



End of year update - 2005

Welcome

Dear Members and supporters - Welcome to the first end of year update for AVONGRO Wheatbelt Tree Cropping.

This year has been extremely important as, thanks to hard work behind the scenes by Peter Taylor from the Department of Agriculture and Tim Emmott from Greening Australia WA, funding was obtained to establish AVONGRO as one of two new Private Forestry Development Committees (PFDCs) for Western Australia. We became officially incorporated in May of this year. While still part time, at least this does allow us to be part of a very important national network of federally funded PFDCs. Another fantastic piece of news is that in October, Senator The Hon Ian Macdonald, Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation announced the continued funding of all 21 PFDCs nationally until June 2008 - we'll be around for a while everyone!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Interim Steering Committee for their important input and bearing with all the tedious work of creating a Constitution and Business Plan and all the important requirements to allow us to become a legal entity in our own right. I would like to acknowledge Greening Australia who hosted AVONGRO for the first 6 months, until we were able to operate on our own.

We held our first AGM on Wednesday September 21st at the Grass Valley Tavern. It was very well attended and a Management Committee was elected. Members are:

Community representatives:

- Myself, Ian Hall, as Chair
- Gerard McSweeney
- Fleta Redding
- Helen Job

National not-for-profit group:

- Tim Emmott, Treasurer (Greening Australia)

Industry:

- Tym Duncanson, Vice Chair (Oil Mallee Company)

State Government:

- Mike Carter (Forest Products Commission)

With our Executive Officer, Monica Durcan, as Secretary by default.

We welcome the important independent advisors to our Management Committee:

Avon Catchment Council:

- Lisa Grosskopf

State Government:

- Susie Murphy-White (Department of Agriculture)
- Dan Huxtable (Department of Conservation and Land Management)

Our inaugural newsletter was distributed early this year, produced by the ACC / GAWA / NLP Tree Crops project.

We are now poised to launch into 2006 with great enthusiasm and professionalism. As with other PFDCs around the nation, we are aiming to take a lead role in developing tree cropping industries, supporting existing partners in the Avon region. Although a challenging area for commercial tree cropping, we have several key systems to work with supported by the community, industry and government.

We hope there will be many on-ground projects to keep us busy in the New Year and we look forward to working together with you to further develop integrated tree cropping opportunities within the Avon River Basin.

All the best for Christmas, we will be in touch again early in the New Year.

Ian Hall, Chairman of AVONGRO

Field Days -2005 Highlights

As a fledgling PFDC, AVONGRO has been extremely fortunate that Greening Australia's Farm Forestry Officer, Tim Emmott, has through his partnership project, the Avon Catchment Council/Greening Australia/National Landcare Program 'Tree Crops for Sustainable Agriculture' has been able support AVONGRO by holding field days in the region, and producing promotional materials.

Here are some of the 2005 highlights, however more information is available on the AVONGRO website or contact Tim Emmott on (08) 9621 2400.



Tuesday 22nd March: “Wheatbelt Timbers Sawmilling Demonstration” Hosted by Wallatin Wildlife and Landcare Inc and Greening Australia (WA), with funding from the Avon Catchment Council, and support from the FPC, a sawmilling demonstration was held featuring two portable sawmills, milling a range of native wheatbelt timber species.



Monday August 8th: “Investigating tree cropping options to aid Avon River recovery”. Designed for landowners in the Brookton / Aldersyde area, participants viewed various tree cropping systems including sandalwood and oil mallees for mid slopes, pines for sandy soils as well as broombush and sheoaks for lower lying more saline soils.

Tuesday 6th September: “Tour of the Narrogin IWP for Mallee Growers”. Greening Australia in conjunction with the Oil Mallee Association and Oil Mallee Company organized a tour of the pilot Western Power Integrated Wood Processing facility in Narrogin. 70 farmers attended the tour of the plant, and surrounding mallee plantings, and 50 people attended an industry dinner where the status and future of the mallee industry was discussed.



The Narrogin Integrated Mallee Processing Plant is presently undergoing commissioning of all the major components. The plant has produced charcoal and an engineer has arrived from Germany to help with commissioning the steam turbine so that electricity can be produced. It is expected that activated carbon and eucalyptus oil will be produced by 25 December 2005. Full operation of the plant is expected to occur after the normal Christmas New Year break. At this time OMC will be harvesting around 300 tonnes of mallee biomass per week.



Wednesday 21st September: “Investigating Brushwood as an integrated tree crop for the wheatbelt”. Held in Grass Valley by Greening Australia in conjunction with AVONGRO and the Southern Brook LCDC, the day focused on key issues and developments in the Brushwood industry. The day involved a range of guest speakers, including Clive Bowman from South Australia, and visits to local plantations 38 people attend the day.



Wednesday 28th September: “Avon Sandalwood Network (ASN) AGM and Spring Field: Day” The 5th field day and workshop of the ASN was held in Cunderdin, attended by 62 people. Topics during the workshop covered included yield estimations, direct seeding, nut research and various industry issues. During the field day various plantations were inspected in the Tammin area.



Friday 11th November: Private Native Forest Management Field Day - An enthusiastic group of almost thirty people visited two properties as part of the first Private Native Forest Management Field Day in the Avon Region. Two sites were visited, a wandoo site in the morning and a jarrah site in the afternoon. Participants were local government, industry and land holder representatives interested in learning how to sustainably manage bush on private land - combining conservation and wood production. This day was funded by the Joint Venture Agroforestry Program

If there is interest or a need for a specific Field Day in your area, please contact Monica Durcan (details below)

Other related events:



August: International Bioenergy Workshop and Field Trip - International scientists looking seriously at woody perennials for power generation.



September: National PFDC Workshop around Katanning - PFDC, state government and industry representatives look at developments in Western Australia and what farm forestry can mean in really low rainfall areas.





Tuesday 29th November: A ceremony to mark the registration of WA's first Plantation and Carbon Rights Agreement at Koorda. Organised and facilitated by the Oil Mallee Company of Australia Limited. Carbon sequestration shows great promise for the Avon, stay tuned for an important event in February to kick off 2006.



Monday 5th December: Industry day organised by State Coordinator for the Master TreeGrower Program, Marg Scott. What happens to the pines that we are growing? Master TreeGrower representatives visited Permapole, The Laminex Group and Wesbeam to see the total utilization of this resource. More information on this day will be available on the AVONGRO website. Pines will not grow everywhere in the Avon, but for where they are suitable the Forest Products Commission is looking for a combined 150 hectares to form commercial partnerships with landholders. If you would like to form part of this exciting new opportunity, contact the Forest Products Commission: 9302 7488 or visit their website: www.fpc.wa.gov.au

AVONGRO Vision

'A sustainable commercial tree crops industry integrated with existing regional land use systems which enhances the social and environmental benefits for the Avon River Basin.'

Belonging to AVONGRO is not just about the Avon. AVONGRO is one of a network of 21 PFDCs nationally including five in Western Australia. All PFDCs work to the same Terms of Reference, including:

Natural Resource Management and Environmental Services

- a. PFDCs will promote the incorporation of tree planting with multiple benefits, including contribution to the enhancement of biodiversity, within regional natural resource management plans and investment strategies.
- b. PFDCs will seek to increase industry awareness of natural resource management priorities in their region.

Under the Plantations 2020 Vision, the notional target for commercial tree crops is three million hectares nationally by 2020.

National Vision

'To increase the adoption of commercial tree growing and management as a widely accepted part of Australian farming and as a component of regional natural resource planning for the production of wood and non-wood products, and natural resource management benefits.'

If you would like to read the full Terms of Reference for AVONGRO and all PFDCs, the National Private Forestry Action Plan or the Plantations 2020 Vision documents, contact Monica (details below).

Research Projects in the Avon - Update:

"Sustainability of Integrated Mallee Production Systems". This project will investigate aspects of the management and productivity of integrated mallee/crop/pasture farming systems to enable the effects of competition between the mallee and agriculture components to be quantified and subject to economic analysis. It is a five year project being implemented by the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Western Australian Department of Agriculture, with funding support from the Natural Heritage Trust Regional Competitive Component and the Joint Venture Agroforestry Program. The project will enable farmers and the wider industry to better evaluate the economic implications of integrating oil mallees into farming systems.

"Florasearch Stage 3". This project builds on earlier work targeted to the development of new, commercial tree crops for the 250-650mm rainfall agricultural areas of southern Australia. Agronomic improvements and industry development strategies are under development for two highly prospective species: *Atriplex nummularia* (grazing) and *Acacia saligna* (biomass). The project is being implemented by the CRC for Plant Based Management of Dryland Salinity, with funding support from the Joint Venture Agroforestry Program. The project will provide the foundation for new sustainable land use systems incorporating perennial plants.

What about 2006? Some planning is already occurring.

Friday February 10th will be the first general information day with the theme of 'Carbon sinks'. Carbon sequestration has the potential to really drive revegetation in the Avon, but there is a long way to go and a lot to learn. This day will provide information on the latest developments in this area from a national and local perspective.

Australian Sandalwood Network (ASN) - will be holding two Field Days in March. One on agronomics - a field focused day on how to grow sandalwood and associated issues. And one marketing and industry day in Perth. The fourth issue of the Avon Sandalwooder is now available. Please contact Tim for a copy: (08) 9621 2400 or temmott@gawa.org.au

Some websites to browse over Christmas: We need to keep in mind that AVONGRO is part of a national network and that we fall under some important national charters. Have a surf over the Christmas break. If you find any interesting tree related sites, let us know!

- www.plantations2020.com.au
- www.plantations2020.com.au/private
- www.mtg.unimelb.edu.au

Don't forget our friends and partners too:

- www.fpc.wa.gov.au
- www.greeningaustralia.org.au
- www.avonimc.org.au
- www.oilmallee.com.au
- www.agric.wa.gov.au

And we have our own website: www.avongro.com.au (thanks to the ACC / GAWA / NLP Tree Crops project)



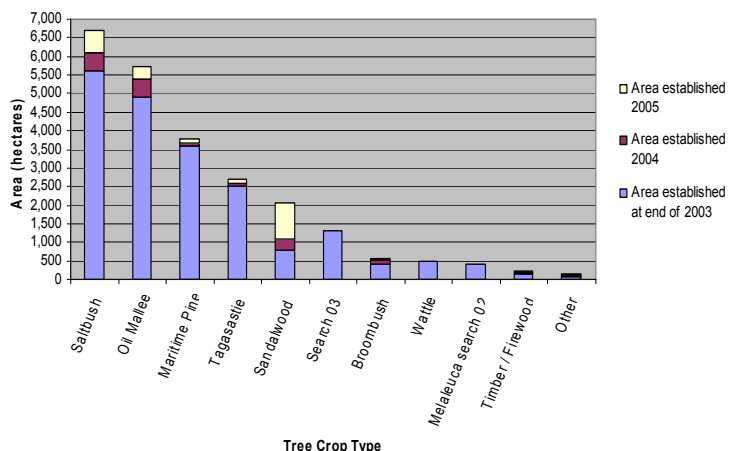
Invest In A Growing Future

<p>AVONGRO</p> <p>About AVONGRO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our services - Our purpose - Membership - Contact us <p>Find Out More</p>	<p>Farmers</p> <p>Take Another Look</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benefits - How to start - Upcoming events <p>Find Out More</p>	<p>Investors</p> <p>Triple Bottom Line Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest in the ARB - How to invest - Tree products <p>Find Out More</p>	<p>The ARB</p> <p>Avon River Basin, Western Australia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional vision - Key issues - Location <p>Find Out More</p>
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AVONGRO is supported by the Tree Crops for Sustainable Agriculture Program, an initiative of the Australian Government National Landcare Program, Avon Catchment Council and Greening Australia (WA).

ARB Tree Crops Inventory 2005



AVONGRO's Goals have been adopted from the Avon River Basin Tree Crops Strategy which was developed by many stakeholders in the region:

Goal 1: Increase the awareness and adoption of tree crops as an integral part of regional landscape management which addresses natural resource management (NRM) issues across the Avon River Basin.

Goal 2: Investigate, encourage and support diverse and vertically integrated tree crop industries of sufficient scale to achieve environmental, economical and social outcomes in all agricultural areas of the Avon River Basin.

Goal 3: Develop and coordinate interaction between the community, all levels of government and the tree crop industry.



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'Thank you' again to all our supporters
Have a great Christmas everyone
We'll be in touch in the New Year

Membership to AVONGRO is open to anyone. Please support us by joining and encouraging others. As we progress, we trust there will be great value in being an AVONGRO member.

Post this page with your subscription to:
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Ph/fx: (08) 9291 8249
Email: mdurcan@iinet.net.au

Membership fees (include GST):

State Government	\$550
Commercial industry (more than 5 employees)	\$275
National NFP organisations and smaller businesses (less than 5 employees)	\$110
Volunteer groups (LCDCs, Naturalists clubs...)	\$55
Farmers/growers/community members	\$20

Yes please, I/we would like to join AVONGRO

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____

Postcode: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Payment of \$ _____ is enclosed