



West Gippsland Conservation Fund (WGCF)

2021-22 Project & Funding Update

Private landholders play a critical role in protecting native habitats, plants and animals across Victoria.

The West Gippsland Conservation Fund is supporting landholders to conduct conservation activities to improve outcomes for biodiversity in the region.

Trust for Nature

Established in 1972, Trust for Nature is Victoria's dedicated private land conservation agency. We work with landholders in all regions of Victoria to ensure that our precious native habitat is protected forever, using permanent on-title agreements (covenants).

In our 50th year, we celebrate our partnerships with the more than 2,000 landholders who have secured over 1,500 conservation covenants contributing to the 110,000 hectares of protected habitats under covenant or in a Trust for Nature managed reserve. These places are home to some of our most threatened species like the Helmeted Honeyeater, Growling Grass Frog or Plains-wanderer.

Trust for Nature takes an evidence-based approach to its work guided by our Statewide Conservation Plan which outlines key areas in Victoria where our most threatened habitats, plants and animals are found. This plan underpins our organisational focus areas including permanent protection and restoration in priority landscapes, landholder engagement in conservation, community engagement including deepening ties with Aboriginal Victorians and innovation in conservation finance including philanthropy.

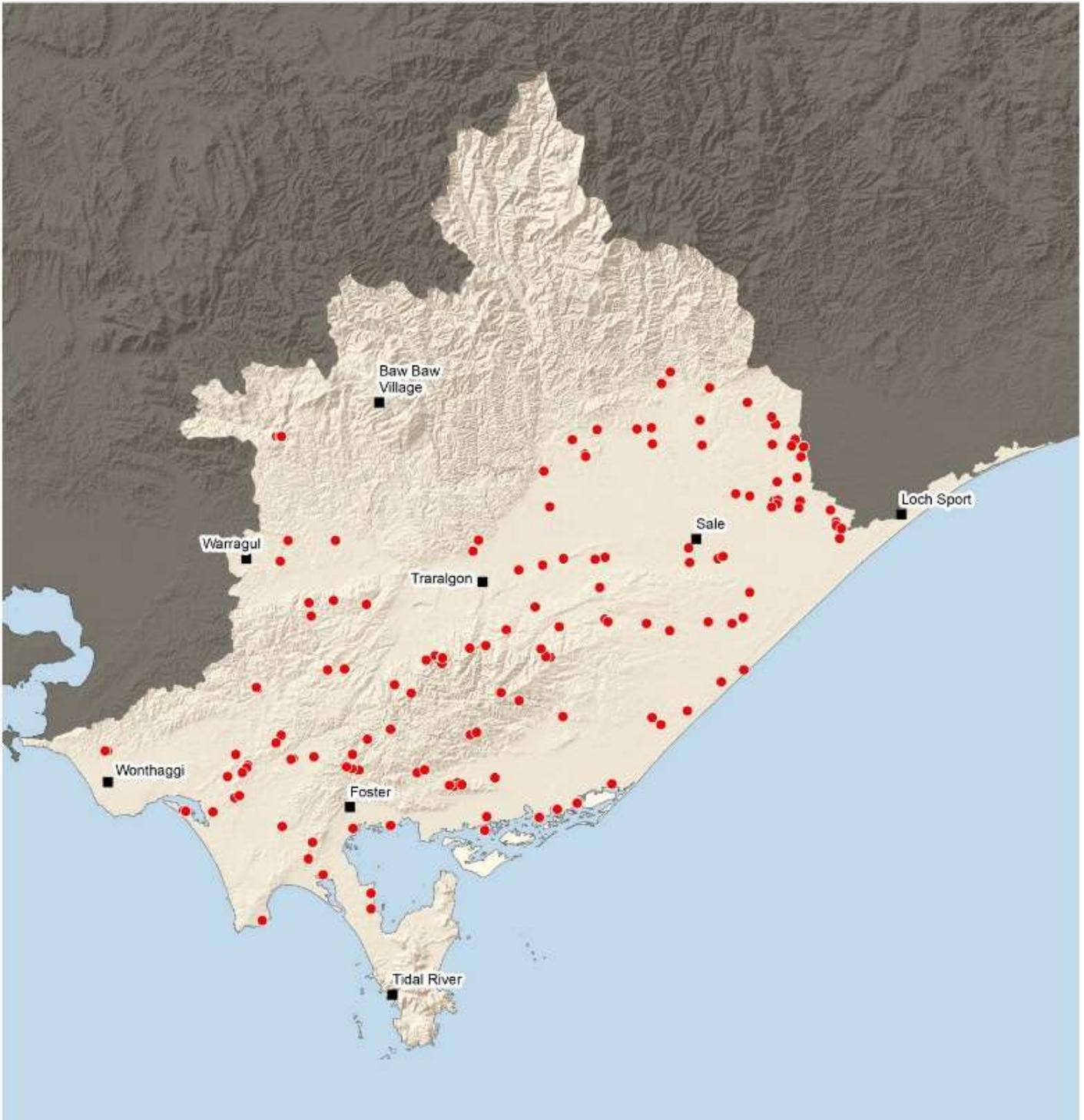
West Gippsland Conservation Fund (WGCF)

The West Gippsland Conservation Fund was established to provide secure and ongoing funding for conservation activities across a network of properties already protected with a Trust for Nature conservation covenant.

By working with landholders already protecting their properties, the Trust aims to mitigate threats in the region from land clearing, habitat fragmentation, pest plants and animals, and climate change by supporting the rich biodiversity in the region.

An annual distribution from the fund is administered by Trust for Nature's West Gippsland conservation team to facilitate on-ground activities at strategically selected locations to deliver the best possible conservation outcomes.





West Gippsland has 146 properties with a Trust for Nature conservation covenant in place (protecting more than 6,000 hectares).

Activities Report (2021-22) - West Gippsland Conservation Fund (WGCF)

Covid-19 restrictions limited activities in the first half of the year, with on-ground works and landholder engagement recommencing early in 2022.

A small revegetation project was conducted in Port Albert to buffer areas of saltmarsh habitats. 320 Swamp Paperbark trees were planted in areas where historic clearing had removed estuarine scrub and other habitats. A covenant was registered at this property this year, reflecting a fantastic outcome for the landholder and Trust for Nature.

A larger habitat restoration project at a covenanted property in Meeniyan involved detailed planning and intensive landholder engagement. The covenant area experienced significant loss of habitat condition over many years, most likely due to historical drought and high nutrient loads from adjoining agricultural land. A works plan was developed to mitigate these threats by erecting fencing, implementing weed control and extensive revegetation. Fencing and drainage works are expected to take place over winter and spring through a combination of Trust and landholder investment.

Lauren Halstead, Senior Conservation Officer, observed animal diggings at a project site in Archies Creek that were characteristic of bandicoot diggings. In response, the team has purchased six remote motion sensor cameras through the WGCF for monitoring at this site and the five adjoining covenants. So far no bandicoots have been recorded at the Archies Creek property, but detections of other species has improved our knowledge of the site.

Remote monitoring is an effective tool to connect landholders with species on their property. The cameras are a valuable asset for the Trust and will be used at other covenants as community engagement continues in the region.

Activities Plan for 2022-23

Trust for Nature's West Gippsland team is developing a program of work for the coming year:

Habitat restoration works in Meeniyan

Encompassing two adjoining covenanted properties, these works will address fencing, weed control and revegetation.

Habitat enhancement works in Jeeralang Junction

Encompassing a cluster of covenants, these works will assist landholders to manage high-threat weeds on their properties.

Continue weed control works in Archies Creek

Continuing work in the area with removal of Sweet Pittosporum at up to six covenants and ongoing monitoring of control area through drone photography (identification of weed species through alterations in canopy cover).

The WGCF will support the employment of a new Conservation Officer role to increase landholder engagement in West Gippsland.

Further support is needed.

Trust for Nature provides an opportunity to help preserve, protect and rehabilitate Victoria's natural assets and vulnerable native species. It is the difference we make today, together, and it lasts forever.

Our collaborative approach makes Trust for Nature one of Victoria's most effective conservation organisations. Our success comes from working hand-in-hand with individual landholders, Aboriginal Victorians, philanthropic supporters, governments, local communities, volunteers and a range of like-minded peer organisations who share our commitment to Victoria's environmental future.

For further information on how you can support this crucial conservation work, please contact:

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