

LBLAP news

Autumn 2009

Loxton to Bookpurnong Local Action Planning Committee Inc

Yatco Story Continues to Unfold

Special points of interest:

- * Yatco disconnection has saved 6 GL of evaporation
- * Yatco gets a share (3 GL) of environmental water for refill.
- * Irrigator pump relocation getting closer.

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If you've been following the local press, you'd be aware that Yatco was one of the wetlands that has recently received water from the environmental water account.

In 2007, Yatco was one of the wetlands selected for temporary disconnection from the main river in order to save water during the ongoing drought.

Locals banded together and pushed for a permanent structure to disconnect from the river, but incorporating regulators in order that ongoing wet/dry cycles could be managed into the future.

They were successful, and a Wetland Management Plan was also undertaken and completed early in proceedings. Disconnection was completed early 2008 and about 6.5 GL of water has been saved in evaporation

Kangaroo Count Katarapko Island

'Friends of Riverland Parks' coordinate a regular count of kangaroos on Katarapko Island with DEH and they asked for some assistance to help with the counting.

So, Sunday 5 April we met at the Loxton Boat Ramp at 9:00 am for DEH to deliver us by boat to designated start

since then.

The refill commits 3 GL back to the wetland and, once full, it will be disconnected again.

The 11 Yatco irrigators involved in the group and who draw irrigation water from a backwater in the wetland, are continuing to work toward pump relocation to the main river, which was always part of the Management Plan for Yatco.

The irrigators are now confident that relocation will finally be delivered by 'Murray Futures—Riverine Recovery' funding - monies devolved by the Federal Government to the State Government for wetland infrastructure purposes.

See page insert for more Yatco detail and data

points on the island.

There was a bit of walking involved, so it was good healthy exercise.

We returned to Boat Ramp around midday, where gun chef, John Kelly, had slapped up a sausage sizzle for all.

Right: Shuttle returns counters to base



above: Sluice Gate Comes Out



above: First Water Reaches the Dried Bed



Land & Water Management Planning Happenings

Lauren Burdett, our LWMP Officer, has been kept busy working on the upgrades of the:

- Bookpurnong Lock 4 Land & Water Management Plan and
- Pyap to Kingston Land & water Management Plan.

She's also been busy in coordinating Bookpurnong Lock 4 Environmental Association activity.

Growers have been busy with harvest and also otherwise occupied with the issues arising from having to operate under an 18% alloca-

tion regime. In spite of those constraints, enough growers have been prepared to give of their time and to have input during the upgrade process. The outcome should be of benefit to all growers.

We continue to encourage growers to attend the Irrigation Efficiency Project courses as well as the training available in IRES (*water management software*).

If you'd like details on any of those programs, please contact the office.



Lauren Burdett
LBLAP Land & Water Management Officer

'Caring for our Country' Funding Applications

Yatco

Its been a busy time around the office the past couple of months.

The Labor Federal Government released their new environmental funding priorities and criteria late 2008 under the 'Caring for our Country' (CfoC) banner.

The criteria are pretty restrictive in relation to our section of the country and opportunities are limited.

Applications were due in by 3 April and we've been working on a couple of competitive bids (*competing against all comers across Australia*).

One is to undertake further works and studies at Yatco including the main targets:

- Installation of further regulators (*we currently have them being designed using previous funding*).

- Gather Yatco indigenous and European history and include in an information strategy to inform other communities of how to replicate the Yatco story.
- Investigate working with the local indigenous people to develop flora usable by indigenous people for traditional purposes.

Pest Plant & Animal Program

We are also putting in a joint application with Berri Barmera LAP and SAMDBNRMB to run a pest plant and animal control program over 2 years (*3 for rabbits*) in the Katarapko Wetland. *Katarapko is one of the nominated target areas for CfoC.*

However, we are also applying for funding to run the same program in properties adjacent to Katarapko Wet-

land. Katarapko incorporates the entire floodplain, not just the island.

Therefore, if you believe that you've got a particular problem with weeds, foxes or rabbits and you're adjacent to the Katarapko floodplain, give us a call. We just may be able to include you in that program if and when successful with our funding application.

Land & Water Management Plans

LWMP activity is not mentioned under the new funding priorities, however, we are submitting an application in the hope that we will continue to be able to implement the Plans we are upgrading.

Funding - it's the ongoing bugbear of all LAPs.

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Yatco Facts & Figures

We currently undertake community monitoring of the wetland quarterly. Those days are coordinated by Callie Nickolai (SAMDBNRMB - Project Officer, Wetland Management) the Yatco group itself and LBLAP.

Parameters Monitored by the community are:

- Groundwater
- Photopoints
- Surface water
- Tree health

Additional Monitoring is undertaken by Callie (*and helpers*) of:

- Frogs
- Fish
- Birds

SOG (*Senior Officials Group*) Wetlands are wetlands that were temporarily disconnected from the river to save water lost to evaporation. Those wetlands are:

- Murbko South
- Lake Bonney
- Ross Lagoon
- Jaeschke Lagoon
- Yatco Lagoon
- Nelwart Swamp
- Donald Flat*
- Tanyaca Creek*

However, and because of mobilised, organized community pressure, Yatco disconnection was converted to a permanent disconnection, with the ability to manage ongoing wet/dry cycles into the future.

6 weekly monitoring of SOG Wetlands includes:

- Groundwater
- Surface water
- Photopoints
- Tree health
- Fish
- Frogs
- Quantitative vegetation

On refill, monitoring will be

more frequent.

Surface water will be twice weekly for first month, then 6 weekly.

Groundwater will be fortnightly for the first month, then 6 weekly.

Fish will be surveyed just before wetland reaches pool and then in Spring and Summer.

Birds - 1 month after reconnection, 2-3 months after refill and then Spring and Summer.

Frogs - 2-3 weeks after refill, 2-3 months after refill and then Spring and Summer

Tree Health - Quarterly

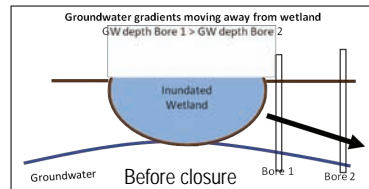
Photopoints - Quarterly

Quantitative Veg Survey - Bi-annually/Annually

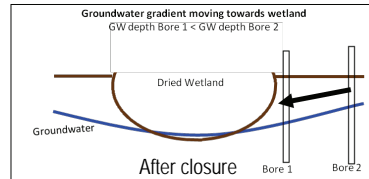
We monitor groundwater level (GW) and salinity.

GW Trends

Before closure - 2 gradients towards wetland, 2 away.



After Closure - 3 gradients were towards, one away.



GW salinity has been reasonably consistent since monitoring commenced prior to disconnection.

Surface Water Trend - Salinity increased over time, which is natural because of the evaporation.

Reached a maximum of

22,633 EC just before wetland was completely dry.

Fish Survey Results - 7 native and 3 exotic species were caught.

Native

- Carp Gudgeons
- Australian Smelt
- Flat Head Gudgeon
- Bony Bream
- Unspecked hardyhead
- Rainbow Fish
- Dwarf FHG

Exotic

- Carp
- Goldfish
- Redfin

Future 2009 Community Monitoring Days are scheduled for:

- 21 June
- 20 September
- 13 December

Monitoring days starts at 2:00pm and are followed by a BBQ tea. It's a great day for all.

All welcome, just advise the LBLAP office if you want to get involved.



Groundwater Sites (Shot taken with lagoon immediately south of embankment dry, the rest partially dry)

Community Monitoring

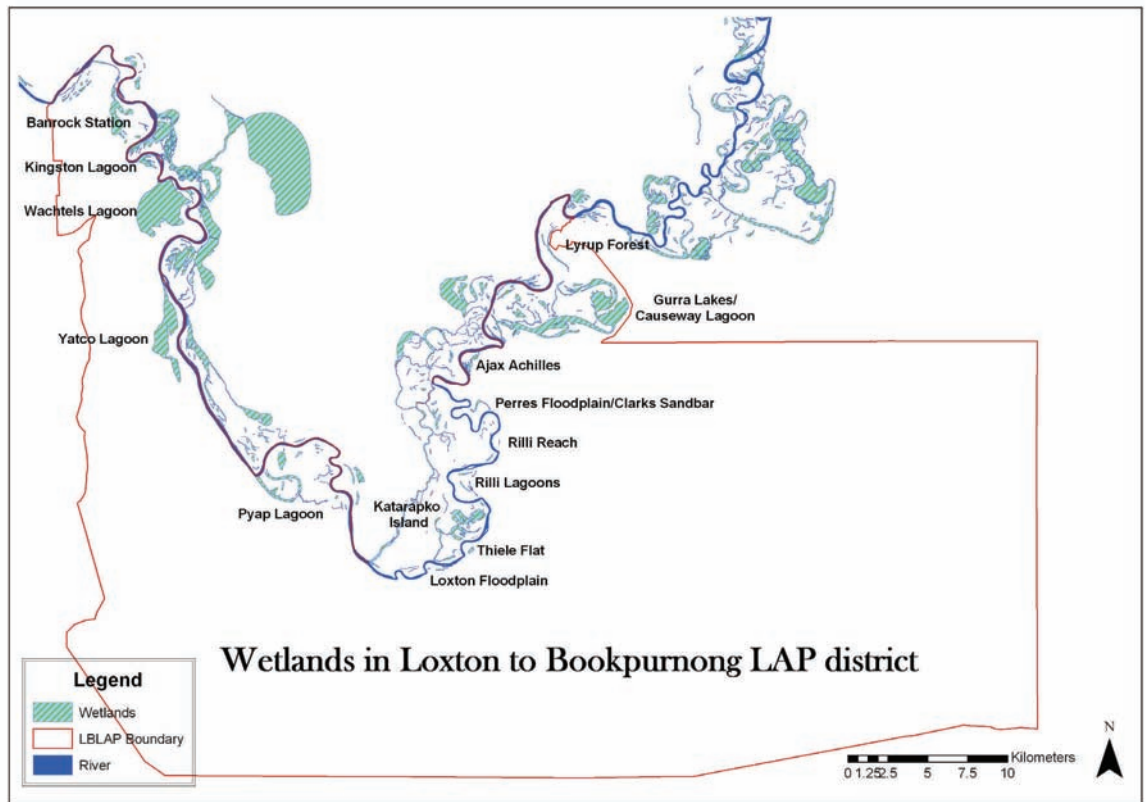
- * Great activity for all, kids included
- * Education for all involved. Increases enthusiasm among the group.
- *



Callie Nickolai - Fish Survey Work - and in waders this time!!

Drawn from a report to the public on Refill of Yatco by Callie Nickolai, SAMDBNRMB

Wetlands in LBLAP Area



Other Wetland Management Plans & Weir Pool Manipulation

Wetland Plans

The South Australian Murray Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board has appointed a planner (*Amy Scott*) to develop management plans for wetlands that currently don't have an accredited management plan and also to upgrade existing, outdated plans.

There is also \$100 million available for potential floodplain infrastructure (*inc pump relocation*), under the SA Government's 'Murray Futures—Riverine Recovery' project. **However, a Wetland Plan would need to be in place before infrastructure would be considered.**

There are several possibilities for Wetland Plans in the LBLAP area and these include:

- Ajax Achilles
- Pyap Lagoon
- Gurra Gurra Lakes
- Wachtels Lagoon

Investigations are now underway to prioritise the wetlands in relation to

the merit of a Management Plan and an important criteria will be a vibrant, active community group willing and able to be strongly involved in the process.

If you are interested in getting involved with a community group to develop a wetland management plan for one of these wetlands (*or another*), please contact the LBLAP office as soon as possible.

The Yatco experience has shown that strong, focused groups can achieve great outcomes. A fantastic byproduct, has been the fostering and building of community spirit and general well-being in a time when gloom and doom seems prevalent in the Riverland.

Weir Pool Manipulation

There has also been considerable discussion at Department level, about weir pool manipulation as a means to move water in and out of wetlands for environmental purposes.

Irrigators who draw water from a wetland should be aware of these discussions because raising and lowering of weir pool levels may have an impact on the floodplain they draw water from and therefore the quality of their water!

If you'd like to be kept in the loop on developments, please contact the office

- Ajax Achilles
- Pyap Lagoon
- Gurra Gurra Lakes
- Wachtels Lagoon

Potential for Wetland Management Plans?



Community Working Together

Potential Primary School Seedling Propagation Scheme

LBLAP has recently advised the Primary Schools within its boundaries, that we are prepared to pay for the schools' membership of 'Trees for Life' and also for the materials to propagate and grow seedlings. Those seedlings could be for their own use or grown for land-owners elsewhere.

We believe that it's a great idea to get the leaders of tomorrow involved in revegetation today.

There may be an issue for

some schools because one of the heavy and critical watering periods for the seedlings, falls in the long school holiday break in the middle of summer.

If you are able to assist any school which may get involved in this propagation/ growing program with time



Loxton Primary Schoolchildren getting their hands dirty and loving it. LBLAP, Loxton Waikerie Council and Greening Aust (and the kids) assisted Vern Hallam with his Reveg Project - 2008

(watering in holidays etc) please contact this office and we'll try to match you up with the need.

If you want further detail about any section of this proposed seedling program, please contact the office.

We believe that it's a great idea to get the leaders of tomorrow involved in revegetation today

Application for FarmReady Industry Grants re 'Climate Change' Adaptation Strategies

LBLAP, in concert with CSIRO and SAMDBNRMB, has submitted an application for FarmReady funding to run a project with two of our currently active Land & Water Management Planning Committees (*Bookpurnong Lock 4 and Pyap to Kingston-on-Murray*).

Climate change appears to be leading to significant reduction in water allocation for irrigation in the SA Riverland into the future.

Whilst climate, water and adaptation possibilities have been studied and are widely communicated to scientific and NRM management agencies, communities most impacted have received less attention and have not fully benefitted from a dialogue with scientists and NRM managers. Yet these communities face critical choices about how to adapt and manage at individual farm scale, at irrigation district scale and at regional economy scale.

These communities also hold detailed knowledge of their local circumstances that scientist and NRM managers don't.

There is an opportunity to help these communities to explore options for their future in a way that combines best scientific and detailed local knowledge in a highly collaborative and interactive learning framework.

Overview

The project will build on a regional futures project recently completed by CSIRO for the Lower Murray region. The Lower Murray Landscape Futures Project (*Landscape Futures for the River Corridor*) was a comprehensive futures scenario analysis. It evaluated impacts on water supply, irrigation sector adaptation and regional economy of four climate scenarios, ranging from baseline conditions through to severe climate

change using a best practice science triple bottom line approach.

The results of this study focus both on assessing how modelled climate futures will affect the viability and profitability of regional irrigation and economy considering potential adaptation strategies, as well as addressing potential environmental impacts.

Here the study proposes to:

- Adapt and downscale this regional level analysis to more localised conditions.
- Develop another set of scenarios to evaluate, but this time based on close collaboration with local irrigation groups and drawing on their specialised knowledge.
- Explore alternative land, water, farm, and irrigation district 'climate change' adaptation strategies in a series of interactive workshops with the growers.

Funding application to "explore alternative land, water, farm, and irrigation district 'climate change' adaptation strategies in a series of interactive workshops with the growers"

With thanks to CSIRO and Jeremy Nelson of SAMDBNRMB for their considerable input into this application



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*We've updated our website,
check it out
www.lblap.org.au*

Covering 155,000 hectares to the south of the River Murray, the LBLAP area includes six irrigation areas - Kingston-on-Murray / Lock 3, Moorook, New Residence, Pyap, Loxton, and Bookpurnong / Lock 4 - some dry land located within the Loxton/Waikerie District Council boundary, and twelve wetlands, including Katarapko Island, Yatco, Ajax Achilles, Pyap and Gurra Gurra Lakes (*which sits within the Renmark Paringa Council area*).

The main areas of focus of LBLAP are:

- ◆ Irrigation and Drainage
- ◆ Flora and Fauna Conservation
- ◆ Climate Change
- ◆ Community Education Development and Awareness
- ◆ Wetland and Floodplains
- ◆ Water Quality
- ◆ Recreational.

If you have an interest in any of these areas or have any ideas for local projects that you believe should be undertaken in these areas, please contact our Office.

Membership of LBLAP is **FREE** and you can be as hands-on as you choose. If you know of someone who:

- ◆ would like to get involved with some monitoring - *friendships - afternoon in the outdoors*
 - ◆ maybe has some ideas for the local environment
 - ◆ would like to get involved at Management Committee level, or
 - ◆ would simply like to be kept up to date with LBLAP activities
- please pass this newsletter on to them or ask them to get in touch with LBLAP.

If you've received this Newsletter via email, please feel free to pass it on to others. *If you'd prefer to receive future Newsletters by email, please let us know.* If republishing an article from this Newsletter, please acknowledge the source.

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Acknowledgements

Loxton to Bookpurnong Local Action Planning Committee Inc would like to thank the following organisations for their ongoing support:

- ◆ South Australian Murray Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board
- ◆ Australian Government
- ◆ South Australian Government
- ◆ Department of Water Land & Biodiversity Conservation
- ◆ Department of Primary Industries and Resources of South Australia
- ◆ Central Irrigation Trust
- ◆ Department of Environment & Heritage
- ◆ SA Water
- ◆ CARE Team
- ◆ Yatco Wetland Landcare Group
- ◆ Bookpurnong Lock 4 Environmental Association

