

Wetlands Day in Whyalla

By Fai CHIVELL

World Wetlands Day is being combined with the Clean Up Whyalla Day this Sunday.

This is an opportunity for real action plans to be initiated for the Whyalla Wetlands.

The Revive Our Wetlands 'Wetland Education Space' program is a partnership between Conservation Volunteers Australia and BHP Billiton.

It aims to help make wetland related projects on or near schools a reality.

Revive our Wetlands School Program began in 2007 and has assisted over 50 schools across Australia to undertake wetland projects at or near their schools.

The program enables schools to obtain extra hands to get projects done.

This may be creating a native frog pond, planting wetland friendly gardens, or rehabilitating a wetland or creek line.

Expressions of interest in the Wetland Education Space program close on Friday, April 10, 2009.

Interested schools across South Australia can visit www.reviveourwetlands.net/schools for further information or call (freecall) 1800 032 501.

In 2007 a group of conservation volunteers from California, USA came to Whyalla under the Wetland Education Space program and worked closely with Whyalla City Council, Whyalla Landcare, the Rotary Club of Whyalla, the Rotary Club of Whyalla Norrie and the Whyalla Special School.

The objective of the volunteers, and interested parties was to create a gabion mattress to filter stormwater running from

Billing Street.

Students and teachers from Whyalla Special School spent the day collecting rubbish littered around the ponds and pathway.

It was an extremely successful endeavour and everyone concerned hoped the Revive Our Wetlands program would stimulate community interest in taking part in making the Whyalla Wetlands an attractive tourist spot.

With the extended drought the Whyalla Wetlands have been experiencing a rapid decline in water supply with the small, middle pond along Billing Street drying up completely.

It recovered briefly with the heavy rainfall we experienced late last year. However, the recent heatwave has caused rapid evaporation and it is once again almost dry.

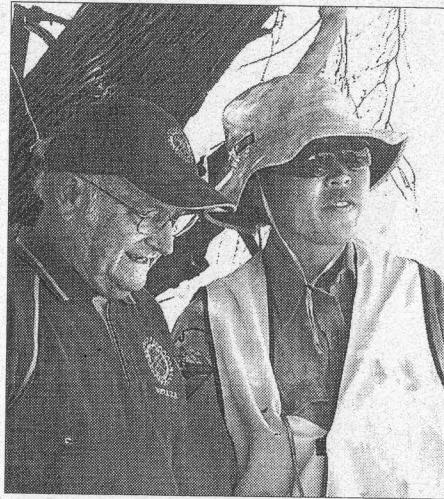
The larger ponds are also suffering with water levels dropping day by day.

Wetlands that rely solely on stormwater need extra special attention and it is necessary to put into operation a very specific plan to keep them healthy.

The Whyalla City Council has initiated a few suggestions from Larry Babbington's five-year management plan, which were submitted last year but the wetlands need community support to survive.

At present contractors are undertaking extensive infrastructure work necessary for the wetland's rehabilitation and survival.

Clean Up Australia Day on Sunday is a great opportunity for families, schools, social clubs and individuals to get involved in keeping our Wetlands clear of rubbish and for people to acquaint them-




Joint venture: Glen Eden from the Rotary Club of Whyalla with Jolie Urushiebata, Conservation Volunteer from California, USA at the Wetlands last year.


selves with the wetland area.

Low water levels offer the opportunity for the ponds and drains to be cleared of rubbish.

We have the technology to create a unique stormwater wetland right in our own backyard, but it needs an environmentally aware community to put in a concerted effort to make it happen.

The Revive Our Wetlands scheme and the annual Clean Up Australia Day are great opportunities for the community to contact council and express their interest in becoming involved in the ongoing process of rejuvenating this important site for the future.

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OHSW Training NEW in Whyalla



Photo: Mark Braithwaite is lecturing in OHSW at Whyalla Campus

In response to community demand, TAFE SA is now offering training in Occupational Health & Safety in Whyalla and throughout the region. These courses include Certificate IV in OHSW and OHSW for Managers and Supervisors.

Lecturer, Mark Braithwaite, stated that he "is very keen to support people to become qualified in the area and has been very pleased with the positive response from students".

Like other Certificate IV level courses, OHSW training can be completed using a flexible external mode of learning. A Commonwealth Incentive scheme (conditions apply) also enables eligible participants to complete this

Students collect cash in casuals



Whyalla High School students took good advantage of casual clothes day on Tuesday and demonstrated their sympathy to victims of the Victoria bushfires