

MEDIA RELEASE

20 November 2007



Bug life snapshot to give insight into Ovens River health

While many people loathe the summer insects, more than 150 (one hundred & fifty) students are hoping to find plenty of bug life along the Ovens River this week.

The students will join the North East CMA's Waterwatch team, adult monitors and staff from the Murray Darling Freshwater Research Centre for a 'Macro-invertebrate Snapshot' this Thursday (22 November).

During the day, teams will assess the health of the Ovens River by identifying different species at five sites between Harrietville and Peechelba.

"Healthy river systems are home to many aquatic species, including macro-invertebrates or bugs as they are more commonly called", explained Emma Russell, North East CMA Waterwatch Coordinator.

"By identifying the macro-invertebrates in the Ovens, we can draw conclusions about the health of the river. For example, if the phosphorus levels are high we will see increases in algal blooms, excessive growth of aquatic weeds and a loss of macro-invertebrate diversity."

The 2006 'Snapshot' recorded an abundance of shrimp, stonefly and mayfly nymphs living along the Ovens. This year teams will also test the Ovens River for turbidity, oxygen, pH, temperature and salinity levels.

Ms Russell said the data collected will be used by Waterwatch to establish long term water quality trends and, potentially, in future decision making about river health.

North East Waterwatch is part of a national program that aims to raise general community awareness about the relationship between water quality and the health of the whole catchment. It encourages participation by schools, land users, community groups, industry, local authorities and government who undertake a variety of biological and habitat assessments and physical and chemical tests to build up a picture of the health of their waterways and catchments.

Photo/interview opportunities: Macro-invertebrate Snapshot' sites, Thurs 22 Nov

Time	Town	Location directions
9-10am	Harrietville	Located in recreation reserve (Pioneer Park). Upstream from the school bridge on left hand side.
10 - 11am	Porepunkah	Located as you come into Porepunkah – follow main road to Bright and rear off at picnic reserve before crossing the bridge over the Ovens River
11.30 – 12.30pm	Myrtleford	Buffalo River Road, Apex Park on the Ovens River below Nimmo Bridge (Vic Roads Reference 49 D3)
12 – 1pm	Whorouly	Ovens River, Whorouly at Bridge on Whorouly / Bowmans Road on downstream side on West Bank
2- 3pm	Wangaratta West	Northern Beaches right turn off College Street.

For further information, please contact:

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