

► Water Quality Monitoring

The Mannum – Wellington Local Action Planning Assn. Inc. has a high quality community monitoring program that is in the process of being expanded to incorporate E coli.

The dairy landholders, Rocky Gully Wetland and the LAP are involved in monitoring for nutrient (P04 and N03) as well as nitrate, pH and EC. The group has its own photometer to record nutrients.

The EC data reported is data from the River sites adjacent to the dairy farms that used to be irrigation areas. It records impacts of the quality of water from upstream sources as a lot of this water is now only used for animal drinking water, dairy wash down and if they are able to access water to use their 15% allocation wisely.

Samples are brought in at the end of each month by landholders, who have been trained to take samples correctly and have their own water sampling poles and eski.

The LAP also has technical support provided by experienced field and wetland officers familiar with the monitoring program.

Many participants in its water-monitoring program are dairy irrigators/dry land farmers located on the shoreline of the River Murray below and above Murray Bridge (Jervois to Mannum). The EPA is actively monitoring in the region to ensure the improvements being made to farming practices are protecting the River system. Landholders recycle water on-farm either through “shandyng” onto irrigated pasture or mostly pumping up to higher elevated land. The “salt channels” discharge to the river (i.e. on high river/high rainfall events), the reason for monitoring river sites captured through the BRS project. The added advantage of having salt meters on hand is that it assists landholders with water management and maximizes the resource use as with such low allocation, loss of ground water issues, effluent water, recycled water this is a very useful tool.

In Feb, 2008 the project officer (Kate Mason) overseeing the testing left the position and the works have continued with the project Manager (Kathryn Rothe) and other staff (Rainbow Rothe and Alex Emmins) who have been trained in water monitoring techniques consistent with NRM Board QA/QC Protocols and Waterwatch data categories. We would also like to thank Greg Lundstrom for his assistance with the project.

Samples are provided by landholders on the last Monday of each month but as the season has been running many of the sights have become dry. Dealing with the drought and low water allocations have made the sampling difficult for some as they have either sold their properties or have lost interest due to so much pressure. The MWLAP has made an effort to keep the interested parties involved with knowledge of updating events dealing with water issues and is very grateful for those who have made a huge effort in bringing their samples into the office.

Kathryn Rothe, Project Manager



► Water Quality Monitoring Workshop

A workshop will be held Monday 24th November at the Natural Resource Centre, (old Standard Building) Murray Bridge in the board room. 11.00am – 1.00pm Lunch included.

Martin Philcox will keep us informed about water quality, results on using what ever water you have including affectivity, from effluent, ground, recycled and restricted water. Greg Lundstrom will speak about Salinity Monitoring and future ideas.

Bring your water samples along on the day.

RSVP by 21st November for catering purposes ph: MWLAP 85313222.

► Rampant Rabbits

Over the last few years, drought has adversely affected native vegetation along roadsides and in crown reserves from Mannum Waterfalls to Caloote Landing. But I am convinced that rabbits have had a much greater impact.

Despite the dry conditions their numbers continued to grow, with water nearby at the waterfalls and in Reedy Creek until mid-summer 2007-8. They adapted and ate the bark and roots of plants which they usually shun including perennial native grasses, *Lomandra* (irongrass), wattles, *Eremophila* (emu bush) and *Dodonaea* (hop bush). New warrens cut deep under the roots of mature shrubs. Exposed to the drying heat of February and March, many died.

In February 2008 when areas around the waterfalls were like a moonscape, a concerted rabbit control effort was made by most local landholders and Mid Murray NRM. Caloote Area Landcare Group had rabbit-fenced crown land either side of Highland Road and members had worked for nearly a year eradicating all rabbits in the 9ha DEH-controlled crown reserve.

To the east it was more difficult because of a steep cliff face with burrows deep into limestone rock and limited manpower. Control is our plan here, with future eradication the goal. NRM's bait laying machine ran Pindone and 1080 in different properties. The untreated oats we trickled out were wolfed down and we followed up with two lots of Pindone. It concerned us that crested pigeons were attracted to the oats, but they seemed to husk and leave the coated shells.

Max and I believe that we'd have had little hope of establishing native vegetation over our whole property and the adjoining crown land without rabbit proof fencing. If we were to count the thousands of plants which have been established and put a wholesale nursery value on each, the cost of fencing would seem very worthwhile, even insignificant.

Jacqui Merckenschlager, CALG member.



► Murray Futures Riverine Recovery

The South Australian Government has secured \$610 million in Commonwealth Government to fund Murray Future projects.

These being:

- \$200 Million allocated to environmental work to help the Lower Lakes and Coorong
- \$120 million for a Lower Lakes pipeline network
- \$110 million for reinvigoration of the irrigation sector in irrigation communities
- \$80 million for purchase of water entitlements
- \$100 million for floodplain management and pumping infrastructure modifications in key wetlands
- Support and consultation with irrigators in adapting to the realities of our water future.

What will the project do?

Within the next 10 years progressively establish flexible environmental management measures to achieve the best ecological, cultural and social outcomes from the selected wetlands, floodplains and the river

Further information contact
Dept of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation



► Dairy Farmers Grant

Eight dairy farms through out the region were involved in on ground works due to funding from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) and the Dairy Farmers C0-Op.

Some of the on ground works included:

- Pest plant and animal control
- Water quality monitoring
- Riparian plantings
- Installation of habitat boxes

We are hoping to receive future funding for 2009 so that further works can be offered for our Dairy Farmers.