

1 July 2008

SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT FOR WESTERN LAND MANAGERS

People travelling around the Western Catchment may soon witness a new road-side species flourishing: natural resource management signage.

Land managers who have undertaken works to improve natural resources on their property through the Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA) are being given the opportunity to highlight their efforts by displaying roadside signs.

In the first round of the signage rollout, thirty-six signs are being erected with preference given to people who accessed funds in the 2005-2006 Incentive Program and whose boundary adjoin high-traffic roads.

The Cobar area will receive thirteen signs, while Bourke will receive eleven and Walgett will receive twelve signs.

Western CMA Community Education Officer, Lisa Crisp, said "displaying the signage is not compulsory but most people who have been approached have been very happy to take part.

"It shows that people are proud of their area and taking steps to improve its condition for future generations.

"The signs indicate to both locals and tourists that Western people are actively involved in improving the natural resources, such as the land, vegetation, rivers, groundwater, cultural heritage and the variety of plants and animals in the Western Catchment," Ms Crisp said.

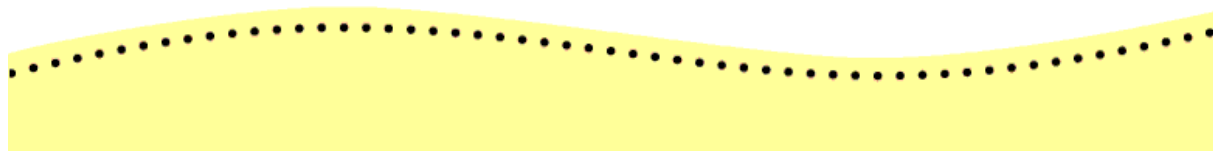
A group of **Cobar** land managers have received signs recognising their African Boxthorn control measures, which is typical of the type of work being done around the Catchment.

The four neighbouring properties, managed by Kevin Martin, Paul Theakston, PEAK Gold Mines and Cobar Shire Council, treated 770ha of African Boxthorn in 2005. The project has been successfully completed and is subject to on-going monitoring to ensure it stays under control.

African Boxthorn is an introduced species which forms dense stands, degrading native pastures, harbouring pest animals, particularly rabbits. Its control is essential to reduce the risk of the plant spreading.

In the **Wanaaring** area, Duncan and Christine Ferguson of Myrnong Station will erect a sign to highlight their improved grazing pressure management

The Fergusons have developed a grazing system to help them manage Total Grazing Pressure and increase groundcover and promote perennial grasses such as cotton panic, mulga Mitchell, mulga oats, curly windmill grass, woollybutt and kangaroo grass



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The Fergusons use a comprehensive system of trapyards and total grazing control paddocks with their rotational grazing system, which allows them to effectively manage their groundcover and promote perennial grass species, encourage native vegetation, increase biodiversity and reduce soil, wind and water erosion.

In **Walgett and Lightning Ridge** areas, the efforts of the Hudson Pear Taskforce will be highlighted by five signs.

The Taskforce, which comprises local landholders, two councils, two miners associations and six NSW government organisations have sprayed Hudson Pear infestations over 60,000 hectares and have undertaken a public awareness campaign.

Stopping the spread of the noxious weed protects the floodplain from infestation following flooding, reduces injuries to wildlife and stock caused by its spines, allows native vegetation to regenerate and encourages the variety of plant and animal life in the area.

Land managers who have accessed funding through the 2007 and 2008 Incentive Programs may also be eligible to receive signage and will be contacted by Western CMA staff in the next few months.

ENDS – For further information, please contact:

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Captions:

Cobar_ABoxthorn: Lisa Crisp and Russell Grant of the Western CMA, Dennis Wilson - Peak Gold Mines, Scott Kahler, Planning and Environmental Officer for the **Cobar** Shire Council, and Kevin Martin of Dellavale Station.

04_Ferguson: Duncan and Chris Ferguson of Myrnong Station, 60km south-west of **Wanaaring**, have had excellent results regenerating native perennial grass.

01_Davies_Green: Gary Davies of the Grawin-Glengarry Sheeppark Miners' Association and Daryl Green of the Western CMA inspect treated Hudson Pear near **Lightning Ridge**.

