

DPIW hosts US ranchers' visit

Sheldon Atwood, Mark Kossler, Mark Orchard and Charley Orchard from [Carrus Land Systems](#) recently visited Tasmania to talk to Tasmanian farmers and conservation organisations about the development of alternative and diversified income sources based on conservation and good natural resource management. Louise Gilfedder of Conservation Policy & Planning (RMC) met the Carrus partners during her Winston Churchill Fellowship in the USA in 2006, and was very interested in the business approach they brought to conservation.



Carrus Land Systems LLC is an organisation of experienced land management professionals who share a common vision for improving ecological outcomes on a large scale. They are purchasing rangeland in USA in order to pursue land-based opportunities that promote permanent ecological integrity across the landscape. They use efficient and innovative enterprises to maximize long-term profit, and place importance on cultivating respect and appreciation for the social fabric of communities and cultures in which they operates.




Participants at the Carrus Land Systems workshop at 'Somercotes', Ross.

Carrus ran a workshop for a small group of farmers at 'Somercotes', Ross, on 18 November, explaining their approach. There was considerable interest and excitement in the concepts, and overwhelming support for a follow-up workshop to explore the application of the ideas to Tasmania. They emphasized thinking "outside the box".



Nick Mooney undertakes wildlife research in the field.

Carrus also visited a number of Tasmanian farmers and were overwhelmed by the warmth and hospitality they were given. A highlight was a visit to Tom Gibson Nature Reserve with Wildlife Management Branch biologist Nick Mooney. Nick was trapping for Tasmanian devils and the visitors got a great view of a healthy male, a lactating female and a diseased male, along with a fascinating insight into carnivore and marsupial ecology and biology.

Of particular interest to the workshop participants were the practical approaches to monitoring developed by Charley Orchard who runs [Land EKG](#)  based in Bozeman, Montana. He specializes in providing innovative grassland monitoring & grazing products, data storage, and training for landowners & conservation managers, allowing ranchers to optimize ecological function and business profit. Land EKG Monitoring and Grazing schools have been delivered to more than 1000 land stewards across the western US and Canada. Land EKG Monitoring and products are in use across about 7 million acres of private and government lands. The aim is to bring Charley back in 2009 to run a training course in Tasmania.

Conservation Policy & Planning Branch of DPIW and the three Tasmanian NRM Regions jointly hosted the workshop through support from the Designer Carrots Program. This program is part of the Market-Based Incentives (MBIs) Capacity Building Programme funded by the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality through the MBI Pilot Programme. Designer Carrots Seed Money funds can be used to run MBI-capacity building activities through access to information and mentoring.

