WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

The Murray Wetland Carbon Storage project aims to assist landholders rehabilitate wetlands to increase their capacity to store carbon and improve biodiversity. The project will also support research into Indigenous values and historical uses of wetlands that aims to build connections to country.

The project is a partnership between Murray CMA and the Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group Ltd. (a not-for-profit community group), funded by the Australian Government’s Biodiversity Fund.

Murray CMA’s Wetland Inventory report (2010) found that one third of the wetlands in the catchment have been cleared of native vegetation, which along with changes to water regimes and grazing, is reducing both the capacity of wetlands to store carbon and maintain biodiversity values.

With careful management, wetlands can become a major potential carbon sink, with high levels of productivity and the important incorporation of carbon into sediments.

WHY ARE WETLANDS IMPORTANT?

- They play a key role in water and nutrient cycles at the local and landscape scale.
- Many endangered species make use of wetlands e.g. the Southern Bell Frog and Australian Painted Snipe.
- They provide nesting sites for water birds noted in international conservation agreements.
- Wetlands are significant cultural sites for Indigenous people.
- They enhance the productivity and environmental value of nearby areas.
HOW WILL THE PROJECT BE DELIVERED?

Activities will be designed to provide carbon storage and increase biodiversity through on-ground works to rehabilitate degraded wetlands and enhance existing wetland and riparian vegetation. Funding incentives will be available to support landholders who meet the project criteria with on-ground wetland management activities such as:

- revegetation
- grazing management
- pest and weed control and
- environmental water delivery (where appropriate and feasible).

Technical guidance to support ongoing management of project wetlands will be provided by Murray CMA and the Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group Ltd.

TARGETING PEST PLANTS

Weeds of National Significance and non-listed, but locally important invasive plant species, will both be targeted in the project, as prioritised by the Murray Weeds Strategy. Species will vary from site to site but may include:

- arrowhead
- lippia
- elodea
- alligator weed
- noogoora burr
- horehound
- serrated tussock and
- blackberry.

TARGETING PEST ANIMALS

Pest animal species targeted through the project will include carp and gambusia within wetland areas, and rabbits and foxes in fringing riparian zones.

Carp are challenging invaders and degraders of aquatic ecosystems in Australia. They have been shown to have direct impacts on riverine and wetland ecosystems and have been linked to reductions in diversity and abundance of native fish e.g. carp gudgeon.

Gambusia are another common pest fish in wetlands, displacing native small-bodied fish and impacting on frog populations.

Rabbit populations have a significant impact on mortality rates of new plants, as well as damaging culturally significant assets such as Indigenous burial sites. Fox populations have detrimental impacts on native birds and other ground dwelling native species.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Nicky Bruce  
Murray Catchment Management Authority  
PO Box 797  
Albury NSW 2640  
Phone: 02 6051 2232  
E-mail: Nicky.Bruce@cma.nsw.gov.au  
Website: www.murray.cma.nsw.gov.au

Sarah Ning  
Murray Darling Wetlands Working Group Ltd.  
PO Box 7016  
East Albury NSW 2640  
Phone: 0427 376 157  
E-mail: sarah.ning1@gmail.com  
Website: www.murraydarlingwetlands.com.au