

Creating Healthy Farm Dams



Connecting Landscapes with Communities

A collaboration between Warrenbayne-Boho Land Protection Group, Swanpool Land Protection Group, Euroa Arboretum, Broken Catchment Landcare Network and Strathbogie Ranges Conservation Management Network. The project is funded by the Victorian Government's Communities for Nature Program.

Balance in the Landscape

The extensive woodlands that once covered the lower slopes and plains surrounding the Strathbogie Ranges also contained extensive wetland areas. These wetlands were interconnected by creeks and chains of ponds. Along with the woodlands, these wetlands have largely disappeared, or been converted into farm dams. And as useful as farm dams are, they don't always provide good habitat for the wetland plants and animals that need them to survive.



Shallow farm dam edges are healthy wetlands.

This project aims to work with landholders to turn farm dams into healthy wetlands, and connect these wetlands with the surrounding remnant woodlands.

The good news is, it's actually pretty easy to turn your farm dam into a healthy, diverse wetland that supports lots of different types of flora and fauna. Three things are critical:

1. **Control stock access**- fence the dam and water stock with troughs. It's well documented that stock health improves when watering is done via troughs, rather than dams.
2. The dam needs a combination of **shallow water and deep water**- this allows a diversity of aquatic and semi-aquatic vegetation to grow, providing all sorts of services (habitat, filtering sediment, oxygenating water).
3. **Revegetate the dam surrounds** & shallow water areas with vegetation native to the area.

Project Activities:

- Work with landholders to select a minimum of 10 farm dams for rehabilitation works.
- Assess the biodiversity values (flora, fauna, habitat) of project wetlands.
- Conduct surveys at project wetlands and in the broader landscape on the distribution of threatened frog species.
- Deliver a variety of community activities focusing on wetlands, including: a tour of local, previously



Bibron's Toadlet, a small locally-occurring frog at risk of extinction.

rehabilitated farm dams/wetlands (learn from history); a tour of selected project dams by a visiting wetlands expert (design & training).

Farm Dam Selection

Up to 15 farm dams will be initially selected and each will meet at least one of these conditions:

- Clearly deficient in biodiversity values, e.g. weedy, cleared of native vegetation, unfenced, low levels of woody debris and leaf litter input.
- Connected to local remnant vegetation, or not prohibitively far away (re fence and corridor construction).
- Easily visible from a public access road and min 0.5 ML capacity.
- Be available for arranged visits by community members for the purposes of education and training.



Farm dam: unfenced, turbid water, no aquatic or semi-aquatic plants = low biodiversity value.

Assistance & Support for Rehabilitation of Farm Dams

The project will:

- Provide expert advice on how to turn local farm dams into healthy wetlands, which fulfill their water storage role and significantly enhance local biodiversity.
- Assist with the funding of the habitat improvement works on a cost-share basis with the landholder.
- Rehabilitation works could include, for example: fencing, tree planting, weed control, earthworks, alternative stock water, water quality monitoring.

For more information about this project, contact:

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Website - <http://www.strathbogieangescmn.com/projects/farm-wetlands-for-threatened-woodlands/>

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