SHIRE OF (*name of Shire*).

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ROADSIDE CONSERVATION IN ROAD CONSTRUCTION & ROAD MAINTENANCE

prepared by
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Introduction

Aims of the Code of Practice:

- To balance road design and road safety requirements with all other values associated with roadsides in the Shire of .....

To achieve this it will be necessary to:

- account for the needs of ratepayers, council work teams, and other organisations with responsibilities or interests in roads and roadsides;
- develop cost effective roadworks and maintenance programs;
- protect road reserves and the adjoining land from erosion, weeds and disease;
- minimise disturbance and clearance of vegetation;
- use the Roadside Conservation Committee map of conservation as a basis for planning/management decisions so as to identify potential conflict situation and ameliorate against them.

Benefits of a Code of Practice

- A fresh start on road and road reserve management which will allow for the competing demands and values of road reserves and do this within the context of the surrounding environment rather than in isolation from it.
- Improve communication, consultation and cooperation throughout the shire staff at all levels so that environmental considerations are integral to any works program, rather than an additive to it.
- Set out clear responsibilities for roadside works between personnel within the shire.
- The development of road works and road maintenance techniques which improve the overall environment of the roadway.

- Build on the skills and experience of works crews in environmental road management and maintenance.

- Enable the development of more cost effective road works through minimising ongoing repairs and maintenance.

- The developments of works appropriate to the special values of particular roadsides, whether for safety, fire prevention, erosion or wildlife.

A Code of Practice is:

- a clear direction for on-ground staff;
- a clear understanding of the issues involved;
- clear and strategic directions and management guidelines;
- a clear allocation of responsibilities;
- flexible to adjust to changing circumstances;
- a participatory process between staff and the community.

Management Aims

- Ensure the safe function of the road and protect the road formation.
- Minimise the risk and impact of wildfire.
- Protect and restore indigenous vegetation communities on roadside.
- Protect rare and priority species of flora and fauna on roadsides.
- Prevent further land degradation on roadsides.
- Control the spread of weed and fungal pathogens on roadsides.
- Maintain and enhance the visual amenity and landscape quality of the road reserve.
- Protect the cultural and heritage values of roadsides.
- Protect service utilities located on roadsides.

Management Goals

- Protect indigenous flora and fauna values.
- Maintain and enhance visual amenity and landscape quality.
- Prevent further land degradation such as soil erosion.
- Prevent the invasion and spread of weeds and soil borne fungal pathogens.

General Principles

- Areas beyond the road formation that contain vegetation (includes all trees, shrubs and groundcovers whether whole or in part, but excluding environmental and noxious weeds) to any degree of significance will not be disturbed during road construction and road maintenance operations, except where necessary to carry out required works.

- The spread of weeds and soil borne fungal pathogens will not be furthered as a result of road construction and road maintenance operations.

Contractor Agreement

- When road works are carried out under contract for the Shire of....., the Code of Practice for Roadside Conservation in Road Construction and Road Maintenance will be adhered to by the contractor for the duration of the contract.

Road Maintenance

Works areas or zones should be marked out clearly before commencing works.

The appropriate type and size of machine will be used for road operations as specified by the Shire Engineer or representative.

On roadsides of high conservation value machines will be selected that create the least disturbance to vegetation on the road reserve.

On roadsides of high conservation value machinery will, where possible, operate from the road formation while carrying out works.

Table drains will be maintained in a condition that will prevent water flooding the road. Works must be kept to the minimum to meet these requirements.

When carrying out maintenance of table drains, spoil will be directed towards the road pavement where it will be removed to a designated dumpsite as specified by the Shire Engineer or representative.

Road shoulders will be graded to the minimum required to maintain the road formation and the condition of the road according to the type of road as specified by the Shire Engineer or representatives. Under no circumstances is the road reserve to be graded beyond the road formation.

Vegetation on the road reserve beyond the road formation should not be disturbed during grading operations.

Scraping of batters should be avoided.

Vehicles and machinery should not be serviced on roadsides.

Any soil or other materials required for road construction and maintenance operations should be taken from disease free and weed free areas.

Where there is no alternative to use soil or other materials from a weed or disease infested sites for road construction or road maintenance operations, the materials should only be used on roads of low conservation value.

Materials used for road construction or road maintenance operations on high conservation or moderate conservation roads should wherever safe be temporarily piled on the road formation not the road reserve or on a cleared area in close proximity to the work site.

All excess materials from road construction or road maintenance operations will be removed at completion of works to a designated site of low conservation value as specified by the Shire Engineer or representative.

Pits for gravel, soil or other materials will not be dug from the roadside.

Vegetation Removal

When it is deemed necessary to remove, destroy or lop indigenous vegetation the Supervisor of the work crew has a responsibility to ensure that no indigenous vegetation, other than that designated is removed, destroyed or lopped and that indigenous vegetation beyond the working zone is not disturbed.

Only the minimum vegetation necessary to meet required works should be marked for removal. If more vegetation needs to be removed to complete required works than originally marked the Shire engineer or representative will be consulted prior to undertaking works.

All other vegetation on the road reserve should not be disturbed.

Areas of regenerating indigenous vegetation on high conservation roadsides should be clearly identified on the ground before mowing or slashing operations area undertaken.

Areas of regenerating indigenous vegetation on medium and low conservation roadsides should be avoided during mowing or slashing operations.

Dead trees should be retained on the roadside, unless they pose a significant hazard as specified by the Shire Engineer or representative, to provide habitat for wildlife.

Limbs on dead trees that pose a significant hazard as specified by the Shire Engineer or representative will be removed. The rest of the tree should be retained on the road reserve to provide habitat for wildlife.

Pruning works will be carried out so as to minimise the extent of wounding and enhance callus formation.

Tree stumps left after pruning or vegetation removal works will be cut as close as possible to the ground.

Vegetation to be removed should be felled in the direction that minimises damage to surrounding vegetation, preferably onto the road formation or cleared area.

Indigenous vegetation will be chipped and either returned to the site, used in rehabilitation works or made available for community projects.

Larger vegetation that can not be chipped will be stock piled in a cleared area for public removal or returned to the Shire Depot and made available at an appropriate time for firewood.

All attempts to carry out sawing, splitting and chipping of felled vegetation should be done with due regard to the understorey. These activities should be restricted to as few a sites as possible.

Pruning required in the vicinity of powerlines should be carried out in accordance with Western Power's Code of Practice for tree clearing.

Site Rehabilitation

In the event that major works are required that modify existing indigenous vegetation on roadsides (e.g. Telstra), rehabilitation of the site should be encouraged. To achieve this, it is recommended the guidelines proposed by the Roadside Conservation Committee be adhered to.

Seed from indigenous plants should be collected over a period of time to allow a range of species to be collected from the roadside prior to works commencing. N.B. CALM permit is required.

Machinery should be chosen to ensure that vegetation to be chipped is free of topsoil.

Top soil should be removed prior to works commencing and stock piled in a cleared area, for a period no longer than six months, to be spread over the site at completion of works.

Sub soil in the works area should be ripped at completion of works to avoid compaction, before topsoil is spread over the site.

Indigenous vegetation should be chipped and returned to the site at completion of works.

Weed and Pathogen Control

The Shire will initiate training for outdoor staff to identify environmental and noxious weeds found in the district.

Weed control methods that minimise disturbance to native vegetation will be implemented. Refer to Chapter 10 of the Roadside Conservation Committee Manual.

A reporting method to record the location and spread of weeds along the roadsides should be devised and control measures planned accordingly.

Shrub weeds should not be removed when they are in flower or seed unless there is no alternative.

Where shrub weeds must be removed when they are in flower or seed that will be transported to a designated site, as specified by the Shire Engineer or representatives, for disposal and covered to prevent weed seeds blowing onto the roadside and colonising further areas.

Vehicles and machinery working in weed infested areas or known pathogen areas should, where possible, be cleaned of soil and washed down thoroughly prior to commencing work on a road of high conservation value.

Vehicles and machinery should, where practical, be cleaned of soil and washed down thoroughly each day to prevent the further spread of weeds and soil borne diseases.

Herbicides

Herbicides should only be used in the following situations:

- to control noxious and environmental weeds;
- in the event that rehabilitation programs are undertaken;
- to control exotic grass and weed growth around road furniture and road signs.

Heavy mulching at the base of road furniture and road signs is a preferred alternative to using herbicides to control exotic grasses and weed growth in inaccessible situations

Trained staff will only use herbicides.

Except in the control of noxious and specific environmental weeds, only herbicides with the active ingredient of glyphosate will be used to control weeds.

Spot spraying with a backpack, gas gun or the use of a rope wick applicator is the preferred methods of applying herbicides.

Records of herbicide use along roadsides should be kept.

Vehicle and Machinery Access and Parking

Vehicles and machinery should not attempt to turn around on a high conservation road, unless at a suitable site where roadside vegetation will not be disturbed.

Vehicles and machinery should not deviate from the road formation onto the road reserve during road works.

Where vehicles and machinery are left for a period of time or overnight they should be parked in a designated wayside stop or private land of low conservation value.

Stock Pile Sites

A set number of stockpile sites will be designated and approved by the Shire Engineer at strategic locations throughout the Shire.

The Shire Engineer or representative will supply all statutory authorities and contractors undertaking works in the Shire of ..... with a location map of designated stockpile sites.

Any works carried out that require stock piling of materials will use designated stockpile sites only.

New stockpile sites will not be located on roadsides of high conservation value or roadsides adjacent to forests areas.

Stock pile sites that already exist on or in close proximity to roadsides of high conservation value or forests areas will be monitored by the Shire for weed growth and the presence of soil borne pathogens such as the cinnamon fungus (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) and the necessary controls implemented.

Waste Management

Dump sites for disposing of excess materials from road construction or road maintenance operations and the disposal of pest plants will be designated at strategic locations throughout the municipality by the Shire Engineer.

The Shire Engineer or representative will supply all statutory authorities and contractors undertaking works in the Shire of ..... with a list and location map of dumpsites.

The Shire Engineer or representative is responsible to monitor all dumpsites and provide new locations to all statutory authorities and contractors, as becomes necessary.

Soil piles created from grading of shoulders or drains that cannot be retained safely on the road formation will be removed to a designated site of low conservation value as specified by the Shire Engineer or representative and not spread over existing vegetation or dumped on a nearby roadside.

Litter and excess materials left over from road construction or road maintenance operations will be removed and disposed of at a designated site of low conservation value as specified by the Shire Engineer or representative and not spread over existing vegetation or dumped on a nearby roadside.