

14. Colin Officer Flora Reserve



Colin Officer Flora Reserve is highly valued for its rich diversity of orchids, lilies and other wildflowers. It surrounds a large dam and the combination of bushland and the dam attract many different wildlife. The Reserve is protected with a Trust for Nature covenant including a fenced high conservation area. Walking tracks around the Reserve are accessible from behind Broadford Golf Course carpark off Horwood Road, on the western side of the reserve or along a rough bushland link from the top of Davidson Street.

This reserve is on the land of the Taungurung People. We acknowledge their Elders past and present and emerging, and their care of Country over many millennia. We ask that all people respect this ancient heritage and care for the land we now share.

Directions

The Reserve is accessible from the carpark at the Broadford Golf Club. Coming from Broadford on the Broadford Wandong Road, turn right after the golf course up Horwood Road and follow the track right into the carpark. The Reserve is a short walk from the top end of the carpark.

The Reserve is also accessible through a gate into the western side of the Reserve.

Walking Tracks



Loop Walk (1.24 km): From the information board at the top end of the Golf Club carpark, follow the track on the left side of the dam to the entrance of the Reserve. From here, the track continues beside the dam and creekline. At the seat just past the dam, a rough track branches right across the creek and then follows back near the creek to the dam wall and across to the carpark. Note that some sections may be wet and slippery, the creek crossing is rough and the descent from the dam wall is steep and slippery.

The loop has several branches:

Link to Horwood/Water Trust Road: at the Reserve entrance, veer left behind the seat and walk along the vehicle track to the bottom gate on Horwood Road (220m).

South end walk: continue south past the seat/creek crossing, an open grassland area and a small pond. Overgrown tracks lead to the grassy swale at the end of the Reserve. Water channels come from Goulburn Valley Water's Water Treatment Plant.

Horwood Road Loop: branching off the south track, a walking track veers left 100m up the slope to the top gate on Horwood Road. From here, a loop down Horwood Road past the middle gate to the bottom gate will link you back to the entrance. Distance of loop from entrance 2.13 km.

Western entrance: a track on the west side of the dam branches 30m to a gate 30m into the housing estate.

Davidson Street route: there is a line of bushland through the Donaldson Street Bushlands at the top of Donaldson Street and across the top of the golf course that almost runs through to the northern end of the Reserve. There are no definite tracks and the end near Colin Officer Flora Reserve involves stepping out into the golf course. It is not recommended until a safer route has been developed.



Mobility access is poor. The top of the dam wall is flat but the access is steep.



Table is available at the entrance near the dam, with additional seats in two other locations.



Toilets may be available beside the Broadford Golf Club Clubhouse, or High Street Broadford.

Landform and Geology



The Reserve is on the west facing slope of a ridge running down to the gully and dam. The ridge is a mix of sandstones and finer layers known as Broadford Formation (Silurian 420-440mya). Rock is exposed on the northwest slope including some breccia with fragments of rock welded together with quartz veins similar to the top of Mount Piper.

Lines of shallow diggings suggest early mining exploration.

Vegetation



The upper dry north-west facing slopes have [Heathy Dry Forest](#) with some sheltered patches of Valley Heathy Forest along Horwood Road. Trees are mostly Red Box, Red Stringybark and Long-leaved Box with the rich diversity of wattles, low and prostrate shrubs and herbs that first attracted botanists to the site. The lower slopes and creek-line are [Grassy Woodlands](#) with some flatter wetter swales of [Plains Grassy Woodland](#). These woodlands have Grey Box on the slopes and Yellow Box near the gully.

The area was logged for timber and firewood but never fully cleared. Many of the trees are small and either coppices from cut stumps or regrowth that is so dense it is inhibiting the growth of the understorey, particularly on the dry slopes. Large trees are uncommon.

The understorey is mostly Golden Wattle and Black Wattle. Sifton Bush has replaced many of the grassy areas in the Reserve over the past 20 years, but this is now ageing and senescing and often has a thick grassy groundcover. A wide swale at the southern end of the Reserve is kept as open grassland with slashing.

A plant list is in preparation.

Wildlife



Large trees are uncommon in the Reserve and tree hollows almost non-existent. Community groups and the Council have put up several best boxes for Sugar Gliders (sighted in the Reserve) and Brush-tailed Phascogales (not yet seen). Kangaroos are a common sighting in the Reserve, attracted by the shelter plus food from the nearby golf course.

Brown snakes and the fascinating Bearded Dragon are occasionally seen.

A wide variety of other species have been recorded over the years but this can vary widely between seasons. As the shrub layers have expanded, the diversity of bush birds has increased, and dry years will bring many different waterbirds to the dam.

Species lists are in preparation.

Aboriginal history

The Reserve is on the land of the Taungurung people.

History after colonisation

Squatters took over the land from the late 1830s, and these runs were broken up into smaller freehold properties from the 1850's. The Reserve was part of this process. The subsequent clearing of the land was hastened by the railway in 1872 that allowed large amounts of firewood to be sent to Melbourne. Many trees in the Reserve were felled but strangely the land was not fully cleared and trees regrew, many as coppices from the original stumps. There are also signs of mining exploration.

In the late 1990s, the Reserve was part of a larger area proposed for urban subdivision. Lobbying by BEAM members led to the recognition of the natural values of the Reserve and its creation by Mitchell Shire Council as part of a larger subdivision plan. Broadford Land Management Group, a

local volunteer group, worked with the Council to manage the Reserve through to 2020. The Reserve was covenanted for conservation with Trust for Nature in 2012.

Management

The Reserve is owned and managed by Mitchell Shire Council with some help from local volunteers. The Reserve surrounds the dam enclosure (marked by old fence posts) which is also Council property but managed by Broadford Golf Club. The Club uses the dam for irrigation.

Further information

Mitchell Shire Council:

Information on the Reserve at <https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/our-region/parks-and-playgrounds/colin-officer-flora-reserve>

Colin Officer Flora Reserve Management Plan: in preparation.

Taungurung Land and Water Council at <https://taungurung.com.au/>

Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement at <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/taungurung-recognition-and-settlement-agreement>.

Goulburn Broken CMA Revegetation Guide: information on different ecological vegetation communities, plant communities and plants in the Sugarloaf zone at <https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/revegetation/zones/sugarloaf>.

Acknowledgements

This Reserve Note was prepared by BEAM Mitchell Environment Group. Thanks to Mitchell Shire Council for their assistance and support. Information was obtained from a draft management plan by Peter Mitchell.

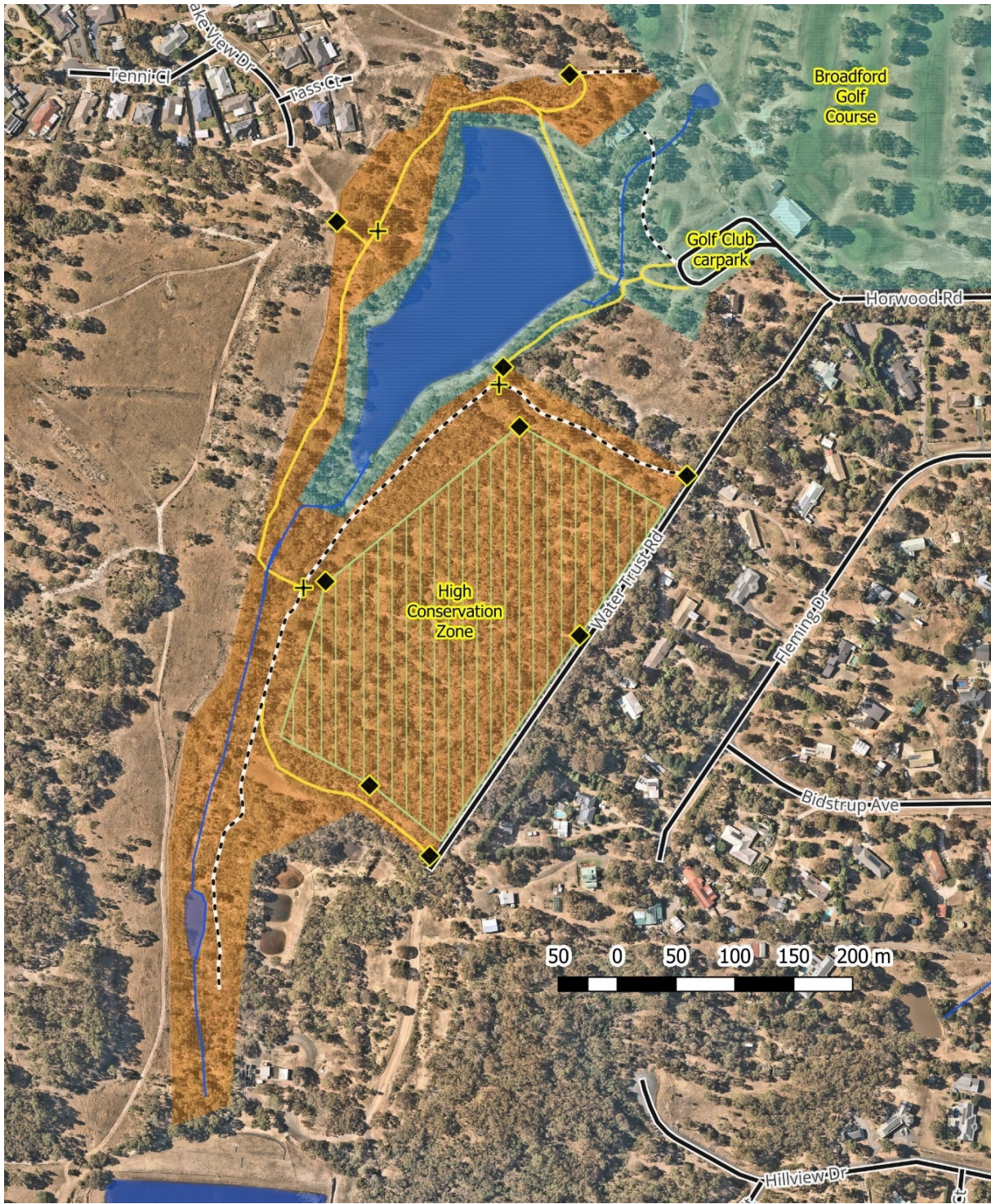
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These notes are a work in progress. If you have any comments or additional information on the nature and ecological history of the Colin Officer Flora Reserve, please contact us at <https://www.beam.org.au/contact>.



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	Colin Officer Flora Reserve		Roads		Waterways and dams
	Broadford Golf Club		Vehicle Tracks		Gateways
	High Conservation Area		Walking Tracks		Seats