



Seven Creeks Action Plan

Fact Sheet 3 – High Value Attributes of Seven Creeks

River and Catchment Values

Asset based approach is the way to develop priorities for protection and enhancement of waterways.

High Value Attributes of Seven Creeks

On the 25th May 2011, landholders, community representatives and natural resource management agencies met to consider the most valuable attributes of Seven Creeks (between Strathbogie and Polly McQuinns Weir).

Eight ‘high value attributes’ were identified and are presented in the following table.

Attribute	Description
Abundant Birdlife	<p>Over 150 bird species have been recorded in the Seven Creeks catchment above Polly McQuinns, with a significant number of these dependent on aquatic habitats for all or part of their life cycles. Of these aquatic-dependent bird species, a small number are listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1988), namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australasian Bittern (<i>Botaurus poiciloptilus</i>) – Endangered. Preferred habitat: permanent freshwater wetlands with tall, dense vegetation, particularly bullrushes (<i>Typha spp.</i>) and spikerushes (<i>Eleocharis spp.</i>). • Barking Owl (<i>Ninox connivens</i>) – Endangered. Preferred habitat: woodlands and forests with a high density of large trees (and particularly sites with hollows that are used by the owls as well as their prey). Roost sites are often located near waterways or wetlands. • Diamond Firetail (<i>Stagonopleura guttata</i>) – Vulnerable. Preferred habitat: grassy woodlands or wooded farmlands near permanent water. • Eastern Great Egret (<i>Ardea modesta</i>) – Vulnerable. Preferred habitat: a wide range of wetland habitats (eg swamps and marshes; margins of rivers and lakes; damp or flooded grasslands). The species usually frequents shallow waters. • Lewin’s Rail (<i>Rallus pectoralis</i>) – Vulnerable. Preferred habitat: wetland areas with dense vegetation, including wetlands, farm dams, swamps, saline lakes and river flats where they usually forage around the water’s edge in shallow water and close to cover. • Powerful Owl (<i>Ninox strenua</i>) – Vulnerable. Preferred habitat: open forests and woodlands, as well as along sheltered gullies in wet forests with dense understoreys, especially along watercourses. Needs old growth trees to nest.
Native Fish Species	<p>Five native fish species are known to occur in the project reach, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macquarie Perch (<i>Macquaria australasica</i>). Preferred habitat: deep holes. Does well in impoundments with suitable spawning streams. • River Blackfish (<i>Gadopsis marmoratus</i>). Preferred habitat: clear, flowing streams with abundant cover such as rocks and timber debris. • Southern Pygmy Perch (<i>Nannoperca australis</i>). Preferred habitat: weedy, slow-flowing or still waters, such as lakes, small creeks and backwaters of large rivers. • Western Carp Gudgeon (<i>Hypseleotris klunzingeri</i>). Preferred habitat: areas of aquatic vegetation in slow-moving or still waters.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mountain Galaxias (<i>Galaxias olidus</i>). Preferred habitat: clear, flowing water; usually in small streams with a gravel, boulder or sand substrate. <p>Only the endangered Macquarie Perch is listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act (1988), however recent surveys have failed to find this species upstream of Polly McQuinns Weir.</p>
Healthy Riparian Vegetation	<p>The riparian (streamside) vegetation community of Seven Creeks (above Polly McQuinns) is the endangered Swampy Riparian Woodland. This vegetation community consists of an open overstorey of Mountain Swamp Gum with an understorey shrub layer (including Ovens Wattle, Woolly Tea-tree, Prickly Tea-tree, Burgan, Blackwood and Prickly Currant-bush) and dense ground layer of tussock grasses and sedges.</p> <p>When all the components of this vegetation community exist in a healthy condition, the riparian zone can provide a number of beneficial functions to Seven Creeks including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> binding and protecting streambanks; filtering, purifying and protecting waterways and wetlands; creating essential habitats for birds, fish, frogs and other animals; and providing aesthetic and landscape significance.
Wetland Springs and Bogs	<p>Springs and soaks adjacent to Seven Creeks are associated with another endangered vegetation community - Perched Boggy Shrubland. This vegetation community is moist year round, and very wet in winter.</p> <p>The scattered overstorey consists of Mountain Swamp Gum over an almost impenetrable shrub layer (including Baeckea, Prickly Tea-tree, Ovens Wattle and Heath species) and a sedge-rich ground layer.</p>
Permanent Water Supply	<p>Naturally, the mean annual flow for Seven Creeks above Polly McQuinns Weir was 48,687 ML, while that occurring under current conditions is 47,596 ML, or 98% of natural.</p> <p>The largest difference between current and natural flow is for the low flows. Compared to natural, the low flow has been reduced by 23% (22 to 17 ML/d) and the low flows now occur for longer time periods.</p> <p>In addition, Seven Creeks upstream of Polly McQuinns weir dries out more frequently than it did under natural conditions.</p>
Good Water Quality	<p>Whilst water quality is seen as a high value attribute of Seven Creeks, recent assessments have shown that both phosphorus concentrations and turbidity levels are well above EPA objectives.</p>
Grazing Land	<p>Land use adjacent to Seven Creeks (between Strathbogie and Polly McQuinns Weir) is a mixture of rural residential, passive recreation, bushland and grazing (sheep and cattle).</p> <p>Within the project area, crown water frontages exist along both banks of Seven Creeks. These frontages are either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reserved for public purposes; or licensed to adjoining landholders for grazing (primary production).
Recreational Opportunities	<p>Three distinct recreational areas exist along Seven Creeks (between Strathbogie and Polly McQuinns Weir):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Bridge to Bridge walk at Strathbogie. Activities in this area include: walking, picnicking and swimming. an informal bush camping area just west of the confluence with Coach Road Creek. This area has no formal facilities and campers must be entirely self-sufficient. Polly McQuinns Weir Pool. Activities in this area include: swimming, boating and bird-watching.