

Woolshed / Thurgoona Landcare

NOVEMBER 2010

ISSUE THREE

Tree planting, Thurgoona Equestrian Centre, 2010

Catherine Allan

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Over 400 seedlings of local tree and shrub species were planted in a flurry of activity at the Thurgoona Equestrian centre on September 5.

Species planted, guarded and watered included Yellow Box, Hopbush, River Sheoak, Golden Wattle and many more.

The plantings are visible from Elizabeth Mitchell Drive; with good fortune we should all be able to watch another small patch of bird habitat grow and flourish.

Thanks to all of the Landcare members who turned out to help.



A special thank you also to members of the Thurgoona Equestrian Centre for their hard work with preparation and planting, and for the food and hospitality after the trees were in.



President's report

Graham Chapman

...

Welcome to our third and final newsletter for 2010.

Everyone, current member or not, is welcome to attend our Annual General Meeting on the 3rd November. This will be held at the TAFE National Environment Centre, Ettamogah Road, Thurgoona.

Formal business, including updating our contact list, will be followed by a BBQ.

Subscriptions are also due: \$25 per family, with special rates for students.

I shall be retiring as President effective The AGM. I would like to thank all members and supporters for their assistance over

Annual General Meeting

Date: 3 November 2010

Time: 6.30pm

Venue: TAFE

the last five years. Please consider standing for the Presidency or for an Executive position.

In August the Woolshed/Thurgoona Landcare Group hosted a presentation by Dr Melody Serena of the Platypus Conservancy. Her engaging and informative talk highlighted some of the challenges faced by platypus, but also inspired some members of the group to become regular platypus monitors to help wildlife ecologists better understand these unique animals.

The Landcare group was also well represented at the Albury Conservation Company's presentation of the results of the recent Squirrel Glider Study. This report will help guide Landcare and other activities in the district for many years.

Sloanes Froglet – Thurgoona’s tiny mystery creature

Alexandra Knight

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The wonderful rainfall over the last few months has revived our wetlands and been of great benefit to the species that rely on them. Our frog species, in particular, are having an active and successful breeding season and at the moment the evenings are full of the varied calls of our many local species including the Plains Froglet, Common Eastern Froglet, Spotted Marsh Frog and Perons Tree Frog.

Mostly we think of frogs as Spring and Summer active animals and hear them in the warmer weather, but Thurgoona is home to a tiny froglet that has been active through the winter months and is just settling down to silence and sleep for the hot dry summer months – the tiny Sloanes Froglet or *Crimia sloanei*.

First discovered in 1957 at Tocumwal, very little is known about Sloanes Froglet. It is a tiny froglet only 20mm long, mostly olive green or brownish grey



Sloane's Froglet in amplexus on a stormy night in Thurgoona in July (©David Hunter)

although the male has beautiful bright orange spots on his back in the breeding season. Sloanes is extremely difficult to see and hides very quickly when disturbed. It was discovered when the renowned frog specialist Murray Littlejohn heard a different call while out surveying, and listening for it is still the best way of finding it. It has a little squeak-like ‘e.e...e.e’ sound and calls in the day and night.

Although Sloanes Froglet was once found throughout the central west of NSW from the border with Victoria to the border with Queensland, it has been very rarely found in NSW in the last 10 years. Sloanes has been found occasionally in northern central Victoria, but not in Queensland at all. Many Australian amphibians have suffered great declines over the last twenty to thirty years and the lack of records of Sloanes Froglet has led to concerns for its ongoing survival.

In order to address these concerns I commenced a PhD focused on Sloanes Froglet in April this year and have spent the winter months gathering

information about it. It was quite a surprise to find that Thurgoona is actually home to quite a strong population of Sloanes which occur in people’s backyards, in rural dams, stormwater drains, roadside puddles and flooded grassland. Although Sloanes is quite widespread throughout Thurgoona, it’s not found in every water body and one of the challenges of the study is to work out what its specific habitat requirements are and so how we can protect it into the long-term.

If you would like to find out more about this little froglet, have a look at the website www.frogs.org.au in the regional guide section – there is some more information and a recording of its call. If you think you have heard it at your place, feel welcome to let me know, as your information will help add to our knowledge.

Alexandra Knight, PhD student, School of Environmental Sciences, Charles Sturt University. aknight@csu.edu.au

Opening of the Community Garden at the Thurgoona Community Centre Ros Webb

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On Friday October 8th 3 members of our group attended this function and manned an information table.

The weather was delightful and we had a few enquiries about our group. Upcoming activities and the AGM were publicised. Thanks Felicity for organising some posters for us. Also thanks to Catherine, Ros and Kaye for manning our table.

Trinity's Environmentally Conscious and Outdoor Active (ECO) Kids

Scott Melgaard

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The 2010 year has been a very busy one for the College ECOA kids. We have had regular afternoon activities and excursions to explore and improve the local environment around Thurgoona.

The final term sees the group; visiting OZE Wildlife, spotlighting Thurgoona's Wetlands, visiting Stanley Forest and camping at the Hume Weir and Tallangatta Creek.

The ECOA program has a strong following at Trinity with one in four students in the Primary School involved in some way.



ECO GROUP KIEWA RIVER, JULY 2010

**Murray-Darling Basin
Authority
Basin Plan Community
Information Session
29 October
Commercial Club
Dean Street Albury
9am-12pm**

more information:

[http://www.mdba.gov.au/
communities](http://www.mdba.gov.au/communities)

How do you prefer to receive your newsletter ?

In the interests of reducing paper use we will be delivering as many newsletters as we can via email in 2011.

If you would like to receive this newsletter by email please check your email address at the AGM, or send an email to callan@csu.edu.au asking to be added to the emailing list.

If you prefer your newsletter in print please note this at the AGM or contact Catherine on 02 60519781 and ask to be added to the physical mailing list.

Vegetation Condition Monitoring in the Murray Catchment

Alison Skinner

**Murray Catchment Management
Authority**

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Spring is a great time to be outside and enjoy the flowers, and it is also the best time to be identifying what native species are present in different parts of the landscape.

Staff from the Murray Catchment Management Authority are currently undertaking vegetation condition assessments at selected Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs) across the catchment, including Bells Reserve on the Old Sydney Road. This is part of a monitoring project established in 2008 which aims to track long term changes in vegetation condition in our catchment. In collaboration with the Australian National University, almost 300 monitoring sites have been established across the catchment on both private and public land, including sites with and without CMA-funded biodiversity projects. Private landholders' monitoring sites will be revisited in 2011.

Vegetation is assessed using the 'Biometric' method, which measures such habitat variables as tree cover, ground cover (both native and exotic), number of native species, tree and shrub regeneration, the amount of fallen timber and the number of hollow-bearing trees. Whilst some habitat variables might be expected to change only after several years or even decades, it will be interesting to see what changes have occurred in the TSRs in two years.

Stay tuned for results from Bells Reserve...



You are invited to:
River Ramble
Sunday Dec. 5th 2010
11.30am for 12 noon.

Landcarers and their families and friends are invited to a picnic on the Murray River at "Hawksview". BYO chairs, hats, sunblock, cameras and binoculars. No fires, BYO picnic lunch and drinks.

View Webb's Murray River Streambank Restoration Project sites and hear about Rob. Fenton's monitoring of birds and animals in the immediate area.

Directions from Thurgoona; Take Riverina Hwy to Lake Hume Village. Turn right into Trout Farm Rd. Go past the Trout farm and turn right at road gate adjacent to Heywoods Bridge. Follow the marked track through the paddocks to the picnic site.

FROM THE EDITOR

This newsletter is produced for the Woolshed / Thurgoona Landcare Group. Its production and distribution is supported by the Albury-Wodonga campus of Charles Sturt University.

Contributions are welcome and should be sent to Catherine Allan callan@csu.edu.au

Woolshed Thurgoona
Landcare Group

To: interested residents of
the Woolshed Creek/
Thurgoona area