



FLORA & FAUNA  
GUARANTEE

## FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE - SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### FINAL RECOMMENDATION ON A NOMINATION FOR LISTING

#### Creekline Grassy Woodland (Goldfields) Community

Date of receipt of the nomination: 26 July 1995  
Date of preliminary recommendation: 7 October 1996  
Date of final recommendation: 26 March 1997

File No.: 96/0973

#### Validity:

The nomination is for a valid item and the prescribed information was provided.

The nominated community is accepted by the SAC as a valid community because it is adequately defined and described according to accepted practice, and it is described in such a way as to be distinguished from all other communities. To avoid possible confusion with other communities that include Creekline Grassy Woodlands in Victoria, the community is referred to as the Creekline Grassy Woodland (Goldfields) Community.

- The Creekline Grassy Woodland (Goldfields) Community represents a woodland at the interface between the undulating sedimentary rises and the geologically younger alluvial plains. The community fringes shallow or ephemeral drainage lines on the lower slopes of Box-Ironbark forests. Seasonal inundation on alluvial soils give these sites higher fertility and moisture availability than the surrounding Box-Ironbark forests. The community is a distinct entity from the riparian vegetation of permanently flowing streams on the alluvial plains (Muir *et al.* 1995).
- Two sub-communities of Creekline Grassy Woodland (Goldfields) Community have been identified. In both, River Red Gum *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* forms an open overstorey canopy, often comprising large old trees. The ground is covered with a dense layer of grasses and sedges, commonly including Weeping Grass *Microlaena stipoides*, Common Wheat-grass *Elymus scaber*, Common Blown Grass *Agrostis avenacea*, Tall Sedge *Carex appressa*, Rush *Juncus* spp., Wirilda *Acacia retinodes*, Black Wattle *Acacia mearnsii*, Rough-barked Honey-myrtle *Melaleuca parvistaminea* and occasional shrubs. The weeds Brome \**Bromus* spp., Quaking-grass \**Briza* spp. and Fescue \**Vulpia* spp. are frequent components. Mean floristic richness is 41 species per quadrat, and mean weed composition is 34% of species and 26% of cover (Muir *et al.* 1995).
- Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora* and Grey Box *E. microcarpa* are additional tree species in one sub-community. The second sub-community is distinguished by the dominance of Common Tussock-grass *Poa labillardierei* and Kangaroo Grass *Themeda triandra* in the understorey (Muir *et al.* 1995).

#### Eligibility for listing as a community under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee

The nominated item satisfies at least one criterion of the set of criteria prepared and maintained under Section 11 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, and stated in Schedule 1 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Regulations 1991*.

#### **Evidence that criteria are satisfied:**

**Criterion 2.1** *The community is in a demonstrable state of decline which is likely to result in extinction.*

##### *Evidence:*

The area and distribution of the community has markedly decreased due to land clearance for agriculture, soil disturbance from mining and timber harvesting, persistent grazing and weed invasion. The current area of land supporting this community is estimated to be less than 5% of its pre-European settlement extent. Existing remnants may continue to decline in area and integrity, particularly because of weed invasion and isolation.

**Criterion 2.2** *The community is significantly prone to future threats which are likely to result in extinction.*

##### *Evidence:*

Potential threats to the community include vegetation clearance, soil disturbance by mineral exploration and mining, persistent grazing by stock and rabbits, habitat loss and alteration due to firewood collection and timber harvesting, weed invasion, habitat fragmentation and isolation. The small, scattered remnants of the community may be insufficient to support some species of flora and fauna, which may be threatened by local extinction from drought, nutrient changes, predation and pesticide drift.

**Sub-criterion 2.2.1** *The community is very rare in terms of the total area it covers or it has a very restricted distribution or it has been recorded from only a few localities.*

The Creekline Grassy Woodland (Goldfields) Community is represented by small remnants within the Box-Ironbark ecosystem in Victoria. The Box-Ironbark ecosystem encompasses the low hills between the Great Dividing Range and the Northern Plains and extends from Stawell in the west to Chiltern in the east. Since European settlement, approximately 75% of the Box-Ironbark ecosystem has been cleared, largely vegetation of more fertile and moister environments, and all the remaining habitat has been modified to some extent. The Creekline Grassy Woodland (Goldfields) Community is one of the most severely depleted communities in this ecosystem. It is estimated that approximately 800 hectares of the community currently exists on public land. While the size of the area remaining on private land is not known, much of this land is severely degraded and would not contribute significantly to the total area remaining of the community.

### **Additional Information**

- The following taxa considered threatened in Victoria (CNR 1994, 1995) have been recorded within the community:
  - Ausfeld's Wattle *Acacia ausfeldii* (vulnerable in Victoria, rare in Australia).
  - Regent Honeyeater *Xanthomyza phrygia* (endangered in Victoria, listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*).
  - Swift Parrot *Lathamus discolor* (endangered in Victoria, listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*).
  - Powerful Owl *Ninox strenua* (rare in Victoria, listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*).
  - Barking Owl *Ninox connivens* (rare in Victoria, final recommendation for listing under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*).
  - Squirrel Glider *Petaurus norfolcensis* (vulnerable in Victoria, listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*).
  - Brush-tailed Phascogale *Phascogale tapoatafa* (rare in Victoria, listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*).
  - Carpet Python *Morelia spilota variegata* (vulnerable in Victoria, listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*).
  - Bandy Bandy *Vermicella annulata* (vulnerable in Victoria, final recommendation for listing under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*).
  - Woodland Blind Snake *Ramphotyphlops proximus* (rare in Victoria).

### **Documentation**

The published information and research data provided to the SAC have been assessed. To the best of their knowledge, the SAC believes that the data presented are not the subject of scientific dispute and the inferences drawn are reasonable and well supported.

### **Advertisement for public comment**

In accordance with the requirements of Section 14 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the preliminary recommendation was advertised for a period of at least 30 days.

The preliminary recommendation was advertised in:

"The Age" - on 13 November 1996

"The Weekly Times" - on 13 November 1996

*Government Gazette* - on 14 November 1996

Submissions closed on 30 December 1996.

### **Final Recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee**

The Scientific Advisory Committee concludes that on the evidence available the nominated item is eligible for listing in accordance with Section 11(1) of the Act because primary criteria 2.1 and 2.2 are satisfied.

The SAC also concluded that sub-criterion 2.2.1 has been satisfied and that no evidence exists to suggest that primary criterion 2.2 cannot be satisfied as a consequence of sub-criterion 2.2.1 being satisfied.

The Scientific Advisory Committee recommends that the nominated item be supported for listing on Schedule 2 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

**Selected references:**

- Briggs, J. D. & Leigh, J. H. (1989) *Rare or Threatened Australian Plants*. Special Publication No. 14. Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service, Canberra.
- Cabena, P. B. (1983) *Victoria's water frontage reserves: An historical review and resource appreciation*. Department of Crown Lands and Survey, Melbourne.
- Carr, G. W. & Muir, A. M. (1993) *An assessment of the botanical significance of Mining Lease Area 4572, and post-mining revegetation, Craigie State Forest, Shire of Tullaroop, Victoria*. Ecological Horticulture Pty. Ltd., Victoria.
- CNR (1993) Regent Honeyeater *Xanthomyza phrygia* Action Statement No. 41. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Melbourne.
- CNR (1994) *Victorian Flora Species List (including vascular and non-vascular taxa)*. Flora Section, Flora and Fauna Branch. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Victoria.
- CNR (1995) *Threatened Fauna in Victoria - 1995*. Flora and Fauna Branch, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Victoria.
- NRE (in prep.) *A conservation program for the Box-Ironbark ecosystem*. Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Melbourne.
- Foreman, D. B. & Walsh, N. G. [eds] (1993) *Flora of Victoria, vol 1, Introduction*. Inkata Press, Melbourne.
- Frood, D. & Calder, M. (1987) *Nature Conservation in Victoria, vol 1*. Victorian National Parks Association, Melbourne.
- Gullan, P. K., Cheal, D. C. & Walsh, N. G. (1990) *Rare or Threatened Plants in Victoria*. Department of Conservation and Environment, Melbourne.
- LCC (1978) *Report on the North Central Study Area*. Land Conservation Council, Melbourne.
- LCC (1990) *Statewide assessment of public land use*. Land Conservation Council, Melbourne.
- LCC (1991) *Rivers and streams special investigation final recommendations*. Land Conservation Council, Melbourne.
- Majer, J. (1983) Ants: Bioindicators of mine site rehabilitation, land use and conservation. *Environmental Management* 7: 375-383.
- Muir, A. M., Edwards, S. A. & Dickins, M. J. (1995) Description and conservation status of the vegetation of the Box-Ironbark ecosystem in Victoria. *Flora and Fauna Technical Report* 136. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Victoria.
- Robinson, J. & Rowley, L. (1994) *Drought refuge identification project for the Box-Ironbark ecosystem within the Campaspe, Goulburn and Loddon Catchments, final report*. Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, Bendigo.
- Robinson, D. (1994) Research plan for threatened woodland birds of south eastern Australia. *Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, Technical Report Series No. 133*. Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Melbourne.
- SAC (1992) *Morelia spilota* Carpet and Diamond Python. Final recommendation on a nomination for listing (Nomination No. 252) Flora and Fauna Guarantee, Scientific Advisory Committee, Melbourne.
- SAC (1994a) *Ninox strenua* - Powerful Owl. Final recommendation on a nomination for listing (Nomination No. 299). Flora and Fauna Guarantee, Scientific Advisory Committee, Melbourne.
- SAC (1994b) *Ninox connivens* - Barking Owl. Final recommendation on a nomination for listing (Nomination No. 343). Flora and Fauna Guarantee, Scientific Advisory Committee, Melbourne.
- SAC (1994c) *Vermicella annulata* - Bandy Bandy. Final recommendation on a nomination for listing (Nomination No. 352). Flora and Fauna Guarantee, Scientific Advisory Committee, Melbourne.
- Traill, B. J. (1993) Forestry, birds and mammals and management in Box and Ironbark forests. *Victorian Naturalist* 110 (1).

**Endorsement by the Convenor of the Scientific Advisory Committee****Date**

SIGNED BY

8 July 1997

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**Dr. Malcolm Calder**  
**Convenor**