

September in Our Catchment

Our week at Floriade was a great opportunity to show off all your good work. Following the pattern set by Bayne Geikie, we travelled around the catchment on the weekend and picked up samples from most of the sites. We then displayed them on the catchment map, and listed the pH and the Total Dissolved Solids for each site. This let us tell Canberra and the world that the water quality in the Queanbeyan River is very fine, and that the Molonglo River water passing Coppins Crossing is at standard, even with Queanbeyan and Canberra in between.

The other fun with water was provided by the very photogenic golden green algae from Queanbeyan Weir and the rotifers that ate them! The whirling balls of *Synura* collected in the light on the Lund Slide on the microscope stage and so danced on the screen of the lap-top. The rotifers rolled in and picked off their lunch and left. And this went on all day! It was great to be able to tell people that lakes and weirs in the Capital Region have plenty of golden green algae in August and September and this provides a healthy food source for the rest of the food chain.

Results for the month:

Yarralumla Ck was flowing more than usual, and the pH and the Electrical Conductivity were up, as Friday's rain got things moving again. This was the story in many places. Sullivans Creek at the top has now got a site above and below the new wetlands. The site below the wetlands gave all the signals for a disturbed site while at the other end, in the University, the water reflects stability in the recently cleaned areas. The Molonglo sites are still showing high electrical conductivity, but the frogs are out and about! Indeed everyone mentioned life, especially frogs, for at least one site visited. The Queanbeyan is still producing good quality water, even when some of it is being used to keep the dust down during the 'grading season'. Thank-you all again for your enthusiasm.

Macroinvertebrate Refresher and Training day:

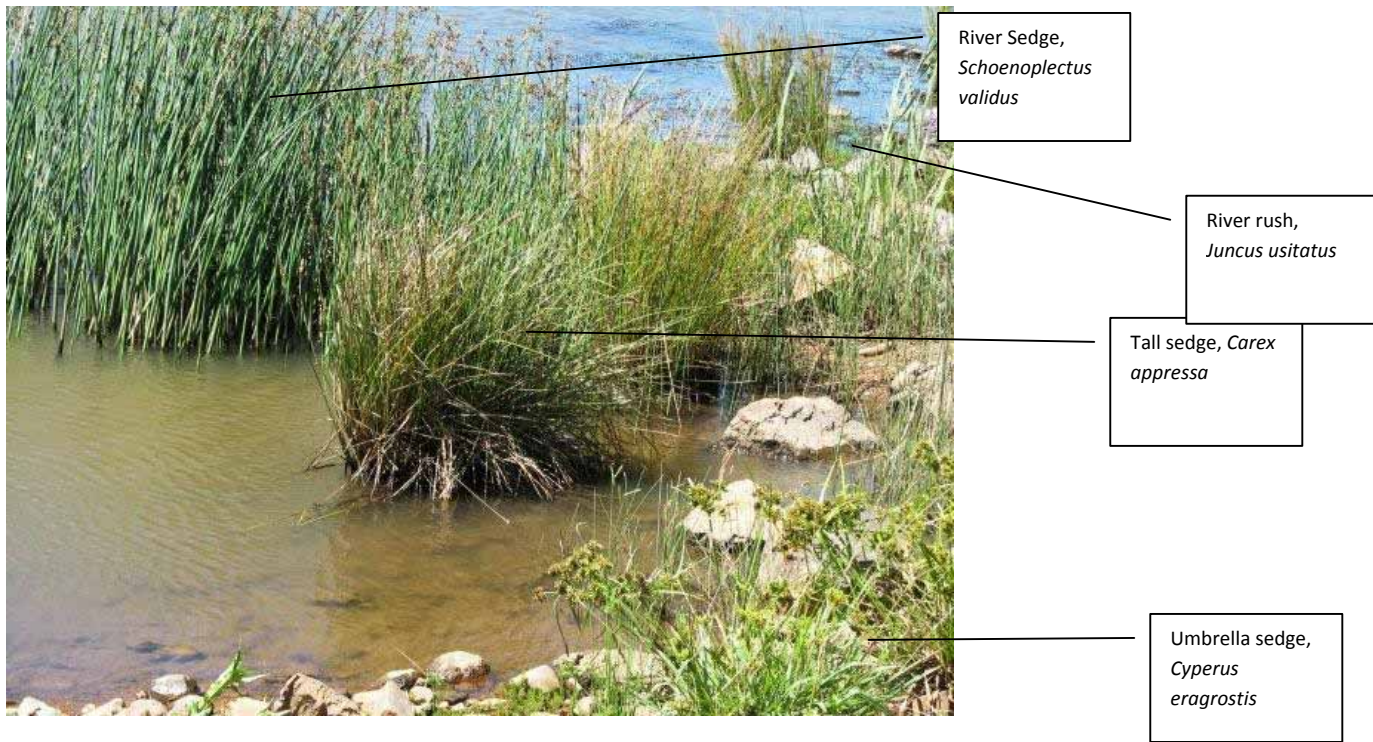
The most appropriate weekend to hold a training session on macroinvertebrates and parcel out equipment would be the 14th/15th November. There is a birds field day on the morning of the 14th (at the Begbie's at Rossi) but that would be over by lunch time. My plan would be to have an afternoon session, ending with an afternoon tea! I would like to have the session at and below the Queanbeyan weir because there are interesting animals in the system, and the gear is at the office.

Please let me know if you would prefer the Saturday (14th) or the Sunday (15th) as soon as possible.

Habitat and Site Condition

Many of you will be conscious of the condition of your site and may want to report on how it is from time to time. We do have an appraisal system, put together a few years ago to help farmers report on the condition of their creeks and river frontage along the Murrumbidgee. Its called Rapid Appraisal of Riparian Condition or RARC. With a little training we can all make a RARC of a site in just a few minutes. And it only has to be done once a year! In our reporting the RARC is used to supplement the overall catchment Landscape health component of the CHIP scoring. We will have another training day for this probably in the new year.

Part of the process involves becoming more aware of the native and invasive plants in the system. And that can begin any time. Just now the sedges are putting on their fresh growth, and many have new flower-heads. They really are not that hard to separate.



These four, and a couple of others (Clubrush and Spike rush) are the ones that are most likely to form large patches in competition with Bulrush/Cumbungi and River Reeds. Umbrella Rush is an invader from the Americas and can be a pest; the others are all locals.



The picture on the left is of the fruiting head of *Carex appressa* the Tall Sedge. The general colour is a washed out brown or straw, and the flowers are in small groups along the stem. The River Sedge has red-brown heads of flowers in upright spiky clumps, and the stems are cylindrical. This helps distinguish it from the club rushes, which have red-brown spiky clumps of flowers, but they usually hang down, and three-sided stems and leaves below the flower-heads.

There are a few guides to water-plants and riparian vegetation in general about in the specialist bookshops. *Down by the Riverside* by Rodney Falconer was written for the Goulburn area but applies well round here too.