

Significant Environmental Benefit NEWSLETTER

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Nature Foundation SA – SA's largest non-government conservation land owner

“This annual ecology forum is a unique opportunity for enviros from the resources sector to meet and share ideas. Our relationships with universities, government, industry and community groups put us in a good position to facilitate such a forum and hold events like this.” – Bob Lott, Nature Foundation SA President

Hiltaba SEB Restoration Ecology Forum, 13-15 October

In October, Nature Foundation SA welcomed resources sector enviros along with representatives from DSD and DEWNR to Hiltaba Nature Reserve for the second annual SEB Forum. The forum was held at Hiltaba to showcase the property as an ideal location to deliver on-ground SEB offsets. As NFSA President Bob Lott explains, “SEB partners can now talk to us about discharging their SEB obligations on either Witchelina or Hiltaba, or a combination of both if it's a large offset project.”



Attendees at our Significant Environmental Benefit (SEB) Restoration Ecology Forum, Mt St Mungo with Lake Acraman in the background. Back: Steve Milne (JBS&G), Jem Shimmield (Beach Energy), Scott Howell (DSD), Tim Flowers (Beach Energy), Mark Anderson (Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula), Jarrod Spencer (DSD), Trish Mooney (Natural Resources SA Arid Lands), Alex Nankivell (NFSA), Kara Edmonds (BHP Billiton), Alice Taysom (BHP Billiton), Liz Mc Taggart (Natural Resources Eyre Peninsula). Front: Dave Goodenough (NFSA), Bob Lott (NFSA), Zoe Bowen (Beach Energy). Photo: Caroline Nefiodovas (NFSA)

NFSA's Conservation Programs Manager Alex Nankivell presented the key aspects of NFSA's conservation management plan for the reserve and led a property tour that took in different vegetation communities. Trish Mooney from Natural Resources SAAL demonstrated the Goat Browse Study Method at North Wall and commented on the positive results of goat control

activities at Hiltaba: “It's great to see what can be achieved with a sustained goat control effort, with the positive response from palatable shrubs easy to see in the hills where goats had the biggest impact.”

Highlights for attendees over the couple of days included the sunset walk at Pretty Point and an early morning hike up Mount Hiltaba, as well as seeing the amazing diversity of wildflowers on the Mount Mungo fire scar which was scorched earth in December 2013. As Zoe Bowen from Beach Energy commented, “It was a good time of the year to see the plants in flower and spot the wildlife. Apart from enjoying the property, it was also great to meet a few new fellow enviros and chat about common issues and interests. It was also good to hear about some of the work the NRM groups are doing in the regions.”

Steve Milne from JBS&G summed up what NFSA hoped attendees would take away from the forum when he said, “It was a great few days and I think we all came away very impressed with both Hiltaba and the work NFSA is doing. There were certainly a lot of positive comments amongst the attendees about Nature Foundation's setup, science and ability to deliver real environmental benefits.”

Conservation achievements over the 2014/2015 financial year at Hiltaba Nature Reserve

- 1252 goats, 36 cats and 3 foxes were controlled.
- ~3000 (1080) fox baits were distributed aerially over the property supported by DEWNR's Bounceback Program.
- 300 (1080) dingo baits were distributed aerially over the property by Biosecurity's Biteback Program.
- 450 (1080) fox baits were distributed at waterpoints and along tracks by Hiltaba's caretakers.

Annual round-up of activities at Witchelina Nature Reserve



Rabbit warren ripping at Witchelina Nature Reserve as part of reducing grazing pressure.

NFSA's rotational managers are implementing the Property Management Plan priority actions of reducing total grazing pressure from goats, rabbits and other herbivores and predation pressure from feral cats, foxes and wild dogs through ground and aerial baiting and shooting. In April 2015 3000 baits (1080) were distributed, primarily targeting wild dogs as part of the SA Arid Lands Natural Resources Management Board's Biteback Program.

Rotational managers and volunteers began mapping and spraying buffel grass infestations, a weed of serious concern with its potential to transform native ecosystems into a monoculture, resulting in devastating effects on native wildlife.

Six different universities, including three from the United States, visited the property during the financial year to study various aspects of both the geological and biological values of Witchelina. The Conservation and Wildlife Management Branch of the Sporting Shooters Association, Birds SA, The Mount Lofty Rangers 4WD Club and the Toyota Landcruiser Club all undertook a variety of important tasks including bird surveys, feral animal control, infrastructure maintenance and heritage building restoration.

Conservation achievements over the 2014/2015 financial year at Witchelina Nature Reserve

- Buffel grass infestations mapped at Witchelina Nature Reserve (~400 hectares) along high-quality biologically diverse river red gum creeks and drainage lines.
- Buffel grass control work undertaken along known mapped infestations (~400 hectares sprayed) by volunteers and rotational managers.
- 1015 (1080) dingo baits were distributed at waterpoints and along tracks by rotational managers.
- 3000 (1080) dingo baits were distributed aerially over the property targeting inaccessible areas by Biosecurity's Biteback Program.
- Feral animal control continued with 161 cats, 61 goats, 15 horses, 8 foxes and 4 dingoes controlled. Fox, goat and dingo numbers continue to remain low, indicating effective control of those three species.
- NFSA has begun cultural heritage surveys of mapped rabbit warrens ready for ripping.



SEB Committee Member Profile: John Gavin

John Gavin, principal consultant, Remarkable NRM, has been a member of NFSA's SEB Committee since 2014. John has extensive experience in environmental management across the rangelands of Australia. He brings over 20 years of NRM experience, including six years as general manager of SA Arid Lands NRM Board. John adds skills and capacity to the SEB team in the areas of strategy and business development.

Watchalunga Management Plan Workshop

Watchalunga Nature Reserve, 92 ha of swampland near Finnis on the Fleurieu Peninsula, is NFSA's newest property. We held a workshop with a number of key people who have worked with the property over the past decade.

We wanted to discuss and prioritise the biodiversity assets and threatening processes that NFSA wishes to manage for the overall benefit and improvement of the flora and fauna at the site. The outcomes from this workshop will be used to develop a management plan for Watchalunga.



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