May 2011

Grassy Groundcover Gazette

News, updates and on ground action

Paul's Piece

Hi folks. It's that time of the year again and the Grassy Gazette is eady to update our readers on the various Grassy Groundcover Restoration Project (**GGRP**) undertakings of the past year and what lies ahead. Among the offerings will be SPA reports, field day reports, some updates from sowing sites and, happily, some of our landholders have agreed to write a few words about their long-time experience with the project.

A major milestone was the publication of our first major peer-reviewed GGRP paper. Titled '*Expanding horizons for herbaceous ecosystem restoration: the Grassy. Groundcover Restoration Project*'; it appeared as a feature article in the December edition of **Ecological Management and Restoration** (Vol 11, No. 3) (click here)

We were very proud to present this overview of the GGRP story to a national and international readership in this highly regarded, restoration-focused journal. In the article we attempt to give a comprehensive explanation of what has been undertaken over the course of the project and to present an overview of findings. In future, other GGRP papers will focus in much more detail on the various experimental aspects of the project.

Please have a look for the paper, or contact me if you are unable to access it anywhere and I'll send you a copy.

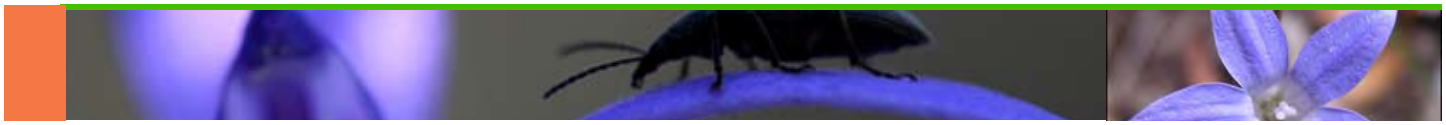
Field Days

In 2010 we ran six GGRP field days (*one in conjunction with the 2010 Wimmera Biodiversity Forum*) which I think is the most we've undertaken in a single year. The sites opened to visitors were Beeac, Birregurra, Chepstowe, Hamilton, Laharum, Moolapio and Wickliffe.

We were very fortunate and grateful to have been supported by the Corangamite, Glenelg-Hopkins and Wimmera CMAs in those respective regions and by VicRoads (*Western Region*). I'm also grateful to Neville Oddie (*at Chepstowe*), Claire and James Dennis (*at Birregurra*) and Will and Proo Pyke (*at Laharum*) for making their farms available to show people their GGRP sites.

Right up front I'd like to say each field day was a '*hoot*'. What a lovely, diverse and interesting group of people we got on each day, with each fully subscribed. I was really pleased with the great showings of local farmers, townsfolk and others interested in grassy restoration attending the days. Indeed, such was the interest that we had large numbers of attendees from across the State and even beyond our borders from SA, NSW, ACT and QLD which is really something. If truth be told, we could even lay claim that we had international participants, as we hosted over forty Masters in

Some of the Hamilton/Wickliffe Field day participants huddled together discussing grassland issues at our Hamilton site. Note the lovely show of Common Everlastings (Chrysocephalum apiculatum).



Environmental Economics students from the prestigious Stamford University in California to our Moolapio site at Geelong.

On each occasion I must admit I was overwhelmed by the interest shown by those who attended the field days, and with the really positive feedback we received afterwards. It certainly highlighted how much focus there is now on grassland and grassy woodland restoration.

I'd very much like to thanks those who attended our field days and to those who helped with organisation, food and facilities. Greening Australia is proud to be recognised as among those who have contributed in recent years to our understanding of the restoration and management of these wonderful and diverse communities. With over 300 attendees, the GGRP field days certainly enabled us to show others what we've achieved over a number of years now through our direct seeding program.

Even strapping young men attend grassland field days! Ross and James striding out front of a group of participants at our Birregurra field day.

Updates on Recent and New works

Roadside Restoration on the Basalt Plains

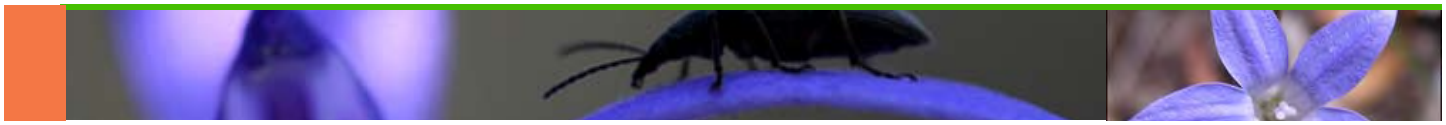
In the last edition of the Grassy Gazette I highlighted a few projects of particular interest. Among those was roadside restoration works conducted on the Glenelg Highway near Wickliffe and on the Streatham-Eurambeen road. At that time I reported that while only several months old, things were progressing nicely at the two Wickliffe sites.

Now about nearly 18 months since sowing I'm even happier to report that these sites are looking quite magnificent, and Frank Carland and Natasha Kennedy from Vic Roads (*who we worked with on this project*) are extremely pleased with outcomes to-date. Not only

Frank Carland from VicRoads enthusiastically discussing the history of works at the Wickliffe site.

do both sites now contain a diverse combination of established grassland species (*closely resembling adjacent intact grassland road reserves*), we have also successfully introduced four EPBC or FFG listed species within each. Importantly, these sites now contain large populations of both *Leucochrysum albicans subsp. albicans* (Hoary Sunray) and *Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides* (Button Wrinklewort).

Results at the Streatham-Eurambeen roadworks have been more mixed and highlight some of the difficulties associated with restoration work. In this project we sowed three small areas of roadside reserve that had been damaged during road construction, with native grasses. Rainfall in the months post seeding was very low and this was



further exacerbated at one site by quite severe heavy vehicular damage to the soil surface.

In recent months with good rainfall, weed growth at another sowing site was quite dramatic (*I suspect nutrients are also an issue here*) and while native grasses are up and going, it may take some time for them to outcompete the weed flora.

Happily at the remaining site (*where nutrients and inadvertent damage were not an issue*) the seeded area looks great with a thick sward of Themeda, Spear and Wallaby grass present.

Wildflowers, established and thriving at our Wickliffe restoration site, with the nationally threatened Hoary Sunray prominent (white flowers with yellow centre)

Wimmera Roadsides – The Dimboola Minyip Five-chain Road

At the request of the Hindmarsh Shire in the Wimmera region, over the past year, the GGRP has been involved in developing an exciting new project that would see up to 50 ha of Grassy Buloke Woodland restored on the five-chain Dimboola/Minyip Road.

Grassy Buloke vegetation is exceedingly rare in this region and the project, which will be managed by long-time GGRP personality, Jess Gardner, will seek to achieve these outcomes over a number of years.

The project presents a great many challenges, and obtaining the seed resources required to achieve these scales of restoration is among the major ones. Happily for us, GA will team up with the wonderful and talented operators of '*Narri Seeds'* who have been critically involved with the GGRP since it's beginnings in 2005 managing Seed Production for all our Wimmera sites (*which they undertook brilliantly and have talked about in past editions*).

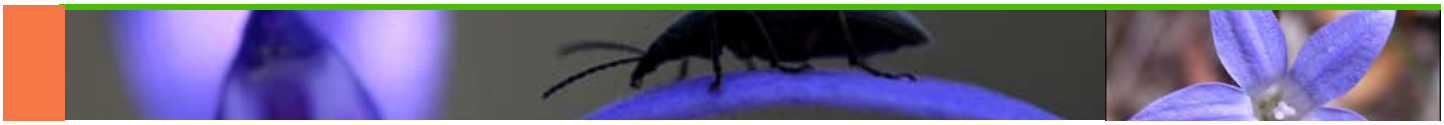
Steve and Rhonda out front of the Wail Nursery

However, the really exciting news is that Steve and Rhonda (*the owners of Narri Seeds*), have recently taken over the lease of the well known Wail Nursery.

This is a wonderful opportunity for these incredibly talented and committed restorationists and not only will native plant enthusiasts and restorationists alike from the Wimmera region benefit from their move to this location, the resources available at Wail (*originally developed decades ago by the Department of Primary Industries to support farm forestry in the region*) will increase the opportunity to produce volumes of seed from a wide range of grassland species for seeding in the Dimboola/Minyip road project.

While the Hindmarsh Shire is exceedingly enthusiastic about the this project, it is early days in terms of securing the funds and resources to undertake what would be, to my knowledge, the largest restoration of roadside complex native grassy vegetation in this State (*and probably Australia*). I'll leave Jess to keep our Grassy Gazette readers informed of progress (pg 11).

You'll have to forgive me but I'm inclined to conclude this overview of roadside projects with a bit of a Gibson-Roy '*rant*'. I think the ability/capacity to restore and manage native herbaceous vegetation on roadside reserves is critically important for a number of reasons. Consider the current situation where tens of thousands of kilometres of rural roadsides are dominated by



introduced grasses and broadleaf weeds. These represent huge management burdens to control the spread of weeds and to reduce the high fuel loads they represent during fire seasons.

What a vision it would be to transform (*over time*) these iconic rural landscapes to the original native herbaceous vegetation, which comparatively represents much less biomass, lowering fire risk, improving site lines for motorists and reducing management burdens for road authorities. Think also of the potential amenity value of areas restored with vibrant populations of native grasses and wildflowers (*as we've now done at Wickliffe*). In addition to their biodiversity benefits *(which perhaps represent their greatest value*), think of the potential amenity outcomes – people love wildflowers!

I can envisage the situation, where like in Western Australia with their renowned wildflower roadsides, people might come from near and far to enjoy and value these areas. Perhaps this is something of a grand vision, but don't you think it's an exciting alternative to the current, worrying state, of our rural roadsides.

Grasses and Wildflowers in Vineyards

One other new project I highlighted last edition was the exciting seeding works undertaken at a Great Western vineyard. Here I can report that a small scalped area seeded to wildflowers is doing very nicely, with a range of forbs establishing and weed loads very low.

Andrea Hart, the Vineyard Manger and staff are very excited to see these wildflowers growing happily at the vineyard.

We also seeded larger areas to grasses between vines (*a single species*) and in headlands (*multiple species*). There was no scalping of these areas and so nutrients and weed growth are the focus of managing these areas while the native grasses develop. This is being achieved through the use of selective herbicides while our native grasses establish to a sufficient size and density to dominate in their own right.

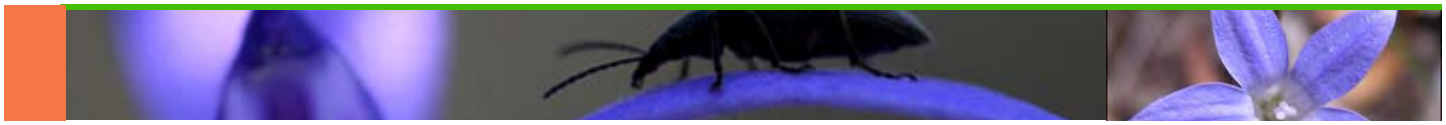
The area of headland sown to native grasses with Wallaby grass showing as golden heads and the Stipa's as a browny sheen

Werribee Open Range Zoo

The area seeded to grassland at Werribee Zoo in August 2010

Grasslands to the west or Melbourne are being destroyed by the ever-expanding urban growth boundary. This sad situation is to be partially remedied by a proposed 11,000 ha grassland reserve to be created near Werribee to compensate for these losses. The size of this reserve and the current condition of the native vegetation contained on the areas proposed for reservation will present huge challenges for the authorities managing the establishment and restoration of this area.

Interestingly, the GGRP and the Werribee Open Range Zoo have been collaborating for many years now to reconstruct diverse grassland habitat *(indeed the Zoo hosts one of our original 13 experimental sites*). Recently, with support from DSEs '*Vision for*



Werribee Plains' program, the GGRP and the Zoo teamed up to restore a new 1 ha area of complex grassland, which will be used to support an Eastern Barred Bandicoot breeding program (*one of Victoria's most threatened mammals*). I reported in the last edition how we had established Seed Production capacity at the Zoo to support the three year seeding program. Well, following a great collection last season from a large range of grass and wildflower species local to the Werribee area (*primarily undertaken by Dangerous-Dave Lockwood*), the GGRP team swung into action seeding a 3000m2 area in August last year.

Emergence and growth since then has been remarkable and already the area has the appearance of lush tussock grassland with wildflowers abounding. I find it hard to imagine this grassland area will not eventually become a huge favourite with Zoo visitors for the wildflowers' alone, not to mention the joy those frisky little Bandicoot-critters will have frolicking (*among other things*) amidst their large '*real-life*' grassland. Indeed,

John and Paul as happy little critters among the lovely grassy tussocks

I hope our grassland outcomes at the Open Range Zoo provide some guidance and inspiration for those charged with the future development and restoration of the proposed Grassland Reserve.

The Changing Complexion of Grasslands

Many people I speak to describe to me their picture of their ideal native temperate grasslands as wonderful dense swards of *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass). Indeed, lush stands of Kangaroo Grass (*back in force this season following a wet summer*) are quite a sight, with their statuesque tall bronze culms rising from dense tussocks of vibrant green and crimson foliage and the characteristic fruits/seedheads that vaguely remind me of Strelitzias (*Bird of Paradise plant*).

While this may be a bit of a stretch of the imagination, I've long suspected that people think that if you haven't created'*Themeda Grassland*' then you haven't really created a grassland. Well, taking off the rose-coloured glasses for a moment and bearing in mind that grasslands dominated by Themeda often have little else in them (*ie. Themeda can be a bit of a thug if left to its own devices*), we have always conjectured that our reseeded grasslands would overtime reach a point where Themeda established as the grass dominant. Interestingly, I often hear that when restoring grassland, one should attempt to establish Themeda first (*by seed or seed hay*) and then introduce other species down the track.

We have found that Themeda is a very poor pioneer species. It seems not to emerge consistently or quickly in the field, and even those individuals that do can then take some seasons to establish as large tussocks.

An early image of Stipas at Will and Proo's Laharum site, and an image taken two years later with Themeda developing strongly within the sward.

David Franklin stands in an area sown in previous twelve months with wallaby grass sward established. The same area three years later with dominant sward of Themeda developed

Therefore, we've taken the approach of introducing a large range of species up front along with Themeda. In this way those species which are better pioneers (*such as windmill, wallaby and spear grasses*) can lock-up the ground while the Themeda takes its time to get happy and take over the reins.

This is all a very long way of getting to the point, but now up to six year post-seeding at many of our GGRP sites we are seeing Themeda really starting to take hold. And while I've always been happy with the way they've looked along the way, others have commented that they now look like *'fair-dinkum*' grasslands. It is interesting that this '*successional*' approach has been very successful and now we will just have to make sure that through our management actions, we keep a check on the dominance of the Themeda to make sure it isn't responsible for longer-term declines of diversity from the sub-dominant species within the sites.

An Overview of this year's Survey at One Site (Chatsworth)

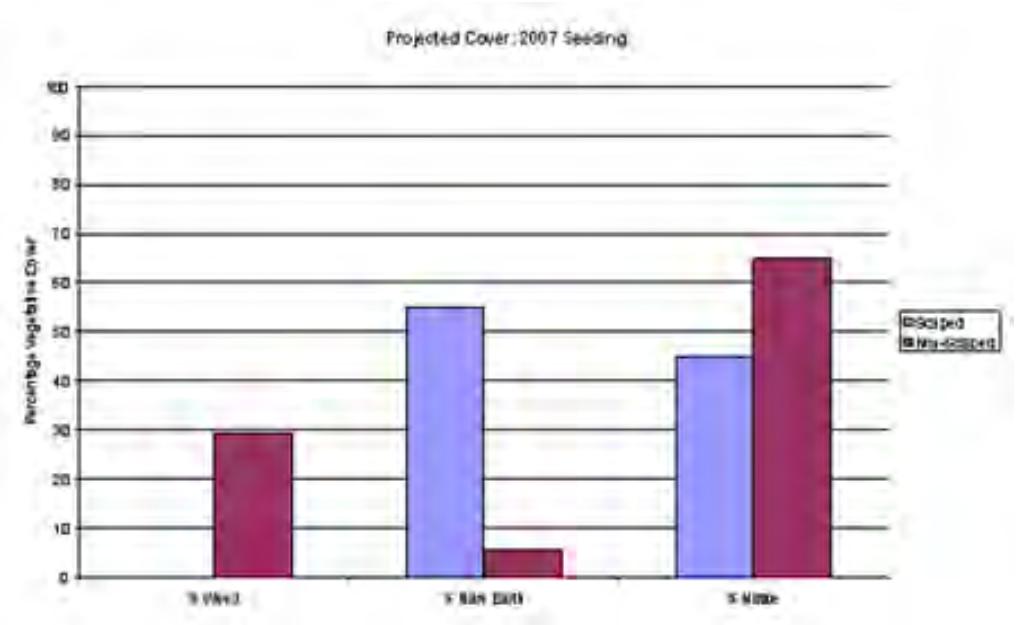
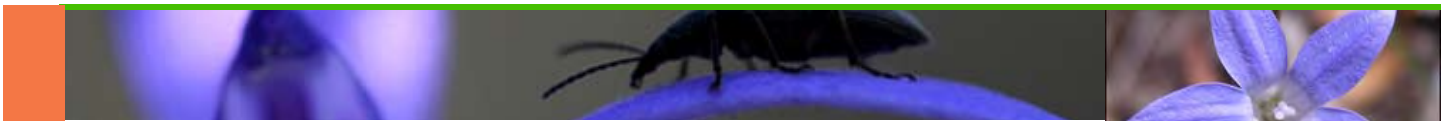


Figure 1. Percentage of vegetative cover at Chatsworth site in plots seeded in 2007. Blue columns denote plots scalped prior to seed and red columns denote plot sown onto non-scalped plot.

I've presented what I think are some of the key findings from my recent survey of our Chatsworth site on Dave Franklin's farm. This data is from the areas sown in 2007. At the time we imposed two site preparation treatments: one - areas sown onto ground that had been managed with a combination of herbicide and shallow tilling for three concurrent years prior to seeding, and another that was sprayed (*to remove weed biomass*) and then scalped to a depth of 100 mm prior to seeding.



As I've mentioned seeding was undertaken three years ago and interestingly vegetation on both treatment areas seem to be dominated by native species which is great.

This is not the case for most sites I've surveyed, where weed species now almost totally dominate the areas that weren't scalped prior to seeding. However, closer scrutiny reveals that what seems common across all the sites, is that the number of native plants on scalped areas and the proportion of bare earth present (*critical to provide habitat and recruitment niches for sub-dominant species*) was greater on the scalped plot. The percentage of native cover was greater in the non-scalped zone, which is partly explained by higher nutrient status of the soil in that area resulting in more biomass. In fact the number of native plants (*overwhelmingly grasses*) on the non-scalped area was less than on the scalped area (see fig 1).

In terms of plant numbers, grasses seem to dominate this site. I believe forb diversity has been negatively impacted over time through excess kangaroo and rabbit grazing (*despite the gallant efforts of Dave to control things*). Although I have noted that many individual wildflowers are developing as larger clumps and will hopefully survive and expand over time.

Each of the two plots surveyed cover an area of 2000m2. The breakdown of plant numbers is shown in the table. It is worth noting that three years after seeding there are almost double the number of native plants per m2 on the scalped plot compared to the non-scalped plot and over three times a many weeds per m2 on the non-scalped plots in comparison to the scalped plot.

Finally, just to get a bit 'sciency', I should point out that these two particular treatments (*scalp vs. 3 years herbicide treatment*) are not replicated at this one site (*although straight scalping vs. non-scalp has been 10 times*). However, these particular treatments were replicated across 12 other sites allowing eventual statistical analysis for differences.

	Scalped Plot	**Non-Scalped Plot**	
Total - sown native	55	29	
grass	52	27	
forb	3	2	
Total - non-sown weeds		15	51
grass	1	12	
forb	14	39	

Table 1. Plant counts at Chatsworth site in areas seeded in 2007.

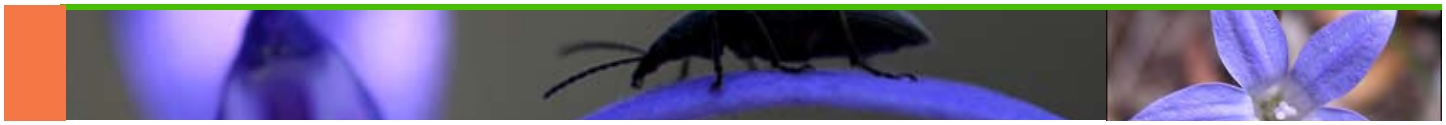
Critters to report

Spider on Spear Grass at Chatsworth

Blue Tongue at Moyston

Invertebrate on Hoary Sunray flower at Birregurra

'Something' burrowing under a tussock (within a scalped area).



Moolapio Grassland Re-establishment

Lyne Willcock

Over the past 12 months the Greening Australia and Alcoa of Australia Moolapio Project Grassland Re-establishment project based at Point Henry near Geelong has progressed exceptionally well. Finally the Moolapio staff team firmly believe that the grassland has proven successful and is worthy of show!

Due to ongoing weed issues and poor rainfall the grassland was very slow to establish and staff were reluctant to conduct tours and education. The Moolapio grassland has grown and developed so well that last year we were able to conduct several educational tours and a combined community/industry Grassland Discovery Field Day.

In early May Paul Gibson-Roy took representatives of the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts through the first established area of the grassland. These representatives were suitably impressed and it was wonderful to demonstrate the successes of the grassland thus far.

Paul Gibson-Roy took representatives of the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts on a grassland tour

In early July the Geelong Environment Council, an influential group within the region, accepted an invititation to tour the Seed Production Area and Moolapio grasslands and were impressed and appreciative of the work undertaken by Greening Australia, the diversity and range of species successfully growing in the grassland and the ground-breaking techniques being utilised to re-establish complex grasslands.

November was the first ever Moolapio Grassland Discovery Field Day conducted by the team, we had such an overwhelming response to the day that unfortunately we had to turn people away in droves. A lesson there for us – conduct lots more education and engagement activities as the community are super keen to learn and be involved!
Folks were bussed across to the grassland site, where we provided a short introduction to the Moolapio project, its aims, land management and community education program. Paul Gibson-Roy then led the way through the grasslands singing "*ya ta da da da ta ... ya ta da da da TAAA*!" on the mobile karaoke system that was hauled across the land by Rod White.

PGR presenting at the Grasslands Discovery Field Day

Candice Parker and almost 50 people from the local Geelong community, NRM agencies, supporters and '*those who are not so sure about what we are up to*' trailed their way through the grassland with Regional Manager, Ron Dodds (*who was grinning from ear to ear as he conga'd along*).

Paul discussed grasslands, their demise and the need for re-establishment of grasslands throughout Victoria. Information about the Grassy Groundcover Project was provided and how the project had commenced and progressed at the Moolapio site. The new in-ground seed production site at Moolapio was highlighted prior to the walk and talk tour of the grassland.

To ensure that the grassland was not disturbed by 50 sets of shoes Paul had mown a path through the grassland ensuring the path passed a wide variety of grasses, forbs and wildflowers. This simple idea worked exceptionally well. Candice Parker had produced laminated signs highlighting each species and these were attached to long poles dotted throughout the grassland track. Attendees were provided with flora and fauna photographic-rich information sheets.

The Moolapio Team: Lyn, Candice, Kim, Lisa, PGR and Rod

All three grassland establishment areas were toured to provide a sense how the grasslands are progressing over time and to provide education about techniques used to re-establish grasslands.

Again, only a few weeks later 45 Masters in Business students from Stanford University, USA were toured through the grasslands with a similar educational focus utilised as the field day. It is likely that our grasslands will never again see such a well-dressed and incredibly well-groomed group. Silver high heels and Gucci suits were the highlight of the day!

This year has been '*our best seed collecting season yet*' with record amounts collected in the field according to Rod White, Moolapio's Technical Land Manager. Rod claims *Themeda triandra* has been the largest amount of seed he has ever collected for this species, and whilst the unseasonably wet weather has created a huge weed issue, it has been just wonderful for grassland species seed production and collection.

45 Masters in Business students from Stanford University attended a grassland tour

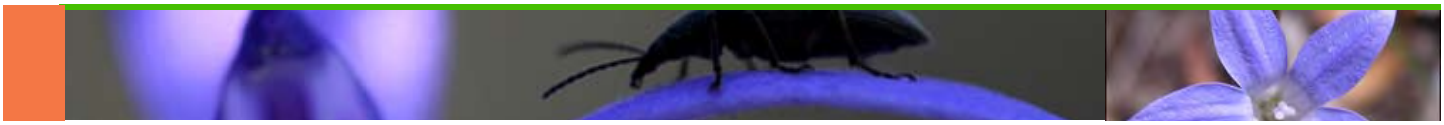
This year's sowing of the grasslands will require a massive volume of seed as the team are about to embark on our most ambitious scrape yet ... four hectares!

To date we have re-established eight hectares of species rich grassy woodlands, with well over 50 grass and forb species identified across the site.

Combined with the dream of finally having our own seed storage and processing facilities, above-ground seed production area, as well as a greenhouse and propagation house hopefully being built this year, thanks to funds sought by Paul Gibson-Roy through The Federal DEWHA it is exciting times for the project.

Come and have a look!

We finally have a grassland!



Nurcoung

Jess Gardner

Wow, wow, wow! Its time to start showing off about our Nurcoung property guys and hard selling biodiverse carbon. The growth following the exceptional summer rains is amazing. In case you don't believe me I'm about 1.6m and I'm standing next to a two year old buloke! Our 130 hectares of successful revegetation and 50 hectares of remnant vegetation will soon be a field of yellow as acacias and desert banksias come into full bloom.

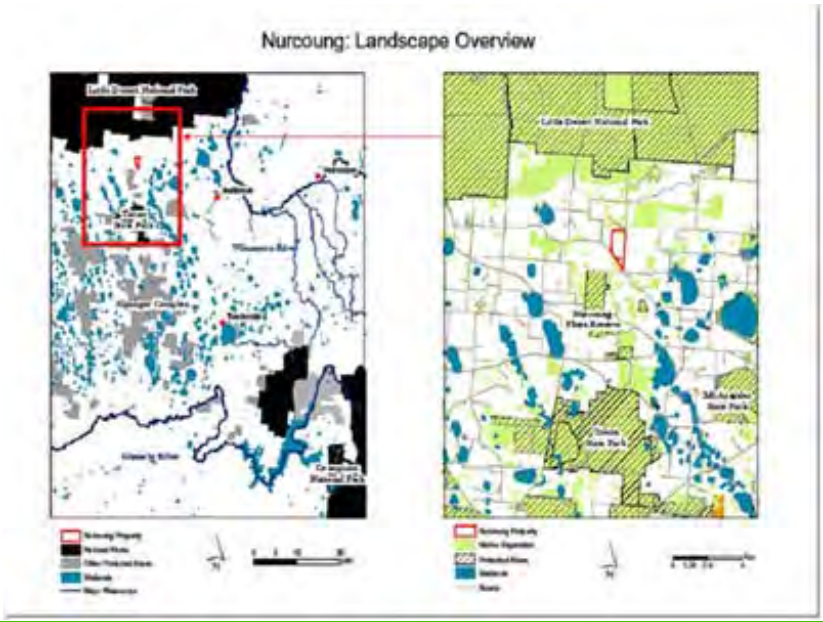
I just completed the Nurcoung Carbon monitoring. We have 42 permanent monitoring plots within the revegetation which are monitored every autumn for presence, height and dbh and every spring a ground cover/abundance survey is carried out. With two years of data we can start plotting the growth curves of each species and ensure we're meeting our stems per hectare obligation.

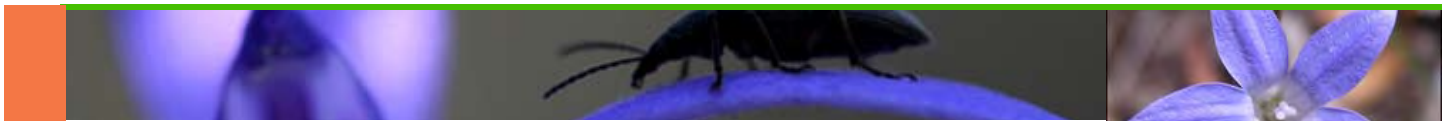
Thanks to David Freudenberger, Ron Dodds, Dale Tonkinson, Genevieve Ackland and Scott Wearin for your assistance in completing these tasks.

Restoration of our Nurcoung property, made possible through a voluntary agreement with Simply Energy, forms a key landscape link between the Little Desert National Park and the Nurcoung Flora and Fauna reserve. Mallee fowl successfully breed each year within the Flora and Fauna reserve and I'm currently working with the Victorian Mallee Fowl Recovery Group to establish more permanent mallee fowl mound monitoring sites both to the north in the Little Desert National Park and further south in the Tooan State Park which backs onto Mount Arapiles.

These new mallee fowl monitoring sites will support our efforts to scientifically monitor our success in reconnecting landscapes and builds upon six years of mallee fowl mound monitoring data in the surrounding area.

Come and visit anytime and please join us on the 28th and 29th of May to help search for new active mounds within the Little Desert . Contact me, Jess Gardner, on 0437 958 259 or email if you'd like more info.





The 3 R's Resolve it- Really do it- Reflect

David Franklin

The Grassy Groundcover Research site at Chatsworth is looking great.It continues to increase in density through natural recruitment and with the extremely wet spring/summer I am trying to work out what to do with the excessive biomass. Burning is out of the question (*too green*), grazing is also too species selective so it looks like it will be cutting, raking & baling to remove material as experience has shown that windrows left on site suppress plant growth

Whilst pondering the problem,and thinking of Paul's move to Sydney, I began thinking of how all this began.I first met Paul in 2004 when he visited with a colleague to discuss my interest in taking part in the project.I had been working on ways to direct seed grassland species (*mainly kangaroo grass*) for about ten years with varying and inconsistent degrees of success.When Paul asked me to take part in the project, I thought, this is good, and I jumped at the chance.

I remember being sceptical about some of the methods to be used. "*are you really going to scalp that whole area*!!!" and "*are you really going to sow all the seed we collected uncleaned*!!!". Of course we now know these are tried and proven successful methods that Paul and his team brought to the project.

All along the way, new opportunities were created.The establishment of seed production areas was challenging but rewarding as we learnt more about the propagation of a diverse range of species.

Specialist equipment was developed to cater for the unique challenges of Australian native species.I have had the opportunity to be involved with Greening Australia on seeding some other sites involving VicRoads and a winery and ,this year, I also have a couple of local landcare projects to keep the momentum up. We still have a lot to learn about looking after the sites but we can experiment with various techniques (*burning/slashing/chemicals*) as a testing ground for future actions on remnants.

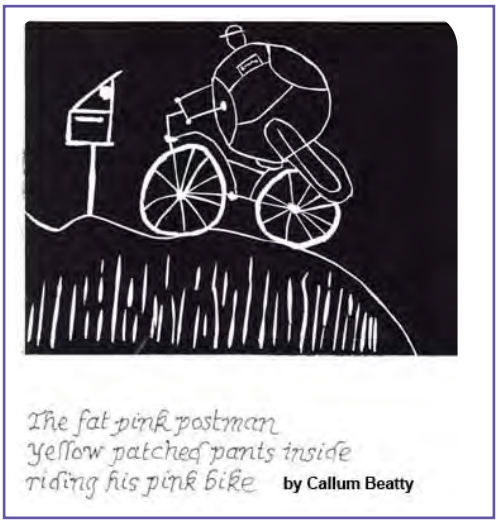
The uncertainty of future funding to continue this work is frustating.In the context of the status of this nationally-threatened ecosystem, some people in high places do not realise the significance of this project. As time passes the significance of this ground-breaking project will become evident. Personally, I have no doubt it will become the model for grassland restoration.

Paul's optimistic, enthusiastic and passionate pursuit of restoring grasslands is infectious. I never tire of attending another field day or seminar where his animated presentation and "*off the cuff*" one liners give a mix of education and entertainment. I acknowledge and thank all the other people involved in the project. The ground staff, office staff, technical staff as well as the other site participants who made this a fantastic team effort that I feel privileged to be part of.

Paul and his family have moved to Sydney to live and he can now pursue his other passion of surfing. I wish him and his family all the best. We have developed a great mateship We have been assured that he will make regular visits down this way.(*He better* !) So this is not Au Revoir Paul- just Bon Voyage.

Children, Art and the Future Wellbeing of Grasslands

Elizabeth Fenton April, 2011



In the early 2000s at a seminar in one of the small Wimmera grain towns a very enthusiastic Paul Gibson-Roy captured the attention of the audience as he spoke of his proposal to recreate complex native grassland communities on altered or degraded rural sites across much of Victoria. His proposal sounded ambitious, his enthusiasm was infectious and I was lucky enough to become involved in the Grassy Groundcover Research Project albeit in a small way.

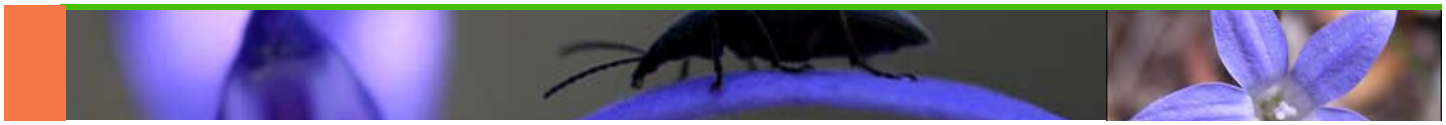
Thanks to this project, advances in seed production and sowing techniques for the re-establishment of grassland and wildflower meadows and a great amount of knowledge and optimism have been generated. Sadly this optimism has often been eroded by the ongoing destruction of remnant grassland areas. Sometimes this has been accidental, at others it has appeared to be deliberate. Either way it suggests a lack of knowledge amongst land managers and other decision makers.

But, on a positive note which will hopefully ensure a greater awareness of the grasslands and wildflowers and have long lasting benefits for the whole community as well as the environment, Dunkeld Artist, Trevor Flinn has been working with primary school students from Dunkeld, Glenthompson and Lake Bolac. He has been involving them with the flora and fauna of the grasslands in very creative ways.


Photo taken by Elizabeth Fenton

The children spent time exploring the native grasslands at the Dunkeld Arboretum, finding, photographing and identifying many wildflowers. They had interactive sessions with several people involved with grassland restoration and management, including David Franklin from the GGRP. They have also been provided with photos of many species found in these grasslands.

With the support of enthusiastic teachers and Trevor's guidance the children from Dunkeld and Glenthompson participated in several creative projects focusing on the Golden Sun Moth, a nationally threatened species found in the grasslands at Dunkeld. They wrote, performed and recorded a play highlighting the life cycle and the various benefits and threats that have influenced this moth's well being.



A display of Golden Sun Moth Sculptures was launched with specially created Sun moth biscuits. Older children created lino cuts and wrote and recorded Haikus about the moth.

The children from Lake Bolac focused on the wildflowers from the grasslands. They also created sculptures, lino cuts and haikus which were displayed at the recent Eel Festival.

While the artworks in their many forms are exciting and inspiring, a very important part of this project for me was being able to see how quickly these young children learned, understood and valued the complexities and importance of our remnant native grassland communities. Although young, they are often insightful and have an enthusiastic way of sharing their knowledge.

Hopefully the lack of appreciation about the remnant grasses and wildflowers that exists with some current land managers will become a problem of the past as these children grow up and start influencing management decisions.

Students from Lake Bolac Primary School identifying wildflowers in the grasslands

DM5 Chain Rd Restoration

Jess Gardner

Works are underway for a new partnership project with Hindmarsh Shire Council to restore 50 hectares of roadside reserve over a 10 year period. The project will employ grassland restoration techniques developed by the Grassy Groundcover Research Project and build upon learnings gained from our Moolapio, Geelong grassy woodland restoration.

Our year one plans for restoration works will see seven hectares of important existing buloke grassy woodland remnants reconnected with highly diverse grassland. Strategically undertaking grassland restoration ensures

there is a seed source adjacent to remnant areas increasing their chances of natural recruitment.

We are currently not funded however the Shire is keen to commence some works this year. Under contract to Hindmarsh Council we collected a diverse range of grasses and forbs over the spring and summer just gone with enough seed available to sow 1.5 hectares of complex grassland this spring. I have also prepared a draft ten year plan for the project enabling us to better promote the project to other organisations and funding bodies.

The photo on the right is taken at our GGRP trial site at Minyip which features many of the same species collected for this project. Now four years old these sites need some management to maintain diversity. I am currently in the process of organising with the Minyip CFA for these trial sites to be burnt. This will not only ensure the diversity of these sites are maintained but also ensures we have some great show and tell wow sites come spring.

Shire Councils make the perfect partners for GGRP style grassland restoration. Using in-house equipment and staff has significantly reduced the scalping cost.

Shire Councils make the perfect partners for GGRP style grassland restoration

GGRP Minyip site

Headed up by ‘tiny’ on the left we had two graders and three trucks out on site the other day with the job being completed in two days. The council decided to stock pile some of the top soil to be sold or used for landscaping purposes and we also came to an arrangement with Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water where the soil was used to fill in a decommissioned channel now that we are on pipeline water.

Please contact me if you would like a copy of the draft 10 year plan or other promotional material that I have prepared. Any assistance to sell and promote this exciting project would be most welcome.
Jess Gardner, 0437 958 259 or email

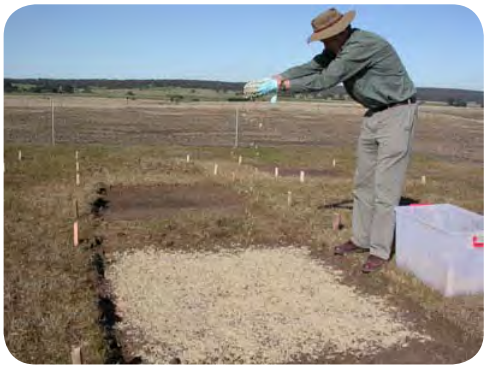
Our year one Plains savannah restoration has been scalped to a depth of 200mm.

A bit of History

Most of these photos are from 2005/2006. It's great to see the outstanding results of these sites throughout this Gazette

David Franklin-Chatsworth

Jess G Margaret Hobbs Ron Dodds at Minyip



John Delpratt sowing-site

Site visit at Neville Oddies

Want to know more about the Grassy Groundcover Research Project ?

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