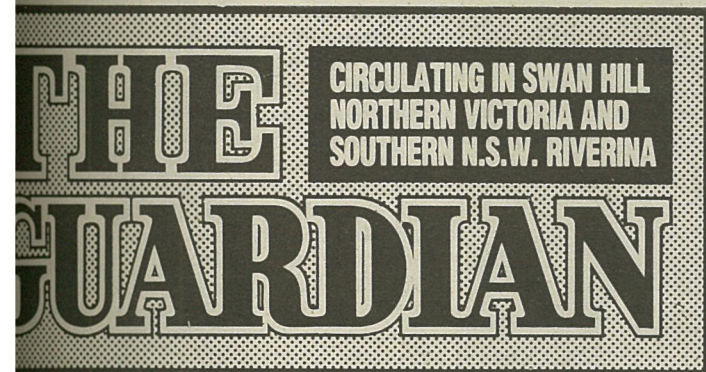


FLOOD BREAK-OUT



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Cunninyeuk farmers fight floods

FARMERS in the Cunninyeuk area have been engaged in an all-out battle with the flooded Niemur River since the weekend.

Strong winds have whipped up waves that are threatening to erode levee banks softened by the prolonged high river.

State Emergency Service personnel from Moulamein and volunteers from the surrounding area rushed to the area on Sunday when a communal levee bank broke due to wave wash.

They plugged the breach on the Fitzpatrick property twice before losing the battle at 4pm, but 20 men and an excavator returned to the same area on Monday night to lay a four-metre wide strip of black polystyrene sheeting held by sandbags below water level.

This time their efforts to reinforce the bank were successful.

About 2km of this plastic sheeting has been laid in the Cunninyeuk and Mallan areas to support levees.

Kelvin Fitzpatrick's property, 68km from Swan Hill by the shortest route, which is no longer accessible, now has about 550 acres under floodwater.

Next door neighbors Noel and Sheila Owers have lost 1500 of their 2000 acres, with only a couple of small sandhills surviving.

Mr Owers said 250 acres of wheat and barley crops and 350 acres of pasture were under water and he had sold 1100 sheep and lambs to save them from the flood.

"We have about 300 ewes and lambs left on the sandhills," he said.

Mr Owers said the Niemur at his property this week was the highest it has been in the 40 years he has been there.

The weekend heartbreak followed a long battle to save levees in which all farmers of the area have been involved.

Even a party from Gippsland who came to the area intending to hunt and fish gave their support.

Constant patrols have been made along the two-metre high banks, but then came the break that could not be controlled.

The people who are affected feel that the Niemur is now being asked to carry too much of the load.

Some say the Edward River could take a lot more of the floodwaters, claiming that twice the volume than in the past is now going down the Niemur.

However, Wakool Council SES controller Neil Whelan said the Edward and Niemur were uncontrolled rivers and the flood followed a natural flow.

The Cunninyeuk area is claimed to be put under further pressure by downstream bottlenecks at Mallan and at the Coonamit Bridge over the Wakool River.

The Niemur and Wakool meet a short distance upstream from the bridge.

Mr Whelan, who had been at the Cunninyeuk flood scene until after midnight Monday night and was back there at 6am yesterday, said he was confident the Moulamein-Swan Hill link via the Tueloga Road detour would remain open.

He said Wakool River waters were up to banks that had been placed along the road shoulders on the approaches to the Coonamit Bridge, but they appeared to be holding.

However, the situation would remain precarious as long as the strong winds continued, and it could be another fortnight before river levels began to drop, he warned.



Sorry about that!

WE didn't mean to drive you mad.

Readers puzzling over our fashion feature find-the-labels competition, puzzle no more.

There are in fact only nine hidden labels, not ten, as advertised in the competition rules.

We don't quite know how it happened, but we do apologise for the error and any headaches it may have caused.

Readers have until 5pm on November 5 to get their entries in and have a chance to win a \$300 shopping voucher.

Entries should be dropped into *The Guardian* offices at 54 McCallum Street, Swan Hill or sent to PO Box 493, Swan Hill, 3585.

Win for Polly was in the bag

FIVE-YEAR-OLD Effie Fox was pretty proud of her pet goose "Polly" at Swan Hill South Pre School last week.

"Polly", who was quite content in her shopping basket, was judged prettiest pet at the school's most unusual pet day.

The aim of the day was to make the children understand what agricultural shows are all about.

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