Roadside Vegetation Surveys

Katanning

September 2005

The Task Ahead: Roadside Surveys

- ‘snap shot’ study of the condition of roadside vegetation.
- designed to allow people with or without botanical expertise to participate.
- left and right hand sides surveyed.

The information you record will help me to decide whether the roadside is…

High conservation value.

Low conservation value.

Overview…

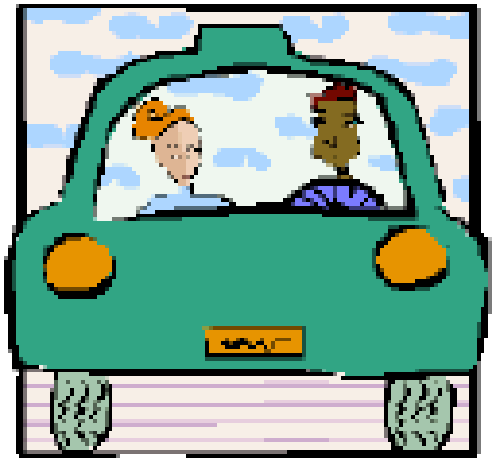
- ✓ An inventory of conservation values
- ✓ Useful for measuring changes over time
- ✓ Produces a map useful for landscape planning & management:

Weed control, Wildlife corridors,

Road works, Tourism,

Revegetation, Funding applications – NRM.

Roadside Surveys…

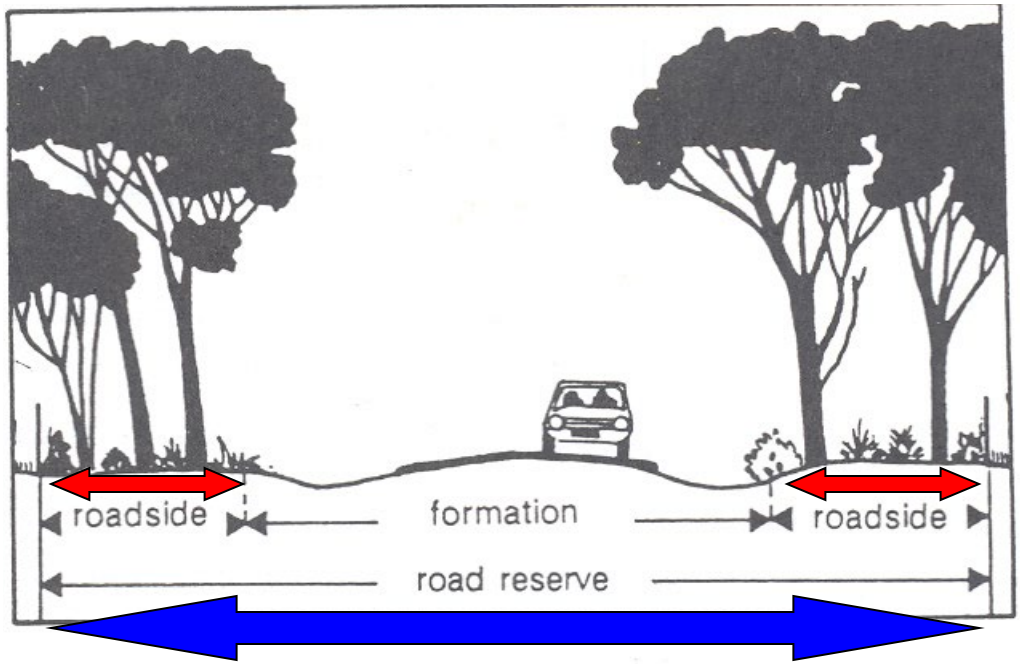


- **Survey procedure**
- **Roadside attributes and examples**

Where is the Roadside?

The road reserve:

- road surface;
- shoulder;
- drain; and
- batter/back slope.



The remaining space is the roadside.

Survey is vehicle based...

- Best done with 2 people per vehicle:
  - **Driver (observe) and**
  - **Passenger (observe & record)**
- In most instances the survey can be done at approx. 30km/h.

Remember SAFETY FIRST when driving slowly or stopping.

☞ *Average rate of survey is 20km of road per hour, so 100km = 5-6 hours.*

You will need…

Make sure you know your left from your right!

- ✓ checklist and map of roads
- ✓ pens/pencil, highlighter
- ✓ survey pack:
  - **iPAQ;**
  - **User's Guide;**
  - **Power chargers.**
- ✓ a good sense of direction, you MUST indicate direction of travel and odometer readings

Survey Procedure…

Roadside surveys are done in ‘sections’ along the road.

This allows you to record changes in vegetation condition.

Survey Procedure…

- Always start the survey at an intersection
- At the start of the road, set your trip meter to 0.0
- Before you start driving, look at the roadside in front of you, record general details such as:
  - road name,
  - your name
  - direction of travel.

Survey Procedure…

- Drive slowly along the road,
- Start recording the roadside attributes for left and right hand sides (more about these later),
- Continue driving until the road ends or until there is a significant change in condition of roadside vegetation.

Changing Sections…

Some roadsides are uniform along their length, and so can be surveyed as *one section* from start to finish.

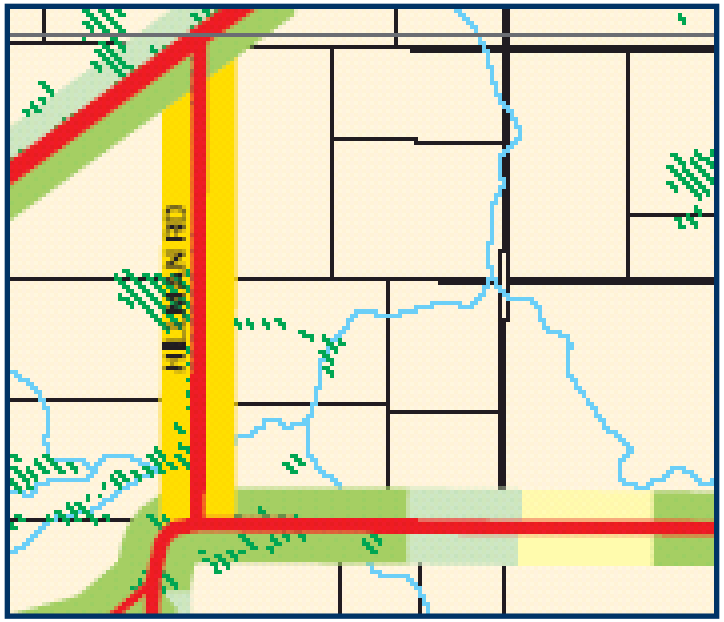
Other roadsides may be quite changeable. For example:

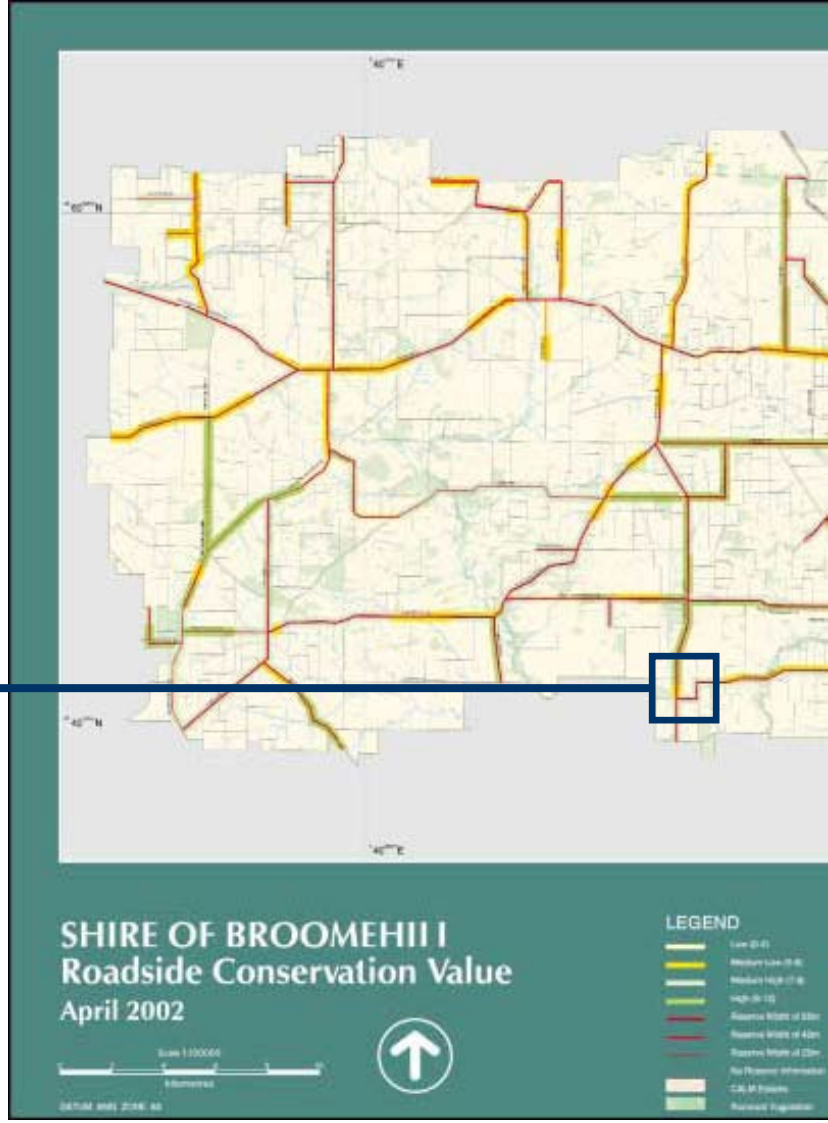
- ✓ adjoining landuse changes significantly, eg. from nature reserve to farmland;
- ✓ quality of roadside vegetation changes significantly, eg. from mostly native to mostly weeds.

May occur on only one side or both sides of the road.

Ignore small changes, i.e. less than 200m along the roadside.

Changing Sections





See how the colour (conservation value) changes along this road…?
Each coloured ‘section’ reflects when they started a new survey section.

Changing Sections Procedure…

1. Note the odometer reading at change over point, this will give the length of Section 1 of the road.
2. Section 2 will continue until another marked change is observed, when section 3 will begin, etc.
3. Each subsequent section is numbered accordingly for this road (1,2,3,4 etc).

☞ *Occasionally note down the odometer reading at a side road. This is very useful when mapping and checks the accuracy of your odometer!*

Quick Refresher…

1. Would you start a new survey section if the:
   - weed cover increased/decreased dramatically?
   - adjoining land use changed from farmland to nature reserve?
2. Changes under ?? metres should be ignored?
3. Do you start a new section if the ‘change’ only occurs in one side of the road?

There's 10 roadside attributes to record …

1. Width of Road Reserve

Historically, road widths were measured in chains (20.1m).

Select the width of the road reserve: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100m.

2. Native Vegetation on Roadsides

Most native vegetation communities have more than one distinct layer.

Woodlands often have small & large trees, a shrub layer & a ground layer containing reeds, everlastings and orchids.

If one or more of the layers is missing, the conservation value of the area is reduced.

2. Native Vegetation on Roadsides

Record whether the roadside contains a native tree, shrub and/or ground layer.

NATIVE VEGETATION ON ROADSIDE

	Left	Right
Tree	☑	☑
Shrub	☐	☐
Ground	☐	☐

3. Extent of Native Vegetation

Is the native vegetation continuous along the road section, or interrupted by weeds or other disturbances? e.g, fire, soil, rubbish, stockpiles.

EXTENT OF NATIVE VEGETATION ON ROADSIDE

	Left	Right
Less than 20%	☑	☐
20 -80%	☐	☑
over 80%	☐	☐

4. Number of Native Species

This is a measure of the diversity of the native vegetation.

Make an average estimate along the length of roadside. It does not have to be done in detail.

No. OF NATIVE SPECIES	Left	Right
0 -5	☐ ✓	☐ ✓
6 -19	☐	☐
0VER 20	☐	☐

5. Weeds

Estimate average ‘weediness’ over the section being considered.

It should be estimated as a percentage of total plants along the section.

RIGHT: majority of the total plants are weeds

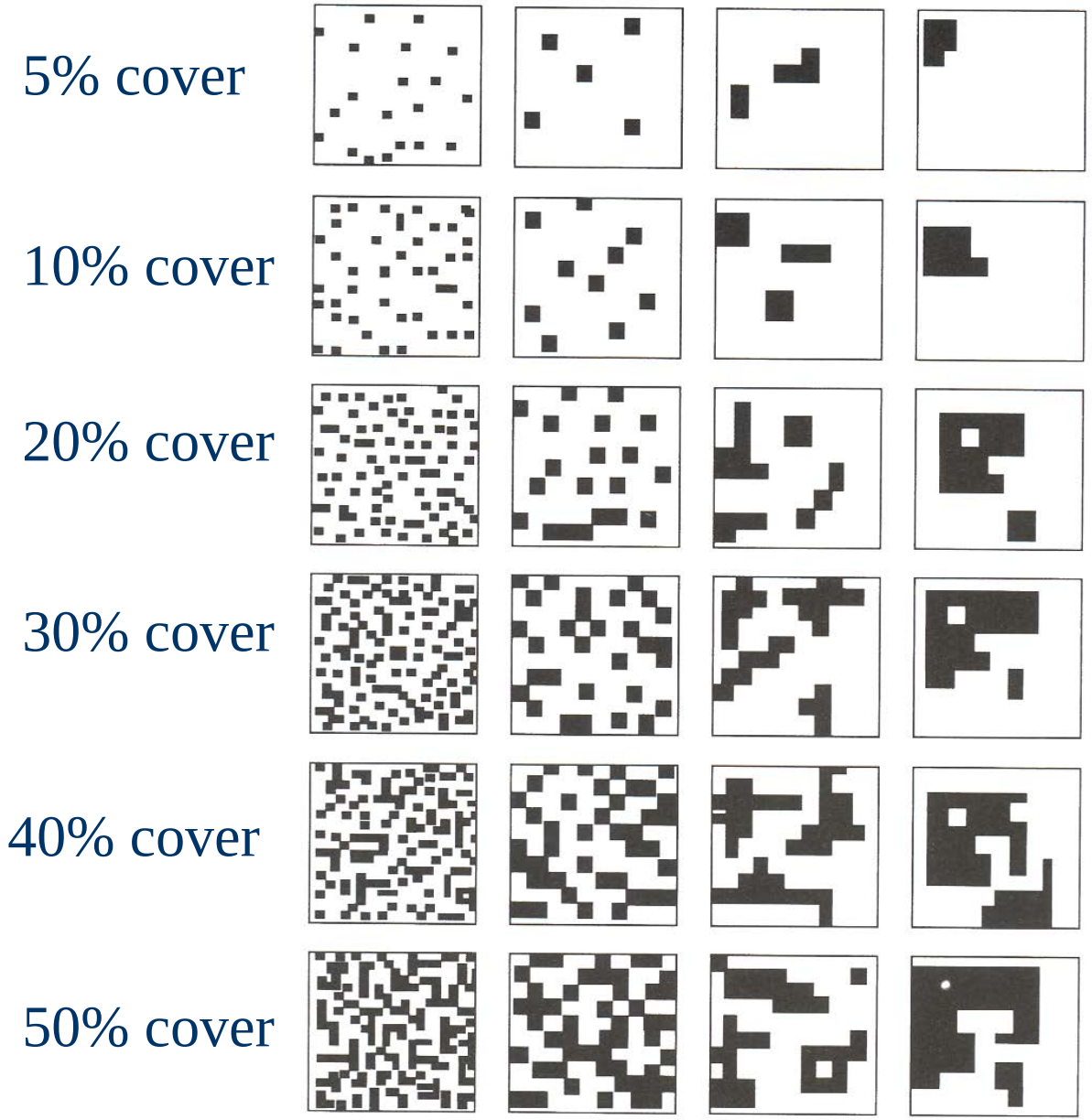
LEFT:Ground layer totally weeds

WEEDS

	Left	Right
Few weeds (<20% total plants)	☑	☑
Half weeds (20 - 80% total)	☐	☐
Mostly weeds (>80% total)	☐	☐
Ground layer totally weeds	☐	☐

Weeds

Weeds may be clumped, or spread out within the road section.



Bayley, D (2001) Efficient Weed Management. NSW Agriculture Paterson NSW.

6. Nominated Weeds

Record roadside populations of these 6 weeds:

- Bridal Creeper
- African lovegrass
- Wild Radish
- Tagasaste
- Cape Tulip
- Veldt Grass

7. Value As a Biological Corridor

In cleared areas, the road reserve can be very important as a corridor, allowing the movement of fauna – especially birds – enabling them to seek out feeding and nesting areas.

VALUE AS A BIOLOGICAL CORRIDOR

	Left	Right
Connects uncleared areas	☐	☐
Flowering shrubs	☐	☐
Large trees with hollows	☐	☐
Hollow logs	☐	☐

8. Utilities

Electricity, power lines and pipelines often built in roadside.

To construct and maintain them, the roadside vegetation may be destroyed. Their presence may be detrimental.

	UTILITIES	
	Left	Right
Utility Absent	☐	☐
Utility Present	☐	☐

	TYPE	
Water	☐	☐
Electricity	☐	☐
Gas	☐	☐
Telecomm.	☐	☐

9. Width of Vegetated Roadside

This is a measure of how much vegetation/land is left along the roadside. With practice, it is easy to recognise the width categories.

WIDTH OF VEGETATION ON ROADSIDE

	Left	Right
1-5 m	☐	☐
5-20 m	☑	☑
over 20 m	☐	☐

10. Adjoining Land-use

Different land uses have different impacts on the roadside.

Road reserves most valuable as conservation area where it acts as a corridor of remnant vegetation in an otherwise cleared landscape.

Record the *predominant* adjoining land use.

Adjoining Land-use

ADJOINING LAND USE

	Left	Right
Agricultural crop or pasture		
- completely cleared	☐	☐
- scattered	☐	☐
Uncleared land	☑	☐
Plantation of non-native trees	☐	☐
Urban or industrial	☐	☐
Railway Reserve	☐	☐
Drain Reserve	☐	☐
Other	☐	☐

Adjoining Land-use

scattered

plantation
non- native

completely cleared

Using the Ipaq's…

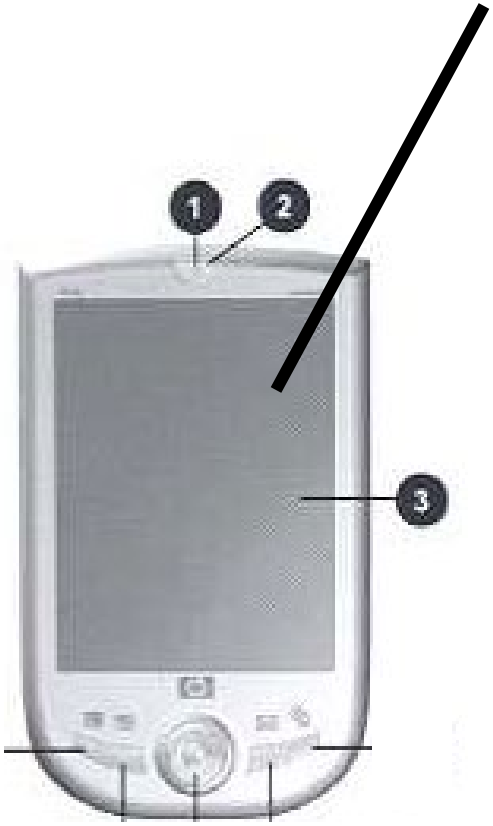
Getting Acquainted…

1. Power: press & hold to turn screen on & off
2. amber flash= battery charging
   amber solid= battery charged
3. display screen
4. Stylus pen: slide up to remove, slide down to store

Getting Acquainted…

Use the stylus pen to tap or write on the screen.

- ✓ The screen is sensitive, so be careful with your fingers...
- ✓ Simply ‘tap’ the screen to select open an item.
- ✓ Tapping is like pressing a keyboard key.



Charging the iPAQ…

- Make sure the iPAQ is fully charged before use, and charge again at the end of each day. Approx. 4 hours.
- If the battery goes flat, you could lose your work!

To protect your work…

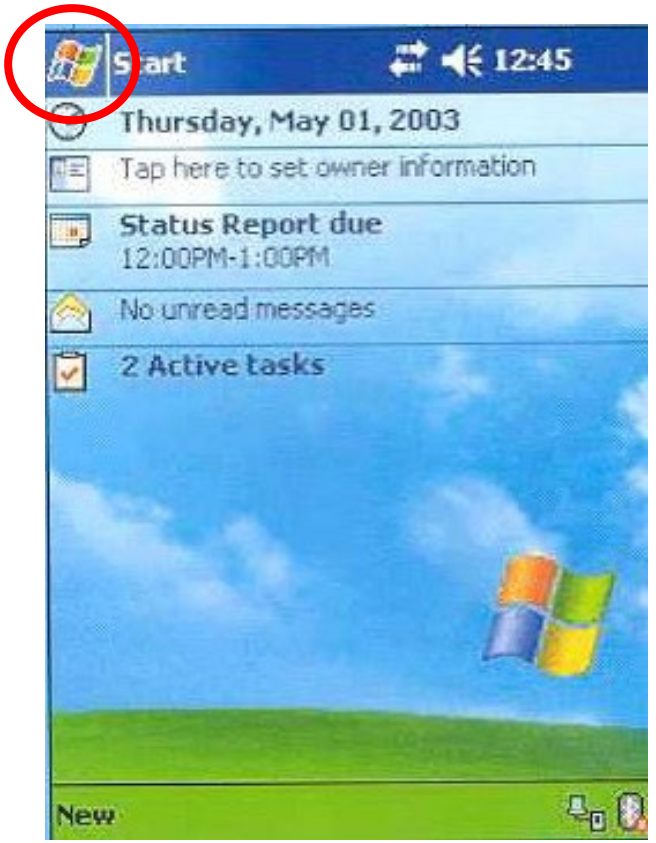
- A program *(Sprite Backup)* saves your information onto a memory card daily at 5pm. If you are using it at this time, you may need to follow the prompt and tap ‘OK’.

- Automatically backs up if battery is low. Press ‘OK’ if prompted to do this.

Getting Started

1. Turn the iPAQ on;

2. Using the stylus pen, tap this icon: (top left corner, next to the word ‘Start’).



3. Select ‘**RCC survey’**.

The program may take a few seconds to start up.

Make sure the device is fully charged.

Starting the Survey

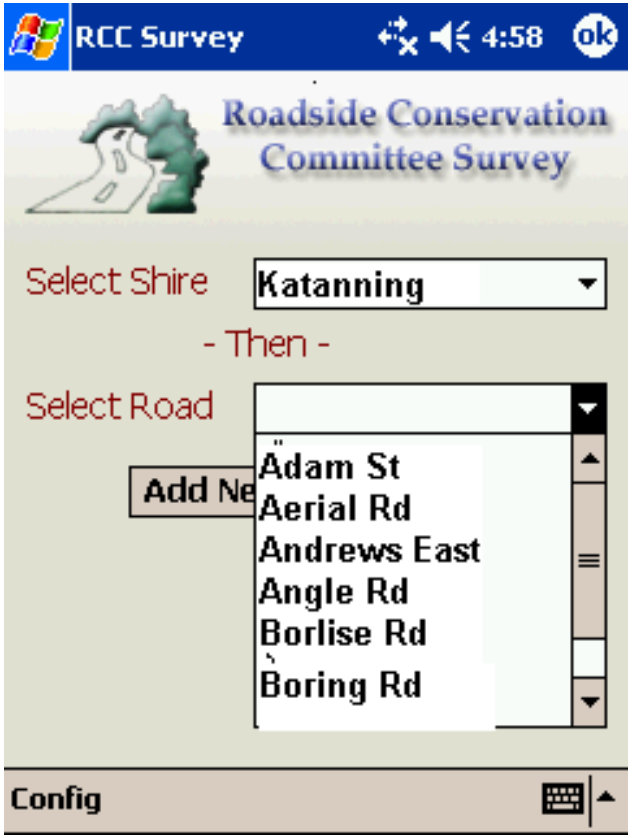
1. Select the name of the **Shire** from the drop-down menu

2. Select the name of the **road** you are going to be surveying: Test Road 1

If the road is not listed, select '**Add New Road**'. In the space provided, type the road name. Press **OK**.

3. You are now ready to begin the roadside survey for the selected road.

Tap 'Start'.



Starting the Survey

- There is a keyboard you can use for typing in details.
- It is located at the bottom right corner of the screen.

Details

Record the following:

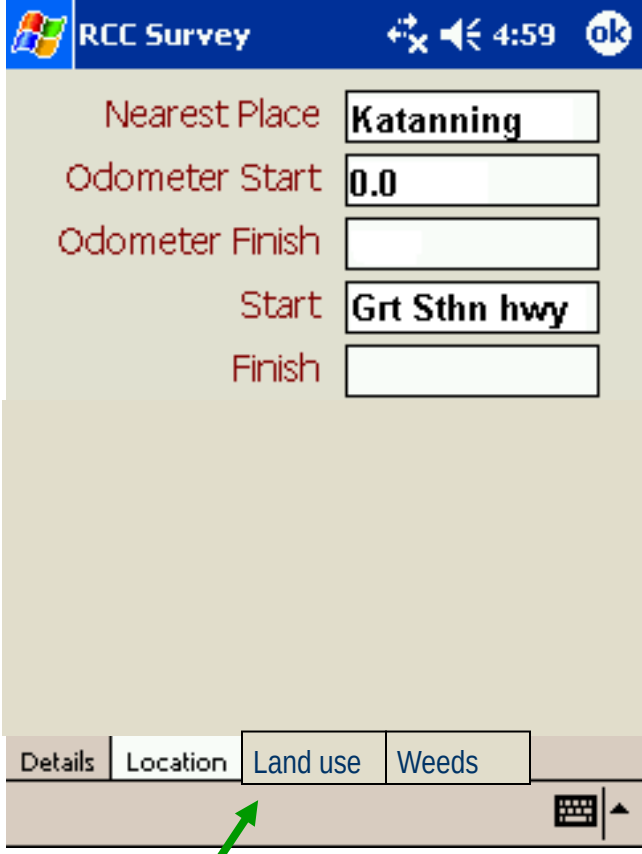
- **Section** number (1,2,3,etc).
- **Observer**.
- **Date**.
- **Width** (m).
- **Direction.**

Go to the next tab, named **Location**.

Location

Record the following:

- **Nearest Place**
- **Odometer Start** (eg. 0.0);
- **Odometer Finish** (eg. 5.6);
- **Start:** start point, eg. Grt Sthn Hwy.
- **Finish:** finish point, eg. Boundary Rd.



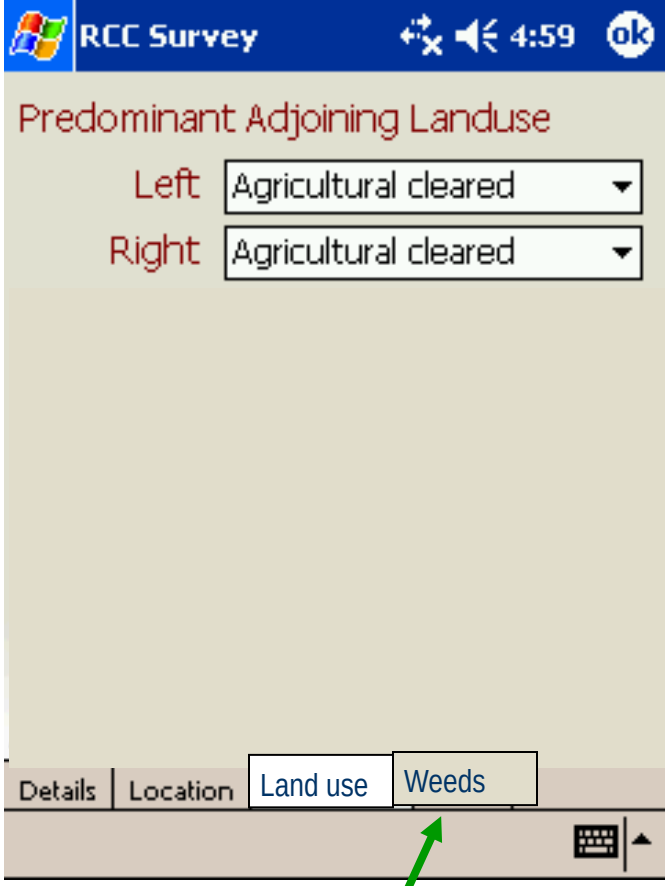
You will need to come back to this page later to fill in Odometer finish and Finish point.

Go to the Land use Tab

Land use

Record the:

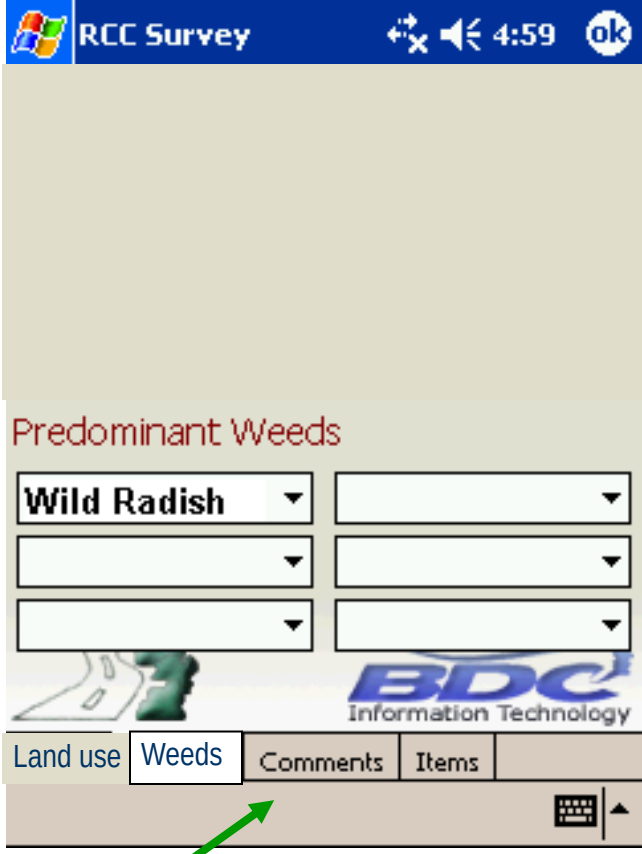
- **Predominant adjoining landuse:** select the dominant land use from the drop-down menu
- Remember to record both the left and right sides.



Go to the next tab, named **Weeds.**

Weeds

- **Predominant Weeds:** record the presence of 6 pre-determined weed species. Select from drop-down menu.
- Bridal Creeper, ?????
- Leave blank if not present.

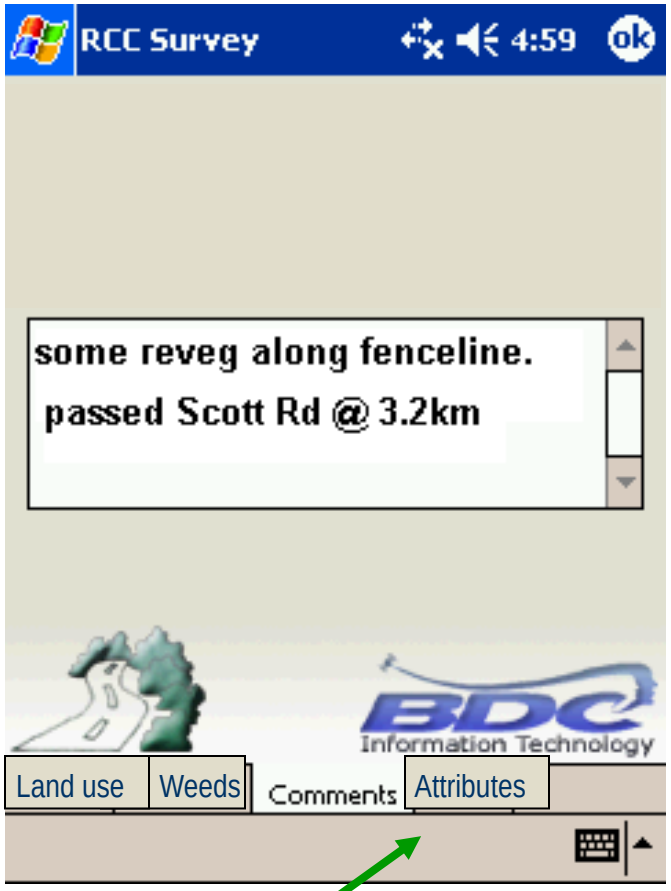


Go to next tab,
Comments.

Comments

Comments: you may like to enter other details.

- Occasionally note down a side road and the odometer reading. This helps in the GIS map production.



Go to the next tab, named **Attributes.**

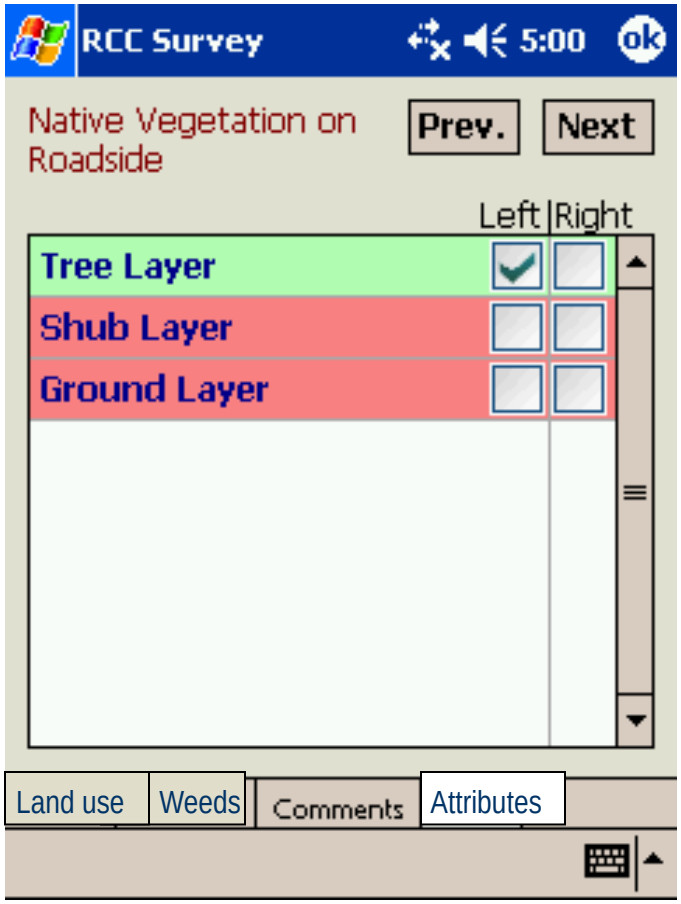
Attributes

Record the **8 roadside attributes** that, when combined, make up the roadside conservation value.

Record the left and right sides independently.

The options will change from red to green, indicating that you have made a selection.

Press **Next.**



Attributes

Tick the box if present and press ‘Next’.

Record the other 7 attributes…

Finishing the Section

- The last attribute page will be “Finished”. Press **Next**.
- You will receive an error message:

  ‘*Odometer finish cannot be left blank’*, press ‘ok’.
- Continue driving along the road until there is a significant change, or until the road ends.
- When this happens, pull over or slow down, enter the **Odometer Finish** and **Finish** point on the **‘Location’** page.

Finishing the Section

On the **Details** page select either:

- **Change Road:** to begin surveying a new road, or
- **Next Section:** if you are still on the same road, and have to start surveying a new section.

Roadside Surveys

- Roadside survey groups/teams.
- Volunteer forms filled out…?
- Map of Shire.

Concurrent Sessions…

- A: groups of 4 to go for practice run (20 mins);
- B: others plan their survey teams and roads, mark onto a central map, and organise roster for using iPAQ's.

Review

- Survey procedure;
- Roadside survey attributes;
- Using the ipaq's;
- Survey teams and allocated roads;
- Roster to share iPAQ's;
- Other questions…

Thank-you…

For further information please contact

Kate Jackson

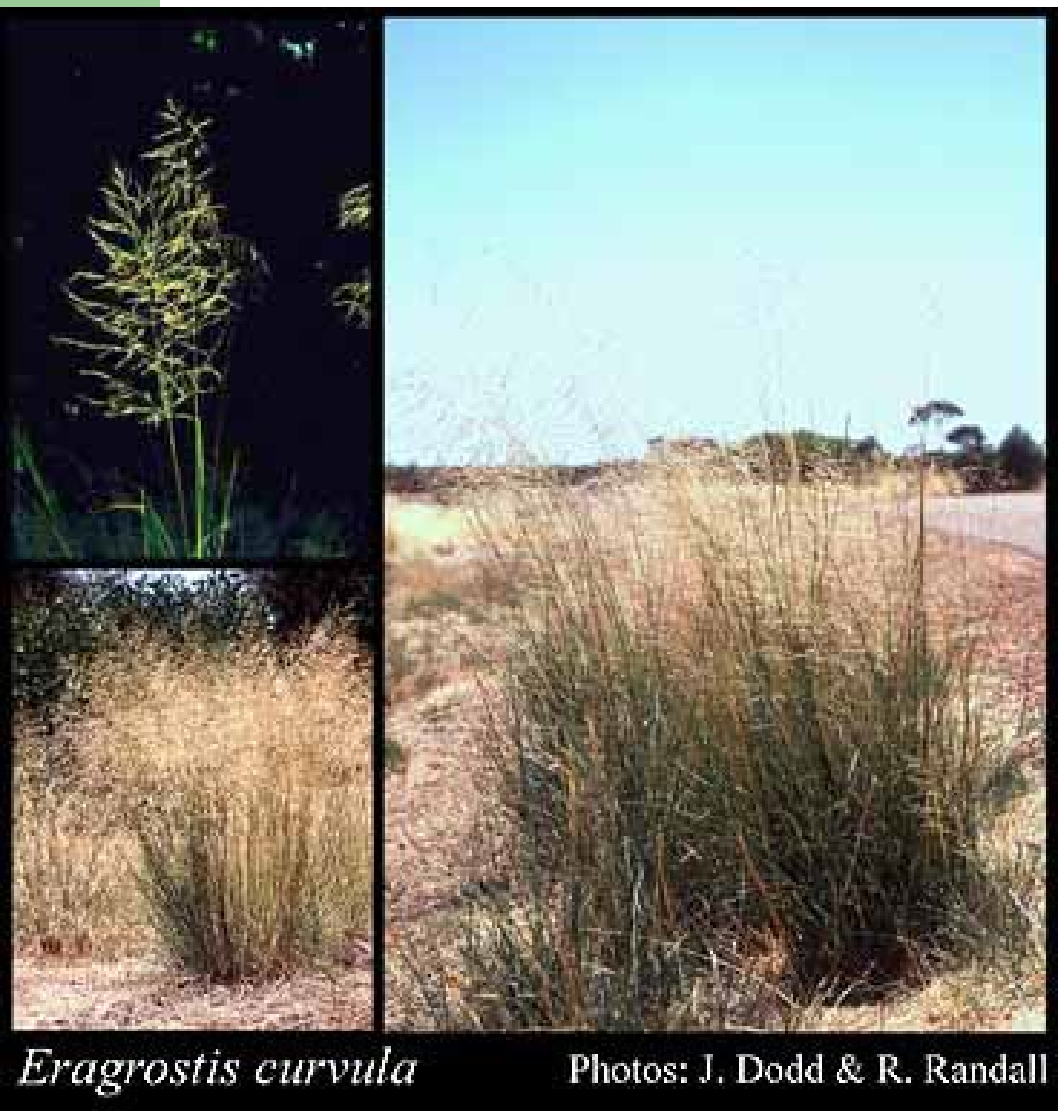
Technical Officer (Mapping)

Roadside Conservation Committee

Phone: 9334 0174 **Fax: 9334 0367**

E-mail: katej@calm.wa.gov.au

African Lovegrass

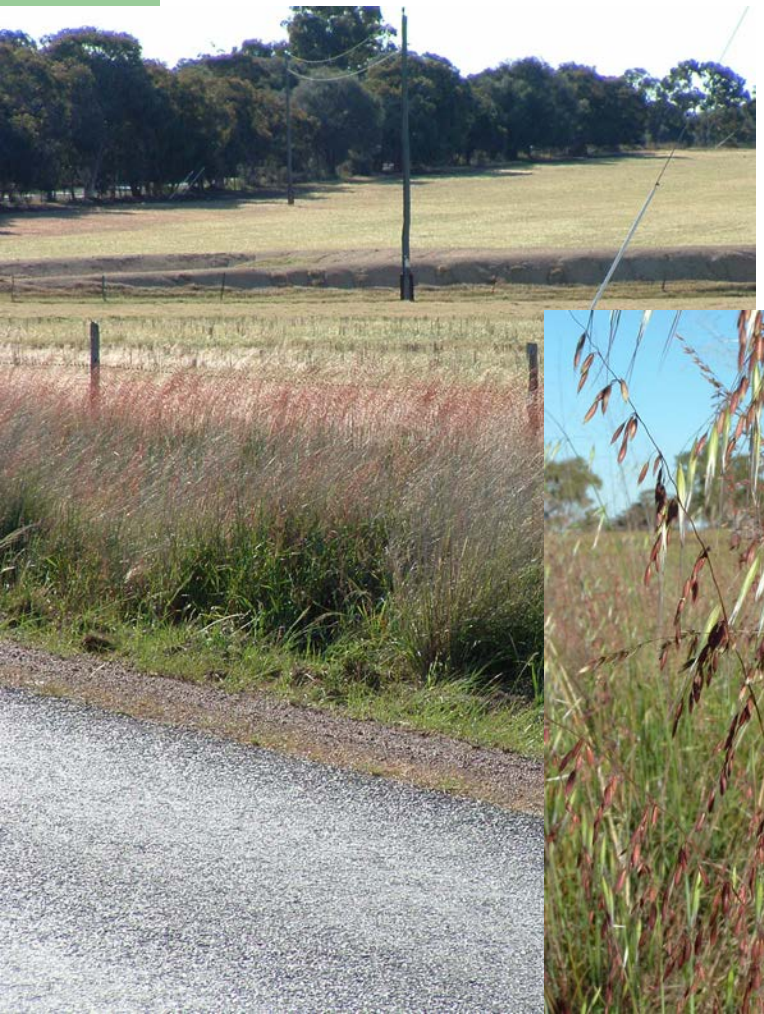


A large, tufted perennial to 1m tall, with greyish-green, often inrolled leaves. The inflorescence is an open or contracted panicle of greenish-purple (or blackish) flowers, to 40cm long. Flowers during spring and summer. Native to South Africa

Veldt grass

E. calycina **(Perennial Veldt Grass): a tufted perennial to 80cm tall. The inflorescence is a drooping erect panicle of reddish-purple flowers, 7-22cm long. Flowers in spring.**

E. longiflora **(annual veldt grass) a tufted annual to 30cm tall. The greenish-purple inflorescence is a narrow panicle, to 15cm long, flowering in spring.**



Cape Tulip

A common weed of pastures, woodlands, granite rocks and limestone heath throughout the south-west. It is particularly abundant in the Avon/Swan valley and upper great southern. Prior to flowering in spring, infestations can be recognised at a distance from the brown tinge resulting from the dying tips of their leaves. Petals up to 4cm long.

Tagasaste (tree Lucerne)

An upright bushy shrub or small tree to 4m, with drooping, softly-hairy branches and leaves with three leaflets. The scented, creamy-white flowers are produced in winter and early spring. Native to the Canary Islands, it is extensively planted as a fodder shrub or for land rehabilitation. Tagasaste regenerates prolifically from seed

Bridal Creeper

A perennial, it flowers in spring, dies down in summer, then shoots rapidly to climb and sprawl over other vegetation, eventually smothering it. One of the State's most urgent environmental weed problems. Birds relish its fleshy fruits and spread the seeds in their droppings. Extremely invasive, spreading rapidly along roadsides, creeklines and even into undisturbed bushland.

Cape Weed

A major weed of crops and pastures, found in all habitats throughout the south-west, and increasing rapidly in the arid zone, where it is displacing everlastings. It is a rosette-forming annual, with greyish, lobed leaves, hairy-white on the underside, and heads up to 6cm across, produced in spring. They have brilliant yellow ray florets and a centre of black disc florets. The seeds are covered in a beige fluffy 'wool'.

Arctotheca calendula Photos: C. Hortin

Wild Radish

An annual herb, up to 1m tall. The leaves and stem usually bear bristly hairs and the petals are pale yellow, white or occasionally purple to lilac, 15-20mm long, often with dark veins. Economically one of the most important weeds of cropping in Western Australia. Flowers throughout the year but mainly in spring. Native to Europe.

Raphanus raphanistrum Photos: J. Dodd