



In This Edition...

- **WildEyre is Go!**
- **Vegetation of Eyre Peninsula Launched in 2010**
- **Sheoak Grassy Woodlands: What's All the Fuss?**
- **Scoping the Shoreline—What's Next for Shorebirds on Eyre Peninsula?**
- **Working on Country—Weed Control on the Coast**
- **Wild About Seeds—The WildEyre Seed Bank Project**
- **Monitoring Our Success in Improving Native Habitats: Bushland Condition Monitoring**

WildEyre is Go!

Welcome to the first edition of WildEyre: an eNewsletter put together by the WildEyre Working Group. WildEyre is a landscape-scale conservation action planning project located on Western Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. The WildEyre project aims to bring together government agencies, non-government organisations and other stakeholders to plan for the future of Eyre Peninsula's natural environment in a sustainable and collaborative approach to conservation.

Please have a browse through our newsletter and feel free to contact one of the partner organisations (listed on the back page) for more information on any of the projects detailed here.

Thanks and we hope to hear from you!

The WildEyre Working Group



Vegetation of Eyre Peninsula Book Launched

The first major field guide to Eyre Peninsula's native plant species, plant communities and environmental weeds is now available through the EPNRM Board in Port Lincoln.

'Native Vegetation of the Eyre Peninsula, South Australia' is a joint publication by Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board and Greening Australia (SA).

The 234-page book features colour photographs of each of the 300 native plant species described and covers 75 species of bushland weeds.

As well as descriptions of individual species, the book describes the groups of plants found in habitats such as coastal dunes, cliffs, mangroves, wetlands, temperate forests and woodlands, mallee, shrublands and grasslands.

The book is the fourth publication in the series written by Todd Berkinshaw, State Conservation Planner for Greening Australia SA.

Continued next page....



Continued from front page...

"The native vegetation of Eyre Peninsula has some significant similarities to what is found in other parts of South Australia but there are also some very unique plant communities on EP," Mr. Berkinshaw said.

EPNRM biodiversity program manager Andrew Freeman said the new book was a great resource for people on Eyre Peninsula who had an interest in growing and conserving native plants.

"We have produced this book in response to demand from the community for a single reference that brings together information about our vegetation. It is a handy guide for those who already have a good understanding of the plants that grow in our region and it is also a good introduction for those who are just starting to learn about them."



Picture: Katrina Pobke, DENR Port Lincoln

Native Vegetation of the Eyre Peninsula, South Australia by Todd Berkinshaw is available for \$45 from the Port Lincoln office of EPNRM at 23 Napoleon Street or call 8682 7555.

Sheoak Grassy Woodlands—What's all the Fuss?

Sheoak Grassy Woodlands (SGW) have gone from being the most widespread vegetation community on Eyre Peninsula to now being listed as threatened in South Australia. In the Sheringa region alone, SGWs covered over 60,000 hectares of what is now non-native vegetation, primarily introduced grasslands.

A number of factors are thought to have contributed towards the extensive decline in the area and quality of SGW on Eyre Peninsula. The impact of intensive grazing, land clearance, firewood collection, the introduction of feral herbivores and changed fire regimes have been



Picture: Louise Mortimer EPNRM Board



Picture: Louise Mortimer EPNRM Board

“One of the best ways to allow Sheoaks to recover is to exclude stock from grazing on regenerating stands”

so devastating that it is estimated that only 2,669 hectares of SGW remain in the WildEyre Project area and local knowledge indicates that much of this is degraded. The distribution of SGW is fragmented and many of the threats that led to this asset's demise continue to contribute to their decline.

The Long Road to Recovery

At community meetings across the WildEyre region, landholders have shown much interest in protecting and re-establishing SGWs. The WildEyre team supports landholders in conserving what stands of Sheoak remain and hope to support landholders in the future by developing sustainable grazing regimes and management plans to assist with the recovery of these fragile systems. One of the best ways to allow Sheoaks' to regenerate is to exclude stock from grazing on regenerating SGW. This will allow seedlings to become





Continued from previous page...

established and grow to a size where they are no longer threatened by grazing animals under a managed grazing pressure. This also allows native grasses and other understory plants the opportunity to recover, developing a healthy, sustainable system that is also useful to the landholder.

Some farmers across the region have voluntarily destocked some sites on their properties. As a result, they have been seen rapid regeneration of Sheoaks' and native grasses. On one farm near Calca the landholder destocked and fenced off a degraded site 10 years ago. At the time, there were only six adult trees remaining, all of which were showing signs of dieback). Now the site has hundreds of Sheoaks growing, however only one of the original six trees is still alive. If the farmer had not taken action when he did the patch would not have been recoverable today.



Picture: Paul Hodges EPNRM Board

Scoping the Shoreline - what's next for shorebird monitoring on Eyre Peninsula?

Since 2006, the sandy beaches of Eyre Peninsula have been under close scrutiny as volunteers closely monitored the effects of coastal activities – for example vehicle access, people, dogs, horses and even foxes - on resident shorebird species. This project – coined Scoping the Shoreline – aimed to assess disturbance regimes on beaches around Eyre Peninsula and quantify the level of threat impacting on shorebirds – in particular Hooded Plovers and Pied Oystercatchers.

Over the last three years volunteers have regularly visited 46 sites across the peninsula to record and map resident shorebird presence, distribution,



Picture: Glenn Ehmke Birds Australia

“ 13 of 46 sites monitored exhibited disturbance levels considered high enough to adversely affect the population ”



Picture: Grainne Maguire, Birds Australia

abundance and recruitment. They also recorded disturbance at each site, noting down vehicles, people, dogs, horses and foxes. Now, after three years continuous monitoring, data suggests that of these 46 sites 13 exhibit levels of disturbance considered high enough to adversely affect the population. The project has also created a valuable dataset of beach use and species distribution data that can help guide future decision-making and planning at the regional level. So ... what's next? How do we reduce our impact on shorebirds, especially on what are considered some of the best recreational beaches in South Australia?

The next phase of the project – implementation – is due for kick-off across the peninsula in coming months. This phase will involve further monitoring of sites, but signage, habitat protection and working with communities on experimental temporary exclusion zones to protect nesting sites are other aspects being explored. The key to the future management of these special areas is working together.



Working on Country - Weed Control on the Coast

The WildEyre team are continually looking for opportunities that engage traditional owners in taking part in activities that care for their country in a traditional land management sense, but also in ways that promote and increase cultural and spiritual connections with country. One excellent way of assisting local aboriginal people in reconnecting with country is to provide both financial and technical assistance to labour hire organisations – such as Port Lincoln Aboriginal Community Council in Port Lincoln and Tjutjunaka Worka Tjuta Inc. in Ceduna – to undertake environmental management projects. The Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board



Photo: Jess Frahn, EPNRM Board

“The group worked for two weeks, controlling mainly African Boxthorn in coastal dune & clifftop areas



also employ local aboriginal community members to supervise and manage on ground works projects, like those undertaken on aboriginal homelands.

As part of WildEyre's successful state complementary project in 2008/2009, WildEyre was able to engage local aboriginal groups to undertake weed control work in coastal areas between Elliston and Port Kenny, as well as at sites around Streaky Bay. The group worked for two weeks, primarily controlling African Boxthorn in dunes and on clifftops.



Photo: Jess Frahn, EPNRM Board

Controlling introduced plants in the coastal environment can be a challenging prospect. Lack of resources and funding often means control is not undertaken and infestations can quickly spread over a large area. By increasing the capacity of local aboriginal groups to undertake environmental works such as this, we can provide an opportunity for groups to get out on country and reconnect with their land in a way that provides both cultural enrichment to the people, employment opportunities in the community and environmental benefits to the region.

Article by Rob Coventry, EPNRM Board, Elliston

Wild About Seed - The WildEyre Seedbank Project

Seed-banks have been established throughout Australia. They are designed to preserve the seed of species that may be under threat and to ensure seed is available to undertake revegetation programs and supply plant nurseries.

In 2009, the WildEyre Project Team secured foundational funding from the Commonwealth Government Caring for our Country program to, amongst other activities, collect, process and store 100 kilograms of local native plant seed. The collection was undertaken entirely within the WildEyre project area, in vegetation communities identified within the CAP as those in most critical need of revegetation activities, for example Sheoak Grassy Woodlands and coastal vegetation communities. Of the forty species selected for collection, plants from both the overstorey and understorey of the various plant communities were targeted. Species from the Sheoak Grassy woodlands include Drooping



Photo: Simon Bey, Greening Australia

Woodlands and coastal vegetation communities. Of the forty species selected for collection, plants from both the overstorey and understorey of the various plant communities were targeted. Species from the Sheoak Grassy woodlands include Drooping



Continued from previous page....

Sheoak, Dryland Tea-tree, Native Cypress Pine, Wattles, Fringe Myrtles, Hopbush, Flax Lilly spp. and Cassias. Coastal species include Boobialla, Native Cherry, Wattles, Fan Flower, Cushion-bush, Cockie's-tongue, Coastal Beard heath and a variety of Saltbush and Mallee species.

"Regional seed-banks primarily store a wide range of seed types collected from native species that are

“The Seed Bank will continue to be managed & expanded to ensure seed is always available for revegetation projects”

specific to that area," says Simon Bey of Greening Australia.

"The collected seed is now stored at the Greening Australia seed-bank in Port Lincoln. While seed is stored in controlled conditions to maintain its viability, it is important the seed supply is turned over to ensure fresh stocks are available," says Simon. "To date, the seed has already been used in revegetation projects over winter and replaced over the summer seed collecting season."

The WildEyre seed-bank will continue to be managed and expanded to ensure seed for vegetation communities within the WildEyre region is always available for projects that may arise. As the seed of specific species becomes available throughout the year, other species will be added. Keep an eye out for WildEyre projects to see the seed-bank in action!



Picture: Simon Bey, Greening Australia

Monitoring Our Success in Improving Native Habitats: Bushland Condition Monitoring and WildEyre

The WildEyre CAP team has embarked upon an ambitious program to gather data which, in the future, will tell us if the native habitats in our region are improving or not.

"The Bushland Condition Monitoring method scores different habitat components, like weeds, number of native plant species, and number of plant forms, such as trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses. We can then re-score these components at a later stage to see if the condition of our native vegetation is changing," says Dr Tim Milne of the Nature Conservation Society of South Australia.



Photo: Bill New, NCSSA

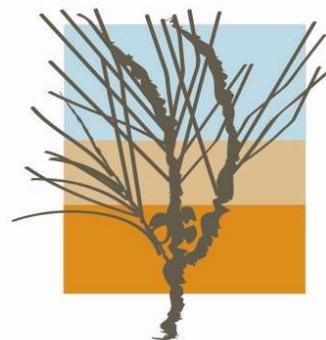
“So far, over 50 BCM sites have been set up on EP by local staff to monitor native vegetation for change over time”



Photo: Bill New, NCSSA

So far, over 50 Bushland Condition monitoring sites have been set up on EP by local Greening Australia and NRM Board staff. "Establishment of a rigorous monitoring program at the outset of the WildEyre project is critical to evaluating its long term success. It also provides an opportunity for us to adapt our conservation strategies over time, as we learn from the monitoring information", says Tim.

"We hope to establish up to 50 more sites in coming years, which will give us a really good understanding of the current condition of this region, as well as provide a basis for measuring future change."



WildEyre

WildEyre Partner Organisations

The partner organisations in WildEyre create, manage and participate in projects that contribute to achieving broader conservation and land management outcomes at a landscape scale

Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board
Port Lincoln: (08) 8682 7555
Elliston: (08) 8687 9330
Streaky Bay: (08) 8626 1108
www.epnrm.sa.gov.au

Department for Environment and Natural Resources
Port Lincoln: (08) 8688 3111
www.environment.sa.gov.au

The Nature Conservation Society (South Australia)
Adelaide: (08) 7127 4630
www.ncssa.asn.au

Greening Australia (South Australia)
Adelaide: (08) 8372 0100
Port Lincoln: (08) 8683 1076
www.greeningaustralia.org.au

The Wilderness Society
Adelaide: (08) 8231 6586
www.wilderness.org.au

What's on in WildEyre?

Get involved! Give us a ring to find out how!

Current Projects -

- *Sheoak Grassy Woodlands - Sustainable Grazing MBI program*
Contact: Rob Coventry, EPNRM Board Elliston
- *WildEyre State Complementary Project - Management of Coastal and Sheoak Ecological Communities*
Contact: Louise Mortimer, EPNRM Board Streaky Bay
- *Protecting Dunetop Remnants using Windbreaks*
Contact: Paul Hodges, EPNRM Board, Streaky Bay

Partnership Programs -

- *Indigenous Partnerships in the Chain of Bays (with Friends of Sceale Bay)*
Contact: Andrew Freeman, EPNRM Board Port Lincoln
- *Engaging Coastal Communities on Eyre Peninsula (with Conservation Volunteers Australia)*
Contact: Louise Mortimer, EPNRM Board Streaky Bay

We are always on the look out for great local photographers and artists who would like to donate their works to help showcase our beautiful region to a wider audience. If you would like to have your work displayed at one of our offices, in one of our posters or newsletters, please contact one of the partnering organisations for more information.

