

## **SALINITY: ITS EFFECT ON ROADS**

**T**HE link between, the loss of native vegetation and rising water tables and salinity have been identified on countless occasions. However it has now been shown that as well as rendering vast tracts of arable farmland useless it is having a severe effect on buildings and roads in some areas of rural WA. In a report released by Agriculture WA in January 2001, it was estimated that the rising saline water table would cost WA \$500 million per year to repair salinity damage to roads and its associated infrastructure. The salinity has a corrosive effect on concrete structures such as bridge footings, culverts and drain headwalls.

The retention of roadside vegetation can play a major role in mitigating against the effects of salinity. If we were to consider a "typical shire" where salinity has been identified as a problem, with roadside remnants along say 841 kilometres of unsealed roads, and these are the standard 20 m road reserve and the road and drains utilise the standard 14 m of the reserve, these unused roadsides would provide the "typical shire" with an extra 504 ha of native vegetation to draw down on the water table.

Its worth protecting the roadside remnants isn't it !!!

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