

Friends Glider comments on Hume BESS EIS

Historical and Environmental Context

Hume Dam is located just downstream of the junction of Murray and Mitta Rivers. The Murray and Mitta River valleys have always been important habitats and corridors for the movement of wildlife and indigenous people.

Construction of the Dam wall and the filling of the Reservoir restricted this movement for most animals (including gliders).

The entire district around the Dam on the NSW side was cleared leaving little tree cover. These were largely for some mining and quarrying, but the last remaining patches along the Murray Flood plains close to the wall, were cut for steam engine fuel during construction. Almost all the trees we see today have regrown or been planted. This area has regenerated but is infested with feed and gets a lot of unsympathetic use.

Tree planting, including pine plantations, around the foreshore “parklands” for soil conservation purposes; and at the Dam Works and accommodation areas, have provided valuable habitat for wildlife. However it had limited variety of plant species and shrubs and lots of weeds. The pines have now been felled. Patches and individual trees are isolated so there is poor connectivity for a large proportion of native wild life

In the 1970s the Trout Farm was established. Considerable planting was undertaken there by the owners both at the Pond areas and at the new constructed residence Trout Farm residence.

Located on a prominent bare hill, the Albury Wodonga Development Cooperation insisted over 500 native trees and shrubs be planted as part of the Building Permit. That is now arguably one of the best ecological biodiverse small property properties around Albury. Big tall trees, some remnant HBT trees, lots of mixed age trees and range of form and food supply for wildlife

Black cockatoos are seen annually moving to winter Tabletop range feeding grounds and returning to the mountains for summer. A pair of rare Regent Honeyeaters was photographed at Lake Hume August 2020 (Woolshed-Thurgoona Landcare Facebook page).

About the “Friends of the Lake Hume Gliders (FLHG)” Group

The group was formed by families of the Lake Hume Village area, with support of their friends, interested in improving the natural environment and helping the struggling Squirrel Glider at Lake Hume Village. It is a sub Group of the Woolshed Thurgoona Landcare Group.

The FLHG initially focussed on the Crown Land below the Hume Dam spillway plan, an audit of the natural resources of the area and changes required to improve it for gliders (eg nest boxes for protection, trees reconnecting corridors to improve range, tree shrubs for food sources and removing barb wire). FYI, the plan “Figure 1 FLHG Corridor enhance -2013” is attached in Appendix 1 (p 5).

In 2013 the group received funding from The Albury Conservation Company for supply of 20 nest boxes and plant 100 trees/shrubs. The was seen so successful Group again the Group was invited to apply again the following year and was successful.

The grant was to repeat the same, 20 additional nestboxes and trees, expanding the range of gliders with boxes and jumping trees/food source shrubs further a field up, and around 32 Trout Farm Rd, around the Lake Hume foreshore and up through the adjacent Hawksview large grazing property

Since then the group has maintained the site, planted more trees and shrubs, installed steel guard around trees/shrub to protect them from wallabies and kangaroos, continued woody weed control and monitored nest boxes annually using a pole camera.

Quite recently, a new corridor was required as State Water placed a 2-3 m high 3 stand top barb wire security fence across the main Trout Farm Rd corridor to the lake Hume Village, Forward planting jumping trees are now 3 years old.

Unfortunately to purchaser are not the sympathetic owners and managers we were led to believe. The proposed battery will not just most of the habitat used by the gliders, over 120 bird species and who knows what else.

Role in the EIS Preparation

Members of the FLHG have:

- attended Information Sessions,
- filled in the proponent's survey form, and
- provided during the Early Feedback period, details of multiple times (3), gliders in flight from "The Big Tree" (HBT) at the #@ Trout Farm residence. This included those observations had been entered into the Nature Mapr and I Naturalist databases.

In xxxx 2024 the Jacobs ecologist contacted the Regional Landcare Facilitator relating glider monitoring in the Lake Hume area and the monitoring data was supplied.

TO DO

[BESS No1 submission info below.](#)

[Results of our monitoring between 2013 and 2019 were provided to Jacobs as both data and maps.](#)

[Information provided in email discussion with the Jacobs ecologist relating to presence and possible movements of gliders were general to the area, as the group was unaware of the intended location of the Hume BESS. Several of those comments are presented in the EIS acknowledges as "Lucas, FLHG. pers comm. , or similar.](#)

Introduction

The FLHG were involved in the Lake Hume BEES:

- during the data collection stage for the EIS preparation to provide local knowledge, and
- following approval to work with management to “tweak” the final design to impact on the Squirrel Gliders as little as possible.

Now a second BESS site has been proposed site has been nominated site we would again like to be have input for the same reasons. Appendix E Biodiversity and the related portions of the main report.

- Firstly, members of the Friends of the Lake Hume Gliders Group attended sessions and filled surveys but didn’t receive any following up correspondence from Foresight.
- Its hard reading and difficult to report on without page numbers
- Members are very concerned, some heartbroken, that all the terrific environmental restoration done on the property (the Project area) will be destroyed
- That work, and the benefiting habitat, has been done with the same goals as the work on the surrounding Crown Land. Most of the core FLHG members have helping with those activities. For example preparing trees/shrubs, building steel tree guards to protect glider jumping trees and monitoring the nestboxes up there.

The Lake Hume Trout Farm /Dam Wall Spillway area is real gem with lots of history.

It is part of a major wildlife corridor, the Murray River and its floodplains and abutting slopes. The different component provide a mix of landscape and wide range of habitat and natural life. More on this attached for your background understanding of this area’s rich diversity and history.

Update since the Lake Hume BESS submission.

Monitoring has continued and increased to twice a year

Past plantings have grown to a size to be significant suppliers of food for the Gliders.

Additional nest boxes were installed on adjacent private properties including Lanark and Hawksview. Gliders became more noticed on Lanark maybe as a result of the planted “jumping trees” starting to be used and providing a corridor short cut up the hill to the food sources there.

And we had covid with an extremely long lockdown with State Border check points either side of Trout Farm Road depending on which State had Covid outbreaks.

Changes for Gliders in the Trout Farm Road area

Changes have been observed at the Trout Farm Reserve area on land to the northwest side of Trout Farm Road (TFRd) over the recent period (approximately 7-8 years)> These include:

- collapse of Silver Wattle presence, initially on the Murray River moderate flood level, then on higher land below the old the quarry bank
- a significant increase of people use and noise, unregulated 4WD activity above and below the access track and burnt out cars. This became evident about the time of the “Albury Wodonga Region “Covid Bubble” period, and
- paper wasps have become more abundant firstly around the River, but have slowly taking over more boxes adjacent the River, and slowly up the slope.

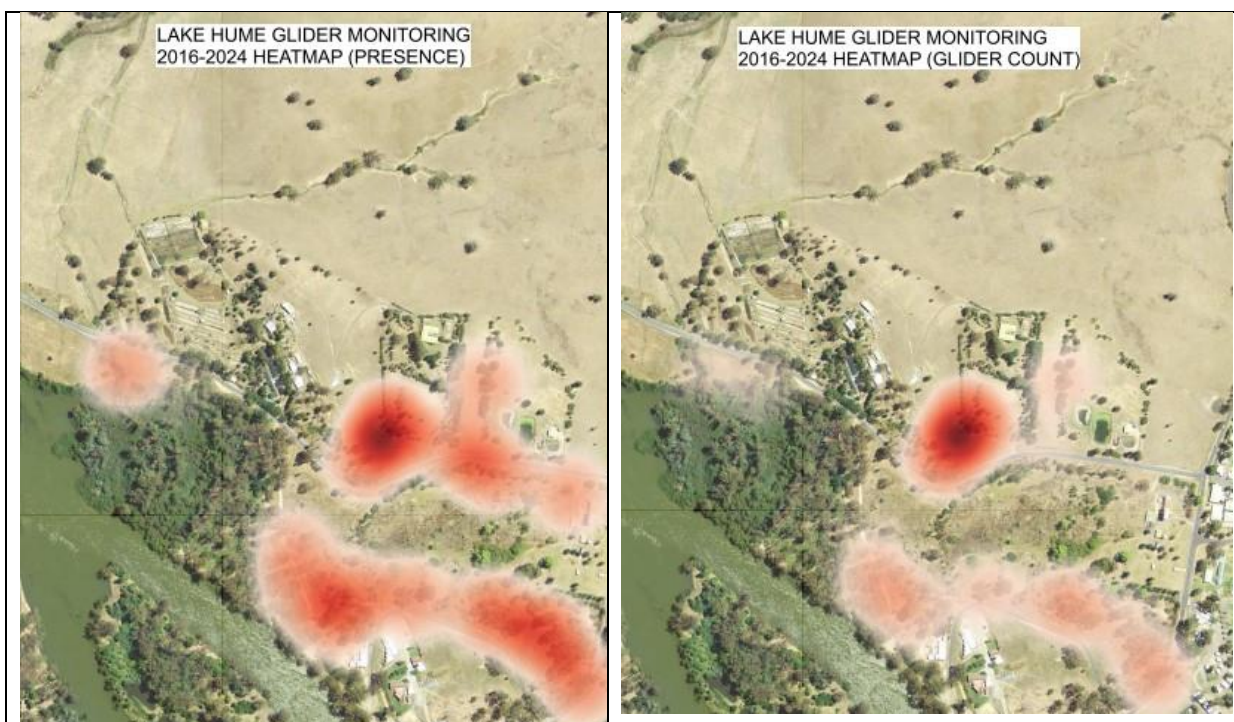
At the roughly same times (years):

- observations of gliders in flight commenced and continued at Lanark, (recorded on Nature Mapr and I Naturalist by a couple of observers. Detailed listed in other files included) and
- FLHG plantings on Lot 98 and Lanark have aged and increased the food source and glider connectivity up the Trout Farm hill and around that area.

Anecdotal observation suggests a relationship between changing food availability and people disturbance has caused a change presence in nestboxes reflecting a change in the proportion of gliders between the River Reserve area, and Lanark/ Lot 98 Crown area.

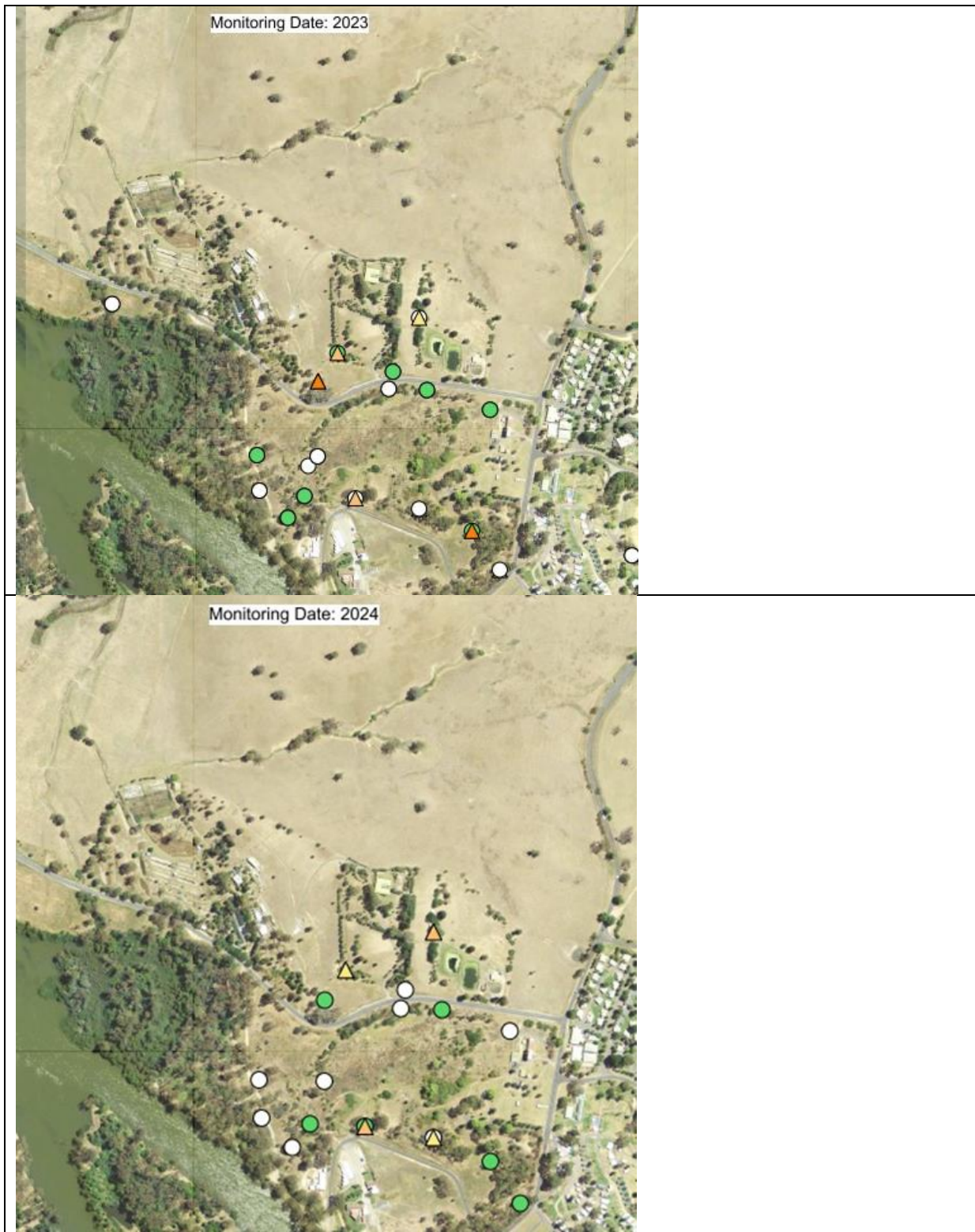
Our nest box data

A couple of our members have looked at our nestbox monitoring readings to see if it showed anything of interest. Interpreted maps are provided for glider nest box for “Glider presence for the period” and “Glider numbers/box for the period”.



Both the maps show a similar colours across the area with the exception of:

- A darker red hotspot on the south west corner of Lanark/Lot 98 Crown Land, and
- A intense on the south west corner of Lanark/Lot 98 Crown Land.



KEY

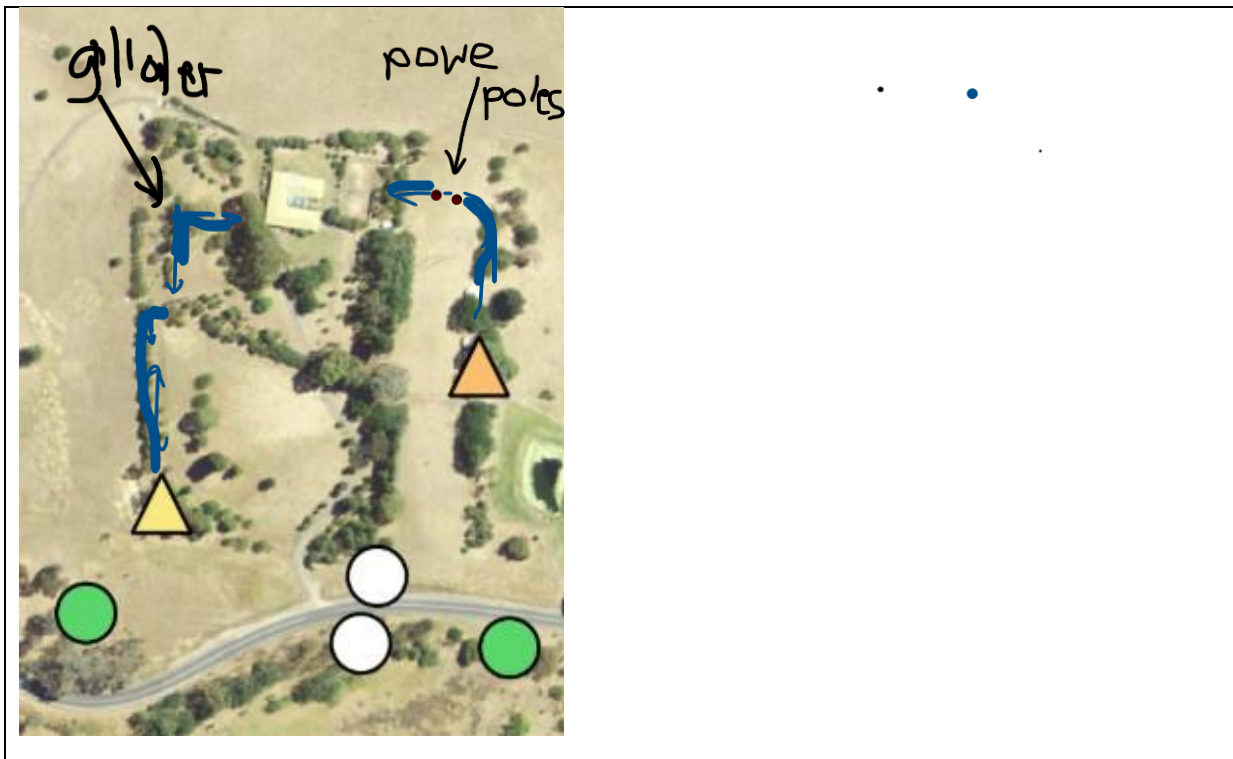
LAKE HUME GLIDER SURVEY

-  2 Gliders
-  1 Gliders
-  Nest active
-  Empty / Other

Both years monitoring shows:

- Gliders present in the Northern Trout Farm Road and Lanark area (coloured Triangles)
- Gliders around the around the State Water boundary and Elm St corridor
- Absence of gliders in the boxes between the others.

There is some evidence to suggest the gliders aren't moving through the central area.



Lanark

Boxes were intentionally not installed away from the to the house'

Gliders have been observes in the round about trees feeding several times

Three glider were observed twice gliding from "The big tree to the roundabout trees (on database)

A glider was observed in flight between “the big tree: and a silking going south toward the south west corner box (on database).

There are two wooden power poles between the house and the eastern boundary. Gliders are suspected to be using those poles to cross between the eastern box and he house paddock to feed.

Map of planed enhancement on the Crown Land (2013)

