**FORESTRY AN UNTAPPED ALTERNATIVE FOR FARMERS**

**MACKAY // Tuesday, 31st MAY 2016**

Landholders in the Mackay-Whitsunday region are being encouraged to find out more about how to make forestry work in their favour.

A Forestry Field Day is being hosted this Friday (3rd June 2016) to help demonstrate how cultivating trees could create an extra stream of income.

“The focus is on how to make use of marginal land that is out of use and not currently earning anything for the grower,” said Reef Catchments Regional Landcare Facilitator, Jake Betros.

“We are inviting people to explore a trial site where the landholder is growing trees in a previously dormant area, with the ultimate aim of selling to the timber market.”

The day will showcase the mixed species trial implemented along the O’Connell River, with a special presentation by Ray Greaves on silviculture in the Central Queensland Coast region.

“Ray is local to the Mackay Region and has been involved in the forestry industry for almost 20 years, including as a ranger with the state government,” Mr Betros said.

A mobile sawmill will be on display, and participants will be able to view soil samples and results from the trial. The field day will also walk attendees through the ABCD Forestry Framework to gain an understanding of best-practice forestry techniques.

Mr Betros said forestry was potentially an untapped market for local landholders.

“Reef Catchments is working with farmers to explore the possibility of using marginal land for production purposes, to increase returns and deliver environmental benefits like increased land cover and stability.

“Done correctly, this is a real area of opportunity for landholders in the Mackay-Whitsunday area.”

This is the first time the trial site, which has been operating for 1.5 years, has been opened to the public.

“Cane and grazing are obviously the main areas of agriculture in our region, but there is no reason landholders can’t broaden their horizons. We would encourage anyone with an interest in coming along to find out more and to obtain a copy of the ABCD Framework as a starting guide,” Mr Betros said.

Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

*The Forestry Field Day is a Reef Catchments initiative, through funding from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Programme.*

To attend, please RSVP to Reef Catchments on 07 4968 4206 or jacob.betros@reefcatchments.com by cob this Thursday.

**EVENT DETAILS**

**Date:** Friday 3rd June 2016

**Time:** 9.30am – 12.30pm

**Where:** 8 Forbes Rd, Bloomsbury

**RSVP:** Essential (by end of Thursday, June 2nd 2016

*Participants are asked to p*leas*e bring a water bottle and wear enclosed shoes and sun smart apparel.*

ENDS

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