



Newsletter No. 9 - November 2010

Adopt-a-reach is going from strength to strength.

"Wouldn't it be great if all along the Goulburn and Broken rivers, in the Shepparton Mooroopna area, there was a group of interested people taking special interest in this rich environmental, economic and cultural resource we have on our doorstep? "
Oct 2007. RiverConnect newsletter.

This was the dream three years ago and I am delighted to say that it has come true!!

This unique joint schools and community Adopt-a-reach project was launched in June 2008 when representatives from the 18 local schools and Berry St. formerly committed to helping connect their students with our rivers.



Since then the project has continued to grow with a great response from schools. In the past 12 months 6 Secondary schools, 9 Primary schools and Berry Street have used their allocated 'reach' as an outdoor classroom, with students completing a range of different activities.

An important component of the project is the VCAL programs run by all the local Secondary Schools. Students have been completing work week after week to enhance their reaches and the results are a credit to them and their teachers. This newsletter features the recent interschool VCAL tour. Many other primary school and secondary classes have been active as well.

We are very appreciative of the support given to the school programs by Wendy D'Amore (RiverConnect Field Officer) and other staff and volunteers from Parks Vic, Greater Shepparton City Council, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Goulburn Murray Landcare Network, G.V Water WaterWatch and the Shepparton Mooroopna Landcare Group.

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St Mels Primary School Biodiversity Buddy Day

On Friday 20 August 2010 St Mels celebrated National Science Week and the International Year of Biodiversity with a whole school 'Biodiversity Buddy Day'. The students participated in a range of activities throughout the day, investigating the biodiversity in our local environments.

Over the course of the day, each class had the opportunity to visit our RiverConnect site at the confluence of the Goulburn and Broken Rivers. Here students investigated the biodiversity of the river environment by observing macro invertebrates in the water, searching for birds and animals, and identifying plants and weeds.

Our school was lucky enough to receive a National Science Week grant, which we were able to use to purchase materials and equipment such as two way bug viewers that allowed us to spot the macro invertebrates in the water. We found all sorts of bugs, such as water slaters, water mites and water scavenger beetles.

Unfortunately we identified a lot of different weeds, but we were also able to spot lots of different trees, shrubs and ground covers. We were impressed to find the poa grass that the Grade 1/2's planted last year was still growing.

We identified some Silver Wattle trees, but being the middle of the day, we obviously didn't catch a glimpse of the squirrel gliders that eat the sap from them!



We were also very excited to see how high the rivers were after all the rainfall that we have had. We have never seen them so high. We could still note the difference in the colour of the two rivers, and how much dirtier and turbid the Broken River was in comparison to the Goulburn River.

Students also participated in a range of other environment based activities at school. In all we had a very busy day that was most enjoyable.

Lauren Calder
Sustainability Coordinator , St Mel's Primary School.

KidsFest 2010

RiverConnect again participated in KidsFest this year. We featured biodiversity activities and displays from the Goulburn Murray Landcare network along with our RiverConnect "What's out there?" activities.

Children and parents had fun finding a variety of important features within the Shepparton and Mooroopna River areas as depicted in the caricature representation of the RiverConnect area.

Parks Victoria attended for their first time, promoting the new Regional and National Parks and featuring Ranger Roo. The two days were a

huge success, with many kids becoming RiverConnect Junior ambassadors. Big thanks to John Laing (GMLN) and those that volunteered their time to help out.



Regional Achievement and Community Award 2010

The RiverConnect project has won the prestigious Parks Victoria Environment and Sustainability Award in the 2010 Regional Achievement and Community Awards. RiverConnect won the award from a strong field of nominees and was one of eight category winners announced on Saturday 23 October at Mercure Ballarat Hotel. More than 350 guests enjoyed the Gala event including official guest the Hon Jacinta Allan MP, Minister for Regional and Rural Development and Patron of the awards.



RiverConnect was established by community members in 2005 to oversee the health of the Goulburn and Broken Rivers and surrounding red gum forests around Shepparton and Mooroopna. RiverConnect facilitates, resources and supports partner organisations (including Greater Shepparton City Council, Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority, Parks Victoria and Yorta Yorta), in working together to

strengthen the communities sense of custodianship of the Rivers and their surrounding flood plains.

This is a fantastic achievement for RiverConnect, its partners, those who have put so much time and energy into the project and the community as a whole. Thank you to Bruce Wehner for representing RiverConnect on the night.

VCAL Interschool Tour

During September, McGuire Secondary College, Verney Road School and Mooroopna Secondary College showcased the various environmental works they have undertaken at their reaches. Students from Notre Dame Secondary College and representatives from Parks Victoria, Greater Shepparton City Council and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority toured each site and were informed by students about the range of works that had been completed. The achievements to date and plans for the future are fantastic and inspiring. Thank you to all the students, staff, schools and Land Managers that dedicate their time and energy, making the program a huge success.



Nesting Boxes at Vic Park Lake

Shepparton High School students, assisted by Shepparton Field and Game, recently constructed and installed 10 duck and 5 parrot nesting boxes at Victoria Park Lake.

With Shepparton Field and Game providing materials, knowledge and direction, Shepp High students were successfully able to build, install and understand the



need and importance of nesting boxes in our river environments. A huge thanks to Shepp Field and Game and students and staff from Shepp High. Hopefully we have a few species of ducks and parrots making the boxes their homes over the next couple of years.

