



Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group

Newsletter



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Biolinks – Beneficial or Barking up the wrong tree.

Special Guest: Anthony Dufty
(President, Moorabool Landcare Network)

Thursday, 18th April, 2013 @ 1930h
Balliang Hall



Anthony heads the local Moorabool Landcare Network and the Pentland Hills Landcare Group. Chris Winfield, who is our representative on the Network, has been very impressed with its success in implementing a major bio-links project which appears to be similar in many respects to our own Little River Project, though on a larger scale. Anthony's group received a Landcare Award for their outstanding success in coordinating a linkage project, due to be completed in 2014, which spans 33 km down the Myrning and Korkuperrimul creeks. Anthony attributes the success of the project to working closely with all stakeholders and creating ownership by the landholders who are creating the biolink. However, much of the work is planting tubestock and Anthony now asks "are we in a fools' paradise to believe we can recreate the plant community of the 1750's". Anthony's ideas

on recreating the landscape also pose the question: Why would any farmer or other landholder in a rural area want to take away from productive value of farmland? You should not miss this challenging talk!.

Our next speaker, Anthony Dufty writes:

Pentland hills Landcare will complete a biolink between Wombat/Lerderderg Forest and the Werribee Gorge by October 2013. The entire biolink, some 33 km down the Myrniong and Korkuperrimul creeks is on track to be completed in 2014. This has included a tremendous amount of cooperation between landholders, the landcare group and government agencies such as Melbourne Water and PPW Catchment Management Authority. The project has raised the awareness of the local Pentland Hills Landcare group and increased membership to 76 people. Additional activities included community engagement events such as a Community Planting Day where 285 people attended. Also there was a Myrniong Landholder Expo that attracts about 400 people per year.

However we have got it wrong!!

Many landcare works involve using the EVC (a scientific assessment of environmental value) as a basis for revegetation programs in an attempt to recreate the environment of the 1750s. However, are we not living in a fools' paradise if we believe that we can recreate the plant community of the 1750's?

On agricultural land, the indigenous plant community has been replaced by an anthropogenic environment dominated by introduced species that are beneficial to agriculture. When this environment is modified to recreate the indigenous ecosystem, we still have many of the introduced species in the environment and have created, in effect, a quasi-natural ecosystem that is not always designed for biodiversity. It is often designed for plant species diversity but the structural layers are missing or misaligned to the architecture of the forest.

What we need to do is achieve an analogue of the natural forest that contains the forest furniture and species richness within the

architectural framework of what was present. The question is: why would any farmer undertake such a design and build such an artificial construct if it takes away from productive farmland?

Mandy Coulson driving Geelong Landcare Network major revegetation project.

Due to tight deadlines, Mandy Coulson met during March with some members from BRLG to encourage applications for revegetation projects, very generously funded by the Commonwealth Government. An email inviting members was distributed in March, but if you are interested and haven't been in touch with Mandy her email address is: nrmextension@exemail.com.au.

The project will establish new large-scale biodiversity plantings across the landscape to improve connectivity between Brisbane Ranges, You Yangs, Port Phillip wetlands, Inverleigh Flora & Fauna Reserve, Bannockburn Bush and Dogrocks Flora and Fauna Reserve. All these are important conservation sites. The project aims to enhance and build links that will bridge together these local, regional and state reserves.

The project will include the Mid Barwon and Lower Moorabool River catchments and their waterways to further widen the landscape links to provide alternate routes for wildlife movement.

Mandy has agreed to speak about this major project at our next meeting, due 20th June. However expressions of interest and applications will be due well before then. Please contact Mandy urgently if you are interested in participating.

15 trees funding is still available for small plantings:

A reminder that this organization, which provided seedlings of indigenous trees free of charge for small plantings last year, wants suggestions for ongoing tree-plantings in 2013. We need to decide numbers of trees and projects by the end of April. Remember that, with the subsidy provided by BRLG for stakes and guards, you can get a good number of trees into the ground for no cost! See Sec. Allan Bartholomew asap. 53 694 197.



15 trees planting at the Bartholomew's last year.

Rabbits!

Allan Bartholomew attended the Ingleston field day in November last year ... he has a few take-away memories, as follows:

Rabbits have been described as the most successful mammal pest ever released worldwide.

A long term collaborative research project was set up at Ingleston, near Ballan in 2009—the list of participants in the project is one huge alphabet soup eg CSIRO & ARIER (Arthur Rylah Institute of Environmental Research), MW, GW, DPI, DSE, PV, PPWCMA, etc.

Ingleston had the distinction of having the largest number of rabbits observed in

Victoria over many years, resulting in highly degraded land. Just imagine up to 120 rabbits per spotlight kilometre, about 2,000 warrens and minimal ground cover on hills.

Some of the large-scale management methods included the laying of 76 km of baits, ripping warrens using heavy machinery, fencing and various follow up treatments including fumigation and implosion of warrens - particularly in difficult areas. Continual monitoring and revegetation trials have tracked some dramatic changes since 2009.

Many of the lessons learnt (particularly how and when to implement controls) would be suitable for smaller scale operations eg baiting is most effective in late summer/autumn and ripping is best when soils are still friable (before rains). It is certainly not easy but you have to be more determined than the rabbits.

Melbourne Water has now included pest control in their "Healthy Waterways Strategy", - effective next year - so may be worth a query if you have a problem with rabbits.



One way to deal with rabbits (and fires): an exclusion fence on the Jenz property, part of the BRLG Little River project. Note the rabbit proof netting and concrete posts.

A footnote: several of our members participated in the Maude Landcare rabbit control program in late February. Good kills were reported. But remember rabbits breed ... like ... er rabbits so continued efforts will be needed. Remember that BRLG members are eligible for a subsidy to support vermin control!

Other activities:

BRLGroup thanks the many organizations that keep us informed of forthcoming events. We post many of these on our website (see the heading of this newsletter for the URL). Members might be particularly interested in the following:

Otways Agroforestry Network is holding two free information sessions for “sea-changers and tree-changers” about innovative activities for small landholders. Projects include growing furniture timber, and selling wattle thinnings for English style traditional fencing. One session is at a property growing specialized farm produce for the local La Bimba Restaurant. But be quick: these free sessios are happening at 1030h and 1330h on **Saturday 13 April**. Visit What’s On page at www.oan.org.au or call 5236 2086 for details.

Will Hogg & PPW Catchment Management Authority again have organized a Werribee catchment action “round table” for Landcare groups. Thursday 18/4/13 at 10am in Bacchus Marsh. Allan Bartholomew will attend for our group, anyone else interested in attending please contact Allan on 0401 925 886.

Victorian workshop Best Practice sessions for Weeds of National Significance. Sessions on Brooms & Boxthorn in Colac Monday 20/5/13, 10am-2pm.- see page 5

Gorse & Boxthorn control field day Tues 23/4/1 9-11am at Teesdale – see page 6

Water Watch: water monitoring on the Little River

In the picture below, Deidre Murphy and Chris Winfield are recording observations of water quality on the Little River. This is part of our continuing participation in Water Watch which provides ongoing water quality data. If you have water frontage and would like to get involved, please contact Chris:



And while on the topic of rabbits:

A man and his pet rabbit walk into a bar. It's about 5pm, but they're ready for a good night of drinking. They start off slowly, watching TV, drinking beer, eating peanuts. As the night goes on they move to mixed drinks, and then shooters, one after the other.

Finally, the bartender says: "Last call." So, the man says, "One more for me... and one more for my rabbit." The bartender sets them up and they shoot them back. Suddenly, the rabbit falls over dead. The man throws some money on the bar, puts on his coat and starts to leave. The bartender, yells: "Hey mate, you can't just leave that lyin' there." To which the man replies: "That's not a lion, that's a rabbit."



Workshop Invitation

Building Best Practice - Brooms and African Boxthorn

What's happening?

The WoNS Coordinators for **brooms** – Scotch/English broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), Montpellier/ Cape broom (*Genista monspessulana*) and flax-leaf broom (*G. linifolia*) – and **African boxthorn** (*Lycium ferocissimum*) are developing manuals about the best practice control of these weeds.

A series of workshops are being held in your area to identify local needs, methods of control and provide information on how these weeds are being controlled elsewhere.

Where and when

Lakes Entrance - Thursday 16th May 2013 - 10am to 2pm
Bellevue on the Lakes, 201 The Esplanade, Lakes Entrance

Pakenham – Friday 17th May 2013 – 10am to 2pm
Cardinia Cultural Centre, Lakeside Boulevard, Pakenham

Colac – Monday 20th May 2013 – 10am to 2pm
Colac Otway Performing Arts and Cultural Centre, Corner Rae & Gellibrand St, Colac

Lunch and refreshments will be served, so please indicate any food allergies or preferences when confirming your place

Agenda summary:

- **WoNS background** – selection process, phasing systems and national strategic plans
- **New WoNS** – identification, distribution and impacts (current and potential)
- **Currently available management best practice info** – what are the standard practices; novel techniques; identified gaps
- **How do you do it?** (workshopping session) – Pros and cons of techniques; knowledge gaps; extension gaps
- **Holistic management** (workshopping session) – All of system rehabilitation: techniques; replacement species; knowledge gaps; extension gaps

Please RSVP by the 13th May to:

Matt Springall - National Brooms Coordinator (WoNS)
Direct: (02) 9585 6087; Mobile: 0427 536 138
Email: matthew.springall@environment.nsw.gov.au



Gorse & Boxthorn Control Field Day Tuesday 23rd April 2013, 9-11am



Supported by a Commonwealth Government's Community Action Grant and CCMA, YGTF, Geelong Landcare Network and Earrabool Hills & Leigh and District Landcare Groups

'Woolbrook'
704 Teesdale/Inverleigh Road,
Teesdale

The Geelong Landcare Network invites you to come and see Gorse & Boxthorn control in action, with grooming and Eco blade demonstrations plus spraying options. Including future funding opportunities. For further information contact Jim 0409935700

