

# Ribbon Gum–Mountain Gum–Snow Gum Grassy Forest/Woodland of the New England Tableland Bioregion

## Introduction

These guidelines provide background information to assist landholders to identify remnants of Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest/Woodland of the New England Tableland Bioregion (known here as Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest). For more detailed information, to refer to the NSW Scientific Committee’s Determination Advice at <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/Final+determinations>.

## What is Ribbon Gum–Mountain Gum–Snow Gum Grassy Forest?

Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest is an open forest or woodland that typically occurs at elevations between 700m – 1500m. It is mainly confined to the high undulating plateau of the New England Tablelands with deep basalt (chocolate or krasnozem) loam soils. It is characterised by a tree layer that is usually 20m - 30m tall, although it may be less tall in exposed or damp sites or where there has been past clearing or thinning. Common trees include Ribbon Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*), Mountain Gum (*Eucalyptus dalrympleana* subsp. *heptantha*), Snow Gum (*E. pauciflora*) and occasionally Black Sallee (*E. stellulata*). It is usually a grassy forest with only spare shrubs.

Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest may occur adjacent to, and mix with the White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely’s Red



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Black Sallee

## What is an Endangered Ecological Community?

An ecological community is a group of trees, shrubs and understorey plants that occur together in a particular area. An Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) is an ecological community listed under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* as being at risk of extinction unless threats affecting these areas are managed and reduced.



Gum Woodland EEC. Where this occurs it can be difficult to determine which community is present, however, intergraded areas are collectively included within the two communities.

### Where is Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest found?

Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest is found on the New England Tablelands.

It is known from the Armidale-Dumaresq, Bellingen, Clarence Valley, Glen Innes-Severn, Guyra, Inverell, Tenterfield, Uralla and Walcha Local Government Areas but may occur elsewhere on the New England Tablelands.

### Why is it important?

Only a small area (less than 15%) of the original distribution of Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest remains, and much of this is in poor condition. A large proportion of the remainder of this community is threatened by clearing and timber harvesting, grazing, weed invasion and too-frequent burning.

## Description of the community

### The tree layer

Common canopy species include Ribbon Gum, Mountain Gum, Snow Gum and occasionally Black Sallee. There may also be a number of other eucalypt species which occasionally occur.

## How can I identify an area of Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest?

The following is a list of key characteristics to help identify areas of Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest.

- Is the site on the New England Tablelands?
- Is the vegetation a grassy open forest with sparse shrubs throughout?
- Does the tree layer contain any of the following: Ribbon Gum, Mountain Gum, Snow Gum, or occasionally Black Sallee?

If you answer yes to the above questions, the area is likely to consist of Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest.



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Mountain Gum

### The shrub layer

The shrub layer generally comprises a sparse distribution of shrubs including Silver Wattle (*Acacia dealbata*), Egg and Bacon Pea (*Pultenaea microphylla*) and Rice Flower (*Pimelia linifolia*).

### The ground layer

There is usually a dense to very dense grassy ground cover dominated by Snow Grass (*Poa sieberiana* var. *sieberiana*), Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri* var. *labillardieri*), Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda australis*) and Common Wheatgrass (*Elymus scaber*). Native herbs are also common.

### Characteristic species

A list of canopy trees and shrub-layer plants that characterise a patch of Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest is provided in the Table below. Not all the species listed need to occur at any one site for it to be considered Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest, and there may also be additional species that are not included in the table.

### Variation in the community

At heavily disturbed sites only some of the species which characterise the community may be present. In addition, above ground plants of some species may not be present, but may be represented below ground in the soil seed banks or as bulbs, corms, rhizomes or rootstocks.

## Species List

Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest is characterised by the species listed in Table 1 below. The species present at any site will be influenced by the size of the site, recent rainfall or drought conditions and by its disturbance (including fire and logging) history. Note that **NOT ALL** the species listed below need to be present at any one site for it to constitute Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name
<b>Trees</b>		<i>Cullen tenax</i>	
<i>Eucalyptus dalrympleana</i> subsp. <i>heptantha</i>	Mountain Gum	<i>Cynoglossum australe</i>	
<i>Eucalyptus pauciflora</i>	Snow Gum, White Gum	<i>Desmodium varians</i>	Slender Tick-trefoil
<i>Eucalyptus stellulata</i>	Black Sallee	<i>Dichondra repens</i>	Kidney Weed
<i>Eucalyptus viminalis</i>	Ribbon Gum	<i>Diuris abbreviata</i>	An orchid
<b>Shrubs/Small trees</b>		<i>Epilobium billardierianum</i>	Willowherb
<i>Acacia dealbata</i>	Silver Wattle	<i>Euchiton gymnocephalus</i>	Cudweed
<i>Exocarpos cupressiformis</i>	Native Cherry	<i>Galium ciliare</i>	
<i>Pimelea linifolia</i>	Rice Flower	<i>Geranium solanderi</i>	Native Geranium
<i>Pultenaea microphylla</i>	Native Pea	<i>Hybanthus monopetalus</i>	Slender Violet-bush
<b>Grasses</b>		<i>Hydrocotyle laxiflora</i>	Stinking Pennywort
<i>Dichelachne micrantha</i>		<i>Hypericum gramineum</i>	Small St John's Wort
<i>Dichopogon fimbriatus</i>		<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	Spiny-headed Mat Rush
<i>Elymus scaber</i>	Wheatgrass	<i>Luzula densiflora</i>	Juncus
<i>Lachnagrostis filiformis</i>	Bent Grass	<i>Poranthera microphylla</i>	
<i>Poa labillardierei</i> var. <i>labillardierei</i>	Tussock	<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	Bracken Fern
<i>Poa sieberiana</i> var. <i>sieberiana</i>	Snow Grass	<i>Ranunculus lappaceus</i>	Native Buttercup
<i>Themeda australis</i>	Kangaroo Grass	<i>Rubus parvifolius</i>	Native Raspberry
<b>Herbs/Ferns</b>		<i>Rumex brownii</i>	Swamp Dock
<i>Acaena agnipila</i>		<i>Scleranthus biflorus</i>	
<i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i>	-	<i>Senecio bipinnatisectus</i>	
<i>Ajuga australis</i>	Austral Bugle	<i>Senecio sp. E</i>	
<i>Ammobium alatum</i>		<i>Stellaria pungens</i>	Prickly Starwort
<i>Asperula conferta</i>	Common Woodruff	<i>Thesium australe</i>	Australe Toadflax
<i>Brachyscome nova-anglica</i>	Native Daisy	<i>Viola betonicifolia</i>	Native Violet
<i>Bracteantha bracteata</i>	Golden Everlasting	<i>Veronica calycina</i>	Hairy Speedwell
<i>Bulbine bulbosa</i>	Golden Lily	<i>Wahlenbergia stricta</i> subsp. <i>stricta</i>	Native Bluebell
<i>Craspedia variabilis</i>	Billy Buttons	<b>Vines</b>	
		<i>Glycine clandestina</i>	

### What does this mean for my property?

As a listed EEC under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest has significant conservation value and some activities may require consent or approval. Please contact the Department of Environment and Climate Change for further information.



Ribbon Gum Leaves

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### Determining the conservation value of remnants

The degree of disturbance (i.e. condition) of many remnants can vary, from almost pristine to highly modified. It is important to note that even small patches or areas that have had past disturbance such as selective logging, fire or grazing may still



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Snow Gum

be important remnants of Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest and be considered the EEC. Where difficulties arise when faced with decisions on whether particular sites are Ribbon Gum-Mountain Gum-Snow Gum Grassy Forest, expert advice may be needed.

Retaining mature native vegetation or EECs for conservation purposes may attract incentive funding. Funding is allocated to landholders by the local Catchment Management Authority (CMA) according to the priorities set out in their Catchment Action Plan and strategies. For more information contact your local CMA or email: [info@nativevegetation.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@nativevegetation.nsw.gov.au)

## For further assistance

This and other EEC guidelines are available on the DECC website: at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)

The references listed below also provide further information on EECs.

- NSW Scientific Committee Determinations: <http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/Final+determinations>
- Department of Environment and Climate Change (NSW) Threatened Species profiles: <http://www.threatenedspecies.environment.nsw.gov.au/tsprofile/index.aspx>
- Botanic Gardens Trust plant identification assistance: [http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/information\\_about\\_plants/botanical\\_info/plant\\_identification](http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/information_about_plants/botanical_info/plant_identification)
- Brooker, M. and Kleinig, D. (1990) *Field Guide to Eucalypts of South-eastern Australia, Vol 2*. Inkata, Melbourne.
- Harden, G. (ed) *Flora of NSW Vols 1 – 4* (1990-2002). NSW University Press.
- Harden, G., McDonald, W. and Williams, J. (2006) *Rainforest Trees and Shrubs – A Field Guide to their identification*. Gwen Harden Publishing, Nambucca Heads.



Snow Gum with Black Sallee in background



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Snow Gum leaves

**Disclaimer:** The Department of Environment and Climate Change has prepared this document as a guide only. The information provided is not intended to be exhaustive. It does not constitute legal advice. Users of this guide should do so at their own risk and should seek their own legal and other expert advice in identifying endangered ecological communities. The Department of Environment and Climate Change accepts no responsibility for errors or omissions in this guide or for any loss or damage arising from its use.