

Southern ACT Waterwatch Report 2009

The Waterwatch Volunteers

Waterwatch is a national association of volunteers who look out for the health of the waterways of Australia. Like so many community based groups in the environmental field, Waterwatch provides a wider coverage of waterways than statutory bodies and research organisation have the support and resources to cover, and so provide a vital but often unacknowledged backup to those organisations. Here in the Southern ACT, Waterwatchers monitor the physical and chemical health of the headwaters of the Gudgenby, as well as the Tidbinbilla and the Paddy's, several popular public access areas along the Murrumbidgee, and urban ponds and waterlines in the region. Many also do a spring bug count on these places, participate in the annual 'Frog Watch' program and monitor platypus sightings while others send through an annual appraisal of the state of the riverbank and its vegetation across the region. They do this in their own time, with their own vehicles, and a little support with equipment and training from the national organisation and they do it for us all.

The Waterwatch Coordinator

Southern ACT Catchment Group supports a Waterwatch Coordinator who backs up the volunteers, collects their data, refills and repairs their equipment and sends them feedback on how their contributions have been received. As well as that the coordinator engages with the local community to increase awareness and hopefully increase voluntary involvement.

Here is a report on the last twelve months of the Southern ACT Catchment Group's involvement in Waterwatch through both the volunteers and the coordinator.

Community Awareness

MEDIA: The coordinator appeared on Radio 2XX's Radio Landcare three times this year, twice featuring members of our Waterwatch groups.

Waterwatch Newsletter Articles:

Summer 2008: *Welcome to Martin Lind in the southern ACT*

Autumn 2009: *Turbidity Events on the Murrumbidgee*

Winter 2009: *Waterwatch Group Profile: 'Bidgee Blue'*

Spring 2009: *Southern A.C.T Catchment Group Profile: 'Gudgenby Bush Regenerators'*

The group profiles were published on the SACTCG website as well as an article about the high turbidity event in the Murrumbidgee River titled 'Muckybidgee!'

PUBLIC ACTIVITIES: The coordinator helped staff the catchment groups stall at a number of high profile events over the last 12months. These included: 'Corinbank' festival, The 'Tidbinbilla Extravaganza' and the 'Festival of the Forest'.

Paddy;s River group (2)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Friends of Tidbinbilla (3)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
CVA Tidbinbilla (4)							4	4	4	4	4	4
Gudgenby R at Naas gate (1)	1						1					1
Gudgenby Bush Regenerators' sites (7)	7		7		7		7		7		7	
Gundharwar Homestead NSW (1)					1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bumbalong homestead NSW (1)										1	1	1
Total Sites monitored (35)	26	18	25	17	27	26	34	26	35	29	37	32

Partnerships towards Healthy Waterways

Waterwatch Meetings:

The coordinator attended all of the ACT Waterwatch meetings in the last 12 months, and attended their training sessions for RARC, FrogWatch and Platypus Watch.

Activities:

The coordinator is also a member of the UMCCC and the Upper Murrumbidgee Demonstration Reach project. He has attended all meetings associated with these, in addition to planning meetings for the Murrumbidgee River Arts project with relevant actions. He attended the field day to Mulloon Creek homestead, hosted by the Natural Sequence Farming association. Accompanied D. Kerruish, the UMCCC Willows project officer on a field trip to Wee Jasper to negotiate training with the local community.

The coordinator was closely involved in reporting and actions around a spike in turbidity event on the Murrumbidgee in January this year.

The coordinator assisted Joan Goodrum with the successful protection of an 'Apple Box' tree and site in Theodore significant to the local aboriginal community, under threat from an ActewAGL development.

The coordinator met with organisers of the 'CorinBank' festival and Corin Forest Park management, to assess the impact of the festival on the Gibraltar Ck sub-catchment.

The coordinator has successfully lobbied PCL to establish the clean up and barricading of a site on the Paddy's River which was the regular target for illegal dumping. This has taken 10months of monthly monitoring and reporting to rangers to occur.

School and Community Learning

SACTCG Website:

March: 'Muckybidgee!!' article

June: 'Bidgee Blue' group profile.

August: 'GBRG' group profile.

SACTCG Meetings Attended:

I have attended all of the SACTCG meetings in the current reporting period.

Educational programs Delivered:

January: School Holiday Program ran at 2 locations in January.

2 lessons delivered at Lanyon High School introducing Waterwatch and water monitoring. Ginninderra WW coordinator and ACT Frog Watch coordinators attended to gain experience.

March: Visited Orana School to discuss Waterwatch involvement in a project being coordinated by a Yr12 student for Yr8-9 environmental group. Visited Calwell HS to discuss Waterwatch's (and affiliated groups e.g. Frogwatch) inclusion in an environmental unit.

April: Holy Family School field morning for Year 2.(48 students) 'Who cleans the water in the creek?' activity and Isabella Pond story.

Delivered 3 morning Waterwatch activities to Yr7 boys as part of Outward bound course in Orroral Valley.

Met Orana School group to discuss catchment project.

May: *(none delivered this month)*

June: Delivered session on macro-invertebrate surveying with Lanyon HS 'Sustainable Futures' class. Holiday program developed and advertised for July holidays.

July: Delivered education program to Yr 7's from Belconnen HS.

Waterwatch Junior Holiday Program delivered in Queanbeyan.

Met with teacher to discuss WW and catchment group involvement in new environmental ed unit at Calwell HS.

Delivered Senior Holiday Program at Urambi Office - Drain stencilling.

August: 2 X WW lessons with Calwell HS Yr 9 class.

2 X mornings of WW lessons with Radford College Yr 6 at John Knight Park.

2 X WW lessons with Yr 9 students for Lanyon HS.

2 X Meetings with Carolyn Chisholm HS teachers to discuss WW inclusion in Yr8 class. Lessons planned and dates set.

September: RARC lesson with Calwell HS Yr 9 class.

3 X WW lessons with Carolyn Chisholm HS Yr8 class.

Facilitated visit by Bayne G to Chisholm HS to give water treatment demonstration and assisted with this session.

October: Organised tree planting program for Spring school holidays.

Organised and ran macro invertebrate activity in partnership with ACT Waterwatch team for the 'National Youth River Health' Conference (19 & 20/10).

Provided bus transport for Lanyon HS students who volunteered as guides for the conference.

Organised and supervised Carolyn Chisholm HS excursion to Stromlo water treatment plant. (23/10)