

## Community update

May 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

- Meningie pine removal works underway
- Educational weed day at Raukkan
- Invasive pines at Clayton to be removed
- Vegetation Program update
- Meningie Lakefront Habitat Project
- Lake Albert Oxidised Nitrogen Levels

### Habitat Restoration- Weed and Pest Management

Weed and pest management is an integral component of the Coorong and Lower Lakes Vegetation Program, as it helps to protect revegetation and restore the region to a healthy and resilient ecosystem. Here are some of the projects which are underway in the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth (CLLMM) region.

#### Meningie pine removal works underway

Invasive pines that have spread through the old quarry site adjacent to the golf course south of Meningie are being removed **this week**.

The Aleppo pines have been identified as a priority for removal under habitat management plans for the CLLMM region.

The Coorong Council are undertaking the removal work this week as part of a project funded by the DENR CLLMM Program.

Aleppo pines are highly invasive, and aggressively invade cleared roadsides and native vegetation. The pines have established themselves next to the Meningie Golf Club, and are spreading into valuable native vegetation on the eastern side of the highway.

This patch of native vegetation also includes a population of Metallic Sun Orchids (*Thelmyitra epipactoides*) – a plant listed as nationally Endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The Coorong Council has a program targeting Aleppo pine infestations across the region, and the CLLMM Program is funding aspects of this work to help prevent further damage to native vegetation.



Aleppo pine (SA MDB NRM)

The pines have also been earmarked for removal under the Council's fire prevention planning.

Once the site is cleared of the pines, the requirements for future revegetation works will be determined, including measures for erosion control.

### **Educational weed day at Raukkan**

The Raukkan community hosted representatives from DENR last week to discuss weed species which are found around Raukkan and works which are planned for their removal. Some species which can be found around the town are boxthorn, aleppo pine, athel pine and tamarisk; these are all introduced trees or shrubs which have a negative impact on the biodiversity and productivity of the land.

Once sites are cleared of these weed species, revegetation will be undertaken. Local native plants will be used such as she-oaks, tea-trees, wattles, grasses and sedges which are grown from seed collected in the region and grown at the Raukkan nursery.

### **Invasive pines at Clayton to be removed**

Invasive pines that have spread across the foreshore at Clayton will soon be removed in a staged approach.

The Aleppo pines have been identified as a priority for removal under habitat management plans for the CLLMM region because of their impact on biodiversity.

The Alexandrina Council will undertake the removal work as part of a project funded by the CLLMM Program.

It's expected the work will begin in mid-June and focus on the western side of Clayton Bay.

The foreshore area will be re-planted with native species once the pines are removed, which will help to encourage native birds and other animals to return to the area.

Aleppo pines (*Pinus halepensis*) are a large coniferous species from the Mediterranean, and are listed as a declared weed in South Australia under the *Natural Resources Management (NRM) Act 2004*.

They are an aggressive invader of roadsides, reserves, and native vegetation, and they will dominate and eventually infest an area if left uncontrolled.

Aleppo pines are also prolific seeders. On average, a mature tree produces 17,400 seeds every year, which makes controlling their spread very difficult.

Anyone seeking further information about the pine removal work should contact the Council's Recreational Services Co-ordinator David Mullins, or acting Field Services Manager Craig Ostich, on (08) 8555 7000.

### **Vegetation Program**

This year's CLLMM Vegetation Program is in full swing with site preparation underway for identified sites, with more than 300,000 plants ready to be planted in July.

The Community Revegetation Program is already underway with a further 300,000 plants to be planted throughout the region by close to 30 community groups. Ten community nurseries are propagating many of those plants, with around 130 different species being grown.

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.

## **Meningie Lakefront Habitat Project: Construction of the two viewing platforms**

The beach stabilisation is very close to completion and work has begun on the two viewing platforms.



*Artist's impression of Viewing Platform 1 near the town jetty*

Viewing Platform 1 will be located alongside the beach seating near Meningie town jetty. It will consist of composite decking and include a concrete bench with an artistic 'reed' backrest. Access pavements will be built between the existing Pelican Path and the viewing platform. Local native plantings will complete the area.

With a similar theme to Viewing Platform 1, Viewing Platform 2 will be constructed behind the Bowling Club.



*Artist's impression of Viewing Platform 2 behind the Bowling Club*

Viewing Platform 2 will be larger than Viewing Platform 1 and will be cantilevered over the edge of the bank. Excellent views across the lake and of the 'breeding area' at the end of the naturalised wetland corridor will be possible from this viewing platform.

Balustrade will make the platform safe, while being specially designed as to not interrupt lake views.

A concrete seat will be built as part of the viewing platform and will feature signage illustrating native plants that visitors may see in the area. Similar to Viewing Platform 1, access paths will be installed to link the viewing platform to the existing Pelican Path.

The bird viewing platform will be the last component of infrastructure to be installed, with construction of this element to commence once the viewing platforms have been completed.

For further information, please contact Andrew Dawes at the Meningie Hub on (08) 8575 1830, or visit him at the Lakes Hub at 79 Princes Highway, Meningie.

## Restoring Connectivity

On 16 May 2012 a Talking Heads session was held at the Milang Lakes Hub to discuss the removal of the Clayton and Currency Creek Regulators and it was well attended. These Talking Heads sessions provide a mechanism for information sharing between the community and Department staff. If you have any ideas about future Talking Head session topics, contact Lou Mawson at the Milang Lakes Hub Ph. 8537 0808.

At the Talking Heads session, Department staff indicated that the final phase of work to remove the regulator in the Goolwa Channel near Clayton is set to begin soon.

Tenders for phase 3 of the removal project closed on May 22.

The final stage of the project involves moving the natural sediment displaced by the regulator into a void created during the initial phase of the removal work.

Phases 1 and 2 of the project – which involved removing as much of the material used to build the regulator as possible – were completed in February.

The remaining work is expected to take up to eight weeks to complete, depending on prevailing weather conditions.

Efforts will be made to keep the Goolwa Channel open as the work continues, however the exclusion zone around the work site may need to be moved at times to ensure safe navigation for channel users.

The Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPoC) and the region's Traditional Owners, the Ngarrindjeri, have been advised that work to complete the removal of the regulator will continue beyond June 30.

Removal of the Clayton regulator is being funded by the Australian and South Australian Governments, and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

A Business Case for the removal of the regulator at Currency Creek has been prepared, and will be provided to the key funding stakeholders for consideration.

Meantime, funding to complete the final site cleanup associated with the removal of the bund in the Narrung Narrows has been approved by the Australian Government and a tender process is being developed.



This next phase of the project will involve dredging some small areas of natural sediment displaced during the construction of the Narrung bund to remove potential navigation hazards in the Narrung Narrows.

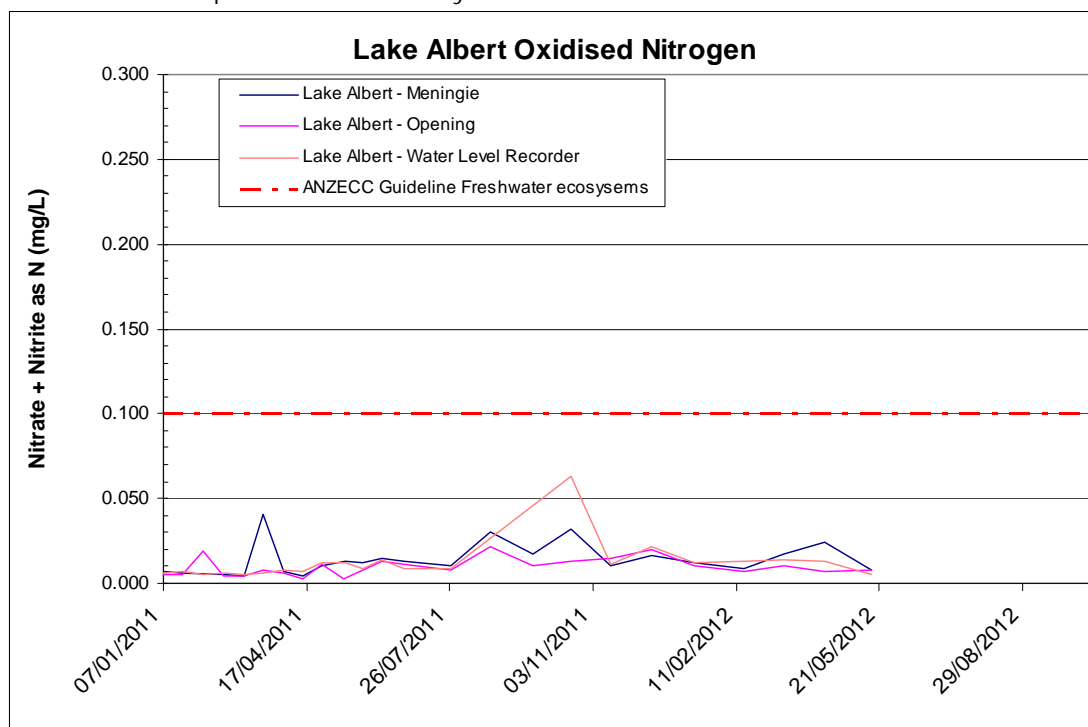
## Monitoring and research

### Lake Albert Oxidised Nitrogen Levels

Following on from information provided in the March Community Update here is the latest Lake Albert water quality monitoring undertaken by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). It shows that oxidised nitrogen (nitrate and nitrite) levels are between 0.005 and 0.008 mg/L (see the graph below of the last year's data). These levels are well within the Australia New Zealand Environment Conservation Council (ANZECC) guidelines for the protection of aquatic ecosystems (0.1 mg/L red dashed line on graph below) and livestock health.

In addition, on the 28 March 2012 the EPA undertook some localised lake edge testing on the western side of Lake Albert of oxidised nitrogen (nitrate and nitrite) levels, which confirmed that localised oxidised nitrogen levels around the edges of the lake do not differ greatly from those found in the main lake water body. This is likely due to the regular wind mixing and seiching of water within Lake Albert.

All of the oxidised nitrogen levels were measured by the Australian Water Quality Centre's NATA accredited independent laboratory.



Lake Albert oxidised nitrogen from January 2011 to May 2012  
(EPA 2012)

## Latest water quality results for Lower Lakes

In mid May, the average water level in Lake Alexandrina was about 0.75 metres above sea level and Lake Albert was about 0.79 metres above sea level<sup>1</sup>.

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](http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/cllmm) or contact us at:

Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Projects Team

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<sup>1</sup> River Murray Flow Advice, 18 and 25 May 2012