

Landcare WA Rangelands

Issue 1

January 2012

Coming Events over the next 3 Months:

- CFI workshops in the Northern Ag region (visit www.nacc.com.au)
- Rangelands Carbon Workshops with Tim Wiley (dates & locations to be confirmed)
- More info coming soon

Inside this issue:

Northern Rangelands Update with Mel	2
Central Rangelands Update with Alex	2
Southern Rangelands Update with Kaz	2
Carbon Farming initiative update	3
\$\$ Biodiversity Fund information	3
\$\$ Action on the Ground fund information	3
Regional Profile: <i>The Gascoyne after the Great Gush</i>	4

Rangelands in the New Year

Welcome to 2012

Hopefully everyone had a merry festive season and didn't have to undo the top button of their jeans too often ??

With any hope we will all have our fat and shiny coats on ready to get stuck into another year of ups and downs and everything in between. For many, 2011 was the year when things were finally looking up after a few years of dry times, only to get kicked in the guts again when the export

ban was imposed. Whilst inconvenient—it has given us all a bit of food for thought, and has reconfirmed the necessity to think outside the box in terms of our rangelands businesses. Many opportunities arose from this bit of 'down time' and we are now seeing plenty of exciting and creative things are happening in the rangelands. With the assistance of a few buckets of federal cash (page 3) we may start seeing many more great things coming out of our WA backyard.

We plan to be sending this Landcare Newsletter out quarterly, and would love your input. So if you have any great photos or stories you would like included we would love to hear from you, please see the back page for contact details.

2012 is off to a cracker already, so hopefully we'll see you around the place somewhere really soon.

Kaz Collins

Monitoring grasslands in the Pilbara



Carbon capture in the Rangelands

In December 2011 a meeting of many minds was held in Perth to discuss the numerous knowledge gaps relating to rangelands carbon capture and carbon sequestration.

From this meeting, several project ideas were highlighted and are in the process of being written up to apply for federal funds to get them underway.

Research projects we may be seeing soon include:

- * Herd selection to improve breeder performance and reduce methane emissions
- * Livestock diet selection (including supplements) to reduce methane emissions
- * Precision Field Carbon Measuring Tools to measure carbon across different land systems
- * Fire management—reducing wild/hot fires and emissions.

Currently, the rights for the carbon (stored, sequestered and managed) in the rangelands still sits with the Minister for Lands. As such, pastoralists do not have a commercial pathway and are currently ineligible to receive a dollar value from any offsets created. The State and Federal governments are aware of this and are dealing with this and other institutional issues to ensure the pastoral industry can access the Carbon Farming Initiative.

Northern Rangelands with Mel McDonald



Mel McDonald

“The future depends on what we do in the present”

Last year was an exciting time for Mel, getting out and about and immersing herself into the Kimberley way of life.

One of the highlight Landcare activities Mel was involved with was the erosion control workshops.

Darryl Hill from Soil Save (in the Territory) shared his experience in reducing (or buffering) erosion along graded roads and fence lines to promote soil conservation, increase soil moisture and vegetation balance all the while saving time and money.

Over twenty pastoral businesses were represented during the workshops and the positive responses were very encouraging to see.

It is hoped that through the Landcare Facilitators Network we should be able to roll out more landscape rehabilitation workshops like this one throughout the whole of the rangelands.

So if you have ideas on where the next workshops should be ... please contact your closest Regional Landcare Facilitator.

“Don’t look where you fell, but where you slipped”

Central Rangelands with Alex Harper

The Central rangelands had a busy 2011, what with the December floods, the Drought Pilot Program being rolled out, numerous funding applications being sought and many meetings attended.

After the Gascoyne floods of December 2010 over \$74,000 was raised from local businesses, community groups and mining companies which helped to purchase simple things such as fuel and oil to get generators and vehicles back in working order.

The goods were distributed to extremely grateful families throughout the flood affected pastoral properties .

Funding has been sought to assist in building fence lines, move waters and install TGM yards. LCDC’s in the region have been successful in receiving this funding and these projects will be underway in mid January.

To be involved in future Landcare activities in the Central Rangelands please contact Alex on 0402 855 358.



Alex Harper

Southern Rangelands with Kaz Collins (formerly Johnson)



Kaz Collins
Same Face—New Name

We haven’t got another new Landcare Facilitator for the Southern Rangelands, the *Landcare Lady* has just changed her name and gained a husband too!

The year of 2011 was a year of big events for Kaz, so she is looking forward to settling into the new community of the Murchison Settlement and knuckling down into some serious Landcare-ing for the Southern Rangelands.

Now fully committed to Landcare (previously only part-time) Kaz will be working hard

to get out and about and meet as many people as possible this year, so we can really get stuck into some solid projects and work on re- building the energy and skills of the wonderful community groups throughout the Southern Rangelands.

If you have any great ideas for things your community group, LCDC, Best Prac, Landcare or School would like to do, but need a bit of help with, please find the contact details on the back page of this newsletter.

“We never know the worth of water until the well is dry”

Carbon Farming Initiative [CFI] - UPDATE

As most of you would know, the CFI Bill was passed through the House of Representatives in October and the CFI commenced operation on 8 December 2011.

Methodologies have been approved for:

- * capture and combustion of landfill gas,
- * capture and destruction of methane generated from manure in piggeries, and
- * environmental plantings (reforestation).

The savanna burning methodology is close to finalisation and the methodology for feral animals (camels) is still being developed.

More information about methodology development can be found at: www.climatechange.gov.au/government/initiatives/carbon-farming-initiative/methodology-development.aspx.

On 8 November 2011, the Parliament passed the Clean

Energy Bills, which include the carbon price mechanism.

For more info on the CEF please visit: www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au

Mel, Alex & Kaz attended a CFI conference in Melbourne in November, and we are sorry to say there is not too much new information for the rangelands we can share in relation to carbon.

We will keep you posted as soon as we hear of anything new.



Soil sampling in the Fortescue

Action on the Ground Fund—NOW OPEN



Plotting a new fence line in the Gascoyne

The first round of the \$99 million Action on the Ground program to help land managers cash in on Australia's clean energy future was released by the Australian Government in November 2011.

This funding is designed to help land managers over the next six years to trial and demonstrate on-farm practices and technologies that may reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as methane

and nitrous oxide or increase soil carbon stocks.

"The first funding round of competitive grants will commit up to \$25 million between now and 2015."

If you do not have access to the internet you can request a hard copy application pack by calling the Action on the Ground hotline on 1800 025 005. The hard copy application form will be available from 11 January 2012.

Applications for the Action on the Ground fund close at 5:00pm AEDT Wednesday 8th Feb 2012

To access the guideline and application form please go to: www.daff.gov.au/climatechange/carbonfarmingfutures/action-on-the-ground/aotg-grant-guidelines

Biodiversity Fund — NOW OPEN

Australia's land managers can now apply for funding under the **Biodiversity Fund**, which is part of the Australian Government's *Clean Energy Futures Plan*. The ongoing Biodiversity Fund has been allocated \$946 million over the first six years of the program and will support projects that establish, restore, protect or manage bio-diverse carbon stores.

In 2012 over \$30 million will be allocated to activities to help land managers store carbon, enhance biodiversity and increase resilience across the Australian landscape.

The Biodiversity Fund will facilitate investment in three key areas:

* **Biodiversity planting** – where funding will be made available to support the expansion of native habitat on through planting mixed vegetation species. This will help build landscape resilience and connectivity;

* **Protecting and enhancing existing native vegetation** – funding to support the protection, management and enhancement of high conservation value native vegetation

for carbon storage and biodiversity benefits; and

* **Managing threats to biodiversity** – funding to support the control of invasive pests and weeds.

Applications for the Biodiversity fund close at 5:00pm EADT Tuesday 31st Jan 2012.

To find out more about the Biodiversity Fund and how to apply for funding, visit the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities' www.environment.gov.au/cleanenergyfuture or call 1800 008 678



Superb Fairy Wren in the Goldfields

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There are great things happening in our back yard

The Regional Landcare Facilitators of WA's Rangelands are employed by Rangelands NRM and are funded by the federal *Caring for our Country* program

The three RLF's are part of a national network of people that link, and support, community Landcare and production groups participating in sustainable land management practices.

The team works towards providing an interface between regional bodies, industry groups, R&D organisations and also provides feedback to the Australian Government on emerging issues and current attitudes and activities in the WA Rangelands. The RLF's are committed to promoting the value of the rangelands and working with all groups of people to understand the importance of this vast region.

A major role of the Landcare Facilitators is to promote opportunities for groups and networks to access public and private funds to address public benefit sustainable farm and land management practices. Our work contributes to and supports the uptake of land management practices in rangelands landscapes identified under the Caring for our Country targets.



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Visit us at
www.rangelandswa.com.au

"Rangelands NRM is about striking a balance between caring for our environment and paying heed to the needs of those who make a living from these resources or use them for cultural pursuits, leisure and recreation"

Affix
stamp
here

To:

Regional

Every issue we will include a regional profile story, outlining good news, events or stories which just have to be told. Please contact us if you have one of these stories.



One year on from the Great Gascoyne Gush

"One foot of rainfall in less than 5 days" now that kind of talk makes you immediately picture tropical rainforests and loads of mozzies.

The mozzie image was about right. But tropical rainforest couldn't have been further from the truth 12 months ago in the Gascoyne. One and a half years worth of rain fell onto a desperately parched and sulking landscape after almost 3 years of none.

Havoc was officially wreaked!

Landscapes, buildings (the Junction Hotel—sob!), infrastructure, businesses and communities were turned upside and were often deemed un-recognisable.

But thanks to the human spirit and grit and determination of good honest country folk, a year has passed and we are back on track.

With the assistance of many volunteer groups and down right friendly self-less people, we have seen buildings re-built, fences re-constructed, roads re-sealed and communities re-lived.

It has taken some real efforts to push through the depths of emotion such havoc brought with it, but, as some have said

"we've had it dry, we've had it bloody wet, the locusts came and went (with all the green) and now the summer fires are on their way... But I'll be buggered if I'm gonna live anywhere else!"

..and the good news is... The Junction Hotel will be re-built (this time on slightly higher ground)