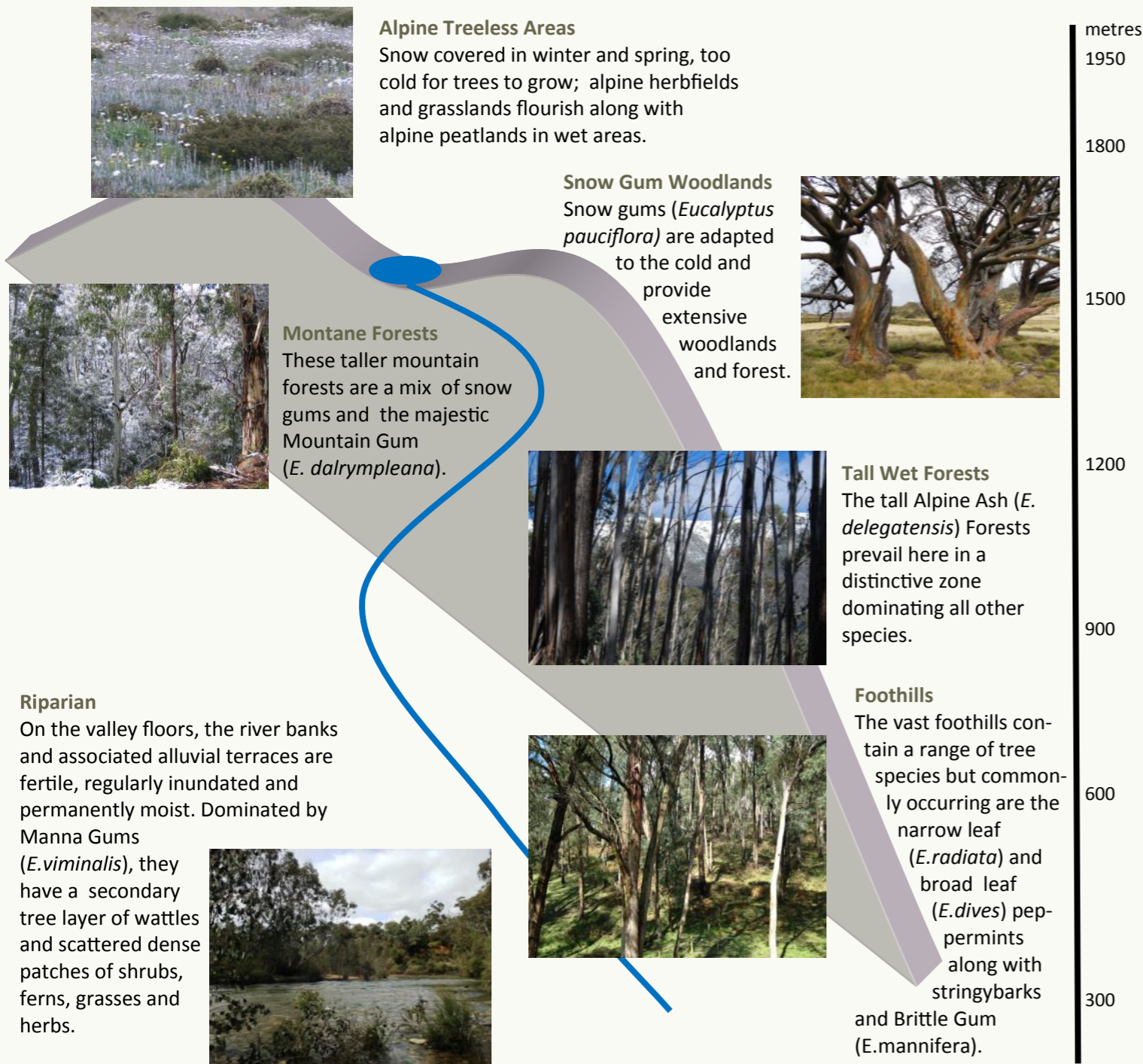


THE UPPER OVENS VALLEY: from top to bottom

The Upper Ovens Valley provides a rare opportunity to observe the effect of change in elevation on landscape ecology.



MOUNTAINS, RIVERS and VALLEYS of the Upper Ovens Valley



The landscape of the Upper Ovens Valley is rich and varied over a wide range of elevations from the rivers and fertile valley floors to some of the highest peaks in Victoria, including Mount Feathertop at over 1900 metres in elevation.

These landscapes are highly valued in the community for their biodiversity, agricultural importance as well as lifestyle and opportunities for recreation and tourism. Natural and healthy landscapes are key to the healthy community and economy of the Upper Ovens Valley.

Caring for the land

Aboriginal people cared for this land for thousands of years and Traditional Owners continue to have a strong connection to this country.

There are threats to the health of the area however that have come from past land use practices since white settlement in the 1830's.

Active management is needed to reduce their impact and restore damaged areas. Some of these include the impacts of weed invasion, pest animals and soil erosion which have disturbed and altered the natural ecology.

Public land makes up 92% of the area and is heavily forested rising up to high treeless alpine peaks. The iconic Alpine and Mount Buffalo National Parks are areas listed as part of Australia's Natural Heritage.

Private land makes up 8% of the area and rural land includes primary production of grapes, hops, apples, nuts, chestnuts as well as cattle and sheep grazing and some domestic deer production.

Agri-tourism is an important and growing industry in the area, such as wineries and other value adding enterprises. There are also many "lifestyle" land owners and hobby farmers on small properties.

The Upper Ovens Valley Landcare Group works in partnership with a range of organisations to inform the community of the values of the area and how to protect and restore them and practically undertake rehabilitation work.



Sambar deer in an Alpine peatland —Alpine National Park

Upper Ovens Valley Landcare Group (UOVLG)

The UOVLG works with the whole community, including landowners, to protect, sustain and enhance our healthy environment in the Upper Ovens Valley.

The UOVLG aims to care for the land by:

- Enhancing understanding of the local environment;
- Supporting practices that restore, conserve and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services; and
- encourage landowners to improve prospects for sustainable agriculture.

For further information:

Come along to the Upper Ovens Valley Landcare Group stall at the Bright *Grow it, Make it, Bake it* market-3rd Saturday of each month.

Web site <http://www.upperovenslandcare.com>

October 2016



A tour of the UPPER OVENS VALLEY

1 Alpine National Park

The Alpine National Park protects a vast and diverse area of the Victorian Alps. Mt Feathertop soars above the Ovens Valley at 1922 m high. The queen of the alps is Victoria's second highest peak.

13 Climate Change

Climate Change Projections indicate a hotter and drier environment for the Ovens Valley. Alpine areas may see a rise in average maximum temperature of 4-6 degrees by 2100. A consequence will be more frequent and hotter bushfires. Alpine Ash Forests and Alpine Peatlands are already showing concerning impacts of frequent fire .

12 Alpine and sub alpine Peatlands

The fragile Peatlands are vital to enhancing water quality at the top of the catchment and contain unique biodiversity. They are easily damaged by weed invasion and trampling by introduced animals.

11 Mount Buffalo National Park.

One of the oldest national parks in Victoria, it protects 31,000 hectares from the Ovens River to The Horn at 1723 m high. The undulating sub-alpine plateau is a mosaic of open plains and snow gum woodlands.



14 The Ovens River

The Ovens River (including its major tributaries, the Buckland River, Morses Creek and Eurobin Creek) is the least modified catchment in the Murray Darling Basin and contributes approximately 14% of the average total flow of the entire Murray Darling Basin. It is the only free flowing major river in North east Victoria. The Upper Ovens Catchment provides important unregulated stream flow to the Lower Ovens and Murray Rivers.

2 Mining

The Upper Ovens River was turned upside down by dredging for gold, starting in 1901. This has created a legacy of environmental issues especially loss of topsoil and weed invasion and sand and gravel from dredging continues to fill the river's deep water holes causing disruption to wildlife habitat.

3 Tobacco Farming

Tobacco farming was present for many decades however that industry started a decline in the mid 1990's and has now ceased. Tobacco growing required significant application of residual chemicals over long periods.

4 Germantown Streamside Reserve

The Friends Group looks after this area as part of Landcare, controlling weeds, restoring landscapes and providing visitor facilities.

5 Bright Community Garden: learn by doing

Urban activities are an important part of Landcare activity. The garden is an opportunity to learn about sustainable gardening.

6 Porepunkah: a town by the river.

One of several towns that have established along the Ovens River, The community group PUNKAH actively contributes to improving the health of the river for the community.

10 Pine Plantations

Forests were cleared for extensive Pine plantations on public land in the foothills around Bright and Wandiligong in the 1930's and are now managed on long term leased land.

9 Waterwatch: Citizen Science

Landcare co-ordinates long term Water quality monitoring at several sites to detect changes.

8 Restoring riparian areas

Riparian areas (i.e. vegetation communities adjacent to rivers) have been invaded by Willows and Blackberries that damage natural ecosystems. Landcare has been controlling weeds and restoring with native plants.

7 Fish ladders

Weirs installed for swimming are barriers to the upstream movements critical for healthy native fish populations. Fish bridges are being installed to facilitate their movement around weirs.