photos on there. Some of the boxes had to be relocated due to seasonal burning
35. Rowena visited a landholder at Hartley to establish 3 new nesting boxes and to check an existing box. There has been sighting of WPPs at this property in the past.



Figure 9 box installed at Hartley



Figure 10 Spider in Huppertz' possum box

Healthy Rivers – aquatic weeds project

36. Planning meeting with Scott Hutchens to work out project roles and activities. New District manager started with Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board, Casey Henderson, who will be part of the management team for the project. We worked on a contract agreement to outline responsibilities, reporting and payment schedule. A contract has now been signed by both parties for the Project delivery and MLRL landscape board are currently setting up appropriate finance processes
37. Prepared some maps of the properties along the river corridor for Scott to start getting spreadsheet together of landholder details.
38. MRLB-River surveys were completed from Walker Flat to Big Bend which resulted in a significant amount of African Boxthorn & Wheel cactus mapping. The mapping tool, Quick capture, was updated to include the Healthy Rivers project, resulting in efficiencies for project staff mapping in the field. There has been a focus on mapping Sunnydale backwater, capitalising on the high river levels that have allowed access to an area that is normally too shallow to enter via a boat.
39. A priority on surveying winter weed on the river corridor will be the focus over the next month. This will include a survey of the back cliffs that are heavily infested with wheel cactus, a target area for control works throughout the project.
40. MRLB - Project staff engaged with 3 Landowners about the project on the eastern side of the river who have indicated an interest in being involved in the project.
41. MRLB - Staff undertook control works on a wheel cactus infestation that will be utilised as a visual aid of two different chemical control outcomes during an upcoming field day
42. Planning in underway for a field day to promote the Healthy Rivers project at Big Bend by night at Sunnydale. This will be promoted via a targeted mail out to landowners that adjoin the river corridor in the target area. The opportunity to engage a guest speaker is being investigated to compliment a field demonstration on various weeds that will be targeted throughout the project. A flyer will also be developed and posted on the Landcare website.
43. MRLB Project staff are collaborating with Mid Murray Landcare SA, and key landscape staff to develop opportunities to engage with relevant indigenous groups and contractors.
44. MRLB Project staff are setting up purchase orders to enable ease of ordering regarding chemical and equipment.

Irongrass Native Grasslands Project

45. Rainfall at the trial site in July was 18.5mm
46. Topped up the wicking bed trial site it took 40 litres, weeded around the plants, landholders have removed fence to upgrade.