

Murra Downs Field Day

You might remember that in the September 2015 issue of *Three Rivers, Three Creeks*, we featured a visit to *Murra Downs* with our Regional Landcare Facilitator, Darren Jennings. This year, Rod & Kerrie Cribb of *Murra Downs* hosted a field day in April for 21 attendees to show local graziers the results of the 25th Anniversary Landcare Grant that South West NRM secured in May 2015 for the Lower Nebine Best Practice Group project.

The field day was the final step in demonstrating how the following key objectives of their project were achieved:

- A holistic approach to improving the condition of a creek bed and surrounding landscape at a site on *Brumby watercourse*, a primary drainage line leading into the lower *Nebine Creek*.
- The demonstration site will combine a range of traditional methods with biodynamic farming principles and a suite of tools will be used to improve soil health, limit erosion and reduce stock impacts.
- 41ha of eroded soil will be rehabilitated and managed grazing will be introduced over 425ha immediately adjacent to the *Brumby Watercourse*.
- Land repair methods will be demonstrated to over 20 landholders at a field day.

The first part of the day was spent looking at contouring which had been completed on the *Brumby Watercourse* (below right). It was observed that whilst little rain has fallen, the contouring had still encouraged ground cover. The contouring had also slowed overland water flow to reduce erosion and sediments.

Attendees then moved on to inspect the riparian fencing undertaken to exclude stock from *Brumby Watercourse* and to provide off stream watering (below).



Above: Attendees inspecting exclusion fencing erected around the *Brumby Watercourse*.



Above: An example of soil contouring at *Murra Downs* for ground cover development.

Murra Downs Field Day Continued...

One way gates have been set up around the property (see right), and stock are being trained to use them in order to control their movements into watering points.

Murra Downs also utilises field broadcasters: a field broadcaster is a self-driven, agricultural pattern energy device with no moving parts, usually made out of PVC pipe. They stand upright, and set up an induction field of the patterns placed in its reagent wells. It is designed to induce organisational patterns into the agricultural landscape. This project has funded the installation of two field broadcasters at *Murra Downs*, and the Cribbs have funded two more.

Above right: Rod Cribb revealing his innovation for controlling stock access to water.



Right: Rod Cribb explaining how field broadcasters work.



After these few site inspections, it was then time to return to the shed for a discussion on what else is happening on *Murra Downs*, where Rod Cribb demonstrated his methods of improving soil. Back on the homestead veranda, Rod and Kerrie Cribb provided more details on energy, and divining for water and other energy sources.

To conclude the day, The Lower Nebine Best Practice Group conducted a meeting: Darren Jennings provided a South West NRM update, Sasha King from Rural Financial Counselling Services provided some information on current issues and assistance available, Derek Goddard from *Deelamon* spoke about supplements and Darren Grant from DLF Resources talked about carbon farming. The meeting was very informative and all those present both gained and provided great information.

Thanks to Rod and Kerrie Cribb for hosting the day, (the tucker was fantastic!) and also to the Lower Nebine Best Practice Group for supporting the event.



Above: Rod and Kerrie Cribb presenting information about divining for water and other energy sources.