

Grassy Dry Forest

In the Goulburn Broken Catchment

48% of Grassy Dry Forests have been cleared. 38% of what remains is on private land.



Figure 1. An example of Grassy Dry Forest.

Photo: Sue Berwick

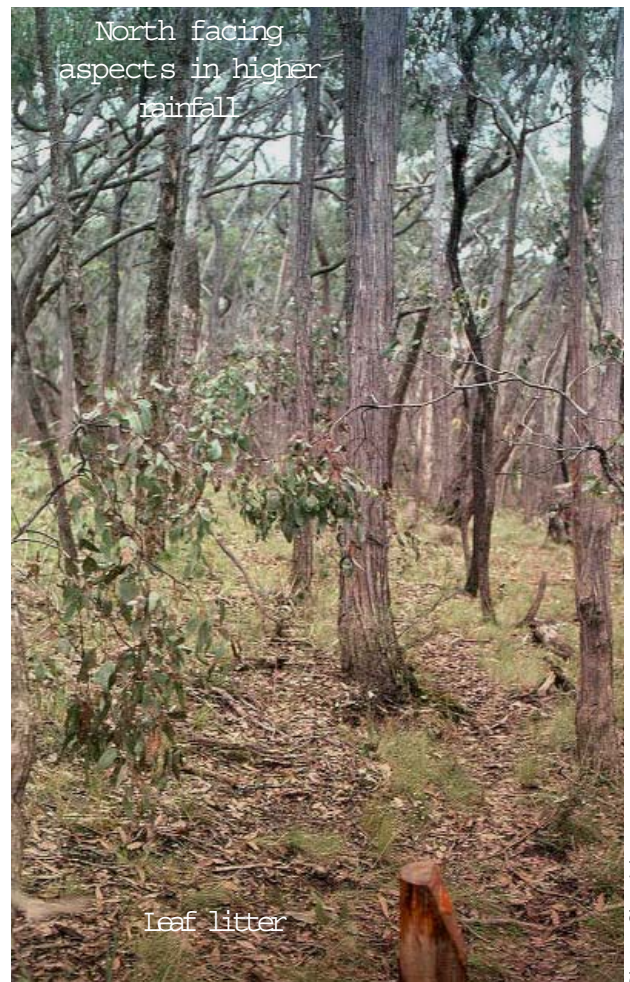


Figure 3. An example of Grassy Dry Forest.

Photo: Glen Johnson

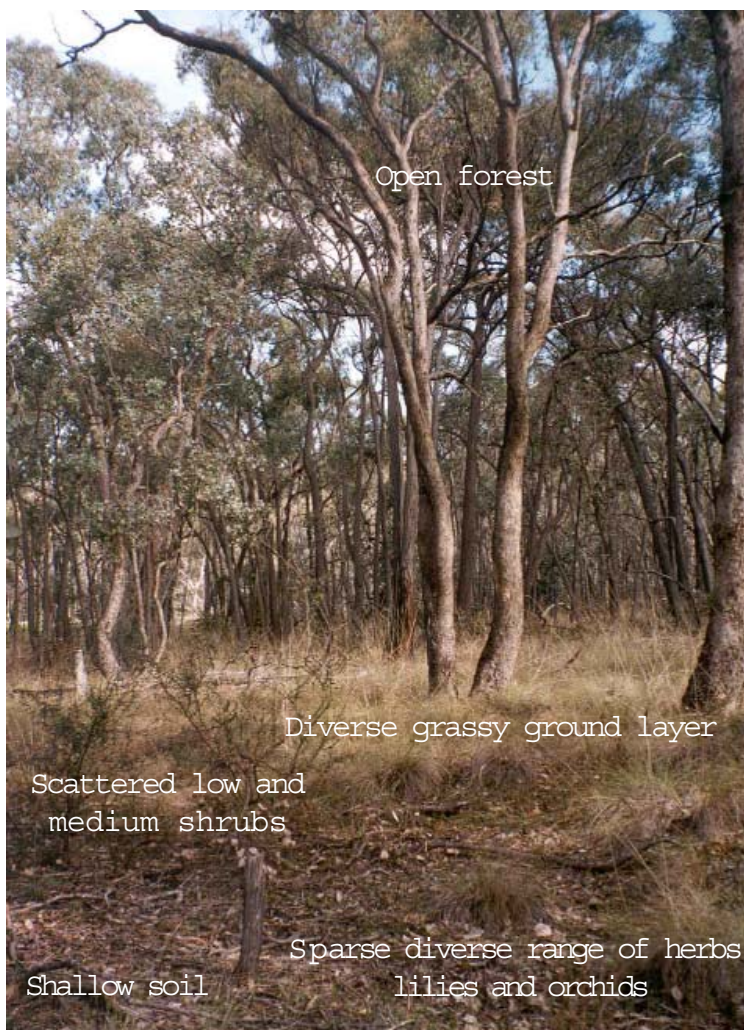


Figure 2. An example of Grassy Dry Forest.

Photo: Sue Berwick



Figure 4. An example of Grassy Dry Forest in good condition.

Photo: Debbie Colbourne

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Description

Grassy Dry Forests occur on hills, generally with very shallow soil, at elevations at 230-900m and an annual rainfall of 500-1000mm. Grassy Dry Forests occur in protected aspects at low rainfall, and on steeper, north facing aspects at higher rainfall and altitude.

These are typically open forests of Red Stringybark and Long-leaf Box at lower altitudes. Occasionally Blakleys Red Gum occurs. Broad-leaf Peppermint and Brittle Gum occur at higher altitudes.

The shrub layer consists of few medium and low shrubs such as Guinea-flowers, Wattles and peas.

The diverse grassy understorey occurs on more protected south-east slopes with species such as Silver-top Wallaby-grass, Grey Tussock-grass, Plume Grass, Common Wheat-grass and Wallaby-grasses. There is often sparse but diverse range of herbs, lilies and orchids.

Species to Look Out For

Flora: Grey Rice-flower (v) and Tick Indigo (v).

Fauna: Bandy Bandy (n) (mid catchment), Barking Owl (e), Brush-tailed Phascogale (e), Powerful Owl (v), Yellow-footed Antechinus (mid catchment), Tree Goanna (v) and Woodland Blind Snake(n).



Figure 10. Bandy Bandy
Photo: Jerry Alexander



Figure 11. Powerful Owl
Photo: DSE/McCann



Figure 12. Yellow-footed Antechinus
Photo: DSE/McCann



Figures 5-9. Red Stringybark, Grey Guinea-flower, Silver-top Wallaby-grass, Common Wheat-grass and Tiger Orchid

Why Grassy Dry Forests are Important

Many species rely on these forests and the ecological services they provide more broadly to the environment. More than 48% of Grassy Dry Forests in the Goulburn Broken Catchment have disappeared since European settlement. It is important to protect the remaining area for the continued survival of the species that rely on it and for the ecological services these forests provide. Of the balance 38% remains on private land. The support of private landholders is essential for the ongoing conservation of Grassy Dry Forests.

Current threats include, **poor timing of stock grazing and overgrazing** (causes loss of native species and weed invasion, hinders native plant regeneration, disturbs the soil and increases nutrient levels), **inappropriate fire regimes** (too frequent/ infrequent fire can hinder shrub regeneration leading to eventual loss of some species, and changes the structure of the remnant), lack of native **understorey** and **ground layer** (which attract insect eating birds helping keep the overstorey healthy, and improve soil health through fixing nitrogen), lack of natural **regeneration**, **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



Install nest boxes

Encourage natural regeneration by:

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

Restoring the native understorey will help keep existing trees healthy, improve nutrient cycling and provide habitat for a greater range of species

Revegetate around remnants to buffer from introduced pasture and link to other remnants

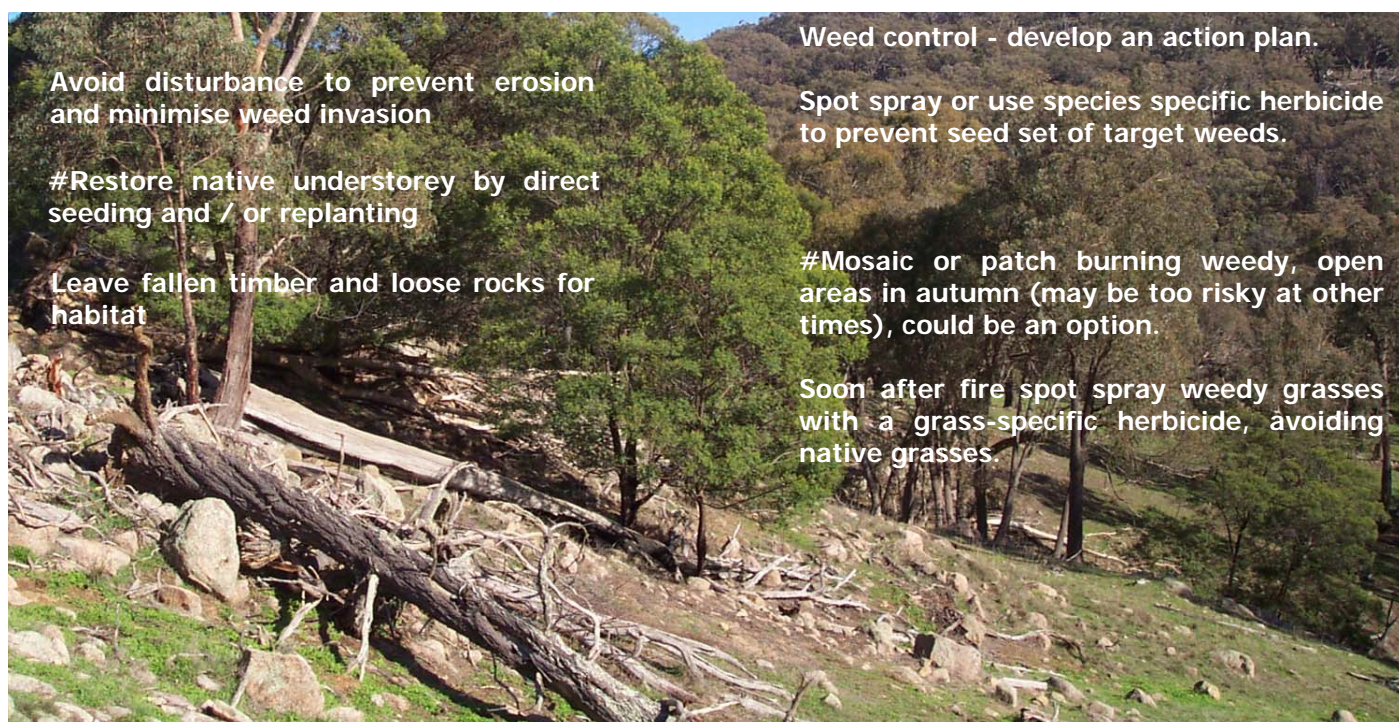
Fire:

#Mosaic or patch burning every 7-15 years in autumn (may be too risky at other times), could be an option.

Figure 13. A degraded example of Grassy Dry Forest near Longwood.

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

Photo: Debbie Colbourne



Avoid disturbance to prevent erosion and minimise weed invasion

#Restore native understorey by direct seeding and / or replanting

Leave fallen timber and loose rocks for habitat

Weed control - develop an action plan.

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

#Mosaic or patch burning weedy, open areas in autumn (may be too risky at other times), could be an option.

Soon after fire spot spray weedy grasses with a grass-specific herbicide, avoiding native grasses.

Figure 14. A degraded example of Grassy Dry Forest near Longwood.

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

Photo: Debbie Colbourne

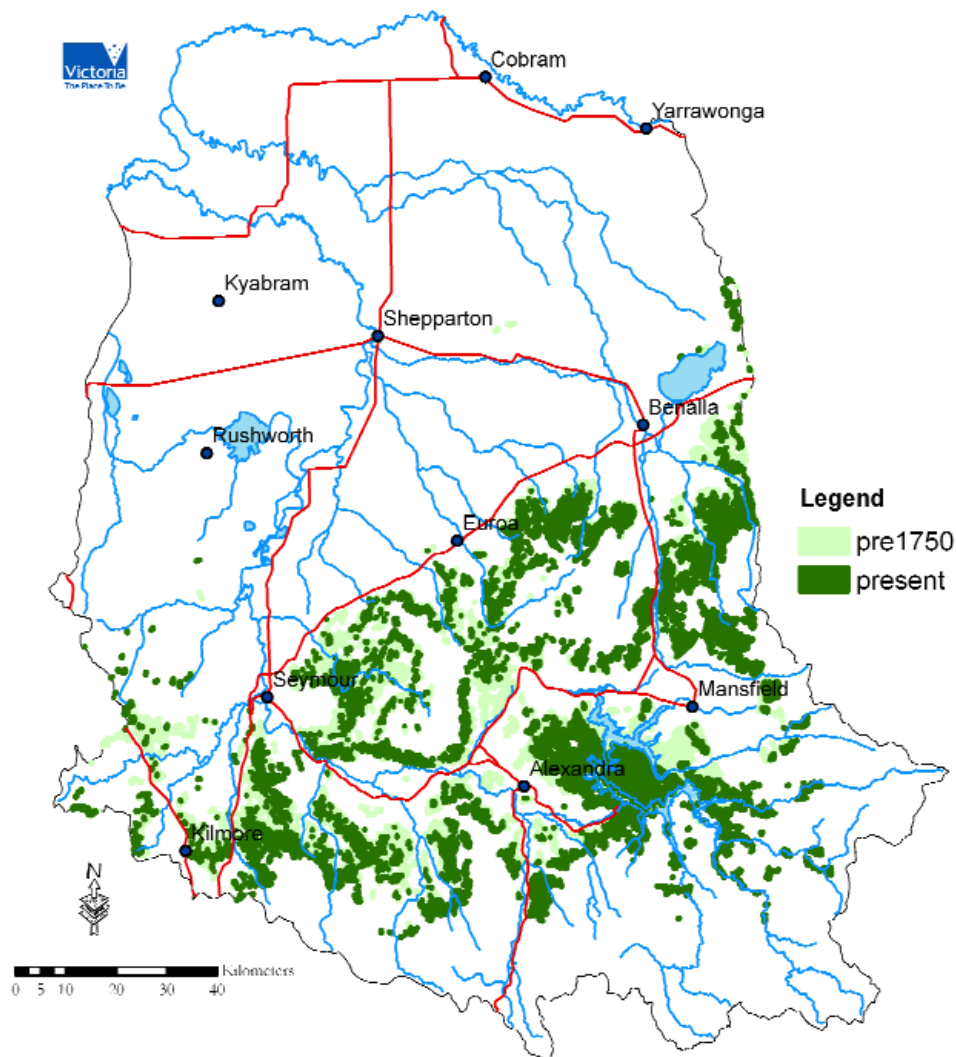


Figure 15. A representation of the pre-1750 and present day distribution of Grassy Dry Forest and its mosaics and complexes in the Goulburn Broken Catchment. The boundaries of the vegetation have been exaggerated to allow for the small scale of the map. The map was produced from Base Data from DSE Corporate 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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