

# the burnett buzz...

## Winter 2010

### NSF reaches the Burnett

A group of over 70 farmers converged on an Auburn property to listen to author and natural sequence farming activist, Peter Andrews.

Peter, in this first visit to the Burnett region, shared his ideas about soil and water management and participants got a chance to quiz Mr Andrews on his principles and see natural sequence farming modelled out in the paddock.

The workshop was held at Dan & Marisa Young's property 20km south of Mundubbera. After a short powerpoint presentation by Peter and a great smoko, the floor was open to attendees to have their specific, localized issues addressed by Peter. After a huge lunch, the group gathered by the dam for an in field demonstration of Natural Sequence Farming principles.

The natural sequence farming workshop focused landholders on information about letting nature take its course by improving hydrology, preventing soil erosion and improving soil fertility.

Peter spoke from experience, as 30 years ago he bought a run-down 2000 acre grazing property called Tarwyn Park, near Bylong in the Upper Hunter Valley. Following the purchase of the property, he quietly set about testing the theories that he had been



Peter Andrews

developing. Peter claims that the model he had set up on Tarwyn Park was an example of a sustainable agricultural system.

Peter enthusiastically passed on his theories during the day, and answered any questions from the participants during the entire workshop.

The workshop was held as part of a Caring for our Country funded program, with the Burnett Mary Regional Group hosting the workshop to give



The crowd at the Peter Andrews field day

landholders in our region the opportunity to learn more about this method of sustainable agriculture.

Workshop participants were eligible for small incentive grants to put natural sequence farming methods into place on their property, through BMRG's 'Better Catchments' program coordinated locally by BCCA.



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#### Highlights

- Reef Rescue Grazing third year now open
- Community action grant for central BCCA
- Peter Andrews in the Burnett
- BCCA welcome new staff member, Sally
- Better Catchments soil improvement grants

### Reef Rescue Grazing 2010-11 now open

The third year of Reef Rescue Grazing 2010-11 is now in full swing. BCCA is currently accepting Expressions of Interest for graziers within the priority area who are interested in implementing activities that will reduce sediment loss and reduce the impact on the Great Barrier Reef.

The priority area is considered the subcatchments of Baffle,

Burrum, Isis, Gregory, Elliott, lower Kolan (downstream of Monduran Dam and Lower Burnett (downstream of Paradise dam). Expressions of interest close 10 September 2010 and can be found by contacting the office on (07) 4166 3898 or by going to [www.betterburnett.com](http://www.betterburnett.com).

BCCA will spend September visiting properties, assisting graziers with their applications.

*About Reef Rescue: Reef Rescue is a Caring for our Country initiative of the Australian Government. The Burnett Mary Reef Partnership has been providing incentives to farmers and graziers in the Great Barrier Reef catchments to improve farm management practices, mainly to keep their fertiliser, soil and chemicals on farm. The Burnett Catchment Care Association (BCCA) is involved in delivering the grazing component of Reef Rescue for the Burnett Mary Regional Group.*

# Green Army support to continue for Turtle nests

The start of nesting season for the White-throated Snapping Turtle was starkly different this year as the first nest protection areas were established on three vital nesting areas along the Burnett River. The Turtle (*Elseya albagula*), a threatened freshwater turtle, native only to the Burnett, Fitzroy and Mary River catchments, is facing extinction if no action is taken to decrease the threats to their eggs laid between April and July, threats such as wild dog and goanna predation, as well as cattle trampling. So far the research has shown that 99% of nests in the wild are destroyed, leaving very few young to



The National Green Jobs Corps team gets hands on pulling out weeds along the fenceline

survive and replace the adults in the population.

Many readers will be familiar with the Turtle Hatchery at Paradise Dam, which has been housing many female turtles and their eggs until they hatch and are returned to the river which they were collected from. The Hatchery will be closed for this purpose soon, and so focus has turned to doing something about protecting the nests in the wild.

Labour assistance from IMPACT Make Your Mark's National Green Jobs Corps and Green Army teams over the past 5 months has greatly improved the success of the project, by establishing the sites and continuing to monitor and maintain the areas. It is hoped that this year will see only half the wild population destroyed and half protected in these sites and at the Hatchery.

The Green Army, a team of young indigenous people, graduated from the

program in July this year, but we at BCCA are pleased to hear that another team will be replacing them and continuing to monitor and maintain the sites for the next 5 months, including the hatching time. We are waiting to confirm the details but are very pleased to be able to work with the young people of our region.



Much hard work was put in to erecting each of the nesting areas on the Burnett River

# Better Catchments incentives to improve Burnett soils

The month of July was a busy one, with workshops being held in the central and south Burnett.

These workshops were used as an opportunity to provide incentives for landholders to implement strategies learnt at the workshops, on their own properties. These incentives are part of the Better Catchments program, which is an initiative of the Burnett Mary Regional Group.

Participants of the Peter Andrews workshop, recently held in Mundubbera, were encouraged to apply for up to \$2500 to implement Peter's principles. The

potential projects were put before an assessment panel, and five projects relating to the Peter Andrews workshop were funded. Most of these projects included the construction of 'leaky weirs', a method of slowing water flow and capturing sediment and nutrients on farm.

The week following the Peter Andrews workshop was backed up by another workshop being held, this time hosted by the South East Burnett Landcare Group, at Boobyjan. This workshop, named 'Resource Trapping', consisted of a guest speaker, Bruce Alchin, and involved a demonstration of keyline ripping, using a

Yeomans plough. Once again, participants were encouraged to apply for the Better Catchments funding, with \$2500 available for eligible projects. A total of 16 applications were approved, with the majority of projects undertaking keyline ripping. Keyline ripping aims to get optimum absorption of rainfall as well as delaying the potentially damaging concentration of runoff.

The landholders have until the end of the year to have their projects completed, and hopefully they will be completed well before the rainy season sets in!

## What's on in the Burnett

- 1 Sept** BCCA AGM, Gayndah
- 8-10 Sept** Nutri-Tech Solutions Sustainable Farming Training Workshop
- 9-10 Sept** GPS and field data collection Workshop, Monto
- 10 Sept** Reef Rescue Grazing Expressions of Interest close, Coastal Burnett
- 11 Sept** Native Bee Workshop, Monto
- 17 Sept** Wetlands Assessment Technique Workshop, Monto
- 18 Sept** Gecko Wildlife Demonstration, Wondai
- 22 Sept** AgForce Chemical Accreditation Course, Bundaberg
- Oct (TBA)** SEBLCG Soil Carbon day, South Burnett

## From Elsie's Diary



Well that's another nesting season done. Me and my friends were a little slow to start, with such little rain on our nesting areas along the Burnett River, the grounds were still too hard for us to dig. But that didn't stop us from trying. This year some of our nesting sites had a facelift, which some of the girls are saying will help keep our babies safer for the next few months until they are ready to hatch in December. Until then, I'm taking a break and enjoying some sun basking and enjoying the river!

Elsie



## Community action grant for Central BCCA

**Congratulations and well done to central BCCA members who were successful in receiving a Community Action Grant to under take their "Farming in the Environment" project.**

The Community Action Grant is funding through the Australian Governments Caring for our Country program.

The 12 month project will be cover six areas of property management common to the central Burnett region. These six areas include:

1. Invasive species control including trialling the use of a handheld flamethrower to control mother of millions without removing other non-invasive vegetation.

2. Permanent and semi-permanent fencing for grazing management and to protect soil management trial sites.

3. Sheet erosion treatment and grassland rehabilitation works through deep ripping, mulching and revegetating.

4. Soil improvement works trialling readily available organic material such as piggery waste, feedlot manure and sawdust.

5. Dryland salinity restoration by means of ripping, addition of organic materials and revegetating after thorough soil testing.

6. Revegetation of previously cleared semi-evergreen vine thicket with native species

The project works are being conducted on a local Mundubbera property. After the project works are implemented, the central branch of BCCA will be holding a field day to demonstrate the hopefully positive onground results of the six different land management practices.

For more information regarding the community action grant project, please call the BCCA office on (07) 4166 3898 or email [admin@burnettcatchment.org](mailto:admin@burnettcatchment.org).

## Another Peter doing his bit for the Burnett

**The Reef Rescue program is happening again this year, with the program entering its third year of operation.**

The last two years has seen the Burnett Mary Reef Partnership providing incentives to farmers and graziers in the Great Barrier Reef catchments to improve farm management practices, mainly to keep their fertiliser, soil and chemicals on farm. The Burnett Catchment Care Association is involved in delivering the grazing component of Reef Rescue for the Burnett Mary Regional Group.

The plan, during the last two years, has delivered incentives to over 90 coastal graziers. These graziers have implemented projects that will assist reducing sediment export to the reef. Peter Fields, a Yandaran grazier, was involved in the Reef Rescue program last year. Peter's funding assisted in

the implementation of additional fencing along Ward Creek to exclude cattle access. This fencing will prevent cattle accessing the creek which will improve ground cover in the riparian area and aid in bank stability.

During a rainfall event, this improvement in groundcover along the creek bank will reduce the amount of sediment loss from the property. "I am hoping that the project I have completed, with the assistance of Reef Rescue funding, will help reduce the amount of sediment ending up in Ward Creek," Mr Fields said.

"The process of applying for the funding I found to be extremely simple, with the field officer assisting in the design of the project and the application process. I would highly recommend land managers apply for this funding in the future."

There are a range of on-ground activities that can be undertaken by landholders within the Baffle, Isis, Elliot, Lower Kolan, Gregory, Burrum and Lower Burnett catchments.

These activities can include erosion control, fencing of different land types to allow for better grazing management, installation of additional stock water points and revegetation of riparian areas.



*Peter Fields with his new fence*

## Staff Profile—Sally Cowen



*Sally Cowen—Administration Officer*

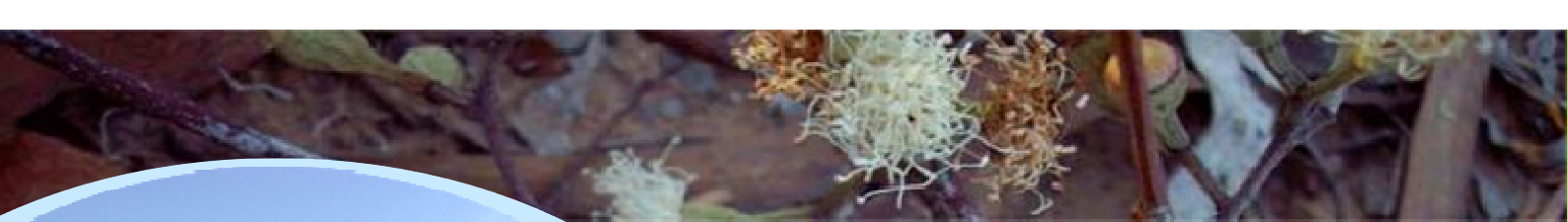
**Hi, my name is Sally Cowen and I was born in Rockhampton. I grew up on a cattle property just outside of Gracemere where my passion for horses started. My family breed Quarter horses, mostly cutting lines.**

My husband and I purchased a property just outside of Monto on Hays Road where we have just started renewing fences and establishing watering points to utilise our whole property more efficiently.

We have two children Jayden, 5 and Ella, 3 who are both very keen on horses.

We are going to start up our own quarter horse breeding program where we hope to establish ourselves in the campdraft and cutting area.

I enjoy working for Burnett Catchment Care Association and like the fact that BCCA helps landowner in sustainable land management.



# Burnett Catchment Care Association



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## Last word...

It seems the Burnett is finally catching a break this year with the weather, with a great summer being followed by a relatively mild winter with some decent winter rainfall events. It is great to see plenty of feed in the paddocks and even some green shoots in the inland thanks to some unseasonably warm weather.

No sooner had our Reef Rescue graziers completed their projects in May and June, we are back into finding new graziers and new projects with the third year of Reef Rescue now open. All 47 graziers completed their Reef Rescue projects by June 2010, with almost \$400 000 delivered directly into these projects thanks to the Australian Governments Caring for our Country program. The total value of these activities was over \$1.06 million when taking into account the cash and in-kind contribution of these graziers. This is a great achievement

and I want to thank all the Reef Rescue participants for their hard work. As I mentioned, BCCA is now tackling the task of delivering the third year of Reef Rescue Grazing for our coastal graziers. Further information can be found at [www.betterburnett.com](http://www.betterburnett.com).

Since our last newsletter, our team has also been out and about within the inland Burnett, delivering the Better Catchments program, which a two year contract, ending June 2011. The Grains BMP two day workshops held in Kingaroy and Monto were very well received with participants receiving small grants to assist in implementing activities identified in their action plan to improve soil management practices. Many modified planters to no till planters where as others conducted soil tests or purchased GPS units for their tractors.

We welcome Sally to the team as our part time administration officer based in our Monto office. She has been tremendous help to our highly mobile team.

Through BMRG, BCCA organized and delivered a Peter Andrews Workshop in Mundubbera in July. The response to attend was overwhelming and the day a huge success. We wish to thank Bill, Jan, Daniel and Marisa Young, the hosts for the workshop who welcomed the 70+ crowd onto their property for the day. The feedback was very positive & we may have to consider holding another in the future.

Both the Better Catchments and the Reef Rescue programs will keep the four of us flat out for the next nine months or so, yet we are always looking for further funding opportunities to service our Catchment.

*Katie Muller*



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**2010-11**

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