

Mid Lachlan Landcare supports district farming practice through its participation in the **Box Gum Grassy Woodland Habitat on Farms Project**, inviting farmers with an interest in natural capital (native vegetation and wildlife) to get involved. Natural capital on farms is becoming more valued as it increasingly disappears from the Australian farming landscape. **Some Grassy Box Woodlands in NSW are now classified as critically endangered** and it's vital that what remains is protected and given the opportunity to expand.



Case Study

a **Box Gum Grassy Woodland Habitat on Farms (BGGWHOF) Project**



Nanami's 2024 BGGWHOF Project.

Nanami, was settled in 1901 when Tim Wright's great grandfather arrived by bicycle after a stint in the goldfields. When Tim, his wife Ash, and sister Liz Mitchel, took over the Eugowra family farm in the mid 1990s drought, they felt the intensive farming techniques of Tim's forebears had made the property harsh and unresponsive. Tim's background in agronomy and Ash's South African heritage in caring for native flora and fauna, enabled them to take a fresh outlook on managing Nanami.

The issues

Much of Nanami is situated in intermittent flood zones. Cropping and overgrazing had led to poor soil hydrology resulting in very hard or very soft surfaces.

The creek running through Nanami was heavily cleared. Rabbit plagues had destabilised its banks and fast-moving flood waters were resulting in large-scale erosion.

Flood gates regularly in need of repair after most rain events, due to the force of fast-moving water.

Tim and Ash describe Nanami's previous management as '*inappropriately European*' and believe '*the overgrazing on its sandy loam erodible soils has led to significant land degradation*'.

They saw their few remaining large hollow bearing native trees as valuable natural capital and in need of improved connectivity and protection from stock.



The solutions

The initial management strategy was to focus on soil health. They increased ground cover by changing from a cropping to a grazing enterprise (growing diverse perennial pastures) and set about ‘removing the pans that lucerne pastures had given us.’ Through some support from the Catchment Management Authority (CMA)’s riparian restoration fund, they set about controlling the problematic creek. *‘This is a large catchment on the western edge of the Nangar range and the CMA improved our understanding of flood zones and erosion control in the face of many external factors. The revegetation of 6000 shrubs and trees along the creek (now affectionately known as Kim’s Flat) solved all the soil and erosion problems we were having in this area. We also noticed our floodgates didn’t get the wash and damage that we’d seen from previous floods’.* – Tim Wright



Different sections of the same gully (April 2024). Water moves slower through the fenced-out section resulting in erosion control, soil stability and the retention of moisture both above and below the ground.

Having stabilized their creek, Tim and Ash turned to the health of their trees and saw value in linking them to each other and to remnant vegetation in neighbouring hills. They have continued to apply for funding from various sources.

Funding from the Box Gum Grassy Woodland Habitat on Farms (BGGWHOF) Project

Two sites on Nanami have been selected to receive funding from BGGWHOF Project. **Site one** (completed 2021) comprises six hectares of remnant vegetation that has been fenced out. It now forms a cluster that connects a hillside to the Lachlan River floodplain via 20-meter paddock trees across 60ha of farmland and eventually to an ephemeral lagoon.

Site two contains remnant box gums (grey box, yellow box, and white cypress), many of which bear hollows. It comprises 1.75 ha of land, its fencing and endemic plantings are to be completed in 2024. The site is important because it connects to a tree corridor and wash erosion site and to an endemic open forest rocky ridgeline.

‘It costs so much to guard trees and fence out land. These funding programs tell us what we are doing is important and their support inspires us to keep going,’ – Ash Wright.

Key facts about the BGGWHOF Project

- **landholders funded to fence out almost 8 ha of grassy box woodland.**
- **protects natural capital.**
- **protects vanishing old growth trees from stock damage.**
- **creates habitat for beneficial native species** (eg. a native spider that controls red legged earth mites).
- **creates connectivity** (eg. acts as a stepping stone for endangered, threatened and other native species) **to navigate across property.**
- **project area requires ongoing management and maintenance** (including weed and pest control).



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