



Mid Murray Landcare SA  
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## Activity Update November 2022

This activity update is for the month of November 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 Irongrass Grasslands Project, Healthy Rivers Grant plus other small grants and contract work.

### Meldanda

1. Continued with managing 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, Paul and David maintained and cleaned Meldanda facilities. Made repairs to the workshop roof, watered the seed production areas, spoke with council groundman staff about areas that need mowing to make access safer and trees that need trimming.
3. The pump that operates the toilets at Meldanda seized, contacted Birdwood Pumps who came down and replaced it with a new one. Whipper snipper was serviced, and David picked it up from Barossa Stihl.
4. Volunteers toured around a teacher from Waikerie Lutheran Primary School who will be having a day visit to Meldanda in December
5. Campers- we have had about 3 campers stay at Meldanda.

### Community Nursery

6. Volunteers Sheralee, Brenton, Cryss, Mick and David general nursery work potting on and weeding. Brenton set up a hydroponics tank at the nursery to grow some zucchini, it will be interesting to see how this goes.
7. Supported 14 landholders/groups at the nursery with plant selections for their projects, or other project support, including landholder Kitty Schiansky with propagating 150 plants as part of the revegetation project she has through a Biodiversity Exchange Project. Kitty bought in some cutting material from her property of *Myoporum parvifolium* and *Eremophila glabra* and the volunteers helped to do the cuttings.
8. Took some more *Olearia pannosa* cuttings from home to support the 1000 plants we are growing to support MRLB Education Project, the volunteers have been busy propagating them.

9. Alex Emmins and Aimee Linke had a site visit to a property north-west of Sedan, the landholder was after some advice on his property, like weed control. The property was covered in spear grass and lot of other native plants and birds. Alex and I identified lots of native plants and there were even some rare plants on his place, we also advised of the priority weeds that should be controlled. We heard some budgies, saw a flock of cockatiels and a chough nest near the dam. The landholder really appreciated us coming out and now has a new appreciation of his property and how special it is.
10. Alex Emmins and Aimee Linke went to Towitta Springs to see if the Silver Leaf Nightshade needs to be controlled again. When we were there, it was clear that firewood is still being illegally collected from the Council Water Reserve.



*Figure 1 Alex Emmins with landholders*



*Figure 2 Teucrium sessiliflorum, rare plant*

## Committee & other

11. 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. Had the ute serviced 190,000km.
12. Sent out agenda, minutes, correspondence list, and financial report for the month to the Committee. We held our monthly meeting at MRLB Office in Cambrai.
13. Saw an echidna crossing the Stott Highway in the Mallee, logged the sighting on Echidna CSI App, it is great to see these creatures going about their business.
14. Was sent a message about a 1.5m MD Carpet python swimming along the cliff line (12-11-22) near Devon Downs, trying to get some more details of the location.

## Regent Parrots

15. Rowena and Aimee submitted the final report for the Healthy Rivers Regent Parrot Project.



### Regent Parrot Decoy Crop Project and forage plantings – Rowena Danks

16. Both sites have good germination and has not needed watering due to rainfall.  
17. Aimee and I will be setting up cameras on each crop on 5th Dec so that we can monitor crops in Dec-Feb.



Figure 3 Almond Board site crop at Mid November



Figure 4 Pomona Farms Sunflower decoy crops



Figure 5 Pomona Farms Millet decoy crops

## River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve - Chris Tugwell

- 18. Planning meetings for Parliament House presentation
- 19. Parliament House & MPs visit to Meldanda postponed due to flood (re-scheduled for early 2023)
- 20. SA Power Networks meeting also cancelled due to flood
- 21. Interview with Sam Lowe (Murray Valley Standard)
- 22. Preparation of IDA annual report
- 23. ABC Radio Adelaide interview
- 24. Updated drawings for Observatory/Planetarium
- 25. Planning meeting with Torrens University re 2023 internships
- 26. Torrens University student presentations





## Healthy Rivers – aquatic weeds project. - MRLB Staff

Good progress has been made survey and mapping priority weeds on the River Bank this month. Whilst River flows have increased, we were still able to launch the boat and undertake works. The focus has continued with private landowners in the Devon Downs area and implementation of Opuntia control will be the focus for the rest of this year.

27. A number of days were spent on the boat, undertaking inspections and surveys with mapping of the River corridor now complete between Walkerflat and Younghusband. Large stands of African Boxthorns have been recorded throughout these surveys and will be a beneficial area to undertake control works.
28. While it was unknown if Yellow Water Lily would germinate this year, due to the high river levels, a number of infestations were discovered during surveys at various locations. Control works were undertaken on the emerged water lily to reduce any further spread as the water rises. A team of three staff member undertook control works at the following locations:
  - Curnamont shacks site – This area is now connected to the river due to high flows. Treatment was completed via land and spray boat.
  - Purnong Lagoon site – Initial treatment was applied via the spray boat. This will need a follow up treatment in coming weeks due to the size of the infestation. The herbicide treatment 'Clipper' was used on an area of the infestations to gauge its effectiveness in higher water levels.
  - Bowhill shacks - A new small infestation was discovered during surveys. Board staff undertook an education role with one landowner who was unaware of the legislative requirements surrounding the declared species and the risks it poses to the River Murray. As a result of this education, staff were able to treat the infestation to stop any further spread of the plant. The area was sprayed on that day and will be monitored as the river rises.
  - Lake Carlet lagoon – High water levels provided access from the River channel into the backwater via boat. This allowed the team to survey the backwater as lily had been recorded last year at the mouth of the lake. Treatment was undertaken of outlying lily plants but large infestation of yellow water lily dominated the western end and was unable to be treated on the day. Further works are planned, focusing on protecting the mouth to stop any detachment of the plants and creating a buffer to stop invasion to the main river channel.
29. Follow up work has continued with landowners that borrowed stem injection packs with some good progress happening on opuntia control on private lands. We have had great feedback from landowners who are very happy with the results of stem injection treatments they have undertaken.
30. Properties that we will be engaging a contractor to undertake control works on Opuntia infestations, adjoining the River in the Devon Downs & Sunnydale area, have been identified and agreement reached with the landowners. Contractor will be contacted in the following weeks to plan for the control works to be undertaken
31. A state of emergency has been declared for the river this month. This may impede any river operations in December and potentially January. Access is getting hard as boat ramps close due to high river levels.

32. River Ferries are going to be closed making locations on the eastern side of the river inaccessible, as a result we will seek a project extension.

### Irongrass Native Grasslands Project – Aimee Linke

33. Rainfall at the Meldanda trial site in November was 75mm
34. Kate Graham and Aimee Linke travelled flooded highways up to Burra with a bit of excitement with World's End Highway being washed out and having to find an alternative route up to Burra over many flooding roads and fords. We finished monitoring the northern properties which included Hall's, Diittrich's and Leake's Pass, we saw another brown snake in one of the trial sites.
35. Team Meeting at Meldanda to discuss the communication materials that we would like produced as an outcome of this five-year project.
36. Kate Graham and Aimee Linke spent two days mapping a grassland out the back of Springton, the property is managed for conservation. Some of the country was very steep and we did some mountain goat climbing, we saw some stubble quails nesting, a dragon but no snakes this time.



*Figures 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 from top left, Kate Graham taking photo point for quadrat, Rytidosperma seed, caterpillar on Trifolium sp., Stubble Quail nest at base of Salvation Jane, insect on native grass.*



## Seed Production Areas – Rowena Danks

- 37. I have bagged seed on plants at the Whytes Well SPA. See photos. This will help with collection so that I don't miss the seed drop. I will be bagging seed at Mantung SPA in the coming weeks.
- 38. Working with landholder Brian Teakle at the Whytes Well SPA, we have worked on weed control in the SPA. This is a bit challenging because the weed mat is now starting to get weak so we need to be as careful as possible. So, we are trialling cutting annual weeds down low at the base of the plant so that the roots remain in the ground and help hold sand together. Rather than pulling weeds and damaging the mat.
- 39. Netting hoops are being installed ready for summer seeding of *Billardiera cymosa*. Shrubs have been pruned in preparation for netting.



Figure 11 *Kennedia prostrata* with seed bags ready



Figure 12 *Billardiera cymosa* pruned ready for netting

## Western Pygmy Possums

- 40. Rowena - No activity was found at WPP box checks at Brian Teakle's WPP boxes (2 boxes checked)
- 41. Rowena - 4 Facebook posts sharing news about pygmy possum projects and also a tip to monitor buckets in rainy weather to help stop drowning WPPs.
- 42. Rowena - I have been working on mapping all remaining nesting boxes. This work will be finished in December.

## 1 Million Turtles Project 2022-2023 – Aimee Linke

43. Have embarked on some turtle work with landholders and volunteers to see if we can find some nesting sites. We did some exploring near Preiss Landing with David LeBrun and Landcare volunteers Sheralee, Mick and Brenton. We think we found an old nesting ground as there were a lot of holes that looked like exited nest sites, we think we may have also seen a potential nest. They are hard to find but they like the sandy rises and nest near vegetation, we marked the location and David will keep an eye on it for any other activity, especially after the rains that were due to come (08/11/22).
44. David showed us a turtle shell he found twelve months ago that still had one turtle egg left in there. The turtle had been nesting and was predated upon by a fox with only one egg not eaten. Sightings like this are still valuable putting on TurtleSAT, a great mapping tool that can help guide turtle protection activities [www.turtlesat.org.au](http://www.turtlesat.org.au)



Figure 13 potential nesting ground surveyed, Henley Park.



Figure 14 egg left inside turtle shell after predation.

45. ABC Riverland radio interview about the turtle project and working with landholders to look for nest sites (09/11/22). We will also be setting up some nest predation surveys with some landholders to provide an indication of fox numbers.
46. Site visit with Graham and Judith Coventry to look for turtle nesting sites at Devon Downs South, we found some locations that have potential but nothing that looked like a fresh nest (11/11/22).
47. Found an Eastern long-necked male turtle walking along the road after some heavy rains just outside of Angaston, moved him off the road and added the sighting to TurtleSAT (12/11/22).
48. Searched for nest sites with volunteers at Meldanda around Mermaid Lake which has recently refilled and along the Marne, there are historic sightings of turtles here, but we didn't see any recent evidence (21/11/22).



49. Another nest turtle day with volunteers Andy, Paul, Bear, Cryss and David, we searched several locations around Preiss Landing, Devon Downs and Henley Park, there were sites that looked like had been nested on before. We found one that had been previously predated, there were egg remains still evident. We marked this site with a pin marker, we intend to keep monitoring the site, so we will know we have captured this record (29/11/22).



*Figure 15 volunteers helping to search for turtle nests.*



*Figure 16 predated turtle nest.*