



2011-2012 Annual Report



This report was prepared by the Executive Officer and Technical Officer of the Western Australian Roadside Conservation Committee

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Chairperson's Foreword

The Roadside Conservation Committee (RCC) was formed to coordinate and promote the conservation and effective management of rail and roadside vegetation for the benefit of the environment and the people of Western Australia. Road and rail corridor vegetation plays an important role in the conservation of Australia's unique flora and fauna. It provides essential habitat for rare species and forms linkages that facilitate fauna movement, whilst providing a valuable asset for tourism in rural areas.

The handheld data collection devices used by the Roadside Conservation Value (RCV) Mapping program have proved very useful, with ongoing refinement of the software occurring this year. RCV Maps and reports were presented to the Shires of Merredin and Denmark. Volunteers have been trained and mapping commenced in the Shires of Moora, Woodanilling and Boyup Brook.

The RCC saw eight roads nominated for inclusion into the Flora Roads program. Eleven roads were assessed and deemed suitable additions, and six were declared as Flora Roads this year. There are currently 44 Flora Roads across the south west.

The Committee presented community displays at Dowerin Field Day and Wagin Woolorama, promoting the conservation of roadside vegetation and providing the opportunity for community members to ask questions.

The RCC has delivered 'Natural Resource Management in Transport Corridors' training to the Shires of York, Goomalling and Quairading this year, in addition to engaging with a range of LGAs through Managers Working Groups and the WALGA Roads and Transport Forum.

Following RCC's strategic input to the Tier 3 Rail line closures in the wheatbelt, works are commencing and clearing applications are being received. Environmental Contract Clauses for Local Government contractors have been finalised and distributed, and we continue to work closely with decision making authorities such as the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC).

The contribution of the RCC towards the effective management and conservation of road and rail reserve vegetation can be attributed to the quality of Committee members, staff and volunteers that have worked passionately this year to achieve extraordinary results.



Dr Ken Atkins
Chairperson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Terms of Reference	4
Policies	4
Membership of the Committee	5
Committee Performance	6
Capability	6
1. Grant Applications	6
2. Member / Stakeholder Contributions	6
3. Local Government Authorities	6
4. State Government Authorities.....	7
5. Utility Providers and Rail Network Managers	7
6. Community Members	7
7. RCC Staff	8
Promotion	8
1. Community Involvement	8
2. Publications.....	9
3. Flora Roads Program	9
4. Political Profile	10
5. Rail Reserve Awareness	10
Information and Tools	10
1. Mapping Extent	10
2. Hardware & Software Upgrade.....	10
3. Value Adding	10
4. Volunteer Training	10
5. Data Accessibility.....	11
Conservation Initiatives	11
1. Research Opportunities	11
Summary of Progress	11
Appendix 1: Priorities from the Roadside Conservation Committee Strategic Direction Document	12

Terms of Reference

To coordinate and promote the conservation and effective management of rail and roadside vegetation for the benefit of the environment and the people of Western Australia.

Policies

The Roadside Conservation Committee will promote and aim to achieve the following:

- Encourage rail and road management authorities and utility providers to conserve rail and roadside vegetation where possible.
- Provide information on the importance of rail and roadside vegetation for nature conservation, for landscape protection, and as an amenity.
- Develop rail and roadside management practices that conserve the native vegetation while achieving rail and road management objectives.
- Promote model by-laws, codes of practice and roadside management plans for rail and road management authorities and utility providers to use for conserving and managing roadside vegetation.
- Encourage the rehabilitation of degraded rail and roadsides to local native vegetation communities.
- Encourage the community to be involved in all aspects of conserving and regenerating rail and roadside vegetation.
- Promote specific research programs directed toward the conservation and management of rail and roadside vegetation.
- Promote the training of road managers, contractors and workers in techniques for conserving and managing rail and roadside vegetation.
- Encourage the integration of rail and roadside vegetation into regional management (e.g. natural resources management, conservation and development) strategies by community groups, local government and government agencies.

Membership of the Committee

Current Member	Organisation
Dr Ken Atkins (Chairman)	Department of Environment and Conservation
Mr Murray Limb	Main Roads WA
Ms Kelly Faulkner	Department of Environment and Conservation
Ms Jade Leask	Fire and Emergency Services Authority
Mr Rodney Safstrom	Department of Agriculture and Food WA
Ms Karen Barlow	Western Australia Local Government Association
Cr Michael Norman	Local Government (City of Joondalup)
Cr Bethan Lloyd	Local Government (Shire of Toodyay)
Mr Craig Morgan	Western Power Corporation
Mr Nicholas Stingemore	ATCO Gas Australia
Mr Darren Trengove	Brookfield Rail
Mr Jeff Anderton	Conservation Council WA
Dr Eddy Wajon	Wildflower Society of Western Australia (Inc.)
No Current Representative	Telstra

Committee Performance

The following performance report is presented against output objectives set by the Committee in the Strategic Direction document. Priorities for these objectives are provided in the Appendix to this report.

These priorities are subject to ongoing review. While some priorities only need small modifications and review to ensure continual improvement, others are deliverable annually and these programs will continued to be reviewed, and where appropriate, the Strategic Direction document amended to fit with the current abilities and priorities of the Committee.

Capability

Objective: To increase the internal and external capabilities of the RCC through resourcing and training.

1. Grant Applications

List of potential grants for which the RCC meets the selection criteria compiled and relevant applications submitted.

➔ A list of grants for which the RCC may be eligible has been developed by the RCC Executive Officer. To date, one grant application has been submitted to the Environmental Community Grants program and one to the RAC Community Partnerships program. Both were unsuccessful.

2. Member / Stakeholder Contributions

Sent letters requesting financial support from RCC member organisations.

➔ Individual letters were not sent.

➔ Main Roads WA maintained their commitment to fund half of the Executive Officer's salary.

3. Local Government Authorities

a) Training framework and prioritisation for delivery to be reviewed.

➔ The Training Framework for Local Governments has been reviewed. This document identifies the target audience and the way in which the RCC support training is to be delivered to Local Government staff. No significant changes were identified.

b) RCC to conduct training with a minimum of five Shires in each financial year.

→ The RCC delivered 'Natural Resource Management in Transport Corridors' training to the following Shires during the 2011-2012 financial year:

1. Shire of York (28 November 2011)
2. Shire of Goomalling (28 November 2011)
3. Shire of Quairading (28 November 2011)

→ In addition to these individual Shires, the RCC has also engaged with Local Governments through Managers Working Groups and the WALGA Roads and Transport Forum to ensure the Committee is known by, and provides advice to, a wider range of Shires.

c) Strategic Planning framework to be developed to assist Local Governments in forward planning.

→ The Road Reserve Asset Management Plan (RRAMP) project, headed by the WA Local Government Association, was completed in December 2011. Two pilot RRAMPs were produced as well as a tool to assist in writing a RRAMP. However no deliverables have been identified and the committee has disbanded.

4. State Government Authorities

Training framework for delivery to State Government employees, including MRWA.

→ The Training Framework for State Government has not been reviewed as no training of State Government employees was undertaken.

5. Utility Providers and Rail Network Managers

Training framework and prioritisation for delivery to be developed.

→ A Training Framework for Utility Providers and Rail Network Managers has not been reviewed as no training of Utility Providers and Rail Network Managers was undertaken.

6. Community Members

Increase quality and delivery of community member training.

→ Community member training in the Roadside Conservation Value surveys was undertaken in three Shires: Boyup Brook, Moora and Woodanilling. There was also a training day held in Perth for volunteers.

→ The RCC attended community displays in Dowerin (August 2011) and Wagin (March 2012) where community members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions about roadside vegetation and its management. This allowed the RCC to increase awareness of the issues facing roadside vegetation as well as allowing the community to make informed judgments on the way vegetation was managed by their Shire.

7. RCC Staff

Increase RCC staff capacity and scope of knowledge (e.g. road engineering requirements, road building techniques and applicable regulations) through training of RCC staff or seeking access to specialist skills through other organisations.

- ➔ RCC staff have participated in a number of training/conference events over the last year, including:
 1. Driver training (Oct 2011)
 2. Volunteer Management (Oct 2011)
 3. Time Management (Oct 2011)
 4. Report writing course (April 2012)
 5. WALGA Roads and Transport Forum (May 2012)

Promotion

Objective: To increase knowledge of the RCC, its objectives and services in the political arena and with road and rail reserve managers and the general public.

1. Community Involvement

- a) RCC displays at strategic public events.
 - ➔ This year the RCC held displays at two community events: Dowerin Field Days (August 2011) and Wagin Woolorama (March 2012). Both events were well attended, with the RCC engaging with over 300 people at each event, with many others likely to have viewed the display. The RCC shared display space with the Department of Environment and Conservation and local Landcare groups which benefited the RCC in attracting environmentally minded community members who might otherwise not have thought about roadside conservation, while at the same time saving the RCC the financial costs of having an individual site.
 - ➔ The RCC also displayed at the WALGA Roads and Transport Forum, an event that attracts Councillors, CEOs and Works Managers from around the state.
- b) RCC to participate in Local Government and Community road shows.
 - ➔ The RCC has engaged Local Governments in a road show style format through interaction with Managers Working Groups such as the Great Southern Managers Working Group.
- c) RCC to select and promote best practice examples of roadside vegetation retention (during road works), revegetation, and Flora Road nomination.
 - ➔ An example of Flora Road management has been selected but has not yet been published on the RCC's website.
- d) RCC to explore the development of a current matters newsletter.
 - ➔ No action has occurred in this objective. RCC information is maintained on the DEC website and information contributed to other related newsletters.

2. Publications

Publications framework and prioritisation for updating to be developed.

- ➔ A Publications Framework has been drafted, however further consultation regarding the priorities of publications is required before finalising.
- ➔ Work has commenced on a publication on Gravel Pits to update and pull together existing information. Funding has been sought to assist with publication.

3. Flora Roads Program

Review and promotion of the Flora Roads program.

- ➔ An article was published in *Western Wildlife* about Flora Roads, roadside surveys and roadside conservation, which resulted in several nominations.
- ➔ Refining of the database continues.

Flora Roads: Declared by managing authority

- Gnowellen Road, Shire of Gnowangerup, April 2012
- Nindibillip Road, Shire of Ravensthorpe, May 2012
- Woodenup Road, Shire of Ravensthorpe, May 2012
- Elverdton Road, Shire of Ravensthorpe, May 2012
- Carlingup Road, Shire of Ravensthorpe, May 2012
- Floater Road, Shire of Ravensthorpe, May 2012

Flora Roads: Found suitable, pending decision of managing authority

- Wongan-Waddington Rd, Shire of Wongan-Ballidu
- Chillinup Road, City of Albany and Shire of Plantagenet
- Gnowellen Road, City of Albany
- Kuch Road, City of Albany
- Reserve Road, Shire of Chittering
- Spillman Road, Shire of Chittering

Flora Roads: Declined by managing authority

- Nil

Flora Roads: Found to be unsuitable

- Chester Pass Road, Shires of Plantagenet and Gnowangerup
- Polinelli Road, Shire of Chittering

Roads nominated: Further action required

- Dotteral Drive, Shire of Ravensthorpe
- Pardalot Parade, Shire of Ravensthorpe
- Dunn Swamp Road, Shire of Ravensthorpe
- Old Plains Road, Shire of Toodyay
- Sandplains Road, Shire of Toodyay
- Plunkett Road, Shire of Toodyay (suitable in 2006)
- Keating Road, Shire of Toodyay (suitable in 2006)
- Forrest Road, Shire of Toodyay (suitable in 2006)

4. Political Profile

Increase activities which promote roadside conservation to a wider audience including decision makers.

- ➔ The RCC had a display at the WALGA Roads and Transport Forum. The Forum attracts Shire Councillors, CEOs and Works Managers.

5. Rail Reserve Awareness

Increase RCC involvement in Rail Reserve management.

- ➔ No change is recorded against this item.

Information and Tools

Objective: To increase the quality and extent of, and access to, Roadside Conservation Value (RCV) data and to integrate the data into land management practices more effectively while maintaining community engagement and development.

1. Mapping Extent

RCC to coordinate Roadside Conservation Values (RCV) mapping with a minimum of five Shires being approached for mapping in each financial year.

- ➔ Mapping results were presented to the Shires of Merredin and Denmark
- ➔ Mapping commenced in Moora, Woodanilling and Boyup Brook and the Shires of Dardanup and Williams have been approached for mapping in 2012/2013.

2. Hardware & Software Upgrade

a) Equipment used for mapping updated to current technological capabilities.

- ➔ Item completed.

b) RCV survey program review undertaken and improvements to data captured through this system implemented.

- ➔ Bugs continue to be ironed out of the new survey program.
- ➔ A review of the new survey program should be undertaken after the spring survey period of 2012/2013 to assess effectiveness, accuracy, efficiency and final product against RCC goals.

3. Value Adding

Add value to RCC data collected through the use of existing information databases.

- ➔ Access to DEC data enabled vegetation type and Declared Rare Flora to be added to the survey information/maps produced.

4. Volunteer Training

c) Increase training delivered to RCV survey program volunteers.

→ Volunteers were trained in weed and main vegetation type as well as how to conduct the surveys and use the survey device. Survey safety is now included as a specific training presentation. A specific training day was held for Perth based DEC volunteers.

d) Investigate alternative means of undertaking mapping

→ No progress on this goal has been made this financial year as the focus has been on upgrading the existing process.

→ The RCC has begun to collect video of roadside data (using phone technologies) for possible use in future actions under this goal.

5. Data Accessibility

e) Publish available RCC data on SLIP portal.

→ RCC data for Shires with available shape files have been uploaded onto the SLIP portal. DEC GIS is continuing to reverse engineer shape files for Shires mapped prior to the introduction of shape files for the mapping.

f) Publish available RCC data on RCC website.

→ All available data have been uploaded to the RCC website and continues to be added to as new data becomes available.

Conservation Initiatives

Objective: To identify opportunities for RCC research and involvement in issues impacting on conservation of rail and roadside vegetation.

1. Research Opportunities

→ A Masters by research project has commenced: *Monitoring use of roadside vegetation by native fauna and feral animals in Wheatbelt Western Australia using remote sensing cameras* (Murdoch University).

Summary of Progress

Based on the progress report above, the RCC has been able to achieve or undertake satisfactory activity in relation to most of the actions set.

The RCC Strategic Direction Plan for 2010-2015 identifies priorities for achieving the actions. There was one lower priority action which received little attention, namely the feasibility of developing an RCC Newsletter. Other communication strategies continued.



Dr Ken Atkins, Chairperson

Appendix 1: Priorities from the Roadside Conservation Committee Strategic Direction Document

Priority (High to Low)	Action Number	Title
1	5.1.3(b)	Capability/ LGA/ Shire training
2	5.1.7(a)	Capability/ RCC Staff Training
3	5.3.1	Information and Tools/ Mapping extent
4	5.3.2	Information and Tools/ Hardware and software upgrade
5	5.1.4	Capability/ State Government training
6	5.1.5	Capability/ Utility Providers training
7	5.2.5	Promotion/ Rail Reserve Awareness
8	5.2.1(a)	Promotion/ RCC Displays
9	5.2.2	Promotion/ Publications Framework
10	5.2.3	Promotion/ Flora Roads Program
11	5.2.4	Promotion/ Political Profile
12	5.1.1	Capability/ Grant Applications
13	5.1.2	Capability/ Member and stakeholder contributions
14	5.1.3(a)	Capability/ LGA Training Framework
15	5.3.4(a)	Information and Tools/ Volunteer Training
16	5.3.4(b)	Information and Tools/ Alternative sources of volunteers
17	5.3.5(b)	Information and Tools/ Data accessibility/ Website
18	5.3.5(a)	Information and Tools/ Data accessibility/ SLIP
19	5.1.3(c)	Capability/ LGA Strategic planning Framework
20	5.2.1(c)	Promotion/ Best Practice examples
21	5.1.7(b)	Capability / RCC engineering staff
22	5.2.1(b)	Promotion/ Road Shows
23	5.3.3	Information and Tools/ Value Adding
24	5.4.1	Conservation Initiatives/ Research Opportunities
25	5.1.6	Capability/ Community Members training
26	5.2.1(d)	Promotion/ Newsletter