

Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 58, May - June 2007

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Diary Dates

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- Understanding Carbon on Farms.....28th June
- Working on Country Grants29th June
- Nuffield Scholarships close30th June
- Armidale PMP Course 18th July
- Oaky's Managing Acid Soils Field Day21st July
- National Song Competition closes..... 1st August
- SNELCC Meeting..... 9th August
- Namoi Landscape Management &
State Landcare Forum 25-27th October
- Riverhealth Conference Inverell 19-20th November

Herbert Park Landcare instigates trip to visit Peter Andrews

Story and photos by Karen Zirkler

On Thursday and Friday 7th and 8th of June, 32 participants mostly from the Southern New England, travelled to the Upper Hunter Valley to learn about and see first hand, the work of Peter Andrews and his Natural Sequence Farming.

Travelling by coach, the group spent Thursday afternoon visiting Gerry Harvey's property 'Barramul', approximately 1½ hours west of Muswellbrook in the Widden Valley, where stunning sandstone ridges that flank the valley floors provide specific minerals that produce equally stunning racehorses.

Peter Andrews and his partner Jo, accompanied the group on a creek walk, all the time, pointing out features of the landscape that shape the watercourse and re-hydrate the land. It seemed obvious that the achievements at 'Barramul' are quite amazing, when compared with similar valleys in the district. Indeed, where the 'experimental' area adjoined a traditionally managed area, the fence-line effect was significant.

On our return to Muswellbrook for the night, the group stayed and dined at the John Hunter Motel... and that

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Above - Peter Andrews addresses the New England group on Day 1 of the trip.

was when the rain really came down. Having experienced flood rain in the (dim and distant) past, I could tell this was flood rain! (My first assignment with SNEELCC in 1998 was a trip to the State Landcare Conference in Orange, during which time it rained so much that the coach was delayed on the trip home due to flooding on the Oxley Highway.)

However, a phone call with Peter Andrews on Friday morning calmed our fears and we took to the road (with a slightly anxious coach driver).

After a very picturesque 2-hour drive west of Muswellbrook, we arrived at 'Tarwyn Park', now owned and managed by Peter's son and his family. This is where Peter first put his ideas into action, so in a way, it was different to 'Barramul' in that the work on 'Barramul' has had the advantage of hindsight.

By this time, the rain was light but constant, making the normally firm farm tracks a little slippery for our coach, and, you guessed it, we got bogged. While the tractor and chain were being summoned, and Jo was organizing a hot drink for the group back at the homestead, Peter carried on talking with the group, pointing out the structures he had put in place across the local landscape that mimic the natural sequence of valley floor processes, and the effects they had achieved over time.

It is Peter's ability to 'read' these landscape features and the roles they play, which is unique. His understanding of these roles is somewhat different to conventional understanding, and catching on to his concepts sometimes requires one to perform mental gymnastics.

After a good hot morning tea and a very interesting question and answer session, we set off home, well aware that by this time, we might be making some significant detours. (I'm not sure that any of us actually remember the route we took to get back to Scone, but it was interesting!)

And, it wasn't until I arrived home that night and saw a ship parked on Nobby's Beach, Newcastle, that I realized just how lucky we were



Above - At 'Barramul', participants inspect rock work on the left and reeds on the right at this 'choke' point in the creek, while Peter explains the role of channels and choke points in the landscape.



Above - NSF began four years ago at this site. There was no 'coarse' vegetation there at the time.



Above - Layers of vegetation appear in the riparian zone as a result of successive years of regeneration.



Above - Casuarinas regenerate prolifically and, along with the reeds in other parts of the creek, filter sediment and nutrients out of the water and cause them to be redistributed in the landscape.

to arrive home safely and not too far behind time! We were indeed somewhat blissfully ignorant of the fact that we were literally only just staying ahead of road closures due to floods, snow and ice!

Perhaps this event should have been 2007's real 'Landcare Adventure'!

The following are some testimonials collected from participants on the way home:

- Peter has completely opened my eyes to looking at the lay of the land in a totally different way. He's challenging our mindsets.
- I like the idea of manipulating small areas and creating small wetlands by using plants.
- Getting humus on the ground and slowing down the movement of water impressed me.
- The regrowth of Casuarinas in the creek was amazing – slowing the water allowed them to germinate naturally.
- There's hope for the lay person: Peter's knowledge comes from experience not necessarily academic training. We can go home, and in a small way, start managing our water, plants and environment better.
- We've learnt so much – to look at plants in a completely different way. Every plant is there for a reason and can do a job. We can now picture in our minds, what Peter is talking about!
- Learning to see the ways water moves through the landscape (not just down the creek). To learn how to see the 'choke' points in the waterways. Learning to slow the water and use it more effectively.
- The most significant thing we learnt was how important it is to fence our creek banks (and how important it is to have cover on your ground when it rains like this!)
- The main thing for me was having the ability to read the land. If you can read the landscape you can manage it better. That's something that agriculture doesn't teach. For some people (e.g. Peter), it comes naturally. For others, we need to learn it.
- It's one thing reading about it or watching slides or television, but it's really mind-blowing to actually see it. Your mind gets opened to the possibilities, even on a small patch of land such as ours.

- It brings home the fact that there are many successful farmers who challenge the traditional way of doing things. We need far greater investment to ensure that the politicians and decision-makers understand what they know and do.
- I was struck by the importance of resurrecting the hydrology of the landscape, and taking the time to get out and observe. It was interesting to change the mindset about for example, 'weeds' – they have a role in the hydrology of the landscape. I can see the urgency of Peter teaching others who can learn and carry these ideas on. Read his book!
- It was incredibly valuable... I've seen past damage in the New England in large rainfall events. The implications for nutrients when you slow that water down – it has to be a step in the right direction.
- Slowing the water down is paramount to managing the hydrology of the whole landscape.
- The most impressive thing was the timeframe of the turn-around – from barren sandy banks to full-on lush creek beds in four years or less was incredible!
- We've just been exposed to totally different ideas that are producing real results. It really questions convention.
- The new paradigm of bringing the water up to the plants and making sure the plants are always there. The domino effect... create the ponds that collect the nutrients, which creates more regeneration, which facilitates more water!
- I'm pleased that we all came so we can discuss what we've learnt. This ties in very nicely with the Envirofund we've applied for. It would be ideal if we can get the chain of ponds going again. To actually see Peter's work was a great lesson.
- I learnt so much, I don't know where to start! Someone asked me what the secret is and I think it's that Peter has turned everything upside down. We get all our water from underground in Australia - the opposite to what happens in Europe, which is where a lot of the conventional thinking comes from!
- I'm impressed by the need for diversity of plants and how they work together. Actually seeing Peter's place and what he's doing – the type of country he's working with – was great. Could we have a mobile



Above - Wainie Robertson from GlenGro Landcare Group inspects the Casuarinas in the creek bed.



Above - John Winter-Irving and his mother Patricia trudge through the thick grass by the creek at 'Barramul'. Patricia took detailed notes the whole time.



Above - It's cold and it's wet, but we are determined to hear as much as we can from Peter. Here we are at 'Tarwyn Park' waiting for the tractor...



Above - And out it comes, ably assisted by 'the big red tractor' driven by Peter's son. Many thanks to our bus driver Peter for putting up with a bunch of over-enthusiastic, cold, wet, muddy campers who caused him to get bogged.

field day for a week with Peter on different types of farms?

- We need to go back to our own places and have a look. Then perhaps we can get the group back together to discuss what we have seen. What can we do to further these ideas on two levels: locally to implement and politically to facilitate change?

As you can see, we were all impressed and learnt a lot from the trip. And, it seems, it has created a thirst for more. I would be particularly interested in hearing from participants who would like to follow up on these last two ideas. It's entirely possible that we could organize a follow-up gathering of participants to discuss:

- what we learnt
- what your farm looks like now that you've put the Peter Andrews 'viewfinder' over it
- how we can start implementing ideas in a small way on our own farms
- future field days or farm walks, perhaps even with Peter Andrews or at least someone who has done some training with Peter
- how we might be able to facilitate change on a greater scale.

Please contact the SNELCC office on 6772 9123 to register your interest or make suggestions.

Nuffield Australia Farming Scholars

2007 Scholarships for Australian Primary Producers are now open.

Aimed at encouraging recipients to adopt local and international best practice so that excellence in all aspects of Australian agricultural production, distribution and management is achieved.

Winners will travel to New Zealand, USA, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, France, Philippines, China, and Ireland in early 2008 (TBC)!

Applications close 30th June, 2007.

For further information contact Jim Geltch on 02 6964 6600 or email enquiries@nuffield.com.au.

Application forms at www.nuffield.com.au.

Coordinated Fox Control 2007

CMA SUPPORTS SERRATED TUSSOCK WORKING GROUP

The NSW/ACT Serrated Tussock Working Group formed in May 2006 following a meeting of interested landholders in Goulburn. The Committee comprises eight landholders and three Department of Primary Industry (DPI) representatives, plus a representative from ACT Parks and Conservation.

The group is currently working to obtain a source of ongoing funding so that it can make a concerted effort to raise awareness and recognition of Serrated Tussock and its associated problems. The main problem is the loss of production from good rural land when this weed takes over. The Working Group feels that it is possible to obtain better control and even eliminate the weed in some areas, especially where it is more thinly scattered like in the northern areas of the State.

As meetings are in Goulburn, it is quite a deal of expense to get there and back for myself, as the Northern Tablelands representative on the committee.

I wish to sincerely thank the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA for sponsoring me to attend a recent meeting and covering the cost of travel to Goulburn and return. This means that the Northern Tablelands is represented in future actions that will be applied against this very costly weed.

Richard Maclean, 23rd April 2007.

If you think you may have seen some Serrated Tussock or would like advice on identification or control, please contact New England Weeds Authority on 6771 1700.

If you would like to contribute to the discussions held by the NSW/ACT Serrated Tussock Working Group, please contact Richard Maclean. Richard's number is available from the SNELCC office by phoning 6772 9123.

Coordinated Fox Control is again under way in the Southern New England with northern groups already picking up their baits.

Project Officer, Kate Boyd, has coordinated the overall the baiting schedule (see opposite), and it's now time to encourage EVERYONE to get involved. If you know of new people in your district, be sure to let them know or pass on a copy of the shedule. Your local coordinator (listed in the table) will have some fliers that can be used around your district. Ask them if they need a hand distributing them.

To order your baits, please phone your local group coordinator by the due date listed.

For advice on fox control methods, phone Armidale Rural Lands Protection Board on 6772 2366. For more information on the program, call Kate on 6772 9123.

The Coordinated program is a joint effort of Southern New England Landcare, the Armidale RLPB and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The Northern Tablelands Dung Beetle Express

Bye Bye Bundy

By Pam Wilson

It is with mixed feelings that we announce the completion of the Bundaberg Rum Bush Fund project aimed at reducing nutrient loads in the Malpas Dam. This was a joint project between the Dung Beetle Express and Leanne Savage of the Malpas Catchment Project.

The Bundaberg Rum project will be missed because, although it is always nice to achieve a goal, this project provided much more than just another round of redistributions. It has given the Project Officer some very funny lines to use at field days and has been a source of amusement for many people.

The story goes something along the lines of: *Molasses is a by-product of rum production, we feed cattle molasses in winter and during drought, hence Bundaberg Rum must share some responsibility for nutrient run off in the Malpas catchment.* We all know this wasn't quite true but...

Seriously, this project resulted in the release of 9000 beetles in the Malpas catchment. Three species were selected for release: *Onitis alexis*, *Onitis pecuarius* and *Onthophagus binodis*. Early indications are that these species have established at sites in Ben Lomond.

The Dung Beetle Express is very grateful to Bundaberg Rum for their support. With winter coming on perhaps our readers could return the favour and drink more rum?

Your Baiting Schedule

To order your baits, please phone your local group coordinator by the due date listed below:

Group	Coordinator	Phone	Order by	Pick up place	Pick up date			
Balala-Brushgrove	Celia Strong	6778 7060	26 th June	Brushgrove Hall	9 am	Wednesday	4 July	
Baldersleigh	Brenda Groom	6775 5733	4 th July	Karoola	10.30	Friday	13 July	
Bendemeer	Ray Quihampton	6769 6509	16 th July	Watsons Creek	10 am	Wednesday	25 July	
			16 th July	Arlemont	11.30	Wednesday	25 July	
Boorolong	Andrew Coddington	6775 5204	4 th July	Wycombe	9 am	Friday	13 July	
BOZO - Walcha	Cameron Lisle	6778 7325	1 st July	Walcha Show Ground	11 am	Tuesday	10 July	
Brackendale	Paul Hoy	6777 3932	17 th July	Sunnybrook	9 am	Thursday	26 July	
Bundarra	Bill Doak	6723 7330	25 th June	Woorak	11.30	Wednesday	4 July	
Chandlers Peak	Laurie Smith or	6779 2037	26 th June	Warringa	9 am	Thursday	5 July	
	Wayne Mills	6779 1552	26 th June	Warringa	9 am	Thursday	5 July	
Cooney Creek	Stuart Waters	6775 7627	1 st July	Bus Stop	9 am	Tuesday	17 July	
Dangarsleigh	Ross Fulloon	6775 1257	2 nd July	Cressbrook	9 am	Wednesday	11 July	
Enmore	Alan Grace	6778 2151	2 nd July	Sylvania	10 am	Wednesday	11 July	
Glen Morrison & Gloucester Road	Murray Fenwicke	6777 6461	12 th July	Branga Nth.	9.30	Thursday	19 July	
Guyra	Rita Williams	6779 1182	Done in June					
Harnham	Alec Taylor	6778 7341	10 th July	Uralla Show Ground	9 am	Thursday	19 July	
	Tim Bower	6778 4598						
	Ted Williams	6778 4324						
Herbert Park	Andrew McLennan	6775 1768	9 th July	Herbert Park Fire Shed	9 am	Wednesday	18 July	
Kingstown	Jim Swales	6778 9135	26 th June	Kingstown Fire Shed	10.00	Wednesday	4 July	
Llangothlin	Bob Williamson	6779 1251	26 th June	Guyra Motors	11 am	Thursday	5 July	
Lower Apsley River	Eric Noakes	6777 2834	22 nd July	Oxley Highway/ Hartford Rd	11 am	Tuesday	31 July	
Malpas-Black Mountain	Gordon Youman	6775 0117	26 th June	Forres	2 pm	Friday	13 July	
Oaky	Sharryn Lasker	6778 1144	10 th July	Chandler Shearing Shed	10 am	Tuesday	17 July	
Rockvale	Don Tully	6775 1621	11 th July	Lyndhurst Fire Shed	10 am	Wednesday	18 July	
Rumbling Mountain	Angus McLean	6723 7383	25 th June	Caloola	1 pm	Wednesday	4 July	
Tenterden	Wayne Jenkyn	6779 4554	Done in June					
Tilbuster	Shireen Brunckhorst	6775 0222	26 th June	Tilbuster Fire Shed	12.00	Thursday	5 July	
Woolbrook-Walcha Road	Kevin Noon	6777 5886	24 th June	Woolbrook Hall	10am	Tuesday	3 July	
Wandsworth	Robert Atkin	6779 4202	4 th July	Wandsworth Hall	12.00	Friday	13 July	
Warrane Road	Gillian Belfield	6775 1168	31 st July	Kialami	9 am	Tuesday	August	
Winterbourne	Polly Locke	6778 0278	15 th July	Cairnie	9 am	Tuesday	24 July	
			15 th July	Millbank	10 am	Tuesday	24 July	
Wongwibinda	Roger Tindal	6775 8512	4 th July	Wongwibinda Hall	12.30	Wednesday	18 July	
Yarrowitch-Tia	Shelley Marchant	6777 3901	22 nd July	Wyandra	10 am	Tuesday	31 July	
Yarrowyck	Ross Anderson	6775 5586	25 th June	Harwood	2 pm	Wednesday	4 July	

Local Events...



LOWER APSLEY RIVER LANDCARE
SUB GROUP OF SNECC INC PRESENTS

UNDERSTANDING CARBON ON FARMS

Walcha Golf Club, Oxley Hwy Walcha
9 am to 3:30 pm **Thursday 28th June 2007**

A host of Guest Speakers will bring you up-to-date on all the key topics on the value of carbon and other ecosystem services provided by farmers.

Carbon in Trees

Shane Andrews, Northern Inland Forestry Investment Group, will speak on carbon sequestration in trees and how it's measured!

Carbon from Cows

Dr Roger Heggarty, Snr Research Scientist in Animal Nutrition, Beef Industry Centre Armidale, will speak on greenhouse gas emissions from livestock.

Carbon in Soil

Rod Rush, Texas Qld Grazier, will speak on carbon sequestration in soil by pasture plants, how to get more carbon in your soils with management of perennial pastures.

Dr Brian Wilson, University of New England, will speak on the current science of measuring soil carbon sequestration.

Stewardship Payments for Farmers

Dr Paul Martin, University of New England, will speak on developing policy on carbon trading and stewardship payments for farmers to conserve ecosystem values like biodiversity and clean water.

Special Guest - Jock Laurie, President of NSW Farmers Association.

RSVP for catering purposes to:

Southern New England Landcare

Telephone 6772 9123 or fax 6771 2656 or email mail@snelcc.org.au

This event is supported by:



Southern New England Landcare Ltd
ACN 099 357 454
Resourcing Landcare in our region



**NSW Farmers
Association**
Growing the Business
of Farming



OAKY LANDCARE GROUP
SUB GROUP OF SNECC INC PRESENTS

THE MANAGING ACID SOILS FIELD DAY

With guest presenter
**Carolyn Ditchfield of
From The Soil Up**

All Welcome!

- Get a better understanding of soils
- Strategies to improve fertility of acid soils
- The use of fertilizers with acid soils
- Management practices to enhance the health of acid soils
- The role of microbes in soils and soil acidity
- Includes indoor and outdoor sessions.

**When: 10 am to 3 pm,
Saturday 21st July 2007.**

**Where: Jeogla Sale Barn,
10km along the Kempsey Road.**

Morning tea and lunch provided by the
Oaky Landcare Group.

RSVP before 15th July for catering purposes to:
**Jenny Frizell on 67781346 or email
wakefieldstud@bigpond.com.**

FREE mapping software from eAgribusiness

This product is ideal for producing detailed and accurate farm maps and property plans and would be suitable for any farm businesses participating in these activities.

eAgribusiness recognise that 2006 was a difficult season for many Australian farmers, and that for some it was just the most recent in a run of difficult years.

To support farmers in difficult times

eAgribusiness is pleased to offer iFarm Mapping FREE* of charge. (* A fee of \$20 applies for postage & handling).

This offer represents extremely good value and will allow farmers to obtain a core component of our iFarm Production Recording software products, that normally retail from \$900 to \$1,600, for free.

eAgribusiness seeks to use this initiative to promote our brand to a wider cross section of the market, promote our supporting products and services, and establish opportunities to look for a commercial relationships in the medium to longer term with business requiring our products and services. That said, this initiative is

not a gimmick and there is no catch. Farmers who order this free product will receive the full version of iFarm Mapping as it currently is. They will be required to register the program, but they will be under no obligation to purchase any other products or services we offer.

We are relying primarily on word-of-mouth to promote this generous offer so please feel free to mention to anyone that may be interested. To obtain the software, you need to fill in a one page form and fax it to eAgribusiness. The form is available by contacting: eAgribusiness Pty Ltd, PO Box 1076, WEST PERTH WA 6005. Phone (08) 9227 1699, facsimile (08) 9227 1733, or www.eagri.com.au.

ARMIDALE PMP COURSE

The starting date for the Armidale Property Management Planning course is **Wednesday 18th July.**

They are FREE, and it doesn't matter which catchment you are from!

They have been very popular so call us now on 6772 9123 for more information and registrations.

School Stuff... School

2007 NSW Youth River Health Conference Inverell

November 19th to 20th, 2007

This conference is based on the highly successful Kids Teaching Kids model. The River Health Conference started in 1999 as a small tri-state event and grew to a national event in 2001. The 2003 and 2005 events were the biggest ever, involving 500 students, 170 teachers, 700 participants in total, huge celebrities, 3 days of excitement and participants from around the world. The Inverell event will be no exception!

Held biannually in Mildura, Victoria, Australia since 1999, these conferences have highlighted how important it is to provide the next generation with a sense of place and a realisation that proper management of their place will ultimately have an impact on their planet.

Satellite events have now been held in Broken Hill, Toowoomba, Narrabri, Adelaide, Wagga Wagga, Canberra, Melbourne and Bendigo.

Registrations have opened (early March), however expressions of interest will be accepted via the website www.onelifeoneworldonefuture.com.

It is expected that registrations will fill very quickly and organisers regularly turn away over 100 disappointed students for each regional event so please get in early!

*2007 MDBC International River
Health Conference*

National Song Competition

*One Life, One World,
Our Future*

As part of the 2007 MDBC International River Health Conference, the nationwide song search is now on!

The Competition is open to any Australian Primary or Secondary School, and entries close 1st August 2007.

Your song should have an environmental theme and if chosen, will be one of fourteen songs to become part of the official conference CD distributed across Australia and played during the event!

Your song must be developed and played by students. Adult mentoring and assistance is encouraged. The final version of the song is to be recorded professionally in a studio so that it is broadcast quality. Your song should be no longer than 4 minutes.

In past years, schools have developed their environmental song as part of their music subject and their music teacher has played a key mentor role.

Send your broadcast quality version of your song on CD by 1st August to:

**National Song Competition
Firestarter
PO Box 692
North Melbourne VIC 3051.**

Please indicate your music teacher's name, school name and contact details and a 50-word blurb about your song.

MALPAS CATCHMENT'S FIONA SMITH SAYS HELLO!

The Malpas Catchment Group will soon welcome Fiona Smith of Guyra into the role of Coordinator. Fiona begins in the role shortly and will perhaps provide us with a short bio for the next edition of Landchat!

The Malpas Catchment Group Steering Committee will hold a meeting in Guyra on Thursday 28th June to get the ball rolling and take care of handover issues.

Watch this space!

GREENCORPS

A new GreenCorps Team will be available for revegetation and fencing activities for a limited time in **September and October.**

The team will operate in the Armidale, Uralla and Walcha districts.

Please phone the office on 6772 9123 to book the team as soon as possible as it will be a case of first in, first served.

Stuff... School Stuff...

By Ruth Tremont

The demand for a Schools Landcare Coordinator has slowed this year. Most teachers are busy or doing their own thing.

Nevertheless, Guyra Central School, is still making wonderful headway in setting sound precedents in 'sustainable living' and environmental education. Under the guidance of Agriculture Teacher Bec Smith there is a group actively working to develop the school's outdoor learning area and get environmental stuff embedded in their day-to-day activities. Not to mention the fact that Bec has registered a group of students for the River Health Conference at Inverell in November. Further to that, Aaron Wood and other members of his Firestarter team (who facilitate the River Health Conferences across Australia) have visited Guyra Central this year and assisted the school to do their 'Landcare' stuff.

Armidale's St Mary's Primary School continue to have a group of students interested in Landcare – planting trees and thinking about conserving energy.

St John's Junior School at NEGS is making preliminary moves to develop an outdoor learning area, to integrate nature and environmental education with literacy, numeracy, science and human studies - lots of potential there.

St Patrick's School at Walcha has a project to conserve and utilise water from their new covered canteen area, and to appropriately re-landscape the surrounding grounds. The Landcare Coordinator is assisting them to obtain further funding and to develop suitable plans and species selection for revegetation works, which will be aesthetically pleasing and educationally worthwhile. Meanwhile the joint Walcha Council–Walcha Central School initiative is not yet off the ground.

Kentucky Public School has also been busy watching and managing their water. They have been well-guided by their staff and SNELCC's Sonia Williams (in her role as parent, land manager and long-time Landcarer).

So, with respect to on-ground works it's a patchy scene in schools: lots of good stuff, but plenty of gaps.

A couple of written resources for schools in the region are in SNELCC's 'pipeline'. Together with the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA, a *School's Landcare Kit* is being produced, for circulation to people working with 'Landcare' and youth across the New England and North-West. This should be released before spring and will be available through Community Support Officers across the region

In addition, the Coordinator has written a booklet to help teachers introduce students

to plant identification. The booklet encourages students to be observant and guides them through a simple introductory process of grouping plants with similar features. *An Introductory Guide to Plant Identification for Schools on the NSW*

Northern Tablelands will be released for the start of Term 3.

Ruth is keen to hear from Landcare Groups or individuals who are interested in being involved with teachers or school students doing Landcare (or other sustainable land management) things. Ruth is in the SNELCC office on Mondays during school hours: phone 6772 9123 or email ruth@snelcc.com.au.

'FIVE CORNERS' (NULLAMANNA) EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Sunday 3rd June:

World Environment Day
- Biodiversity: what is it?
With Wendy Hawes (The Envirofactor), and a creek walk with water testing.

Sunday 8th July:

Winter Bird Watch with Ann Handy (local bird expert).

Sunday 5th August:

What's That Tree - Agroforestry Discussion with BRG CMA.

...

To RSVP and get directions to the site, contact Shirley Handy on 6723 2251.

Funding & opportunities

AgFund

As part of the Advancing Agricultural Industries Program, funding will be available under the **July 2007** round of AgFund to support projects that:

- improve information and communication throughout the supply chain
- improve business management
- encourage innovation adoption; and
- develop leadership skills and networks.

Producer groups can use the grants for projects, which must be completed within one year or less and can include:

- helping farmer groups better position themselves to take advantage of emerging markets
- developing strategies to address a regional bio-security threat
- working to understand and implement an innovation to increase productivity; and
- translating strategic plans into new practices.

Under the initial round of the AgFund, projects which contribute to drought mitigation, preparation or recovery will be given particular consideration in recognition of the fact that many producers have been coping with prolonged drought conditions.

For more information, go to www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/aaa/advancingindustries/agfund.

Landleader

Landleader is a voluntary environmental stewardship program for broadacre farmers and graziers to help document the wool and red meat industries' environmental credentials.

If you are involved in the broadacre grazing industry you are invited to participate in the trial which will be

run across Australia over the next 6 weeks.

Landleader is interested in having individuals and groups such as Landcare and producer groups to complete the survey on line, on paper or as a facilitated group.

As an added incentive, if you complete the data collection, you will also be in the running to win a number of farm care prizes (the minimum prize value is \$5,000).

If you or your organisation is interested in being involved or would like more information please contact Clare Hamilton on phone: 0428 791 359, fax 0263 791628 or email samandclare@bigpond.com.

FarmBis is back

The Australian Government will fund and deliver the new national FarmBis education and training program. From 1 July, 2007, the new FarmBis will be available to primary producers, fishers and rural land managers in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria. The new model will be available in all other states and the Northern Territory from 1 July, 2008.

FarmBis has been operating since 1998 and is the best recognised component of the Australian Government's Advancing Australia Agriculture (AAA) program, with about 81 per cent of farmers aware of FarmBis.

The Australian Government has stepped in to deliver and fund the program to ensure:

- the availability of FarmBis to producers in all states and territories including New South Wales
- consistency in support and delivery, and
- greater certainty of funding.
- How has FarmBis changed?
- The new FarmBis program

delivered by the Australian Government means improved consistency in the:

- level of FarmBis participant support of 65 per cent for registered courses
- program eligibility criteria for participants and for training providers
- level of assistance for training provider travel and accommodation
- availability and level of assistance for participant travel, accommodation and childcare costs in all states and territories, and
- registration processes for training providers and courses. Training providers will not have to register the same course in different states.

The key features of the new FarmBis delivery model are:

- a national steering committee to set the strategic directions and priorities of the program. The committee will replace the FarmBis State Planning Groups located in the states and the Northern Territory
- a single administrator responsible for handling application and registration procedures, course assessments and approvals, and payment processes
- the availability of on-ground FarmBis networkers. These networkers will be the "public face" of the program and will work with industry and training providers to encourage uptake of training by producers
- a single national FarmBis website providing up-to-date information on the program including on-line application forms, eligibility guidelines and fact sheets, and training providers that are already registered by their State FarmBis do not need to re-register

What training will the national FarmBis offer?

The focus of the new program is on delivering business and natural resource management training rather than technical or operational training. Single-issue production management training will not be eligible for registration under the new program.

Courses will be available under the following training categories:

- managing people (for example, implementing effective workplace relations, succession planning)
- financial management (for example, cash flow budgeting, financial risk management, taxation)
- general business management (for example, strategic planning, Quality Assurance)
- marketing (for example, developing a marketing plan or market access requirements)
- natural resource management (for example, sustainable soils or managing revegetation); and
- integrated approaches to production management (for example, risk management, farm management systems).

How can training providers get involved?

Training providers and courses will have to be registered with the new program to allow payments to be made for eligible training activities. The Australian Government is recruiting an administrator who will assess the eligibility of training activities for the new program.

Training providers currently registered with an existing FarmBis program administrator in a participating state or territory will not have to register as a training provider for the new program and will only have to register specific courses.

To register as a training provider for the new FarmBis in NSW and Victoria you will need to satisfy one of the following requirements:

- have previously obtained a Certificate IV in Assessment & Workplace Training

- hold a current Certificate IV in Training & Assessment
- be a Registered Training Organisation (RTO)
- be auspiced through an RTO; or
- be an organisation with demonstrated education training experience as approved by FarmBis.

Where can I get more information?

Training providers can contact 1800 195 543 for more information and to sign up for regular email updates about FarmBis.

Application forms can be downloaded from the FarmBis website from 1 July, 2007, at www.farmbis.gov.au or can be posted to you if you phone freecall 1800 195 543.

Working on Country Grants

Indigenous Australians have long protected and managed land and see country using traditional knowledge. Working on Country is an Australian Government program that will contract Indigenous people to provide environmental services in remote and regional areas. This work will help to maintain, restore, protect and manage Australia's environment.

Examples of environmental activities that might be funded are: sharing traditional knowledge about country, protecting and monitoring threatened plants and animals, controlling weeds and feral animals, as well as looking after important wetlands, marine areas and national heritage places.

The first assessment close date is 29 June 2007. A further round will be announced later in the year.

For more information and for application guidelines and forms: call 1800 803 772, email workingocountry@environment.gov.au or visit www.environment.gov.au/workingoncountry.

Telstra Next G

Are you a Next G user but you have found 'black spots' in your local district?

Telstra would like to know about it so they can fix them faster.

You can call them on 1800 687 829 and provide your contact details and address.

ARMIDALE TREE GROUP & WOODLAND CENTRE

A non-profit community group committed to reversing tree decline, the Woodland Centre is an educational centre for our community.

We have a great range of ornamental natives, from ground covers and grasses to dwarf flowering eucalypts.

We stock hardy Tableland trees and shrubs.

We have a seed bank of local species.

***Need advice on what
to plant where?
Need someone to do
the planting?
ASK US!***

**80 Mann Street
Armidale
Phone 6771 1620.**

Volunteers welcome.
Seed collectors wanted.

Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 58, May - June 2007

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Landchat presents a forum for the expression of a range of opinions. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent those of Southern New England Landcare or its employees. While every effort is made to publish accurate information, Southern New England Landcare and its employees do not accept responsibility for statements made and opinions expressed in this newsletter.



Natural Heritage Trust

*A better environment for Australia
 in the 21st Century*

Next SNELCC Meeting
6:30 pm Thursday 9th August 2007
 Uralla Community Centre (cnr Hill & Maitland St)
 All members are invited.
 Please contact your group's SNELCC Representative if you wish to accompany them to the meeting.
 Dinner will be provided for a small charge.
 Please RSVP by
 Tuesday 7th August 2007
 for catering purposes.
 Tel 6772 9123 • Fax 6771 2656
 snelcc@bigpond.com.au • www.snelcc.org.au

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 WFI contributes 5% of the value of every insurance policy held by a local Landcare member to Southern New England Landcare!
 Please support Southern New England Landcare by supporting WFI and be sure to note with them your alliance with Southern New England Landcare.
 Contact David de Ferranti on tel 6722 1755, fax 6722 2338, or at david.deferranti@wfi.wesfarmers.com.au.

