



Information Sheet 02

River Bend

Site visits

Introduction

Before you can submit a bid, a *River Bend BushBids* officer needs to visit your property to discuss management options and assess the conservation value of your site/s. The conservation value of your site/s will be assessed on the basis of: the condition of the native vegetation, its significance in a landscape context, regional biodiversity priorities, and with reference to existing information on the distribution of native plants, animals and vegetation communities.

Different management options will produce different landholder management services and a different 'score' representing the benefits from managing that site. Landholder management services are a measure of the management commitments and actions that you propose to undertake. The conservation value and management scores for your site will be combined with the cost of your bid to produce a Biodiversity Benefits Index that will identify the 'value for money' for biodiversity conservation of your bid and each bid from other landholders. (Refer to *River Bend BushBids* Information Sheet 'Submission and assessment of bids' for further information.)

Conservation value

During the site visit to your property, the *River Bend BushBids* officer will:

1. Discuss the history of management of the site/s and your ideas for management in the future.
2. Identify the distinct native vegetation and natural wetland sites.
3. Identify the native vegetation communities present and advise you of their conservation status.
4. Advise you of any significant or threatened plants or animals likely to occur in the area and discuss any additional information you may have on the presence of significant plants or animals that may enhance your score.
5. Assess the significance of your patch of native vegetation within the broader landscape on the basis of:
 - the size of the patch of vegetation and
 - the amount and location of other native vegetation in the neighbourhood.
6. Assess the condition of your native vegetation sites on the basis of the following condition indicators:
 - number of native plant species present,

- presence of weeds, extent of weed cover, and level of threat posed to native plants and animals,
- proportion of ground cover compared with bare ground,
- structural diversity (presence and cover of native plant species and variety of plant life forms),
- evidence of regeneration of native plants,
- tree and shrub health*,
- tree habitat value (number of large trees with healthy canopies and or hollows per hectare)*,
- presence of tree hollows* and
- presence of fallen logs and trees*.

For each condition indicator, the site will be compared to a set of benchmarks established for that particular vegetation type.

After all bids are submitted, *River Bend BushBids* will determine a score for the conservation value of your site that is based on the above factors. During the site visit the *River Bend BushBids* officer will only be able to advise you of the general significance of your site. However, before you prepare your bid, you will be provided with information about the condition of your site and the relative value of the management services you are offering. (For details see *River Bend BushBids* 'Management and vegetation information' Information Sheet.)

Additional information

Some additional information will be collected during the site visit, for example total grazing pressure, lerp and mistletoe presence, and feral animal abundance and frequency. This information will not be used in the bid assessment process, but may help to guide actions identified in the management plan.

How can I make sure my site is in the best possible condition for the assessment?

Once your registration of interest in *River Bend BushBids* has been confirmed, it is recommended that you remove stock from the site until the site assessment has been undertaken. This will allow your site to be assessed at its full potential.

* These condition indicators will not be relevant for some types of native vegetation, e.g. native grasslands.



Photo: C. Grant



Photo: M. Humphrey



Photo: C. Nicolai

Management services

Maintenance and improvement services are the management services that a landholder agrees to provide, for the duration of the management agreement, to improve the condition, quality and/or extent of native vegetation on their property.

You can propose to provide maintenance services only or both maintenance and improvement services. Importantly, the services you propose must be over and above those actions you are already required to provide under current arrangements and/or legislation.

Maintenance services include protection of existing native vegetation by excluding stock and retaining dead trees and fallen logs/branches.

Typical improvement services may include active management of existing native vegetation by controlling weeds and feral animals or other threats.

The management services included in the management plan will be determined by the conservation values of the site, the condition of the site, and the range of actions that are acceptable to the landholder.

Your maintenance and improvement services score will be based on:

- the actions you propose to protect and maintain the current site condition (the better the existing condition and the more substantial your commitments, the higher your score will be),
- the actions you propose to improve site condition (the greater the improvements your actions will achieve, the higher your score will be),
- the size of the area you propose to protect and manage (the larger the area, the higher your score will be) and
- your willingness to permanently protect the site under a Heritage Agreement (through an existing Heritage Agreement or a commitment to initiate a Heritage Agreement).

To organise a site visit

Register an expression of interest by calling *River Bend BushBids* on Tel: 1300 847 450. A *River Bend BushBids* officer will then contact you to arrange a time to visit your site.

Please don't worry if you do not hear back immediately. Depending upon the demand for site assessments, it may take a short while to schedule all site visits.

Call 1300 847 450

for more information or to register
an Expression of Interest