

Self-Assessment

Determining Ecological Vegetation Class Groups and generalised conservation status

Work Sheet No 3

This Work Sheet will enable you to:

- identify native vegetation located on your farm by the EVC Group name
- determine the generalised conservation status for individual native vegetation sites.

This Work Sheet requires you to access websites. Most of the work will be undertaken at a computer with some on-site survey (if required) and a follow up farm walk to verify the information.

Determining Ecological Vegetation Class Groups

Native vegetation communities vary significantly across Victoria. This variation reflects the differences in geology, soil, climate, rainfall, elevation, drainage and aspect of where these communities are growing. Groups of plants suited to similar conditions are commonly associated with each other, and these associations are referred to as Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs).

Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC)

The basic mapping units used for biodiversity planning and conservation assessment at landscape, regional and broader scales in Victoria. EVCs are derived from large-scale forest type and plant community mapping and are based on the following types of information:

- plant communities and forest types (including species and structural information)
- ecological information relevant to the species that comprise the communities (including life-form and reproductive strategies)
- information that describes variation in the physical environment (including aspect, elevation, geology and soils, landform, rainfall, salinity and climatic zones).

DSE has identified approximately 250 EVCs in Victoria. A full list and description of all EVCs located in your region can be found in the Native Vegetation Plans prepared by each of the Catchment Management Authorities. *(For further information contact your local CMA by going to www.dse.vic.gov.au select Land & Water Management, Catchments and then Catchment Management Authorities - this will provide links to all CMA websites).*

You may be required to identify the EVCs located on your property as:

- a planning permit from your local shire may be required prior to the removal, destruction or lopping of any native vegetation
- there may be other legal obligations relating to the management of threatened EVCs
- EVCs respond in different ways to the same management practices
- EVCs have their own conservation status.

The 250 (approximate) EVC's in Victoria have been categorised into 21 EVC Groups according to the type of landscape they occur in and assessed affinities (e.g. climate, aspect or landform) to particular environments (see [Table 1 this Work Sheet for a list of the EVC Groups](#)). These EVC Groups are represented by 8 common structural forms (appearing as bold capitals in Table 1), these are forests, woodlands, mallee, grasslands, wetlands, scrubs, shrublands or heathlands. Figure 2 is a matrix of plant height and folige cover that illustrates the difference between each of these structural forms.

This Work Sheet requires you to identify the EVC Group for vegetation growing on your property. This is easily done by accessing a website (refer to ['Instructions' for assessing the appropriate site](#)) that has interactive maps showing the distribution of EVC Groups throughout Victoria. A 'Zoom In' function enables detailed analysis of a property to a very fine scale. After determining the EVC Group this information is transferred to the Site Record Sheet.

Determining generalised conservation status

Generalised Conservation status

The extent to which a EVC Group remains in their natural condition in relation to their pre-1750 (pre-european) distribution.

An EVC Groups conservation status is based on the typical conservation status for the most extensive EVCs that form part of an EVC Group. This includes consideration of the:

- the rarity of the vegetation
- any threats to the vegetation (including historic and on-going impacts)
- the EVC Groups importance for supporting other significant features (for example, as a drought refuge for native fauna).

Determining the generalised conservation status of an EVC group may be useful as it could be used:

- in association with the assessment of habitat quality to determine conservation significance, which is incorporated in the Net Gain goal developed in [Victoria's Native Vegetation Management – A Framework for Action \(2002\)](#) (which supports the individual CMA Native Vegetation Plans).
- as a guide to assist in the development of a funding application (part of NHT, NAP etc.). Allocation of public funding is increasingly being linked to the conservation status of native vegetation, with priority given to more threatened vegetation types (usually prioritised within Regional Catchment Strategies and / or Native Vegetation Plans).

This Work Sheet has allocated a **generalised** conservation status for each of the 21 EVC Groups. Whilst this is an interim allocation, you are still able to apply these generalised categories as part of an initial review of native vegetation sites.

An EVC Groups generalised conservation status is assessed as being one of the following:

- presumed extinct
- endangered
- vulnerable
- depleted
- rare
- least concern.

These same groupings have also been used as the basis for assessing conservation status in [Victoria's Native Vegetation Management – A Framework for Action \(2002\)](#) which supports the CMA Native Vegetation Plans. For more detailed descriptions of the criteria see table below or Fact Sheet 14).

STATUS	CODE	CRITERIA
Presumed extinct	X	Probably no longer present in the bioregion
Endangered	E	Contracted to less than 10% of former range; or less than 10% pre-European extent remains
Vulnerable	V	10 to 30% pre-European extent remains
Depleted	D	Greater than 30% and up to 50% pre-European extent remains
Rare	R	Rare (as defined by geographic occurrence) but neither depleted, degraded nor currently threatened to an extent that would qualify as Endangered, Vulnerable or Depleted
Least Concern	LC	Greater than 50% pre-European extent remains and subject to little to no degradation over a majority of this area

Source: Adapted from Victoria's Native Vegetation Management – A Framework for Action (2002) (p 51)

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Work Sheet No 3



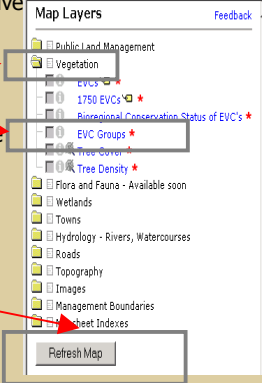


Information required

To complete this activity you will need the following information:

- Work Sheet 2: Site Record Sheet
- access to the DSE website.

Instructions

FARM OFFICE

<p>Locate 'Interactive maps' on DSE Website</p>	<p>Access www.dse.vic.gov.au and select:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Interactive Maps' (under 'Online Services on the right of the screen') - 'Biodiversity Interactive Map'
<p>Locate your property on the map</p>	<p>The screen now on display has a number of different functions, indicated by the row of nine tabs towards the top of the screen (you may need to enlarge the screen to its maximum size).</p> <p>Locate your property by selecting the 'Find Location' tab. This gives a number of different options, select either 'place name', local government area' or 'postcode to locate your property'.</p> <p>Note: If you chose 'place name' to locate your property select the '10km zoom extent' option.</p> 
<p>Identify the EVC Group for individual vegetation sites</p>	<p>Click on the 'Layers' tab. This provides a number of different interactive options.</p> <p>Click on the 'Vegetation' folder  This will reveal further set of options.</p> <p>Select the 'EVC Groups' and click on the empty box icon and then the grey information icon (both adjacent to 'EVC Groups').</p> <p>Click the 'Refresh Map' tab to enable these features to be viewed.</p> <p>Note: Refer to following page of this Work Sheet for an example of an EVC Group Map.</p> <p>Select the 'Zoom In' map tool to zoom into your property.</p> <p>By holding the mouse button down you are able to draw a rectangle around your property.</p> <p>Note: If you zoom in to a scale of 1:5,000 or under the EVC Group layer WILL NOT be displayed.</p> <p>Areas of different vegetation will be displayed as blocks of different colors and patterns.</p>   <p>To identify the EVC Group click on the  icon in the map tool bar. By clicking the mouse pointer on a colored patch of vegetation an 'Identify Results' box will be revealed on the right of the screen. This provides a detailed analysis of the vegetation patch you have selected.</p> <p>Read down the list to X_GROUPNAME: this will indicate the name for your patch (this list will also provide you other details, such the size in hectares of the remnant).</p>
<p>Record the EVC Group on the Site Record Sheet</p>	<p>Enter the EVC Group name in the space provided in the Site Record Sheet (refer to Work Sheet 2).</p> <p>Note: You will notice that some EVC Group names are a combination of different vegetation structural form (e.g. EVC Group 'Coastal Scrubs GRASSLANDS or WOODLANDS'). If you are uncertain which to apply to your patch (i.e. is your patch a grassland or woodland?) refer to the X_EVCNAME: (which appears above the X_GROUPNAME:), the EVC name will clarify which vegetation structural form is most appropriate for your site. This clarification is important when assessing the site for habitat quality. Also refer to Figure 2 'Structural Forms of Australian Vegetation' of this work sheet for additional guidance.</p>

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Work Sheet No 3

FARM OFFICE	Determine Generalised Conservation Status	Locate the EVC Group in Table 1 (on the next page of this Work Sheet) and read across to determine the Generalised Conservation Status for that EVC Group. Enter the status (either Endangered, Vulnerable, Rare, Depleted or Least Concern) in the Site Record Sheet.
	Repeat for all sites	Identify EVC Groups for individual vegetation sites that are located within separate paddocks. Record the details in the separate Site Record Sheets.
PADDOCK	Confirm EVC Groups onsite	Due to the scale of the maps used some information may not have been captured correctly for your individual property. Walk around the property to check that the EVC Group is most appropriate to the actual vegetation located on your farm. Note: If uncertain contact your regional Native Vegetation Officer for advice (for details of local staff refer to <i>Fact Sheet 7-12 Environmental: Contacts: state and regional</i>).

Figure 1: An example of a 'Biodiversity Interactive Map' available from DSE website (www.dse.vic.gov.au)

'Find Location' tab

Mapping tool to identify EVC Group

Examples of vegetation patches (of different EVC Groups) on a property

Scale

EVC Group name

Note: This Biodiversity Conservation Status refers only to the EVC and not to the EVC Group which has been allocated a more GENERALISED Conservation Status (which reflects a composite range of vegetation communities growing in different bioregions throughout Victoria). See next page for details of the EVC Group GENERALISED Conservation Status.

Identify Results	
EVC Groups	
EVC:	53
EVC_BCS:	E
EVC_BCS_DESC:	Endangered
EVC_CN:	NP
EVC_GO_DESC:	Naturally Restricted
EVC_BCS_SRC:	5
AREASQM:	3245.78
HECTARES:	0.32
EVC_GP:	8
EVC_SUBGP:	8.1
V_EVCNAME:	Swampy Scrub
X_GROUPNAME:	Riparian Scrubs or Swampy Scrubs and Woodlands
SCALE:	200000
EVC_MUT:	EVC
BIOREG:	Otway Plain
BR_NO:	5.2
BR_CODE:	OTP_
VEG_CODE:	OTP_0053
Coordinate Position	
Vicgrid94:	2382400, 2302953

Published by the Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment
Melbourne, November 2004 © The State of Victoria Department of Sustainability and Environment 2004

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ISBN 1 74106 617 4

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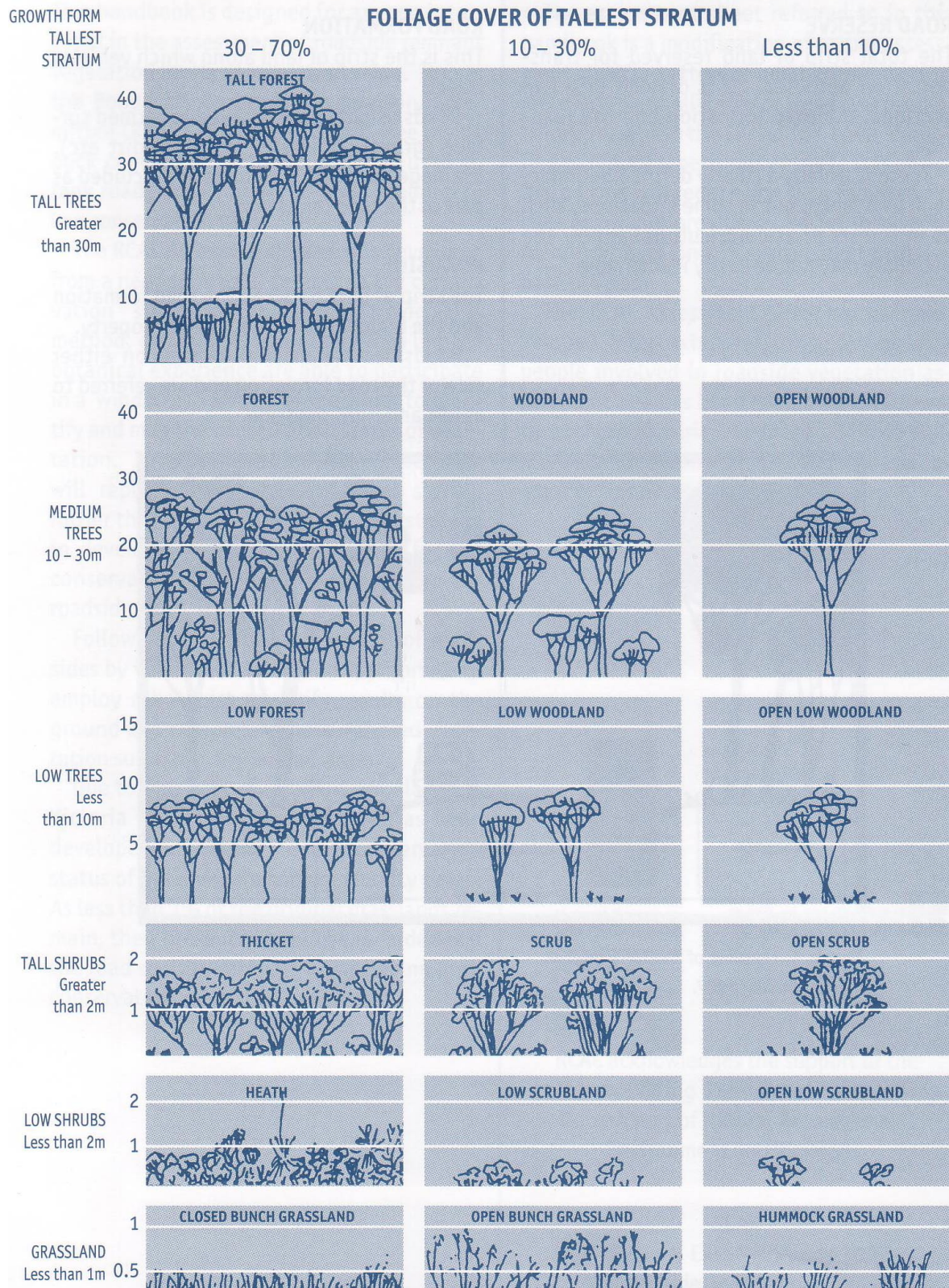
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Work Sheet No 3

Table 1: EVC Groups and Generalised Conservation Status

EVC Group		Generalised Conservation Status	
1	BOX IRONBARK FORESTS or WOODLANDS	Vulnerable	
2	COASTAL SCRUBS, GRASSLANDS or WOODLANDS	Endangered	
3	DRY FORESTS	exposed and/or lower altitude	Vulnerable
		sheltered and/or higher altitude	Vulnerable
4	GRASSLANDS	Endangered	
5	HEATHLANDS	not well-drained	Vulnerable
		sandy and/or well-drained	Vulnerable
		sub-alpine	Vulnerable
6	HEATHY WOODLANDS	damp and/or less well-drained	Vulnerable
		dry and/or better drained	Vulnerable
7	HERB-RICH WOODLANDS	alluvial terraces and/or creeklines	Endangered
		damp sands	Endangered
8	LOWER SLOPES or HILLS WOODLANDS	grassy	Depleted
		herb-rich	Depleted
		seasonally inundated	Depleted
9	LOWLAND FORESTS	Least Concern	
10	MALLEE	deep sands	Least concern
		shallow sands or sandy clay loams or gravels	Least Concern
11	MONTANE SHRUBLANDS, GRASSLANDS or WOODLANDS	Least Concern	
12	PLAINS GRASSY FORESTS OR WOODLANDS	freely-draining	Endangered
		lunettes or beach ridges or shallow sands	Endangered
		poorly-draining	Endangered
13	RAINFORESTS	Endangered	
14	RIPARIAN SCRUBS or SWAMPY SCRUBS or WOODLANDS	Vulnerable	
15	RIPARIAN FORESTS or WOODLANDS	Vulnerable	
16	RIVERINE GRASSY FORESTS or WOODLANDS	broader plain	Endangered
		creekline and/or swampy	Endangered
17	ROCKY OUTCROP or ESCARPMENT SCRUBS	Least concern	
16	SALT-TOLERANT and/or SUCCULENT SHRUBLANDS	coastal	Endangered
		inland	Endangered
19	SUB-ALPINE SHRUBLANDS, GRASSLANDS or WOODLANDS	Least Concern	
20	WET or DAMP FORESTS	Least Concern	
21	WETLANDS	brackish / estuarine	Least Concern
		freshwater (permanent)	Least Concern
		freshwater (ephemeral)	Endangered

Fig.2 Structural Forms of Australian Vegetation



Source: Roadside Assessment handbook (1996) RCAC, Melbourne (based on Specht)