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Watching over environmental water

This week, Jo reports back on a trip to the State Herbarium and Seed Conservation Centre. We have a link to the “Annual Water Use Options for 2012-13” document regarding environmental water, and look at what Riverland irrigators are hoping to see happen with some of that water. There’s more news, another birthday to celebrate, and a little slice of SA History I learned this week, that I didn’t learn in school.

We’re also looking for your stories, and will be taking submissions for a new “Letters to the Editor” feature. Send them in by emailing: info@lakeshub.com

Kind regards,
Stuart Jones.

State Herbarium & Seed Conservation Centre Visit

Jo McPhee (Community Nurseries Coordinator) arranged a tour of the State Herbarium & Seed Conservation Centre on Tuesday 18th September. Nursery managers, volunteers & GWLAP project officers boarded a bus from Milang to make the trek to the Botanic Gardens.

The first tour was of the Seed Conservation Centre which was very interesting and informative. Research Coordinator Phil Ainsley took the tour and talked about the objectives of the centre and how they are involved with the Millennium Seed Bank.

By 2010 South Australia had met the objectives for the Millennium Seed Bank by submitting 1,000 native plant species. He told us that there are 3,500 native plant species in SA and 1,500 weed species and that 1 in 4 of the native species are at risk of becoming endangered.

Staff at the centre are usually out in the field for 6 months of the year locating plant populations and collecting seed while the other 6 months is spent in the lab conducting research. It was really interesting to look at all of the state-of-the-art technology used to test seed viability and replicate climatic conditions from where the seed was collected.



We then had lunch in the Botanic Gardens and in the afternoon toured the Herbarium with Weeds Botanist Chris Brodie. Chris explained the filing system used for their pressed specimens and showed us how to press and collate the data needed when submitting our own specimens to the herbarium for identification. We also looked at some really interesting pressed specimens dating back to the 1830's!

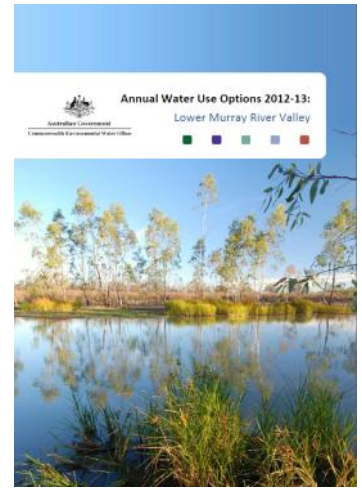
Overall a great day was had by all and it was a good networking opportunity for nursery members, GWLAP staff and community.

Annual Water Use Options 2012-13: Lower Murray River Valley

Published, September 2012, Commonwealth Environmental Water Office.

This document sets out the proposed approach for the use of Commonwealth environmental water in the Lower Murray River Valley during 2012-13, based on the range of possible river conditions in the valley throughout the year. The potential watering options included in this document do not form an exhaustive list and the Commonwealth Environmental Water Office welcomes further suggestions for water use.

[Click here to access the document](#)



Podcast: River Murray irrigators working to save red gums

“Over years of drought, images of dying trees and dry, cracked creek-beds along the lower reaches of the River Murray became an all too familiar site.

But after three big flood events, hundreds of thousands of seedlings have now emerged underneath dead red gums in South Australia's Riverland region. But there are fears they won't survive through summer, unless water is diverted to the flood plains...”

[Click here to visit the ABC to listen or read the segment](#)



This week in the News ... Old fashioned analogue clippings this week!

Murray Valley Standard, Sept 20, p6

Barrage history on display

A REEL of film showing the construction of the Goolwa barrage in 1934 has gone on show at the Cheese Factory Museum in Meningie.

Regional Development Australia Murraylands and Riverland, the Murraylands Tourism Partnership and SA Water donated film footage after collaborating on its conversion to DVD.

The museum already had photographs of the barrage's construction and a letter written by a Meningie resident at the time.

Museum president Peter Ancell said he was pleased to add the film to the museum's collection.

RDA Murraylands and Riverland chief executive officer Brenton Lewis said it was important to reflect on the region's history when contemplating future decisions, and paid tribute to the museum's role in the community.

The Goolwa barrage is almost seven kilometres long and consists of 593 independent gates and bays, a unique design for the time.

- Details: The Cheese Factory Museum at 3 Fiebig Road, Meningie, is open between 8am and 5pm daily.

Murray Valley Standard, Sept 20, p7

River Murray hits pool level in lower reaches

THE River Murray was at pool level as of last Friday, according to the South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, as about 40 gigalitres per day flowed over Lock 1.

The department's latest weekly flow report said about 44 to 45GL per day was flowing into South Australia from New South Wales as of last Friday, with the strong flows expected to continue well into this week.

River levels at Murray Bridge were at pool level, 0.75 metres AHD, with levels at Mannum slightly higher at 0.86m AHD.

The department has issued a high flow advice, warning people using the river to be aware of inundated river banks and submerged obstacles along the South Australian stretch of the Murray.

Landholders have been warned to secure their property against rising water levels and people have also been warned to be aware of continued risks associated with riverbank collapse.

However, the department said there was no immediate risk of flooding in South Australia.

Water levels are also high in the Lower Lakes, with Lake Albert recording a height of 0.79m AHD and Lake Alexandrina at about 0.70m AHD.

Three hundred barrage gates are currently open.

Wet winter has positives and negatives

REGION - It is no secret the Fleurieu Peninsula has had a drenching this winter, with rainfall figures showing it is the wettest winter in 11 years in Victor Harbor.

In June, Victor Harbor received 147.2mm, which more than doubles the average for June of 71.2mm. Parawa received 205.8mm, easily beating its average of 121.2mm. Strathalbyn received 114.6mm and its average is 59.4mm.

While some farmers can rejoice with the good rains having dams at 100 per cent capacity and plenty of feed in the paddock for livestock, crop farmers have done it tough, according to FPAG-GLF agronomist Grant Lyon said.

“Seeding conditions were brilliant in early May and there was a chance of a bumper harvest, followed by good prices, but the buckets of rain that did not stop stalled crop growth,” he said.

“In some cases the seed was completely washed away and the farmers had to re-seed paddocks, not just once, but twice.

“One complete paddock of canola was wiped out for one farmer at Finniss and many more broadacre clients have reported the same thing.

“You put all your energies into planting your crop and your paddock rotations and an abnormal rain event throws all your planning and hard physical labour out the window.

“It is soul destroying, but farmers do not give up, they are resilient and what they do with their families is truly heroic.”

Mr Lyon said crops have recovered with the ceasing of the rain, but the potential target yield has dropped approximately 20 per cent.

“It has been very challenging for the crop farmer, as there has been too much rain, which has leached nutrients out of the soil,” he said.

“They have had the cost of seed and then the cost to re-seed and then to fertilise.

“It is hard work and they should only have to do it once.”

Aggregate rainfall recorded for the months of June, July and August, 2012 and the average rainfall on parts of the Fleurieu Peninsula are McLaren Vale 278.6mm (2012) 217.7mm (average), wettest winter since 2004, Mount Compass 477.8mm (2012) 362.4mm (average) wettest winter since 2006, Noarlunga 234mm (2012) 174.9mm (average) wettest winter since 2004, Parawa 433.8mm (2012) 358.4mm (average) wettest winter since 2003,

Port Elliot 255.7mm (2012) 191.6mm (average), Strathalbyn 245mm (2012) 149.4mm (average) wettest winter since 2010, Victor Harbor 335mm (2012) 233.3mm (average) wettest winter since at least 2001.

The Weather Bureau has forecasted below average rainfall for early spring and summer.

Bridal Creeper Control, Rust Available

Rust to control bridal creeper is available from Glen Dean, Environmental Officer with the Rural City of Murray Bridge. He reports on the success of this method of control: "Bridal creeper should be in the best of health right now and in the areas that we have rust, the plants are already starting to die back, no flowers meaning no seed."

Contact Glen: g.dean@murraybridge.sa.gov.au or 08 8539 1167



Happy 9th Birthday MOSHCC!

Can you believe it, it's the Milang Old School House Community Centre's 9th Birthday!

Join us on Wed 3rd October for fun and festivities, kicking off at 10am with the judging of the Great Scone Bake-Off (get your scones in by 9:30!) and continuing with activities for young and old.

Download the brochure attached to see all the activities, and make sure to RSVP for lunch!

[Click here to access the full brochure](#)



Flinders Ports Award, SA Young Achiever Awards - Nominate Now!

Pollution, climate changes, salinity and the destruction of forests affect us all. While many of us try to make a difference, it is South Australia's young people who are actively using their initiative to stop destruction of our environment and help repair the damage. By developing programs and using new technology, it's these dedicated young individuals who are helping to educate us all. The Flinders Ports Environment Award salutes those who are dedicated to saving planet Earth by nurturing and protecting our natural surroundings.



[Click here for more info and to nominate](#)

Nominations close Tuesday 20th November 2012

**Milang Turtle Shed Open
Wednesday and Sundays
9am-3pm
during School Holidays**

Eastern Fleurieu School
MILANG CAMPUS

'TURTLE SHED'

Murray Darling Basin Native Fish
& Lower Lakes Environmental Awareness Programme

Open Wednesdays
9am - 3pm
or by appointment

Call Chris on 0407483817

The History Spot - The Village Settlements

The early 1890's were a time of economic depression in South Australia, after a series of major strikes and the Australian Bank crisis of 1893. Widespread unemployment caused families to leave South Australia and settle in VIC and WA. The Crown Lands Amendment Act of 1893 saw the establishment of 13 Village Settlements in South Australia. These self-sufficient settlements would run on communalistic principles and give work to the unemployed on the land and keep them in SA. Eleven of these settlements were established along the River Murray including Waikerie and Kingston. One such community was also settled on the Fleurieu at Nangkita.

The main guidelines for the establishment of village settlements were:

- Twenty or more people could form a village association, the members of which would live communally and be governed by approved rules, signed by each member.
- These rules would administer the division of labour amongst the villagers; the distribution of profits and the regulation of industry and trade including the payment into the village fund any earnings by all villagers; the expulsion of villagers and the settlement of disputes.
- The association was to pay annual rent to the government, but rent for the first year of settlement was waived.
- The association was expected to make improvements to the land over the first ten years of settlement
- Coupons rather than a monetary system would be used within the settlements
- An advance was given to each settler by the government, with the first instalment of the repayment to be paid within three years.



Lunchtime at a village settlement, ca.1898

(Public Domain image, courtesy State Library of SA, [available here](#))

MURRAY RIVER: Men sitting at table being served by women during lunch at a village settlement on the Murray River; they are seated outside a pug and pine building underneath a shelter covered with brush and eucalyptus branches; names not known.

A [video released by the State Library available on YouTube](#) explains (thanks to a fine narration by Don Dunstan) the way these settlements came about, as well as their undoing.

Unfortunately few of the settlers had any agricultural experience, and with a socialist structure where everyone is equal, no-one was keen to take orders from

anyone else. An advisor, Samuel McIntosh was appointed by the state government in 1896 to advise villagers in matters of irrigation. However, by 1899 the settlements were still being supported by the government and none had become self-sufficient, leading to the establishment of a Royal Commission which found that the communal system had failed and recommended settlements be subdivided into blocks of at least 10 acres and leased to individuals.

Ultimately many of the settlers left, to go to the more successful settlements such as Waikerie, or to return to Adelaide. In December 1901 the South Australian government passed the *Village Settlement Act 1901* repealing previous legislation regarding Village Settlements and bringing in the recommendations of the Royal Commission. (See [The demise of Village Settlements](#), SA Memory)

A report in the South Australian Register, Sat 20th January 1900, reports on the state of affairs at Nangkita after the Village Settlement folded: <http://bit.ly/QOJInk>

Attempted communism aside, it's clear the Village Settlements were in over their heads trying to live off the land in very challenging conditions, certainly a little local knowledge wouldn't have gone astray.

This is just one small chapter in SA history and of life on the River Murray, if you have a story to share either as a "history spot" or as a "Letter to the Editor", please send it in to: info@lakeshub.com

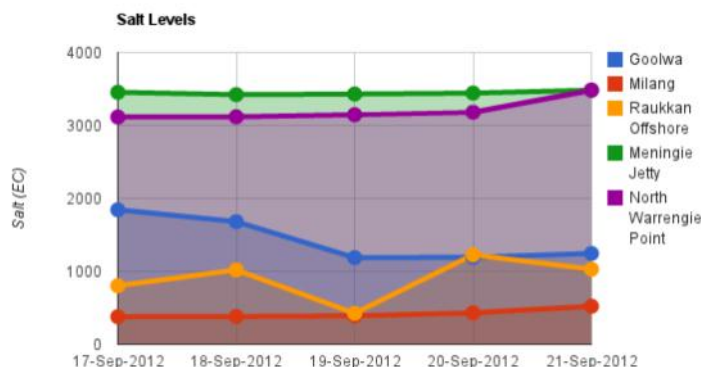
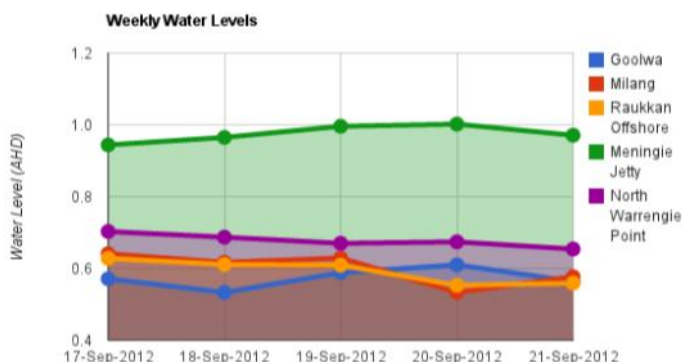
Sources, Further reading:

[Village Settlements - Flinders Ranges Research](#)

[European Settlement: Village Settlements on the River Murray \(SA Memory\)](#)

On the Level

Water levels are higher in Meningie this week. Levels are controlled carefully, cycling water in efforts to reduce salinity in Lake Albert. Over the past year levels have been reduced from 6,400EC to current levels of around 3,500EC.



Daily Recordings – River Murray Data

Data received from:

<https://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au/RMWD/Pages/default.aspx>

River Murray – Weekly Flow Advice

For weekly flow / level reports on the River Murray and Lakes go to the following website:

www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au

Up-to-date River Murray flow and water level information can be accessed at the Department for Water, SA Water and Murray-Darling Basin Authority websites: [Water Connect](#), [Daily Flow Report](#), [River Murray Storage Data](#)

Details of river height and rainfall information in the River Murray within Victoria and New South Wales are available at the Bureau of Meteorology website: <http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/flood>

Information on the discharge of acid drainage water into the Lower River Murray can be accessed online at: www.waterforgood.sa.gov.au

DATE Sept 17 - 21 2012

DATE	SITE	WATER LEVEL (AHD)	SALT (EC)
17	GOOLWA	0.571	1845
18		0.533	1682
19		0.588	1188
20		0.610	1193
21		0.564	1246
	AVERAGE	0.573	1430.8
DATE	SITE	WATER LEVEL (AHD)	SALT (EC)
17	MILANG JETTY	0.641	379
18		0.617	382
19		0.629	391
20		0.533	431
21		0.577	522
	AVERAGE	0.599	421
DATE	SITE	WATER LEVEL (AHD)	SALT (EC)
17	RAUKKAN OFFSHORE	0.628	803
18		0.611	1020
19		0.609	425
20		0.553	1227
21		0.559	1030
	AVERAGE	0.592	901
DATE	SITE	WATER LEVEL (AHD)	SALT (EC)
17	MENINGIE JETTY	0.944	3455
18		0.965	3423
19		0.996	3431
20		1.002	3444
21		0.971	3484
	AVERAGE	0.976	3447.4
DATE	SITE	WATER LEVEL (AHD)	SALT (EC)
17	NORTH WARRENGIE POINT LAKE ALBERT	0.703	3116
18		0.687	3119
19		0.670	3148
20		0.674	3182
21		0.654	3484
	AVERAGE	0.678	3209.8

CALENDAR OF EVENTS for more info contact the Lakes Hub

If you have any relevant community event or courses that you would like added to the Calendar of Events please contact the Lakes Hub.

September 2012 (Biodiversity Month)	
1	National Wattle Day
2	
3	Landcare Week
4	
5	
6	
7	Ngarrindjeri Weaving Workshop—Milang More info : Email : reception@moshcc.com.au Ph : 8537 0687 National Threatened Species Day
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	Frogs and Frog Monitoring workshop—Ibis Siding Garden Centre, Goolwa. 6:30pm—8pm Places are limited—please phone or email to book. Regina Durbridge 8537 0808 / 0427 364 551 regina.durbridge@gwlap.org.au
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	Frogs and Frog Monitoring workshop, Lakes Hub Meningie 2:30-4:30pm Enquiries: Regina Durbridge 8537 0808 / 0427 364 551 regina.durbridge@gwlap.org.au
21	
22	
23	
24	School Holidays!
25	
26	Turtle Shed Open 10am-1pm —Eastern Fleurieu School Milang Campus phone 8537 0223
27	
28	
29	
30	World Rivers Day - Turtle Shed Open 10am-1pm —Eastern Fleurieu School Milang Campus phone 8537 0223

Disclaimer

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