

Gippsland Plains & Strzelecki Ranges Conservation Action Plan

Overview

Achieving our vision to:

Increase the resilience of natural assets in the Gippsland Plains and Strzelecki Ranges Parks Landscape and maintain ecosystem services in the face of climate change and other stressors.

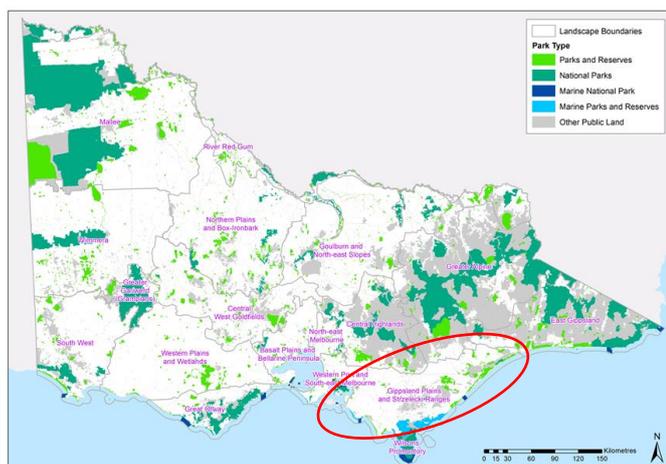
The Gippsland Plains and Strzelecki Ranges Parks Landscape is a region of great biodiversity and cultural heritage. It encompasses old growth forests, internationally recognised wetlands, and sandy beaches backed by coastal dunes and heathlands. It has significant marine values, including extensive seagrass beds that support both fisheries and migratory birds, and extensive rocky reefs.

Parks and reserves include:

- The Lakes National Park
- Tarra-Bulga National Park
- Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park
- Cape Liptrap Coastal Park
- Holey Plains State Park
- Mount Worth State Park
- Bunurong Marine National Park
- Ninety Mile Beach Marine National Park
- Yallock–Bulluk Marine and Coastal Park
- Shallow Inlet Marine & Coastal Park
- Corner Inlet Marine & Coastal Park
- Nooramunga Marine & Coastal Park

The landscape is significant to the Gunaikurnai and Bunurong peoples, who are traditionally and culturally associated with the landscape.

The Gippsland Plains & Strzelecki Park Landscape:



Green and Golden Bell Frog, Gippsland Lakes

Conservation Assets

Ten ecosystems have been identified as conservation assets in the Gippsland Plains and Strzelecki Ranges Park Landscape. Within each of these, a range of nested assets have also been identified, including threatened species and important ecological assemblages.

Condition

The plan 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 (improving, stable, declining), and establishes a target for future condition of each key ecological attribute. These measures allow the condition of each asset to be assessed:

- **Wet Forest and Rainforest** is in good condition
- **Dry Forest and Woodland, Heathland, Wetland and Coastal** conservation assets are in fair condition
- **Water Column (pelagic)** is in very good condition
- **Soft Sediments, Seagrass, and Subtidal and Intertidal Reefs** are in good condition
- **Saltmarsh and Mangrove** is in fair condition

Threats

Eight priority threats to the conservation assets in the Park Landscape are identified:

- Inappropriate fire regimes
- Altered hydrology/reduced water quality
- Terrestrial weeds, diseases and pathogens
- Introduced herbivores
- Introduced predators
- Marine pests
- Recreation/natural resource extraction
- Extreme weather events and climate change

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 strategies will be implemented to tackle the threats. They have been selected for their likely impact, feasibility and cost-effectiveness in achieving the desired conservation outcomes.

- **Fire management for ecological health** — Using fire as a tool to maintain fire dependent habitat or species, exclude planned fire from fire sensitive habitats and apply fire in appropriate areas of the landscape to help protect priority species and habitats from high-severity bushfire.
- **Water management for conservation outcomes** — Supporting partnerships to improve water-dependent conservation assets by maintaining and improving the hydrological regimes that support them.
- **Weed and pathogen control using a biosecurity approach** — Managing weeds to reduce their spread, establishment and impact, focusing on species that have, or are likely to have, significant impacts on the health of conservation assets.
- **Herbivore management** — Increasing the health of habitats for native flora and fauna, and the health of waterways, by managing exotic grazing and browsing species, and overgrazing by native herbivores.
- **Ongoing control of introduced predators to support native fauna populations** — Supporting vulnerable native animal species to persist and recolonise suitable habitat.
- **Managing marine pests for healthy marine protected areas** — Containing existing marine pest populations and preventing new invasions.
- **Reducing the impacts of recreation, illegal activities and natural resource extraction on natural values** — Encouraging the public to enjoy nature-based tourism activities, while reducing the impacts of illegal activities.
- **Establishing collaborative partnerships and addressing key knowledge gaps** — Promoting effective collaboration and partnership between Parks Victoria, Traditional Owners, land management partners, researchers and community groups to support improved management across the fragmented Park Landscape.

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 conservation.

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 the Eastern Victoria regional team in partnership with Traditional Owners, and with detailed planning and design often assisted by other agencies, restoration partners, researchers, Friends groups, special interest groups, and volunteers.

10 Step Process:

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



For more information

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