

Significant Environmental Benefit NEWSLETTER

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

“Nature Foundation SA looks forward to hosting the SEB Restoration Ecology Forum at Hiltaba from 13-16 October. Based on the success from last year we recommend registering interest early.”
Bob Lott – Nature Foundation SA President

Hiltaba Nature Reserve: Perfect for delivering SEB offsets

Well placed for the delivery of SEBs for both the EP NRM and SAAL NRM regions, Hiltaba Nature Reserve is a 78,000 hectare former pastoral property located in the Gawler Ranges on the Eyre Peninsula. Purchased by Nature Foundation SA in 2012, Hiltaba has high biodiversity values with a rare collection of flora and fauna from three converging ecosystems – the Rhyolite hills of the Gawler Ranges, arid country to the north and mallee to the south. It is also an important component of the East Meets West Corridor, a 750km biodiversity corridor linking public and private lands to create healthy and diverse habitats on the Eyre Peninsula.

The core NFSA management objective is conservation at a landscape scale, utilising the connectivity of landscapes. Hiltaba Nature Reserve is providing protection for 9 species of national conservation significance and 40 species of state conservation significance in addition to 7 species that only occur in the Gawler Ranges.

Major threats are excessive total grazing pressure (compromising habitat quality and recruitment) and predation by introduced feral predators. NFSA has reduced grazing pressure by completely

destocking the reserve of sheep and managing the impact of goats. This has allowed native vegetation (habitat for native fauna) a chance to recover. The control of introduced predators (cats and foxes) is ongoing, focussing on areas of high biodiversity value, primarily Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby colonies. A comprehensive monitoring programme has been implemented. Results indicate a decrease in fox numbers from 18 to less than 2 per hundred kilometres of track surveyed, since NFSA has owned Hiltaba.

Conservation is our first priority however the Foundation believes that Hiltaba is such a beautiful and important landscape that we should share it with supporters, tourists and the Eyre Peninsula community. Hiltaba has recently launched Ecotourism opportunities, including walking trails, camping and station stay accommodation for all to enjoy.

Investment in SEBs by the resources sector at Hiltaba Nature Reserve will ensure NFSA can manage conservation threats and continue to deliver outstanding environmental gains for the Eyre Peninsula and all South Australians.

Good news from Hiltaba following Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby survey

Recently, DEWNR conducted surveys for the Yellow-footed Rock-wallaby (YFRW) on properties adjacent to the Gawler Ranges National Park where they were once known to exist.

NFSA Conservation Programme Manager Alex Nankivell joined the survey for the Hiltaba component which involved walking over the hills where suitable habitat was likely, searching for fresh evidence of wallabies (sightings and scats) or historical evidence (skulls and skeletons).

An assessment of habitat suitability was also conducted. The good news is that the survey team found fresh YFRW scats in a new location not yet known to the Foundation or DEWNR.

This is an encouraging sign for the Hiltaba YFRW population and it is hoped that with a continued focus on predator and goat control a sustained recovery of YFRW at Hiltaba Nature Reserve can be achieved.

Witchelina Grand Working Bee

The 2015 Grand Working Bee was held at Witchelina 30 April – 3 May, with 44 enthusiastic volunteers turning the property into a hive of activity for the 4 day duration. Participants diligently completed a range of important jobs including erection of just over 2km of new boundary fence, photopoint monitoring and Jessup transects, renovation of the old overseer's cottage, and rabbit warren mapping.

The conservation work undertaken at the working bee contributes to the implementation of the Witchelina Management Plan and delivering SEB outcomes. For example, rapid creek line assessments have begun recently using a methodology developed by Rob Brandle (DEWNR Ecologist) that follows a process to identify the current condition and historical grazing pressure by indentifying the number of palatable and non palatable species in each vegetation layer. It also records weed invasions and their associated densities, giving us a systematic way to identify priority areas requiring weed control.



Alex Nankivell with volunteers monitoring vegetation

SAVE the date!

New date confirmed for our 2015 SEB Restoration Ecology Forum at Hiltaba from 13-16 October.

We have rescheduled our Hiltaba SEB Restoration Ecology Forum due to a date clash with another NFSA programme. Resources sector environment and approvals advisors are invited to attend Hiltaba Nature Reserve from Tuesday 13th to Friday 16th October (travel up Tuesday and depart Friday morning).

The forum programme will include: presentations related to native vegetation management and changes to SEB regulations, property tours, conservation activities and walking trails.

At last year's forum, the enviros present requested we expand the programme to include an industry facilitated session for participants to discuss wider environmental matters relevant to the resources industry. We're pleased to be working with SACOME on this initiative.

For further information about the Hiltaba Forum contact caroline.nefiodovas@nfsa.org.au



Trevor Whitelaw

Trevor Whitelaw joins the Foundation's SEB Committee

The Foundation is pleased to welcome Trevor Whitelaw to its SEB Committee. Trevor, recently retired from Santos Ltd after 37 years as Stakeholder Advisor and had a key role in Santos' SEB contribution to Nature Foundation SA.

For 24 years he was based at Moomba (15 years as the Operations Manager) and was actively involved in Community, NRM and environmental processes.

Trevor is a past member of the SA Arid Lands NRM Board, Lake Eyre Basin CAC and the Cooper Creek Catchment Committee.

NFSA working with industry and DEWNR on new NV Act regulations

DEWNR is at a critical stage in regard to both the review of existing NV Act regulations (e.g. clearance exceptions) and the development of new regulations (e.g. third party providers). NFSA is involved in a number of ways with both industry and the department consultation processes. We are supportive of greater clarity about 3rd Party SEB provision under the new regulations. Just how some of the proposed changes will be implemented is also an area of interest.



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