



STOP PRESS ...

Farm Walk Tuesday 20th February 2007, Bowraville

MNCFF will be holding its first event of 2007 with a farm walk on 20th February. John Monro has kindly offered to show interested MNCFF members around his property on Congarinni Road, between Bowraville and Macksville. This is a great opportunity to view 100 hectares of native forest which John has managed for farm forestry since the 1970s.

Details for the event are as follows:

9.30 am: Meet at Nambucca Valley Phoenix, 88 High St Bowraville. Morning Tea will be provided.

9.30 - 10.30: John Monro will provide an introduction to Greenbank Forest, describing how the forest has been managed to achieve his farm forestry objectives, including preparation and implementation of a Management Plan, the role of a property agreement in assuring the future of the forest, rainforest plantations, and much more!

10.30 - 12.30: Drive to Greenbank Forest and view how the Forest Management Plan has been implemented.

If you are intending to come along on the farm walk, please email or call the office (6564 7916) and leave a message. This will enable us to cater for morning tea.

**Master Tree Growers Course – Macleay Valley/Kempsey
March – April 2007**

Expressions of interest are sought from farm foresters, landcarers, property owners, and all those in related industries to participate in this University of Melbourne course. Excellent feedback continues to be received from participants in previous MTG courses! Contact Dawn at the MNCFF office.



Introducing the new MNCFF managers...

As of the beginning of January, two new part time managers have been appointed to work at MNCFF's office in Bowraville – Dawn Thornton and Terry Bates.

Terry began his career as a geologist before working in the environmental field in the UK and Australia. He then studied for an MBA and worked with Commonwealth and Local Governments on the North Coast focussing on business and regional development. Many of you will have met Terry at workshops when he conducted the strategic review of MNCFF in 2004.

Dawn Thornton initially worked as an ecologist in the UK and has a Masters in Conservation. She met Terry in the rainforests of Ghana and migrated to Australia in the mid 1990s. She has extensive experience in environmental and natural resource management around the world and more recently for State Government on the North Coast. Dawn and Terry have an organic farm near Bowraville.

Dawn and Terry will be managing the delivery of MNCFF's projects with the National Landcare Programme, the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority and the Mid North Coast Private Forestry Development Committee. They will be coordinating MNCFF's programme of events, training courses, and field days and building partnerships with government agencies, industry, community groups and farm foresters within the region to promote farm forestry and develop initiatives for new projects.

The MNCFF Committee of 2007

A new committee was elected at the Annual General Meeting in December as follows:

Chair: Geoff Cullen

Treasurer & Secretary: Keith Cullen

Public Officer: Geoff Cullen

Committee Members: Justin Rose; Michael Nisbit; John Monro; Bruce Raeburn; Jeff Unwin; Ian Spooner; Arthur Dyason; George Feist; Jeanette Carpenter

The committee meets monthly to provide direction to the managers and MNCFF members are welcome to attend and contribute.



Forthcoming Training Courses

MNCFF is currently developing a programme of training courses for 2007, whilst dates and venues are still being organised, please contact the office if you interested in a particular course – you will then be informed as the details are fixed.

Training Course	Timing	Location	Further information
Master Tree Growers Course with the University of Melbourne	March – May 2007	Macleay Valley – Kempsey	Contact Dawn at the office as soon as possible if you are interested in attending. See the article below from the University of Melbourne for an introduction to the course. Look up the MTG website www.mtg.unimelb.edu.au/
Log Grading Course with TAFE	April or May 2007	Macleay Valley – Kempsey	Contact Dawn at the office if you are interested in attending.
Forest Management and Planning Course	To be advised	To be advised	To be advised
Mobile Milling Course – a course designed for existing millers	To be advised	To be advised	Contact Terry at the office if you are interested in attending.
On Farm Timber Drying Course	To be advised	To be advised	Contact Terry at the office if you are interested in attending.



What is the Master Tree Growers Program?

The Australian Master TreeGrower Program (MTG) is more than just a short course in forestry for farmers. It is a comprehensive extension package focused on ensuring that the development of forestry and native vegetation management on farms is driven by the aspirations and opportunities of Australian farmers. The program encourages farmers to truly aspire to be 'master tree growers' in their own right and provides some of the skills, support networks and confidence to launch them on that lifetime journey.

The aim of the MTG is not as simple as just increasing the area of farmland under trees. It certainly does not promote particular species, products or planting patterns. The MTG does seek to enhance landowner participation in the design, management and evaluation of appropriate vegetation management options for their own circumstances. If establishing and managing trees and shrubs does offer farmers real economic, environmental and social opportunities we would expect an increase in the forest cover on farms and improved forest management.

After more than ten years and seventy five regional programs the impact of the Australian Master Tree Grower Program on farm forestry in Australia is now clearly evident. Participants talk of increased confidence about their own farm forestry activities and greater awareness of opportunities. They value the knowledge, skills, networks and experience provided by the program and the recognition of their experience that being a Master Tree Grower provides. As a result of the program many more farmers are taking an active role in farm forestry development at a regional, state and national level as part of landowner groups, regional and state planning committees and private organisations.

The significance of the title 'Master' is in the acknowledgment of the knowledge and experience that the participants bring to the program and the potential they have to influence others within their region. A master in any field will concede that they can never know it all. Master Tree Growers recognise that knowing the right question to ask (and who to ask) can be more important than knowing an answer. And, they appreciate that every farm and every farmer is different so what is right for one may not suit another.

In practice, the MTG program is a short regionally based educational program (of approximately 50 hours), in agroforestry and vegetation design and management for farmers with the aim of:

- Improving the design and management of agroforestry and native vegetation projects on participants' own properties.
- Helping participants understand the interests of governments, catchment authorities, industry groups and community organisations in agroforestry and native vegetation management and encourage mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Facilitating the involvement of participants in the development and promotion of agroforestry and native vegetation management within their region by providing a wide range of knowledge, skills, experiences and networking opportunities.
- Assisting regionally based forestry and natural resource management professionals by: providing the opportunity to work alongside leading researchers



and practitioners; links to a range of national and state information and support networks; and, the opportunity to build strong personal relationships with a group of committed local landholders.

Information provided by Rowan Reid from the University of Melbourne.

MNCFF Project Update

Forest Stewardship Council Pilot Group Certification

MNCFF has been funded by the Mid North Coast Private Forestry Development Committee (PFDC) to undertake a pilot group certification under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

The project will see approximately 5 properties on the Mid North Coast and 5 in the Hunter region achieve group certification. Australian Sustainable Timbers are engaged to complete the pilot project. Several MNCFF members are currently involved in the preliminary property screening exercise to identify those properties which will proceed to the pilot certification. The project aims to demonstrate a practical mechanism for FSC certification of privately owned native forest in Australia and encourage and help create market based incentives for sustainable forest management on private land.

Training courses in portable milling and timber drying

The PFDC has provided funds to enable mobile mill owners/operators to upgrade their skills through a portable milling training course. Funding has also been given to teach growers how to take green sawn timber on the farms through the process of drying and stacking to finished product ready for sale. A training provider has been identified and further details on locations and dates will be sent out to members in due course.

Contact Terry Bates at the MNCFF office if you are interested in participating in either of these courses.

Test Marketing

The PFDC has funded MNCFF to undertake test marketing to determine the best way to maximise returns to private native timber growers in the region. The aim of the project is to prove or disprove the theory that a profitable and growing market for locally produced timber exists for which there is guaranteed supply without impact on established local mills. Cullen Timber Solutions will source buyers and property owners to sell sustainable harvested timber at a high return, handling all the logistical and financial aspects of the transactions. The process will be documented so that the lessons learned can be shared amongst MNCFF members once the project is completed. Selling timber to its highest and best use should maximise returns and enable more selective and sustainable logging for farm foresters.



Farm forestry extension services for sustainable native forest and plantation management

MNCFF is now into the second year of our National Landcare Program. This year's contract is just being finalised with the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority.

Through this funding, MNCFF is able to deliver the Master Tree Growers and log grading courses and our programme of farm walks and field days. You will receive notice of these events throughout the year.

Other News...

Landcare Farming Forum 29-31 March 2007

South Grafton Ex Servicemen's Club

Bruce Raeburn from the MNCFF Committee has been a member of the organising committee

Contact the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority for further information Lindy Brown 6561 4962 or Kerri Francis 6627 0114

Envirofund – Round 9 is now open

The Australian Government Envirofund is for small projects aimed at conserving biodiversity and promoting sustainable resource use. The Envirofund supports on-ground actions by groups and individuals to target local problems. Applications close on Friday 27 April 2007. Information is available at www.nht.gov.au/envirofund

New MNCFF email address

Please note that the office email address has
changed to ...

mncff@tsn.cc

If your contact details have changed please fill out the form below and send it back to MNCFF or e-mail us at mncff@tsn.cc

Name:

Postal address:

Telephone:

Mobile:

E-mail: