

Landcare matters

Hotham-Williams sub-catchment update



PHCC
Peel-Harvey Catchment Council

Edition 81
November 2023



NRM is the management of natural resources such as land, water, soils, plants and animals. It brings together land use planning, water management, biodiversity conservation and sustainability of industries such as agriculture, mining, tourism, fisheries and forestry.



What do straight lines and squares have to do with river restoration?

The Oxford Dictionary defines monitoring as observing or checking the progress or quality of something over a period of time. In the case of restoration projects, this involves a number of methods that allow us to measure the changes we are making in degraded natural areas.

A regular method of monitoring used at our project sites is the installation of transects, which are straight lines of a set length in a specific location, along which standardised observations and measurements are made. Once established, monitoring sites are revisited annually to measure change over time.

Transects were established last year at the Pumphreys Bridge, Williams and Quindanning River Action Plan sites within riverine vegetation where weed control and revegetation are already occurring. The standardised observations included in each

monitoring effort were fauna activity, groundcover/mid-storey/canopy species, canopy cover, and species richness within square quadrats attached to the transect. Permanent photo monitoring points are also included in the transect to provide an additional visual indication of change.

River Health Assessments were carried out during the development of the Hotham-Williams River Action Plan in 2019-2020. These included detailed water quality testing which can be repeated at a future date to also measure changes in parameters such as nutrients, turbidity, temperature, oxygen, salinity and presence/absence of aquatic fauna species.

A drone was recently used as an additional monitoring tool at the Williams and Pumphreys Bridge sites. Once again, the focus was on the main areas of current and

intended activities. This gives us a fresh perspective of the sites, watch this space for some drone images!

This project is funded through partnerships with both South32 Worsley Alumina and Newmont Australia (Boddington).



Williams quadrat



Williams transect



PHCC staff Kristy Gregory on location

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Talkin' regenerative land & livestock with Bruce Maynard

Renowned regenerative agriculturalist and 2022 National Bob Hawke Landcare Award winner Bruce Maynard from near Bowden NSW visited Wandering on Tuesday 24th October to speak to a keen crowd of 30 people about techniques for managing land and livestock for more regenerative outcomes. But what does that even mean?

Bruce explained how some land management practices that were 'softer' on the land, like his 'no-kill' method of sewing crops into pasture or cover-crops which reduces soil disturbance and erosion while also supporting soil health. He also explained the benefits of providing support for soil-driven nutrient cycling which over time becomes less dependent on synthetic inputs.

The group, who came from the local district as well as further afield in Perth, also

got to hear about Bruce's tips on managing livestock in rotational programs through a better understanding of their behaviour, as well as using their grazing patterns to better understand the land capacity at any given time. Using a hands on approach Bruce demonstrated some livestock management principles and the impact changing animal behaviour can have of production, paddock health and a farmer's time.

There was a lot of discussion on how changing traditional land practices can lead to challenges with pests, cash-flow and paddock/fencing management; but with Bruce's inclusive and inquisitive communication it was evident that taking a no-judgement approach and respecting the unique situations each farmer faces on their land is a key aspect of his regenerative

farming methods. As well as the importance of maintaining profitable enterprises!

Following some refreshments everyone headed out to one of the Watts' farms north of Wandering and had wide ranging discussions on regenerative farming practices in the district and what threats and opportunities there could be along the way.

Bruce was lucky to get away given all the questions he had, but it just shows there is lots of interest in the Hotham-Williams district for information on regenerative agricultural practices, however it is done and whatever other name it might have - let's just call it farming for the future!

This event was supported by RegenWA, the WA Regenerative Livestock Producers Inc, and the Peel-Harvey Catchment Council



Regenerative land & livestock field day



Watts' farm, Wandering



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These projects are supported by the Peel-Harvey Catchment Council through funding from Newmont Boddington, South32 Worsley Alumina and the Shires of Boddington, Cuballing, Wandering and Williams

