

14 September 2009

LANDCARE FORUM FOR ALL WESTERN CATCHMENT PEOPLE

The Western Catchment Landcare Forum 2009 will be held at the Culgoa Sports Ground on October 24 and 25 and all residents of the Catchment are invited.

The Culgoa Community Sports Club and Landcare Group and the Western Catchment Management Authority (CMA) will host the forum, whose theme is "*Revitalisation: our land, our communities, ourselves*".

Landholder and Forum committee member, Angus Geddes of Wodalla near Brewarrina says the theme was well suited to Culgoa.

"The Culgoa Community Sports Club had fallen into disrepair in the late 1980s and 1990s, however, at the height of the drought in 2006 the locals worked together to revitalise both the club and the community," Mr Geddes said.

"The Western Catchment Landcare Forum allows people to learn from local landholders, scientists and industry experts in a hands-on environment and to share their experiences with others from western NSW.

"Approximately 100 people attended the last Western Catchment Landcare Forum, which was held in White Cliffs last year and we hope to have similar numbers attend," he said.

A full program and registration form is available at www.western.cma.nsw.gov.au or by ringing 1800 032 101. Culgoa is located 45 km north-west of Brewarrina. Registration and meals are free. People are asked to RSVP by October 9.

Guest speakers include Maarten Stapper, a former senior scientist with CSIRO, who will discuss biological farming and soil health. He believes that to regenerate soils, landholders need to look at how farm practices affect the ecosystem.

Greg Rummery, who operates an agronomic consultancy based in Walgett, will discuss whether pasture cropping is an option for landholders in far western NSW. Chris Ware of Bourke will speak about native seed harvesting and production.

"A key to the success of the forum is the opportunity to share knowledge and to learn from others who are also living and working in the Western Catchment. On Sunday October 25 each of the Landcare groups will give a five minute presentation about their group and we will also have a workshop to answer the question 'what works in your patch'," Mr Geddes said.

Local landholders will also showcase changes they've adopted on their properties.

Chris Ferguson of Myrnong Station near Wanaaring will discuss the role of knowledge in the revitalisation of land and communities and the changes they've made to their farming business including an innovative fish and vegetation production system, aquaponics.



MEDIA RELEASE



Garry Hannigan of Churinga Station near Broken Hill will outline his organic farming practices and the Enterprise Based Conservation program on his property.

Judy and Wayne Newton will speak about the invasive native scrub demonstration site they have established on their property, Malabar near Walgett.

Nigel Kerin, 2008 NSW Farmer of the Year, who operates five properties in the Yeoval district, will speak about the holistic management tools he has applied and "working with what you have got, not what you hope to get".

Members of the Buckwaroon Catchment Landcare Group will outline the education kit they developed for school children including a demonstration of how the kit works. The Group, comprising 40 members from the Cobar area, were announced joint winners of the Landcare Community Group category at the 2009 Landcare Awards on Friday (Sept 11).

Participants have the choice of three field trips on Saturday, October 24. Ben and Liarne Mannix will host a farm visit on their property, Gumbooka, which will include an inspection of goat traps and drafting system, saltbush plantation, Dorper sheep, Boer goats, wild dog trapping and their Enterprise Based Conservation program.

Graham and Cathy Finlayson invite people to visit their property, Bokhara Plains. They believe in building business and landscape resilience instead of 'drought proofing' which has resulted in diversification into tourism and intensive grazing management being the two main drivers of their operation.

A third field trip is a 45 minute cultural walking tour of Brewarrina including the famous Aboriginal fish traps and the Brewarrina Visitor Information Centre.

An additional option is making the journey to Bourke to celebrate the official opening of the Back O' Bourke Centre, which will be held on Saturday afternoon.

On Saturday night, the dinner will feature a presentation to winners of the 2009 Western Catchment Management Authority Environmental Care Awards.

"We hope to see as many people as possible at the Western Catchment Landcare Forum," Mr Geddes said.

Ends

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Captions:



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Judy and Wayne Newton of Malabar near Walgett will outline their invasive native scrub demonstration site.

Graham and Cathy Finlayson will host a farm visit on their property, Bokhara Plains.

Chris Ferguson of Myrnong Station, south-west of Wanaaring (photographed with her husband, Duncan) will speak about the role of knowledge in the revitalisation of land and communities.

