River Red Gum Park Landscape Conservation Action Plan 2019–2024

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Riverine Forest and Woodland

Ephemeral Freshwater Wetlands

Permanent Freshwater Wetlands

Saline Wetlands

Plains Woodland

Box Ironbark Forest

Mixed Dry Forest

Chenopod Shrubland

Ramsar Wetlands

River Red Gum Park Landscape

The River Red Gum Park Landscape is a fragmented linear corridor that roughly follows the Murray River and its tributaries. Many of its ecosystems are periodically connected by floodwaters.

The Park Landscape covers over 120 parks and reserves managed by Parks Victoria that protect more than 242 000 ha. Over half of the area falls within the Murray–Sunset, Hattah–Kulkyne and Barmah national parks. The parks in this landscape contain parts of Australia's largest River Red Gum forests, wetlands listed under the Ramsar Convention, and refuge for endangered plant and animal species. They are important recreational and tourism destinations for Victorians and visitors.

This landscape is rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage and includes areas extremely important to Traditional Owner groups in maintaining their cultural connections. It encompasses traditional lands of the

The landscape provides diverse, unique, high-quality habitats essential for the persistence of threatened species that rely upon seasonally inundated wetlands and floodplain environments. It is characterised by iconic large, old trees, vast floodplains, and internationally significant wetlands.

The Park Landscape encompasses eight ecosystems. The most extensive is Riverine Forest and Woodland, which covers over two-thirds of the landscape (130 001 ha). Three additional inundation-dependent ecosystems – Ephemeral Freshwater Wetlands, Permanent Freshwater Wetlands and Saline Wetlands – account for another 15% (28 147 ha). Four Ramsar-listed wetlands – Hattah–Kulkyne Lakes, Kerang Wetlands, Gunbower Forest and Barmah Forest – account for around 20% of the landscape. These occur across the four ecosystems already mentioned plus Plains Woodland. The other three ecosystems are Chenopod Shrubland, Mixed Dry Forest and Box Ironbark Forest.

Bangerang, Barapa Barapa, Dhudhuroa, Latji Latji, Ngintait, Nyeri Nyeri, Tatti Tatti, Taungurung, Wadi Wadi, Wamba Wamba, Waywurru, Yaithmathang, and Yorta Yorta peoples. Traditional Owners are understood to be restoration partners in conservation planning and are the custodians of a living cultural heritage.

Conservation vision

The resilience of natural assets in the River Red Gum Park Landscape is increased and ecosystem services are maintained in the face of climate change and other stressors.

RRG Landscape

ASSET
- Box Ironbark Forest
- Cheonopod Shrubland
- Mixed Dry Forest
- Ephemeral Freshwater Wetlands
- Permanent Freshwater Wetlands
- Plains Woodland
- Riverine Forest and Woodland
- Saline Wetlands
- Other Parks Estate
- Other Public Land

Conservation Logic Chart

The Conservation Logic Chart shown here describes the relationship between the on-ground actions, strategies, threat objectives and the outcomes for each of the conservation assets, and the vision for the Park Landscape.

Conservation Outcomes
By 2034

Riverine Forest and Woodland
Support a healthy and diverse vegetation community within existing and new areas that can be targeted by environmental water deliveries; where environmental water cannot be used to supplement the water regime, identify strategies that will facilitate transition to drier climatic conditions.
Current condition: fair and stable

Ephemeral Freshwater Wetlands
Where environmental water can be delivered, restore and enhance condition to support habitat-dependent flora and fauna species; elsewhere, identify strategies that will facilitate transition to drier climatic conditions.
Current condition: poor and declining

Permanent Freshwater Wetlands
Where environmental water can be delivered, enhance condition to maximise value as refuges for threatened flora and fauna species; elsewhere, support the transition to drier climatic conditions in which these wetlands may become more ephemeral or dry.
Current condition: fair and stable

Saline Wetlands
Support delivery of a water regime that sustains a submerged salt-tolerant aquatic plant assemblage, facilitates the recovery of Murray Hardyhead and provides wader habitat.
Current condition: fair and stable

Ramsar Wetlands
Manage the key ecological attributes within the limits of acceptable change identified in the ecological character description for each Ramsar site.
Current condition: fair and variable between individual sites

Plains Woodland
Maintain and enhance the condition and connectivity of Plains Woodland communities to support declining flora and fauna species.
Current condition: fair and declining

Box Ironbark Forest
Maintain and enhance the condition of Box Ironbark Forest to support declining bird and other fauna species dependent on this habitat.
Current condition: fair and stable

Mixed Dry Forest
Maintain and enhance the condition of Mixed Dry Forest to support declining bird and other fauna species dependent on this habitat.
Current condition: fair and declining

Chenopod Shrubland
Maintain the condition of Chenopod Shrubland structure and diversity.
Current condition: fair and stable

Performance measures

To quantify the effectiveness of implementing the conservation strategies, interim performance measures have been set for the River Red Gum Park Landscape Conservation Action Plan. These will enable an assessment of the effects of management actions in relation to the desired state of conservation assets and their key ecological attributes.
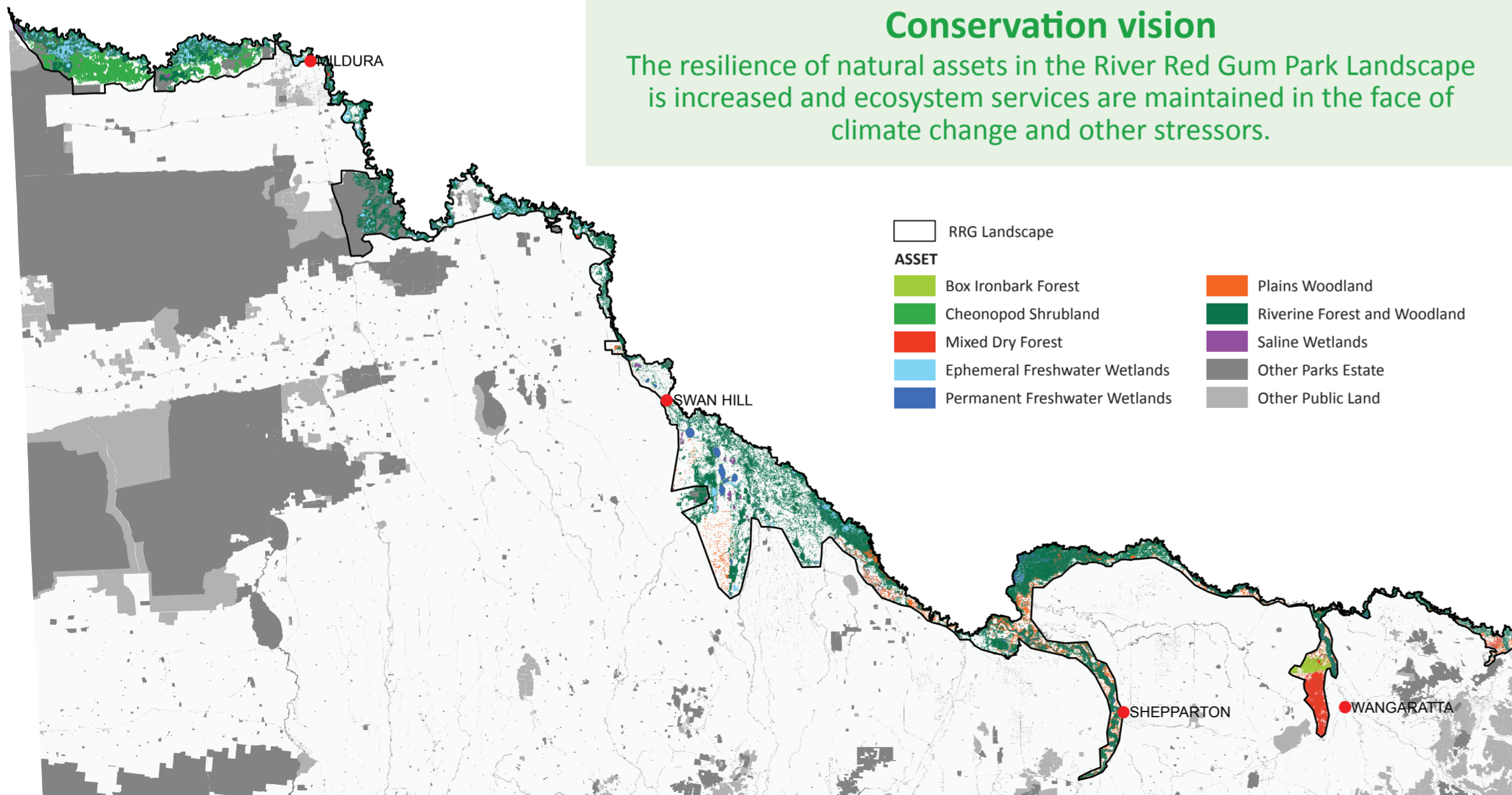
Activity (short-term) measures
Activity measures represent the quantity and quality of management actions that have been delivered.

Threat (medium-term) measures
Threat measures represent the impacts of management action on threats, measuring the extent of threat reduction that has been achieved.

Outcome (long-term) measures
Outcome measures represent the results of management on the state of the conservation assets, which generally only respond over a longer term.

Threat Objectives
By 2024

Inappropriate hydrological regimes
Targeted areas of inundation-dependent conservation assets are stable or improving in condition because of managed environmental water deliveries that improve the hydrological regime.

Fire regimes and management
Protect large River Red Gums from fire and minimise the likelihood of large-scale bushfires through campfire awareness and visitor planning. Use fire where appropriate to increase the structural diversity of understorey vegetation in Plains Woodland, Mixed Dry Forest and Box Ironbark Forest.

Terrestrial grazing, browsing and trampling by introduced herbivores and macropods
Reduce browsing pressure from herbivores and trampling pressure from large herbivores and macropods across the landscape to a level that allows for regeneration of key species in each conservation asset.

Invasive exotic fish
Continue to support partner agencies to trial and implement a range of techniques to manage invasive aquatic fauna in inundation-dependent conservation assets to reduce impacts on key ecological attributes of aquatic systems.

Predation by foxes and cats
Sufficiently reduce the impact of predation at key locations to allow predation-sensitive fauna to occupy the majority of available habitat at key locations.

Invasion by introduced and native flora
Eradicate any new and emerging weeds wherever they occur and control established high-priority weeds to acceptable levels where key ecological attributes are at risk.

Climate change
Review climate change–planning frameworks, adapt strategies to be 'climate smart' and integrate climate change planning into land management planning.

Recreational activities and resource extraction
Minimise the incidence of unauthorised or illegal park use and manage authorised uses to minimise impacts on conservation assets.

Action – Conservation Strategies

Manage water for conservation outcomes
Improve water regimes by implementing on-ground actions and working in partnership with environmental water managers to facilitate the delivery of environmental water and increase the extent of natural floods.

Manage fire for healthy assets
Undertake communications and compliance activities to reduce the risk of human-induced ignitions, and where possible ensure a rapid response to bushfire to prevent loss of significant values during fires.

Manage total grazing pressure
Control herbivores using culturally appropriate methods to improve the quality of native vegetation and riparian zone integrity and to protect culturally important sites across the Park Landscape.

Manage introduced pest fish
Implement best practice measures to reduce the impact of introduced fish to improve the key ecological attributes of inundation-dependent assets.

Control introduced terrestrial predators
Implement targeted control of foxes and cats at high-priority sites for threatened and migratory species, integrating available methods of control, to reduce predation.

Manage environmental weeds
Control environmental weeds through surveillance and rapid management intervention to prevent the establishment of new and emerging weeds and maintain established weeds at acceptable densities.

Implement management actions to address climate change
Incorporate planning for climate change and the transition to drier conditions and more frequent severe weather events into land management practices to facilitate the adaptation of ecosystems.

Establish partnerships to coordinate management strategies and address key knowledge gaps
Integrate research and management activities to improve management effectiveness.