



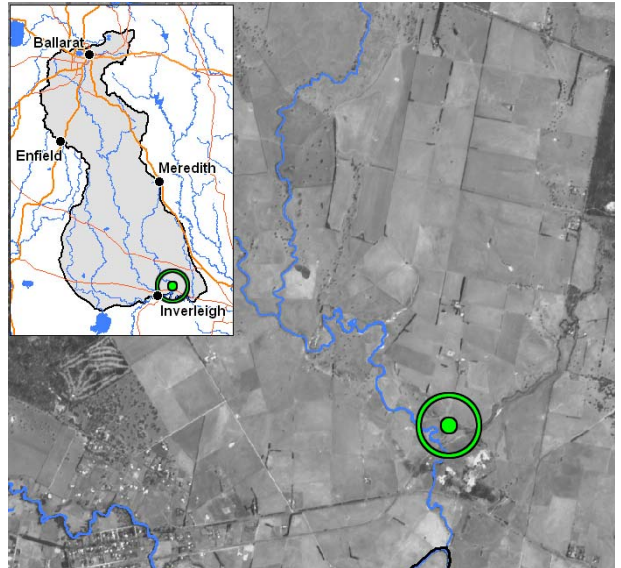
Farmscaper

Steve Donaldson is focussing on productivity while creating welcome benefits for biodiversity.

An annual programme of revegetation has led to new areas for wildlife on his specialist wool & merino sheep farm at Inverleigh. He now has a sense of farming sustainably and leaving something better behind.

Steve has two properties with frontages to Native Hut and Spring Creeks, which have significant red gum remnants and a Chilean needle grass infestation. Large non-productive areas of rocky outcrops and sandy escarpments adjoin his lucerne and grazing paddocks.

After completing a whole farm plan in 2000, Steve decided these areas were not cost effective within his farm management programme and in 2002 began fencing for revegetation. The Leigh Catchment Group has been instrumental in assisting with technical and funding support for these projects - in particular Natural Heritage Trust, Envirofund and the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority.



Key issues:

- Increasing productivity on arable land
- Stopping the spread of Chilean needle grass
- Reducing the gully and soil erosion
- Landclass fencing



Steve Donaldson

The solutions:

An annual programme of revegetation has been built into the farm time table.

Steve's father had previously fenced off 21Ha around a large wetland on Native Hut Creek.

48,422 tubestock plantings have been undertaken over the last 5 years.

3.8km waterways have been fenced to protect them from grazing and revegetated with local provenance plants.

The results:

The plantings are too young to provide measurable habitat improvements but islands of trees are now linked to provide corridors for native fauna to move easily.

Understorey plantings have enhanced the remnant gums along the creeks.

The spread of Chilean needle grass has been reduced along Native Hut Creek.

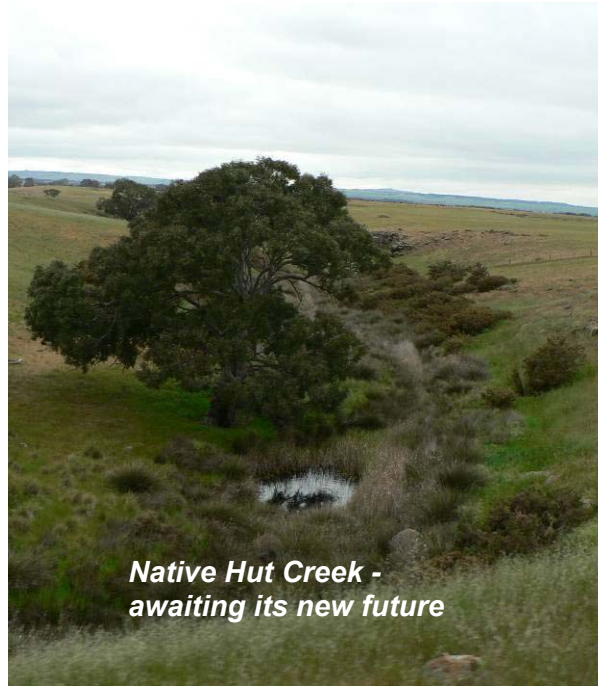
Soil erosion on the sandy escarpments has been alleviated.

Steve's results have inspired two of his neighbours to undertake similar projects on adjoining creek areas.

The future:

There are still 9km of waterways with spiny rush and gorse infestations and over 9Ha of stony outcrops to be fenced and revegetated.

3.2km of 20m wide shelterbelts are planned which will also create biodiversity corridors linking the waterway projects.



*Native Hut Creek -
awaiting its new future*

Lessons Learnt:

There doesn't have to be conservation objectives to improve conservation values on farms.

Integrating revegetation into farm time management has benefits for long term planning and funding.

Great projects inspire others to get involved.



More information:

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