

Spring-soak Herbland – Woodland Mosaic

ENDANGERED in the Goulburn Broken Catchment

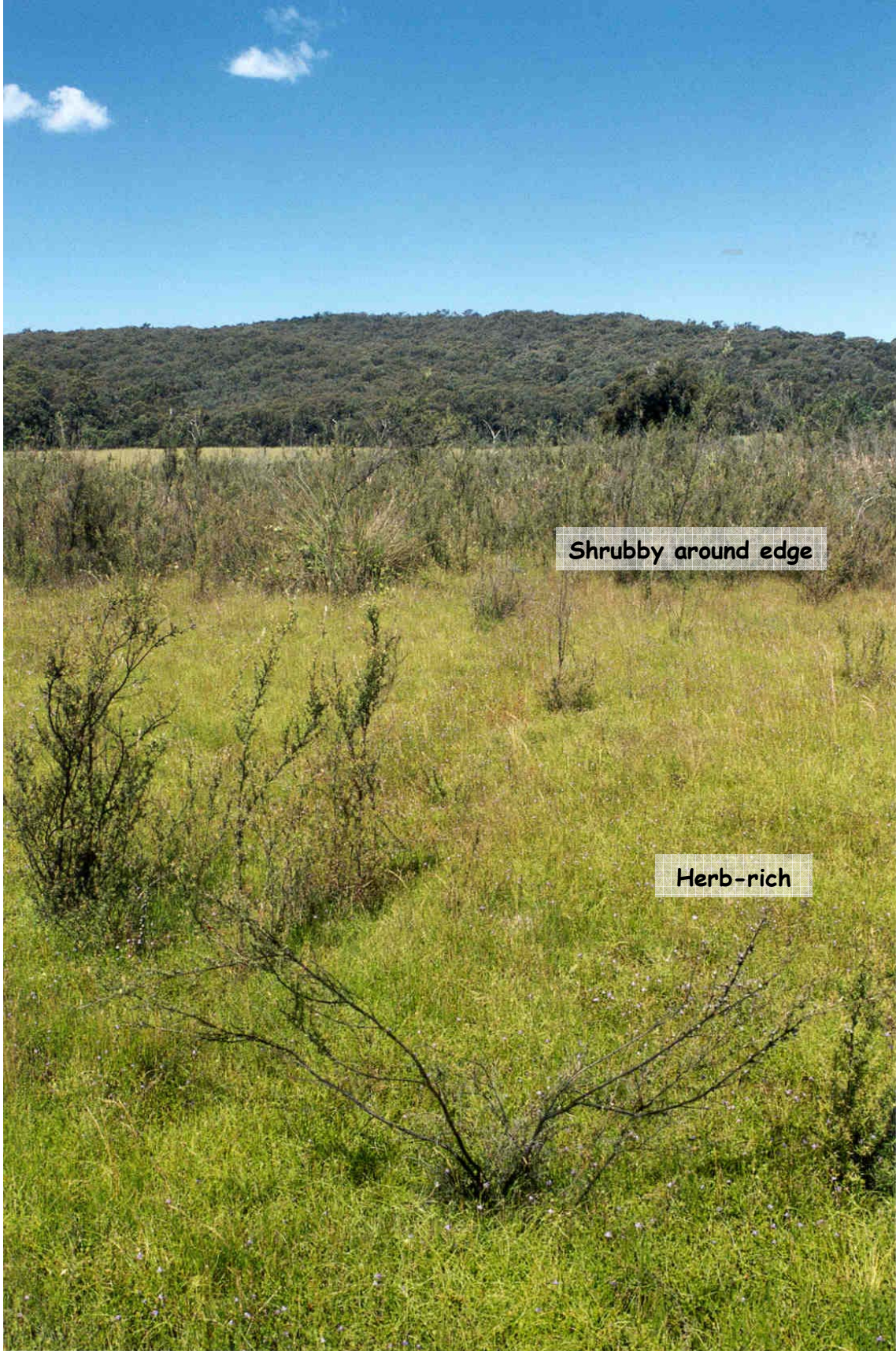


Photo: Mary Titcumb

Figure 1 An example of a Spring-soak Herbland / Woodland mosaic in good condition, with important diagnostic and habitat features noted.

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18% of this vegetation type remains uncleared, 83% (23ha) of which is on private land.

Description

Spring—soak Herblands are seasonal wetland communities commonly associated with plateaux and outwash slopes of granite hills at elevations of 130–500m, with an annual rainfall of 500–750mm. These springs support a range of vegetation types in a radial pattern around the source of moisture. The **wetter centre** contains the taller **sedges** surrounded by a **shrubby** or **heathy woodland** of **Swamp Gum** or **Hill Red Gum**, often dominated by Prickly Tea—tree, with Golden Spray found on most intact sites. On the outer edge where it is moist, but would **occasionally dry out**, a low meadow, rich in herbs and small sedges occurs.

Current Threats

- **Alteration of natural drainage** regimes (particularly through damming or draining) changes spring—soak hydrology; can result in native species loss, and disrupts the delicate balance of the remnant.
- Loss of tree and ground **habitat**, (through **timber harvesting**, **firewood collection**, and "tidying—up" of fallen sticks), threatens associated native fauna.
- **Grazing** causes loss of native species (through selective grazing and trampling), disturbs the soil, hinders native plant regeneration, and increases nutrient levels.
- **Weeds**, particularly Paspalum and Phalaris, compete with native plant species.
- **Increases in nutrients**: favour weeds; can eliminate native plants; and cause excessive growth of some species — shading out others.
- **Pest animals** cause defoliate native vegetation, disturb the soil and threaten native fauna as predators and by competing for food.
- **Isolation** of remnants makes it difficult to maintain a healthy gene pool, recolonise with native species following disturbance, and restricts 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, threatens the sustainability of the remnant.



Figure 2 Distribution of Spring—soak Herbland — Woodland Mosaics in the Goulburn Broken Catchment.

Significant Species

This vegetation type is an important drought refuge for various species.

Flora: Narrow Goodenia.

Fauna:

Management Tips

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

- **Retain or re—instate natural hydrology.**
- **Fence** sites from grazing.
- **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**.
- **Plant understorey** for remnants with no native shrubs or groundlayer in appropriate areas.
- **Revegetate** around remnants to buffer from pasture and to link to other remnants.
- **Monitor** your site and **adapt management practices** as required (help is available to assist and set up monitoring).