

Monitoring

Photopoint Guidelines and Instructions

Monitoring involves the regular collection of information and is used to track trends or changes of natural areas. Photographs are valuable in monitoring the on-ground activities outlined in your Traditional Land Management Practice report.

The photopoint site

Photopoints are a simple method of monitoring and involves selecting a point to establish a permanent marker from which photos can be taken and retaken over time. A sequence of photos taken at suitable intervals over a period of time can provide a rich source of information.

Some key points to consider when selecting the site:

- Identify a representative area.
- Identify the location of key activities that you would like to monitor.
- Use features of the area to help make the photopoint easily relocateable.
- Try and position the photopoint north/south and take the photo facing the south so that the sun is behind you when you take the photo.
- Avoid locating the photopoint where other factors may influence changes or trends, eg along tracks, near water points, etc.

Once the location has been determined a permanent, visible labeled marker is required to identify the site and act as the ‘fixed point’ from which the photograph is taken. Two posts, known as the marker and sight peg should be hammered into the ground roughly 10 metres apart – see Figure 1 below. Occasionally it may be appropriate to use landmark features, which future photos can be matched up with.

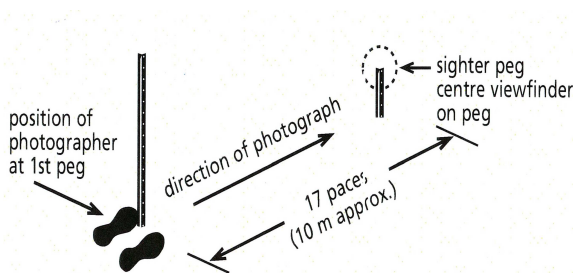


Figure 1. Layout of photopoint site.

Camera settings

The main principle is to use the camera setting that consistently gives a good picture, so it is advisable to keep the settings simple so that photos are easier to compare. Use the camera’s default focal position and do not use the zoom when taking the photo.

Take the photo

Hold the camera so that the image is taken with a landscape perspective – that is where the picture is wider than it is high. The photo should be taken at eye level standing directly behind the marker peg. Frame your scene so that the top of the sight peg is in the middle of the camera viewfinder and focus on infinity. The photo should focus on the understory vegetation.

Photos should be taken twice a year at the equivalent time, preferably spring and autumn, with the same direction, angle, and focus point each time.

Photo management and maintaining records

To enable monitoring to be useful and valuable in the longer term, it is imperative that the details of the photograph and site are appropriately recorded and stored together.

Each photo should be labeled with the site number, site name, date and time.

Photographs accompanied by information that affect the site such as management actions, climate and natural events and observational measurements (eg. seedling survival, weeds present and abundance) enables interpretation and possible explanation of the changes that are visible.

Both the details of the photograph and site information can be recorded on a ‘Photopoint record sheet’ – see Attachment A.

Attachment A

PHOTOPOINT RECORD SHEET

Property information

Landholder:

Property address:

Photopoint details

Site name: Site number:

Date: Time:

Photographer's name:

Site management (in the period between this photo and the previous photo):

Observations/Comments:

Attach photograph here