



Ashbourne Landcare Group

WINTER 2015

We have certainly had some cold mornings of late and apart from the 3 polar fleeces, requisite woollen beanie, gloves etc. one has to adorn before venturing out, the blanket of crisp white frosts have been exquisite not to mention some pretty serious rainbows!



Einsporns Rd, Ashbourne

Welcome to the Winter ALG Newsletter. Two points that are worth recognition are firstly to pay respect to the founder of the National Landcare Program, Joan Kirner. Her vision to create a formal Landcare policy to address the degradation of farmland, public land and waterways stands as an inspirational legacy.

Second point, that Landcare funding has been cut by almost a third and the Federal Government has created a new National Landcare Program which is an amalgamation of the former Landcare program and Caring For Our Country. Details of how the new program will work are still underway.

ASHBOURNE LANDCARE GROUP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SUNDAY, 21ST JUNE, 2015

The Ashbourne Landcare Group's Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday, 21st June at the home of Sue and Darryl Chivers. There was an attendance of 19 members.

Guest Speaker:

Our guest speaker was Sandy Scheltema, Landcare Facilitator for the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network, who gave a presentation before the beginning of the formal AGM meeting. Sandy spoke of the activities of the Landcare Groups in the Upper Campaspe Landcare Network.

The Network represents 15 Landcare and related groups in the Campaspe catchment including: Woodend, Ashbourne, Tylden, Trentham, Malmsbury, Carlsruhe, Pipers Creek, Campaspe Valley, Bayton Sidonia, Langley, Newham, Friends of Bald Hill, Metcalf and Campaspe Valley Working Party (Kyneton township).

Sandy elaborated on the many on-going activities and projects ranging from school planting days, installation of nesting boxes for sugar gliders and phascogales, to clearing of weeds along the Malmsbury railway viaduct etc.. Sandy had many wonderful photographs of children absorbed in the tasks of planting and identifying native flora and fauna species.

Sandy also talked about the commitment of the Landcare Groups, some only having 2 members and how each piece of work that is being carried out contributes to a big picture of protection and rejuvenation of the Campaspe and its surrounds.

The photo below shows the Minister for Climate Change, Land and Water, the Hon Lisa Neville, being shown the beginnings of a biolink constructed as part of a Landcare project aiming to link the Macedon Regional Park with the Cobaw State Forest.



Photo and information ©Sandy Scheltema

She is seen with 4 yr old Austin May, Penny Roberts from Newham Landcare, Amanda May, 4 year old Marigold Bickford, Sophie Bickford from the Central Victorian Biolinks Project, and the MP for Macedon Mary-Anne Thomas.

The Upper Campaspe Landcare Network is working with Landcare groups in the region to create biolinks which will connect remnant vegetation.

Many thanks Sandy for a very interesting and informative presentation which really got to the heart of what Landcare is all about.



President's Report:

Alan Denehey, opened the meeting and presented a comprehensive Annual Committee Report which had been circulated previously to all members. Alan spoke of the achievements and activities of the Ashbourne Landcare Group during 2014-15. These included, well attended working bees, the completed 900m riparian project and the UCLN and CMA projects still underway. Alan expressed his appreciation to all members who have supported activities during the year and to the committee for their input.

On a broader basis the UCLN (Upper Campaspe Landcare Network) now represents the interests of 15 local Landcare groups and is instrumental in linking the work and focus of these groups together for the long term benefit of Campaspe River and surrounding environment.

Election of Office Bearers:

Alan Denehey noted that all committee positions were open. De Marshall resigned as Vice President but is happy to continue as committee member. Alan Denehey advised that he would no longer be standing as President due to the many commitments that he currently has, one including the Vice President of the UCLN, but will stand as a committee member.

The remaining Office Bearers agreed to restand for election and Libby Peck (Secretary) and Geoff McLeod (Treasurer) were duly elected. The remaining Committee Members agreed to restand for election and there were six nominations for the committee. Margaret Blackburn agreed to stand, which was warmly received. All duly elected: Margaret Blackburn, Susan Chivers, Alan Denehey, Linda Healy, Deidre Marshall and Ian Temby.

Due to the unexpected resignations, Alan Denehey and Deidre Marshall agreed to remain in the positions for an interim period of a month and voting can then take place either electronically or by calling an Extraordinary Meeting. A notice to advise will go out shortly.

Libby Peck, on behalf of the Committee thanked Alan for all his hard work and commitment over the previous years.

The meeting then adjourned and we enjoyed a delicious lunch, provided by all and sat back and joined in for a lovely afternoon.



Matt Schulz

Our Landcare group is very saddened by the unexpected passing of Matthias (Matt) Schulz of Walshes Road.

Matt, Beatrice Schlabowsky's husband and father of Isabelle and Christian, was a warm hearted and fun loving person, with a great sense of humour and interest in many issues and topics. He enjoyed a beer and conversation with his neighbours. Matt and Beatrice had already achieved much on their lovely property, with many more plans ahead. Matt contributed to the riparian revegetation project and designed and built a special fence along their length of the riparian zone – aesthetic, native animal friendly and distinctive.

Beatrice would like to thank the Landcare Group for their kind and generous time for chopping and carting wood for them – "without it", she says, "we would have been quite cold over the last few weeks". Our heartfelt sympathy to Beatrice, Isabelle and Christian.

WAG – VIC GORSE TASKFORCE SUBMISSION GRANT APPLICATION *Urgent Attention!*

The **WAG Interim Steering Committee** is preparing to submit a 2015 grant from the Victorian Gorse Taskforce.

To succeed in our submission, we need to have a long list of landholders who are willing to undertake a gorse control program on their properties in return for free chemical.

Landholders who did not participate in the last round of VTG funding and who would like to participate in this round should immediately respond to by expressing their interest and giving a very approximate estimate of the area of gorse and blackberry on their property.

Please refer to follow up email sent out on 18th July with further necessary information.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU COMPLETE THIS INFORMATION AND EMAIL IT BACK TO MICHAEL PECK BY WEDNESDAY 22 JULY OR AS CLOSE TO.

Michael Peck
0428172993

ALG Events



Ashbourne Landcare Group is looking forward to holding a number of wildflower and exploratory walks in the Spring. There are a varied mix of orchid's in our bush areas and a spectacular variety of wildflowers will be emerging in a month or two.

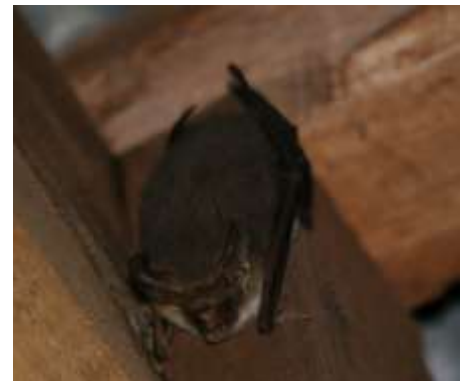
Details of dates, locations, picnic preferences, etc. will be distributed shortly. Any suggestions welcome!

Bats and Frogs

The Bat community play a big role in the eco-environment and have been around for at least 55 million years. There are two different types of bats: Megabats and Microbats.

Megabats, as the name suggests are larger, more identifiable and are also known as Flying Foxes or Fruits Bats. They roost openly and collectively in trees in both urban and rural areas. Their food source is usually native fruits, domestic back yard fruit trees and pollen. They are effective pollinators flying quite a distance before they drop seeds.

Many of us around here might have a single **Microbat** or a colony of microbats roosting in your ceiling or shed. Their habitat in some areas has been eroded and if you have a small opening in the roof, they might take up residence. They are shy, wee little mammals, not much bigger than a 50 cent piece. They are very beneficial to our environment, feeding on vast quantities of pest carrying insects during the night. SC



The photo above is of a *Lesser long-eared Bat* (*Nyctophilus geoffroyi*) roosting in the Temby's shearing shed. This species is quite common in the area and can often be found roosting under a coat or bag hanging in a shed.

Frogs and dams are synonymous and when walking around the dam you often hear the 'bonk' sound. This is the *Eastern Banjo Frog* or *Pobblebonk*, more often heard than seen. It is a burrowing frog may be found, as this one was, while digging in the garden. Surprisingly, often a long way away from the dam.



Photos and information courtesy: Ian Temby

Pines were the most recognisable – a distinctive orange colour with wide gills, which are very delicate. When bruised, these turn a deep orange, then tinged green colour.

(Right: *Slippery Jack's* with chef Riccardo Messora of Tutto Bene)

The Slippery Jack's have a sponge like texture and are quite slimy; unlike all the other varieties we found which had gills. These are prized for eating when small, around fist sized, but can grow to be dinner plate sized and become woody and inedible, although some of the chefs suggested they just required slower wet cooking methods and are often eaten in the large sizes in Europe.



Less common but equally edible were the wood blewits and rooting shanks pictured left.

We also found a large amount of poisonous fungi, even the pretty red toadstools with spots straight from the nursery books, but best not tried. (And yes there are magic mushrooms around too...you need some insider knowledge to find them).

After the forage, we headed to Olive Jones, one of Macedon's best restaurants where head chef Mark Renaud prepared our haul and treated us to a feast of wild and commercial mushroom dishes.

Caroline is an Ashbourne resident, freelance journalist and food bon vivant!

WEEDS to watch out for!

***Texas Needle Grass (Nassella leucotricha)* is appearing in the Campaspe area and is an extremely invasive perennial tussock, forming dense clumps up to one metre high.**

Sandy Scheltema made a special point of highlighting this noxious weed. It is of huge concern and livestock will not eat it.

Texas Needle Grass has an almost identical twin named Chilean Needle Grass. They're both in

Wild about wild mushrooms! By Caroline Westmore Gusto Styling

In Australia, we have some of the most varied places to find amazing wild mushrooms, often well kept secrets! Mushrooms in general are such a wonderful food source, with high fibre, vitamins (especially B group and D) minerals and antioxidants. They are linked in the latest health research with the prevention of breast and prostate cancer and Alzheimer's disease.

Last year I was thrilled to accompany some chefs and food writers and be taken on a forage to learn about the varieties ready for the picking in the **Macedon Ranges** in Central Victoria.

Firstly I should mention that collecting mushrooms is an art, and the difference between a mushroom that looks edible and one that will leave you feeling worse for wear are often minute, so having an expert with you is a great head start! (Pines right)



Our day began in the pine plantation and we were encouraged to forage under the roots and along the sunny edges of the forest, where wild mushrooms grow – they like the damp and some sunlight around the tree bases. Each mushroom variety is *symbiotic to a particular tree*, and were at first hard to spot, but with slow careful searching we found varieties such as *pines, slippery jack's, lilac coloured wood blewits and rooting shanks*.

the *Nassella* genus, which is the same as Serrated Tussock.

Max Schlachter from Connecting Country, max@connectingcountry.org.au or 5472 1594 is

currently working on an ID booklet for Needle Grasses in the area, so look out for that later in the year. The Upper Campaspe Landcare Network or Connecting Country will advise when it is available.



Texas Needle grass is a serious threat in Central Victoria, so it's really worth doing something about it! says Max.

Up and Coming Event

Newham Landcare invites you to hear two speakers and ask questions about:

'RURAL ROADSIDES – Conserving shared treasure'

Date: Friday, 24th July

Time: 7pm for 7.30pm

Newham Mechanics Hall, Supper provided

Many of our Shire's rural roadsides are important remnants of rare plant communities and habitat for many animal species. Their biodiversity and beauty are constantly under threat of damage or destruction. What can residents do on our own roadsides to assist conservation?

Michelle Patrick is the Natural Resources Officer at Macedon Ranges Shire Council, where she has worked for over three years. She will talk about Council's roles and responsibilities on roadsides. What is allowed on roadsides, What is illegal? Managing native vegetation - protection of biodiversity including rare or threatened species.?

Dr Steve Krstic is a semi-retired veterinary epidemiologist who has been associated with the Macedon Ranges area all his life. He will talk about Roadsides Conservation and their importance in a Landscape Conservation Strategy.

RSVP: Helen Scott 0412 582 526, orseda@bigpond.com

Ashbourne Landcare Farm Gate Signs

Only 8 left. Great to spot when driving around the district. Contact Libby Peck.

ALG Website

Constantly being updated and provides very informative information for members.

<http://northcentral.landcarevic.net.au/ashbourne>

ALG Newsletter

If you have any suggestions or contributions to our Newsletter, please feel free to contact me, they are more than welcome.

Sue Chivers – Editor

The ALG Library –

De Marshall has now catalogued the titles of all books, journals, pamphlets and this extensive list will be added to the ALG website. Any enquires contact De.

Committee Meetings for 2015:

Committee Meetings continue to take place at the Victoria Hotel over a pub meal (6.30pm).

Next meetings: Friday, 28th August and Thursday, 19th November.

Any member is most welcome to attend.

Membership Fees

MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE NOW DUE!

New members are always welcome – a way of belonging to a local community group, and together achieving more for our Landcare.

Joining fee for new members now \$20.00 **per household**. Annual subscription \$20.00. Members can pay by cheque made to Ashbourne Landcare Group or via online bank transfer:

Account name Ashbourne Landcare Group Inc.
BSB 313 140 **Account no.** 19221339

Don't forget to write MF (Member Fee) followed by your surname for description. Please notify Geoff McLeod of any change in your contact details.

And on a positive warm note...



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