

Newham & District Landcare Group



Working towards a
healthier environment

Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND 3442

Newsletter Editors: Paul & Marie Marmara

Aims of Newham & District Landcare Group

The Group has the objective of raising awareness of the natural environment amongst the residents of the district. Emphasizing how we can all contribute to the wellbeing of all (humans, plants, water quality and the natural environment) through the raising of knowledge and participation of all in projects that improve the environment of Newham & District.

Your Committee



President: Penny Roberts [5427 0795]
tee member
Secretary Roger Rugless [5427 0100]
Treasurer Hilary Roberts [5427 0795]
Past President Jim Sansom [5427 0408]

Peter Eisen - committee member
Philip Flanagan – committee member
Nick Massie – committee member
Alice Aird – committee member

Members are invited to contact the committee on the contact numbers above on any issue.

Special interest groups



If you have any queries, or wish to contribute, please contact the person listed below.

Roadsides: Sue Massie [5427 0065]
Seed bank/seed collection: Penny Roberts [5427 0795]
Newsletter items: Nick Massie [5427 0065]



Understorey Plants of the Newham district by Marie Marmara

Over the next issues of this newsletter we will identify specific plants indigenous to the Newham area. We are very fortunate to have such a large range of understorey plants in our area, which tend to be ignored over the larger dominating tree species. Understorey plants provide a valuable ecological habitat needed for a healthy bush environment.

Understorey plants range from grasses, woody bushes and wildflowers. In addition we will also focus on some of the aquatic plants and the roll they play in our ecology.

The series will specifically focus on plants in our area and hope to be of some benefit to members wishing to better understand the local flora and how you can best grow them in your patch.



Items of interest



Community Water Grants – another success story!

We have received news of another successful Newham & District Landcare Group grant application – this time for \$12,500 of Federal funds through a ‘Community Water Grant’. The project title was ‘Protecting and Enhancing the Upper Deep Creek catchment’.

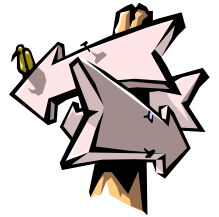
This will fund work on two properties – provision of 5000 indigenous plants with guards, site preparation and subsidy for some fencing.


Ours was one of 1750 successful applications out of almost 5000 received.

This project has been supported because it demonstrated public benefit and involves practical, on-ground works which protect water resources.

GPS unit

Newham & District Landcare Group has been given a Magellan GPS 315 unit by the Upper Campaspe Combined Landcare Group.



 This will be used for mapping weeds, landmarks on larger properties etc. and data can be used with the “Streets Ahead” mapping program. It is possible that a training session in ‘Streets Ahead’ will be organized and funded by the U.C.C.L.G. in the near future.

If you are interested in learning how to use this mapping program make your interest known to a committee member.

Trailer Mounted Spray Unit – Trailer Warden

Newham Landcare is looking for a (Trailer Warden) to house the Trailer Mounted Spray Unit that the Newham Landcare has available for hire. Ideally the location should be in the district, on a property occupied during the day and provide undercover storage. The person should have a chemical user’s certificate and will be responsible for ensuring the hirer is trained on the unit and the trailer is maintained and cleaned. A proportion of the daily hire will be paid to the “Trailer Warden”.



If anyone is interested please register your interest with Hilary Roberts (5427 0795).





Rural Land Zoning

Newham Landcare (Peter Eisen) asks two questions:

1. Will the new rural zones have any effect on the environmental well-being of Newham and surrounding district?
2. If so, should the Newham and District Landcare Group take a public position on this issue?

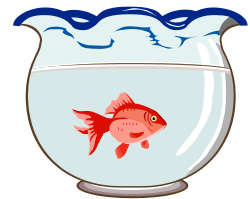
Recent media reports on rural zoning changes have concentrated on landowners' rights to build on properties of fewer than 40 hectares. From an environmental perspective the critical issue is whether the change will be a disincentive or a positive in protecting the natural environment including its key water catchment, flora and fauna.

What do you think? Will taking any position politicise our Group negatively?

Let us know your thoughts by writing to the committee PO Box 314, Woodend 3442.

Water - The Basis of Life

extract taken from Australian Pond and Stream life - John Child



What is water?

The most important feature of ponds and streams is that they consist of fresh water. But what exactly is fresh water?

It is certainly not the same as pure water, in the strict sense, because all ponds and streams contain other substances. There may be clouds of tiny particles suspended in the water, for example when a stream becomes suddenly muddy during a flood, or a pond water turns slowly green with microscopic life. The substances may be dissolved in the water, and quite invisible. They may give the water a faint tinge of brown or blue, or give it a faint taste or smell, but often they cannot be detected readily.

These dissolved substances are very important to the living creatures in the water. Most important of all is the dissolved oxygen. Oxygen, of course, occurs in the air, and is the gas we use when we breathe air into our lungs. We need oxygen to 'burn' (oxidize) the food in our blood, and thus provide energy to keep us warm and let us move about. The more active we are, the more oxygen we need, and the harder we breathe.

All animals need energy for movement, and hence they all need oxygen. But plants need oxygen too, for their growth. However, during their food production (photosynthesis) plant leaves give off surplus oxygen. Thus there are several ways in which oxygen becomes dissolved in pond water. As rain falls through the air it dissolves a little oxygen. At the water surface oxygen will dissolve in the water. And thirdly, green plants growing beneath the water give off oxygen which dissolves in the water.

Water is absolutely essential to nearly all forms of life as we know it.....

Upcoming Events



Sunday May 21st Autumn planting

This is a chance to do something practical, catch up with old friends and make some new ones. We will be planting riparian species along a drainage line and around a dam. Lunch will be provided by our host, Ken Sweaney. BYO gloves & hat.

Where: 297 Dons Rd., Newham

When: 10 am – 12 noon then lunch [RSVP to Ken 5427 0460]

Wednesday May 24th Evening speaker meeting

Ice-sheets, volcanic eruptions and the geology of our local landscape....

“Landscape Forms and Processes: Macedon – Cobaws”

Speaker: Dr. Neville Rosengren, Environmental Geoscientist
Director, La Trobe University Research Centre for Applied Alpine Ecology

When: 8 pm

Where: Newham Hall, Rochford Rd., Newham

Cost: \$2 members / \$5 non-members



March 31st – May 12th Autumn Property Planning Series – Refer page 6 for full details

April Sat 22nd Friends of Hanging Rock – Spotlight Walk

Members from the Newham Landcare Group are invited to come along to the annual spot light walk at the rock (free entry no charge). Bring along a good torch and appropriate clothing to suit the night.

Starts at 7:00pm and involves a walk around the base of the rock reserve.

Make sure the batteries are fully charged



Saturday July 1st Winter Warmer

Social gathering for those hardy souls prepared to venture out in mid-winter and who aren't heading North.

When: 6.30pm for dinner

Where: 159 Dons Rd., Newham (to be confirmed)

What to bring: drinks and something for the shared table

RSVP: Penny Roberts 5427 0795

Other Events

Spring Planting

Wildflower Walk

End of year social function, including the annual egg-competition

These events will be a great opportunity for all members to interact.

More details to follow when events are confirmed.



tossing

meet and

Roadside Weeds Project.



The weed control spraying to Dons Road, Egans Lane and Jim Road has commenced by the Council following the recommendations of the Roadside Weeds Group. The work is programmed to be complete by the end of March 2006. Caldwell's Road will be included in next years programme.

To assist the Macedon Ranges Shire Council in mapping roadside weed infestation and the effectiveness of the spraying. Lachlan Milne, Environmental Resource Officer has trained a number of group members in mapping techniques. Mapping has been completed in Dons Road, Egans lane and Jim Road with mapping of Caldwell's Road, Coach/Rochford Road to be completed shortly.

In addition instruction is to be given to project members in April on how to enter the information collected by the group into the MRSC data base.



Clean Up Australia Day - 5th March 2006

Thanks to everyone who contributed to a successful day. Particular thanks to Fran and Neil who organised the clean up. I am sure you all noticed that Newham, Dons Road and Rochford Road were all much cleaner.

Membership Drive



A dynamic Landcare Group relies on its membership. Please encourage others to join and contribute to your community. Forms can be obtained from any member of the committee or at the Newham General Store. Members are also invited to consider committee membership and are invited to contribute thoughts to any committee meeting. Please contact any committee member if interested.



Frogs by Paul Marmara

There does not seem to be a day that goes by without encountering frogs in our local area in one way or the other. Be it in the pond, under a rock or in the vegetable garden.

Just the other day we came across a spotted marsh frog , which is one of the most common frogs in eastern Australia , but very pretty, and then, a day later my favourite, a Pobblebonk frog under a large tarpaulin. It was the size of my cupped hand. I picked it up and relocated it to another part of the garden, given I had to move the tarpaulin.

“Australia can lay claim to some of the most fascinating and spectacular frogs in the world. In fact, Australia is home to over 210 of the world’s almost 5,000 frog species. The vast majority of these Australian frogs are unique to Australia because of the comparative isolation of the continent

Victoria has at least 35 species, all of which belong to one of two frog families; the tree frog and the ground frogs. Some ground frogs are also referred to as marsh frogs..

The origin of the this frog fauna can be traced back millions of years to a time when dinosaurs still walked the earth and South America, Antartica and Australia formed part of a large landmass known as Gondwana” extract taken from frogs of Melbourne Want to know more? Visit the Victorian Frog Groups website www.frogs.org.au

Autumn Property Planning Series- March 31st - May 12th



Twenty five properties have signed up to do this program of six sessions.

This series aims to give participants the skills and motivation to develop individual property plans [with an environmental focus], to initiate broader scale environmental planning through the formation of 'cluster groups' of participants and to facilitate future applications for funding support by enabling Newham Landcare to develop a database of projects 'ready-to-go' .

There are excellent specialist speakers for each topic, as listed below.

****The first two sessions have already occurred,**

Please Note: It is still possible to enrol for individual sessions - \$5 per head [except am of April 29th which is free]

Or \$25 for the series ... but the deadline for production of aerial photos with overlay sheets has passed. RSVP to Penny Roberts if you intend to attend the individual sessions (for catering purposes [5427 0795]) We have applied for funding from Dept. of Victorian Communities and Australia Post and, if successful, this will be used to produce aerial photos for late entry participants in the series.

Dates and Topics

- Friday March 31st "Fauna issues - How to Plan Wildlife Landscapes" Dr Jim Radford [Deakin Uni.] & Waterway issues part 1. Newham Primary School 7 pm.
- Saturday April 1st "Waterway Issues" part 2 Melbourne Water. Newham Primary School 9 am.
- Friday April 21st "Land classification & responsible property management"
Dr. John Webbware [Melbourne Uni. & Clarkefield Landcare]
Newham Hall 7:30 pm.
- Saturday April 29th Case study on planning wildlife landscapes - Colleen Wood Revegetation & regeneration -techniques & tools - Jim Robinson [Greening Australia] – Field Session. E.V.C.'s & vegetation protection - Andrea Keleher [Vegetation Officer, D.S.E.]. Hanging Rock Farm 9 am.
Also in the hall is Aesops Attic with a book display and sale as well as an indigenous understorey plant display and sale.
- Friday May 12th \ Pest plants and animals - Gordon Meyer [private contractor "Landpro"]. Newham Hall 7 pm.



**Hope every-one has a
Happy Easter!**