

Grassy Woodland

ENDANGERED in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

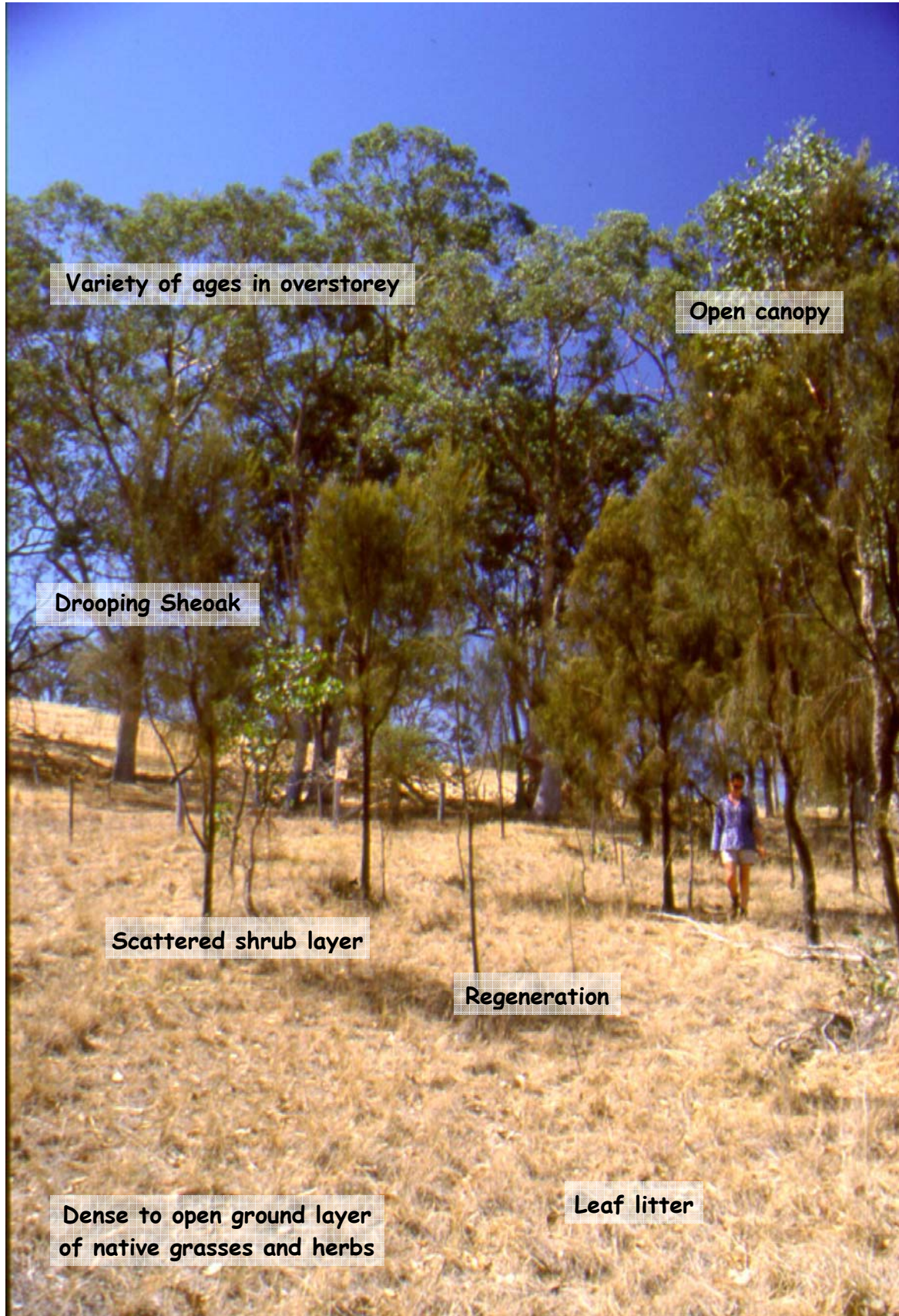


Photo: Sue Berwick

Figure 1 A healthy example of Grassy Woodland at Mt Camel, with important diagnostic and habitat features noted.



Natural Heritage Trust
Helping Communities Help Australia
A Commonwealth Government Initiative



Grassy Woodland

ENDANGERED in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

3% of this vegetation type remains uncleared, 82% (3,954ha) of which is on private land

Description

Grassy Woodlands occur on lower slopes of foothills and low rounded hills above the plains and floodplains, at elevations of 150–500m, and an annual rainfall of 500–750mm. They are predominantly **open grassy Box woodlands** with a variety of **grasses**, including Kangaroo grass, Red-leg Grass, Wallaby Grasses and Spear Grasses plus **sedges, lilies, orchids and herbs**. The **overstorey** usually consists of Box species (mainly Grey Box, or White Box with Red Box) and some Hill Red Gum, and Drooping She-oak in the rockier areas. The **medium to low scattered shrub layer** has characteristic species of local wattles and Sweet Bursaria. Wattles include Golden Wattle, Spreading Wattle, Gold-dust Wattle, Varnish Wattle, Lightwood, with Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea and Smooth Parrot-pea.

Current Threats

- 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.
- Inappropriate **grazing regimes** which compact the soil, increase nutrients, hinder native plant regeneration and cause loss of native species.
- **Isolation** of remnants makes it difficult to maintain a healthy gene pool, recolonise with native species following disturbance, and restricts movement of native fauna.
- Too frequent/infrequent **burning** which can result in the loss of some species.
- **Soil disturbance** (eg. ploughing) favours weed species and can result in loss of native species.
- **Weeds**, particularly by St. Johns Wort, compete with native species.
- **Pest animals** defoliate vegetation, disturb the soil and threaten native fauna as predators and by competing for food.
- Loss of tree and ground **habitat** (through **timber harvesting**, **"tidying-up"** of fallen sticks, and **firewood collection**), threatens the associated native fauna.

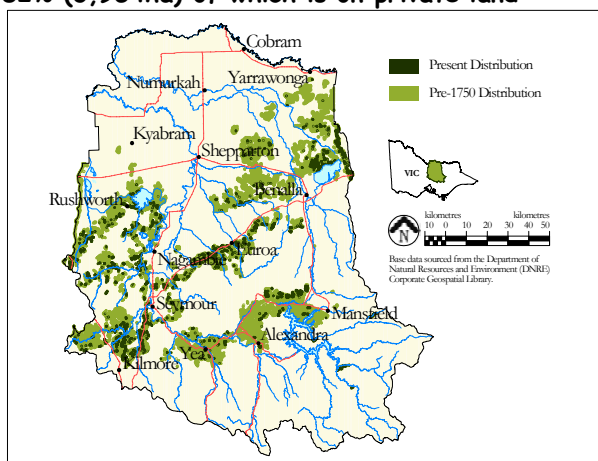


Figure 2 Distribution of Grassy Woodlands in the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

Significant Species

Flora: Deans Wattle, Drooping She-oak and pea shrubs.

Fauna: Bush Stone Curlew, Tree Goanna and Regent Honeyeater.

Management Tips

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

- **Fence** sites to **exclude grazing**, particularly in spring and early summer, to allow flowering and seed-set of native plants. Retain access for **controlled grazing** for weed management where necessary.
- **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.
- **Plant understorey** for remnants with no native shrubs or ground layer.
- **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 and branches.
- **Maintain** natural drainage through wetlands and protect them from stock grazing.
- **Monitor** your site and **adapt management** practices as required (help is available to assist and set up monitoring).