



FLORA AND FAUNA GUARANTEE - SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FINAL RECOMMENDATION ON A NOMINATION FOR LISTING

Montane Swamp Complex Community

Date of receipt of the nomination: 13 January 1989
Date of preliminary recommendation: 22 January 1991
Date of final recommendation: 22 May 1991

File No.: 89/0160

Validity:

The nomination is for a valid item and the prescribed information was provided.

The nominated community is clearly described in such a way as to be distinguished from all other communities. The Montane Swamp Complex is defined in Carr and McMahon (1988). It is a mosaic of treeless, cold air drainage-line vegetation, with a large number of herbaceous species. The dominant species is *Baeckea utilis* (Mountain Baeckea), and other important species are *Carex gaudichaudiana* (Fen sedge), *Baumea gunnii* (Slender Twig-rush), *Festuca asperula* (Graceful Fescue), *Empodisma minus* (Spreading rope-rush), *Poa costiniana* (Tussock-grass), *Blechnum penna-marina* (Alpine Water-fern), and *Sphagnum cristatum*.

The community is not narrowly defined. It has been clearly identified in three separate reports (Carr and McMahon 1988, Gullan & Westaway 1988 and Earl 1990) and it is known to be restricted in its distribution on a statewide basis.

Eligibility for listing as a community under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee:

The nominated item satisfies at least one criterion of the set of criteria prepared and maintained under Section 11 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, and stated in Schedule 1 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Regulations 1990*.

Evidence that criteria are satisfied:

Criterion 2.2 *The community is significantly prone to future threats which are likely to result in extinction.*

Evidence:

The largest known locality of 21 hectares, which represents 47% of the total area of the community in Victoria, is threatened by construction of a mining tailings dam (Carr & McMahon 1988, Gullan & Westaway 1988), either directly on the 21 ha. site or very close by. This use would destroy or seriously threaten the community at the site (Carr & McMahon 1988), and significantly reduce the total area of the community (Gullan & Westaway 1988).

Sub-criterion 2.2.1 *The community is very rare in terms of the total area it covers or it has a very restricted distribution or it has been recorded from only a few localities.*

Evidence:

The known extent of the community is approximately 44 hectares, comprising seven sites, the largest of which is 21 hectares (Gullan & Westaway 1988). Of 16,000 vegetation quadrats recorded in Victoria (including 1000 in alpine treeless vegetation) no similar community has been discovered (Department of Conservation and Environment Flora Information System).

The data presented on distribution and abundance are the result of comprehensive surveys and provide clear and strong evidence that the community is very rare in terms of abundance and distribution.

Background Information

- Four of the species recorded as components of the community are categorised as "rare" in Gullan *et al* (1990).
- Carr & McMahon (1988) state that the Montane Swamp Complex community is of State Significance.
- The community is apparently endemic to Victoria.
- The 21 hectare site ("T1") is possibly a distinct sub-community which could be eligible for listing in its own right.

Advertisement for public comment

In accordance with the requirements of Section 14 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the preliminary recommendation was advertised for public comment for a period of at least 30 days.

The preliminary recommendation was advertised in:

"The Age" - on 6 February 1991

"Bairnsdale Advertiser" - on 15 February 1991

Government Gazette - on 6 February 1991

Submissions closed on 8 April 1991.

Further evidence provided:

A submission was received, but no new evidence was provided to warrant a review of the Scientific Advisory Committee's preliminary recommendation that the community is eligible for listing.

Documentation

The published information, research data and additional evidence provided to the SAC have been assessed. To the best of their knowledge, the SAC believes that the data presented are not the subject of scientific dispute and the inferences drawn are reasonable and well supported.

Final Recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee:

The Scientific Advisory Committee concludes that on the evidence available the nominated item is eligible for listing in accordance with Section 11(1) of the Act because primary criterion 2.2 is satisfied.

The SAC also concludes that sub-criterion 2.2.1 has been satisfied and that no evidence exists to suggest that primary criterion 2.2 cannot be satisfied as a consequence of sub-criterion 2.2.1 being satisfied.

The Scientific Advisory Committee recommends that the nominated item be supported for listing on Schedule 2 of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

Selected references:

Belcher, C. (1988) *A survey of the vertebrate fauna of the dam sites of the amended Benambra proposal*. Report to Kinhill Engineers P/L.

Carr, G.W. & McMahon, A.R.G. (1988) *The Benambra Project - Wilga and Currawong. Modified Project Description and Environmental Information. Vegetation Data and Assessment of Botanical Significance*. Ecological Horticulture Pty. Ltd. Report to Kinhill Engineers P/L.

Earl, G. (1990) Investigation of four small catchments in the Tambo State Forest. Unpublished report to the Bairnsdale Region, Department of Conservation and Environment, November 1990.

Gullan, P.K., Cheal, D.C. & Walsh, N.G. (1990) *Rare or Threatened Plants in Victoria*. Department of Conservation and Environment, Victoria.

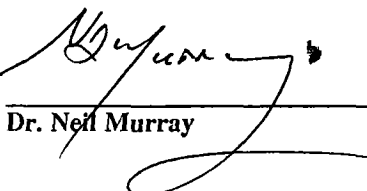
Gullan, P.K. & Westaway, J. (1988) *Proposal for Tailings Dam for the Benambra Project. Investigation of additional sites in Montane Swamp Vegetation*. Unpub. report, Flora Survey Group, Dept. of Conservation, Forests and Lands.

Kinhill Engineers Pty. Ltd. & Macquarie Resources Ltd (1987) *The Benambra Project, Wilga and Currawong*. Environmental Effects Statement, November 1987. Kinhill Engineers and Macquarie Resources, Melbourne.

McMahon A.R.G. (1988) *Aerial survey of Montane Swamp Complex vegetation in the Benambra region, North-East Victoria*. Report to Kinhill Engineers P/L.

Endorsement by the Convenor of the Scientific Advisory Committee

Date


Dr. Neil Murray

19 June, 1991