

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES 2010

Information on the community's top three environment concerns was gathered via the Annual Community Survey, the Recognising Women Farmers (RWF) surveys and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) Evaluation survey in 2010. Information was collected from 214 respondents. Further details on community priorities can be found in the following supporting documents, available on the Wheatbelt NRM Website in the Director Logon section.

Additional information gathered through the Community Forum Workshops held in April 2010 has been included separately.

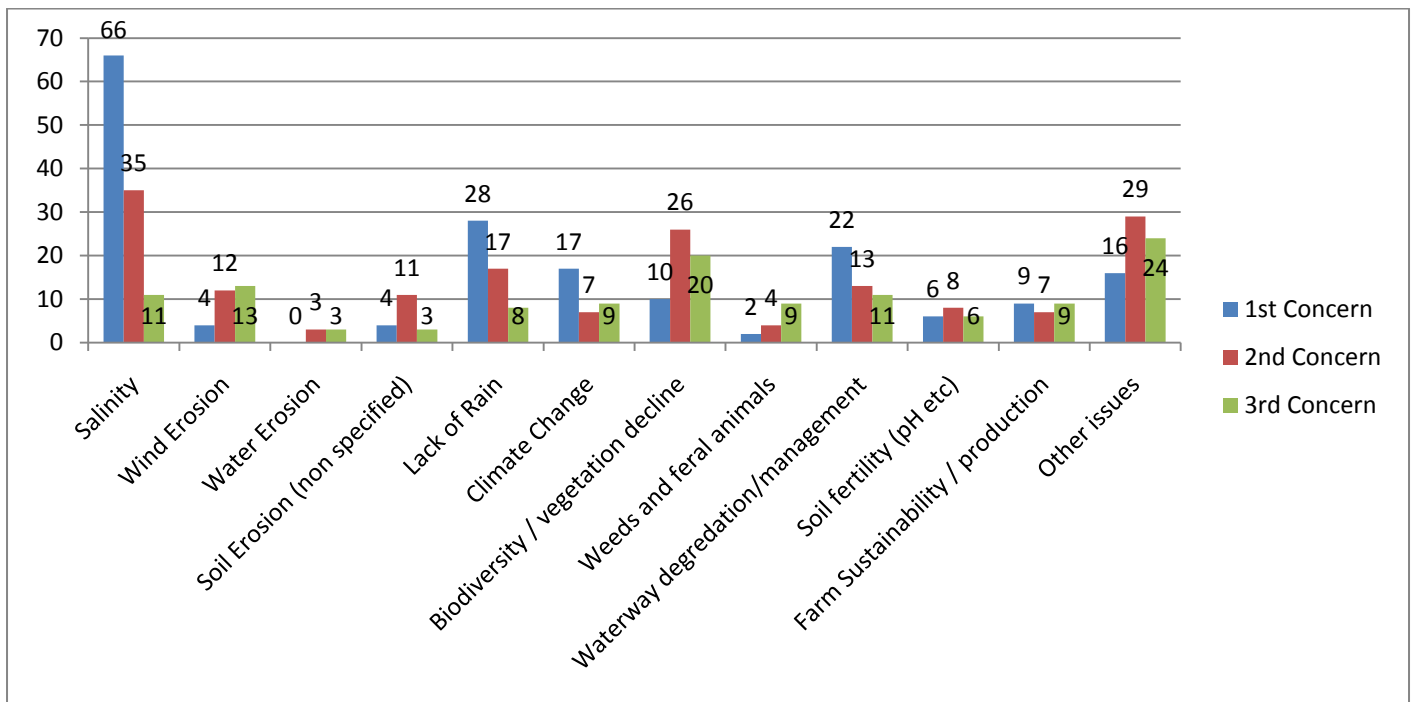
Figure 1 indicates overwhelmingly the community's top concerns for the environment are salinity, lack of rain and waterway degradation/management. Other issues of concern that rated as a top concern (for AGM and RWF respondents) included:

- Population
- Third world pollution (and slavery)
- men and women working too hard, longer hours more pressure more stress, mental health
- Break up of rural land and development pressures
- Community motivation and enthusiasm towards NRM & the environment
- Educating the young about natural biodiversity/environment
- Maintaining viable communities
- Long term land holder engagement for stewardship
- Doing more with less!
- Negative attitudes of people - the Earth is resilient! Have faith.
- Lack of perennials in farming
- Lack of involvement in Landcare

The second major concern for the environment is:

1. Salinity
2. Other issues (from the AGM and RWF survey results), included:
 - Population increase
 - In balance with healthy landscape
 - Tree cropping
 - Funding for landcare
 - use of resources
 - solar
 - community health
 - raise awareness of locally produced products
 - fire
 - biosecurity
 - management of environment
 - recycling
 - farmers staying around after hard seasons
3. Biodiversity / vegetation decline

Figure 1: Top three environmental concerns for community of the Avon River Basin (2010)



More detailed information about the results presented above can be found in the following documents:

- 2010 AGM Evaluation Report
- Recognising Women Farmers Report (not yet completed)
- 2010 Annual Community Survey Report

Additional information about local community concerns, priorities and needs was captured through the Community Forums held in April 2010, and included the following comments:

- Lake Camm revegetation & drainage - need to prioritise or we will lose Wave Rock vegetation.
- Want info talk on Lake Camm River Catchment
- We need help with getting ideas happening and off the ground
- We need to protect some of our most precious bush areas (e.g. Lake Cronin, Graham Rock, Western Woodlands) from increasing tourism.
- Get back to basics of planting trees, cut the red tape for the individuals.
- I'm sick of Salmon Gums being felled. Advocate the environmental responsibility of land managers to leave large trees, contours, water courses in paddocks - not remove to suite auto steer!
- Foster more tree planting.
- Continuity of funding for projects e.g. Ecoscapes. Stop/start nature of funding makes community support difficult.
- The local catchment group has lost momentum and disbanded despite many obvious needs.
- NRM talks about one voice, how to we know that our voice (Hyden) is going to be heard?
- We need local projects relating to landcare to be constructively discussed with the expertise within the room (govt. and landholders) with a view to accessing FUNDS.
- Discuss salinity
- Field Days by Christine Jones would be good. How to improve soil at no cost.
- Community capacity has crashed in the Eastern Wheatbelt – suggestion to decentralize Wheatbelt NRM staff.
- We need a large scale of funding to do the revegetation work to get the ball rolling for new industries.
- Wheatbelt NRM should investigate biofuels species and work with power and related companies.

- Wheatbelt NRM website should include baseline information on best species to plant where, what you'll find on granite outcrops to help the community make good decisions, habitats, carbon effects.
- Wheatbelt NRM should look at marketing food grown on healthy soils. We need to start recording the data and relate carbon offsets to soil indicators.
- Wheatbelt NRM needs to develop a process to talk about what projects have been successful.
- Mortlock River Study and Avon Waterways program – will they continue?
- Need research using salt water as a resource.
- WNRM and the Government are not funding salinity which was the “only thing we could hang our hat on” to attract funding.
- Salinity is really a water balance problem. It can be managed throughout the landscape.
- Water tables continue to rise as sure as the sun comes up. We need to help farmers use the water that falls, e.g. perennials.
- Consistency of funding needed to encourage support for on ground work.
- Communicate with, include and encourage community.
- Community were disengaged through Regional Strategy development process.
- Wheatbelt NRM needs to be creative about community engagement activities.
- Associates should be called ‘Friends’ of Wheatbelt NRM.
- Promote good work done in the region by community and production groups.
- Salinity is still the number one issue!
- Salinity is bigger problem in WA and the Government needs to understand this.
- Water in valley floors could be considered an asset and can have benefits if managed properly.
- Should look at saline valley floor as a resource and where integrated management should occur.
- Be careful how you deliver messages to farmers - you lose them with too much bureaucratic talk.
- So Wheatbelt NRM doesn't have lots of money and community groups should be making decisions on what they want to do and sourcing funding? We can rely on Wheatbelt NRM to do this for us, so need to decide what we want and get community more active and find other sources of funding?
- Wheatbelt NRM will need to listen to the community.
- Is there anybody who can package up a suite of information on how to manage salinity on a whole property?

More detailed information about the outcomes and feedback received during the community forums can be found in the 2010 Community Forum Feedback and 2010 Community Forum Outcomes Reports, where information was provided back to the community to address their questions.