

Landchat

Landcare in the Southern New England, No. 87, January - February 2012

Southern New England Landcare...

Our **VISION** is for a vibrant, socially and economically healthy community existing in a healthy, productive and biodiverse environment.

Our **MISSION** is to foster community participation in sustainable natural resource management.



Southern
New England
Landcare



Australian Government



Regional Landcare Facilitator

Hosted by New England North West Landcare Network Chairs Inc.
for the Border Rivers – Gwydir region

Diary Dates

National Landcare Conference Survey	
closes	4 Mar
Dr Maarten Stapper visits	5-9 Mar
Retreat & Woolbrook Wetland Workshops	
.....	TBA early Mar
Rural Women's Group	
bus tour around Kentucky	12 Mar
Pest Smart Roadshow	20 Mar
2012 Landcare Adventure	26-27 Mar
Community Action Grants close	27 Mar
Rural Women's Group	
Dinner at Mt Duval	13 Apr
SNELCC Meeting	16 May
Sustainable Farming Tour USA	11-27 May

Dr Maarten Stapper to visit New England

Farmers across the New England North West will have the opportunity in March to learn about developing healthy productive soils from Dr Maarten Stapper.

Dr Stapper is a farming systems agronomist whose main focus is helping farmers improve the profitability of their operations by harnessing the power of natural healthy soil processes.

After working for 30 years as a research agronomist on four continents, Dr Stapper has become an advocate of biological-organic farming systems.

Dr Stapper believes that by improving the use of inputs and understanding those practices that negatively impact on soil health farmers can have a positive impact on their land and production.

The Landcare Networks of the New England North West are running a series of events featuring Dr Stapper from 5th to 9th March 2012.

The field days are part of a number of projects being implemented in the region by the Landcare Networks and are supported by the Regional Landcare Facilitator program.

The Armidale segment of Dr Stapper's tour will include:

- 7.00 - 8.30 pm Monday 5th March at the Armidale Services Club: "Healthy soils, healthy food, healthy people. Free.
- 9.00 am - 1.00 pm Tuesday 6th March: a field day at 'Kinleigh', Long Swamp Rd Armidale (Richard & Elspeth Belfield). Free.

For more information about the events and to register and for catering purposes please contact SNELCC on 67729123.

Funding and Staffing update

Staffing

In December we farewelled Alice Devlin, who has accepted a position with Border Rivers Gwydir CMA, based at Moree. We wish Alice and Stuart all the best.

Bec Ballard is still on extended medical leave, and will return to work gradually as she recovers. We all wish Bec the best as she travels the long road to regaining her health.

Mahri Koch has joined the team working as one of our Landcare Coordinators, and Projects Officers. Emily Ingram will take on the role of Malpas Catchment officer and be responsible for working with Malpas landholders, and others, in rolling out the Caring for Our Country funded Sustainable Farms project.

Sally Taylor is working for us as a casual Projects Officer, supporting the roll out of programs such as the Border Rivers - Gwydir CMA funded Reducing the Impact of Rabbits, and the Recognising Womens Farmers Projects.

Ruth Tremont is working out and about looking at completed projects - its great to have her experience and knowledge once again available to our members.

We farewelled Chris Whackett, who many of you had met in the paddock as he looked over projects - with the birth of a new boy, and a toddler as well, they have returned to Newcastle to be closer to extended family.

Bec Smith, who did such a fantastic job with the highly successful Womens Business event, as well as working on several HiCUB activities, has returned to full time work at Armidale High - we will miss her vision and enthusiasm.

The HiCUB project, has had an extension until the end of April

to complete on ground works that have been delayed by all the rain we have experienced! This extension however hasn't extended to the community engagement activities, and we farewelled Brenda Shepherd at the Black Gully Music festival which was the official wrap up of the project.

Dave Carr, Project Director, remains with SNELCC on 2 days per week to finalise the project outcomes, assisted by Ellen Nyberg on 1 day per week, while Nic Cobcroft, HiCUB Projects Manager continues on 4 days per week to oversee all the on-ground activity still going on.

When the HiCUB project finishes, Nic will remain with SNELCC as a project officer for the recently announced successful Endangered Wetlands and Woodlands project, and the recently announced Roadside Vegetation Incentive Implementation Grants for Guyra, Uralla and Walcha Councils.

Ellen will remain to support the Armidale Urban Maintenance Program funded by Armidale Dumaresq Council, and Dave Carr will be with us part-time developing partnerships and overseeing projects. Watch the next issue of LANDCHAT for more information.

Funding

During January there was frantic activity by all staff and many of our groups submitting funding to the various rounds that opened in the lead up to Christmas.

Submissions included:

Biodiversity fund: six projects ranging from individual landholders to small scale group revegetation, to large scale cross regional projects.

Environmental Trust Bush

Regeneration: a \$250,000 project focusing on bush regeneration over 6 years.

Carbon Farming Initiative Action on the Ground Projects: one application from a landholder, and one application from SNELCC in partnership with AIMS, involving a number of SNELCC members.

AWI Research and Extension: a project for Engineered Woodlands Phase II.

SNELCC meeting dates have changed!

The quarterly SNELCC Inc meetings for 2012 will be held on the third Wednesday of the following months. The venue is the Uralla Community Centre, Hill Street, Uralla.

Meetings will commence at 6:30 pm on 15 February 2012, 16 May 2012, 15 August 2012 and 21 November 2012 (includes AGMs).

Landcare equipment for hire/borrow

SNELCC has number of items you may find useful if you are running an event or doing some planting. Please contact the office, 02 6772 9123, to discuss your needs.

Equipment includes:

Field day items: Ice boxes, BBQs, Mugs, Marquee.

Tree Planting/maintenance: Pottiputki tree planters, Dome sprayer, Moulder (has own trailer), Weed spray tank (has own trailer), Planting tools trailer.

Miscellaneous: Rabbit traps (soft jaw), Indian Myna bird traps, Library/Resources.

We also have many publications on a variety of topics, if you need information on weeds, soils, vegetation etc, contact us, we may have just what you need.

Upland Wetland Field Exploration Bendemeer

What would we do without our most keen and enthusiastic landcarers?

On Tuesday 7th February, locals braved the wet, wet and more wet weather to get even wetter by exploring the unique and highly valuable wetland of Dennis and Noreen Chapman of Bendemeer.

Dorothy Bell, Botanist at UNE and Nic Cobcroft Botanist at HiCUB were the talent for the day, keeping participants enthralled with their tales of what grows where, why we need to let them grow there, and what we can do about helping them stay there.

Mahri Koch assisted everyone, and among many other things prepares a fine breakfast. Thank you to Bendemeer Tourist Park for providing our meeting place venue.

This event was proudly brought to us by Namoi CMA, who would like to remind interested people that the Upland Wetlands Funding round is now open and closes on the 16th March 2012.

Contact Frances Bigge at Namoi CMA or SNELCC office for application forms.

Below: participants enjoy hearing from Nic Cobcroft on the day.



Funding now available for Namoi landholders

Are there wet boggy areas on your property? Would you like some grant funds to assist you manage these areas better?

While you may see these areas as a source of problems such as liverfluke, problem areas for mustering etc, these areas are actually wetlands – and play an important function on your farm, and in the wider environment.

Wetlands will often look like grassy, open areas. They may have the appearance of a swamp, a soak, or an open lagoon. Wetlands occur in different forms: near permanent (rarely dry); intermittent (often seasonally dry) or ephemeral (remaining dry for the majority of the year).

These Wetlands are extremely important for farm and catchment health. They perform many functions, including: improving water quality, allowing for groundwater recharge, biological productivity, ecological functions, nutrient cycling.

Wetlands act as ‘sponges’, holding and releasing water slowly over a long period of time. This is particularly important during prolonged periods of dry weather, as this allows wetlands to support a wide array of plants and animals, including species which do not occur anywhere else. Wetlands are often areas of cultural heritage and spiritual value, and are also wonderful places for recreation, especially bird and wildlife watching.

Many of these wetland areas are in poor condition, or no longer exist, due to past land uses and ongoing threats, such as clearing and draining, grazing and damage

caused by feral animals such as pigs, and invasive weeds.

Funding is currently available from the Namoi CMA to assist landholders in the Upper Namoi to manage these threats to your wetland areas. This can include fencing, weed and pest management, installation of alternate water sources, and revegetation.

Two workshops are being held to help landholders who would like to have their area considered for funding assistance, one in the Woolbrook area and the other in the Retreat area.

At these workshops you will be able to talk with local botanist Dorothy Bell and Nic Cobcroft to get advice, and our SNELCC staff will assist you fill out the application form, map and cost your project.

Most likely dates are 8th and 13th March, however ring the SNELCC office to find out further information re dates times and workshop locations.



Women's Business Workshop

a great time at Guyra



More than 70 rural women laughed, learned, networked and were inspired to find balance in a hectic world at the Women's Business Workshop held at "Wattle Ridge", near Guyra in January.

The day was a celebration of the incredibly versatile role that rural women play in their communities, from all cultural backgrounds.

Many guest speakers and workshops covering no-dig gardens, tree propagation, bush-tucker walks, clay sculpture, camp-fire cooking, mindfulness, soil building, succession planning, African drumming, massage and wine appreciation were some of the topics shared.

These workshops acknowledge the relationship between maintaining a healthy lifestyle and the health of our land.

"Learning about the Aboriginal heritage of the Banbai people, the traditional owners of the area, was a highlight for many who attended," said Rebecca Smith, event organiser.

"The Banbai were not only our cultural hosts but they also showcased their young trainee rangers who guided the participants on walks to share art sites and cultural knowledge," she said.

One participant shared her learning saying, "During the morning bird saying, "During the morning bird walk I learned how little I actually knew and how beautiful the morning mist could be... picking the bird songs from the air was lovely".

The guest speaker, Sarah



Above L-R: Anne Finlayson, Radi Tintner & Christine Jones.



Above L-R: Susan Grant, Suzanne Hatch & Rick Hatch.

McFarlane-Eagle, spoke about the importance of raising awareness of mental health issues. Her poignant presentation certainly struck a chord, with many recognising that improving responses to mental health issues were important to encouraging resilience in rural Australia.

There was an overwhelming response from these women to hold another workshop at Wattle Ridge to extend their learning experiences and opportunities for networking.

“Education is essential for this changing physical and economic climate. It is also a must for us rural people to educate our city cousins in the benefits of buying foods that are produced from more sustainable farms,” said Fiona Smith from “Kenilworth”, Guyra.

So, if you live in this region and are interested in attending future workshops, please leave your contact details at the Southern New England Landcare office on 6772 9123.

These workshops are supported by funding from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry under Australia’s Farming Future and Southern New England Landcare.



Above L-R: Tremane, Cody & Robert Patterson at the Wattle Ridge Workshop.

Women Adapting to Changing Landscapes

The Women Adapting to Changing Landscapes workshop series continues with 3 more monthly workshop planned.

The first workshop was held on 13th September with the emphasis on how climate change will affect the New England region.

The second workshop was held 18th November and featured a visit to Leanne Savage’s property to see her rotational grazing management and pasture identification, then on to Fiona and Derek Smith’s property “Kenilworth” where Fiona discussed her grazing enterprise, pastured egg production, free range pigs and organic potatoes.

On Friday 17th February, the third workshop was held at UNE and entitled Measuring Emissions on your farm.

Professor Roger Hegarty from the Department of Animal Nutrition UNE spoke about methane emissions in livestock. Mallam

McLeod spoke about biochar and her experience in Aceh.

On Monday 12th March there will be a bus tour to various businesses around Kentucky, including the Rose Farm, Herb Supplies, Kentucky Shop and Sunhill goat dairy near Uralla.

The grand finale will be held on Friday April 13th, the Rural Women’s Group will be spoilt with a white tablecloth dinner before spotlighting on Mt. Duval.

The Women’s Group have enjoyed a variety of experiences focussing on climate change on their farm and the participants want to continue to meet and exchange ideas on an ongoing basis.

Upcoming Women’s Network Outings...

Monday 12th March

Join the group for a bus tour to various businesses around Kentucky, including:

The Rose Farm

Herb Supplier

Kentucky Shop

Sunhill Goat Dairy

to hear from Corinne Annetts, recently announced runner-up in the prestigious RIRDC NSW and ACT Rural Women’s Awards.

Friday 13th April

Dinner and Spotlighting at Mt Duval.

RSVP to SNECC on 6772 9123.

'Pointsfield' leads Wollomombi River rehabilitation

With the initial groundwork done to rehabilitate a 1.5 km stretch of the Wollomombi River, John Finlayson has briefly paused to survey the 2600 native seedlings planted, 2550 m of stock exclusion fencing in place, off-stream watering points construction, and invasive grasses and weeds removed from 10 hectares of "Pointsfield" straddling the river.

This would be a major project for any landholder to undertake, however John has struggled through two of the wettest years this eastern section of the Southern New England has seen in a long time to meet his targets for the rehabilitation project funded under the Northern Rivers CMA Incentives Grants 2010-11.

The Chandler River sub-catchment - of which the Wollomombi River is a key feature - was identified some years ago by the NSW Department of Land & Water Conservation as an environmentally stressed river system in urgent need of priority action to improve water quality and remnant riparian vegetation.

In partnership with Southern New England Landcare Inc and Northern Rivers CMA, landholders in the area developed a River Reach plan for the Wollomombi River in 2009 aimed at better managing stock access to the river, remediating bank erosion, and revegetating paddocks straddling the river with native trees and shrubs common to the area.

"Grazing will be the key to managing weeds and fire load in the river bank zone," said John.

The Finlaysons commenced their plan for a section of the River at "Pointsfield" in 2010, with the final step - planting seedlings -

completed early this year. Seasons of heavy rains and river flooding brought the work to a stop often during the project period, and the results of John's commitment to the plan provide a glimpse into the future of how this river reach will be improved as native seedlings continue to thrive and extend remaining vegetation.

John says another two sections of the Wollomombi, upstream and downstream from this first site, have been identified as the next priorities for regeneration in the short term.

"The long term plan is to fence off and manage the entire 8 km stretch of the Wollomombi that flows through "Pointsfield", linking a series of remnant vegetation areas on the property," said John.

Maintaining a weed and rabbit free zone for the seedlings to prosper in will be a long-term and regular program over the coming years. The initial establishment of the trees and shrubs has been very successful due to the favourable moisture and seasonal conditions, however weed control will be vital in the coming months to ensure the long term viability of the species planted.

"Direct seeding of some areas is being considered as another method of re-establishing native vegetation along the banks of the river in the future," advised John.



Above: John Finlayson regularly works the many lines of seedlings to check their health and growth.



Above: A section of Wollomombi River at "Pointsfield" at start of project in June 2011.



Above: The same section of the site December 2011 at project end.

Rockvale Landcare Group Weeds Day

Rockvale Landcare Group know all about weeds following an afternoon with Rachel Betts from the New England Weeds Authority. Fifteen landholders met with Rachel to talk weeds and observe weed samples while Sally was on hand to answer questions and listen to various concerns raised and see whether SNECC could assist with those concerns.

Kentucky Public School Nature Reserve Rejuvenation

With funding support from the Border Rivers -Gwydir CMA, Kentucky Public School has its nature reserve area in great shape.

Works in the area have seen mulching to reduce compaction, retain water (not really a concern in the current rainy climate – but it will no doubt dry out again some time!), and provide habitat to the many and varied small creatures that inhabit such areas.

At a recent workshop with Matt McKenzie and Veda Crossley from Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre, and Sonia Williams from Landcare, the children spent the afternoon learning about importance of biodiversity and looking at their nature area and how to improve the habitat value of it so as to increase the biodiversity on their own patch.

A walk through the area showed the trees and shrubs planted by a previous generation of students are now at the stage of flowering and seeding, and this along with the provision of a water pond has provided both food and water for birds and other animals that visit the area.

However as the trees are only relatively young, they have not developed hollows, which birds and small mammals use for shelter and nesting. And whilst there is a good upper and middle story of cover from the wattles, eucalypts, grevilleas, bottlebrushes and the like, the lower understory

of native grasses, forbs and groundcover plants is missing, as are fallen logs and other sheltering spots in this low level.

The students have some projects to go on with – they will add features in this low layer - with concession being made to ensure we don't include habitat for snakes!

Following the walk through the area Matt and Veda led the children through a nest box building activity. After building nest boxes each group had to measure their box to determine which animal would use it and their group then presented information about that animal to the whole group. The group that built the kookaburra box were very theatrical with great sound effects from Indy Tait!

In addition to some planting, several nest boxes for parrots, kookaburras and sugar gliders will be installed in the nature area. Matt from Thalgarrah will hold a microbat nest box building workshop so that students can build and install these in the new Stephanie Alexander Garden area. Bats eat lots of small insects and are great biological pest control agents!

The importance of biodiversity and the role it plays not only in nature areas but also on farm was discussed. The planted and remnant bush areas that our local farmers and Landcare groups have planted provide habitat for many of nature's pest predators that help with farm productivity.

As most students at Kentucky school are from farms they can now look at these areas and see whether they have all the requirements of food, water and shelter to make them an effective habitat for our native birds and animals.



Above: Remy Taylor, Dan Bride and Zac Boland with their parrot nesting box.



Above: Erin Smith measures up a nesting box.

Help shape the future of natural resources on the Tablelands

Individuals are being urged to help shape our local Catchment Action Plan by taking part in an online survey.

New Catchment Action Plans (CAPs) are being prepared by the Border Rivers-Gwydir and Northern Rivers CMAs to guide investment in natural resources over the next decade.

Both CMAs are working closely with local communities and Landcare groups to develop the new CAPs and they are keen to learn from you!

Recently, the Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA, the Northern Rivers CMA, Southern New England Landcare (SNELCC) and Granite Borders Landcare (GBLC) members met to streamline catchment planning across CMA borders to deliver better natural resource management outcomes on the Tablelands.

You can have your say about how our natural resources will be managed by taking part in online surveys. Your responses will provide valuable input into the development of the local Catchment Action Plans that will be used to guide decisions on natural resources funding and services throughout our region.

To take part in our online surveys, log onto the Border Rivers-Gwydir CMA website www.brg.com.nsw.gov.au and click on the "Catchment Action Plan Upgrade – Have Your Say" button.

Once there, help us map important natural assets by clicking on the link to 'tell us about your special place in the catchment', or click on the link to 'tell us about what you value in the region' through our Values and Issues Survey on natural resource management.

For further information or if you'd like to have your say but don't have internet access, contact Wendy Miller at our Inverell office on (02) 6728 8020.

Reducing the Impact of RABBITS

The Border Rivers- Gwydir CMA "Reducing the Impact of Rabbits" project around the Uralla Kingstown and the Guyra lagoons area has had its fair share of hold ups with wet weather and other challenges.

However, rabbit warrens have been blown up and rabbit harbour in the form of blackberry thickets are being sprayed in the next month or so.

More than 12,000 ha and 24 landholders are participating in this Project and the major beneficiary will be the threatened tree and grass species in the area as a result of reducing the impact of rabbits.

The project started with a series of workshops demonstrating how to determine rabbit densities and damage levels across a property. AAA Feral Rabbit Control Contractor, Alan Paul was also in attendance to demonstrate his new method of rabbit control using LPG gas and ignition in the warrens.

Several properties undertook blowing and/or ripping to control significant populations, and follow up work across an extensive area in removing rabbit harbour has extended the area over which rabbit impact will be reduced.

To continue the control program, landholders who have signed up to be part of the program will continue to control rabbits via ongoing destruction of harbour, and be part of a coordinated rabbit control program, to be rolled out in conjunction with the long-established SNELCC coordinated fox control program.

Rabbit bait and soft jaw traps have been purchased for use by landholders in the control area to assist with the ongoing control measures.

Schools were also an integral part of the project. Black Mountain and Kingstown schools were involved in the project, while Kentucky public School and Uralla Central School were invited to the Brushgrove field day at "Rosie's Retreat" with a total of 30 children involved in collecting rabbit data on the day.

Black Mountain Public School attended the Field day in Black Mountain to collect rabbit data on damage and densities. The students were then involved in contributing their data onto the Rabbitscan website. It is planned that they will follow up this field day with another day to assess the rabbit populations and damage at a later date.

Below: Landholders and school students monitor rabbits in the Kingstown area.



Landchat - Landcare in Southern New England

'Bush Tiger' on the loose

Native grass seed harvesting and cleaning is now possible in the New England and North West, thanks to the innovations of Uralla business, Field's Environmental Solutions, better known to locals as Steve and Janet Field of Field's Native Nursery.

Construction of both the native grass seed harvester and the separate native grass cleaner was completed in early 2011.

Steve Field is extremely pleased with the machine, dubbed the "Bush Tiger", and said, "We are very grateful to the Border Rivers Gwydir CMA Caring for our Country for funding assistance to develop the machines."

"We aim to establish a number of seed production areas, and initially focus on local species such as Kangaroo grass (*Themeda*), Wallaby grass (*Danthonia*), native sorghum (*Sorghum*), Red grass (*Bothriochloria*) and *Microleana*.

Field's Environmental Solutions aim to increase availability of native grass seed to local stakeholders, including mining operations, farmers, local councils, Roads and Traffic Authority, and other land holders/managers in the longer term.

"It will also increase availability of local seeds for biodiversity conservation, rather than from sources outside the region," said Steve.

A further spin-off will be increased knowledge by local stakeholders in the importance of using local, native grass in rehabilitation or replanting schemes.

Fields are interested in speaking with local landholders who might have good seed production areas. If you think you can help, contact

Steve at Field's Environmental Solutions on 0402 293 111 or steve.field@fieldsnativenursery.com.au or see www.fieldsnativenursery.com.au.

Below: The "Bush Tiger" ready for action!!!



Below: "Bush Tiger" from the rear



Below: Steve Field with the thresher and de-awner



Help UNE and you could WIN an iPad!

An Apple iPad V2 is up for grabs.

All you have to do is click on the link below spend 10 minutes (or so) doing the follow-up HiCUB survey and fill in your details.

Even if you didn't do the first survey, we would love to get your thoughts this time around.

The survey link is:
<http://tinyurl.com/HiCUB-2>

Please pass the link on to all your friends in the Armidale, Uralla, Guyra and Walcha areas.

So for 10 minutes work, put yourself in the draw and you might win an iPad valued at about \$700. Work out the hourly rate!!

What's new & happening?

Northern Rivers CMA Incentive Grants Opening Soon

Keep an eye on the SNEC website www.snelandcare.org.au and our e-news for details as they are announced.

If you don't receive our fortnightly e-news, it is very brief and contains no attachments to be downloaded, instead it contains links to our website for further information.

If you are not receiving e-news and would like to, please provide your email address to mail@snelcc.org.au or phone 02 6772 9123.

Please note that we do not share our email distribution list with anyone.

PestSmart Roadshow 2012

**Tuesday 20th March,
Armidale Services Club**

Update on research and management developments to control invasive animals such as wild dogs, rabbits, foxes, feral pigs and carp. New products will be covered.

The PestSmart Roadshow is carried out in conjunction with the Invasive Animals CRC and partners AWI, MLA and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

Visit the PestSmart website: www.feral.org.au/pestsmart.

For more information, email suzy.balogh@invasiveanimals.com or phone 0418 417 943. For bookings, see <http://pestsmart.eventbrite.com.au>.

CHEMICAL CARD PLUS

Online Group

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Visit our website for workshop dates

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www.ruralbiztraining.com.au

Or contact us

P: 02 6884 8812

E: support@ruralbiztraining.com.au



Sustainable Farming Tour to the USA

Two weeks exclusive access to some of the most advanced, sustainable and regenerative agriculture practitioners in the US. Visit Rodale Institute for organics, working farms, learn about Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), conception to consumption marketing and more. The tour will be accompanied by Jerry Brunetti of Agri-Dynamics, and Patrick MacManaway, a leading practitioner of subtle energy.

This tour is for those serious about expanding their knowledge on sustainable and regenerative agriculture. The tour will be accompanied by Jerry Brunetti and Patrick MacManaway to allow you to learn from these leading consultants and will provide you with exclusive access to consultants, researchers and practitioners at the many visits on the tour.

This is an educational tour which aims to take participants to a range of sustainable, artisan, bio-diverse and economically viable farming operations in the US, from small scale to large.

The tour will take in visits to the Rodale Institute - the world's oldest organic farming research facility, as well as Polyface Farm in Virginia. It will also visit Amish farms, Community Supported Agriculture organisations and distribution cooperatives

Fully Escorted 17 Day tour - 11th to 27th May 2012

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Applications open for Community Action Grants

The Australian Government is seeking applications for 2012-13 Community Action Grants from local community groups to help them take action to conserve and protect their local environment.

As part of the Australian Government's Caring for our Country initiative, Community Action Grants recognise the contribution that community groups make to the Caring for our Country priority areas of:

- Coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats
- Sustainable farm practices, or
- Biodiversity and natural icons.

As in previous rounds, local community, farming and Indigenous groups can apply for a grant between \$5,000 and \$20,000 (GST exclusive) to fund projects that encourage active participation and build the skills and knowledge of the community to protect and restore our environment and natural resources.

Projects may include hosting

a local field day, developing natural resource management plans, educating land owners in sustainable agriculture techniques and on-ground works. All successful applicants must finish their project by 30 June 2013.

Over the past few rounds 11 SNELCC groups have developed successful applications. These have included, on-ground works, trials, field days, and education activities.

For more information on eligibility and to submit a Community Action Grants application, visit www.nrm.gov.au or telephone 1800 552 008.

Applications close at 5pm (AEDT), on Tuesday 27 March 2012.

If your group has some ideas for a project that needs some funding, give the SNELCC office a call on 6772 9123.

Ideally we would like to come to group meeting and help you design your project and give you a hand with writing the application.

National Landcare conference survey

The National Landcare Conference will be held at the Parkside Convention and Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour in Sydney from September 3rd to 5th in 2012.

The 2012 National Landcare Awards Gala Dinner will be held at the Darling Harbour Parkside Convention Centre Ballroom on September 4th.

More information about these events will be announced late April.

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry are seeking your input and views to assist them to develop an outstanding and stimulating National Landcare Conference, which will provide networking and information sharing opportunities.

You are invited to contribute via an online survey, which will automatically close at midnight on Sunday 4th March 2012.

Go to www.landcareonline and follow the links to complete the survey.

Christine Jones: Life in a teaspoon

Christine Jones spoke about some of the amazing critters that live in soil during a FREE one-hour teleseminar with Grahame Rees entitled 'Life in a teaspoon' on Wednesday, 8th February.

One teaspoon of healthy carbon-rich soil can contain almost as many organisms as there are people on the planet, that is, close to 7 billion living things - and a greater diversity of life than the Amazonian rainforest.

What are these billions of living things in the soil - and more importantly, what do they do? What role does soil biology play in carbon sequestration and food security?

Christine discussed the key principles for rebuilding soil - be it on farms or in gardens - and explained why soil regeneration is of fundamental significance to the health and future of us all.

There were about 1000 listeners at the teleseminar on the day - right across the globe!

This was the first in a series of 12 teleseminars linking soil health and human health.

Even if you didn't listen in on the day, just go to www.amazingcarbon.com and click on the Teleseminar link to access the audio which is still available.



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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.



General Meeting

6:30 pm Wednesday 16th May 2012

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 15th May 2012

for catering purposes.

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