

CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems

FRIDAY SEMINAR

28 July 2006

***BioAssess*: Early results from assessing the biodiversity benefits of revegetation in Holbrook, NSW**

David Freudenberger, CSE (presenting)

Geoff Barrett, CSE

Alex Drew, CSE

.... and a host of hundreds

Substantial Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funds have been committed to re-planting native vegetation in highly cleared agricultural landscapes in southern Australia. These funds have been matched by the efforts of thousands of farmers, community groups and NGOs. All this effort was based on the un-tested assumption that 1) native vegetation can be established and will survive in these highly disturbed landscapes and 2) replanting will contribute to the conservation of native flora and fauna. The BioAssess project is testing these assumptions, particularly the assumption that revegetation will contribute to the persistence of declining native wildlife.

BioAssess was 'seeded' with *Internal Venture Capital Funds* from CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems to support the time consuming design phase of this large research project. CSIRO *Water for Healthy Country* supported the implementation phase. The NSW Environmental Trust project *Better Knowledge - Better Bush* and the *Earthwatch Institute*, Australia, are providing on-going support.

Based on three years (6 seasonal surveys) we can report that:

- Despite some of the driest seasons on record and high levels of exotic weeds, the 4-5 year old re-plantings in the Holbrook Landcare area are thriving.
- A modest diversity of shrub dependent birds have already colonised most re-plantings and are breeding at rates similar to those in large old-growth remnants.
- There are few native mammals or reptiles colonising revegetation with the exception of bats.
- Various indicators of ecosystem function (e.g. tree regeneration) are improving in the re-planted sites.

The next challenge is to maintain institutional support for this long-term project.

FRIDAY, 28 July 2006
3:30 pm
Venue: Seminar Room
Graeme Caughley Building
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Gungahlin Homestead
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