

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Focus Farm Wetland Study

Description:

Focus Farm Wetland Study (2010 - 2011)

Wetlands are some of the most threatened but valuable ecosystems in the world. Rainfilled wetlands – areas that hold water sourced only from rain and local runoff – are often overlooked in current wetland discourses in Australia.

Funding: Caring For Our Country & NSW Government, via the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority

Researchers ILWS: Dr Andrea Wilson, Dr Catherine Allan, Dr Skye Wassens, Prof Max Finlayson, Dr Remy Dehaan, E H Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation: Prof Deirdre Lemerl, Tom Nordblom, Helen Burns

Objectives:

This study improves understanding and management of rainfilled wetlands in the Murrumbidgee CMA area, in particular in areas around Hay and Coolamon.

Methods:

Social research with farmers in these areas as part of this study has confirmed the great connection they have to their land, but highlighted both their need and desire for more information about their rainfilled wetlands. Ecological studies within the project suggest that the rain-filled wetlands in these districts are special, with many supporting wetland plants that are unique to particular sites.

Outcomes:

By the end of 2011 this multi-disciplinary, and multi-centre research will provide the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority with:

- a methodology for assessing quality of rain-filled wetlands; application of that methodology in the Hay and Coolamon areas;
- a spatial database of rain-filled wetlands in the relevant areas of the Murrumbidgee CMA;

- identification of priority rainfilled wetland conservation areas;
- an understanding of landholder awareness and knowledge of rain filled wetlands in the Hay and Coolamon areas; and
- an improved understanding of the economic and social implications of managing rainfilled wetlands in farmlands for enhanced conservation benefits.

These outputs will be presented as a database and a series of reports with maps.

Better understanding of the rainfilled wetlands, their current management and the aspirations of farmers with rainfilled wetlands on their properties will facilitate the development of appropriate and targeted extension and incentive packages within the Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority.

The ultimate goal is to maintain and enhance the natural and productive values of these hitherto ignored wetland areas.

A public presentation of the data is planned for later in 2011.



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April 2011