

21 January, 2010

Small grants can make a big difference

What does Napoleon have in common with grass-roots conservation efforts? Both are small, but make a mighty difference.

Just over \$100,000 will go towards six small but important conservation projects in central Queensland under Community Action Grants, the small grants component of the Australian Government's Caring for our Country.

The grants, which aim to help community groups conserve their natural environment, will fund projects to improve sustainable farming and grazing, rehabilitate a local creek, protect endangered wallabies, and help indigenous people to better manage cultural sites.

The Central Queensland Natural Sequence Farming Group secured \$20,000 to run a series of information-sharing and hands-on activities to raise awareness of Natural Sequence Farming (NSF) principles.

The region's leading natural resource management group Fitzroy Basin Association Inc (FBA) sponsored the group's application, to foster innovation among local land managers.

Operations manager Claire Rodgers said FBA supported any project that encouraged landholders to explore new land management practices that strike a balance between production and protecting natural resources.

"Natural Sequence Farming is of great interest to many local landholders, because it offers the potential to improve the productivity of their land in a sustainable way," Ms Rodgers said.

"This project will encourage land managers to take advantage of natural processes to aid in pasture health and water infiltration, which will also reduce erosion and ultimately improve ecosystem resilience – an important outcome as we deal with a changing climate."

Other projects funded include more than \$11,000 for the Capricorn Coast Landcare Group to remove rubbish and weeds including Guinea grass, Lantana, Easter cassia and Para grass, from a 500m section of Fig-tree Creek near where it enters Keppel Bay. The group will rehabilitate the area with native plants to improve the health of the waterway.

Morinish Landcare Group received around \$19,000 to run a workshop and field days to promote sustainable land management that will help members tackle issues such as erosion, ground cover and pasture health.

Australian Animals Care and Education will use its \$20,000 grant to protect the endangered Bridled Nailtail Wallaby. The money will support ongoing work to improve the wallaby's chance of survival through a captive breeding program near Marlborough, and wild release back into the region.

Two local indigenous groups received funding to help manage sites of cultural significance in central Queensland.

The Gawula Aboriginal Land Trust will use its grant of just over \$18,000 to undertake vegetation mapping at the Gawula site near Rockhampton. The Trust will also develop a

Fitzroy Basin Association Inc.

PO Box 139, Rockhampton Qld 4700, Ph: (07) 4999 2800, Fax: (07) 4921 2860

management plan to help preserve the site, which features a number of rare and vulnerable species.

Fitzroy Basin Elders Committee sponsored a project worth \$18,400 that will see the Western Kangoulu People develop an Indigenous Land and Sea Country Plan that will identify natural resource management and cultural heritage goals and provide practical strategies to address them.

These small projects promise to make a significant difference to how landscapes across central Queensland are managed into the future.

For further information or interviews contact: Jody McDonald, Media and Communications Co-ordinator, 4999 2816, 0429 992 808, jody.mcdonald@fba.org.au.

Fitzroy Basin Association Inc.

PO Box 139, Rockhampton Qld 4700, Ph: (07) 4999 2800, Fax: (07) 4921 2860