

EstuaryWatch Update April-May 2008

This is a monthly email to let people know of recent achievements and upcoming events for EstuaryWatch.

If you receive this and would like to be removed from the mailing list please reply to email requesting to be removed.

Any person interested in adding something to the update, please send me an email with your written piece toward the end of the month.

2008 Victorian Coastal Awards

As reported in March, EstuaryWatch was short listed as a finalist in the 2008 Victorian Coastal Awards in the category of Innovation. Congratulations again to Kate for tireless work in developing EstuaryWatch, and to all our amazing volunteers and those who assisted in the development of the program, a big thank you. The Sea Search program was the winner in a strongly contested field of finalists. The experience of attending the awards has provided much enthusiasm to continue to grow and strengthen our program.

Night Seminar planned for Anglesea

In the last week of May, a night seminar will be held in Anglesea for EstuaryWatch volunteers and guests. The aim is to further develop a greater knowledge of estuary processes within our monitoring teams that will help volunteers to interpret their water quality measurements and visual observations. We may never be experts, but we can aim to have knowledge significant enough to form valued opinions.

All EstuaryWatch volunteers will be invited via email (or phone if required) and will be required to RSVP by mid May.

It will be held in the community precinct of Anglesea in the evening from 6 to 8pm with a light supper provided. More information will be provided when our quest speaker is confirmed.

Those interested but not part of the EstuaryWatch monitoring team can contact Rhys if interested in attending by emailing rhys.collins@ccma.vic.gov.au

Current monitoring sites

Full depth profile monitoring takes place on the Barwon River, Spring Creek, Anglesea River, Painkalac Creek and Gellibrand River, and mouth condition monitoring is taking place at Thompson Creek, Kennett River, Erskine River and St George River.

Thompson Creek site established

Following the training day at Anglesea on the 19th of March, a group of EstuaryWatchers have commenced monitoring of Thompsons Creek. Some follow up work is still needed and will be carried out during May.

This makes our coverage extremely thorough and gives exceptionally good data for estuaries from Barwon to Aireys Inlet. All groups within this area are to be commended for their hard work.

EstuaryWatch training

An EstuaryWatch training session took place on Saturday 19th of April in Apollo Bay with 12 participants, from a wide spectrum including Genelg-Hopkins CMA, Melbourne Water, Dept Primary Industry and Southern Otway Landcare Network. As a result of the training we have developed plans to monitor Wild Dog Creek, Skenes Creek and Barham River.

Future Growth

The program's priority for this year is to fine-tuning, especially to assess how the data being collected will be used in decision-making. Discussions are being held with various management agencies and experts to link the data collection and QA/QC protocols with information needs for decision making. Now that a good amount of data has been collected, the program can now be put to the test, as being something more than purely a community education program. Until this work has been done, the intention is to maintain the current level of activity.

The EstuaryWatch program is already operating at more sites than originally budgeted. This is the result of community interest and the desire to extend our breadth of monitoring as far as possible.

We are currently establishing the mouth monitoring sites as these can be established at a relatively low cost. Ideally, some of these estuaries will eventually extend to full depth profiling. Having an established group at each estuary will no doubt make this far easier.

Looking toward 2009 and beyond there is room for some growth if funding can be sourced to extend monitoring at mouth monitoring sites and include Parker River and Elliott River within the Otway National Park, Aire River, and the Curdies near Peterborough.

Quality Assurance and Quality Control

The first biannual Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC) sessions have been held for all locations except for the Barwon (scheduled for mid-May). Results so far suggest that our volunteer monitors are highly skilled with strong knowledge of the processes occurring within their estuaries.

I'm currently investigating how to represent the results on our database.

Additional database entry training was carried out with some of the QA/QC sessions.

A reminder of recent results and our Database

Data is available for public viewing at www.ccma.geomatic.com.au

Search the "Results" section of then enter estuary of your choice.

Estuary Openings

The Aire was also artificially opened under permit on the 7th of April.

That's all for this month. More news at the start of June.

Rhys