

Kangaroo Island Biodiverse Carbon Pilot Project

Background

Coastal riverine and areas of high rainfall in South Australia, have been identified as having potential for successful carbon farming projects and are considered priority areas for further investigation. As such, in 2018 the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) has identified Kangaroo Island as a primary location to launch the first biodiverse carbon offset pilot project, due to its climate, location, and potential brand marketing opportunities for local farms and businesses.

This Pilot project will use the Environmental or Mallee Planting Carbon Farming Methodology, to establish native mallee vegetation that can capture and store carbon as it grows. Projects can undertake revegetation by planting (environmental planting) or natural regeneration.

The project aims to add income diversification to the other benefits that native vegetation can bring to a property such as improving biodiversity, providing shelter for stock and beneficial insects for crops, protecting eroded or degrading land, protection of watercourses and improving water quality. A key principle of the project is to maximise on-farm benefits while minimising the impact on good quality agricultural land.

What is carbon farming?

Carbon farming is basically the capturing and long-term storing of carbon. This can be an engineering solution such as the capturing of methane produced in the breakdown of waste at municipal waste sites, capturing carbon in soil, reducing methane produced by stock or, in this case, by capturing carbon in vegetation.

An Australian Carbon Credit Unit (ACCU) is issued for every tonne of carbon captured. The credits are then sold through carbon markets. The income from a project depends on the growth rate of the trees and the price of carbon which fluctuates depending on supply of and demand for ACCU's. In much the same way as in the stock market, credits can be retained and

sold when the owner thinks the price is right. Credits can also be sold directly to a voluntary buyer.

Carbon farming projects must follow specified carbon farming "methodologies" and other requirements under the Commonwealth Government's Emissions Reduction Fund. These methodologies describe how the method is applied and how the carbon is calculated.

Results

Following a call for expressions of interest and site inspections last November, 64 ha of revegetation on 11 properties and one site of 416 ha of natural regeneration have been approved. The revegetation sites are windbreak/shelterbelts, protecting creek lines or smaller patches on non-agricultural land.

The next step is to engage a Carbon Farming service provider, to work with the proponents to prepare a submission to register both a revegetation project and a natural regeneration project, with the Emissions Reduction Fund. If successful, these projects can serve as "anchor projects" that future works using the same methodology can be added to. Once the projects are registered, preparation for planting such as seed collection, growing tubestock, fencing and site preparation can commence.

Funding/Sponsors:

The Biodiverse Carbon Credit Pilot Project is a South Australian State Government funded project.

For further information, contact

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Or go to the NRKI website at:

https://www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au/kangarooisland/land-and-water/KI_Biodiverse_Carbon_Credit_Pilot_Project