



# Gunyulgup Brook Action Plan



2005



Soil and  
Land  
Conservation  
Council  
Western Australia



GeoCatch



Natural Heritage  
Trust

# **Gunyulgup Brook Action Plan**

2005

Prepared for the Cape to Cape Catchments Group (CCG) and the  
Geographe Catchment Council (GeoCatch).

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# How to use this river action plan

This River Action Plan (RAP) was prepared for the Cape to Cape Catchments Group, GeoCatch and landholders within the Gunyulgup Brook catchment. It contains a detailed description of the current health of the waterway, provides information on current management issues, and recommends strategies to address these issues.

Landholders may find this a useful tool to manage their waterways, while community groups will find it helpful in prioritising actions to make the best use of limited resources. For others, it will provide background information to aid decision making.

## For landholders

Landholders should turn to their relevant map in Chapter 6 and read the associated management issues and recommendations. They can then read Chapter 4 to determine why these issues are considered to be a priority for remediation, and Chapter 5 to determine the most appropriate actions to address the issues. Information on the general study area and methodology used to develop this action plan can be found in Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

## For the Cape to Cape Catchment Group

Chapter 7 contains a list of priority actions that can be used as a starting point for the implementation of this River Action Plan. Chapter 6 will also be useful, as it contains detailed information on management issues for each stretch of the waterway. Chapter 5 provides technical advice on how to best address and manage these management issues, and relevant pages should be read carefully prior to implementing any actions.

Four appendices provide further information that may be useful to landholders and community groups. Native vegetation and community types that were found in the study area.

- Common weeds that were found.

Advice for planning revegetation projects.

Useful contacts for further information and assistance.

## Acronyms

CCG	Cape to Cape Catchments Group
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
LCDC	Land Conservation District Committee
DCLM	Department of Conservation and Land Management
GeoCatch	Geographic Catchment Council
WRC	Water and Rivers Commission (now DoW)
DoE	Department of Environment
DoA	Department of Agriculture
RAP	River Action Plan
SoB	Shire of Busselton
UCL	Unallocated Crown Land

*Cover photo: Gunyulgup, Brook looking west near Marrinnup Drive.*

# Acknowledgments

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This River Action Plan has drawn extensively on the work by Genevieve Hanran-Smith in the Margaret River, and the Sabina, Abba and Ludlow Action Plans.

The project was funded by the Natural Heritage Trust, and the Department of Water.

## Reference details

The recommended reference for this publication is:  
Cape to Cape Catchments Group, 2005, *River Action Plan for Gunyulgup Brook*. Department of Water.

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Gunyulgup Brook is located in the north of the Cape to Cape catchments area, and enters the Indian Ocean at Smiths Beach, near Yallingup.

The Gunyulgup Brook system is undergoing significant land use changes such as intensification of agriculture and increasing population pressure. Community concern about the health of the waterway, and a desire to protect and improve its health led to the development of this River Action Plan (RAP).

The aim of this RAP is to provide information to landholders, interested community members, CCG and GeoCatch on the health and current state of Gunyulgup Brook and recommendations on how to manage it better.

Assessments were carried out in November and December 2004 and January 2005 using the Foreshore Condition Assessment method developed by Dr Luke Pen and Margaret Scott for rivers in the south west of Western Australia (Pen & Scott, 1995). Many landholders assisted with the foreshore surveys.

A summary of the foreshore condition ratings and length of fencing of the Brook is presented in Tables 1 and 2 below.

## Key issues identified

The key issues of concern identified during the foreshore assessments and community consultations were:

- Loss of native fringing vegetation and degradation of remaining vegetation;
- Invasion by weeds, including deciduous trees;
- Erosion and sedimentation of the waterway;
- Water quality issues, including nutrient enrichment and altered hydrological flows such as decreased flows; and
- The need to provide technical advice and financial assistance to landholders if they are to protect and enhance their foreshore.

## General recommendations to improve the health of the Gunyulgup Brook

It is recommended that landholders consider the following:

- Retain and protect the remaining riparian vegetation of Gunyulgup Brook, including along drains and tributaries.
- Fence the river to enable control of stock access. Use available funding to defray the costs of fencing or rehabilitation projects.
- Where there are bypass valves on dam walls, open them at first flows.
- Where there are no bypass valves, install a siphon system to allow environmental flows.
- Plant vegetation corridors that support the movement of wildlife and re-create their habitat. This includes working with neighbours to provide continuous habitat for native fauna.
- Revegetate dams and waterways with local native species.
- Control weeds, particularly invasive species in the riparian zone.
- Implement management techniques that minimise soil erosion and nutrient loss to waterways such as: buffer strips, soil testing and fertiliser management plans and maximising vegetation cover on the soil.

## It is recommended that the Cape to Cape Catchments Group and GeoCatch consider the following:

- Encourage and support community efforts to fence the rivers to restrict stock access.
- Apply for further funding to continue to subsidise the cost of revegetation projects and fencing. Encourage, as a priority, the protection of areas of the rivers still retaining native fringing vegetation. It is more cost effective to protect these areas than to restore them later after further degradation has occurred.

- Provide encouragement and support to landholders to undertake revegetation using a diverse suite of local native species (including trees, shrubs, sedges, rushes, herbs and native grasses).
- Expand and continue to support weed and feral animal control projects in the catchment.
- Reduce sediment and nutrient export from agricultural properties by encouraging and supporting landholders to plant buffer strips and implement accepted best management farming practices.
- Reduce nutrient export from rural residential and semi-urban areas by encouraging and supporting landholders to enhance riparian vegetation, minimise fertiliser use and use local plants.
- Work with landholders and engineers from the Department of Environment to address erosion and sedimentation in the catchment.

- Work with Ribbons of Blue and other community organisations to increase community awareness and knowledge of the Gunyulgup Brook catchment, focussing on natural assets, values, and threats.

It was noted by many landholders that funding and the time required for revegetation and restoration works are limiting factors. Funding assistance and technical advice to implement management recommendations is now available through CCG and GeoCatch. For more information, please contact CCG on 9757 2202..

Actions are listed in Chapter 7. They provide a useful starting point for the implementation of this RAP. They include a balanced mix of short and long-term activities and practical on-ground work combined with community education and strategic planning activities.

*Table 1: Summary of foreshore condition rating of Gunyulgup Brook*

Condition	Total Length	Total %
A (pristine)	0.75 km	0.8%
B (weedy)	25.75 km	29%
C (erosion prone/eroding)	51.5 km	58%
D (ditch)	5.80 km	6.5%
Unassessed	5.05 km	5.7%

*Table 2: Length of fenced areas on Gunyulgup Brook*

	Length Fenced	% of Length
Total fenced	6.63 km	7.5%

# 1. Introduction

## Background

In recognition of the need to address the poor state of the rivers in the Geographe catchment, and following consultation with the relevant Land Conservation District Committees, GeoCatch submitted a Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) application for the development of a number of River Action Plans in 1997. The project was funded through the National Rivercare component of NHT, which operates under the goal:

*To ensure progress towards the sustainable management, rehabilitation and conservation of rivers and to improve the health of these river systems.*

That project led to the successful development and ongoing implementation of a number of River Action Plans in the Geographe catchment. Since then, in partnership with GeoCatch, the Cape to Cape Catchments Group has successfully developed and begun implementation of Action Plans for the Margaret River and Cowaramup Brook.

This project continues the series, and reflects the goal of completing a RAP for each waterway in the Geographe and Cape to Cape catchments. It also reflects increasing community concern about the health of Gunyulgup Brook.

This project is a partnership between the Cape to Cape Catchments Group and GeoCatch, with funding from the National Heritage Trust and the Department of Water.

## Study aims

The primary aims of this River Action Plan are:

- To produce a detailed description of the current state of Gunyulgup Brook and identify priority actions to guide works to improve the health of the waterway;
- To help increase the community's awareness of the importance of healthy waterways and riparian vegetation;
- To provide a benchmark against which the local community's future work to protect and rehabilitate the waterway can be gauged;
- To provide guidance on the use of funding and assistance available for fencing, weed and erosion control, and the planting and rehabilitation of native vegetation; and
- To provide a sound technical basis for future funding or project submissions.

**The complete file and hard copy report of the Gunyulgup Brook Action Plan is available from GeoCatch via email: [geocatch@water.wa.gov.au](mailto:geocatch@water.wa.gov.au)**