



HEALTHY
ESTUARIES
WA



Join a growing number of farmers working to improve their land for the next generation by fencing stock out, and revegetating waterways (streams, rivers) and drains.

Why should we fence and revegetate our waterways?

Since 2010, more than 290 farmers across south-west Western Australia (WA) have been participating in projects to keep stock out of waterways and drains. To date, more than 450 km of fencing has been installed as part of the Healthy Estuaries WA program – with an additional 200 km set to be installed by 2024.

Stock that have access to waterways or drains degrade the natural environment; dung and urine can contaminate water, either directly or when it is washed into waterways after rainfall. Dung and urine contain organic matter and nutrients that promote algal growth and decrease a waterway's ability to support a healthy ecosystem.

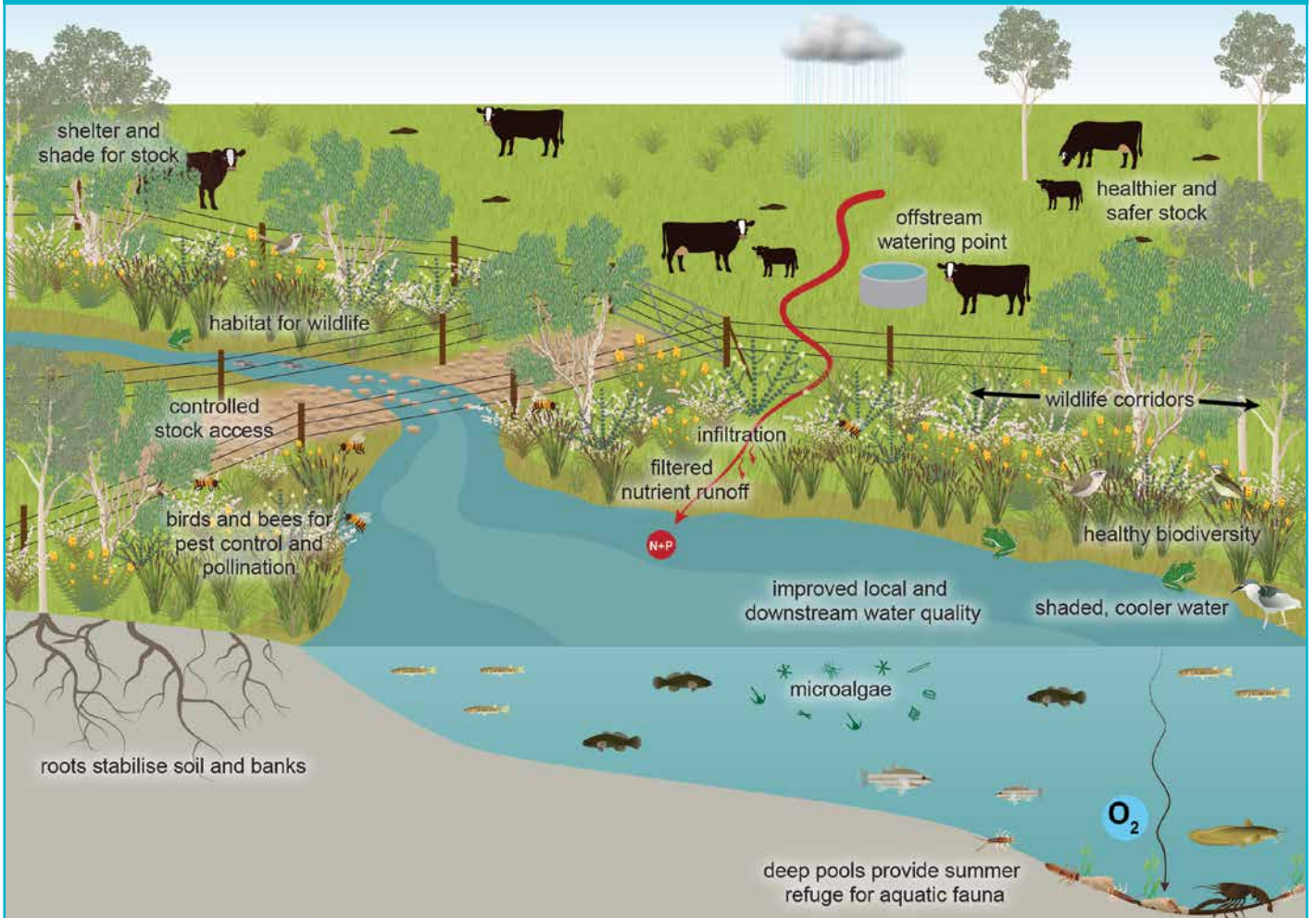
When stock trample banks and beds of waterways, streambank erosion and sediment runoff are increased. Hooved animals, such as sheep and cows, destroy soil structure through pugging (compaction). By eating and damaging foreshore vegetation that stabilises the banks, erosion is worsened.

When drains and streams are degraded by stock, the erosion and water quality impacts can have flow-on effects to downstream waterways and estuaries. This can adversely impact habitats for fish, birds, frogs, and marsupials.

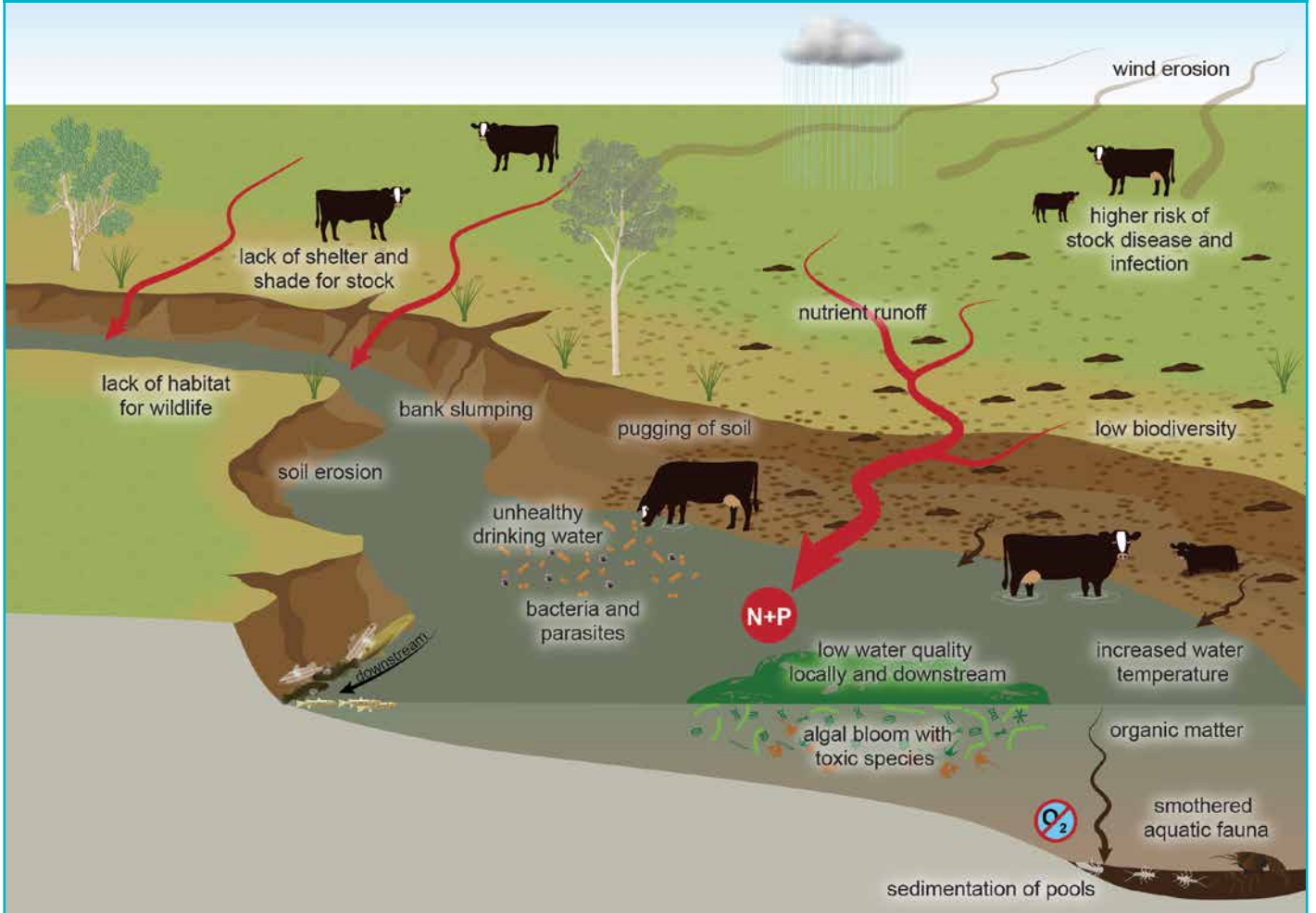
In some areas, looking after your waterway can be as simple as fencing off existing foreshore vegetation and controlling weed growth to allow natural regeneration. In most cases, planting native seedlings along waterways will help to out-compete weed growth and support a healthy ecosystem.



Healthy farm waterway



Unhealthy farm waterway





Healthy waterways support sustainable and productive farms

Benefits of fencing and revegetating waterways

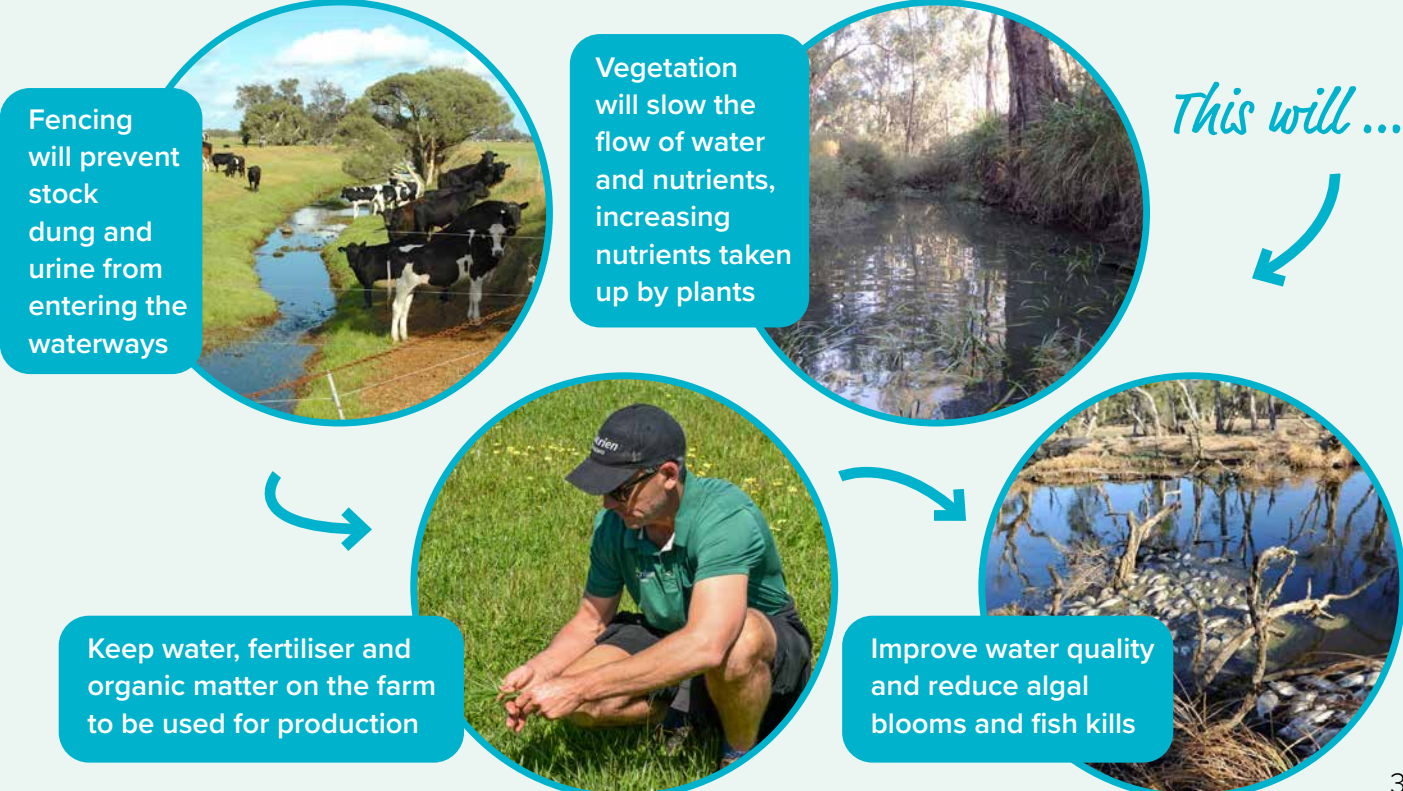
Fencing stock out of waterways and revegetating the foreshore area is not just important for the environment, it is an opportunity to increase farm productivity. By fencing and revegetating your waterways, you can keep nutrients on the farm, improve stock health, and manage grazing more efficiently.

Western Australians value our natural environment and care about our waterways. When farmers fence and revegetate waterways, they are taking action to restore and protect their land and the environment for future generations.

Fencing and revegetating waterways will:

Keep nutrients on the farm and improve the quality of runoff entering waterways

Fencing and revegetating stops stock dung and urine from entering waterways and improves filtering and uptake of nutrients by plants. This improves water quality.



Fencing and revegetating waterways will:

Improve fencing and watering systems

Well-planned fencing and watering systems improve stock health, reduce the spread of disease, and make grazing management more efficient.

Off-stream watering points are healthier for stock, reducing disease and infection



Improved fencing makes grazing management more efficient



Stock are protected from injury on muddy, unstable banks



Less stock are lost along foreshore areas or in neighbouring properties



Biosecurity is improved, and disease spread between properties is reduced



Stabilise banks and soil with healthy vegetation and roots

Stabilised banks with healthy vegetation prevent soil washing into waterways, keeping it on the farm where it is needed, and protecting downstream wildlife.

Stabilised banks prevent waterways from washing away arable land



Vegetation creates wind breaks, reducing dust and keeping topsoil on the farm



Sediments are prevented from washing downstream where they can fill deep pools, smothering wildlife habitat and food sources


Vegetation slows the flow and reduces the power of floodwaters




Fencing and revegetating waterways will:

Create shade and shelter


Shade and shelter help to improve stock health, increase our resilience to climate change, can slow bushfires, and improve conditions for aquatic animals.



Shade and shelter increase resilience to climate change by creating cooler microclimates




Stock are healthier and stock survival, fertility, and production are improved



High moisture areas and a wind buffer can help to slow bushfire spread¹

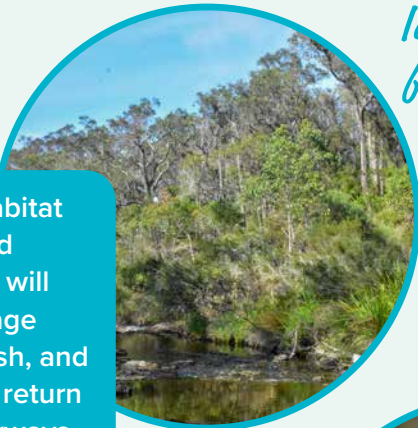
¹ Country Fire Authority 2017, Riparian land and bushfire. Resource document, Version 2, Report prepared by obliqua pty ltd for the Country Fire Authority and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. CFA, East Burwood, Victoria.



Cools water temperatures, reduces evaporation, and improves conditions for aquatic animals


Create habitat and food sources

Improving habitat has important flow-on benefits for crop pollination, pest control, and biodiversity.




More habitat and food sources will encourage frogs, fish, and birds to return to waterways

Improves biodiversity



Returning insects and birds contribute to crop pollination and pest control



Wildlife are able to safely access more habitat through corridors of connected bushland

All of these benefits work to create healthier waterways and land

Together we can:

Build trust and connection with customers and community by being environmentally responsible

Support cultural and spiritual values for Aboriginal people

Protect and enhance beautiful natural areas to use and enjoy

Leave a legacy by handing down healthy, sustainable farms



Support businesses, recreation, and tourism that depend on healthy rivers and estuaries

Increase resilience to climate change by storing carbon







Create a potential income source through carbon trading/carbon offsets²

² www.agric.wa.gov.au/carbon-farming/western-australian-carbon-farming-and-land-restoration-program



Get involved

Leave your land and waterways in better condition than you found them. Contact your local catchment group to find out how to get started to care for your farm waterway or drain, and check your eligibility for fencing and revegetation funding.

	Catchment group	Catchment	Contact number
	Peel-Harvey Catchment Council	Peel-Harvey estuary	(08) 6369 8800 admin@peel-harvey.org.au
	Leschenault Catchment Council	Leschenault Estuary	0458 960 576 reception@leschenaultcc.org.au
	GeoCatch	Vasse Geographe waterways	(08) 9781 0111 geocatch@dwer.wa.gov.au
	Lower Blackwood LCDC	Hardy Inlet	(08) 9758 4021 info@lowerblackwood.com.au
	Wilson Inlet Catchment Council	Wilson Inlet	0401 291 457 info@wicc.org.au
	Oyster Harbour Catchment Group	Oyster Harbour	(08) 9851 2703 0419 646 390 admin@ohcg.org.au

This project is a part of Healthy Estuaries WA – a State Government program that aims to improve the health of our South West estuaries.

Disclaimer – The information in this factsheet is of a general nature and site-specific circumstances should always be taken into consideration when planning fencing and revegetation projects.





Further reading

Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation 1999, [*Riparian Land Management Technical Guidelines. Volume Two: On-ground Management Tools and Techniques*](#), Edited by Siwann Lovett and Phil Price. Land and Water Resources, Research and Development Corporation, Canberra.

Penn, L 1999, *Managing our rivers: a guide to the nature and management of the streams of the south-west Western Australia*, Perth, Western Australia, Water and Rivers Commission.

Staton, J & O'Sullivan, J 2019, [*Stock and Waterways: a NSW Manager's Guide*](#), Australian River Restoration Centre.

Water and Rivers Commission 1999–2003, [*River Restoration Manual \(RR 1–16\)*](#), Water and Rivers Commission, Perth, Western Australia.

— 2000, [*Water Note 18 Livestock management: Fence location and grazing control*](#), Perth, Western Australia.



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