

Activity Update August 2020

This activity update is for the month of August. If you would like to be on our mailing list and receive this free update, please email Aimee Linke on the above email address or view on webpage.

Meldanda

1. Managed the volunteers, camp bookings, provision of materials and equipment and all necessary administrations including invoicing and banking for Meldanda. Kept neighbors informed of any camp bookings.
2. Volunteers Andy and Brenton set up the new rainwater tank we got through an MMC grant. Irene acquitted the MMC grant for the rainwater tank. MMC Keiron Nuske dropped off some gravel to use around the base of the tank.



Figures 1, 2, 3 Volunteers Andy and Brenton replacing old rainwater tank at Meldanda thanks to MMC grant and volunteers.

3. Volunteer Andy mowed down some dead bushes along the path towards the fire garden.
4. Volunteer Trevor Carmichael cleaned Meldanda ready for the Torrens Valley Scout Camp.
5. MMC Keiron Nuske dropped off a truck load of mulch for us to finish off the fire garden.
6. Volunteer Don Lester went and inspected all the habitat boxes at Meldanda to see what was being used, there were no birds but there were 6 bats in 6 different boxes.
7. Volunteers Brenton and Andy have been fixing up the sliding door on the back shed, Brenton welded up some new guides, it is a huge improvement.
8. Volunteer Sheralee has sprayed all the paths around Meldanda for weeds.
9. Updated a Bushtucker Trail quiz and some bat information for a teacher from Sheidow Park who will be camping at Meldanda. They will be there for a week of local activities, including Ngaut Ngaut and Wildwood Park Sanctuary visits.

10. Family of 5 camped at Meldanda on the 1st of August. Two people also camped at Meldanda on the 22nd of August.
11. Trees for Life held a Paddock Tree Project meeting at Meldanda on 25th of August.
12. Cleaned the Meldanda site ready for Mt Barker Joey Scout group that camped overnight.
13. Volunteers Bob, Andy and Brenton did general maintenance work at Meldanda, including fixing a leaking pipe.
14. We started adding to the entrance of the fire garden with adding some entrance plants, defining the path, adding more gravel to the path from the recreation hall to the garden.
15. Volunteers Sheralee and Cryss sprayed for weeds in the fire-garden, added drippers to plants, mulched more plants and watered the site.
16. Volunteer Greg Kirk fixed the gate into the Bushtucker garden and helped with mulching in the fire garden and creating the gravel path to the Fire Garden.



Figure 4 Fire Retardant Plant Display Garden taking shape.

Community Nursery

17. Volunteer Sharon did some cuttings of *Myoporum insulare*, Royce has been helping with the weeding.
18. Volunteers Sharon and Cryss started propagating nectar plants for the WIRES project.
19. Some of the excess grassland plants we have from the Irongrass Project we have been planting in the garden at Cambrai, volunteers Cryss and Sheralee have been busy with this. We will still be able to collect seed from them, use them for community education and they nicely fill in a gap near some roses.
20. Mark Metcalf called into the nursery with some seeds from rare plant species he would like us to grow for some of his properties.

21. Picked up some smoked water from Kersbrook Landcare Nursery to help propagate some tricky species.

Committee & other

22. Managed the office, volunteers, staff, and all necessary administrations including monthly accounts, reports.

23. Held our Committee Meeting at Trevor and Lyn Carmichaels at Devon Downs 13/8/20, thanks to Trevor and Lyn for hosting the meeting.

24. Volunteer Mick Lowe mulched each week at Marne Valley CP.

25. Spent a day with treasurer Lyn Carmichael to get July accounts ready for annual audit.

26. Supported a Small Grass Roots Grant for community member Kitty Schiansky, to protect and enhance a reserve in the Mid Murray Council region.

27. Site visit to Wildwood Park Sanctuary in preparation for planting day. Started drafting up a brochure for Wildwood Park Sanctuary, support we are providing through a Small NRM Volunteer grant to help promote this local community service.

28. Tree planting Day at Wildwood Park Sanctuary, we had 14 people help on the day and planted 120 tubestock. Most of the planting was in a degraded paddock that will be transformed to be a diverse mix of native shrubs to provide food and shelter for wildlife. Our hosts Sally and David made us a beautiful morning tea and BBQ lunch. We also had a tour of the sanctuary to meet some of the animals they care for.



Figure 5 Planting team at Wildwood Park Sanctuary

29. Prepared and submitted a Grass Roots Grant in the Murraylands Riverland Landscape Board region to continue Landcare activities in the region. The funding was oversubscribed as usual. We will find out the results by the end of September.

30. Applied for a Grass Roots Grant in the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board region to support a couple of sustainable agriculture workshops.
31. Provided support letter for Grass Roots Grant for Murray Mallee LAP and a Palmer Biodiversity project.
32. Contacted the Native Grasses Resources Group to see if they can help us protect some of the large tracts of grassland that occur along 3 Chain rd. which are subjected to illegal ploughing. We are seeking support of signs to help protect these areas, there is a lot of *Enteropogon acicularis* (Curly Windmill Grass) which is a vulnerable species in the region.

River Murray International Dark Sky Reserve

33. The RMIDSR website is active, it still needs a few links to tourism pages.
34. Held the Dark Sky Committee Meeting on the 14th of August at the Planetarium. Prepared the minutes and emailed out to the Dark Sky Committee and Mid Murray Landcare Committee.
35. Made some edits to an action tracker for the project to keep a check on the deliverables we need to undertake to stay accredited.

Microbats



36. Have finished working my way through Katarapko Wetlands bat data.
37. Have processed Les and Jane Payne's bat data from Stock route road near Morgan, they had 7 different bat species.
38. Volunteer Don Lester audited all the bat boxes on Bat Island at Meldanda, fixed up any cattle tags that were missing which identifies the boxes. He surveyed the boxes 24/8/20 and found 6 bats.
39. Had a bat enquiry from a man at Mannum who has had a bat in his old pump in his front yard and on the wall of his verandah. He sent a photo, which was identified as a Lesser long-eared bat. I will meet up with him and give him a bat box and loan an Anabat detector to see what other species are there.
40. Volunteer Don Lester dropped off 52 bat boxes volunteers made in his shed at Tanunda, these boxes will be used for people who do bat monitoring and support the WIRES project.



Figure 6 Microbat habitat boxes made by volunteers

Irongrass Grasslands Project

41. Volunteers Andy and Brenton fixed some shade cloth to the western side of the SPA to help reduce wind over the enclosure.
42. We have had 37.5mm of rain on the trial site at Meldanda.
43. Dropped off Poonthie Ruwe monitoring gear to Jo Clarke who will be helping with monitoring the trial site in September.

Western Pygmy Possum

44. Volunteer Don Lester and I visited a landholder at Riverton, James Huppertz, who has 2 boxes installed in his remnant vegetation. It was a beautiful site with an amazing diversity of plants including several *Drosera* species, native ferns and Orchids. They also have resident Echidnas that they monitor with cameras. They have seen 8 Echidnas and an Echidna train, it is the first time I have seen a site where Echidnas have a designated toilet.
45. Dropped off 40 nectar plants to Rowena Danks from Murray Mallee LAP who will give some to 4 of her landholders that have participated in the project.
46. Picked up nectar plants from Kersbrook Landcare Nursery that we ordered to help with the 'Plants for Possums' small grant.
47. Picked up hardwood stakes from Arborgreen in Mt Barker for the 'Plants for Possums' small grant project.
48. Volunteer Don Lester and I visited Tothill Ranges, owned and managed by Bushland Conservation Pty Ltd with Andrew Wurst. There are 5 boxes installed at this beautiful site, that has lots of Banksias, Xanthorrhoea and Orchids. We surveyed all the boxes but there was no activity.



Figures 7, 8, 9 Tothill Ranges, Possum box in Banksia and Pheladenia - Blue Fairy Orchid.

49. Ordered 800 nectar plants from Kersbrook Nursery for the WIRES project.
50. Put together the nectar plant packs for landholders involved with the project. This was funded through a Small NRM Volunteer Grant “Plants for Possums’ and supported by Cambrai Community Nursery and Kersbrook Landcare Nursery. 20 landholders will receive 10 plants each.
51. MMLAP Rowena Danks and I went out to Mark Hura’s property to collect the scats we found in WPP boxes after using an inspection camera 3 months earlier. We first checked the box to make sure nothing was living in there; collected the scats and put into the vials of ethanol. The scats have been sent to the SA Museum and we are waiting on genetic testing to see what they are from. The other box where previously there were scats were missing, we had photo evidence so we know they were there, we think something may have eaten them.



Figure 10, 11 Rowena Danks opening box to collect scats, vial of scats collected.

Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (RVMP)

52. Ordered the missing roadside markers that have arrived. Volunteer Andy put them onto droppers ready for me to go out and install them.
53. Irene Bugeja has been working with MMC Russel Pilbeam on the RVMP, it will be ready soon to send to the NVC for review.