

**FLORA & FAUNA
GUARANTEE**

FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE - SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FINAL RECOMMENDATION ON A NOMINATION FOR LISTING

Granite Foothills Spring Wetland (North-East Victoria) Community

Date of receipt of nomination: 17 December 2008
Date of preliminary recommendation: 24 February 2011
Date of final recommendation: 5 May 2011

File No.: FF/54/3046

Validity: The nomination is for a valid item.

Prescribed Information: The prescribed information was provided.

Name of the Nominator is adequately provided.

Name of the Item is adequately provided.

The nominated community is 'Granite Foothills Spring Wetland (North-East Victoria) Community'.

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.

Description of the community

This community is located in sites around granite foothills mainly in and around the Warby Ranges and Mt Pilot Parks.

Granite Foothills Spring Wetland (North-East Victoria) Community is a seasonal wetland, typically comprising a range of structural vegetation types in zones radiating from the source of moisture. The wetter centre supports tall sedges and rushes. In low disturbance sites there may be many species of sedges and rushes (e.g. Common Fringe-sedge *Fimbristylis dichotoma*). This is usually surrounded by a shrubby woodland with an outer edge of low hermland, which at many sites, is all that remains. Many of these sites have a history of disturbance and so may carry a variety of vegetation.

The condition of the community is degraded due to a long history of human disturbance. Trees and shrubs have been cleared at most sites, leaving only a low hermland (Berwick pers. comm.). Weeds are commonly present, and relatively weed-free intact sites are rare. St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum* subsp. *veronense* and Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* are among the weed species considered to have a high impact on the community (DSE 2008).

A common ingredient between all the relevant sites is seasonal waterlogging within soaks and post soak drainage lines, usually during spring with water that originates from aquifers through the fragmented granite base rock of those areas. Both the community's name and description highlight these common attributes.

Overstorey trees, when present, are commonly Warby Swamp Gum *Eucalyptus cadens*, Blakely's Red Gum *Eucalyptus blakelyi*, or occasionally Long-leaf Box *Eucalyptus goniocalyx/nortonii*. The shrub layer at more intact sites often contains Prickly Tea-tree *Leptospermum continentale* and rarely Golden Spray *Viminaria juncea*. The central zone of rushes is dominated by *Juncus* spp., with Ground Fern *Hypolepis* spp. occasionally found. The outer hermland is species-rich and includes; Fairies Aprons *Utricularia dichotoma*, Swamp Isotome *Isotoma fluviatilis*, Matted St John's Wort *Hypericum japonicum*, Small Mud-mat *Glossostigma elatinoides*, Pale Sundew *Drosera peltata* subsp. *peltata*, Common Bog-sedge *Schoenus apogon* and Slender Aphelia *Aphelia gracilis*. The FFG-listed species Narrow Goodenia *Goodenia macbarronii* is characteristic of this community. In addition, some sites may also contain the FFG-listed species: Warby Swamp Gum *Eucalyptus cadens*, Purple Diuris Orchid *Diuris punctata*. Annual weeds are also a feature as a result of past disturbance, and commonly include Cat's Ear *Hypochoeris radicata* and Lesser Quaking-grass *Briza minor*.

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 2001*.

Evidence that criteria are satisfied:

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

Evidence:

The total area of the community is approximately 100 ha, which is estimated to be 45% of its former extent (DSE 2007). Many sites have lost the tree and shrub component of the community, and all are affected by weed invasion (Berwick pers. comm., RFA 1998, DSE 2008) and use of these wetlands as water supply for stock.

Sub-criterion 2.1.1 *the community is in a demonstrable state of decline which is likely to result in a significant loss of its component taxa*

Evidence:

90% of the area of the community now occurs on private land (DSE 2007). Ongoing threats from agricultural activities, particularly livestock grazing and use of these areas as stock water supplies, are progressively causing loss of component taxa in the community (Berwick 2003, Titecumb 2005). These include a number of threatened taxa.

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*

Evidence:

The extent of the community is small and is restricted to small fragmented patches (RFA 1998, DSE 2007). This rarity makes it prone to future decline due to chance disturbances and population genetic effects.

Additional Information

- The following taxa considered threatened in Victoria (DSE 2005) have been recorded within the community: Warby Swamp Gum *Eucalyptus cadens*, Narrow Goodenia *Goodenia macbarronii* and Purple Diuris Orchid *Diuris punctata*. These species are also listed under the FFG Act.
- Black-tip Greenhood *Pterostylis bicolor* and Slender Tick-trefoil *Desmodium varians* though not specifically associated with this community are found at some sites.
- The very rare amphibian Rugose Toadlet *Uperoleia rugosa* has been recorded from this community. This species is also listed under the FFG Act.
- The impact of a drying climate due to climate change is likely to further threaten this community.

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 Herald Sun' - on 9 March 2011

'The Weekly Times' - on 9 March 2011

Government Gazette - on 10 March 2011

Submissions closed on 22 April 2011.

Further evidence provided:

Two submissions were received on this item, both supported the recommendation and provided further information in support of listing.

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 criterion 2.1 and sub-criteria 2.1.1 and 2.2.1 have been satisfied. The Scientific Advisory Committee also concludes that no evidence exists to suggest that primary criterion 2.2 cannot be satisfied as a consequence of sub-criteria 2.2.1 being satisfied.

The Scientific Advisory Committee makes a final recommendation that the nominated item be supported for listing under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

Selected references:

Berwick, S. (2003) *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Action Statement: Narrow Goodenia Goodenia macbarronii*. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Division, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne.

See: <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>>Plants and animals>Native plants and animals>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act>Action statements

Coates, F., Tolsma, A., Cutler, S. & Fletcher, M. (2009) *The floristic values of wetlands in the Highlands and Strathbogie Ranges*. Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Heidelberg, Victoria.

DSE (2007) 2007 EVC Bioregional Conservation Status, Tenure and Depletion Statement for Victoria. Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne. Support document to 'Victoria's Native Vegetation Management - A Framework for Action', Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne (August 2002).

----- (2008) EVC 80 Spring Soak Woodland – Northern Inland Slopes bioregion and Central Victorian Uplands bioregion. Ecological Vegetation Class Bioregion Benchmarks. Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne.

See: <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au>>Conservation and environment>Biodiversity>Native vegetation information for Victoria>EVC benchmarks

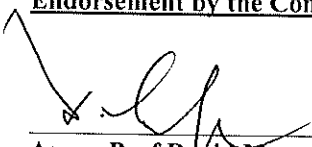
RFA (1998) North East Victoria Comprehensive Regional Assessment: Biodiversity Assessment. Joint Commonwealth and Victorian Regional Forest Agreement Steering Committee, Melbourne & Canberra.

Robertson, H.A. & Fitzsimons, J. (2004) Hydrology or floristics? Mapping and classification of wetlands in Victoria, Australia, and implications for conservation planning. *Environmental Management* 34(4): 499-507.

Titcumb, M. (2005) *Spring Soak Woodland – Threatened in the Goulburn Broken Catchment*. Department of Sustainability and Environment, Benalla.

Endorsement by the Convenor of the Scientific Advisory Committee

Date



Assoc. Prof David Morgan
Convenor

18 / 8 / 11

