



Envirofunds- Round 9

The next round of the Australian Government Envirofund is now open. The Envirofund is for small projects aimed at conserving biodiversity and promoting sustainable resource use Eg fencing, tree planting, creek restoration. Applicants can receive up to \$50,000 (inclusive GST) per project.

Some small changes to Envirofunds have been made to ensure that projects will continue, despite the drought. For this year, Envirofund will allow proponents in EC declared areas on private land to apply for weed and feral animal control as the primary activity, as long as there is a clear natural resource management benefit.

To receive a round 9 guide and application form, you can download these at www.nht.gov.au/envirofund, or alternatively you can contact your local NRM Officer **Dene Solomon/ Katie Hasleby PERENJORI 9973 1425** Applications close 27th April 2007.

Salinity Rehabilitation and Extension Project

Farmers in eastern areas of the Northern Agricultural Region now have access to an "on farm" salinity advice service run by the Department of Agriculture and Food. The project is jointly funded through the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC) by the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) and the Government of Western Australia.

The project is strategically targeting areas in the region where properties have a significant proportion of land affected by salinity. This is particularly true for properties bordering the chain of valley floor salt lakes in the Three Springs, Morawa and Perenjori shires.

The project provides "in paddock" planning advice and technical information on options, and has links to a fencing incentive to help rehabilitate salt affected land. For further information contact **Jessica Hasleby at the Department of Agriculture in Geraldton on 99568 532.**

Brushwood Industry Development on Saline Land

Melaleuca uncinata and related species can be grown on land that is not highly productive for conventional agriculture, including sites that are marginally saline and seasonally waterlogged. A number of Melaleuca species can be used in the construction of brushwood fencing. These species are often collectively referred to as "broombush".

Melaleuca uncinata is widespread throughout the Northern Agricultural Region, where it is generally slow growing. Most forms have the capacity to re-sprout from an underground woody stem after fire, drought or physical damage. It is this ability to re-sprout, and provide multiple harvests that makes Broombush an economic prospect for unproductive agricultural land.

The number of plants per hectare, management, time to first harvest and site conditions will determine yield. Time to first harvest is expected to be between 5-7 years. The growers receive approximately \$1200 per hectare per harvest or \$40/tonne.

This project is funded by the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, administered by the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council. The project aims to increase the viability of commercial plantings of Broombush by offering seedlings for a subsidized price, and make productive use of land that is unproductive for conventional agriculture.

To order your seedlings for 2007/08 or for further information, contact **Georgie Troop on 9668 1033 or 0408 675 787**

MU 55

The Mongers 55 drain has now been completed. Overall, the MU55 experience supports the assumption of an average 300 m draw-down, with the proviso that some small parts of the landscape with particularly clayey soils may be slow to respond to drainage and might need soil amendments. Water from the MU55 drain discharges into a small, samphire-fringed saltlake, with overflow continuing to Mongers Lake. Detailed studies of downstream vegetation, water quality, and the geochemistry and mineralogy of sediments in the discharge environment have not detected any deleterious impact of the drain. Results are continuing to be monitored. (Flume data, bore monitoring, photopoint references and vegetation transects)

Sub-surface Drainage project 3 sites

Three Springs

- lines have been dug
- water volumes from site are large
- bores being monitored

Carnamah

- Perforated pipe has been installed
- Bores being monitored
- Solar pump being installed to allow better disposal of discharge water

Burakin

- Perforated pipe has been installed
- Bores being monitored
- Flume installed to monitor volumes. Very little flow so far, less than 1 litre per min.
- No obvious drop in water table

Em31, 38 surveys are continuing every three months to allow comparisons in Electrical conductivity in the soil and evaluate any changes that may take place from the engineering option.

Yarra Yarra Oil Mallee Project Update

Harvester and distillation unit have been working through January with good results. Nearing completion in Wongan area and will be moving closer to Kalannie soon.

Information packages for 2007 seedling and subsidies have been mailed out

15c Seedling subsidies were well received, with some growers being knocked back due to lack of nursery space – limiting our 2007 plantings to 360,000. More seedling subsidies will be available in 2008.

Mulching contractor, Braddon Mulching will be doing another run of mulching oil mallees too large or uneconomical to harvest in the coming weeks. Please contact Jo Ashworth on 9666 1033 ASAP if you would like to confirm your interest for mulching or have any queries.

We are currently developing the biomass transfer system. The aim is to establish the still in a central location and transfer the harvested biomass in bins from the paddock to the still by truck.

Look out for field days in the future to see the harvester in action.



**MARCH is
drumMUSTER
MONTH
19th - 31st**

Clean eligible farm chemical containers can be delivered for recycling to any of the following collection sites. Booking are essential.

Carnamah 21 (am)	9951 1289
Eneabba 21	9951 7000
Coorow 30	9952 0100
Mingenew 21	9928 1102
Morawa Depot 22 & 23	9971 1004
Mullewa 23	0427 611 610
Northampton 20	9934 1205
Perenjori 21	9973 1002
Latham 22	9973 1002
Three Springs 22	9954 1001

Contact **Bevan Henderson on 0429089780** for more details

