

Attachment C: BCD North East Branch – Principles for Mapping the Extent of Woodland Critically Endangered and Endangered Ecological Communities

Introduction

The NSW Threatened Species Scientific Committee's final determinations for woodland endangered ecological communities (EECs) must be considered when preparing vegetation maps for impact assessments. The determination for White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland states it covers all occurrences of this ecological community independent of their condition and the determination for Ribbon Gum - Mountain Gum - Snow Gum Grassy Forest/Woodland describes the ecological community in several condition states. Hence, vegetation mapping must ensure that all condition states referenced in these determinations are mapped appropriately.

The Biodiversity and Conservation Division (BCD) North East Branch has prepared these guidelines to assist proponents and their consultant ecologists with identifying, describing, and mapping the extent of these EECs in accordance with those final determinations.

Underpinning Considerations from Hnatiuk et al. (2009) (see Tables 6 and 7 below)

1. Open Forest has crowns touching or slightly separated – up to 0.25 crown widths apart.
2. Woodland has crowns clearly separated – up to one crown width apart.
3. Open Woodland has crowns well separated – up to 20 crown widths apart.
4. Isolated trees - more than 20 crown widths apart.

Table 6: Visual estimation of crown cover class

Code	Criteria assessed in field	Described as	Crown separation ratio	Crown cover %	Foliage cover %
D	Crowns touching to overlapping	Closed or dense	<0	>80%	>70%
M	Crowns touching or slightly separated	Mid-dense	0–0.25	50–80%	30–70%
S	Crowns clearly separated	Sparse or open	0.25–1	20–50%	10–30%
V	Crowns well separated	Very sparse	1–20	0.25–20%	0.2–10%
I	Isolated plants; for trees about 100 metres apart, shrubs about 20 m apart	Isolated plants	>20	<0.25%	<0.20%
L	Isolated clumps of 2 to many plants about 200 metres apart	Isolated clumps	>20	<0.25%	<0.20%
E	Emergent	Emergents	>3	<5% of total crown cover	<3% of total foliage cover

Table 7: Converting crown separation ratio to crown cover

Crown separation ratio	Overlap			Touching		Crowns separate																			
	-0.1	-0.05	-0.02	0	0.05	0.1	0.15	0.2	0.25	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.75	1.0	1.25	1.5	2.0	3.0	4.0	8.0	10	15	20	30
Percentage crown cover (%)	100	89	84	81	73	67	60	56	52	48	41	34	31	26	20	16	13	9	5	3	1	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.1

Principles for Mapping the Extent of White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland Critically Endangered Ecological Community (CEEC)

- based on NSW Scientific Committee Final Determination
 - can be a woodland, open woodland or derived native grassland
 - open woodland tree crown separation is based on the definition of scattered trees in Appendix B of the Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 (i.e. scattered trees are more than 50 metres apart)
1. Woodland Form (trees up to one average crown width apart)
 - a. For areas with tree crowns up to one average crown width apart, map all the following as CEEC - the outer edges of tree crowns up to one average crown width apart (including those of regenerating canopy trees) plus a buffer with a width of one average crown width from the outer edges of those tree crowns, noting that there can be exotic or native understorey and/or groundcover, or bare earth, within each mapped polygon.
 - b. For areas with tree crowns more than one average crown width apart, follow the open woodland form procedures in 2 below.
 2. Open Woodland Form (trees more than one average crown width apart and up to 50 metres apart)
 - a. For areas with tree crowns more than one average crown width apart and up to 50 metres apart, map all the following as CEEC - the outer edges of tree crowns more than one average crown width apart and up to 50 metres apart (including those of regenerating canopy trees) plus a buffer with a width of 50 metres from the outer edges of those tree crowns, noting that there can be exotic or native understorey and/or groundcover, or bare earth, within each mapped polygon.
 - b. For areas with tree crowns more than 50 metres apart, map all the following as CEEC - the outer edges of each tree crown more than 50 metres apart, including those of regenerating canopy trees.
 3. Treeless Form
 - a. For areas beyond the buffers in 1a and 2a above, or beyond the tree crowns in 2b above, or areas with no canopy trees or regenerating canopy trees, map all the following as CEEC - areas of understorey and/or groundcover containing native species.

Principles for Mapping the Extent of Ribbon Gum - Mountain Gum - Snow Gum Grassy Forest/Woodland Endangered Ecological Community (EEC)

- based on NSW Scientific Committee Final Determination
- can be an open forest, woodland or derived native grassland
- woodland tree average crown separation is used to define scattered trees (i.e. scattered trees are more than one average crown width apart)

1. Open Forest Form (trees up to 0.25 average crown widths apart)

- a. For areas with tree crowns up to 0.25 average crown widths apart, map all the following as EEC - the outer edges of tree crowns up to 0.25 average crown widths apart (including those of regenerating canopy trees) plus a buffer with a width of 0.25 average crown widths to the outer edges of those tree crowns, noting there can be exotic or native understorey and/or groundcover, or bare earth, within each mapped polygon.
- b. For areas with tree crowns more than 0.25 average crown widths apart, follow the woodland form procedures in 2 below.

2. Woodland Form (trees more than 0.25 average crown widths apart and up to one average crown width apart)

- a. For areas with tree crowns more than 0.25 average crown widths apart and up to one average crown width apart, map all of the following as EEC - the outer edges of tree crowns more than 0.25 average crown widths apart and up to one average crown width apart (including those of regenerating canopy trees) plus a buffer with a width of one average crown width to the outer edges of those tree crowns, noting there can be exotic or native understorey and/or groundcover, or bare earth, within each mapped polygon.
- b. For areas with tree crowns more than one average crown width apart, map all the following as EEC - the outer edges of each tree crown more than one average crown width apart, including those of regenerating canopy trees.

3. Treeless Form

- a. For areas beyond the buffers in 1a and 2a above, or beyond the tree crowns in 2b above, or areas with no canopy trees or regenerating canopy trees, map all the following as EEC – areas of understorey and/or groundcover containing native species.