

Progress Report CF 2018-061

Off-reserve conservation

Species and Communities

Project Core Team

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Project status as of Aug. 21, 2019, 1:40 p.m.

Approved and active

Document endorsements and approvals as of Aug. 21, 2019, 1:40 p.m.

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| Project Team | granted |
| Program Leader | granted |
| Directorate | granted |

Off-reserve conservation

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Context

The department supports off-reserve programs to complement its conservation and management of the reserve system. The Nature Conservation Covenant program establishes covenants on land titles to formally protect the land's biodiversity conservation values. Technical and scientific advice is provided through the preparation of management guidelines, and funding is available for voluntary covenants. The Land for Wildlife program is a voluntary, non-binding scheme that provides technical and scientific advice for registered land managers to assist in managing their land for biodiversity conservation. The program is being delivered through a partnership with the NRM Western Australia regional organisations. The Roadside Conservation Committee has membership from other government agencies, road and rail managers, utility providers and community conservation organisations. An executive officer supports the committee and prepares technical and scientific advice for promoting road and railside vegetation, and promotes this through training programs and consultation. These programs work with other land managers and the community to assist in delivering biodiversity conservation outcomes on lands not managed by the department.

Aims

- Increase community awareness of biodiversity conservation and promote the department's biodiversity conservation activities through community and land manager consultation.
- Integrate science knowledge into technical biodiversity management advice.
- Improved conservation management on lands not managed primarily for nature conservation.
- Enhance the conservation estate through nature conservation covenants.

Progress

- Fifty two landowners applied for registration with Land for Wildlife during 2018/19, and a total of 1,945 properties are currently registered supporting 883,101 ha of bushland managed for conservation.
- Eleven property assessments were undertaken for Land for Wildlife by NRM partners, and 11 by the departmental coordinator during the year. Sixteen properties were added to the program as full members, one as an interim member and five were deemed unsuitable.
- Five regional NRM groups have been actively involved in Land for Wildlife activities. Funding has been obtained by the Peel Harvey Catchment Council for the development of an on-line data management system.
- Direct contact was made with over 200 members.
- An edition of the newsletter, *Western Wildlife*, was produced and emailed in digital format to most Land for Wildlife members.
- Thirteen new nature conservation covenants were registered covering 2,678 ha. Nature conservation covenants have been established on a total of 350 land titles, covering 27,273 ha, including habitat for threatened species and ecological communities, a Ramsar wetland and registered Aboriginal heritage sites.
- Advice was provided to land owners, local government and departmental planning staff on land use planning matters relating to covenants.
- Covenant staff are collaborating with the National Trust of WA and Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development to update joint publicity material, and represent the conservation covenant programs of the state at a natural resource management conference in October. This is to increase exposure in the regional community via natural resource management groups.
- Four meetings of the Roadside Conservation Committee were supported.
- The Roadside Conservation Committee, with funding support from Main Roads WA, continued to develop education materials, and provide training to road and rail managers, to minimise potential impacts to adjacent vegetation.

- Training in roadside management was provided to five local governments, and a guidance document about how to manage roadside vegetation and minimise impacts of road works was prepared.
- Presentations were made to three WALGA road forums, and a rural Local Government Professional Association.
- Advice was provided to members of the community and road managers regarding roadside management issues.
- A discussion paper was prepared on the AusRoads Guide to Road Design (Part 6).
- A review of the Roadside Conservation Committee, Strategic Plan 2015 -2020 was completed.
- A review of the 'Revitalising Agricultural Region Freight Strategy Draft' was commenced.
- A review of the Roadside Conservation Committee, was commenced by an external auditor.

Management implications

- Off-reserve conservation plays an important role in achieving the conservation of the State's biodiversity. For example, 68% of threatened flora subpopulations (at 2017) occur on land not managed by the department, and 23% occur specifically on road and rail reserves. The encouragement of off-reserve conservation actions and the provision of technical support to enable effective management is important for achieving the biodiversity conservation objectives of the department and the State.
- Off-reserve lands are also often integrated with department-managed land, either by being adjacent to, or by providing linkages. Effective management of these lands, and the integration of management practices with those of the department, facilitate more effective management of the conservation estate to achieve biodiversity conservation outcomes.

Future directions

- Publish a technical guide on roadside pruning.
- Publish one electronic edition of the *Western Wildlife* newsletter.
- Develop a process for using spatial analysis to identify freehold land adjacent to the conservation estate for potential covenant sites.
- Establish all conditional covenants within the required planning approvals time frame.