

Valley Heathy Forest

Threatened in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

91% of Valley Heathy Forests have been cleared. 87% of what remains is on private land.



Photo: Debbie Colbourne

Figure 1. An example of Valley Heathy Forest in degraded condition with some indicative and habitat features highlighted. This photograph was taken in early Autumn.



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Figure 2. An example of Valley Heathy Forest in degraded condition with some indicative and habitat features highlighted. This photograph was taken in early Autumn.

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Description

This diverse open forest community usually occurs on protected colluvial slopes and valleys, seemingly with impeded drainage, in areas of 750-850mm annual rainfall.

The open overstorey is influenced by adjacent vegetation types and can be any of: Red Box, Long-leaf Box, Broad-leaf Peppermint, Messmate (Cobaw area) and Grey Box. Blakely's Red Gum and Candlebark may also occur.

The understorey contains a component of small ericoid shrubs, often occurring in thickets. The Small Grass-tree is also often present.

The usually dense ground layer consists of Thatch Saw-sedge, Small Trigger-plant, Milkmaids, Black-anther Flax-lily, Mat-rush species, Wire Rapier-sedge, Variable Sword-sedge and Small St John's Wort. Grasses include Common Wheat-grass, Wallaby grasses, Kangaroo Grass (sometimes quite dense), Spear grasses and less commonly Silvertop Wallaby-grass.

Species To Look Out For

Flora: Small Grass-tree, Prickly Tea-tree, Wattles

Fauna: Spotted Marsh Frog, Australian Owlet-Nightjar, Red-bellied Black Snake, Common Froglet.



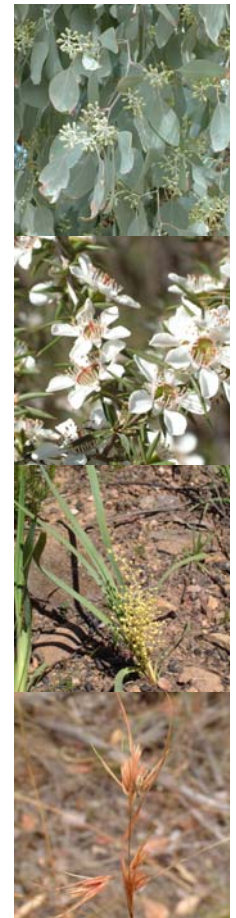
Figure 7. Spotted Marsh Frog
Photo: DSE/McCann



Figure 8. Red-bellied Black Snake
Photo: DSE/McCann



Figure 9. Common Froglet
Photo: DSE/McCann



Figures 3-6. Red Box, Prickly Tea-tree, Wattle Mat-rush, Kangaroo Grass.

Photos: Mary Titcumb

Why Valley Heathy Forests are Threatened

More than 91% of Valley Heathy Forests in the Goulburn Broken Catchment have been cleared or modified since European settlement. Many of the plants and animals that rely on this habitat are now also threatened, and some are extinct. Over 87% of this remains on private land. Therefore, the support of private landholders is essential for the ongoing conservation of Valley Heathy Forests.

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 attract 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

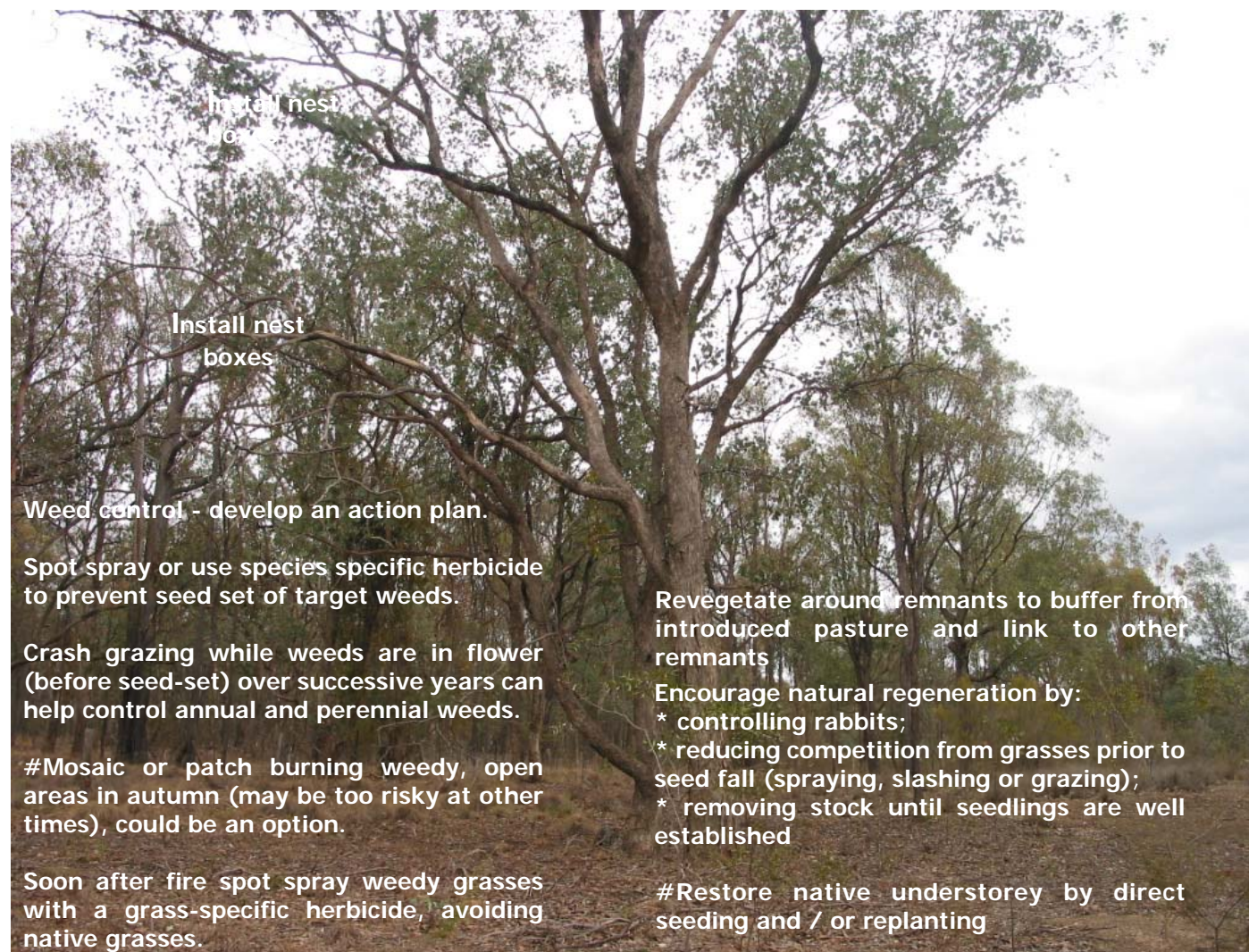


Figure 10. An example of a degraded Valley Heathy Forest

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

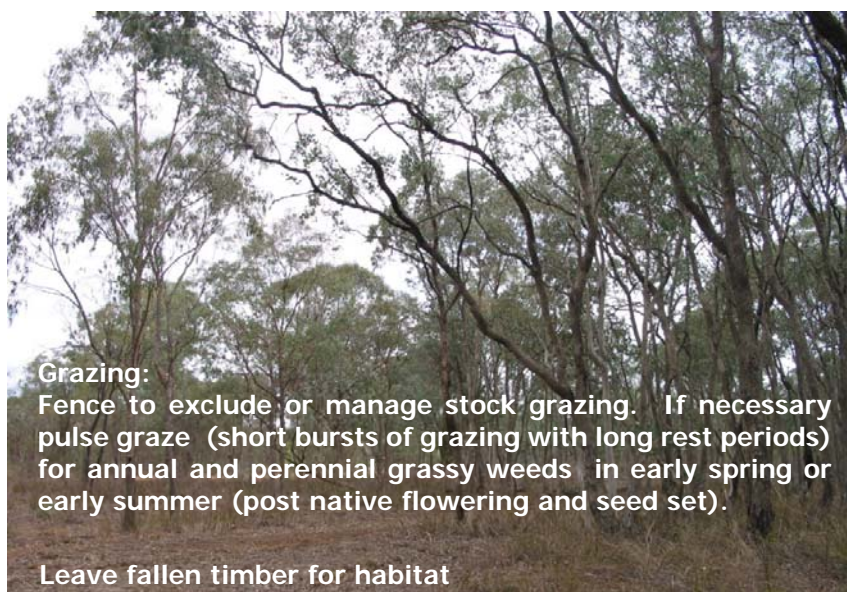


Figure 11. An example of scattered trees of what used to be Valley Heathy Forest.

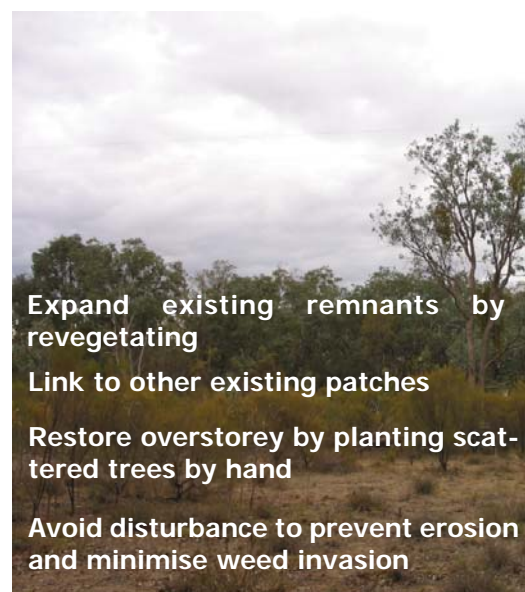


Figure 12. An example of Valley Heathy Forest.



Conservation Status

Valley Heathy Forest is **threatened** 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 :	Depleted

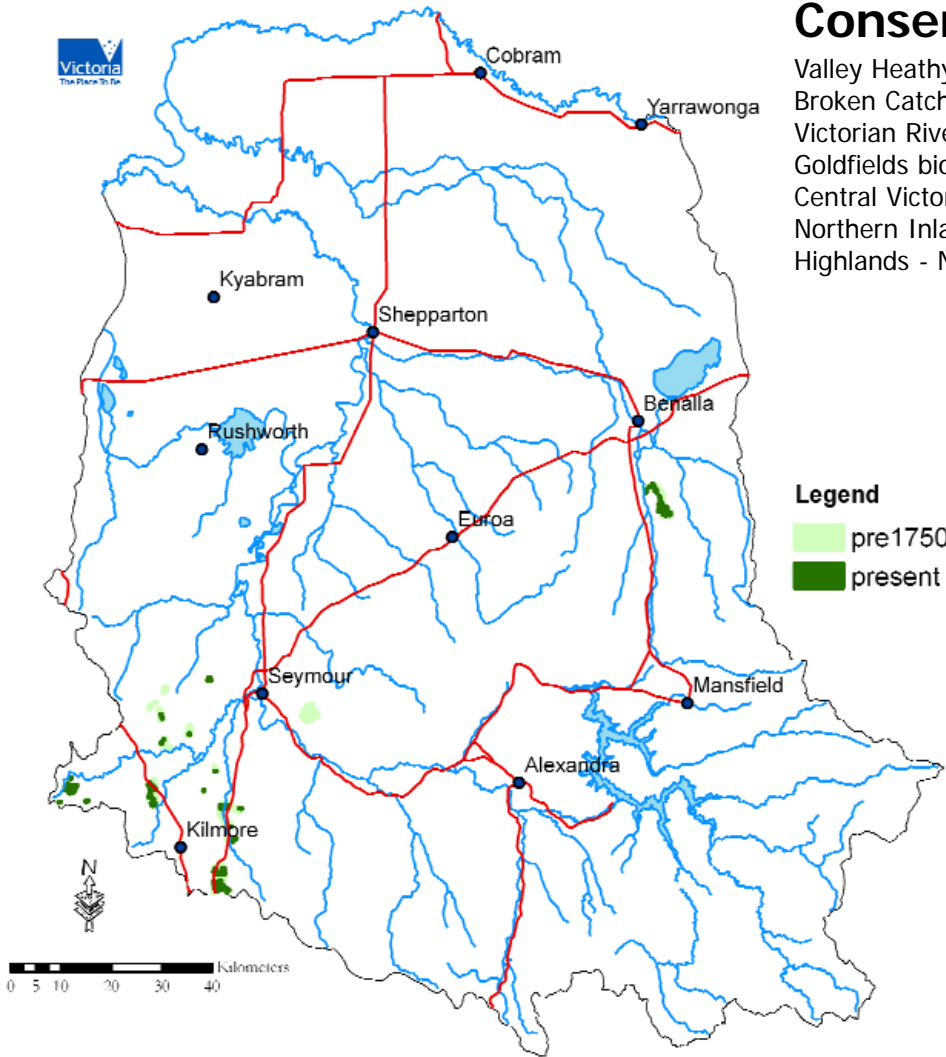


Figure 12. A representation of the pre-1750 and present day distribution of Valley Heathy Forest and its mosaics and complexes in the Goulburn Broken Catchment. The boundaries of the vegetation have been exaggerated to allow for the small scale of the map. The map was produced from Base Data from DSE 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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Acknowledgments:

This project was a partnership between the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority and Department of Sustainability and Environment, and funded by NAP: *Australian Governments and local communities working together to prevent, repair and manage rising salinity and declining water quality across Australia*. Thanks to comments from Alison Oates, Biodiversity & Natural Resource Division, DSE and Glen Johnson, Water and Biodiversity Team, North East DSE; Jenni Nunan, GIS team, DSE, Benalla for producing the maps; for Salinity & Water feedback and comments from the Biodiversity Team in the Goulburn Broken and NorthEast, DSE; the DPI LINKS officers and CMOs, the AUSTRALIA GBCMA waterways and vegetation officers and to all who contributed photographs and support.

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ISBN 1-920742-11-5

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