

FLORA

IN addition to a road's essential purpose as a transport route, roadsides possess a number of other values. They are remnants of the original native vegetation which provide habitat for native plants and animals and act as corridors for their movement. There are also landscape values associated with roadsides, with local native plants providing a 'sense of place', and providing the traveller with an example of the way the 'bush' once looked. Roadsides are a valuable and irreplaceable resource - the list of other values goes on and on!

Unfortunately, many of the roadsides in our beautiful state are losing their value, due to a range of threats. The most common ones are clearing, weeds, fire and salinity. Can you think of any roadsides in your area that may deserve special recognition and protection? Well, read on a bit further because there may be something you can do to help!

The Roadside Conservation Committee (RCC) initiated the Flora Roads program as a way of encouraging road managers to protect and conserve roadside vegetation of high conservation

When is a road a Flora Road?

Kate Jackson

value. Flora Roads, as defined by the RCC, are "those roads which have conservation value owing to the vegetation growing within the reserve". There are a number of criteria that the roadside must meet before it can be considered for Flora Road status:

- the roadside must be mostly native vegetation, and be in as near to its natural condition as possible;
- the roadside may be one of the only remaining examples of the original vegetation; and
- the Flora Road should be a decent length (e.g. more than 2km), and may link up with main roads, tourist routes or other significant features within an area.

Put simply, a Flora Road contains vegetation of special conservation, cultural or scenic value and also provides an attractive tourist drive route within a Shire or region.

The Flora Road signs (provided by the RCC) draw the attention

of both the tourist and anyone working in the road reserve to the roadside flora, indicating that it is special and worthy of protection. The program seeks to raise the profile of roadsides within both the community and among road management authorities.

To date, there are 21 Flora Roads in the state. They occur in the Shires of Plantagenet, West Arthur, Merredin, Dowerin, Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Cuballing, York, Chittering, Coorow and Mingenew. Do you know of one or more of these in your area?

There are 3 steps to follow before a road becomes a Flora Road:

- 1 identify the road;
- 2 nominate the road; and
- 3 declare the road as a Flora Road.

Anybody can identify potential Flora Roads; including local interest groups or individuals, the road manager, or the RCC. The RCC's survey of roadside conservation value identifies high conservation value roads that could potentially be suitable Flora Roads. Alternatively, local communities, groups and individuals usually know of some



Mundijong Road, a Flora Road in the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale, is a tourist asset to the local community. Photo: D. Lamont



Attractive roadside landscapes make for a wonderful tourist drive and have the potential to be Flora Roads (North of Stirling Range National Park). Photo: P. Hussey.

continued from page 12

really good roadsides that we are not aware of, so please let us know about them!

Now that the roadside has been identified, you can nominate it as a Flora Road by submitting a written request to the RCC. If you are not the road manager, it is important to have the support of the road manager. Only the managing authority in whom the care, control

and management of the road is vested can officially declare it a Flora Road. Once the potential Flora Road is identified and nominated, and assuming it meets the criteria, the RCC works collaboratively with the road manager to achieve the declaration of a Flora Road.

In the past few years, there have not been very many Flora Road nominations, so we would love to

hear about special roadsides in your area, and expand the Flora Roads network. If you know of a potential Flora Road, or would like advice or information, please contact Kate Jackson, Technical Officer, RCC, by phone on 9334 0174, or email katej@calm.wa.gov.au or by mail to Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre, WA 6983.