

Plains Grassy Woodland

Endangered in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

97% of Plains Grassy Woodlands have been cleared. 71% of what remains is on private land.



Photo: Martin White

Figure 1. An example of Plains Grassy Woodland in good condition. This is an example of a Grey Box dominated remnant, and with a dense ground layer of grasses.



Figure 2. An example of Plains Grassy Woodland in good condition with Red Gum from along the Longwood Railway Reserve. Note the pea shrubs and herbs. There is, however a lack of old trees.



Figure 3. An example of Plains Grassy Woodland at Katamatite Reserve in good condition. Note the scattered shrub layer and open woodland structure.

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Description

Plains Grassy Woodlands predominantly occur on the secondary or non-active alluvial terrace (as opposed to the floodplain), as well as on basalt plateaus in the south west of the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

They are predominantly open woodlands with a dense suite of grasses, sedges, lilies, orchids and herbs in the ground layer. These include Kangaroo Grass, Spear-grasses, Common Wheat-grass, Lemon Beauty-heads, Chocolate Lilies, Milkmaids and Yellow Rush-lily. The overall amount of plant matter (biomass) produced in the ground layer (particularly grasses) in this vegetation type tends to be greater than in Plains Woodland.

The scattered wattle and pea shrub layer includes Gold-dust Wattle, Spreading Wattle, Golden Wattle and Showy Parrot-pea.

The overstorey can range from Red Gum and Grey Box dominated woodlands (southern region of Catchment) to Yellow Box, Grey Box and Buloke woodlands (northern region of Catchment).

Species To Look Out For

Flora: Buloke, Buloke Mistletoe (v), Spreading Eutaxia, Broom Bitter-pea, Northern Plains Leek-orchid, Glandular Early Nancy (r) and Spurred Spear-grass.

Fauna: Grey Crowned Babbler (e), Bush Stone-Curlew (e), Long-nosed Bandicoot, Squirrel Glider (e) and Brush-tailed Phascogale (v).



Figures 4-8. River Red Gum, Parrot Pea, Kangaroo Grass, Wallaby Grass.

Photos: Mary Titcumb



Figure 9. Grey-crowned Babbler
Photo: Chris Tzaros



Figure 10. Bush Stone Curlew
Photo: Jim Castles



Figure 11. Squirrel Glider
Photo: Lindy Lumsden

Why Plains Grassy Woodlands are Threatened

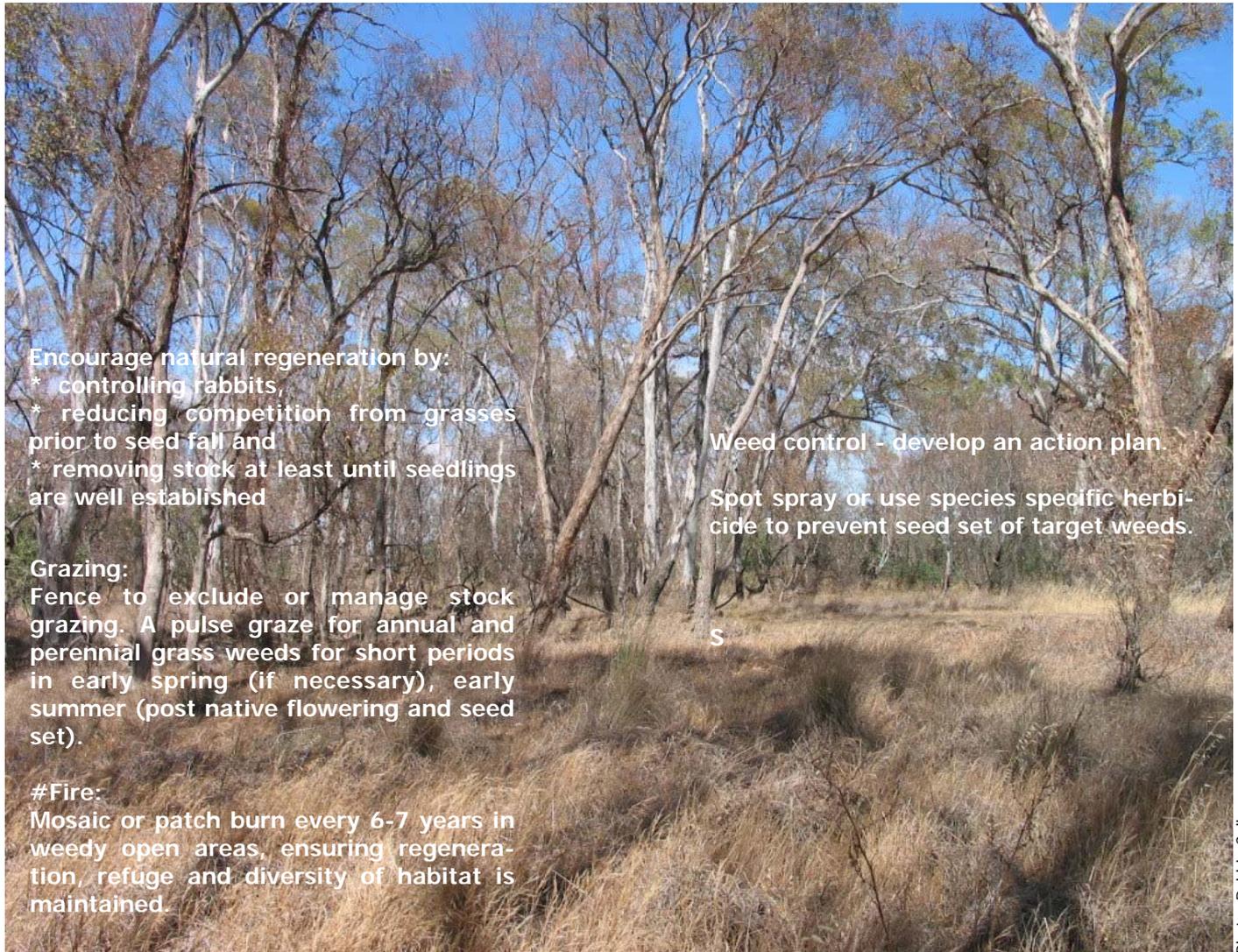
More than 97% of Plains Grassy Woodlands in the Goulburn Broken Catchment have disappeared since European settlement. Over 71% of what remains is on private land. Many of the plants and animals that rely on this habitat are now also threatened, and some are extinct. Therefore, the support of private landholders is essential for the ongoing conservation of Plains Grassy Woodlands.

Current threats include, **poor timing of stock grazing and overgrazing** (causes loss of native species, hinders native plant regeneration, disturbs the soil and increases nutrient levels), **isolation** (restricted movement of fauna, difficult to maintain healthy gene pool), lack of **native understorey** and **ground layer** (which attracts insect eating birds helping keep the overstorey healthy, and improve soil health through fixing nitrogen), lack of natural **regeneration**, **soil disturbance** (eg. ploughing and pugging, favouring weed species), **weed invasion**, **pest animals** and loss of **tree** and **ground habitat** (through timber harvesting, tidying-up of fallen timber and firewood collection).

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Management Tips



Encourage natural regeneration by:

- * controlling rabbits,
- * reducing competition from grasses prior to seed fall and
- * removing stock at least until seedlings are well established

Grazing:

Fence to exclude or manage stock grazing. A pulse graze for annual and perennial grass weeds for short periods in early spring (if necessary), early summer (post native flowering and seed set).

#Fire:

Mosaic or patch burn every 6-7 years in weedy open areas, ensuring regeneration, refuge and diversity of habitat is maintained.

Weed control - develop an action plan.

Spot spray or use species specific herbicide to prevent seed set of target weeds.

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Photo: Debbie Colbourne

Figure 12. An example of Plains Grassy Woodland in poor condition in Alexandra. The overstorey is suffering some dieback, and there is a lack of native shrub layer and the ground layer is dominated by introduced grasses.

May require expert input in decision making and planning. See your local DSE, DPI or CMA representative for further advice.



#Restore native understorey (and overstorey) by direct seeding and / or replanting

Avoid disturbance to prevent erosion and minimise weed invasion

Avoid driving vehicles through remnant to minimise disturbance

Leave fallen timber for habitat

Plant missing shrub species and dominant ground cover species after weed treatment to prevent the same, or other weeds re-invading

Photo: Sue Berwick

Figure 13. An example of Plains Grassy Woodland in moderate condition near Longwood. While there is a good shrub layer, the ground layer is dominated by introduced grasses.

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Conservation Status

Plains Grassy Woodland is **Endangered** in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

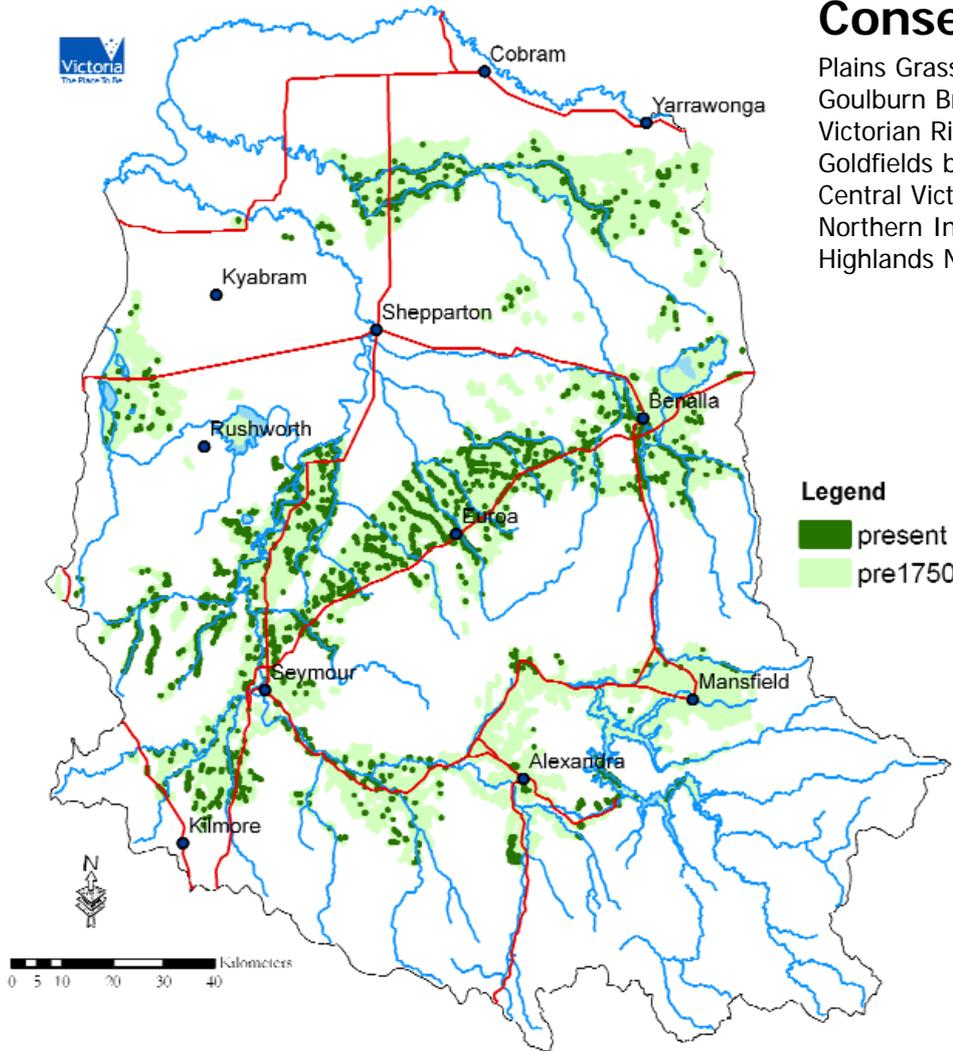
Victorian Riverina bioregion : **Endangered**

Goldfields bioregion : **Endangered**

Central Victorian Uplands bioregion: **Endangered**

Northern Inland Slopes bioregion : **Endangered**

Highlands Northern Fall bioregion: **Endangered**



Legend

■ present

■ pre1750

Figure 14. A representation of the pre-1750 and present day distribution of Plains Grassy Woodland and its mosaics and complexes in the Goulburn Broken Catchment. The boundaries of the vegetation have been exaggerated to allow for the small scale of the map. The map was produced from Base Data from DSE Corporate Library. The State of Victoria does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of information on this map. Any person using or relying upon such information does so on the basis that the State of Victoria shall bear no responsibility or liability whatsoever for any errors, faults, defects or omissions in the information.

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Compiled by: Mary Titcumb, Department of Sustainability and Environment

For further information about this publication, contact:

Department of Sustainability and Environment or Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
Benalla (03) 5761 1611

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