

Dear all, I hope that February is treating you well. Just a quick note about our next sampling weekend which is on the 18th/19th Feb. Also- some newsy bits for your enjoyment.

This is the new site at the upstream end of Cooma Back Creek

Here are some pictures of the new site at the top end of Cooma Back Creek. An old concrete causeway provides an ideal sampling platform at this site, conveniently shaded by a large willow.

The Cooma Back Creek is an interesting catchment, rising at the foothills of local landmarks 'the Brothers' (three hills which are prominent on the skyline around Cooma). The top end of Cooma Back Creek is rather undulating and the catchment includes a couple of small 'Monaro lakes'. The area is dominated by native grasslands and is used for grazing purposes. The creek provides stock water and is largely un-fenced.



Welcome to Alison- our newest volunteer

Alison lives beside and looks after the Cooma Back Creek, upstream of Lambie Gorge. She knows the area intimately and often walks and rides along the Cooma Back Creek and surrounding areas. Alison has completed her first training session in Jan. She will take on the Cooma Back Creek at Kiah Ave site. While we were doing the training a duck and her paddle of ducklings larked about in the pool, having emerged from the thick stand of reeds upstream. It was a nice welcome for Alison at her site! :)



Water levels are at a summer time low

Water levels have gotten very low over the summer season, with water levels getting very very low. The Numeralla River, Badja and Bredbo Rivers are starting to form pools and the flow is going underground. River level data is showing a steady decline over the month. Plots for the Murrumbidgee River (at Mittagang), Numeralla River, Bredbo River and Strike A Light Creek are below. (I think the Bredbo Gauge is not reading correctly where it shows '0', as the

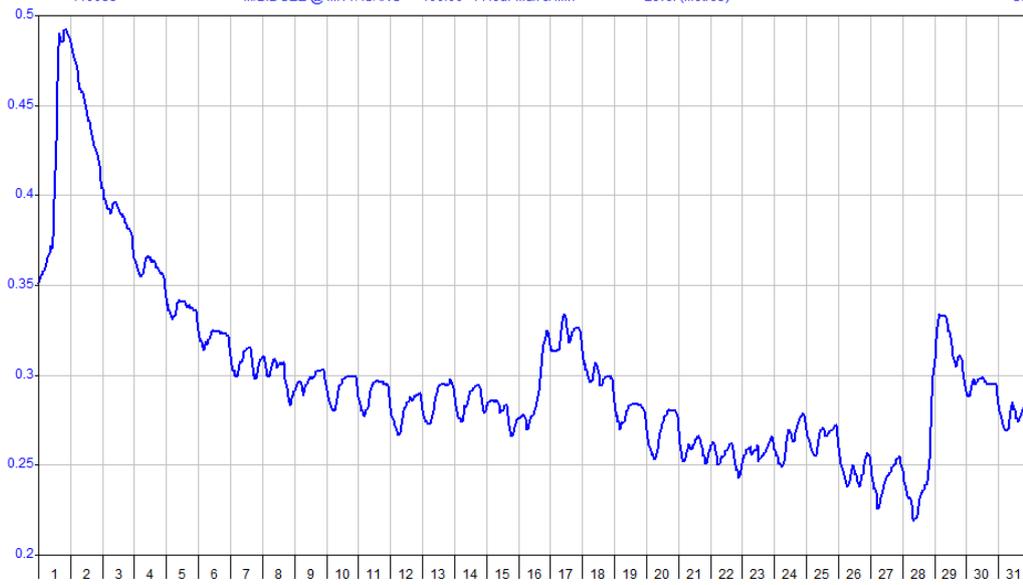
DPI Water

HYPLOT V133 Output 09/02/2017

01/01/2017 to 01/02/2017

2017

410033 MIBIDGEE @ MITTAGANG 100.00 1 Hour Max & Min Level (Metres) CP



normal low level is 0.45.)

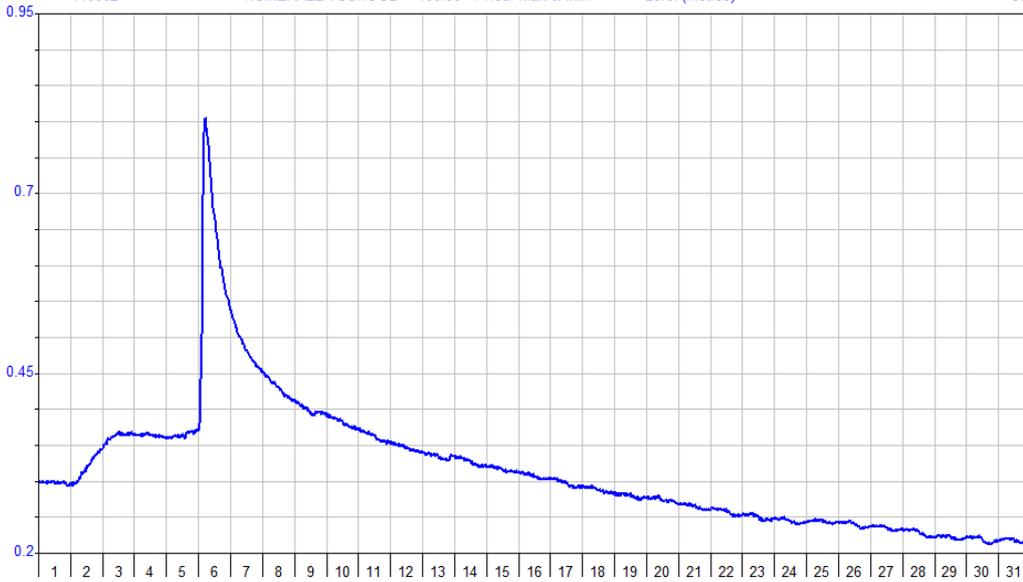
DPI Water

HYPLOT V133 Output 09/02/2017

01/01/2017 to 01/02/2017

2017

410062 NUMERALLA SCHOOL 100.00 1 Hour Max & Min Level (Metres) CP



DPI Water

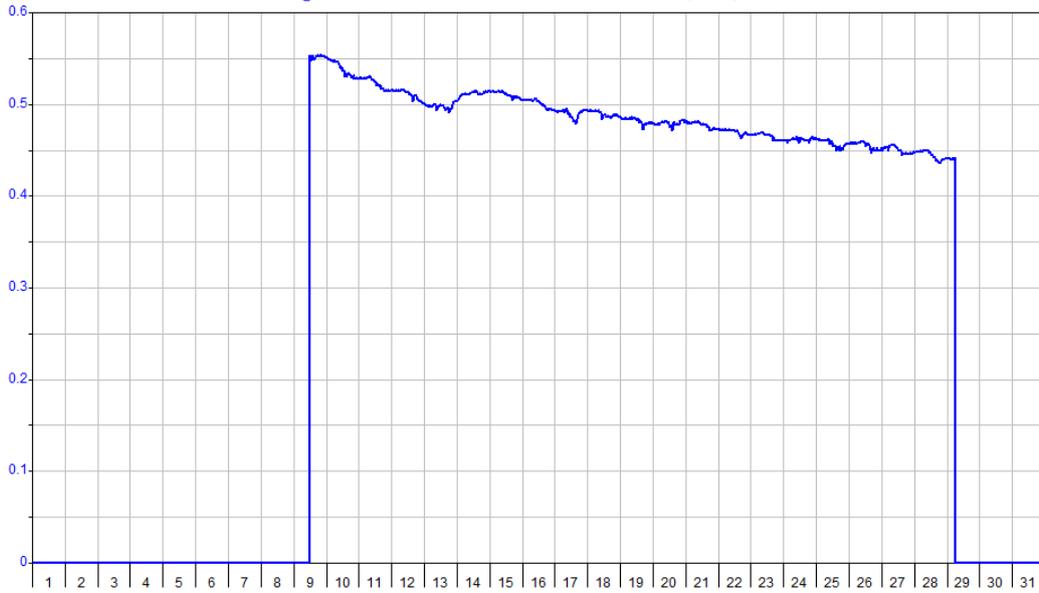
HYPLOT V133 Output 09/02/2017

01/01/2017 to 01/02/2017

2017

41000270 BREDBO@BREDBO STN 100.00 1 Hour Max & Min Level (Metres)

CP



DPI Water

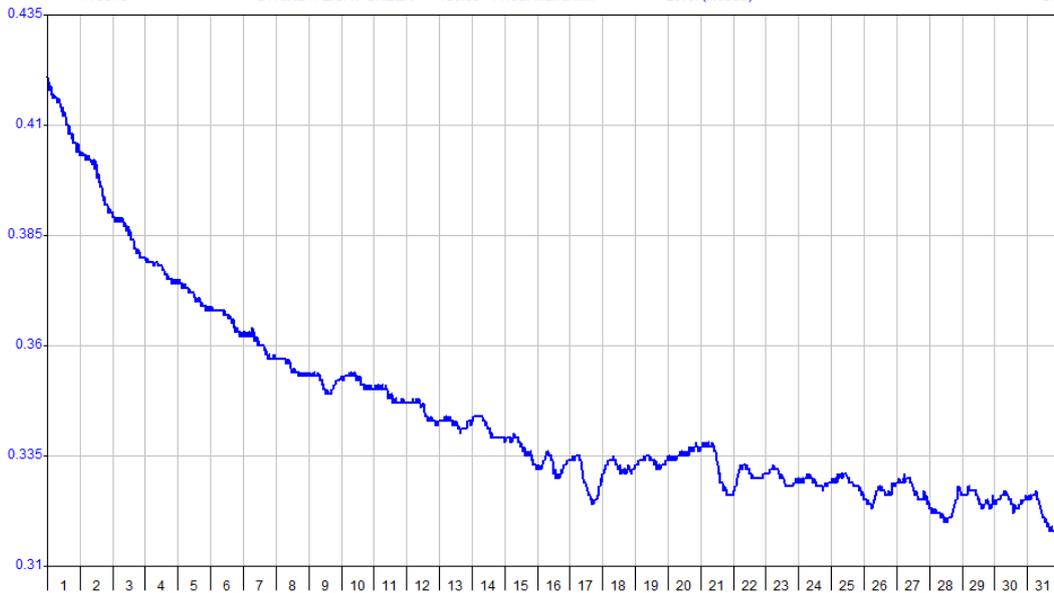
HYPLOT V133 Output 09/02/2017

01/01/2017 to 01/02/2017

2017

410076 STRIKE-A-LIGHT CREEK 100.00 1 Hour Max & Min Level (Metres)

CP



Low flow conditions may change water chemistry as water evaporates and water becomes increasingly 'soupy' (that should be a technical term). It is common for water temperatures to become higher, EC levels increase and a slick may be seen found on top of the water. Algae may increase. If water turns green (and looks as if someone has tipped in some paint) it could be an algal bloom. Stock should not be allowed to drink this water. Carp or other fish may be spotted with levels are so low. Don't forget to record the sighting on Feral Fish Scan. Below is a picture of the Badja River, exposing its bare bones and with a scummy film on the surface.



Clean Up Australia Day event on Cooma Creek will 'Keep Cooma Creek Clean'

Clean Up Australia Day is coming up on Sunday the 5th of March. Cooma Waterwatch will once again support our local Cooma event, which we have named 'Keep Cooma Creek Clean Day'. Save this date if you are close to Cooma and please come along if you can spare the time. I am ordering some awesome waders so we can get into the creek and clean up the area around the platypus survey site...which tends to cop a lot of litter as it is downstream of town. I will send around a flier soon.



Orange Hawkweed field day

Orange Hawkweed has recently been found on grazing country in the Monaro Region (it was thought to only occur in Kosciuszko National Park). It has the potential to become a serious weed! This emerging weed has successfully been eradicated where early detection and control is in place. Being alert and able to spot this weed is key. Learn more about this weed and how to identify it at an upcoming field day on Monday 27th Feb, Rocky Plains Fire Shed, 9:30-12:00. Please RSVP Jo Powells on 64521455 or 0429785986. I have attached the flier.



Remember: Safety first when sampling

Please take care while sampling. It is very hot out there and people are reporting high numbers of snakes so please watch out. Please take care on slippery and muddy surfaces if accessing areas with low water levels.

Ensure that you have the first aid kit (including snake bandages) with you when you go waterwatching. There should be one in your kit. If not, please let me know and I can give you one. Take emergency communications when sampling and take someone with you if possible. Remember a mobile phone can still be used to call emergency help, if the phone tells you you can make emergency calls by dialing 112. I also have an EPIRB at the office which can be borrowed. Please let someone know when and where you are going out and when you are expected to return.

Links to waterwatch resources

The resource manual can be found on the Upper Murrumbidgee Waterwatch website: <http://www.act.waterwatch.org.au/Waterwatch%20Manual.html>

Data is submitted to the ALA data portal. The link is: <http://root.ala.org.au/bdrs-core/umww/home.htm>

Please report platypus, water rat and carp sightings and any other notable things for your site

It is common to see carp in summer, at the water surface or jumping out of the water (their yellow/orange bodies are a telltale sign as they jump). Please record any sightings via Feral Fish Scan as well as on your data sheets. This is especially important if you see breeding behaviour (several/lots of carp will be moving vigorously in the water and repeated splashing). The Feral Fish Scan website and app now allow people to download their photos. Please encourage others to record their fish sightings too. We are especially interested to hear about any sightings in Cooma Creek.

Please make a note of any platypus or water rat sightings on your data sheets. Comments about site changes and observations are always welcome and add that little bit extra to our data....we may even include them in next year's CHIP!

Recording events provides useful information

If you notice the river or creek near you changes suddenly (such as flood, become muddy, go green, get an oil slick, gets overgrown by algae etc) in a way which you suspect may be influencing river health, please record this event and let me know as soon as possible. Recording events helps us to address pollution events and to better understand the catchment. Taking photos, time, dates, a turbidity reading are all useful pieces of information. This information is valuable for any waterway, even if you are just passing by and it is not a waterwatch site. Turbidity readings along the river (even if it has a gauge) are still helpful as these can indicate the contribution of pollution from tributaries.

cheers

Antia Brademann
Cooma Region Waterwatch Coordinator