

Catchment Update



Triumphant Return 2015

In General: Valiant Waterwatchers. I hereby make a solemn promise to get the seasonal updates going again. The format will change a bit as the ALA data base now gives you instant access to records around the region, rather than having them hiding on my computer.

I hope you have all had a chance to look at the CHIP report. The link is

[http://www.act.waterwatch.org.au/Files/CHIP2013_14%20Report%2004FEB2015_FINAL%20\(low%20res\).pdf](http://www.act.waterwatch.org.au/Files/CHIP2013_14%20Report%2004FEB2015_FINAL%20(low%20res).pdf)

The new Waterwatch Scientific Officer, Danswell Starrs (Dan) will be releasing regular CHIP reports in this format from now on.

In the past a number of things were synthesised to develop an overall ‘health score’ for your general sub-catchment. The headings of these I will still use to provide information about what is going on around our region.

We used to use Frogwatch data and algae scores in addition to Waterwatch data to give a colour code for overall health. This was problematic in that it really didn’t capture the differences between creeks, river and lakes in each sub-catchment. The ‘reach’ model divides your sub-catchment up into sections of water ways we can safely say are being evaluated by your data.

To effectively assess ‘reach’ health a decision had to be made as to which features would accurately and regularly gathered.

We settled on monthly **Water quality data**, Autumn and Spring **Bugs surveys** and Biannual **RARC** surveys.

This is outlined in the report table I’ve copied below:

Table 1. Summary of waterway health parameters collected by volunteers and co-ordinators, that are included in the CHIP. These values here reflect current goals, but are not always achieved in all instances.

Data Category	Parameter	Frequency	Number of sites
Water Quality	pH	Monthly	All sites
	Electrical Conductivity	Monthly	All sites
	Turbidity	Monthly	All sites
	Phosphorus	Monthly	All sites
	Nitrate	Monthly	All sites
	Dissolved Oxygen	Monthly	All sites
	Temperature	Monthly	All sites
Macroinvertebrates	Stream Invertebrate Grade Number – Average Level (SIGNAL 2.0)	Biannual (spring & autumn)	Key sites (min 1/reach)
Riparian Condition	Rapid Appraisal Riparian Condition (RARC)	Biennial	All sites

A quick note from Woo O'Reilly:

WORKSHOP

“Due to the many changes made, we are viewing the 2013/14 CHIP as a pilot study and would welcome any feedback on how we can make this document more useful for our audience. With this in mind, we invite you to come to a brief workshop that will include the following:”

- Provide a summary of the background and findings of CHIP 2013/14
- Give a brief overview of the methodology behind the new approach
- Changes we have already incorporated from feedback
- A discussion on how we can make this document more useful
- A discussion of any catchment issues arising from the CHIP and how these may be approached.

DATE & TIME: Monday 16 March 10:30-12:30

WHERE: Ground floor, Dame Patties Menzies House, Dickson.

RSVP: Lunch will be provided – please rsvp by 12 March for catering needs.

THANK YOU TO THE VOLUNTEERS

“A very big thank you to the Waterwatch volunteers. This report is generated entirely from data collected by you. As is said in the report, we feel the best way to say thank you is to ensure your data is made accessible and is being used by stakeholders across the catchment to better manage the upper Murrumbidgee. It is hoped this report achieves that.”

Regards,

Woo

The 2013/14 report relied heavily on monthly water quality data and as many water bug surveys as was collected in Autumn 2014. Significant gaps appeared as shown by the light blue (insufficient data) colour given to some reaches.

Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch made a commitment to the ACT Government upon receiving the renewed funding that we would deliver comprehensive data sets for these reports.

To this end, I will be asking Waterwatch teams to do a number of things:



- 1. Please ensure you gather monthly data and enter it on the ALA asap.**
- 2. Consider conducting Water bug surveys this Autumn.**
- 3. Consider conducting RARC surveys asap.**

Sorry. This all sounds a bit bossy. Getting your data up on the ALA quickly allows me to check for errors and get back to you. Dan is very strict about his deadlines and there was nothing worse than looking at the CHIP report with reaches marked as having ‘insufficient data’ when I knew darn well teams had spent many hours doing their monitoring. I will also need to know asap if you having problems with the data base as it can involve more than me to get things fixed.

With the water bug and RARC surveys many sights have never been surveyed by Waterwatch groups before.

To help with all these insistent demands, I need to know:

- Any months you have missed, or are likely to miss, your monitoring. I can cover your sites if you are going to be away.
- If you need help with Water bug surveys. I have all the gear and will make time to assist.
- If you need help with RARC surveys I will assist. Let's make a time .

If you are pretty positive you will not be able to complete these extra surveys- **don't panic**. I will use this as an opportunity for a school group. But I do need to know if help is needed.

P.S. I was told we had the most comprehensive data set of any catchment group. Don't tell the other coordinators, they'll get jealous.

I will put out another newsletter very soon introducing the many many new groups and volunteers who have joined our ranks this year. Very exciting.



Mulangang (Platypus) at Tidbinbilla Sanctuary. Photo Nikey Mylordi 2014

A huge thank you to all those groups and individuals involved in collecting data. Waterwatch volunteers provide vital and immediate information on the state of our waterways which is being increasingly used by government and corporations locally and nationally. For more information contact the SACTCG Waterwatch Coordinator on 62966400 or at waterwatch@sactcg.org.au

Martin Lind.

