



Quality Rural Solutions Training for you

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Quality Rural Solutions - NaturalCapital Pty. Ltd.

Changes to QRS ownership

From March 26 2009, Quality Rural Solutions will become Quality Rural Solutions – Natural Capital Pty Ltd. (QRS-NC). Alison Elvin is the new owner/ manager while Jane Vincent will continue to do some training. This way QRS-NC will become part of Alison Elvin and Owen Whitaker’s already extensive business specializing in native vegetation. To now deliver training in Natural Resource Management is a natural progression for Natural Capital Pty. Ltd. For a long time Alison has been the senior trainer of QRS and she is highly regarded for her wonderful work, especially in Property Management Planning –she has now trained over 100 clients with QRS, so I am pleased to announce this new look for QRS. JV

Farm Dam Competition

In 2008, Jerrawa Creek Landcare successfully applied for funding under the ‘Woolworth’s Sustainable Farming Program’ to undertake a Free Farm Dam Makeover competition, offering the three winners a sensible re-design of their dam by a local consultant. The cost-effective and practical design of the dam will use biological features of riparian and aquatic vegetation, together with exclusion fencing and habitat reinstatement, to steadily improve water quality and create a vibrant wetland ecology within the farm. Alison was engaged as the consultant to ‘makeover’ each of the three dams, using a small budget to achieve maximum long-term gains. The designs have been prepared and presented to the dam owners, and include details of exclusion fencing; aquatic and riparian species and plantings methodologies; simple habitat reconstruction both in the dam and around it; and the design of various ‘silt traps’ to slow, filter and soak up the water. With cooler days and a small amount of moisture now in the soil, it is the ideal time to begin the works. Alison will be working directly with each farmer to ensure that the final design and the on-ground results are within the means of the farmer and the modest funds available, fit in with each farmer’s farm plan; ensure little on-going maintenance, and provide the ultimate aim of clean water for stock and wildlife, a dynamic wetland, better water in the catchment, and an asset for the farm. This is an exciting and rewarding project, and has captured much local interest.

New Water Workshop!

In November 2009 QRS delivered a new workshop for Jerrawa Creek Landcare. This workshop, on improving water quality on your farm, was highly successful with participants gaining an understanding of the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of water which yield excellent water quality. They also learnt how to identify which plants will keep your watercourse clean and healthy year-round, and how to grow them. A highlight was a visit to John and Mary Walsh’s property where we looked at two contrasting dams. We carried out Waterwatch tests to assess the water quality by identifying the insects and other animals living in it - different

species living in the water indicate the presence or absence of various pollutants and thus the quality of the water. The first magnificent dam, excluded from regular grazing and with wonderful vegetation all around it, had very high quality water, in stark contrast to a second dam which had not been excluded from stock. As a consequence there was no re-vegetation surrounding this dam, and the water quality was accordingly poor. Both the presentations and the field trip in this workshop provided biological management techniques to obtain the maximum water quality and biodiversity from your dams, creeks and wetlands. Please contact QRS-NC if you are interested in your Landcare group doing this fun workshop.

In early May 2 full-day workshops were conducted on Wetland Identification and Restoration along the South Coast - one day in Bodalla, the other day at Bega. Both workshops were full, with passionate and committed landholders keen to learn all they could and then get on with the job. They were both wonderful days, and were funded by the Wetland Carers Network, the Far South Coast Conservation Management Network, and the Eurobodalla Shire Council.

Property Management Planning (PMP) to continue in 2009

In 2009 Quality Rural Solutions – Natural Capital Pty. Ltd will continue to focus on Natural Resource Management. This year there will be two different PMP courses offered; Property Management Planning (PMP) for natural resource management (6 day course) and Farm Planning (4 day course) are being delivered by NSW Dept. Primary Industries. Alison Elvin is the senior trainer for many of these courses, across S-E NSW so register your interest with QRS –NC. Last year six PMP courses were completed with very positive feedback; over the past few years QRS has developed farm plans with over 100 clients. A further two PMP courses were completed in February 2008 in Gunning and Boorowa, both subsidised by the Lachlan CMA. Then during the year courses were completed in Goulburn, Moss Vale, Berridale and Richmond as well as a shortened version at Moruya. Recently we delivered a Refresher course in Braidwood; this gave us a chance to see how everyone had progressed with their plans –in many cases the progress was amazing. As well, we were able to go though the latest developments particularly in terms of the importance of Soil Biology. We were also pleased to see the Farming for the Long Haul funding that some had received on the strength of their plans. The plantations joining Barwood and Manar were brilliant as was the Barwood “wetland”! This is an important point that a good farm plan is a big help when it come to getting funding! We were also interested to learn about pasture cropping and see the trial at Barwood sponsored by Southern Rivers CMA.

Direct Seeding of Trees and Grasses

NaturalCapital Pty Ltd specialize in the direct seeding of provenance native grasses, forbs, shrubs and trees for both agricultural and environmental outcomes. They collect, clean, process and store these seeds in their commercial native seed bank, and are constantly trialing new and different methods to sow these seeds in dry times to ensure successful germinations. Clients include Government Agencies, private companies, NGO's and private landholders. NaturalCapital believe that direct seeding is the most cost-effective and ultimately successful method for the large-scale revegetation of degraded landscapes. They are also working closely with interested farmers to establish productive native pastures in a landscape whose dryness has annualized their pastures, leaving little or no feed for much of the year, bare soil, and huge stock-feeding costs. To date, their work has

concentrated on the SW slopes and plains and the southern tablelands within the auspices of numerous CMA's.

For further information see www.naturalcapital.com.au

Soil Carbon and Soil Biology Seminar coming soon to Yass

On the 21st October the Yass Area Network of Landcare Groups (YAN) is holding a seminar "Your Land, Your Soil and Your Future". The emphasis will be on Soil Biology and how improving it has many benefits for your farm, including raising Soil Organic Carbon. Patrick Francis from Australian Farm Journal will open the seminar with Christine Jones, founder of Amazing Carbon, being the keynote speaker. Many other excellent technical experts and farmers have been lined up to speak on topics such as Soil Health (Tom Redfern and Maarten Stapper), Pasture Cropping (Colin Seis) , Biodynamics (Hamish McKay), Vermiculture (Rachelle Maddock from Nutrisoils), Natural Sequence farming (Peter Hazell and Martin Royds) , Composting (Eric Harvey) and Rotational Grazing (David Marsh). To register your interest in coming RSVP to Melinda Johnson: Melinda.Johnson@cma.nsw.gov.au or 6118 6013 at Yass MCMA office to reserve a seat (including lunch) for \$25.00 each.

2009 PROGRAMS

Whole Farm Planning (Property Management Planning)

Construct a dynamic plan for your farm with both short and long-term goals. This series of 4 or 6 workshops, spread out over 4 months (on dates to suit clients), assists in developing property management plans which will contribute to improved water and soil quality, improved livestock health, increased drought resistance, biodiversity conservation, reduced soil damage, effective weed control, and consequently increased and sustainable productivity. Property Management Planning (PMP) for natural resource management (6 day course) and Farm Planning (4 day course) are being delivered by NSW Dept. Primary Industries. Register your interest with QRS -NC or see the PROfarm website: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/profarm>. These courses are registered under the Commonwealth Government's FarmReady program. Eligible primary producers can be reimbursed for the cost of this course. See the FarmReady website for more details. www.farmready.gov.au. Courses in Lachlan CMA are for 6 days and include the software CRS Farm Mapping (RRP \$1096).

Trainers: Alison Elvin, Jane Vincent, Brian Eccles

Date/s

- Berry: already commenced
- Braidwood: Commencing June 6
- Hawkesbury-Nepean CMA : Commencing soon in the Sydney region
- Lachlan CMA: commencing June. TBC

Price: Farmready subsidy

available to cover entire cost of course (if an eligible primary producer). If ineligible contact QRS -NC to check on CMA subsidies.

Farm Planning and Electric Fencing

Farm planning talk by Alison Elvin from QRS -NC and George Gundry from Holistic Management, stall by Dept. Primary Industries followed by Electric Fencing demonstration by Gallagher.

Date/s • Tuesday May 26th, 10 am to 2 pm

**Free. Register with SRCMA.
4842 2594**

Identification & management of native grass pastures for agriculture and conservation

A one day workshop to assist landholders to identify native grasses, understand how these grasses best fit into an agricultural landscape, and learn how to manage these grasses for agriculture and conservation.

Trainers: Peter Simpson and Alison Elvin

Topics included in the course are:

- Recognition of the major native grasses of the Southern Tablelands
- The strengths and weaknesses of these grasses
- Where and why these grasses best fit.
- Recognition of vegetation links to soil acidity
- How to best manage native grasses for agriculture and conservation

Date/s

- Braidwood: Spring
- Griffith: October 26
- Bombala : Spring
- On request from Landcare or other groups

Price: Farmready subsidy available to cover entire cost of course. \$230 GST incl. (if ineligible for Farmready) www.farmready.gov.au

Improving Water Quality on your Farm

A one day workshop providing insights into how to manage your surface water for maximum water quality and biodiversity – and at very little cost. Landcare groups could apply for relevant subsidies.

Trainers: Alison Elvin and Jane Vincent

Date/s On request from Landcare and other groups

Price per person: Depends on Subsidy. Farmready pending

FURTHER PROGRAMS MAY BE DELIVERED IN 2009

To register your Company's/Department's/Landcare Group's expression of interest in the following programs please contact QRS-NC. These programs are available across Southern NSW.

- **Weeds - Not always the Enemy.** Learn to identify weeds in your locality, the story they tell us about the conditions of the soil, their potential usefulness, and a variety of control methods.
- **Wetland and Riparian rehabilitation**
- **Introduction to Successful Biological farming**
- **Assessing the ecological value of your land,** and improving the value cost-effectively.
- **Flora and Fauna identification** for the Southern Tablelands and SW slopes.
- **BioBanking Assessment.** Alison Elvin has enrolled to undertake the BioBanking Assessors' course, being jointly run by DECC and TAFE NSW , in July.

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