



Mid Murray Landcare SA

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Activity Update February 2024

This activity update is for the month of February 2024. If you would like to be on our mailing list and receive this free update, please email Aimee Linke at the above email address, or view it on our webpage. These projects are from varied sources of funding including the Murraylands and Riverland Landscape Board's Grassroots Grants, other small grants, and contract work.

Meldanda

1. Continued with managing the volunteers, camp bookings, provision of materials and equipment and all necessary administration managing the booking page, cleaning, mowing of campsites, around seed production area, astronomy paddock and maintenance of facilities. Kept neighbors informed of any camp bookings - we had thirty-five bookings for February, ninety-six adults and thirteen children, fifteen of the bookings were for the astronomy paddock. We had issues with a group of party goers that thought driving around the Astronomy Paddock fast was a great idea, not so for the Astronomers who were using the paddock for star gazing. We have made some changes to hopefully avoid this happening again. Astronomers when they book the site will be given a code to a combination lock so they can access the paddock and lock it behind them.
2. We have been addressing the water issues at Meldanda and have diverted the water from the bore around the tank straight into the irrigations system, hopefully this will help speed up the transfer of water when we are on site and can still top up the top tank when we are not there.
3. Volunteer Brenton with the CFS truck topped up the tank in the front Bushgarden area, this tank is the hardest to get water to as it is the last in line to fill up.
4. We borrowed the Prickle Picker from MRLB again, thank you to Authorised

Officers Rob McGregor and Scott Hutchens for helping to facilitate this. Volunteers David and Peter Bennett brought in their Gator and spent two days driving around the Astronomy paddock and the paddock around the Seed Production Area to pick up prickles. They emptied the prickles into our trailer that I dropped off in the paddock and filled it up about one-third.

5. Volunteers continued with the control of caltrop at Meldanda, and we reinstated bins at each gate for people to remove prickles from their shoes. We are also keeping gates shut and reducing vehicle access.
6. We had white ants destroy the cupboards in the workshop shed, we threw out the cupboards, reorganised things to be more functional.



Figure 1 caltrop buckets at gate.



Figure 2 white ants destroyed cupboard.



Figure 3 second hand mower.

7. We were fortunate enough to be offered a secondhand ride on mower from a school in Adelaide, thanks to Greg Kirk for facilitating this. I went and picked it up with a tandem trailer, thanks to Darren Linke for the loan of the trailer. The purchase of this mower was made possible from a kind donation we received from the former Murray Mallee LAP, thank you. This mower will make an enormous difference to our capacity to manage Meldanda, and we will look at setting up a spray unit behind it.

Community Nursery

8. Supported twelve landholders or groups with plants, plant selection, projects, weed or other species identification and letters of support.
9. Volunteers David and Sheralee have been installing new irrigation to the shade house, they have potted on *Pittosporum angustifolium* (native apricot), *Cymbopogon obtectus*, *Melaleuca lanceolata* and sowed *Digitaria ammophila* and *Goodenia pinnatifida*.

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. Had the work Ute serviced.
11. Sent out agenda, minutes, correspondence list, and financial report for the month to the Committee. We held our February meeting at the Cambrai Library.
12. Acquitted Landcare Association of SA 'Care for Landcare' small grant, they will open again in April.
13. Joined in on a webinar put on by Green Adelaide 'The Wonderful World of Weeds.'

River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve - Chris Tugwell

14. Meeting with architects to discuss next steps in creating promotion document.
15. Presentation at Caravan & Camping Show with (supposedly retired) Bill Nehmy.
16. Council Dark Sky Committee meeting, discussion of business case, cooperation with Torrens University students, potential funding opportunities under new federal government initiative, also attended by Leila Kasprzak and Ros Schultz.
17. Meeting with Torrens University design staff re. Design project to go with business case.
18. Meeting with Lance & Heidi Otto re. site for Observatory/Planetarium
19. Provided information for Council's objection to WA trademark of the words "Dark Sky Festival".
20. Andrew Cool sought feedback on darkness readings from Dark Sky International (formerly IDA).
21. Dark Sky committee discussions on suitable telescope; our experts recommend a 1 metre Planewave telescope.

Western Pygmy Possums

22. Volunteer Dennis Matthews went out to Michelle and John Bohner's to change the SD cards in the cameras and see if he could get some good shots of the possums. No luck with the possums but he got a great shot of some spiders.
23. Coral Johnston has captured some Western Pygmy Possums on one of her cameras, which is exciting.



Figure 4 Spiders co-habit with possums.



Figure 5 Coral Johnston's possum photo.

Feral Scan

24. We had two goat sightings submitted in February with one new landholder contributing, 12-20 goats seen around Broncos Road and Mueller's Road.
25. Site visit to property near Mueller Road to assess suitability for setting up a goat trap with MRLB authorised officer Craig Krollig. The site was suitable, and the watering point has been set up. Installed a camera on the water trough and we have some very supportive landholders next door who will help to monitor it for us.



Figure 6 water point set up.

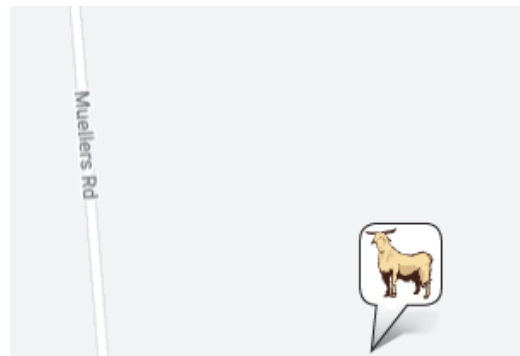


Figure 7 goat sighting map.

Carpet Python Project

26. Meeting at Murray Bridge with Daniel Saliba and Mel Burford to discuss the project.
27. Organised two site visits with landholders on properties out near Moorunde where MDCP have been seen on several occasions in the past.
28. Mail drop in Sedan to encourage landholders to submit any sightings of MDCP into iSPYthon, since the new app has been set up there have been about 15 submissions.

Turtles

29. Site visit with Sylvia Clarke, Mike Thompson, and landholders to a wetland at Caloote to see turtle nesting sites that have been predated, we are looking at providing support to the landholders to instal a fox proof fence to help protect this popular nesting site.
30. Have been reviewing some videos on the turtle project and will be catching up with the producer to get these finalised.



Figure 8 site visit nesting site Caloote.



Figure 9 predated turtle nest.

Irongrass Native Grasslands Project

31. Aimee and volunteers have weeded seed production areas, harvested some of the grass species and cleaned *Arthropodium* seed.
32. Meeting with Kate Graham and Nicola Barnes in Murray Bridge to discuss the project and planning for the upcoming trials.
33. Drafted letter in readiness to send to landholders about the vegetation mapping we did on their properties last year.
34. Received the soils report for Mokota CP from Geoff Kew, Senior Soil Officer.

Supporting Biodiversity Across Conservation and Production Lands - Rowena Danks.

Maintain 1 partnership with Industry where Regent Parrot management is crucial to crop management.

35. Discussions with producers to assist in the development of the forum.

Encourage mallee community to participate in recording sightings of Regent Parrots in the mallee using the 'Poly Tell Us' App. Encourage mallee community to participate in recording sightings of Regent Parrot habitat plants across mallee. (1 communication activities)

36. I have begun a draft of this communication with the aim of sending it out in March.

Host 1 forum to support bee and bird management in productive systems. Deliver forum to growers (40) to support establishment of functional and effective revegetation projects that support native and honey bees as well as native birds for integrated pest management.

37. Planning has continued on the forum with a date range that suits most growers chosen for May/June.

Report on assessment of decoy crops and plantings to Regent Parrot Recovery Team (1 report) and source new funding for next phase of programs if relevant.

38. I have begun work on this report with the aim of presenting it at the April Regent Parrot Recovery Team meeting for feedback. I will make any final changes before the Forum in May/ June.

39. On the 29th of February, Aimee and I will be discussing potential project ideas with Nature Foundation and the Landscapes SA on this topic.

Disseminate fact sheet. (Promote at 1 event)

40. To be ready for the forum in May/June

Attend Regent Parrot Recovery Team meeting (1 meeting)

41. Next meeting will be held on April 5th. I will attend to present my draft fact sheet and my report on the effectiveness of decoy crop and forage plantings.