

Wimmera Parks

Conservation Action Plan

Overview

Achieving our vision to:

Increase the resilience of natural assets in the Wimmera Parks Landscape and maintain ecosystem services in the face of climate change and other stressors

The Wimmera Parks Landscape includes dune systems supporting heathlands and mallee, dry forests and woodlands, and river and wetlands connecting the landscape. The reserve system creates stepping-stones across the landscape, connected by permanent and ephemeral waterways.

Parks and reserves include:

- Little Desert National Park
- Lake Hindmarsh Lake Reserve
- Jilpanger Nature Conservation Reserve
- Mount Arapiles-Tooan State Park
- Tallageira Nature Conservation Reserve
- Wimmera River Heritage Area Park
- 355 other reserves managed by Parks Victoria

The area is significant to the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples, who are traditionally and culturally associated with the area. They are represented by the Barengi Gadjin Land Council Aboriginal Corporation who have a co-operative management agreement with the State of Victoria.

Global Practice

Conservation action planning is an internationally recognised process developed by The Nature Conservancy, and used by many conservation managers around Australia. Adaptive management is a critical component of the model.

The Plan provides directions for environmental conservation management for the next 15 years. After 5 years, the plan will be reviewed, and progress will be evaluated against outcomes identified for the conservation



Blanca Gold

*Wimmera Spider Orchid,
West Wail Flora & Fauna
Reserve*



*Malleefowl,
Little Desert National Park*

Dave Watts

Conservation Assets

Six ecosystems have been identified as conservation assets in the Wimmera Parks Landscape.

Within each of these assets a range of nested assets, such as threatened species and important ecological assemblages, have also been identified.

Condition

The plan also identifies a range of key ecological attributes (components that are believed to best reflect the health of the asset). The plan describes their current condition (very good, good, fair, poor) and the trend in condition (improving, stable, declining), and sets the anticipated future condition of each key ecological attribute. These measures then allow the overall condition of each asset to be assessed:

- Heathlands and Mallee habitats are in fair condition.
- Riverine Forests and Woodland and the Dry Forest and Woodland habitats are generally in fair condition.
- Freshwater and Saline Wetlands habitats are in fair condition.

Threats

Ten threats to the conservation assets in the Park Landscape are identified in the plan. Five of these are considered key threats and are therefore the priority threats considered in this plan. They are:

- Total grazing and browsing pressure (by introduced and native animals).
- Predation by introduced species (foxes and feral cats).
- Fire regimes and management.
- Weed invasion.
- Alterations to natural hydrology.

The Conservation Action Plan identifies strategies that target our conservation efforts to achieve the best outcomes for ecosystems and species with the available resources.

Conservation strategies

The following conservation strategies will be undertaken to tackle these threats. They have been selected for their impact, feasibility and cost in achieving the desired conservation.

- **Establish collaborative partnerships to support the sustained management and connectivity of assets** — implement working partnerships between Parks Victoria and restoration partners to improve the condition of assets across public and private land tenures to facilitate connected management across the fragmented landscape.
- **Management of total grazing pressure** — in partnerships with neighbours encourage species and structural diversity of native flora and habitats by reducing the total grazing pressure across the landscape.
- **Introduced predator control** — to increase the distribution and occurrence of predation-sensitive native fauna at high priority locations.
- **Fire management for healthy assets** — improve the structural diversity and distribution of vegetation growth stages in the fire associated vegetation communities, and protect values in ecosystems that are sensitive to inappropriate fire management.
- **Environmental weed management using a biosecurity approach** — to effectively manage priority weed species at relevant locations in partnership with neighbours, to encourage species and structural diversity of native flora and habitats.
- **Management of water dependent ecosystems** — to implement management interventions that will create ecosystems more resilient to the cumulative impacts of changes to natural hydrology and the effect of climate change.

10 Step Process:

Parks Victoria uses a ten-step process for conservation action planning: the Plan covers the first seven steps in the process

Performance measurement

For each strategy, component actions and monitoring indicators have been developed. These will be used to track the achievement of threat mitigation objectives and conservation outcomes defined for each of the assets.

Implementing the plan

The Conservation Action Plan will be implemented by a regional team in partnership with Traditional Owners, and with detailed planning and design often assisted by restoration partners, researchers, other agencies, Friends groups and volunteers.

More information

Copies of the plan may be downloaded from the Parks Victoria website (www.parkweb.vic.gov.au)

