



Government of South Australia

Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources
Management Board

MEDIA RELEASE

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More money for WildEyre and Coffin Bay work

Two major conservation projects on Eyre Peninsula have been granted ongoing funding totalling \$790,500 for the next two years from the State Government's Natural Resources Management Program.

This will enable Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board to continue working on high priority conservation actions under the WildEyre project on the West Coast and protection of the Coffin Bay wetland system.

The WildEyre project area covers more than 1.2 million hectares and includes the coastal townships of Sheringa and Elliston in the south to Streaky Bay in the north and extends inland to the large Wilderness Protection Areas of Hincks and Hambidge. The project is a partnership between EPNRM, Greening Australia, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Greening Australia, the Nature Conservation Society of SA and the Wilderness Society.

The State Government has granted \$484,000 over the next two years for the Board and partners to continue its work on the WildEyre project.

The Government granted \$207,000 for the project in 2009/2010. During this first year, the Board helped three landholders to undertake fencing and revegetation to improve areas of sheoak grassy woodlands on their properties, with a total of 130ha enhanced by these works.

"These woodlands are not only important for the grasses, shrubs and trees that live in them, but they are also a vital habitat for a number of threatened bird species, including the plains wanderer and the diamond firetail," Mr Freeman said.

"Sheoak grassy woodlands are listed as a vulnerable ecosystem in South Australia and the extent and health of these woodlands on Eyre Peninsula has suffered from many impacts, including livestock and rabbit grazing and bushfires

"It would be fair to say that if action isn't taken in the short term to protect these woodlands, they could disappear altogether.

Mr Freeman said the Board would continue with similar work on other remaining stands of of sheoak grassy woodlands and on coastal habitats in the WildEyre area.



EPNRM biodiversity program manager Andrew Freeman said conservation work had also been done on coastal habitats. These were eight sites on public land and eight on private land between Haslam and Sheringa where works were undertaken such as revegetation, fencing to rationalise vehicle and stock access, rabbit control, weed control and erosion control to improve the health of the vegetation in these areas. A total of 2500ha has benefitted from these works.

The second project, which is aimed at protecting and improving the biodiversity of the Coffin Bay coastal wetland system, will receive \$306,000 over the next two years. The wetland system takes in Coffin Bay, Dutton Bay and Kellidie Bay and surrounding coastal vegetation and farming land within five kilometres of the coast.

This is a collaborative project between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the NRM Board.

EPNRM coastal officer Kerry McEwan said there had been a big focus on pest animal and plant control in these areas.

“We have targeted pest plants including polygala, aleppo pines, olives, boxthorns, various succulents and diosma in the Coffin Bay National Park, Kellidie Bay Conservation Park, the Greenly and Frenchman coastal zones and Coffin Bay township,” Ms McEwan said.

“These plants have become significant environmental pests in this area, because they were originally garden plants growing in small coastal settlements that have jumped the fence and spread into surrounding conservation areas, where they out-compete native species.

“These pest plants are very well adapted to the coastal environment and to drought and they produce massive amounts of seed, which stays viable in the ground for years.”

In addition, more than 2,500 tubestock of native species have been planted at key sites to reduce erosion from surface water runoff. The pest plant control and revegetation work has been supported by rabbit control and fox baiting to protect shorebirds, reptiles and other native animals.

For more information on coastal garden plants that can become pest plants, a colour booklet called *Grow Me Instead* is available from EPNRM offices and other outlets for \$10. Call 8682 7555.

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