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MURRAY FUTURE
Lower Lakes & Coorong Recovery

Community update

January 2012

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 (CLLMM) region as a healthy, productive and resilient wetland of international importance.

Highlights

- Clayton Bay temporary flow regulator
- Coorong and Lower Lakes Restoration Project
- World Wetlands Day
- Meningie Project update

Restoring connectivity

Clayton Bay temporary flow regulator

The next phase of the removal of the Clayton regulator has begun. This work involves using a barge-mounted excavator to remove the imported sand material of the section of the regulator partially removed in September 2010. The material will be taken to the disposal site on Hindmarsh Island. Water quality testing and testing of the sand material will continue as with Phase 1, in line with the EPA requirements.

During Phase 2 work, barges will need to move outside the boating exclusions zone to take the imported sand material from the Goolwa Channel to Hindmarsh Island. In line with the current [Notice to Mariners](#) (#46 of 2010), **all vessels travelling through the Goolwa Channel must give way to the working barges** operating within the channel at **all times**. There is a **4 Knot** speed limit, and vessels must follow the marked navigation areas and not enter the boating exclusion zone, as indicated by the yellow buoys.

During the Phase 2 work, the boating exclusion zone (yellow buoys) and the navigation channel (red and green markers) will need to be moved. This will be done in cooperation with the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure and access will be provided through the Goolwa Channel with a marked channel (red and green markers).

Please ensure at all times that you travel through the marked channel. If vessels don't adhere to these safety measures, the channel may be closed for the safety of the public and contractors working on the site.

Work to remove the Clayton regulator is on schedule, with excavation to remove as much introduced material as possible due to be completed by the end of February to comply with Commonwealth EPBC Act requirements. Subsequent bathymetric surveys will direct the extent of work required for Phase 3, which involves moving the mud wave created during the construction of the regulator into the void created during Phase 1, with the aim to restore the lake bed as near as practicable to pre-construction bathymetry. All work in the Goolwa Channel will be completed by June 30.

Narrung Bund

DENR and the Department for Water (DFW) are in discussions with the Australian Government about funding the remaining work associated with the removal of the Narrung Bund. This will involve removing a number of 'high peaks' from the area adjacent to where the Bund was located to ensure there are no risks, dangers or impediments to navigation. This natural sediment will be moved into the voids created by the breach of the Bund in September 2010.

DENR and DFW are developing a proposal for a broader study for the future management of Lake Albert and the Narrung Narrows. This study would be subject to separate and further funding from the Australian Government.

Habitat restoration

Coorong and Lower Lakes Restoration Project



Bioremediation and planting vegetation are part of the South Australian Government's plans to address the legacy of severe drought and re-establish a healthy environment in the Coorong and Lower Lakes region.

Planting vegetation is one of the keys to the region's recovery, because it increases habitat for native species, adds carbon to the soil to combat acidification, and stabilises soils. Local native plants are used to restore a healthy ecosystem at important sites around the Lower Lakes and Coorong. The mix of species used provides habitat and food for local wildlife, particularly birds.

Community involvement is crucial to the success of the Coorong and Lower Lakes Restoration Project, through propagating and planting native vegetation. The ten Community Nurseries based at Milang, Raukkan, Meningie, Clayton, Hindmarsh Island, Murray Bridge, Finniss and Goolwa are working tirelessly to grow plants for planting this winter. The nurseries are aiming to grow 131 species which is an amazing diversity of plants and their input is an essential part of this project.

This year 54 community, Ngarrindjeri and government agency based revegetation sites will be planted with more than 500,000 plants. This will include 30 new sites and 24 infill sites which will increase biodiversity and extend previously planted sites.

Since 2008, more than one million native seedlings and one million sedges (reed-like plants) have been hand planted in the region with a further 10,000 hectares of exposed lakebed seeded by air.

Meningie Project update

Works at Meningie are continuing, with activity set to increase during the next couple of months. The grass area between the Meningie Sailing Club and the Town Jetty is being poisoned to make way for 15,550 local native plants to be planted during May 2012. While the area is already looking very brown, some more weed spraying is required to ensure the kikuyu has been controlled. During this process, the area will look unattractive. Weed matting will be installed in March, and the whole area will be mulched ahead of the plantings. The combination of weed matting and mulching will assist with weed suppression, moisture retention, soil stabilisation, and aesthetics.

Coconut fibre logs have been installed along the lake's edge in this same area to help repair existing erosion and prevent further erosion. Reeds (*Schoenoplectus validus*) will soon be translocated to form a line 10-15m offshore to assist in protecting the bank from water erosion.

Work to naturalise the culvert has commenced. The concrete drain on the corner of Princes Highway and Narrung Road is being removed and the sides of the swale will be shaped. A section of the path has been removed to allow access for semi-trailers. This section will be replaced once the work has been completed. A spillway will be built at the lake end of the wetland corridor, and rocks will be placed at the outfall pipe to prevent scouring.

As this site is a construction zone, please keep a safe distance.

The area will be planted when the weather cools. This work will complement and enhance the stormwater management work recently undertaken by the Council on the corner of Narrung Road.

The detailed design phase is underway for the two viewing platforms, bird hide and beach stabilisation seating. Construction is still on track to being in autumn 2012.

Timeline for Meningie works

- **January/February** - Weed control in Zone 1 between the Meningie Sailing Club and the Town Jetty
- **January/February** – Culvert naturalisation
- **February** – Translocation of reeds within Zone 1
- **February** – Mulching of Zone 2 woodland
- **March** – Installation of weed matting in Zone 1
- **March/April** – Mulching of Zone 1
- **April** – Planting of 2,500 plants in the naturalised culvert area
- **May** – Planting of 15,550 local native plants in Zone 1
- **June** – Installation of viewing platforms, bird hide and beach seating

While the initial stages of the project will have impacts on the aesthetics of the area, in the longer term the project will make the lakefront more attractive for the community and visitors to enjoy. The project is also working to restore the habitat along Meningie's lakefront for local wildlife, and to improve Lake Albert's health in the Meningie area.



Coconut fibre logs preventing erosion

Get involved

World Wetlands Day



The CLLMM region is a wetland of international importance and what better day to acknowledge its diversity and value than on World Wetlands Day Thursday 2 February 2012.

In February 1971, representatives of 18 nations, including Australia, met in the Iranian city of Ramsar to adopt a treaty popularly known as the 'Ramsar Convention'. The Ramsar Convention recognises the value of wetlands, particularly as waterbird habitats, and aims to protect them.

As a signatory to the treaty, Australia is required to nominate wetlands of international importance and to ensure the wise use of all wetlands.

The broad aim of the Convention on Wetlands is to halt the worldwide loss of wetlands and to conserve those that remain through wise use and management. This requires international cooperation, policy making, capacity building and technology transfer.

The CLLMM region meets eight nomination criteria specified by the Ramsar Convention. It covers an area of approximately 140,500 hectares, most of which is Crown Land and National Park.

The CLLMM region supports many nationally and internationally significant flora and fauna. It provides habitat for nationally threatened species such as the:

- orange-bellied parrot
- mount lofty ranges southern emu-wren
- murray hardyhead
- hooded plover
- freckled duck
- southern pygmy perch
- murray cod
- southern bell frog.

Also in the area are the critically endangered swamps of the Fleurieu Peninsula, the threatened gahnia sedgeland ecosystem and a number of threatened plant species such as the metallic sun-orchid.

A diverse range of waterbirds regularly visit the wetland, particularly in summer. It is an important breeding site for the Australian pelican, crested tern, fairy tern, and the rufous night heron.

For information about environmental projects in the region or to find out how to get involved, contact the Lakes Hubs:

- Milang Lakes Hub: call 8537 0808 or visit shop 2, 10 Daranda Tce, Milang
- Meningie Lakes Hub: call 8575 1830 or visit 79 Princes Highway, Meningie.

Community Advisory Roles

The Expression of Interest for the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Community Advisory Panel closed on the 27th January.

The applications received will be considered by a South Australian Government selection panel, and the panel will notify all applicants of the outcome by the end of February.

We would like to thank all those who expressed their interest in the Community Advisory Panel.

Monitoring and research

Latest water quality results for Lower Lakes

In mid January, the average water level in Lake Alexandrina was about 0.67 metres above sea level and Lake Albert was about 0.64 metres above sea level¹.

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

- [River Murray Flow Advice](#)
- [River Murray Data website](#)
- [EPA water quality monitoring](#)

More information

Funding

Developing and implementing the Long-Term Plan is part of the South Australian Government's up to \$610 million *Murray Futures* program, funded by the Australian Government's *Water for the Future* initiative and the South Australian Government.

The Lakes Hubs have been funded through a grant made to the Milang and Districts Community Association as part of the Coorong and Lower Lakes Recovery *Murray Futures* project.

Find out more

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

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¹ River Murray Flow Advice, 20 January 2012

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.