

LAND TALK

Newsletter of the 'Centralian Land Management Association' (CLMA)

G'day from chilly Alice Springs. As the new financial year rears its head, several opportunities for funding resource management and landcare projects are being made available by the federal Government. If you have any ideas or would like to become involved with applying for funds for a special project, give us a call. Thanks to everyone who made an effort to get to the CLMA meeting last month, it was great. Hope to catch up with you at Harts Range, Andrea

GRADER SCHOOLS, DO YOU WANT ONE COMING YOUR WAY?

There has been a fair bit of interest around the tracks to hold some grader schools again. This is likely to involve a day looking at new and improved techniques involving:

- grading and building roads
- maintaining fence lines with minimal soil disturbance
- building banks
- rehabilitating eroded country



If you are interested in getting to a Grader and soils Demo day, please give us a call or fax/send back the enclosed slip.

GARDEN PLANTS GOING CRAZY!!!

Our old mate Prickly Pear has been going a bit crazy around the recreation area behind the Aileron Roadhouse. Since the big seasons a couple of years ago, big numbers of plants have established in amongst the mulga along the floodout area near the racecourse. CLMA and the Aileron Roadhouse crew

are looking at ways to knock it down and stop any further spread. This is a classic example of innocent garden plants turning into problem weeds. Keep an eye out for your garden monsters.



FIRE PROJECTS IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

Tilmouth Well Roadhouse recently hosted an information day for Tanami region pastoralists to look at new projects with the Desert Knowledge CRC. Grant Allan from the Bushfires Council gave a presentation on new and potential projects looking at the effects of fire on pastoral production and land condition. Several PhD students have started working on some research projects using the Tanami as a focus area. Some of the areas the projects will focus on include:

- Review of methods to reduce the number and extent of wildfires
- Collate existing knowledge and information of the effects of fire in different land systems
- Strategic planning and using fire as a management tool
- Identify priority areas for management and research



INTRODUCING A DESERT FIRE STUDENT...



Hi, my name is Kirsten MacLean. I am doing a PhD through the School of Resources, Environment and Society at the Australian National University, Canberra, looking at community involvement in conservation. I spent 3 months in Castlemaine, country Victoria, involved with a Threatened Species Network project (of the Worldwide Fund for Nature) working to protect and enhance threatened species habitats in the region. I am now based in Alice Springs for about 3 months looking at one of the Desert Knowledge CRC projects entitled 'Desert Fire – developing a fire management plan for the Southern Tanami'. I am interested in considering how this plan will be developed given different attitudes and practices to fire in the region. Part of the methods include speaking with people about fire, maybe even observing some burning. I look forward to perhaps meeting some of you soon!

VISITORS FROM THE WEST

Early last week, a group of pastoralists from Western Australia traveled to central Australia to visit different properties and projects happening to address soil and land rehabilitation. All pastoralists who visited on the tour are part of a big project called "EMU."

The EMU (Ecosystem Management Understanding) Project commenced in

mid-2000 and has received considerable and widespread support from a range of rangeland stakeholders. The project team is based in Kalgoorlie and work with pastoralists over most of the arid inland of WA to assist with restoring land condition and productivity. Producers and Ag Department staff from WA visited Woodgreen, Alcoota and Undoolya in their travels around Alice Springs last week. They shared many stories of the successes and challenges of restoring and rehabilitating grazing country in the west, and were impressed with the work that people are doing to maintain productivity and land condition in the Alice region.



Chris Nott showing WA blokes the new water medicator at Alcoota.

EMU participants have invited the CLMA to become involved with their work and to develop cross border projects. Some ideas which developed following the visit included finding some funds to take interested central Australian producers to visit some of the WA projects to exchange ideas and methods.

A big thankyou to Woodgreen, Alcoota and Undoolya for hosting the EMU mob.

For more info on the EMU project
www.emuproject.org

CONSERVATION PROJECTS ON PASTORAL LANDS

Whether you like it or not, the wider community, green groups and the Federal Government are becoming more and more interested in the conservation of species diversity on pastoral lands. Conservation doesn't have to mean locking up country from stock...in fact most pastoral enterprises are very successfully conserving important plant and animal species. Let's tell these stories and get some good press about the good things we are doing as an industry!

With the development of a Parks and Conservation Masterplan for the NT, and numerous other Federal Government initiatives, pastoral leasehold land is coming under the spotlight as a large and significant area for conserving important and special plants and animals. At the recent Australian Rangelands Conference in Alice Springs, numerous guest speakers including pastoralists from NSW, QLD and NT spoke about initiatives and developments to developing "ecologically sustainable pastoralism." In short, this means maintaining healthy country for production as well as the whole suite of native plants and animals that live there.

If you feel like you could do with a hand to conserve or rehabilitate a special area...there are a few funding opportunities coming up. ENVIROFUNDS are able to fund up to \$30,000 for projects which work toward conserving or restoring special areas. The next funding round closes later this year, so get your brains ticking now.

For more stories of what other people in the throughout the Australian pastoral industry are doing towards production based conservation, contact the CLMA office.

ANDADO STATION – A SUCCESS STORY OF CONSERVATION ON PASTORAL LANDS.

Jo and Robbie Bloomfield have recently been successful in getting funding through Envirofund to fence off some stands of *Acacia peuce* (a rare tree only found in the Simpsons desert region).

With help from the Parks and Wildlife Service and Conservation Volunteers Australia, the Bloomfield's are able to fence off trees from stock and relocate a bore to relieve grazing pressure around the trees.



Mature *Acacia peuce* trees that will be fenced off on Andado Station. These trees are believed to grow for several hundreds of years.

The project at Andado is a great example of using public funds and local knowledge to conserve important areas for the benefit of the whole community. Got any ideas? Give us a call before December so we can put in an application.

Hello from Jo! The Grazing Land Management Workshop Facilitator...

What's been happening?

I attended Resource Consulting Services' "Grazing for Profit" (GFP) school at Roma from the 10th to the 17th of June. It was a fantastic learning experience and I'm keen to talk/work through the principles and methodologies with other GFP graduates as part of my role as the GLM workshop facilitator. In other words, if you came away from GFP enthused but time has passed by and you're not sure what to do with those grazing charts and that big, thick workbook give me a call...I'll be at your front gate before you hang up the phone!

Why am I so keen to follow up on GFP?

I think it's important that current knowledge and science on grazing land management systems are made known to those who want to find out more. That's why I'm trying to get the full picture on management regimes that range from continuous grazing through to more intensive systems that use spelling, rotations and time control methods. I'm not advocating that a particular system is better than any other and the GLM workshop won't be doing that either. What it will give you is the tools to make informed choices!

Don't forget that the GLM workshop is an *area specific* three day workshop (with a follow up day) that covers understanding what we've got to work with as grazing land managers in respect to climate, land types and land condition. The workshop then looks at the *tools we have available as grazing land managers to manage what we've got* – fire regimes, weed control, grass/tree balance, sown pastures, stocking rates/carrying capacity calculations.

Other tools that have been suggested for inclusion in the workshop are ponding banks, water point management and feral camel control. These will be discussed further by the steering committee in the near future.



Katherine GLM Workshop

The Katherine GLM workshop was postponed from the 28th of June to sometime in August. So, I'm still waiting to participate in an actual GLM workshop but good things come to those who wait...apparently!

Australian Rangeland Society Conference

The Australian Rangeland Society Conference from the 5th to the 8th of July was a great forum that brought together a diverse group of people who are all keen to see inland Australia's' rangelands increase in ecological, economical and social viability. I met the developers of the Burdekin, Burnett and Qld Mitchell Grass GLM packages at the conference and will hopefully be meeting up with them in December to go over my draft workbook. They all work for the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries.

Jo's Contacts...

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Weeds Project: time for action!

We are two months into the project, and with many kilometers of property covered and hundreds of weeds mapped and controlled we are on our way to keeping some of the most potentially damaging weeds out of the Sandover Catchment. We have started at the top of the catchment looking specifically at the upper reaches of the Gillen, Anamarra and Ongeva Creeks and moving into the top of the Mueller creek next.

Simultaneously we have been in discussions with the CLC and the Urapuntja Council about weed control at Utopia (Angarapa Aboriginal Land Trust). We have made great progress on this and Batchelor College has even jumped on board. They will recognise CDEP participants skills learnt through the project, towards a certificate in Conservation and Land Management.

If you live in the Sandover Catchment and you have weed issues then make our job a little easier and let us know what weeds you have and where they occur on your property. We can then come out and have a look, come up with a plan and then help control them.

Some of the Key species to look out for are: **Parkinsonia** and **Rubber Bush**, as well as **Athel Pine**, **Mesquite**, **Noogoora Burr**, **Bathurst Burr**, **Castor Oil Plant** and any others.

Field Day

We are proposing to have a Weeds Field day on Saturday the 4th of September. This field day would be a great opportunity for producers to check out the major weed species out there, look at the best control methods, look at how CLMA is mapping the

weeds and have a chat about what experiences people are having with these outbreaks.

We are yet to confirm a property to hold it but it will be somewhere in the Sandover Catchment. Stay tuned for more details.

Contact Peter Barker at the CLMA office for more information.



CLMA Sandover Weeds man Michael Wood, standing next to a mature Rubber bush

WEEDeck

New weed ID cards have just been released called the "WEEDeck". CLMA is in the process of ordering some so we can put together a stack that is relevant to particular catchments in the Centre. These will be useful to throw in the glove box of the Ute so you can recognise any emerging weeds on your property.



Rubber bush in flower

IT'S GREEN WITH LEAVES!

Are you interested in what the pink flowering thing is growing under the Mulga? The CLMA office has recently updated a book and price list of the useful books and guides to identifying trees, pasture plants and critters of central Australia. Give us a call and we can fax you a copy if you are interested.

FIND OUT WHAT THE WEATHER WAS LIKE... ONLINE

Are you ever interested in what the weather was like last week or month? The Bureau of Met has recently updated its' website to make this information freely available to internet users. Daily weather observations are available on the Bureau's website www.bom.gov.au/weather/national

Please don't forget to give us some feedback about your interest in Grader Schools.

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**MARSUPIAL MOLES IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA**

They're furry, have no eyes and the boys and the girls both have a pouch! Marsupial moles spend most of their time swimming through sand, and thus.....there is very little known about these unusual and mysterious little creatures. Joe Benshemesh from NT Parks and Wildlife Service is currently completing a national recovery plan for Marsupial Moles. The

Southern Marsupial Mole has previously been found mostly in sand dune and sand plain country and is listed as Endangered because there have been very few records of this species over the last fifty years. Major threats to Marsupial Moles are cats and foxes. Other threats identified include soil compaction from stock and vehicles. If you would like to know more about the marsupial mole recovery plan or have input into it, contact Joe Benshemesh, phone 89518205 joe.benshemesh@nt.gov.au