

West Greenway Natural Environmental Values

Summary

The key environmental values of land west of Greenway relate to its closeness to the Murrumbidgee River and its location within an important wildlife corridor.

Vegetation

The proposed development area has a long history of grazing, and in the mid 1970s when the rural lease was withdrawn it was basically an area of exotic pasture. In 1978 the then Parks and Conservation Service began restoration action through large scale planting of eucalypts local to the Murrumbidgee corridor, including Yellow Box, Apple Box, Red Box, Red Gum, Brittle Gum and Scribbly Gum. Most of the trees are 35 -38 years old with eucalypt plantations occupying nearly 50 per cent of west Greenway.

The remaining area between the plantings has been heavily invaded by the exotic African Lovegrass. There are some very small patches of nationally endangered Yellow Box – Red Gum Grassy woodland on site, particularly towards the south-west, but these patches have been significantly degraded by the Lovegrass invasion.

No plant species of conservation significance are known to occur within the proposed development area.

In contrast the vegetation within the adjacent Murrumbidgee Corridor conservation area is a hot spot for rare and threatened plant species in the ACT as it:

- contains the entire known population of the endangered sub-shrub Tuggeranong Lignum (*Muehlenbeckia tuggeranong*);
- is habitat of Pale Pomaderris (*Pomaderris pallida*), Hoary Sunray (*Leucochrysum albicans* var. *tricolor*) and Murrumbidgee Bossiaea (*Bossiaea grayi*) which are all listed as either nationally vulnerable or endangered;
- supports a sizable proportion of the national population of Stiff Woodruff (*Asperula ambleia*) considered to be a rare species within the ACT;
- contains the only known population of Green-top Sedge (*Carex chlorantha*) in the ACT
- supports most of the ACT populations of Blady Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) and Swamp Millet (*Isachne globosa*); and supports plants of another 25 species considered to be rare or uncommon in the ACT.

Fauna

The threatened Perunga Grasshopper was recorded in 2005 within West Greenway and in 2006 at Pine Island. This grasshopper is restricted to the Canberra area and adjacent NSW and is known from about 30 locations.

The Murrumbidgee and Molonglo Valleys within the ACT is the stronghold of the nationally vulnerable Pink-tailed Worm Lizard, which has been recorded to the north and south of the development area, while modelling suggests that about half of the development area is potential habitat.

The invasion by African Lovegrass, together with the dense eucalypt plantations means that currently the proposed development area provides at best marginal habitat for both the Perunga Grasshopper and Pink-tailed Worm-lizard

Woodland connectivity and woodland birds

The Murrumbidgee River is a significant wildlife corridor at the national level and the general vicinity of the proposal is important to north south wildlife movement along the Murrumbidgee and for connections eastwards to Tuggeranong Hill, and to a lesser degree Mt Taylor.

Clearing of the eucalypt plantings within the proposed development area would reduce the width of the north-south connection, but would not significantly degrade its functionality. Planting and other restoration activities aimed at enhancing wildlife movement would be most effective further to the west between the lower slopes of the Bullen Range and the Murrumbidgee River and to the south of west Greenway eastwards to Tuggeranong Hill.

The plantings, remaining woodland elements and adjacent riparian area provides habitat for small woodland birds. While its position as part of the Murrumbidgee corridor means that area is utilised by birds travelling through the landscape and/or which are making wider use of the local riparian habitat. The vulnerable Scarlet Robin and White-winged Triller and other declining woodland birds have been recorded within west Greenway

Aquatic life

The section of the Murrumbidgee River adjacent to the proposal is known habitat of the threatened Murray Crayfish, Murray Cod and more rarely, the Trout Cod. There are also historic records of the Macquarie Perch.

This is a summary document of a presentation by Michael Mulvaney, Ecologist, ACT Government to the western Greenway community panel on Wednesday 17th August 2016.