

Community update

August 2010

This email newsletter is published by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to update the community about work being done to secure the future of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth region as a healthy, productive and resilient wetland of international importance.

Highlights

- Check out the long-term plan
- Learn about Lower Lakes' turtles at Cleland
- Talking heads at the Lakes Hub
- Restoring Meningie's lakefront habitat
- Watch out for water hazards

Long-term plan

Check out the long-term plan

[Securing the Future: A Long-Term Plan for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth](#) is now available to read or borrow from a number of locations across the region.

A full list of council offices, public libraries and community centres where you can view the plan is available on the [Murray Futures website](#), including:

- Alexandrina Council Office and Library, 11 Cadell Street, Goolwa
- Coorong District Council Office, 49 Princes Highway, Meningie
- Lakes Hub, Shop 2, 10 Daranda Terrace, Milang
- Mapland, 100 Pirie Street, Adelaide
- Rural City of Murray Bridge Office, 2 Seventh Street, Murray Bridge

The long-term plan was released by the Commonwealth and South Australian Governments in June. The release brings us a step closer to securing \$200 million from the Australian Government to implement the actions outlined in the plan.

For more details, [email](#) the Lower Lakes and Coorong Recovery team or free call 1800 226 709.

Managing acid sulfate soils

Monitoring of Boggy Lake has shown further intervention is needed to address the risk of acidification. The lake will be aerielly dosed with limestone early this week (subject to weather) and will continue to be closely watched.

The EPA is regularly monitoring water quality at a number of locations across the Lower Lakes.

The monitoring results are used to decide when it's necessary to take action such as adding limestone to neutralise acid produced by exposed acid sulfate soils.



Boggy Lake

Native plants and animals

Government plays Cupid

The Goolwa Barrage boat lock is being used as an emergency response to [help save the congolli](#) from extinction.

The Congolli is a diadromous species, which means it can live in both marine and fresh water.

Low water levels have disconnected the congolli habitats and blocked their movements over the last three years, leaving the females on the freshwater side of the barrage unable to reach the males in the estuary. If they are unable to breed this year, they could face extinction in the region.



Congolli (courtesy of Chris Bice)

The boat lock is being used to help the fish get together. A successful trial conducted last month saw almost 800 congolli swim into the lock after the upstream gate was partially opened. Other fish also used the open lock gate to swim up or downstream.

After water equalises in the lock, partially opening the downstream gate allows the female fish to move into the estuarine waters to meet up with the males.

SARDI Aquatic Sciences have now trapped and released 1700 females into the Coorong. Steady numbers indicate there are more upstream waiting to migrate through the lock.

Rescue to recovery for the Yarra pygmy perch and purple-spotted gudgeon

Low water levels in the Lower Lakes have had serious consequences for several freshwater native fish. Reduced habitat, food and breeding sites have brought them close to extinction in South Australia.

Two species that have been affected are the [southern purple-spotted gudgeon](#) and [Yarra pygmy perch](#).

A rescue and recovery project has seen both these species rescued from a number of locations where their habitat was at risk of completely drying. The rescued fish then became part of a captive breeding program.



Southern purple-spotted gudgeon (courtesy of Mike Hammer)

The next step saw rescued fish and their offspring released into surrogate refuge sites, with the final aim being to return the fish to their natural habitats, in the wild, when conditions in the region improve.

Monitoring and research

Latest water quality results for Lower Lakes

In mid August, the average water level in Lake Alexandrina was 0.04 metres above sea level, and in Lake Albert the average water level was 0.38 metres below sea level.

The latest reports on water quality monitoring and River Murray water resources are now available.

- [River Murray Update – 16 August 2010 \(PDF 280 KB\)](#)
- [Lower Lakes and Tributaries Water Quality Report – June 2010](#)
- [Currency Creek, Finnis River and Goolwa Channel water quality report – April 2010 \(PDF 610 KB\)](#)



The average [salinity](#) in Lake Alexandrina was 3,500 EC and the average salinity in Lake Albert was 13,800 EC¹. Sea water is approximately 60,000 EC units.

Lake Albert turtles looking good

A turtle monitoring program has been carried out in Lake Albert, in tandem with the carp eradication program. DENR Turtle Coordinator, Kerri Bartley, worked together with commercial fisherman, Glenn Hill, to monitor the animals.

Over eight days, 68 turtles were captured, weighed, measured, marked and released. Of these, 39 were long necked and 29 were short necked turtles.

All of the turtles captured in Lake Albert were in excellent condition.



Environmental approvals

Coorong South Lagoon pumping proposal

The Australian Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts has given [approval](#) for hypersaline [water to be pumped from the South Lagoon](#) to the sea under the EPBC Act, as long as a number of [conditions](#) are met.

This is the first of a series of approvals required before the South Australian Government can decide whether to proceed with the project.

Pumping water from the South Lagoon to the sea is just one of several actions designed to work together to reduce salinity and restore wetland habitat in the Coorong. Other actions that are being implemented or explored include restoring freshwater flows from the South-East to the South Lagoon and managing flows through the Murray Mouth.



Get involved

Lake Albert residents rescue lost turtle

Thank you to Lake Albert residents, Meredith and Janette, for sending in photos of a turtle they rescued after it became disoriented in a storm and walked all the way to Princes Highway!

The ladies took it home, washed it in rainwater, checked it over and released it back safely into the lake.

Generally turtles in Lake Albert are healthy and the tubeworm infestations of the northern part of the region have not been a problem in the lake - but wandering can also be a 'health hazard' in the case of this little turtle.

Thanks to Meredith and Janette he is safely back home.

If you have any stories or photos of good community environmental work underway in the region that you would like to share, please [email](#) us.



Meredith and Janette rescued and released this lost Lake Albert tortoise

¹ River Murray Update, 16 August 2010

National Science Week events

As part of [National Science Week](#) (14-22 August 2010), Eastern Fleurieu School Milang Campus and the Marine Discovery Centre at Henley Beach received special visits from the Lower Lakes and Coorong Recovery team.



The team aims to get more local school and community groups involved in projects to save native fish and other animals in the region.

Several schools have already asked what role they can play in protecting and conserving local freshwater ecosystems. A few keen schools across the state have even gained their own funding to get involved by housing, and sometimes breeding, endangered native freshwater fish.

To find out how your local school or community group could help protect native plants and animals in the Coorong, Lower Lakes or Murray Mouth region, contact Gemma Cunningham via [email](#) or 8204 9453.

Learn about Lower Lakes' turtles at Cleland

A new [display focusing on the plight of turtles](#) in the Lower Lakes was launched at Cleland Wildlife Park during Science Week.

Turtles in the Goolwa Channel and parts of Lake Alexandrina are suffering from tubeworm infestation, caused by increased salinity in the water.

Local community groups and school children are helping to rehabilitate these animals and release them in safe locations. Several turtles that cannot be released into the wild due to injury now have a new home at Cleland.



Visit the exhibit at [Cleland Wildlife Park](#) to find out more about work underway in the region to save these animals.

Watch out for water hazards

Rising water levels are beginning to submerge items placed on the previously exposed lakebeds, causing hazards for boats and other lake users.

Land owners are urged to make sure any fence posts, star droppers or other obstacles that are partially or fully covered by water are removed or marked with a buoy to ensure the safety of everyone using the lakes.

For more information contact the Lakes Hub via [email](#), call 8537 0808 or visit shop 2, 10 Darranda Terrace, Milang.

Talking Heads at the Lakes Hub

Jeff Edwards from Rural Solutions SA visited the Lakes Hub this month to discuss how vegetation programs are planned, taking into account factors such as soil type, salinity and topography at each site.

Initially cultural research, fencing and vermin and weed control are carried out. Community nurseries grow the specific plants needed for each site, and local community members and groups are given the opportunity to plant the vegetation.

He also identified a range of weeds and native plants brought in on the day, and discussed the different common names and control methods for pest plants that locals use.



Jo McPhee - Lake Hub Community Nurseries Coordinator, Leah Sullivan - GWLAP Tributaries Project Officer, Jeff Edwards - Senior Consultant Rural Solutions SA

To find out more about regular Talking Heads sessions, contact the [Lakes Hub](#) at shop 2, 10 Daranda Terrace, Milang, call 8537 0808 or send them an [email](#).

Have your say on invasive plants and animals

The South Australian Parliament's Natural Resource Committee is carrying out an [inquiry about invasive species](#).

They are looking at the impacts of invasive plants and animals, community awareness and ways to prevent and manage invasive species.

Written submissions or expressions of interest are invited by 3 September 2010.

Coast to Coast Conference 2010

The biennial National Coastal Management Conference will be held in Adelaide this year.

You are invited to join others with an interest in coastal, estuarine and marine matters to share knowledge and experiences in management, science, policy, governance, activism and many other topics.

When: 20-24 September

Where: Adelaide Convention Centre

[Registrations](#) now open



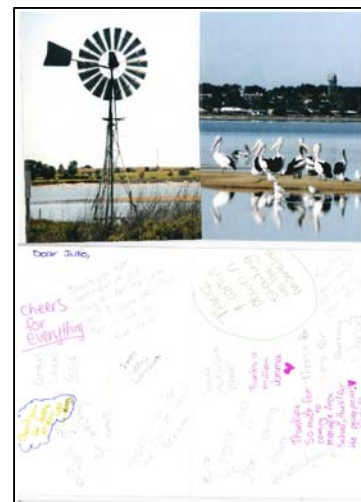
Restoring Meningie's lakefront habitat

Members of the Meningie community provided positive feedback and support for the [concept plans](#) to [restore habitat along Meningie's lakefront](#) at an information session held last month.

The next step is to develop a detailed design, with the aim to begin work in 2011 with planting next autumn.

The DENR team also visited the Meningie Area School to discuss the plans and were given an insight into student's thoughts for the area. We were encouraged by their efforts and delighted to receive thank you cards from the school children.

- Sign up to receive information specifically on the Meningie lakefront habitat restoration project by contacting the team on free call 1800 226 709 or via [email](#).



State History Conference round up

The 19th annual [State History Conference](#), Cross Currents: History, People and the Environment, was held earlier this month in Murray Bridge, with a focus on the history and heritage of the River Murray and Lower Lakes.

As part of the conference the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority invited the Lower Lakes and Coorong Recovery team and local government representatives to examine the new relationships Ngarrindjeri are developing with all levels of government, built on recognition of traditional ownership of Ngarrindjeri Ruwe (lands and waters).



Glynn Ricketts, Lower Lakes and Coorong Recovery team Project Officer, presenting at the State History Conference

More information

Funding

Developing and implementing the long-term plan is part of the South Australian Government's \$610 million [Murray Futures](#) program, funded by the Australian Government's [Water for the Future](#) program and the South Australian Government.

The \$10 million [Lower Lakes Bioremediation and Revegetation Project](#) is funded by the Australian Government and supported by the South Australian Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The [Lakes Hub](#) has been funded through the \$220,000 grant made to the Milang and Districts Community Association as part of the Bioremediation and Revegetation Project.

Partners

DENR acknowledges that many projects in the region are delivered in partnership with other organisations. We will do our best to acknowledge our partners in this publication.

Find out more

For more information about Murray Futures visit www.murrayfutures.sa.gov.au.

To find out about the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' work in the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth region visit www.environment.sa.gov.au/cllmm or contact us at:

Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Projects Team
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Email: cllmm@deh.sa.gov.au
Phone: 1800 226 709 (freecall during normal business hours)
Post: Reply Paid 1047 ADELAIDE SA 5001

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Your details may be disclosed to partner agencies such as the Department for Water and Murray Futures for the sole purpose of providing further information on related projects in the region.

Apologies for cross postings.