

Photopoint Monitoring

Fact Sheet 4 - June 2016

Photopoint monitoring is a simple, fast and inexpensive technique that can be used to demonstrate the progress of your project and changes to the physical environment over time.

Done correctly, the photos provide a permanent visual record of your work site(s) and are an important project management tool.

They can also serve to promote and communicate your work and successes.

State NRM Program funded projects are required to monitor their work site(s) and it is important to plan how you will do this at the beginning of your project.

Step 1: choose a method

There are several ways to undertake quality photopoint monitoring.

GPS methodologies are ideal as they provide quality data and are simple to use.

A useful tool is the smartphone app, PhotoMon, available free-of-charge from the [Northern Agricultural Catchments Council](#).

If you prefer to use more traditional methods, [this guide](#) from NRM South in Tasmania details how to set up a rigorous methodology.



Step 2: decide how often to take photos

It is important to determine your photopoint monitoring schedule at the beginning of your project.

The frequency of monitoring will depend on a number of factors including the length and nature of your project.



At a minimum, you will need to:

- take baseline photographs at the start of your project
- take additional photos when there are significant changes to the site. For example, after a fire or flooding event or following construction or planting activities
- take photos at project conclusion but continue photopoint monitoring periodically after your project with us has finished. This will demonstrate your commitment to the site and support future funding applications.

Step 3: choose sites

Select sites that will effectively demonstrate changes to your project area over time.

It is best practice to select two or more sites that are:

- easily recognised and safely accessible in all seasons
- unobscured by factors that may spoil future photos, i.e. anticipate plant growth
- representative of the site and relevant to the projects' main objective.

While not always possible, consider taking additional photos that can help place your project site in a wider context.

Panoramas, close-ups, or an adjacent 'control' site can all help with the interpretation of setting and intention.

Step 4: take photos

When taking photos it is important to:

- take them at the same time of the day and during similar weather conditions where possible
- minimise sun glare and shadowing by considering sun position and angle
- use a point of reference where possible e.g. a building, fence, pathway or a mature tree
- record the date and time of each photo, the height of the camera, orientation, GPS coordinates and percentage zoom. This makes it easier to set up for the next photos.

Step 5: archive photos

It is important to correctly archive your photos to ensure photopoint monitoring information is accurate and accessible to others.

Ensure that photos are dated and labelled with site data and file them with documents that assist in their interpretation.



Case study

Photos of the Centennial Park Living Stream were taken over a 33 month period to demonstrate site changes.

Note the similarity of height, angle and visibility of each photo.



Image 23 July 2014



Image 19 February 2014



Image 11 March 2015

Links

[Northern Agricultural Catchments Council](http://www.nacc.com.au/photo-monitoring-app-photomon)
<http://www.nacc.com.au/photo-monitoring-app-photomon>

[NRM South, Tasmania](http://www.nrmsouth.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Photo-Monitoring-Fact-Sheet-NRM-South.pdf)
<http://www.nrmsouth.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Photo-Monitoring-Fact-Sheet-NRM-South.pdf>

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