

East Gippsland Conservation Action Plan

Overview

Achieving our vision to:

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

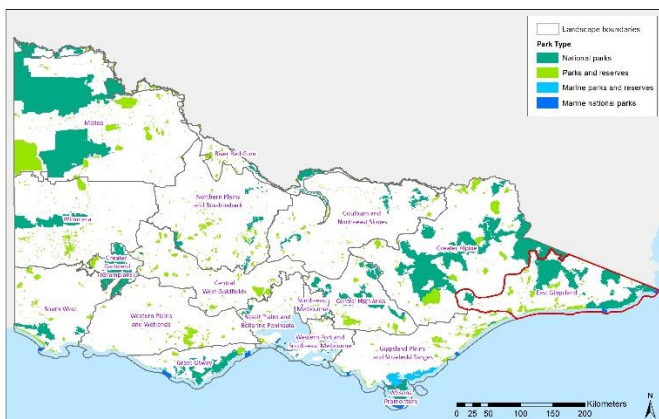
The East Gippsland Parks Landscape encompasses marine and terrestrial values in Victoria's far east. It is a region of great biodiversity and cultural heritage, with many large, remote national parks and several important marine ecosystems.

Parks and reserves include:

- Snowy River National Park
- Croajingolong National Park
- Errinundra National Park
- Coopracambra National Park
- Mitchell River National Park
- Lake Tyers State Park
- Buchan Caves Reserve
- Corringale Foreshore Reserve
- Cape Howe Marine National Park
- Beware Reef Marine Sanctuary

The area is significant to the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, the Bidwell-Maap Aboriginal Council, the Bidwell First Nations Clans Aboriginal Corporation, the Nindi-Ngujarn Ngarigo Monero Aboriginal Corporation, the Cann River Womens, Childrens, Families Aboriginal Co-operative, the East Gippsland Aboriginal Aquaculture Co-operative, and the Ngarigo Nations Indigenous Corporation, who are traditionally and culturally associated with the area. The Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation is recognised as the Registered Aboriginal Party for the western section of the Parks Landscape.

The East Gippsland Parks Landscape



Conservation Assets

Eleven ecosystems have been identified as conservation assets in the East Gippsland Parks Landscape. Within each of these assets 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:

- **Intertidal Reef** is in very good condition.
- **Riverine Forest and Woodland, Estuarine and Coastal Wetland, Coastal (including islands), Soft Sediment, and Water Column (pelagic)** are in good condition.
- **Heathland, Subalpine, and Subtidal Reef** are in fair condition.
- **Dry Forest and Woodland** is in good condition in unburnt areas but fair condition in burnt areas and **Wet Forest and Rainforest** is in good condition in unburnt areas but poor condition in burnt areas.

Threats

Seven priority threats to the conservation assets in the Parks Landscape are identified:

- Inappropriate fire regimes and management
- Alterations to natural hydrology and reduced water quality
- Terrestrial weeds and pathogens
- Competition and land degradation by herbivores
- Terrestrial predation
- Marine pests and overabundant species
- Human disturbance (visitor impacts and natural resource use)

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.

- **Fire management for ecological health** — develop ecological fire strategies so that planned burns are carried out within an appropriate fire regime to improve habitat condition and protect high value assets and areas from damage; meet conservation needs before, during and after bushfire.
- **Supporting partnerships to address threats to water-dependent assets** — support partners to improve water-dependent assets by maintaining and improving hydrological regimes and connectivity, and implement best practice measures to reduce the impact of introduced fish on aquatic vegetation and prey species.
- **Weed and pathogen control using a biosecurity approach** — manage weeds and pathogens 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** — targeted monitoring and control of deer, pigs, horses and goats at priority sites through integrated control methods to achieve acceptable herbivore densities and improve vegetation quality and intactness.
- **Ongoing control of introduced predators** — targeted control to reduce predation pressure from foxes and monitoring of adjacent locations for future incursions of foxes, cats and pigs to support the persistence of predation-sensitive species.
- **Managing marine pests and overabundant species** — targeted monitoring in priority locations to inform adaptive management programs to contain existing infestations and prevent new invasions of marine pest and overabundant native species.
- **Reducing the impacts of human disturbance** — undertake targeted communication and compliance activities to reduce the impacts of recreation, illegal activities and resource extraction and minimise the disturbance of terrestrial and marine assets.
- **Building climate resilience and refugia** — identify and prioritise fire and climate refugia to buffer species against the impacts of climate change, including future fire events, and mitigate sea level rise on coastal assets.

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 Metropolitan Parks team in partnership with Traditional Owners, and with detailed planning and design often assisted by restoration partners, researchers, other agencies, 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

