

# Herb-rich Foothill Forest

## Threatened in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

36% of Herb-rich Foothill Forests have been cleared. 21% of what remains is on private land.



Figure 1. An example of Herb-rich Foothill Forest, in moderately healthy condition.

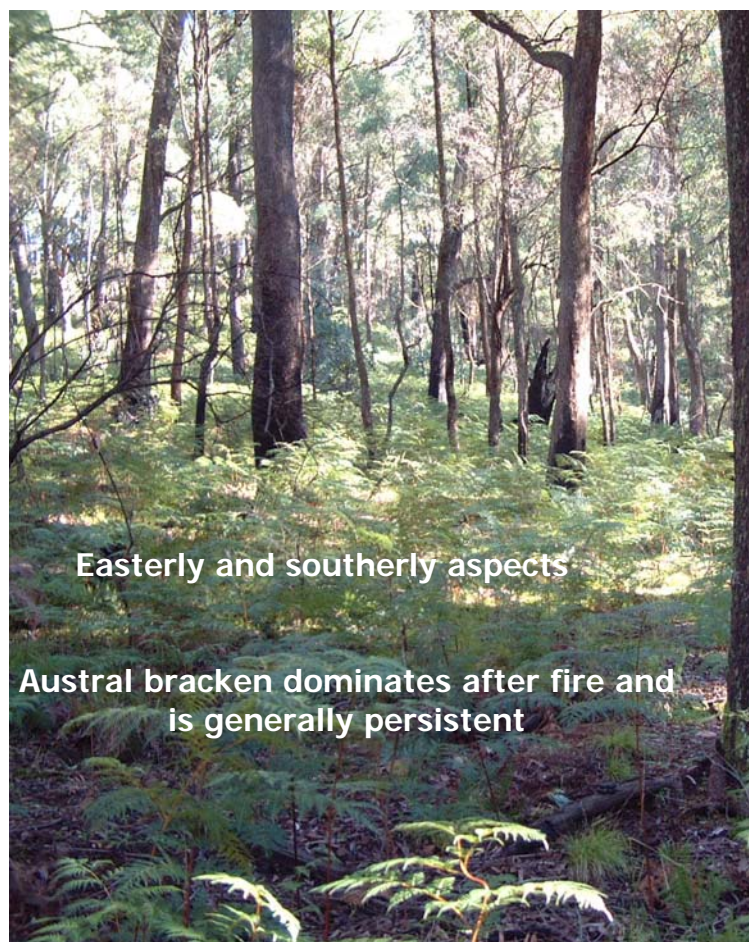


Figure 2. An example of the Herb-rich Foothill Forest after fire.



Figure 3. An example of the Herb-rich Foothill Forest in moderate condition.



Figure 4. An example of the ground layer in a Herb-rich Foothill Forest. Pennywort, Kidney-weed, Native Geranium, Wattle Mat-rush, Handsome flat-pea, Common Woodrush and Tussock grass can be seen.



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### Description

This medium to tall open forest (25m to 30m tall) occupies easterly and southerly aspects mainly on lower slopes and in gullies. It occurs on relatively fertile, moderately well-drained soils on an extremely wide range of geological types and in areas of moderate to high rainfall at elevations from 200-1200m.

The overstorey commonly consists of Narrow-leaf Peppermint and Candlebark.

The small tree layer of Silver Wattle occurs over a sparse to dense shrub layer including Prickly Currant-bush, Handsome Flat-pea, Hop Bitter-pea and Pink Bells.

The understorey contains a high cover and diversity of herbs and grasses in the ground layer, such as Kidney-weed, Pennywort, Mat-rush, Austral Bear's-ears, Mountain Clematis, Weeping Grass, Common Tussock-grass, Common Hedgehog-grass and Common Wheat-grass. Austral Bracken may tend to dominate following frequent disturbance, particularly by fire and grazing.

### Species to Look Out For

**Flora:** Blackwood, Common Heath, Dusty Daisy-bush.

**Fauna:** Greater Glider, Southern Boobook, Tawny Frogmouth, Superb Lyrebird, Mountain Dragon.



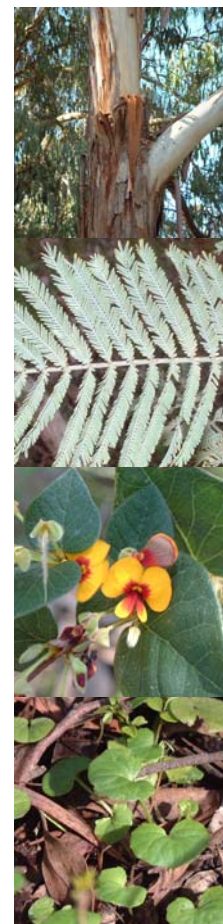
Figure 9. Southern Boobook  
Photo: DSE/McCann



Figure 10. Tawny Frogmouth  
Photo: DSE/McCann



Figure 11. Superb Lyrebird  
Photo: DSE/McCann



Figures 5-8.  
Candlebark, Silver  
Wattle, Handsome  
Flat-pea and Kidney-  
weed.

Photos: Mary Titcumb

### Why Herb-rich Foothill Forests are Threatened

Many species rely on these forests and the ecological services this forest type provide more broadly to the environment. More than 36% of Herb-rich Foothill Forests in the Goulburn Broken Catchment have disappeared since European settlement. Of the balance 21% remains on private land. The support of private landholders is important for the ongoing conservation of Herb-rich Foothill Forests.

Current threats include, **inappropriate fire regimes** (frequency, season of burn and intensity - cause loss of species and change the structure of remnants), **soil disturbance** (eg. ploughing and pugging, favouring weed species), **weed invasion** (particularly Blackberry and other woody and broad-leaf weeds), **pest animals**, loss of **tree** and **ground habitat** (through timber harvesting, tidying-up of fallen timber and firewood collection), **poor timing of stock grazing and overgrazing** (causes loss of native species, invasion of weeds, hinders native plant regeneration, disturbs the soil and increases nutrient levels) and lack of native **understorey** and **ground layer** (which attract insect eating birds helping keep the overstorey healthy, and improve soil health through fixing nitrogen).



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## Management Tips



Photo: Mary Titcumb

Weed control - develop plan for action:  
Woody weed control (including Blackberry)  
Control small isolated infestations first.

Blackberry control: advice is available from  
DPI on specifically how to deal with dense  
blackberry infestations.

Control foxes to limit woody weeds.

#Burning weedy, open areas in autumn,  
could be an option (perhaps too risky at  
other times of the year for landholders).

Soon after fire spot spray weedy grasses  
with species specific herbicide, avoiding  
native grasses.

Figure 12. A degraded example of Herb-rich Foothill Forest. Surrounding areas of the forest are in good condition. This section is heavily infested with Blackberries. The priority should be to prevent the spread of blackberries into good areas.

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

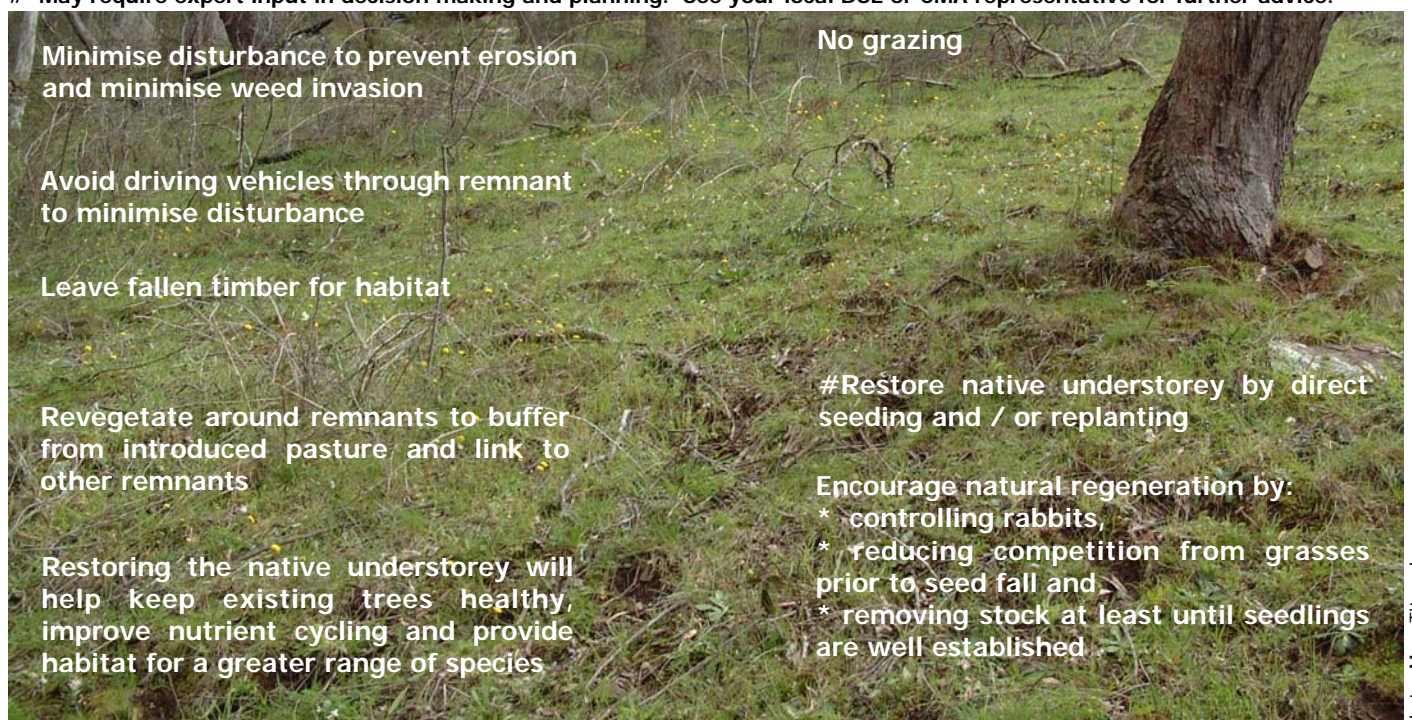


Photo: Mary Titcumb

Minimise disturbance to prevent erosion  
and minimise weed invasion

Avoid driving vehicles through remnant  
to minimise disturbance

Leave fallen timber for habitat

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

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

No grazing

#Restore native understorey by direct  
seeding and / or replanting

Encourage natural regeneration by:  
\* controlling rabbits,  
\* reducing competition from grasses  
prior to seed fall and  
\* removing stock at least until seedlings  
are well established

Figure 13. A degraded example of Herb-rich Foothill Forest. Invasion by Flat-weed and some annual weeds are hindering the native ground layer. Additionally the shrub layer and small tree layer are absent.

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## Conservation Status

Herb-rich Foothill Forest is **threatened** in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

Victorian Riverina bioregion :

**Vulnerable**

Central Victorian Uplands bioregion :

**Depleted**

Highlands - Southern Fall bioregion:

**Least Concern**

Highlands - Northern Fall bioregion :

**Least Concern**

Victorian Alps bioregion:

**Least Concern**

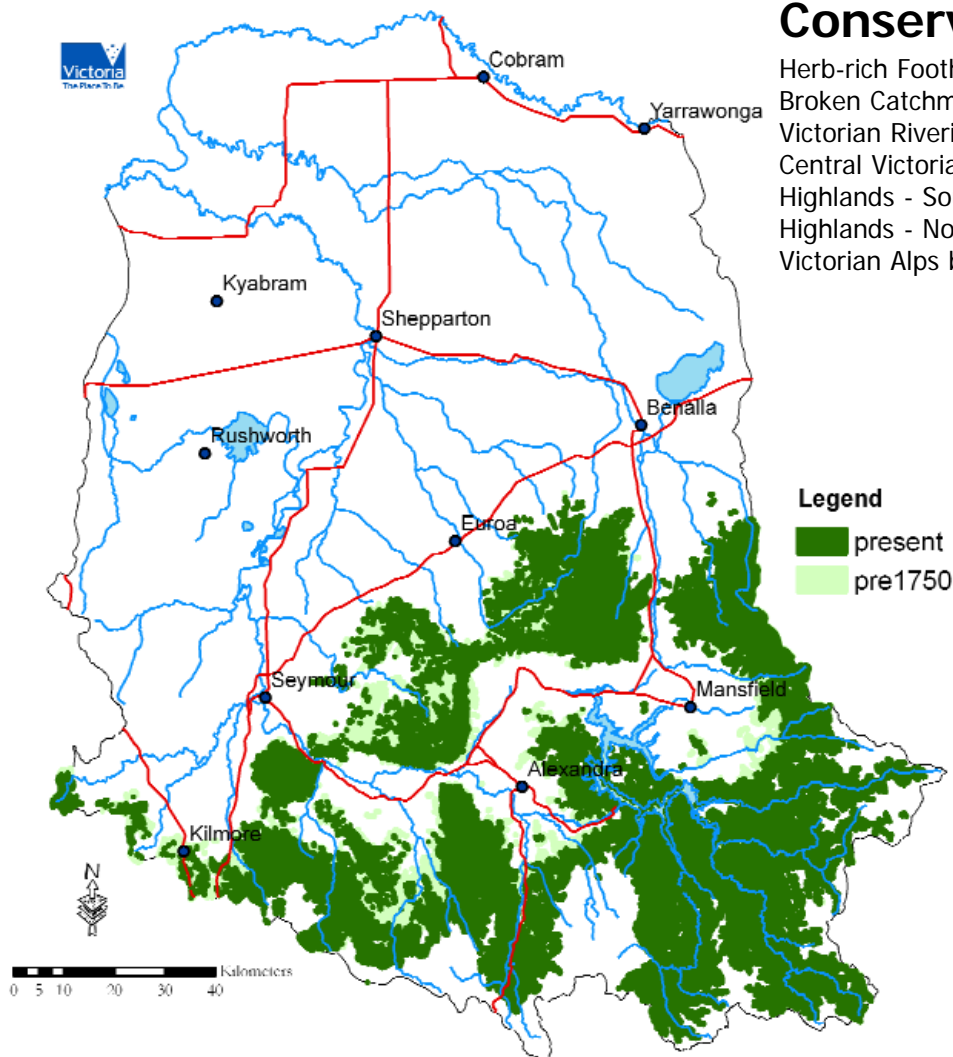


Figure 14. A representation of the pre-1750 and present day distribution of Herb-rich Foothill Forest and its mosaics and complexes in the Goulburn Broken Catchment. The boundaries of the vegetation have been exaggerated to allow for the small scale of the map. The map was produced from Base Data from 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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