

Protection of Box-Gum Grassy Woodlands and Buloke Woodlands



**GOULBURN
BROKEN**
CATCHMENT
MANAGEMENT
AUTHORITY

Farmers from north-east Victoria, the Goulburn Murray and southern NSW are part of a major push to protect one of Australia's most poorly conserved ecosystems. Sixteen farmers have joined a new, \$3 million project that aims to reverse the decline of threatened grassy woodland ecosystems across the Greater Murray Goulburn catchment.

The project 'Improving landscape scale conservation of threatened Grassy Woodland ecosystems in the Greater Murray Goulburn Catchment' focuses on landscape scale conservation of three nationally threatened woodland ecological communities and associated threatened species.

In Victoria, the project aims to protect and improve the quality of 1200 ha of Box Gum Grassy Woodlands and 50 ha of Buloke Woodlands across the North East and Goulburn Broken Catchments.

The three ecological communities are:
White box - Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum grassy woodlands and derived native grasslands (also known as Box-Gum Grassy Woodland) (listed as critically endangered)
Buloke Woodlands of the Riverina and Murray-Darling Depression bioregions (listed as endangered)
Weeping Myall Woodlands (listed as endangered, NSW only)

The aim of the project is to work with landholders and provide incentives, information and advice, as well as increase the broader community's knowledge and understanding of woodlands.

Approximately 90% of Box Gum and Buloke Grassy Woodlands have been cleared in the North East and Goulburn Broken catchments. Much of what remains occurs on private land. This project will help secure important remnant sites on private land.

Woodland protection and management will benefit a range of threatened woodland-dependent plants and animals, such as birds, reptiles, gliding possums and several flora species.

Grassy woodlands and native pastures also provide an important productive base on the plains, lower slopes and foothill country of the two catchments. The protection and management of these woodlands will contribute to soil conservation and waterway protection by encouraging greater cover of perennial native grasses.

Protecting these woodlands will also assist in maintaining an iconic Australian landscape that is rapidly disappearing through soil decline, tree death, erosion and drought. The Australian National University scientists will establish long-term monitoring sites on suitable properties to collect data on changes resulting from woodland conservation works.

Incentives payments are available for a range of conservation activities on private land, including:

- Managing grazing to encourage natural regeneration of eucalypts and native grasses
- Fencing remnant areas of woodland
- Pest plant and animal control
- Supplementary planting of indigenous species in remnant woodlands
- Revegetation around remnant woodlands to improve their size and connectivity to other remnant native vegetation

Eligibility for funding assessment is based on the following:

- The site supports Box Gum Grassy Woodland or derived grassland, or Buloke Woodland with a reasonable cover of native grasses.
- The land owner is willing to enter into a 10-year management agreement to control livestock grazing, retain trees and fallen timber, exclude cultivation and fertilisers and control pest plants and animals.
- The site is 5 hectares or greater and not subject to any current or ongoing funding arrangement for biodiversity conservation (smaller high quality sites will be considered, especially for Buloke Woodlands).

The new threatened grassy woodlands project is funded by the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country initiative and supported by an impressive range of partners - the North East, Goulburn Broken and Murray Catchment Management Authorities, the Victorian Departments of Sustainability and Environment and Primary Industry, the Australian National University, Trust for Nature and the Nature Conservation Trust.

For further information please contact: Vanessa Keogh at the Goulburn Broken CMA Office on 03 5820 1100