

Floodplain Riparian Woodland

ENDANGERED in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

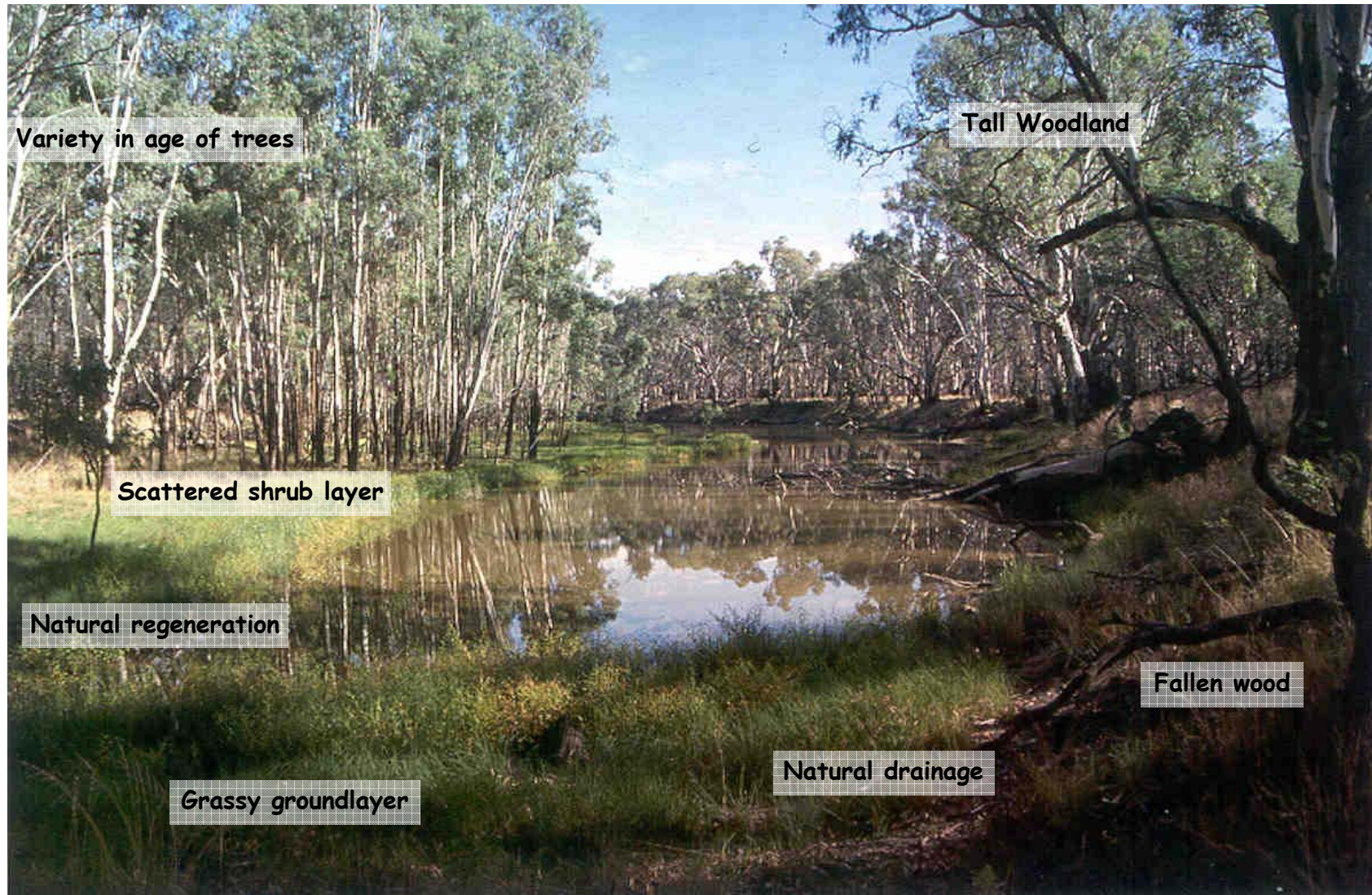


Photo: Keith Ward

Figure 1 A healthy example of Floodplain Riparian Woodland at Cobrawonga Island, with habitat and diagnostic features noted.

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12% of this vegetation type remains uncleared, 54% (2,331ha) of which is on private land

Description

Floodplain Riparian Woodlands occur along the banks of the regularly flooded terrace on larger, slow-moving rivers, typically where flooding is relatively brief, and often with other floodplain and wetland communities. They occur at elevations from 100–300m with an annual rainfall of 400–700mm. There is typically a **medium to tall shrublayer** of Silver Wattle, with Tree Violet and Blackwood, and occasionally Swamp Paper Bark east of Seymour. The tall woodland **overstorey** consists predominantly of Red Gum with a **groundlayer** varying between Common Tussock—grass on the drier elevated banks, and Common Reed and various rushes and sedges occur on the wetter, lower areas.

Current Threats

- **Changes to natural flooding, temperature and flow** regimes changes floodplain functions, and can result in loss of native species and threatens the viability of remnants.
- Inappropriate **grazing regimes** disturb the soil, increase nutrient levels, cause loss of native species and hinder native plant regeneration.
- Loss of tree and ground **habitat** (through **timber harvesting**, “tidying-up” of fallen sticks, and **firewood collection**), threatens associated native fauna.
- **Weeds**, particularly Willows, Phalaris, Yorkshire Fog Grass, Wild Oats and Blackberries, compete with native species.
- **Pest animals** defoliate vegetation, disturb the soil and threaten native fauna as predators and by competing for food.
- **Increases in nutrients** favours weeds and causes excessive plant growth which restricts water movement and reduces dissolved oxygen.
- **Isolation** of remnants makes it difficult to maintain a healthy gene pool and to recolonise with native species following disturbance, and restricts the movement of native fauna.
- Lack of native **understorey** and **groundlayer** plants, which: attract insect eating birds, helping keep the overstorey healthy; and improve soil health through fixing nitrogen.
- Lack of **natural regeneration** of plants, threatening the viability of the remnant.



Figure 2 Distribution of Floodplain Riparian Woodlands in the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

Significant Species

Flora: Common Joyweed, River Swamp Wallaby—grass and Smooth Minuria.

Fauna: Squirrel Glider, Barking Owl and White-bellied Sea—Eagle.

Management Tips

Management which **maintains** and **enhances** the remnant vegetation / habitat, including:

- **Maintain** or restore the natural flooding, flow and temperature regimes.
- **Fence** sites to **exclude grazing** when soil is wet and prone to pugging, and over spring to early summer to allow flowering and seed—set of native plants. Retain access for **controlled grazing** if exotic grasses dominate.
- **Develop and implement** a plan to **control** weeds and pest animals.
- Encourage **natural regeneration** by **controlling rabbits**, **reducing competition** with grasses prior to seed fall, and **removing stock** until seedlings are well established.
- **Revegetate** around remnants to buffer from pasture and link to other remnants.
- **Retain** dead & hollow—bearing trees (where absent, erect nest boxes) and **leave** fallen timber, branches.
- **Plant understorey** for remnants with no native shrubs or groundlayer, where appropriate.
- **Monitor** your site and **adapt management** practices as required (help is available to assist with monitoring).