

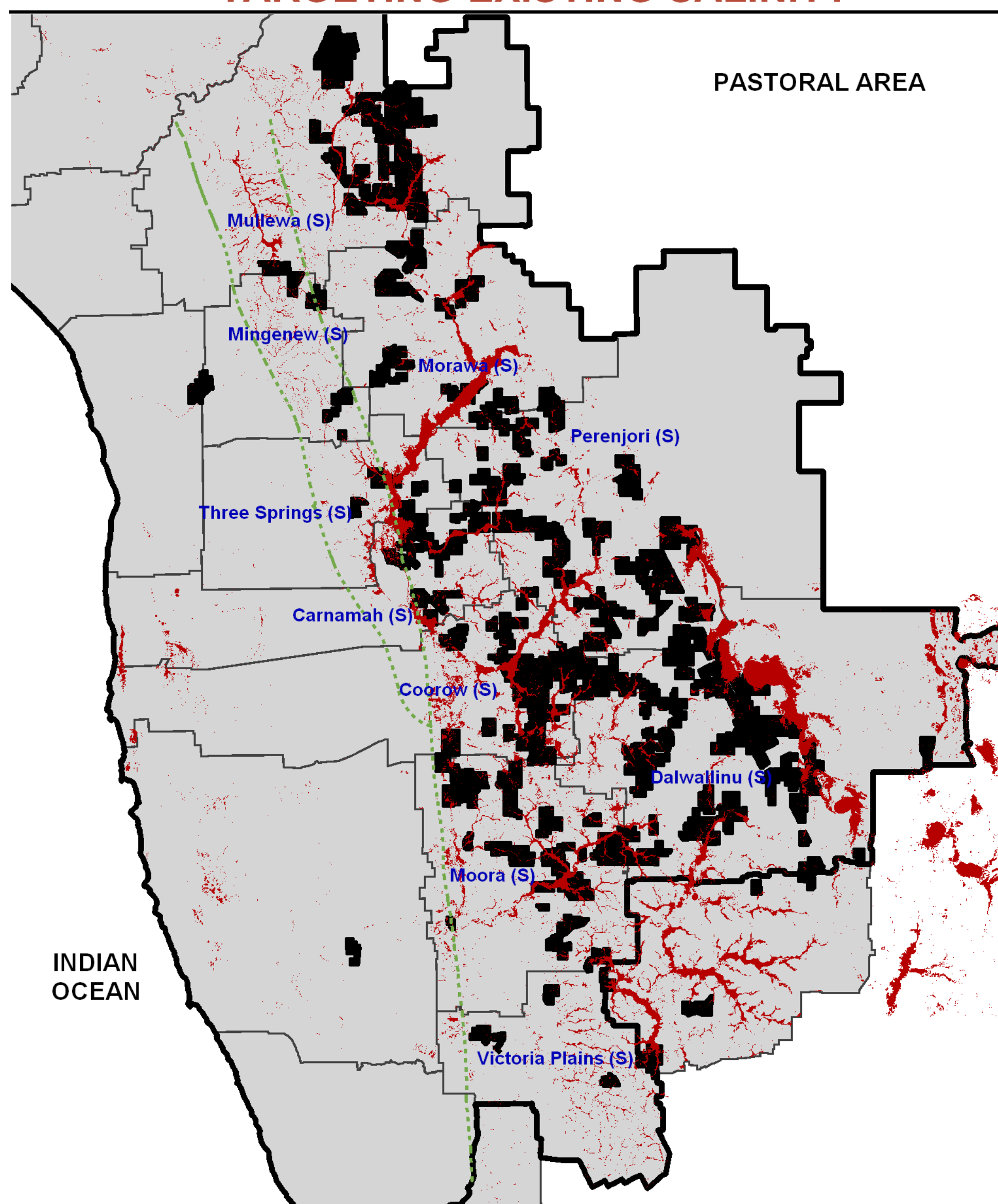
SALINITY EXTENSION AND REHABILITATION PROJECT

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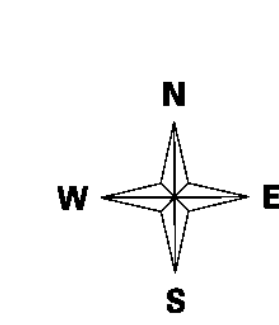
Project Outline

This project was developed in response to the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC) Natural Resource Management Strategy which identified a gap in the provision of unbiased advice on salinity management and the need to assist farmers with on ground works. It was jointly funded through NACC by the Australian Government, through the former National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAP) and the Government of Western Australia through the Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA).

TARGETING EXISTING SALINITY



PASTORAL AREA



Projection: UTM, Zone 50
Datum: GDA 1994



Legend
 Properties Visited
 Areas of Existing Salinity
 NACC Boundary
 Major Geological Faults

0 10 20 30 40 50
Kilometers

Project Outcomes

In the three years the project ran, more than 150 farm visits were completed and over 11,000 hectares of salt affected land has been fenced out and will be managed more sustainably as a result.

This new approach enabling devolved grants to hit the ground was innovative, in that previously farmers would have had to spend many hours, or even days, filling out Landcare application forms which then underwent a lengthy regional and state technical assessment process.

The approach taken in this project was that the "technical assessment panel" was "on farm" and able to provide site specific recommendations. Many farmers commented on how easy the process was and were pleased and appreciative of the support offered. Following each farm visit a report was written and details of measurements, discussions and advice was detailed. It is hoped that this pilot project could be extended to other regions throughout WA.

Aim

To provide farmers in the Northern Agricultural Region with on ground salinity management advice, and a fencing incentive to assist with management of saline land. The project employed a farming systems officer, a saltland agronomist and an extension hydrologist.

This team from the Department of Agriculture and Food's Geraldton office has spent the past 3 years visiting farmers who have expressed an interest in receiving a farm visit. The original project application aimed to provide this service to 130 farmers over a three year period and fence out 4,000 hectares of salt affected land. The project focused on farms which were located in the Irwin River, Yarra Yarra and Moore River Catchments where large areas of saline land are located.



Mike Clarke DAFWA, farmer Gary Butcher and Andrew Blake agronomist in front of a fenced saline area.

How was it achieved

The service was delivered by a team of DAFWA specialists in hydrology, farming systems and revegetation and used the Land Monitor products, Aerial photography, Satellite imagery, EM 38 and other survey results to provide the farmer with a range of salinity management options. Options covered included engineering, soil amelioration techniques, cropping and grazing solutions, farm forestry and revegetation for nature conservation outcomes.

A fencing incentive of \$2,000/kilometre assisted landholders to implement saltland works on their farm agreed upon as a result of the farm visits. The first step in managing salt affected areas is to protect it from grazing to allow for natural regeneration, (at the very least) to occur. It is important to ensure that salt affected areas don't remain bare and lose topsoil as a result of grazing pressure. A management agreement was developed and a contract signed between NACC and the farmer which outlined future management on each site for a 10 year period. Each site also had at least one permanent monitoring point established to enable the rehabilitation process to be monitored.

This project also provided general information to the broader farming community on salinity management and watertable trends. Regular articles were published in the Agmemo (which is mailed to all farmers) of groundwater trends in representative bores from different hydrological zones and the implications of those trends for management.



Jessica Hasleby and farmer Mick Thomas looking over property maps in the field



Andrew Blake using the EM38 in the paddock.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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