



Newsletter 11, Summer 2011/2012

Bug Blitz Big Dig Report 2011

RiverConnect introduced the Shepparton High School Science staff School to John Caldwell, the field officer for the Bug Blitz program. This program aims to reignite in students, the spark of discovery in Science by inviting them to participate in various biological projects and is sponsored by founder and philanthropist, O.E Wilson .

All year 8 students from Shepp High participated in the Bug Blitz project, under the guidance of Science teachers, Cat Jenkins, Leigh McIntyre and myself. It formed part of an overall program, "Reach out to your River", which involved the students in a full term program of activities centred around the Goulburn River, supported by Landcare and WaterWatch members. With Bug Blitz, working in pairs, students were required to select an area of soil approximately one metre square and collect one centimetre depth with leaf litter etc. This sample was then placed in a simple version of a Berlaise Lamp with the aim of collecting any 'bugs' present. The term 'bugs' in this case referred to a wide range of small invertebrates. The sample was then analysed, counted, identified and photographed with magnifying glasses and a Dinolite.

The results varied, as expected, depending on the location and richness of the soil sample. Specimens included worms, insect larvae, cockroaches, centipedes and millipedes and many spiders.

Students were excited by their bug collecting, which enabled them to branch out and look under bark and leaf litter and collect a variety of life. They enjoyed examining their samples and attempting to identify their specimens.

The staff and students appreciated the support of Bonny Schnorrenberg and Wendy D'Amore from RiverConnect and John Laing from Landcare. Special thanks to John Caldwell who travelled from Gippsland to check on and assist us. This type of hands on activity was just what was needed to bolster the Reach program.

Pauline Pettigrew, Shepparton High School.



Photo: Students analysing soil samples.

Seniors Festival

For Seniors Festival during October this year, RiverConnect ran **FREE** 'ART CLASSES ON THE RIVER'. Local artist Kate Peachey led 5 classes at various locations including Jordan's Bend, Reedy Swamp and Victoria Park Lake. The mediums used during these classes were Charcoal, Pastel and Paint.

Between 3 - 6 people attended each session, with a few dedicated coming to all. Participants learnt a lot and thoroughly enjoyed the beautiful outdoor setting. We hope this will continue to be a regular event in the RiverConnect Calendar for all ages.

A Seniors Spotlight Walk was also held at Jordan's Bend as part of the Seniors Festival. A young Squirrel Glider was spotted quite early on the walk and sat there cleaning itself quite unconcerned until we decided to move along and leave it to its job.

Bonny Schnorrenberg, RiverConnect Education Project Officer



Photo: Kate Peachey far right with art students at Jordan's Bend.

RiverConnect Land Assessments

The RiverConnect Land Management Working Group has been conducting land assessments on Council owned land in the RiverConnect Project area during the past 18 months.

These assessments incorporate natural, cultural and recreational elements and include a recommendation regarding future use and/or development of the site.

Recently the group assessed Kialla Landfill site and Fitzjohn Street. Kialla Landfill site, along the north western boundary is in good condition with broad recommendations to undertake minimal management to maintain current environmental values. While Fitzjohn Street is in poor condition with recommendations for possible revegetation.

These land assessments assist Council and other agencies to better manage these lands and plan for future developments.



Photo Above: Site 2 Fitzjohn Street, Floodplain riparian woodland/ Sedgy riverine forest mosaic. Photo right: Site 1 Kialla Landfill, Riparian Woodland.



Pest verses the Rest

On Thursday 26 May, RiverConnect in partnership with Bug Blitz, gave grade five and six students from five different Adopt-a-Reach primary schools the chance to learn about different plant and insect species with a field day at Reedy Swamp.

With the theme "Pests verses the rest.", the work shops were interesting and varied: Good plant... bad plant??; Friend or foe?; Sounds of the bush; Bugs From Below; Arthropods on land.

Students collected various plant specimens and photographed insects. This then provided materials for their ongoing learning.

A month later these same students got together again, this time at St Brendan's Primary School for a Sharing Day. Each school presented their 'music' creation from their day out. (Sounds of the bush activity).

Both the day at Reedy Swamp and the Sharing Day were a huge success with lots of scope for this to be an annual event. Thanks go to Bug Blitz, Department of Primary Industries, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Water Watch team, John Laing at Goulburn Murray LandCare Network and Ann Fagan for taking photos. Thank you to all students and staff that participated in this wonderful event.



Photos working clockwise from above: Students learn about Arthropods from John Laing; John Caldwell, Bug Blitz, exciting students about bugs; Kids identifying specimens; Joel Pike helping students to identify good plants vs bad plants.

Register for FREE Spotlight Nights

We have a wonderful natural floodplain and river system right at our back doors. There are many native fauna species that utilise this precious environment, like the threatened Squirrel Glider to the right. We often hear these animals in the night but usually don't get a good look at them.

Why not come along on one of our **FREE** spotlight night walks and explore the wondrous bushland after dark.



To find out more and to register, please contact Bonny Schnorrenberg, RiverConnect Education Project Officer on (03) 5832 9493.

RiverConnect Staff Changes

RiverConnect has seen some staff changes over the past few months and it is with much sadness that we say goodbye to Dianne Hanna and Wendy D'Amore.

Dianne has been with RiverConnect almost since its inception in 2005/2006 as one of its founding members. During her time with RiverConnect, Dianne has often been the driving force that ensures successful project outcomes. The Adopt-a-Reach program, that Dianne worked passionately to help implement and then continued to encourage participation, has been a huge success. There are many students, teachers, volunteers, and agency staff that have all benefited and enjoyed not only this program, but many others Dianne has played a crucial role in.

Wendy joined the RiverConnect team in early 2010 and since then has run various school activity days, spotlight nights and other RiverConnect events. Wendy has always been a positive and inspiring person for students to work with in her Field Officer role. Both Wendy and Dianne's expertise, experience and can do attitudes will be missed. We wish them all the best with future endeavours.

On a positive note, we welcome Bonny Schnorrenberg to the RiverConnect Education Project Officer position. This newly formed position is a combination of both Wendy and Dianne's previous roles. Bonny had been filling the RiverConnect Project Officer role while I have been away on Maternity Leave, but now we're both back on board and excited about implementing the RiverConnect Strategic Plan.

Renee Ashmore, RiverConnect Project Officer

Please Save the Date

RiverConnect Festival—29 April 2012

More information to follow early 2012