Southern Forests
SES Local Plan

The Southern Forests

The Southern Forests SES to the south-east of the Goulburn Broken Catchment includes seasonally snow-covered alps, moist montane and sclerophyll forests. Towns in the Southern Forests include Marysville, Jamieson and Woods Point.

The Southern Forests predominately occur on public land that is managed as state forest, alpine resorts and national or state parks by Parks Victoria, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR), the Alpine Resorts Co-ordinating Council and Alpine Resort Management Boards. The Southern Forests area is the largest intact native vegetation areas in the Catchment.

The forest landscapes are highly valued for their ecological extent and diversity, cultural significance and economic importance generated through recreation and tourism, and plantation and native forest timber harvesting.

The ecosystem services provided by the Southern Forests include high quality and reliable water that provides environmental, economic and social values across and beyond the Catchment.

The future aspiration for the Southern Forests is a managed ecosystem that balances ecological, economic and recreational needs.

The challenge ahead

Although the natural environment is relatively intact in the Southern Forests, threats from current land uses and possible land-use changes could compound the legacy of major natural events (fire, drought) and historic land-uses.

Increased frequency of unplanned bushfires and drought, resulting from extreme climate variability, and planned fires are significant additional threats to aquatic biodiversity habitat and water quality (through increased soil erosion) and to terrestrial biodiversity habitat (through loss of structural diversity).

This is particularly important at the public/private land interface.

Although the natural environment is relatively intact in the Southern Forests, threats from current land uses and possible **land-use changes** could compound the legacy of major natural events (fire, drought) and historic land-uses.

Increased frequency of unplanned bushfires and drought, resulting from extreme **climate variabilit**y, and planned fires are significant additional threats to aquatic biodiversity habitat and water quality (through increased soil erosion) and to terrestrial biodiversity habitat (through loss of structural diversity).

This is particularly important at the public/private land interface.

Actions and Effort - To embed the resilience approach

*Progress rating is an indicative qualitative assessment, these will be further refined through data analysis, stakeholder and community consultation.

Strategic priority: Update and develop strategies

Responsibility   🖐 GBCMA

RCS Actions	Effort	Progress*	Case Studies
Review and update existing strategic documents and sub-strategies and create new ones according to need.			G-MW to develop groundwater management plan across all surface water catchments that drain into Lake Eildon

Strategic priority: Plan at social-ecological system scale

Responsibility   🏛 GOVERNMENT   👥 COMMUNITY   🖐 GBCMA

RCS Actions	Effort	Progress*	Case Studies
Develop an adaptive planning process for social-ecological systems to build and enhance their resilience	Coordinate various levels of planning between agencies, NGO's and Local government (WS) Empower public to do what they can locally and ensure these efforts are recognised as contributing to wider scale benefits (WS) What is the state of the environment? How are we measuring to manage? Then how are we managing? (WS) Encourage all land managers to identify their ultimate objective then link this to practical management and start taking required steps (WS)		

Strategic priority: Provide adaptive management and leadership

Responsibility   🏛 GOVERNMENT   👥 COMMUNITY   🖐 GBCMA

RCS Actions	Effort	Progress*	Case Studies
Build community and agency capacity to respond together to drivers of change	Encourage thinking outside the box and be prepared to support new initiatives (WS)		

Actions and Effort: To strengthen partnerships

Strategic priority: Reinforce relationships between agencies and industry

Responsibility

GBCMA

RCS Actions	Effort	Progress*	Case Studies
Define roles and reslationships with regional delivery partners	Build relationships and collaborative opportunities with land managers and industry (WS)

Work with Vic Forests and local community to identify bioenergy opportunities (GV Community Energy) (WS)

Develop meaningful ways to describe successful relationships and track their status (WS)

Explore the role of private enterprise in NRM (WS) | | |

Strategic priority: Manage Public land collaboratively

Responsibility

GOVERNMENT   COMMUNITY   GBCMA

RCS Actions	Effort	Progress*	Case Studies
Undertake works on public land and Crown land frontages to improve waterways and wetlands	Manage erosion and sedimentation from the likes of tracks on public land (RWS 2014)

Support more collective/collaborative environmental works on waterways and riparian areas (WS)

Facilitate forums to discuss and promote collaboration and to publicise successes (WS) | | |
| Collaborate with Traditional Owners in catchment management | Recognise multicultural diversity within the catchment and be aware of this in delivery of information (WS) | | |

Actions and Effort: To adapt to land-use change

Strategic priority: Capture opportuntites from land development

Responsibility

🏛 GOVERNMENT ⚙ COMMUNITY 🌿 GBCMA

RCS Actions	Effort	Progress*	Case Studies
Deliver farm planning to integrate ecological and agricultural productivity benefits	Educate tree changers on land management practices (WS)		
Plan land-use to minimise loss of biodiversity	Assist local government to develop and apply appropriate planning tools for all council plans and strategies (e.g. Municipal Strategic Statement review, policies, & overlays) to increase the protection and reduce risks to biodiversity (e.g., matching land use intensity to land characteristics). (BS 2010)		The Mansfield Shire Environment Advisory Committee's primary function is to advise Council on matters pertaining to:

• The Mansfield Shire Environment Priority Action Plan implementation and annual review
• Planning initiatives
• Environmental program and policy priorities
• Opportunities to participate in State or Federal Government environment initiatives, programs and grants
• The development of mechanisms to advertise and promote Council's environmental management and sustainable development policies, strategies and projects
• The development of educational mediums to raise the awareness of environmental issues and management
• Support and mentor Council's environment staff
• Providing a conduit between Council and Community in environmental maters |
| Promote land-use capability assessments and implementation, including use and management of water | Land capability assessments are "mandatory" in the Southern Forests as directed by the EPA code of practice for onsite domestic wastewater (WS) | | |

Manage public land to minimise loss of biodiversity	Possible interventions: Converting forests to parks managed for conservation, PPA control (inc deer management), people/recreation management, review codes of practice, better understanding impacts of major fire events, work with Alpine resorts to prevent/reduce vegetation loss and disturbances, preparation of fire ecology plans/fire management plans, crown frontage licencing for conservation. (Priority zones Background Paper to BS 2010)		The Holly removal project in the RCS case study demonstrates a management project at the public-private interface (RCS)
Promote broader community awareness and acceptance of practices to protect and improve the condition of natural assets	Local Government needs access to information on high value assets to inturn promote values in their area (WS)		
Promote land-use capability assessments and implementation, including use and management of water	Land capability assessments are "mandatory" in the Southern Forests as directed by the EPA code of practice for onsite domestic wastewater (WS)		

Strategic priority: Plan for and manage floods

Responsibility

🏛 GOVERNMENT   COMMUNITY   GBCMA

RCS Actions	Effort	Progress*	Case Studies
Understand more about the nature of flooding to manage its impact on the natural and built environments	Learn from historic events and respect local knowledge (WS)		Updated Flood Overlay for Mansfield.

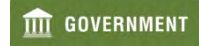# Actions and Effort: To adapt to water policy reform

Strategic priority: Use water efficiently on farms

Responsibility   🏛 GOVERNMENT   👥 COMMUNITY   🌱 GBCMA

RCS Actions	Effort	Progress*	Case Studies
Modernise water delivery on irrigated land to provide ecological and productivity benefits	Works with dryland agriculture to secure/develop water resources to maintain/increase agricultural production		

Actions and Effort: To adapt to climate variability

Strategic priority: Adapt to climate variability risk

Responsibility   🏛 GOVERNMENT   👥 COMMUNITY   🌱 GBCMA

RCS Actions	Effort	Progress*	Case Studies
Factor risk of climate variability and identify adaptation strategies in Goulburn Broken CMA and partner plans	Identify areasvulnerable to drought and fire (and climate) refugia and manage for protection (RCS) Undertake risk assessments for specific biodiversity assets (including threatened species) to determine priority for investment and disinvestment. (BS 2010) Distinguish between short and long term fluctuations and long term trends and educate on the consequences of these e.g. scenario planning (WS)		
Factor risks to natural assets into public land fire management plans	A range of agencies to be included in discussions by DEPI and PV to have input into land management decisions (RCS) Ensure information about high priority biodiversity assets is considered by fire-fighting authorities prior to and during wildfires (BS 2010)		The Goulburn Broken Climate Change Adaptation Plan - in development

Strategic priority: Respond and recover from climatic events

Responsibility

🏛 GOVERNMENT | 🖐 GBCMA

RCS Actions	Effort	Progress*	Case Studies
Plan and implement flood, fire and drought response and recovery	Identify risks to drought refuge areas and develop mitigation plans (RCS) Reduce the impact of flooding on Urban Centres including Marysville, Buxton, Woods Point and residents along the Delatite River. (IFS 2014) Manage and design for episodic disturbances		Flood Investigation in the Marysville and Buxton area underway