



The community voice for sustainability throughout
the Murrumbidgee catchment

15 Landcare Networks | 140 landcare groups | 2000 landcarers



ANNUAL FORUM 2007

“Landcare Partnerships’

August 16th – 17th

Narrandera Ex-Servicemen’s Club

Hosted by

Central Riverina Landcare Network

Murrumbidgee Landcare (ML) is the community-based, umbrella organisation representing landcare in the Murrumbidgee catchment. The committee of ML is made up of the Chairs of the 15 Landcare Networks in the catchment; 12 in NSW and 3 in ACT. The regional representative on the NSW State Landcare Council is also a co-opted member of the ML committee.



Catchment vision

A landscape supporting vibrant, financially sustainable communities, managed in harmony with natural systems to maximise their retention and expansion.

Key priorities

- To support the Landcare Networks
- To encourage strategic alliances for the implementation of landcare initiatives
- To promote landcare to the wider community and to encourage the next generation of landcarers

- Central Riverina Landcare
- Cootamundra
- Eastern Riverina
- Ginninderra
- Harden/Murrumburrah
- Hay/Balranald
- Junee Area
- Kyeamba Valley
- Lower Murrumbidgee
- Molonglo Catchment
- Riverina Highlands
- Southern ACT
- Tarcutta Valley
- Upper Murrumbidgee
- Yass Area

Sponsors & supporters

Murrumbidgee Landcare gratefully acknowledges our sponsors and supporters, without whom this event would not have been possible.



Acknowledgements

Many people have assisted in the planning and preparation of the Annual Forum. We thank you all. Marion Benjamin, Executive Officer, Murrumbidgee Landcare and Wendy Jennings, Chair, Central Riverina Landcare Network, would especially like to thank Betty Bradney and Dianne McVicker of Narrandera Urban Landcare and Nella Smith of Murrumbidgee Field Naturalists, for assistance with the 'fiddly-bits,' and Ian Auldust, Chair, Hay/Balranald Landcare Network for his 'big-picture.'

Bus to leave the front entrance to Narrandera Ex-Servicemen's Club at 12.30 pm, returning at approximately 5.00 pm. Places on the field trip will be limited to 50 people. Field trip will include:

- **Rockdale Feedlot, Rockdale Beef Pty Ltd.**
Will Cowley, Chief Operating Officer with Rockdale Beef, will take us on a tour of their feedlot. The feedlot is managed and operated by a team of experts committed to the humane treatment of cattle and protecting the natural resources of the property.
- **Narrandera Fisheries Centre.**
The Narrandera Fisheries Centre, including the John Lake Centre, is a major NSW Fisheries facility. Important research is conducted into fish species of the Murray/ Murrumbidgee/ Darling River systems. The Centre is also a major breeding facility for native fish, including endangered species, for release throughout NSW. Adam Vey, a fish expert with the Department of Primary Industry, will lead us on a tour of the Centre, addressing issues relating to native fish and river health.
- **Narrandera Wetlands**
The Narrandera Wetlands are an exemplar for Landcare Partnerships. The Wetlands have been made possible through a highly successful collaboration between the Narrandera Landcare Group, the Narrandera Shire Council and the local indigenous community. Gary Hutchinson, Chair of Narrandera Landcare will lead us on a tour of the wetlands.

The Annual Forum dinner will be held in the Auditorium of the Narrandera Ex-Servicemen's Club.

7.00 pm Welcome to country.
Michael Lyons, Wiradjuri people, Narrandera.

Host's welcome. Wendy Jennings, Chair, Central Riverina Landcare Network.

7.10 pm Dinner keynote address:

"It's working! The benefits of Landcare, research and regional delivery partnerships"

Dr David Freudenberger from Greening Australia and the CSIRO will describe the biodiversity and ecosystem service benefits of Landcare from a researcher's perspective. David has been involved in numerous research-farmer-regional delivery partnerships during his 15 year career with CSIRO. He will describe, with a bit of 'show & tell' some of the remarkable diversity that is returning to revegetated sites and fenced remnants in the Murrumbidgee, Murray and Lachlan Catchments.

* Program subject to change without notice.

Annual Forum**Friday 17 Aug 8.30am to 5.00pm****8.30 am** Registrations – tea & coffee**9.00 am** Welcome to country
Host's welcome. Wendy Jennings, Chair, Central Riverina Landcare Network.**9.10 am** "Murrumbidgee Landcare, our Annual Forum & Landcare Partnerships."
Peter Holding, Chair, Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc.**9.30 am Keynote**

Kevin Goss, CEO Future Farm Industries Co-operative Research Centre Ltd.

"Farming for the future in altered landscapes"

In this keynote address, Kevin will recall 30 years of experience with dryland salinity programs, sustainable agriculture policy and the landcare movement. His journey has brought him back to lead a new R&D venture on Profitable Perennials™ for Australian landscapes. Working with farmers, is it possible to develop livestock enterprises and cropping rotations, integrated with new woody crops, that are more sustainable, more adapted to climate change, and beneficial to biodiversity and water conservation?

10.15 am Session 1: Farming adapting to change

Chair: Jim Pratley, Professor of Agriculture, Charles Sturt University.

- Graham Strong, "Regenerative Farming."
- Healthy Soils Symposium: A report by four landcare farmers who attended the Natural Heritage Trust-supported Healthy Soils Symposium.
- Mason Crane, Senior Research Officer, Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, Australian National University, "Empowering farmers to adapt to change in a more environmentally aware Australia."
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11.30 am Session 2: Managing for climate change

Chair: Alison Bowmen, Department of Primary Industry, NSW.

- Dr Rohan Nelson, CSIRO, Farm Management, "Reframing the climate change problem: the adaptive capacities of rural communities."
- Mark Ritchie, CO2 Australia. "CO2 Australia™ Carbon Sequestration Program."
- Rob Youl, CarbonSMART Landcare Australia Limited.
- John Francis, Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority.

1.00 pm Lunch

1.45pm Session 3: Conserving biodiversity in agricultural landscapes

Chair: Ross McDonnell, Regional Manager for Western Rivers Region, Parks and Wildlife Group, Department of Environment and Climate Change.

- Dr Rebecca Montague-Drake, Senior Research Officer, Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, Australian National University, "Conserving Biodiversity in Agricultural Landscapes: Insights from two large-scale natural experiments."
- Elisa Tack, PhD researcher, School of Environmental Science, CSU, "Conservation of wildlife in agricultural landscapes."
- Mark Sheahan, Conservation Planning Officer, Department of Environment and Climate Change, "Targeting stewardship: what sites for what outcomes?"
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3.00 pm Session 4: The power of collaboration: Landcare partnerships

Chair: John Dalton, NSW State Landcare Co-ordinator.

- Garry Hutchinson, Chair, Narrandera Landcare Group and a member of the Narrandera Wetlands Committee, will present on the community collaboration to establish the Narrandera Wetlands.
- Rosie Smith, Bush-Stone curlew project, Murray Catchment Management Authority.
- Bev Smiles, National Parks Association, "Forging the Links: government, community and scientists working together for conservation outcomes."
- Dr Rohan Nelson will present results from the morning session: How do we view our adaptive capacity in the Murrumbidgee.

4.20 pm Plenary

- Professor Allan Curtis, Institute for Land, Water and Society, Charles Sturt University, "Don't take it for granted!: recommitting to the future of volunteer landcare."

4.55 pm Thanks & farewell

Peter Holding & Wendy Jennings

Our speakers

DAVID FREUDENBERGER

Dr David Freudenberger is Greening Australia's Director of Science and Major Projects. He has 25 years of ecological research experience, the most recent 15 years with CSIRO. David is an author of over 130 research publications including 49 papers in peer reviewed scientific journals. He has had research leadership roles in CSIRO and is a graduate of the Australian Rural Leadership Program. David's role in Greening Australia is to foster transformative landscape scale initiatives to conserve biodiversity, improve water quality in our rivers, contribute to sustainable agriculture and enhance community wellbeing. One of David's responsibilities is to insure that Greening Australia's 'Breath Easy' carbon sequestration program provides multiple outcomes including:

- Premium quality carbon offsets
- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity
- Landscape resilience in the face of climate change

Greening Australia is the largest environmental NGO in Australia. In 2005, Greening Australia facilitated the planting of 2 million native trees, collected 3 tonnes of native seed, united 9000 volunteers and partnered with 1500 landholders in providing practical and inclusive environmental solutions.

"It's working! The benefits of Landcare, research and regional delivery partnerships"

Dr David Freudenberger from Greening Australia and the CSIRO will describe the biodiversity and ecosystem service benefits of Landcare from a researcher's perspective. David has been involved in numerous research-farmer-regional delivery partnerships during his 15 year career with CSIRO. He will describe, with a bit of 'show & tell' some of the remarkable diversity that is returning to revegetated sites and fenced remnants in the Murrumbidgee, Murray and Lachlan Catchments.

PETER HOLDING

Peter is the Chair of Murrumbidgee Landcare Inc. He is a third generation farmer from Harden and a member of the Harden/Murrumburrah Landcare Network. Peter has a long history of involvement with landcare including a number of leadership positions. In the 1980s, along with a small group of like-minded farmers in Harden, Peter was instrumental in developing systems for minimum tillage with the aim of improving farming systems as well as environmental outcomes. This included collaboration with CSIRO scientists and was the catalyst for forming a local landcare group in 1989.

Peter has served on numerous catchment and landcare committees and played a significant role in setting up the Landcare Network structure in the Murrumbidgee during the tenure of the former Catchment Management Board. He served two terms on the NSW Landcare Working Group, charged with monitoring the 'decade of landcare.' Peter has been a formidable champion for the need for community based landcare to have a voice. He has been a strong proponent of the Landcare Network structure and one of the founders of Murrumbidgee Landcare, the representative body which aims to give voice to community goals for sustainability in the Murrumbidgee catchment.

KEVIN GOSS

Kevin is Chief Executive Officer for the Future Farm Industries Co-operative Research Centre Ltd. FFI CRC's activities focus on a highly innovative R&D program developing new farming systems and regional industries, and perennial plant cultivars and technologies uniquely adapted to the Australian environment. It supports this with nationally significant capacity in biodiversity and water modelling, economic and social analysis, and policy development. Its headquarters are at The University of Western Australia.

FFI CRC commenced in July 2007 and extends the work of the well known CRC Salinity; however, it is taking a stronger commercial approach to adoption of new farming systems and component technologies, working closely with agribusiness. Its technologies will be marketed under the Profitable Perennials™ brand.

Before taking up these CRC positions Kevin was Deputy Chief Executive of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission (1998-2004) and Executive Director Sustainable Rural Development with the Western Australian Department of Agriculture (1995-98). In these capacities he has advised Commonwealth and State

governments on policies for dryland salinity and natural resource management, sustainable agriculture, and education and capacity building; including the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council.

Kevin was a Director of Landcare Australia Ltd from 1989 to 1995, while heavily involved in the Landcare movement from a government perspective, in Western Australia and Nationally.

"Farming for the future in altered landscapes"

The Future Farm Industries CRC commenced operations in July 2007. How the previous national research centre focused on dryland salinity management, evolved into a sustainable agriculture initiative is quite a story. It's a story about:

- facing up to the limitations of current salinity policies and programs, and accepting that adapting to salinity's impact is the only option for many landholders
- taking the foundational R&D on farming systems based on perennial plants for dryland conditions, and applying it to the broader mission of sustainable agriculture
- being quite pragmatic about the roles for commercial services and products, regional and catchment organisations, and industry R&D corporations in achieving sustainable outcomes

In this key note address Kevin will recall 30 years of experience with dryland salinity programs, sustainable agriculture policy and the landcare movement. His journey has brought him back to leading a new R&D venture on Profitable Perennials™ for Australian landscapes. Is it possible to develop with farmers livestock enterprises and cropping rotations, integrated with new woody crops, that are more sustainable, more adapted to climate change, and beneficial to biodiversity and water conservation?

Already there are some exciting R&D prospects and significant challenges to farmer adoption. Current and planned work in the Murrumbidgee and adjacent regions will be described.

Pragmatism is a theme of this address – combining the visionary and the practical, profitability with environmental benefits, and commercialisation and public investment. This is the world of the Future Farm Industries CRC and also, Kevin argues, effective partnerships for sustainable management of farmed landscapes.

JIM PRATLEY

Jim is Professor of Agriculture at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga. His research career commenced with doctoral studies at the University of NSW studying plant and soil factors affecting the selenium nutrition of grazing livestock. Jim has devoted attention to long term studies of tillage systems and in recent times his activities have been extended to include research into herbicide resistance and to allelopathy of weeds and crops. His resistance work identified the first worldwide incidence of evolved resistance to the herbicide Roundup.

Jim is editor of the standard Australian agronomy text "Principles of Field Crop Production", now in its 4th edition, and has co-edited the monographs "Tillage - New Directions in Australian Agriculture" and "Agriculture and the Environmental Imperative".

He is currently a member of the Board of the CRC for Plant-based Management of Dryland Salinity, and was a member of the Board of the CRC for Sustainable Rice Production which terminated in 2005. He is a member of the Minister's Science Council, NSW Department of Primary Industries, and is a member of the Research Advisory Committee of the Australian Farm Institute. In July 2006, Jim retired from the position of Dean of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture at CSU after more than 15 years in the position.

GRAHAM STRONG

Graham Strong is a 33 year old farmer from Narrandera in the Riverina of NSW. Graham has been working in the family business with his parents Garth and Jan since 1995. Graham has been recognised as a leader in developing creative approaches to Landcare, being awarded 'Young Australian of the Year 2000 – NSW Environment Category' for his work with direct seeding trees. In recent years, Graham's partner Rosie Smith, whilst mainly working off-farm in catchment management, has helped bring new ideas and inspiration to the property. She helped draft an environmental services scheme project in 2002, has established 2 seed production areas, and has made a farm website. Rosie's involvement has also led to greater communication of ideas and results with the wider community.

"Regenerative Farming."

In the mid 90's we began to question the way we were thinking about the land which we farmed and from which we drew sustenance. We began engaging with our land as a living being in its own right, with its own history, with its own aspirations. We now describe our goal as 'Regenerative Agriculture' and our engagement with our land as 'dialogue'. Some of the practical applications and outcomes of this fresh approach have been.

- The planting and direct seeding of over 250,000 locally indigenous trees since 1998.
- Seed production areas.
- The establishment of 120 Ha of Old Man Saltbush.
- The random cultivation of quandongs.
- 'Permeable' low cost electric fencing.
- A farm gate lamb enterprise selling to butchers and top restaurants.
- Maintenance of wool production without significant handfeeding over the last 6 years of drought.
- Involvement in carbon trading and environmental services.
- Renovation of a church building, soon to be opening as a farm stay.
- Communication with the greater community via field days, bus visits by University Students, tree planting weekends, WWOOF scheme.

GEOFF HENDERSON

Geoff is a 2006 Regional Landcare 'Primary Producer' Award winner and member of the Harden/Murrumburrah Landcare Group. Geoff, Anthony Male, Michael Lee and Danny Flannery attended the NHT supported Healthy Soils Symposium in July this year and are compiling a report on the Symposium to be distributed to all the Landcare Networks.

MASON CRANE

Field-based Senior Research Officer, Tumut Fragmentation Study, Riverina Restoration Study, Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, Australian National University.

Mason is a graduate of Charles Sturt University in Albury. He grew up in Gundagai and is still a local in the Western Slopes area of NSW and is committed to bettering environmental conditions in this highly degraded and fragmented area. After graduating, Mason did several stints of paid and volunteer work with National Parks (as a ranger and discovery ranger) and with David Lindenmayer's team of researchers from ANU. He is a highly experienced field ecologist with extensive experience in working on forest and woodland vertebrates. He is also keen on botany and revegetation.

Over the next few years, Mason will be conducting an experiment looking at the conservation and habitat use of the threatened Squirrel Glider, an arboreal marsupial, for a Masters Degree. Woodland degradation and fragmentation in the Western Slopes has reduced the habitat for Squirrel Gliders. Mason will look at the 3 main types of Squirrel Glider habitat: linear strips (roadside corridors), blocks (Travelling Stock Reserves) and mixed habitats made up of scattered paddock trees, tree plantings and small farm remnants. Specifically, he will examine how habitat shape and make-up affects density, demographics, home range, behaviour and foraging with a view to finding out how to conserve Squirrel Gliders in the Western Slopes area.

Mason is actively involved in conservation in his local area with the Gundagai Bushcare Group, Riverina Highlands Landcare network. He has been involved in a number of vegetation restoration projects including restoration work in degraded grassy white-box remnants.

"Empowering Farmers to Adapt to Change in a more environmentally aware Australia."

Over the last few decades, Australia and indeed the world has become much more environmentally aware. As a result there has been massive growth in the market for 'clean and green' products and a growing expectation for farms to perform well at both agricultural production and biodiversity conservation. Clearly a challenge exists for farmers, governments and scientist to work together to ensure that these two seemingly incompatible goals can be met.

DR ALISON BOWMAN

Research Leader, Southern Farming Systems, NSW Department of Primary Industry.

DR ROHAN NELSON

Dr Rohan Nelson is an agricultural and natural resource economist striving to help farmers, natural resource managers and policy advisers to manage and adapt to uncertainty. He leads a team of economists, ecologists and climate scientists within the Agricultural Landscapes Program of CSIRO's Division of Sustainable Ecosystems. The team provides practical research to support the management of risk and uncertainty in agriculture and natural resource management arising from climate variability and change, declining terms of trade and threats to agriculture's natural resource base such as erosion, salinity and weeds. We work alongside farmers seeking to improve the farm management and develop sustainable livelihood strategies, as well as industry and government policy advisers seeking to provide a policy environment conducive to adaptation.

Rohan is motivated by the idea that the value of science for managing uncertainty is ultimately realised when it is used to make improved decisions by real people in communities, industries and governments. One of his current goals is to reframe the debate surrounding climate change in agriculture natural resource management. Focusing on the long term impact of greenhouse gas emissions on rainfall and temperature tends to be disempowering because these processes are beyond the influence of individuals and policy in the short term. Rohan's goal is to empower farmers, resource managers and policy advisers to identify and build on their intrinsic adaptive capacity in order to meet the challenges of an uncertain future.

Rohan brings diverse experience, knowledge and skills to this field of research. In collaboration with colleagues across Australia, he pioneered the application of rural livelihoods analysis to define and map the adaptive capacity of rural communities. Through these multi-disciplinary collaborations, he has also developed and applied bioeconomic modelling systems to translate the biophysical impacts of climate variability and change into the economic impacts on farm production and incomes that are of critical interest to rural communities and policy advisers. His expertise in adaptive capacity stems from working with farmers seeking to adopt more sustainable farming practices, and with policy advisers designing government programs to support adoption.

"Reframing the climate change problem: the adaptive capacity of rural communities."

In this presentation, I'm going to try to convince you that we need to reframe our conversations about climate change away from trends in rainfall and temperature, toward enhancing the adaptive capacity that already exists in your community. I'll begin by briefly reviewing our current scientific understanding of the risks that you face from climate variability and change in your region. To be complete in terms of what scientists call *global change*, I'll also explore other sources of risk, including market risk and key threats to the natural resource base in your region.

I'll then argue that the current focus of the climate change debate on likely changes in rainfall and temperature is not particularly helpful, because there's not much we can do to change them in the short term. A much more useful focus for agriculture and natural resource management is identifying and building our capacity to adapt to the challenges of an uncertain future. While adaptation options include changes to farm management, they also includes changes in enterprise mix and off-farm sources of livelihoods. I'll show how an approach called *rural livelihoods analysis* can be used to help identify the sources of adaptive capacity in your community so that we can build on them.

Come prepared to participate – if we have time, I'll be asking you to evaluate the adaptive capacity of your community. I'll collate your responses and report back with a summary before the end of the workshop.

MARK RITCHIE

Mark Ritchie is CO2 Australia's Manager - Land Acquisition, based in the Wagga Wagga office and is responsible for managing and negotiating the land acquisition process as well as marketing and client/customer liaison. Mark has over 15 years experience in the livestock and farming industries having previously worked for the North Australian Pastoral Company in Qld and the NT as their Environmental Manager, time in Canberra with the Cattle Council of Australia and more recently within the feedlot industry. Mark is also a Churchill Fellow having spent time in Canada and the United States reviewing a range of environmental issues relevant to Australian Agriculture.

"CO2 Australia™ Carbon Sequestration Program."

The CO2 AUSTRALIA™ Carbon Sequestration Program (the Program) is dedicated to establishing commercial scale, permanent carbon sinks. The Program, which is unique in the Australian market, involves establishing plantings of mallee eucalypts for the purpose of generating Carbon Credits. CO2 Australia Limited (CO2 Australia) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the CO2 Group Limited, a company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange. CO2 Australia has grown considerably since its beginnings in September 2004. The company was accredited under the NSW Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme (GGAS) as an approved abatement provider in November 2004, and began undertaking Programs for large energy companies.

Large scale Programs to produce the highest quality offsets available (NGACs - NSW Greenhouse Abatement Certificates) were the beginnings of the company, and continue to be the foundation of the CO2 AUSTRALIA™ Carbon Sequestration Program. However CO2 Australia recognised the demand for high quality offsets in a Retail environment. As such the company now provides offsets to the public with the same high standards as applied to the large Corporates.

CO2 Australia was the first forestry company to be accredited under the NSW GGAS, and is also the first forestry company to be accredited under the Federal Governments Greenhouse Friendly™ Program. An important aspect of the business is to integrate these environmental plantings into existing farming and grazing operations across NSW and Victoria. These environmental plantings can make significant contributions to the productivity of crops, pastures and animals. These plantings can reduce physical damage to crops and pasture by reducing the impact of strong dry winds, contribute to potential yield increases by influencing temperature, humidity, evaporation and soil moisture conservation. They contribute to improving soil quality by limiting the loss of valuable top soil to wind erosion and also reduce the likelihood of dryland salinity affecting farming land. Tree belts also provide shelter for grazing stock during extremes of heat and cold and significantly minimise animal production losses.

In addition, these unique mallee plantings offer a direct financial injection into farming and grazing businesses with landholders participating in this program paid on a \$/ha rate for the land planted under trees. All costs associated with the planting program including surveys, site preparation, planting, seeds and seedlings, weed and pest management, cultivation and monitoring costs are all met by CO2 Australia. This payment is in recognition of the long term nature of the CO2 AUSTRALIA™ Carbon Sequestration Program, and the fact that arable land is taken out of production. In return, CO2 Australia takes an interest in the land called a Forestry Right. A Restriction on Use is also taken over the land by the New South Wales Government to protect the interests of the landholder, CO2 Australia and the trees.

ROB YOUL

Rob Youl, who is based in the Victorian office of Landcare Australia, has been involved continuously in farm forestry, Landcare and community project development since 1981. He knows south east Australia well. Moreover, having been at the launch of Landcare, and occupying numerous technical and PR roles, last year he produced an entertaining history of the movement in Victoria.

"CarbonSMART"

Landcare Australia recently launched its CarbonSMART program to enable Australian landowners with permanent conservation plantings and shelterbelts established since 1990 to market the carbon sequestered by that vegetation. CarbonSMART will assess its carbon sinks annually and pay landowners an annual income over 30 years.

JOHN FRANCIS

Program Manager, Sustainable Ecosystems, Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority.

ROSS MCDONNELL

Ross McDonnell has worked for the Department of Environment and Climate Change / National Parks and Wildlife Service for 20 years. The last 16 years has been based in Griffith. Ross is currently Regional Manager for the Western Rivers Region, which extends from Bathurst to Balranald in southern and central western NSW. Within the Region there are 60 reserves.

The acquisition of new reserves in the Murrumbidgee catchment in recent years (involving the former properties of Oolambeyan, Norwood, Darcoola and Yanga) has resulted in the Department acquiring water licences with the view of improving wetland health, and in the restoration of lands previously used for agricultural purposes.

DR REBECCA MONTAGUE-DRAKE

After graduating from a BSc. (Resource and Environmental Management) degree (ANU), Rebecca worked in environmental consulting for a number of years, before returning to university to further her qualifications. In 1997, she gained a First Class Honours (with a Dean's Merit Award for Academic excellence) for her thesis "Abiotic and Biotic Factors Determining Saltmarsh Zonation Patterns" and in 1999, ventured out to Sturt National Park in far-western New South Wales to commence her PhD "Strategic Management of Artificial Watering Points for Biodiversity Conservation". This study examined the impact of artificial watering points on flora and fauna (small mammals, lizards, macropods and avifauna) in an arid national park. Her time spent living in the outback was a true formative experience, which she will always treasure.

Upon moving to the South West Slopes in 2002, Rebecca became aware of the urgent need to better protect and understand temperate woodland environments and their biodiversity. Over the past few years, Rebecca has been active in this regard gaining a job as a Project Officer (Biodiversity Conservation in the Wheat-Sheep Belt) with the Department of Environment and Conservation and later joining David's team and becoming heavily involved with the South West Slopes Restoration Study and its associated community extension program.

As part of Professor David Lindemayer's research team, Rebecca also assists with field surveys and associated research activities across the other projects (e.g. at Booderee National Park, Jervis Bay, in the Victorian Central Highlands, the Nanangroe Natural Experiment and the Tumut Pine Experiment) and is also conducting case-control studies examining the habitat requirements of 10 declining woodland bird species (e.g. Brown Treecreepers, Speckled Warblers). Rebecca is also responsible for ensuring the integrity of data sets across all projects and personnel.

"Conserving Biodiversity in Agricultural Landscapes: Insights from two large-scale natural experiments."

Using examples from ten years of our research conducted across the South West Slopes, I outline five key insights regarding the conservation of biodiversity in agricultural landscapes and how these insights can be implemented on farms to improve biodiversity conservation outcomes.

ELISA TACK

Elisa Tack is currently a PhD student at Charles Sturt University, Albury and is researching the habitat of Bush stone-curlews in agricultural areas of New South Wales and Victoria. Over the last three years Elisa has been involved in many Bush stone-curlew conservation programs across southern Australia and is currently working with the Murray CMA on a program to assist farmers protect and manage habitat for curlews and other ground-nesting birds.

"Conservation of wildlife in agricultural landscapes."

The bush stone-curlew is a ground-dwelling bird which occurs throughout much of Australia but has declined significantly across southern Australia in recent years. Predation by introduced predators such as foxes, together with the loss of their grassy woodland habitat, have been identified as the likely causes of this decline. As 80% of current curlew records in New South Wales occur on private, agricultural land management of habitat and predators in these areas is integral for curlew conservation. This presentation will outline our knowledge of the habitat

requirements of bush stone-curlews, together with management actions that can be carried out to improve and protect their habitat on private farmland.

MARK SHEAHAN

Mark has worked in vegetation management in the region for around 15 years. This has included 7 years with D.L.W.C. in both Wagga and Albury, (Regional Vegetation Co-ordinator). More recently Mark worked for 4 years in northern Victoria with D.S.E. (Team Leader, Biodiversity program) . Mark has 'hands-on' experience through his purchase of a mostly cleared 300 acre Grassy Box Woodland property in N.E. Victoria, which he has regenerated and now protected through a conservation covenant. Mark is now Conservation Planner for the S.W.Slopes with DECC, based in Queanbeyan.

"Targeting stewardship – what sites for what outcomes?"

The sites with greatest conservation value on the S.W. Slopes are difficult to map and identify (because they often don't have contiguous tree cover), and, occur largely on private property. Mark will provide examples of these types of sites, and how they might be identified. Mark will ask: Is management of these types of sites a priority for Landcare? Should it be? If so, what type of management practices are appropriate? What arrangements would best suit landholders to encourage this management?

JOHN DALTON

In February 2004 John Dalton was appointed State Landcare Coordinator for New South Wales under the National Landcare Program administered by the Australian Government's Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). The State Landcare Coordinator promotes industry engagement in sustainable resource management and primary production, including through existing landcare and primary industry groups, in line with his conviction that *"good resource management is good business!"* The State Landcare Coordinator also promotes the landcare movement and community engagement in the regional approach to natural resource management.

John had 25 years experience in Africa and Southeast Asia with rural development and catchment management projects including 16 years leading his NGO in the Philippines in promoting community-based natural resource management in collaboration with national and local governments, agencies and donors.

During his three and half years as SLC John has actively promoted community engagement in regional NRM, particularly Landcare-CMA collaboration: *"Still a work in progress! Considering CMAs don't actually manage one acre, one tree or one litre, the extent the actual resource managers are engaged will determine the extent catchment targets are met"*

GARY HUTCHINSON

Chair, Narrandera Urban Landcare Group. Gary has lived in Narrandera for the past 28 years. A Sydney boy originally, married a Narrandera girl Karen. After travelling around Australia in the late seventies made Narrandera his home and brought up four boys. As his family grew so did his commitment to the community of his town. He has served as member of the hospital board for 6yrs , 4yrs as vice chairman. When his boys joined the scouts he joined the parent support group of Narrandera Scouts and also served as president of district scouts Association for 2yrs. He was also one of the driving forces in establishment of the Narrandera Skate Park. Gary works for Sun Rice and has held a number of different positions in that organisation.

In all Gary's community work it has always been important to him that all members of the group work together to achieve goals that have tangible positive outcomes, which can be seen by the people doing the work and the end users.

ROSIE SMITH

Bush Stone-curlew Project Officer, Murray Catchment Management Authority.

"Bush Stone-curlew Project."

The Bush Stone-curlew is an iconic Australian bird which lives in grassy box woodlands across south-eastern Australia. Unfortunately the bush stone-curlew has been in serious decline since

the 1950's, in many areas numbers have become so low that populations may not be viable into the future or they have disappeared altogether. Classed as Endangered in NSW, curlews have their stronghold in the south-west of the State, especially in the Murray catchment, and two part-time Bush Stone-curlew Project Officers have been recruited by the Lachlan and Murray CMAs to implement actions identified in the NSW Bush Stone-curlew Recovery Plan. Curlews are widely known and much loved by the rural community, and targeting them is a good way of raising awareness locally of conservation issues. In addition, curlew-friendly farm management is simple and incorporates practices that are known to be beneficial to wildlife and farm production, serving to reinforce the message of sustainable farm management.

Many partnerships are necessary for effective Bush Stone-curlew conservation in the Murray catchment: most curlews live on privately owned land, so supporting landowners is very important, as is working with other organisations such as the local RLPBs and Charles Sturt University. Recognising the value, and being proud of biodiversity in one's local area can bring many benefits to the community, therefore initiatives such as schools programs, mail surveys, community playback surveys, talks etc are proving to be a very important component of this project.

BEV SMILES

Bev Smiles is a landholder near Mudgee on the edge of the upper Hunter Valley and central west NSW. She is the Western Program Manager for National Parks Association of NSW (NPA).

"Forging the Links: government, community and scientists working together for conservation outcomes."

In 2007 NPA is celebrating 50 years of active work to protect natural areas in NSW. This environment group has a membership of over 5,000 people across the state. NPA has had a long interest in the biodiversity values of western NSW and in seeking ways to best conserve them.

NPA West is part of the Western Program that recognises the role and opportunities for private land conservation management in south west NSW. 'Forging the Links' Forum was held in Wagga on June 22 to find ways of improving connections in the community in order to identify and prioritise key conservation linkages across the landscape. Bev will be outlining the issues and actions identified at the Forum.

PROFESSOR ALLAN CURTIS

Professor Allan Curtis, Institute for Land, Water and Society, Charles Sturt University.

"Don't take if for granted!: recommitting to the future of volunteer landcare."