

## Appendix 3: Glossary of terms

**Abundance:** How common a plant is.

**Adequately conserved:** Relating to a vegetation type, community or plant or animals species that is considered to be well protected in the formal reserve system.

**Aerial photo:** A photo taken from the air, usually from specially commissioned aircraft.

**Alpine grassland:** Native grasslands that occur naturally at higher altitudes (1200 m), occurring as a result of climatic or topographic factors that prevent tree establishment and growth.

**Annual:** A plant that completes its full lifecycle within one year.

**Arable soil:** Able to be cultivated by conventional means.

**Biodiversity:** The variety of life forms (plants, animals and other organisms), the genes that they contain and the ecosystems of which they form a part and the functions that they perform; also called *biological diversity*.

**Biomass:** The sum total of living and dead plant and animal material of a particular site. Usually refers to living and dead plant material (standing herbage) in the groundlayer in reference to grassy ecosystems.

**Botanical assessment:** Evaluation of the plants (types and abundance of types) of a particular site.

**Botanical composition:** A description of the plant species present at a site or within a community.

**CMN:** See *Conservation management network*.

**Co-dominant species:** Two or more species that are equally dominant in an area.

**Community or ecological community:** An assemblage of species (plants, animals and other organisms) occupying a particular area.

**Condition:** The state of a site that results from previous actions or events and that may change with application of specific management.

**Connectivity:** The spatial relationship between remnant patches of vegetation. Highly connected remnants are linked to other remnants across a landscape.

**Conservation management network (CMN):** A network of sites that have particular conservation values and of people involved in their care and management. CMNs allow for the exchange of ideas, information and assistance that helps landholders manage and protect native communities, while maintaining other land uses.

**Conservation management plan:** A plan that is drawn up specifically to ensure the long-term protection or preservation of the natural values of a site. It doesn't inevitably exclude the use of the area for other purposes such as stock grazing or recreation.

**Conservation significance:** The relative importance of a site for the long-term protection of its natural values; conservation significance of native grassy vegetation is determined by such criteria as the presence of native trees, diversity of the native flora, extent of cover of introduced plants, presence of threatened or uncommon species, the variety and condition of the native understorey, the quality of habitat available for native animals and often by the spatial extent and location.

**Corridor:** A strip of vegetation that links remnant vegetation patches together. Corridors are important in allowing the movement and spread of species from one area to another.

**Current management:** The particular range of uses and pressures that are presently being applied to a site.

**Degraded:** A condition of native vegetation in which major modifications have resulted in impacts that influence land capability, such as excess salinity, erosion, weediness, occurrences of pest species, etc.

**Derived grassland:** See *secondary grassland*.

**Distribution:** The spatial range or area of occupancy of a species or ecological community.

**Disturbance:** A natural and or human-induced physical change (e.g. soil cultivation, grazing events, fire) to a site or community that leads to either partial or total destruction of plant biomass and or modification to the soil surface (e.g. creation of bare ground, loose soil) and light availability.

**Disturbance sensitive species:** Species that only survive in areas that have experienced low levels of disturbance and that have been shown to decline under a particular set of disturbances.

**Disturbance tolerant species:** Species that remain in similar abundance or increase in abundance under a range of disturbance levels.

**Diversity:** A measure of the variety of something, such as the variety of plants in a site.

**Dominant species:** Species that make up a large proportion of a community's biomass or numbers.

**Dynamics:** Relating to change over time, resulting from changes in climate, management or other influences. Often implies that changes of state include reversal to previous states.

**Ecological community:** A group of plants and animals living and interacting together.

**Ecological processes:** Processes that underlie fundamental ecosystem functions such as nutrient cycling, biomass production and pollination.

**Ecosystem:** A dynamic combination of plant, animal, fungal and micro-organism communities and associated habitats and processes interacting as an ecological unit.

**Ecosystem function:** The processes that are essential for the sustainable management and working of any ecosystem.

**Endangered ecological community:** An ecological community that is in immediate danger of extinction unless the circumstances and factors influencing its distribution, composition and viability as an ecological unit cease.

**Endangered species:** A species of plant or animal that is declared as likely to become extinct unless the circumstances and factors threatening its abundance, survival or evolution cease; or its numbers or habitats have been reduced to such a level that it is in immediate danger of becoming extinct in the region, state or nation.

**Exotic species:** See *Introduced species*.

**Fauna:** Animal species, including invertebrates and fish that occur in a certain area or time.

**Fire regime:** The frequency, timing and intensity of burning.

**Flora:** Plant species that occur in a certain area or time.

**Floristic diversity:** The variety of flora in an area.

**Forest:** A vegetation type that has trees in a closed structure (trees touching or overlapping). Forest trees have taller trunks and shallower crowns than woodland trees.

**Formal reserve system:** The system that includes national parks and nature reserves.

**Fragmentation:** Refers to the state of native vegetation remnants that are significantly isolated from each other.

**Fungi:** Mushrooms, moulds, rusts, yeasts, etc, belonging to a group of organisms that lack chlorophyll and which are important in the decay of plant and animal material and residues.

**Grass:** A plant in the family Poaceae that is usually herbaceous and produces flowers without petals.

**Grassland:** A vegetation type in which grasses dominate and trees are absent or sparse (less than about two mature trees per hectare).

**Grassy ecosystems:** Those ecosystems dominated by grasses in the groundlayer (including grasslands and grassy woodlands).

**Grassy woodland:** A native plant community in which native grasses interspersed with native forbs dominate the groundlayer, and trees are present at between 2 and ~50% tree canopy cover (more than about two mature trees and less than about 25 trees per hectare, with the tree crowns not overlapping).

**Grazing pressure:** The number of animals per weight of herbage available.

**Groundlayer:** The sum total of the species making up the lowest level of a particular plant community or site.

**Habitat:** Where a particular animal, plant or other organism naturally lives or grows.

**Herbaceous:** Plants without woody stems (includes grasses and forbs, but excluding trees and shrubs).

**Herbicide:** A chemical used to kill plants (usually weeds).

**High density stocking:** Large numbers of animals grazed on a small area of land, generally for short periods.

**Indicator:** A species that when monitored can be used to indicate the condition of the whole ecosystem.

**Indigenous:** Native to a particular area.

**Introduced pasture:** Pasture that has been deliberately modified from a natural or semi-natural state by adding introduced plant species and usually implying ploughing or other soil disturbances and the addition of chemicals such as fertilisers.

**Introduced species:** Species introduced into an area, usually from outside Australia, but also including species from either other parts of the country; non-indigenous or exotic species.

**Invertebrate:** An animal without a backbone (e.g. insects, spiders, and worms).

**Land capability:** The ability of land to accept a type and intensity of use permanently, or for specified periods under specific management without permanent damage.

**Land class:** The defined land use and landform category of a site.

**Land use:** The particular purposes imposed by humans on a particular site or region.

**Landforms:** The features of an area such as the mountains, hills, slopes, plains, cliffs, rivers, valleys, etc.

**Lichen:** An organism that is formed by an association between fungi and algae. Lichen grows in greenish, grey, yellow, brown or blackish crust-like patches or bush-like forms, often on rocks and trees, but also as a crust on the ground in grassy ecosystems.

**Litter:** Dead plant material lying on the ground (unattached to plants).

**Locally indigenous:** Refers to plants or animals that occur naturally within a particular locality or region.

**Management history:** The particular range of uses and pressures that have been applied to a site by humans over a span of years.

**Management requirements:** The human inputs imposed at a particular site to reach a desired aim.

**Management unit:** An area or patch that is characterised by having relatively uniform landform, vegetation and management history. This allows for management to be applied that is suitable to the conditions present in the patch.

**Monitoring:** The repeated assessment of a particular feature at a selected site that is applied with the aim of guiding the maintenance or a change in management of the site.

**Moss:** Small leafy-stemmed plants that often grow in tufts or mats in moist areas and on trees and rocks, but also form crusts on the soil of grassy ecosystems.

**Native grassland:** A native plant community dominated by native grasses interspersed with native wildflowers, and trees are either absent or scattered.

**Native pasture:** A native plant community used for grazing of stock, in which native grasses dominate the groundlayer, exotic grass species may be present, and few other native species are present, as a result of significant modification.

**Native vegetation:** The vegetation, including native trees, understorey plants, groundcover or plants within in a wetland that is indigenous to a particular area.

**Natural temperate grassland:** Grasslands in the temperate zones that are dominated by grasses and forbs and are treeless or contain scattered trees as a result of natural processes, such as climate or soils, that inhibit tree growth; specifically, the listed endangered grassland community of the NSW Southern Tablelands and the ACT.

**Non-arable soil:** Soil that is unable to be cultivated by conventional means.

**Non-indigenous:** See *Introduced species*.

**Non-local native species:** Native to the country, but not from the locality or region.

**Off-reserve conservation:** Conservation outside the formal reserve system that ensures that additional areas that preserve natural ecological processes are retained across the landscape.

**Overlay:** A plastic sheet that is placed over a map and is used to record information about a site. The information is recorded on the overlay so that the map does not become cluttered.

**Perennial:** Plants that grow for more than two years and continue to live from year to year. Includes trees and shrubs (woody perennials) and herbaceous perennials (non-woody species including forbs and grasses).

**Physical site characteristics:** The non-biological features of a site, such as fencing, roads, tracks, buildings and dams, rocky outcrops and creeklines.

**Presence:** Recognition of a species (or other feature) in a site, used as a measure of diversity of plants.

**Rare species:** Species that are either depleted in population size or are intrinsically and naturally very uncommon.

**Recruitment:** In plant communities, the process where plants replace themselves with their offspring (usually by seedlings but also through vegetative means).

**Regeneration:** The natural rehabilitation of the vegetation of a site following disturbance or degradation.

**Rehabilitation:** The deliberate improvement of habitat qualities through revegetation or restructuring of habitat features such as placement of fallen logs or rocks.

**Remnant vegetation:** An isolated patch of original vegetation in a landscape that has been largely altered by human activity such as agriculture or urban development.

**Restoration:** Returning a modified ecosystem to a known past state or to an approximation of the natural condition of the area.

**Revegetation:** The deliberate re-establishment of vegetation at a site.

**Riparian area or zone:** Any land that adjoins, directly influences or is influenced by a river or other watercourse.

**Rotational grazing:** A sequence of grazing and rest periods.

**Secondary grassland:** A condition of native woody vegetation where most if not all of the trees have been removed and only grassland remains; also called *Derived grassland*.

**Set stocking:** The practice of continuously grazing an area throughout the year, usually with the same type of stock.

**Shrub:** A woody perennial with more than one stem arising from its base, usually smaller than 2 metres in height.

**Site assessment:** Appraisal of defined characteristics of a particular site.

**Snow Gum Grassy Woodland:** Grassy woodland in which Snow Gum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) is the dominant tree species.

**Soil disturbance:** Natural and human-induced physical agitation of soil. Soil disturbance includes ploughing or burrowing by animals.

**Species:** The basic biological units of plants, animals or other organisms that interbreed to produce fertile offspring like themselves, or possess common characteristics derived from a common gene pool.

**Species composition:** The plant and animal species that are present at a site or in a community; one way to describe a vegetation community (see *Vegetation structure*).

**Species richness:** A count of the number of species that occur at a particular site.

**Stocking rate:** The number of animals per hectare, including non-domestic animals such as kangaroos and rabbits.

**Sustainable land management:** Land management (e.g. agricultural) practices that ensure that a system can be maintained in its present state and rate of production over a long period of time.

**Threatened species:** Species recognised under Commonwealth, state or territory legislation as being at risk of extinction.

**Threatening processes:** Processes that threaten or may threaten the survival, abundance or evolution of a species or community.

**Threats:** The particular forces that act to degrade or erode the ecological community or a species, placing it at risk of extinction.

**Topographic map:** A map showing the landform (hills, slopes, plains, etc) of an area, indicated as contour lines.

**Transect:** In relation to the study of plants and animals, a defined area, usually linear, from which information is collected and recorded.

**Tree:** A woody perennial with usually only one stem arising from the base.

**Uncommon species:** These species may be naturally rare or the numbers may have been depleted as a result of land use or management.

**Understorey:** The vegetation layer or layers underneath the canopy of a woodland or forest.

**Vegetation:** The sum total of the plants of a particular area; includes exotic vegetation and the groundlayer vegetation such as grasslands.

**Vegetation community:** An assemblage of plant species occupying a particular area.

**Vegetation composition:** The plant species that are present at a site or in a community; one way to describe a vegetation community.

**Vegetation history:** The range of plant species and vegetation types that have been present in a particular area over a span of years.

**Vegetation structure:** The physical shape and configuration of plant species (height, width, density and abundance) of an area; one way to define a vegetation community (see also *Species composition*).

**Viable:** In relation to remnants or plant and animal populations, the extent to which this entity will exist as a recognisable unit into the future.

**Vulnerable species:** A species that is identified as in danger of becoming endangered unless the circumstances and factors threatening its abundance, survival or evolution cease; relates to the declaration process of threatened species.

**Wetland:** A vegetation type that is dominated by the presence of water for at least a part of the year.

**White Box Grassy Woodland:** Grassy Woodland in which White Box (*Eucalyptus albens*) is the dominant tree species; a Commonwealth-listed endangered ecological community; one of the Box-Gum Woodland types.

**Wildflower:** A native herbaceous plant; in the context of this kit, to simplify assessment and recording, 'wildflower' refers to all the following groups of plants: sedges, rushes, ferns, orchids, lilies and other non-grassy plants.

**Woodland:** A vegetation type that has trees in an open structure with either a grassy or shrubby groundlayer. The trees of woodland tend to be shorter, more branched and more widely spaced than forest trees.

**Yellow Box – Red Gum Grassy Woodland:** Grassy Woodland in which Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) and Blakely's Red Gum (*E. blakelyi*) are the dominant tree species; a listed endangered ecological community under NSW and ACT legislation; one of the Box-Gum Woodland types.