

MARCH, 2006

MURTHO ROAD IRRIGATORS

COMMITTEE'S MOVEMENTS

The committee has remained very involved with the Murtho Road Irrigators despite it being the time of Harvest.

The group has organised and run industry "shed" meetings to get feed back on what these groups would like to see in the Paringa & Murtho Strategic Environment Initiative and actions they would like completed.

These meetings were a great success with much information coming out of them.

Much of the committee's focus has been on the development of the Initiative, but they have also decided to take a new direction in the outcomes they wish to achieve, taking a more environment and floodplains view, whilst still looking at off site impacts of irrigation.

The committee also were invited to attend an announcement for funding of a Salt Interception Scheme for Murtho, made in January this year at Nanya Vineyards. This was a great reward for all the time and effort the committee has put to achieve this goal and the support they have received from you, the community.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE SALT INTERCEPTION SCHEME

As many of you already know, an announcement was made early this year by Karlene Maywald, stating that funding has been approved for the fast tracking of a Salt Interception Scheme in the Murtho area.

Funding will be spent on investigations on salt mitigation solutions and will be primarily looking at; identifying and understanding the regions hydrology, developing a ground water model and a conceptual SIS design, identifying disposal options (all of which were completed in 2005), as well as project costing and economic analysis and submitting a Approval Submission to the MDBC Ministerial Council.

Milestones for 2006

First Quarter: Complete project costing and economic analysis; model accreditation; submit proposal to MDBC for approval .

Second Quarter: Investigate drilling to fill gaps



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PARINGA & MURTHO STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE

The Murtho Strategic Environmental Initiative is progressing well after 'industry shed' meetings were held late last year and community opinions sought via a pro-forma handout.

We are nearing a first draft stage where by we will be seeking to clarify that all issues have been raised by the community and to seek input by other stakeholders.

The plan will take into account the assets and threats that have been raised and looks at potential ways these threats can be mitigated.

This plan needs to be driven and backed by the community so it is essential your comments are included at this draft stage.

The draft plan will be available in mid April 2006, and will be available in two versions – a summary document and a complete version.

To have a copy sent to you please contact Tahlee at the Renmark to Border LAP on 8586 4346.

For Community Comment

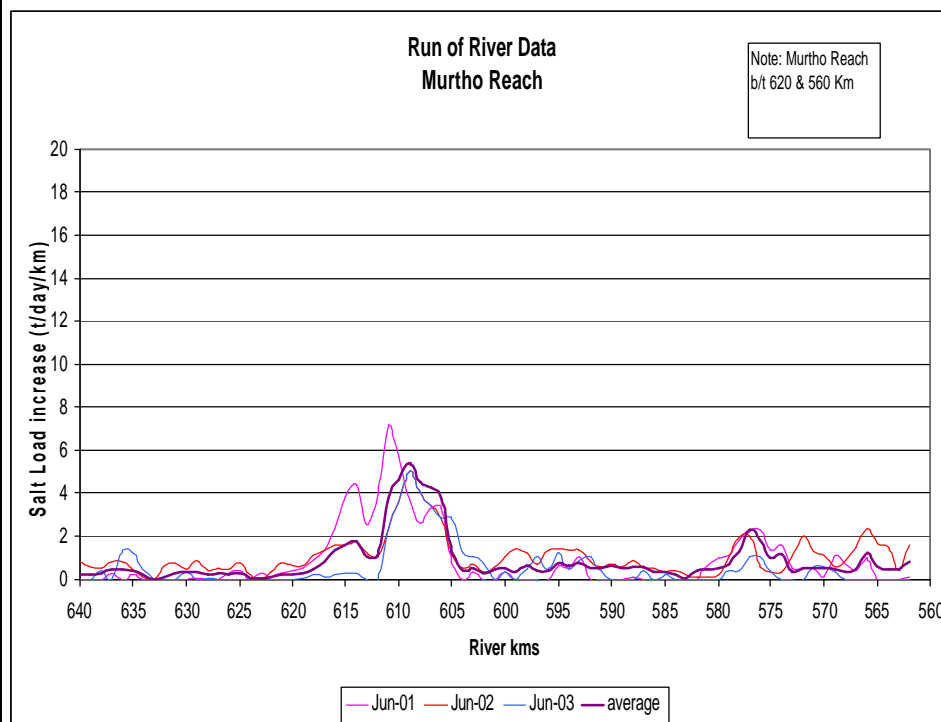
The **Draft Paringa & Murtho Strategic Environment Initiative**

will soon be complete and available for comment at the end of APRIL.

To receive a copy of either the shorter summary document or the complete draft plan please call Tahlee at LAP on 8586 4346

Comment will be due 3 weeks after the release of the document

RUN OF THE RIVER DATA



This is derived from run of the River data undertaken from the Department of Water Land and Biodiversity Conservation. The data is taken using a GPS and an automatic salinity monitoring device linked to a lap top computer and is used as a guide as to where salinity hot spots occur along the River Murray. Over time a picture can be built up of where saline inflows are occurring and how much salt is entering in these places. The

Murtho LWMP reach general runs the length between 620 and 560 km. One of the influences that occur on this graph is that of the Chowilla Creek entering the River Murray. The run of the River is not as exact science and it is completed at a similar time each year under similar conditions.

INTEGRATED FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PLANNING

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the Murtho Road Irrigators as the new Floodplain Planning Project Officer and discuss how we can work together to improve floodplain health and the local environment.

I have recently started with the SA MDB NRM Board, as a Wetland Project Officer for the Upper Murray. Previously I was an Implementation Officer at the Berri Barmera/Loxton Bookpurnong LAPs. My new role will not only be working with wetland community groups, but will also focus on the integrated floodplain planning program for the region.



What is floodplain planning?

Floodplain Planning will be looking at prioritising actions within a localised floodplain area and will identify management tools such as weir pool manipulation, wetland management, salt interception schemes and flooding trials, whilst considering how to undertake them in an integrated manner to gain optimal environmental benefits for floodplain health.

The Floodplain Planning process is intended to have strong links to the Land and Water Management Planning process and provide more technical expertise relating to floodplain issues.

Three Riverland LWMP areas have been identified as potential areas to trial the Floodplain Planning process; Pike, Bookpurnong and Murtho.

Where to from here?

Having said all this, the first port of call in facilitating the Floodplain Planning process is to talk to you, the community, and find out if or how you would like to be involved. I hope to work closely with the local community into the future and produce a planning document that will bring together your knowledge of the local floodplain area, what you would like to see happen and how these actions might be achieved as well as integrate technical knowledge and floodplain management tools.

For further information, please contact Caren St-John Sweeting at the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board (SAMDBNRMB), on 8582 4477 or 0427 979 054, or via email on csweeting@rivermurray.sa.gov.au

RBLAP'S REVEGETATION SCHEME

The closing date for expressions of interest for this years "Revegetation Incentives Scheme" has been and gone, with many quality project being proposed by landholders for funding.

Projects ranged from the regeneration of cliff faces, creating habitats for wildlife and linking existing remnant patches through the planting of corridors.

A total of 6 projects will be funded with areas ranging from 0.3 hectares to 8 hectares, including activities such as seedling planting, direct seeding, and pest management (not covered under funding).

Those interested in acquiring funding for next year are encouraged to contact the Renmark LAP Expressions of Interest will be called for in September for 2007 projects to allow for sufficient planning and seed collection.

CROP SURVEY

Its almost that time of year again. The crop survey will once again commence in approximately May/June, with Tahlee contacting ALL growers, as well as those properties that have not yet been surveyed.

If you wish to get your survey out of the way ASAP then you are urged to contact the Tahlee on 8586 4346 to organise a time to meet or just to inform her that you have no changes to your crops or irrigation infrastructure between July 1st 2005 and June 31st 2006.

For those of you who are new or unfamiliar with crop surveys, this is a process in which crop data is collected and stored at the LAP office and distributed to authorised organisations of your choice.

This is also a part of your water licensing agreement (as part of the Water Allocation Plan) and data collected used in calculating your water use efficiency figure.

After completing the survey the LAP will also provide you with an aerial photo of your property and details of the crop information you have provided.

Also, for those interested growers, a report has been written on the information collected in last years survey.

If you are interested in seeing how much area is planted to which crop and irrigation system as well as ages of different crops and a comparison to the previous year, then a copy of the report is available by contacting the LAP office.



Paringa Island

LAP Contact Details

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Diviner 2000

There are still several Diviners up for sale from the Diviner Trials held by LAPs, SA MDB NRMB and CIT/RIT

If your interested in purchasing a unit please contact

Noel Johnston, SA MDB NRMB

Ph: 8582 4477

Email: njohnston@rivermurray.sa.gov.au

Members Contact details

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