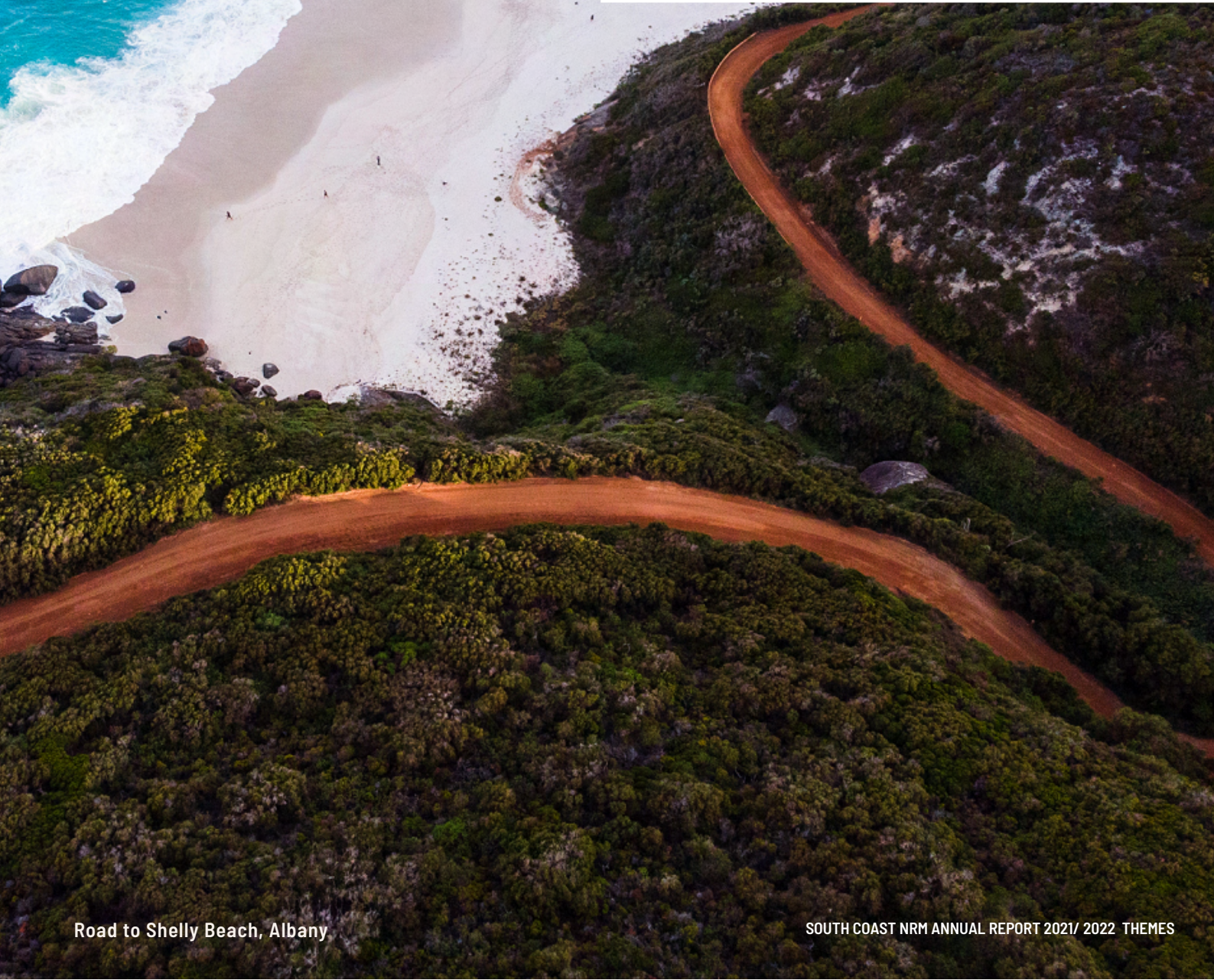


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The Land and Water program is led by Kylie Fletcher and incorporates the Land and Water themes of Southern Prospects.

The Land theme represents a fast paced, rapidly evolving space for South Coast NRM and the region's primary production industries. The aspiration of the land theme is to improve and protect land resources through sustainable land use, matched to land capability.

MEAT AND LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA AND AUSTRALIAN WOOL INNOVATION – CARBON STORAGE PARTNERSHIP AND BENEFITS

Delivery of projects relating to carbon farming have been a focus of the Land theme over the past year, with work starting on a partnership project for Meat and Livestock Australia. The Carbon Storage Partnership is a project showcasing the leadership of red meat industry in improving sustainability through its strategic goal of carbon neutrality by 2030; CN30.

Through this National project, a range of initiatives are underway to improve knowledge around carbon storage, with South Coast NRM playing a key role in supporting the communication and adoption of knowledge generated. Through involvement in this project, we have been able to secure additional investment to target woolgrowers through Australian Wool Innovation.

Whilst producers understand the need for reducing carbon emissions, many are confused about where to start. In order to help improve understanding, our Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitators organised a carbon roadshow in February. This roadshow brought together a range of experts, from local people involved in carbon projects through to the Clean Energy Regulator. It is anticipated that providing baseline knowledge on carbon will be a key focus area in the 22/23 financial year.



Cattle grazing. CREDIT: William Edge.

SUB-SURFACE DRAINAGE RETURN ON INVESTMENT, ESPERANCE

The Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) funded Subsurface Drainage Return on Investment Trial is well into its second year. Interest is growing following the development of the initial trial site at a local Neridup property owned by Michael and Marnie Fels. A second trial has been established in Dalyup while a third trial site is set for installation in Wittenoom Hills in early 2023. To date, conditions for the three-year trial couldn't have been better, with rainfall well over the ninetieth percentile across the 2021 and 2022 growing seasons.

High rainfall has created the perfect testing ground for subsurface drainage, where the slotted tile drains are effectively moving perched water away from the root zone, thereby reducing crop yield loss due to waterlogging. This has definitely resulted in an increased yield from the drained site.



Subsurface drainage trial site. CREDIT: Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network.

REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL LANDCARE FACILITATORS

Letisha Newman, Sophie Wilsher and Natalie Reeves had a big year in 2021/ 2022 delivering, facilitating, attending and supporting many agricultural events across the region, including the NRM Professional forums. The program also supported a range of regional capacity training events including delivery of a carbon roadshow in Esperance and Jerramungup.

FUTURE DROUGHT FUND - FARMERS HELPING FARMERS

The Future Drought Fund project in the Ravensthorpe and Cranbrook areas has continued. We were lucky to visit the Ravensthorpe gravelling demonstration site in June, where there were obvious colour differences between the graveled and non-graveled areas. It will be interesting to see the impact in the harvest yields.



Gravel mulch demonstration site, Ravensthorpe. CREDIT: Ravensthorpe Agricultural Initiative Network.

A PLAN FOR COOBIDGE CREEK, ESPERANCE

In 2021/ 2022 a management plan for Coobidge Creek was developed to establish a path forward for this priority waterway. This catchment was severely impacted by flooding in 2017. The management plan proposes a range of initiatives to help improve the catchment and reduce the downstream impact of high rainfall events. The next phase will involve resourcing future actions on ground.



Coobidge Creek landscape in December 2020. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.

REGIONAL BIOSECURITY GROUP INVESTIGATIONS

South Coast NRM, together with a number of partners, set out on a path of investigation in 2021/ 2022 to research and review the potential for a regional biosecurity group consortia to be formed in the western part of the South Coast region. The investigations included detailed economic analysis and a field trial delivered by Oyster Harbour Catchment Group.

The findings of this work are currently under review and following the Western Australian Government's review of the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007, the partners will come together to determine where to next.



European red fox. CREDIT: Dwayne Thompson.



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The Land and Water program is led by Kylie Fletcher and incorporates the Land and Water themes of Southern Prospects.

South Coast NRM is driven by the aspirations of Southern Prospects to recognise the region's rivers, estuaries, wetlands and water resources as precious and being maintained, protected and/or restored with social, cultural, economic and ecological values.

YAKAMIA CREEK AMITY REACH

A key achievement over the 2021/ 2022 year has been securing investment from the Minderoo Foundation, matched by the South Coast Environment Fund, and with contributions through the Healthy Estuaries project, into the Amity Reach area of Yakamia Creek, Albany. This investment will support the delivery of works on a degraded section of the creek near Amity Village and are well underway.

Yakamia Creek was once home to a thriving population of freshwater turtles and other aquatic fauna and was an important resource for the Menang people. Although impacted by decades of excavation and weed invasion, there is great potential to improve the riparian habitat and amenity values for the Albany community and enhance the conditions for the remaining turtles and other fauna.



Launch of the Yakamia Creek Amity Reach project. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.

ALBANY SANDPLAIN AND WETLANDS FORUM

COVID impacted the delivery of some key events in 2021/ 2022. The Albany Sandplain and Wetlands Forum was originally intended for March 2022, however after a delay, the Forum took place between the 3rd and 5th of October 2022. If you're interested in following the outcomes of this forum, we recommend signing up to the South Coast NRM eNews and social media to find out more.



Albany Sandplains & Wetlands Forum 2022. CREDIT: Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee

PROTECTING RAMSAR VALUES, LAKE WARDEN AND LAKE GORE

South Coast NRM's flagship Ramsar project, funded by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, has continued to deliver this year with key achievements including the delivery of a technical action plan for the Lake Warden Ramsar wetland, which will guide future investment.

Community involvement in fauna surveys in the Lake Warden and Lake Gore Ramsar wetland areas represented a substantial investment from our community, with volunteers providing a detailed snapshot of local bird diversity and abundances. This in-kind support for the project is exceptional and speaks to the Esperance community's passion for the Ramsar wetlands and the species that inhabit these magnificent areas. The work of the project is supported and guided by the Lake Warden and Lake Gore Technical Advisory Group, which includes representatives from the Esperance community.

REGIONAL DROUGHT RESILIENCE PLANNING

South Coast NRM coordinated community input into the development of the Regional Drought Resilience Plan for the Inland Great Southern.

This work, carried out for Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC), was a wonderful opportunity to ensure that diverse community voices and their thoughts relating to drought resilience were heard and incorporated.

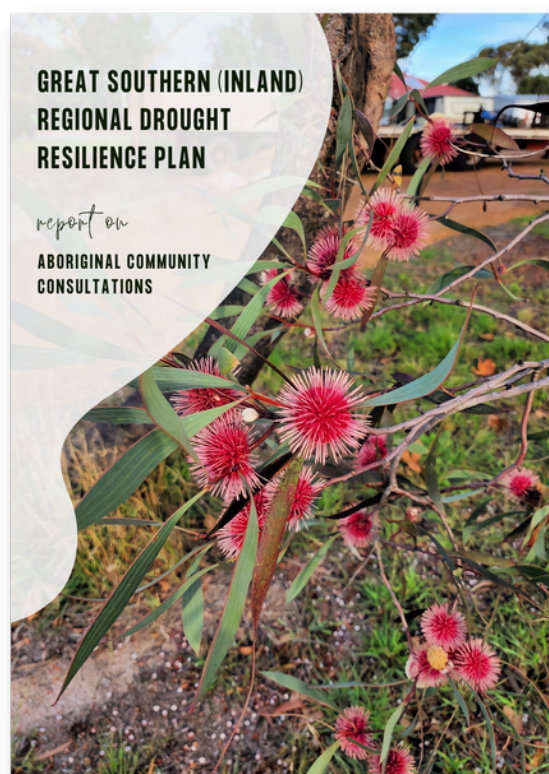
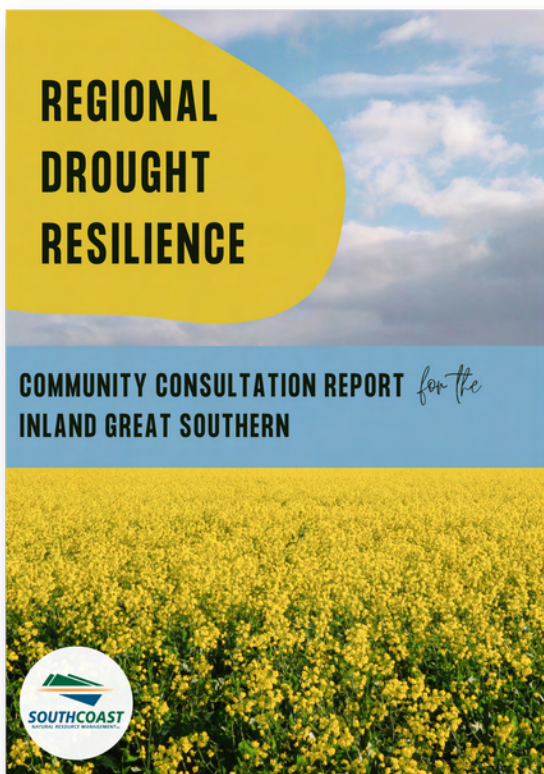
A separate body of work was delivered by South Coast NRM for the GSDC to capture the views of Traditional Owners and custodians. The Indigenous consultation work was delivered in partnership with Keogh Bay and The Gillamii Centre.



Ramsar wetland Lake Warden, Esperance. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.

Regional Drought Resilience Community Consultation Report. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.

Regional Drought Resilience Aboriginal Community Consultation Report. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.





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The Healthy Environments program is led by Dr Michael Wysong and incorporates the Biodiversity and Coastal and Marine themes of Southern Prospects.

The Healthy Environments Program is working with local community groups, state and local governments, and two Aboriginal Corporations, to deliver key outcomes of the Biodiversity theme within Southern Prospects.

THREATENED SPECIES AND ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

This year marked year four of the five-year Regional Land Partnership (RLP) program, supported by the Australian Governments National Landcare Program, which invests in actions to improve the status of six priority listed threatened species and two Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) in the South Coast region. Key achievements for the year include:

A 50% reduction in fox activity at Ballogup (Lake Pleasant View) and surrounding nature reserves following quarterly baiting by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA). These reserves are home to populations of the Critically Endangered western ringtail possum and Endangered Australasian bittern, both of which are expected to benefit from reduced predator activity.

The first ever wild-to-wild translocation of the western ground parrot was achieved to help establish a new population of the species at a site east of Albany. Led by the DBCA in partnership with Perth Zoo, Birdlife WA, South Coast NRM and others the translocation gives new hope to one of Australia's rarest birds.

After three years of intensive surveying, the Wilson Inlet Catchment Committee (WICC) confirmed the presence of the western ringtail possum inside the Nullaki Peninsula fenced sanctuary. South Coast NRM helps to fund these surveys and the maintenance of the sanctuary which aims to exclude feral cats and foxes for the benefit of native fauna.

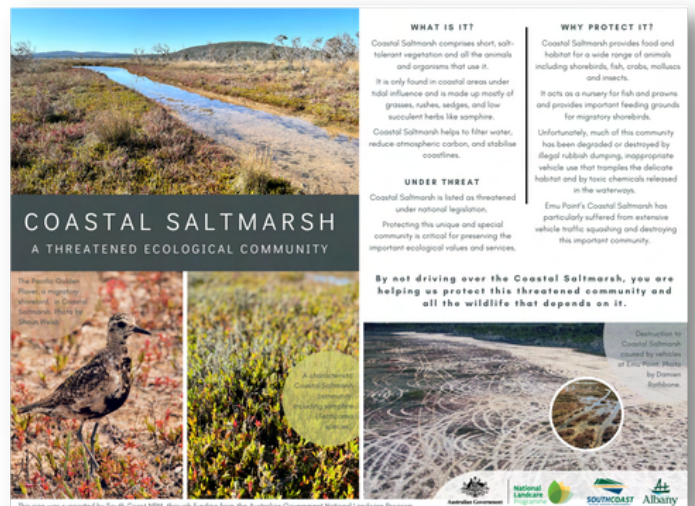
In collaboration with the City of Albany, vehicle access points to Emu Point in Albany were closed to protect sensitive temperate coastal saltmarsh TEC from vehicle disturbance. A new interpretive sign was installed at the site to highlight the importance of the saltmarsh and encourage people to limit their impacts on this sensitive ecological community.

In partnership with the Banksia Farm, an Open Garden Day was hosted at the Mount Barker Banksia Farm to raise awareness for the Kwongkan TEC.

The event received over 250 attendees and featured a guided tour of the farm, and presentations from local naturalists and members of the Menang Noongar community.



Banksia Farm Open Garden Day. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.



Coastal saltmarsh TEC interpretive sign at Emu Point. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.

PROTECTING BLACK COCKATOOS OF THE SOUTH COAST

This year marked the third year of a four-year Protecting Black Cockatoos of the South Coast project supported by the Australian Governments Environmental Restoration Fund. The project is being delivered by South Coast NRM in collaboration with Birdlife Australia, three community groups and over 12 private landholders.

Key highlights this year include:

The installation of 10 artificial nest hollows, or Cockatubes®, over five private properties and nine hollow repairs on one property. Carnaby's cockatoo chicks successfully hatched in four of these newly installed Cockatubes® located on two private properties.

Native plant revegetation over 12.5 ha of feeding habitat spanning four private properties that occur within 12 km of known cockatoo breeding sites.

Breeding season nest surveys were conducted across 17 known and potential breeding sites in the South Coast region with assistance from Birdlife WA.



Installation of a Cockatube® at Balijup farm. CREDIT: Basil Schur, Greenskills.

PROJECT DIEBACK

Project Dieback saw a change in project officers with Natalie Reeves taking on the role after Mia Hunt departed in December 2021. South Coast NRM was awarded a new, small State NRM grant to help enhance collaborative Dieback mapping in the WA's southwest.

This project will oversee a transition of South Coast NRM web-based Dieback Information Delivery and Management System (DIDMS) and connect with key stakeholders to promote the new product. Work continues on the large State NRM Grant awarded in 2018. Key achievements for this grant include the completion of aerial disease mapping over the entire Fitzgerald River National Park and the hosting of the Dieback Information Forum in Hopetoun during the Ravensthorpe Wildflower Show.

We are grateful for the continued support of the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program for Project Dieback.



Dieback affected *Banksia coccinea* on the south coast. CREDIT: South Coast NRM

RECOVERY ACTIONS FOR STIRLING RANGE THREATENED FLORA

This year the Healthy Environments team embarked on a new project entitled Recovery actions for Stirling Range Threatened Flora impacted by bushfires funded through the Australian Government's Environmental Restoration Fund. The 14-month project, delivered in partnership with DBCA and the Gnowangerup Aboriginal Corporation (GAC), targets recovery actions for three highly endangered threatened flora species restricted to the summits of the eastern Stirling Ranges. The project was awarded in April 2022 with most activities to occur in the 2023 financial year.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

The first year of monitoring was completed for the Monitoring, Evaluation and Research (MER) network. In collaboration with the CSIRO, this project is part of a national pilot program to better understand how ecosystems recovery from fire and determine where interventions such as weed management are needed to enhance recovery. Monitoring plots were established at Ballogup and the Mount Manypeaks nature reserve. This two-year project will conclude in 2023 following one more year of survey at these sites.



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The Healthy Environments program is led by Dr Michael Wysong and incorporates the Biodiversity and Coastal and Marine themes of Southern Prospects.

The Healthy Environments Program works to improve coastal and marine systems by reducing key threats through a community-led approach that embraces social, economic, and ecological values.

Great Ocean Road, Esperance

SOUTH COAST NRM ANNUAL REPORT 2021/ 2022 THEMES

In 2020/ 2021, South Coast NRM completed two grant-funded projects which focused on managing the impacts of off-road vehicles for the protection of ecological, social, and cultural values on our coastlines. There have been no new, funded coastal and marine projects since this time. The past year has focused on exploring opportunities with local government, stakeholders, and partners to develop funding initiatives for coastal and marine projects that deliver on Southern Prospects.

Unfortunately, an application to the State NRM community grants program for the development of community-led citizen science project to monitor southern right whales on the south coast was unsuccessful for the second time. In the next year, we will be working with our partners to see how we might be able to target other funding opportunities to support this critical project.

Despite the lack of dedicated, funded projects, the Healthy Environments team has been successful in delivering important outcomes for the coastal and marine theme by leveraging existing projects and opportunities. Through the RLP-funded TEC program and in collaboration with Southern Aboriginal Corporation, Wilson Inlet Catchment Council and South Coast Bushcare Services, weed control commenced at a new five-hectare project site on the Wilson Inlet foreshore, to improve the condition of coastal saltmarsh habitat at Morley Beach. Working to protect coastal saltmarsh at this and other sites delivers important outcomes for both the biodiversity and coastal and marine themes.



Weeding coastal saltmarsh TEC at Morley Beach. CREDIT: South Coast Bushcare Services.

CULTURAL

HERITAGE

heritage

The Cultural Heritage Program is led by Dr Peter Twigg (Twigg) and incorporates the Cultural Heritage theme of Southern Prospects.

Cultural Heritage is a foundational and critical theme of Southern Prospects. The Southern Prospects aspiration is that all NRM actions in the South Coast region recognise and respect natural heritage values. Aboriginal practices, spiritual and cultural values are considered across all NRM themes, to support conservation and protection of the natural environment.

RESTORING NOONGAR BOODJA

The Restoring Noongar Boodja project, of which there are three sub-projects, enable the Noongar community to actively pursue caring for Country (Boodja) using traditional ecological knowledge while restoring and protecting culturally significant locations. The sub projects are Restoring Lake Pleasant View (Ballogup), Walking Together and Songlines and Sustainability.

Restoring Noongar Boodja will build capacity and capability for Aboriginal people to be key participants in caring for Country projects alongside scientists and natural resource management practitioners.

RESTORING LAKE PLEASANT VIEW (BALLOGUP)

The partnership between Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation (AHRGAC) and South Coast NRM continued to flourish throughout the year under the Lotterywest supported Restoring Lake Pleasant View (Ballogup) project.

Activities this year included the finalisation of a Landscape Master Plan with proposed visitor facilities, on-site seed collection for the planting of local provenance seedlings at Ballogup in the winter of 2022, ongoing actions to reduce spread of key weed species, and the second Heritage survey to extend knowledge of traditional uses of this important and rich cultural landscape.



Elders and family members conducting a Cultural burn on Country at Ballogup. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.

Perhaps the most significant event of the year was generated when Elders and AHRGAC families gathered at Ballogup and conducted a cultural burn (otherwise known as a cool burn) in May. On the day, Elder, Aiden Eades observed that "this is the first time since I was a boy that I've seen Noongars conducting a burn on Noongar land". Ballogup was visited by many people in 2021/2022, including the Threatened Species Commissioner, Fiona Fraser.

SONGLINES & SUSTAINABILITY

This project, supported by Lotterywest, is a close working partnership with Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Inc that has been exploring links between culture, language, Songlines and caring for country options in the Fitzgerald River National Park and its surrounds. The project partnership has been underpinned by the creation of a set of standard cultural protocols and a standard contract template to protect Wirlomin intellectual property within any partnership arrangements, in this project and beyond.

The Songlines & Sustainability project, through on-country trips, documentation, research and filming is working on a mapping and archiving process that will help tell the hitherto untold story of the Fitzgerald region through the eyes, the lives and the history of Wirlomin people. Looking forward, the materials collected and the connections re-established and mapped through this project will provide the Wirlomin with a strong foundation to play a more active and sustained role in land management initiatives of the Fitzgerald region.



Wirlomin community visiting Calyerup Rocks. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.

A highlight of the year was the Kayang Trip held in November 2021 when almost 50 Wirlomin community members met at Point Anne to discuss Wirlomin opportunities associated with the Mamang (Whale) Trail and then camped at Twertup for a long-term planning workshop. During the trip Elders were able to show community members significant sites around Calyerup and discuss opportunities for Wirlomin people pass on cultural knowledge in ways that ensure the rightful place and role of Wirlomin people as traditional owners.

WALKING TOGETHER

In partnership with the University of Western Australia and the Noongar community, there have been continued efforts to record and investigate traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in 2021/2022. The project seeks to create positive outcomes for the preservation of both Noongar culture and biodiversity within the region.

In addition to recording and documenting knowledge held by Elders, the project partners have been identifying significant landscapes suitable for developing TEK-informed management plans. Development of the first plan, for Cowalellup Reserve on Peenebup Creek, is now well underway working with Elders and community members from the Gnowangerup region.

Within the project, three property management plans will be developed that highlight the cultural and biodiversity values of utilising both TEK and western science for land management success.

As part of the consultation and engagement process with Elders and the community, the Walking Together project has facilitated a range of on-country gatherings including participation in a multi-partner fire workshop at Nowanup and field walk visits to granite and lake sites.

ABORIGINAL SCHOOL BASED TRAINEES

In 2021/2022 South Coast NRM has continued to deliver on its commitment to the value and benefits of Aboriginal School Based Traineeships (ASBT) within the organisation.



Threatened Species Commissioners visit to Lake Pleasant View/ Ballogup. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.

Ashleigh Woods was a graduating Aboriginal School Based Trainee who graduated Year 12 in November 2022 thus completing her 2-year traineeship in Business Studies with South Coast NRM.

Between July and November of 2022 two ASBT's were an integral part of the South Coast NRM team. Tyler Roberts commenced a traineeship whilst undertaking a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management as a year 11 student. Tyler will graduate year 12 in 2022 and will complete his traineeship and his TAFE qualification.

Steven McCleary, a year 11 student from Mt Barker, was appointed as the incoming ASBT in February 2022 and is undertaking a Certificate II in Conservation and Restoration Ecology.



Steven McCleary, Aboriginal School Based Trainee with Natalie Reeves at Yakamia Creek. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.

NOONGAR KAARTDIJIN

Noongar Kaartdijin In-Schools Cultural Awareness aims to provide hands-on experience for teachers and students' by bringing local Elders into schools with a knowledge of traditional ecological practice of Landcare. In doing so, the program is able to enhance schools' connections with local Elders and NRM practitioners whilst supporting Elders to obtain and develop required and to develop educational resources suitable for undertaking Cultural educator work in schools.

The program has encouraged involvement from all schools in the Lower Great Southern education district since November 2021. A range of events were delivered in 2021/ 2022 with good project monitoring and communications being delivered. Noongar Kaartdijin is supported by the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program and the Commonwealth Bank of Australia through the South Coast Environment Fund.



Students from Gairdner Primary School mixing ochre. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.

STRONG AND PROUD

The Tambellup Strong and Proud program was delivered for the second consecutive year under the capable guidance of Kerry Smith as program coordinator assisted by Lillian Penny as a local mentor. The program delivers a weekly after school program for Noongar youth aged around Year 6 to Year 11 focusing on sporting, environmental, and cultural themes.

Typically, the sessions begin with some healthy food which then leads into an activity led by a facilitator supported by Elders and mentors.

Kerry's program has been very strongly and enthusiastically supported and some weeks 23 participants have attended. The Cultural team look forward to delivering the program in the new location of Gnowangerup in 2022 - 2023. Strong and Proud is supported by Healthway promoting the 'Go for 2 & 5' message.

The Cultural team look forward to delivering the program in the new location of Gnowangerup in 2022-2023. Strong and Proud is supported by Healthway promoting the Go for 2&5 message.



Strong and Proud participants at Bluff Knoll. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.

SEEDING THE GREAT SOUTHERN AND SEEDS OF THE GREAT SOUTHERN

The Seeding the Great Southern project was a pilot project in partnership with the Gnowangerup Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) and Tambellup Aboriginal Progress Association (TAPA) supported through a Regional Economic Development grant.

The project, finalised in 2021/ 2022, sought to investigate the potential of establishing two separate Indigenous owned and led local provenance seed and seedling propagation enterprises, supplying local provenance stocks for environmental restoration works.

A consultant led strategic review identified commercial opportunity and both communities strongly endorsed efforts to continuing pursuing the original aspiration of developing community owned and managed business. In early 2022, South Coast NRM and its partners GAC and the TAPA were successful in a subsequent Regional Economic Development grant to further progress the development of the two Noongar led enterprises.

The project team are working to secure additional investment to ensure the project's broader goals are achieved.



Announcement of Regional Economic Grant for the Seeding the Great Southern Project. CREDIT: Great Southern Development Commission.

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capacity

The Regional Capacity theme was led by Karen Herlihy prior to her resignation and then by Johanna Tomlinson. Regional Capacity, like Cultural Heritage, is acknowledged as a foundational theme of Southern Prospects.

With strong foundations in people and culture, we position the region in the best way to deliver positive impact to the biophysical environment; the land, water, biodiversity and coastal and marine landscapes of the region.



STATE NRM PROGRAM SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

Strong capacity and capability are the key to healthy and active groups and the regions collective ability to deliver on Southern Prospects. Through funding from the State NRM Program, South Coast NRM have been able to support building capacity and capability in the region in three key areas;

- Supporting NRM practises
- Supporting NRM volunteers
- Supporting NRM organisations

This has involved a range of different activities including GIS training, project management, first aid, social media, and public speaking training. Activity through this project was also able to support familiarisation training on the Work Health and Safety harmonisation.

SOUTH COAST ENVIRO-EXPERIENCES SUPPORTED BY LOTTERYWEST

In January 2021, South Coast NRM were advised of their success with South Coast Enviro-Experiences supported by Lotterywest. South Coast Enviro-Experiences will encourage volunteerism across the South Coast and increase the capacity of NRM groups to grow and manage their volunteers. In turn, this will support the community to care for our natural heritage.

Linking with the six Noongar seasons and supported by Volunteering WA, Bush Heritage WA, Green Skills, and regional NRM and volunteering groups, experiences will be matched to generational and cultural needs.

The project team worked diligently to onboard the project, including a successful launch attended by Hon Reece Whitby MLA, Minister for Environment and Climate Change and Rebecca Stephens, MLA. A steering committee has been formed to guide the project and its deliverables which include an online volunteer management app, Enviro-Experiences, volunteer management training, an updated Volunteer Management Guide and development of a contemporary governance model.



The launch of South Coast Enviro-Experiences at Lake Seppings, Albany. CREDIT: South Coast NRM.

SOUTH COAST ENVIRONMENT FUND

The South Coast Environment Fund invested in two key projects in 2021/ 2022; Noongar Kaartidijin and Yakamia Creek Amity Reach, Albany. Both projects are supported through project investments and the South Coast Environment Fund investment provided leverage and value-adds to these priority projects.