ACT Government

Office of Nature Conservation

An update

- Brett Howland and Kristy Gould

ACT Government

Content

- Habitat restoration activity
- Spatial restoration prioritization
- Swainsona Recta translocation
- Weed management
- Small mammals
- Pest animals
- Other things

Habitat Restoration Program - Conserving Canberra Initiative

- 651k for habitat restoration over 2 years.
- Broader Restoration Team:
  - Ngunnawal partnership
    - embed cultural practices into restoration
    - Cultural advisor roles
  - Spatial restoration tool and monitoring

- “All in one place” approach.
- Three sites chosen to showcase.
- Considerations:
  - Threatened species/communities.
  - Building on previous restoration work.
  - Input from Ngunnawal community.
  - Capacity for ongoing work (PCS, volunteers and community).

Considers objectives:

- Reserve Management Plans
- Woodland strategy
- Threatened Species Action Plans
- Landscape Improvement Plans

AINSLIE/MAJURA

- Threat mitigation in protected plant hotspots.
- Supporting existing ParkCare projects.
- Carry out actions in Landscape Improvement Plans.
- Trial soil chemistry modification to reduce Phalaris.
- Protect and improve bird breeding habitat
- Assess Glossy Black Cockatoo feed trees.
- Small mammal habitat improvements.

URAMBI HILLS/BULLEN RANGE

- Box Gum Woodland
- Declining Woodland Birds
- River corridors and riparian zones
- Aprasia Habitat

- Murrumbidgee river corridor planting.
- Replacing woody weeds with natives
- Fence removal
- Log placement
- Burning Aprasia habitat.
- Creating Grass and forb nodes.
- Ngunnawal-led activities.

NAMADGI

Using Emus in ecological and cultural restoration:

- Workshop with experts.
- Plant desirable food plants.
- Remove weeds.

Forrest connectivity

- create habitat nodes across cleared grassy valleys

Sweet Vernal Grass

- control and rehabilitation
- Spray/mulch/plant

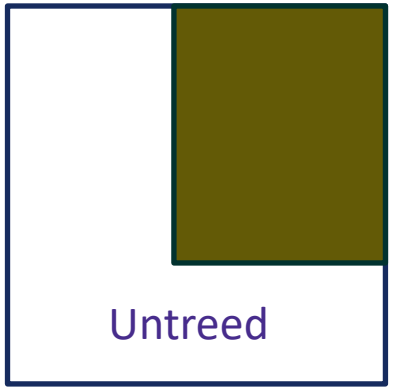
Restoration prioritization

- 2 year position to develop a ‘Spatial Restoration Plan’
- Meredith Cosgrove hired
- Problem Statement - *Large areas of the ACT have and continue to be degraded*
- Questions:
  - What to do where?
  - How do we prioritise our limited resources?
  - How do we track recovery?

An example question “Where do we plant trees?”

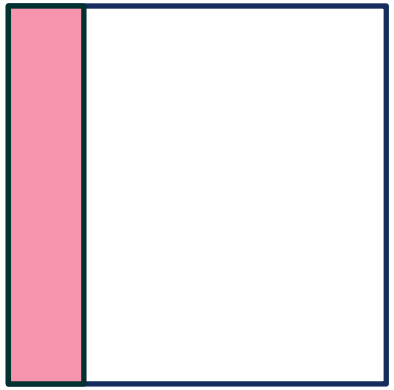
Restoration prioritization - Where do we plant trees

Step 1 use canopy map to work out where we are missing trees



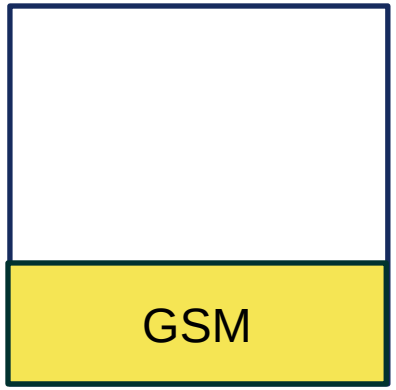
Canopy map

Step 2 Use fire layers (APZ) to restrict where we consider to plant trees



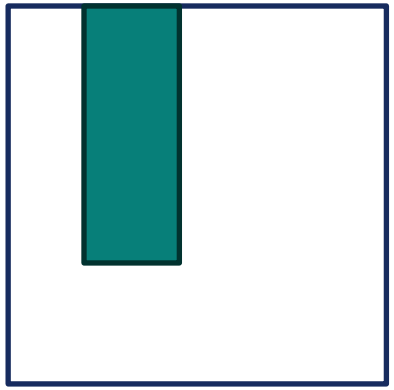
Fire protection zone

Step 3 Threatened species layers to avoid grassland species



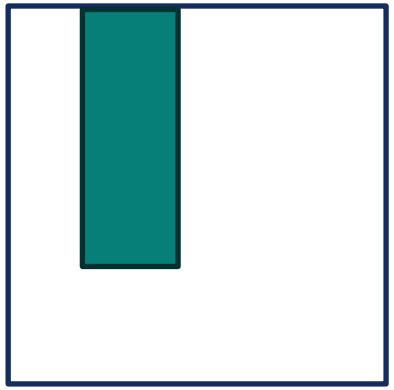
Threatened species

Step 4 Define an area where we can plant trees from what's left



Where to plant

Step 5 Provide more advice on restoration method



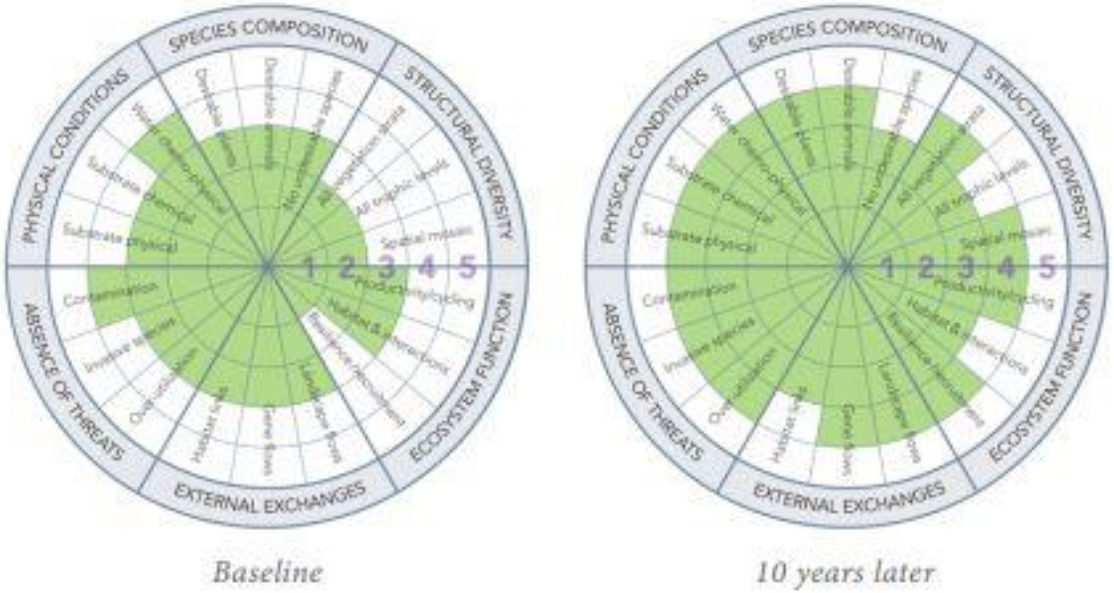
What species
Density
Priority areas

ACT Government

Measuring effectiveness

SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

Recovery Wheel



The **Ecological Recovery Wheel** *is part of the Standards' five-star system for designing and implementing restoration, and for assessing progress as compared to a reference model. See Principle 6.*

Composition

- Plant diversity
- Weeds

Structural Diversity

- Trees
- Shrubs

Ecosystem Function

- Bare ground
- Woody debris

Absence of Threats

- Noisy minor
- Rabbit warrens

Physical Conditions

- Available phosphorus

ACT Government

Small purple-pea *Swainsona Recta*

The issue:

- Endangered in the ACT & NSW
- 5 populations in the ACT with 600 individuals
- 3 having less than 10 pants

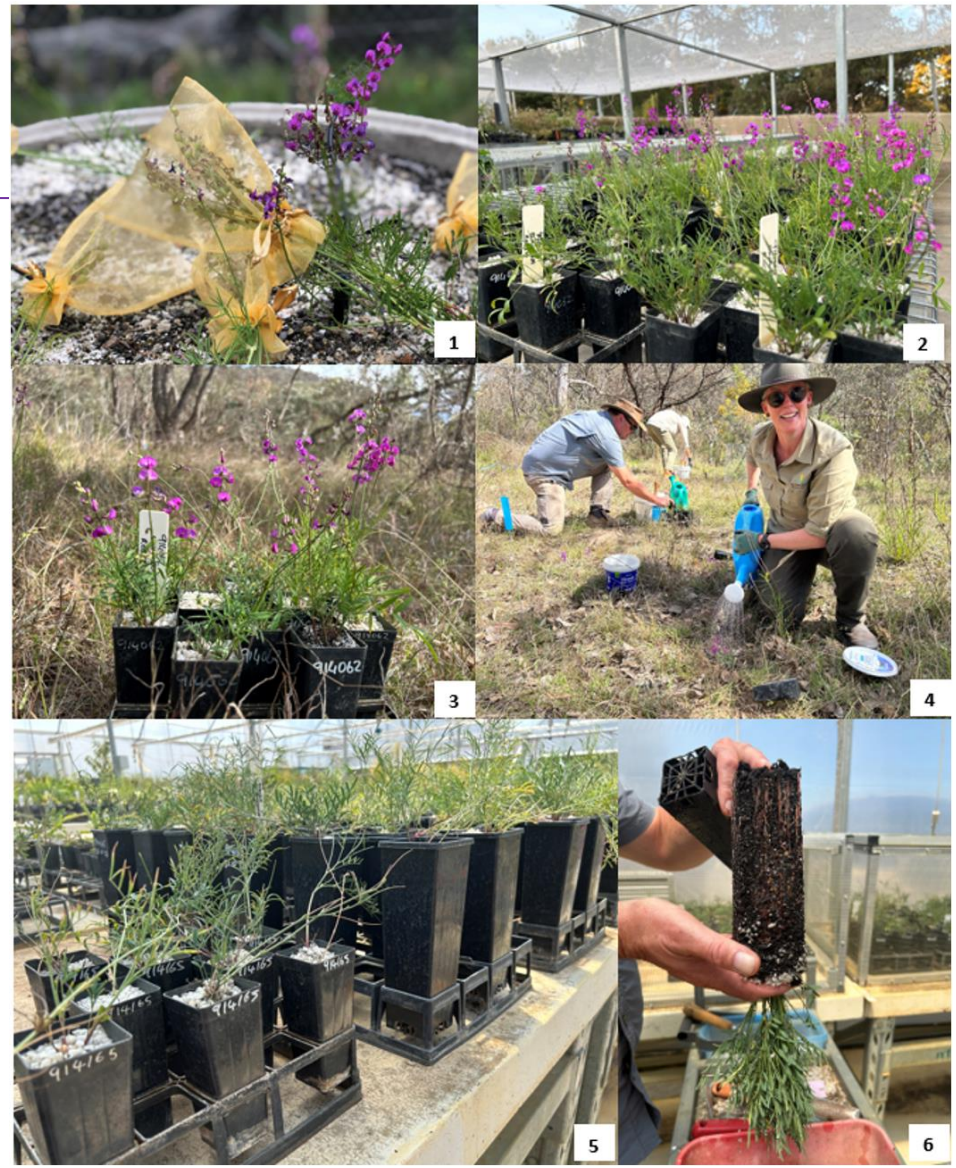
Growing the plant:

- Collected seed from a variety of populations
- Cracked the code in germinating
- ACT Government provided >$50K of funding to grow plants
- Grew up over a thousand plants

Putting it back:

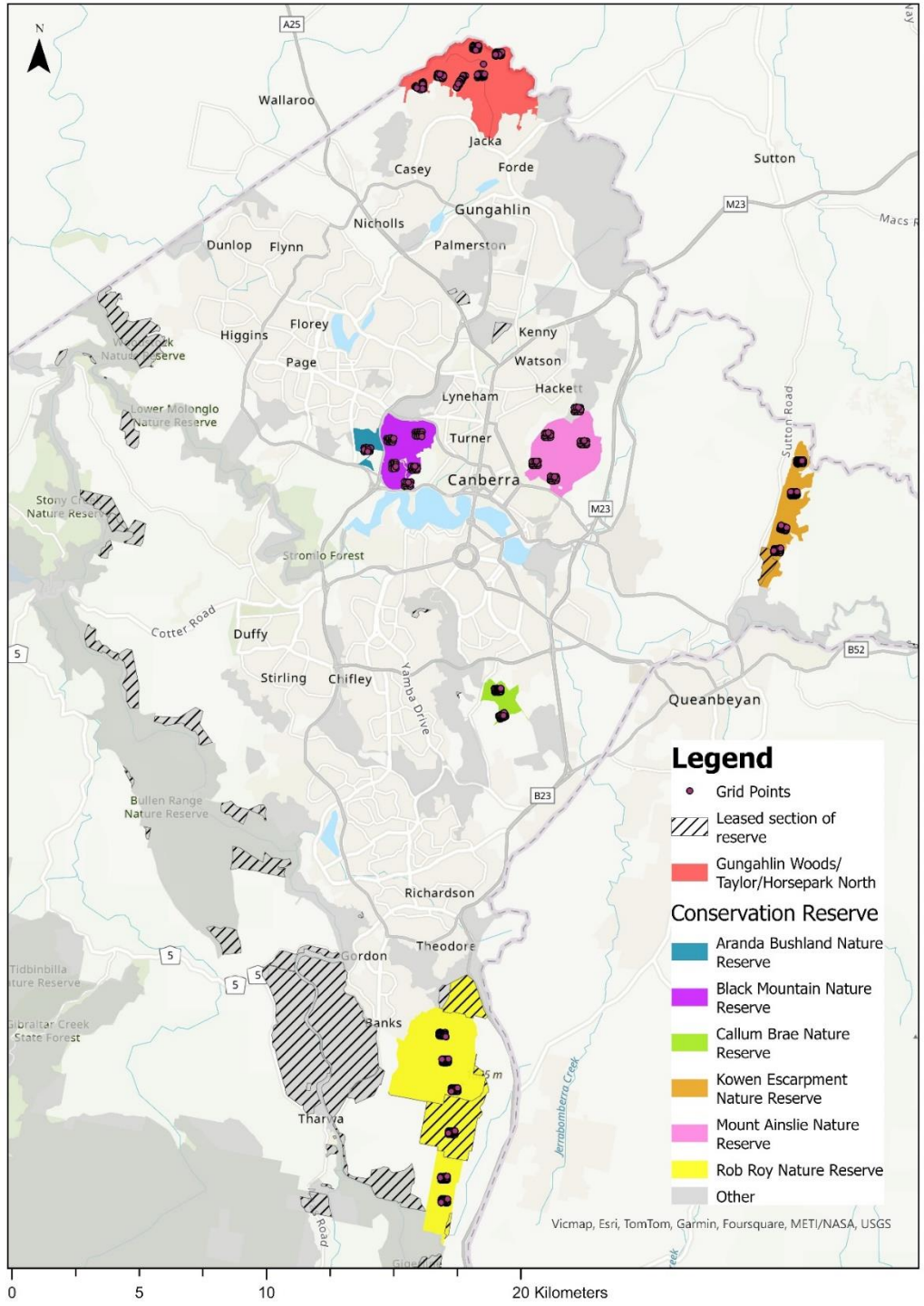
- 400 planted into 4 sites since 2023
- Placed next to wild populations
- 600 more over next 12 months
- Tracking survival and cross breeding success
- Trailing ecological burning to improve establishment conditions.

Emma Cook (ACT Government), Zoe Knapp (Bot Gardens), PCS



Small Mammals

- These species were once found across several inner-city urban reserves.
- But are they still there?
- Surveys occurred at 7 areas with potential areas
- Surveys were performed using grids consisting of cameras (12 white flash, four infrared per grid) and footprint tunnels (discontinued in 2024 due to lack of specificity of results).
- Common Dunnarts were detected in the North Gungahlin Woods, Rob Roy Range and Kowen Escarpment Nature Reserve and *Antechinus* spp. were detected in Kowen and Rob Roy



Pest animals

Foxes

- Masters student working on a collared Canid Pest Ejector trial over the next 18 months.
- Method to kill foxes with limit/no off-target impacts
- Different types of collars are used in Victoria and NT but have never been used in the ACT.
- This could give us a new tool to manage foxes without the risk of harming dingoes or pet dogs.

Cats

- We have poor records for the urban areas of cats in reserves and they don't show up on cameras very often in urban reserves
- In Namadgi we have many more records of cats.
- We know to have big impact on wildlife
- In May trialled of the Safe Pet Tag technology, a new Bluetooth technology for tracking cats
- We have lots of ideas but moving forward slowly in this space as there are many regulatory, social, political, resourcing etc parts to work through.

Other things

Policy Team

- Nature Conservation ACT Review
- Action plan reviews

Urban Team

- Canberra Urban Biodiversity Surveys data (pollinator surveys, grassland reptile surveys, platypus and rakali surveys, small mammal surveys, and grassland, woodland and aquatic-riparian habitat condition surveys) published before the end of the year and thank you for your patience.
- Ecological Network Dashboard to help guide biodiversity hotspots for protection and ecological restoration

ACT Ecological Network Dashboard

Connecting Nature, Connecting People

Choose a species group: None | Fish | Amphibians | Riparian | Mammals | Birds | Grassland Reptiles | Native Bees

How to use

The map will show the Blue-Green Network only when you first open it.

View data: Open the layers menu in the top right corner of the map. Turn on the eye button next to the layer to make the data visible or turn off the eye button to hide data.

Expand data layers: In the layers menu, use the arrow next to a layer to view its components.

Choose a species group: In the top right of the dashboard filter by species group. The UHCP Fragmentation Mapping layers must be visible.

View details: Click on an area of interest to see a pop-up with more information.

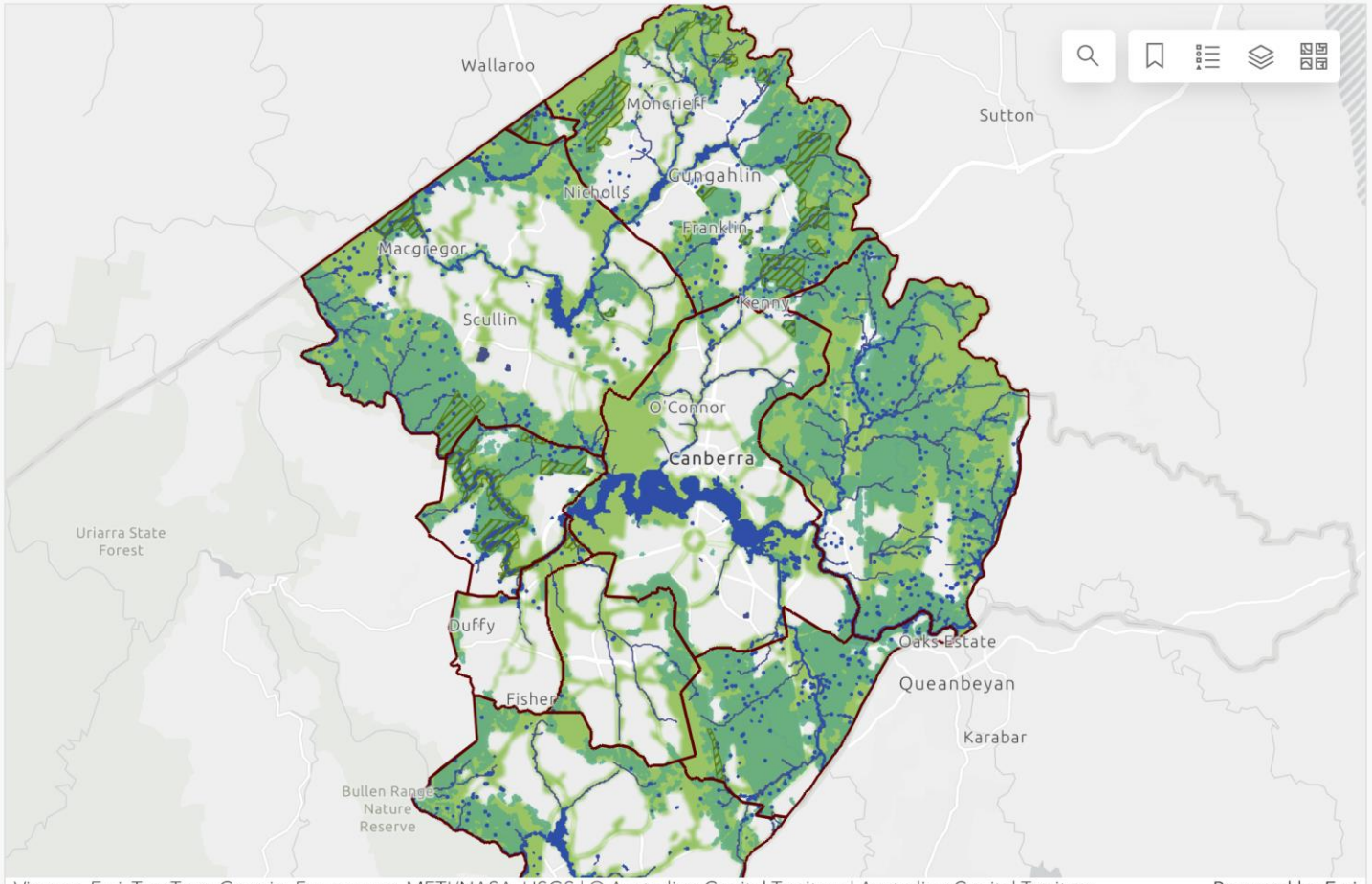
Understanding the map

BLUE-GREEN NETWORK identifies Canberra's major potential habitat areas and the ecological corridors which connect and support them, including the ACT Urban Ecological Network.

The Urban Habitat and Connectivity Project **(UHCP) FRAGMENTATION MAPPING** visualises predicted ecological connectivity/fragmentation with colour:

Connected patches are the same colour and have

Disclaimer: This dashboard is optimised for desktops. It may not be accessible on all tablets and mobile devices. Some users have experienced difficulty viewing this dashboard in Google Chrome. If you are experiencing difficulties, please try another browser (e.g. Edge). The data is complex and may take some time to load. Please email cncp@act.gov.au if you experience any other issues with the dashboard.



Legend

ACT Blue-Green Network

Extent

District Boundaries

Protected Conservation Areas

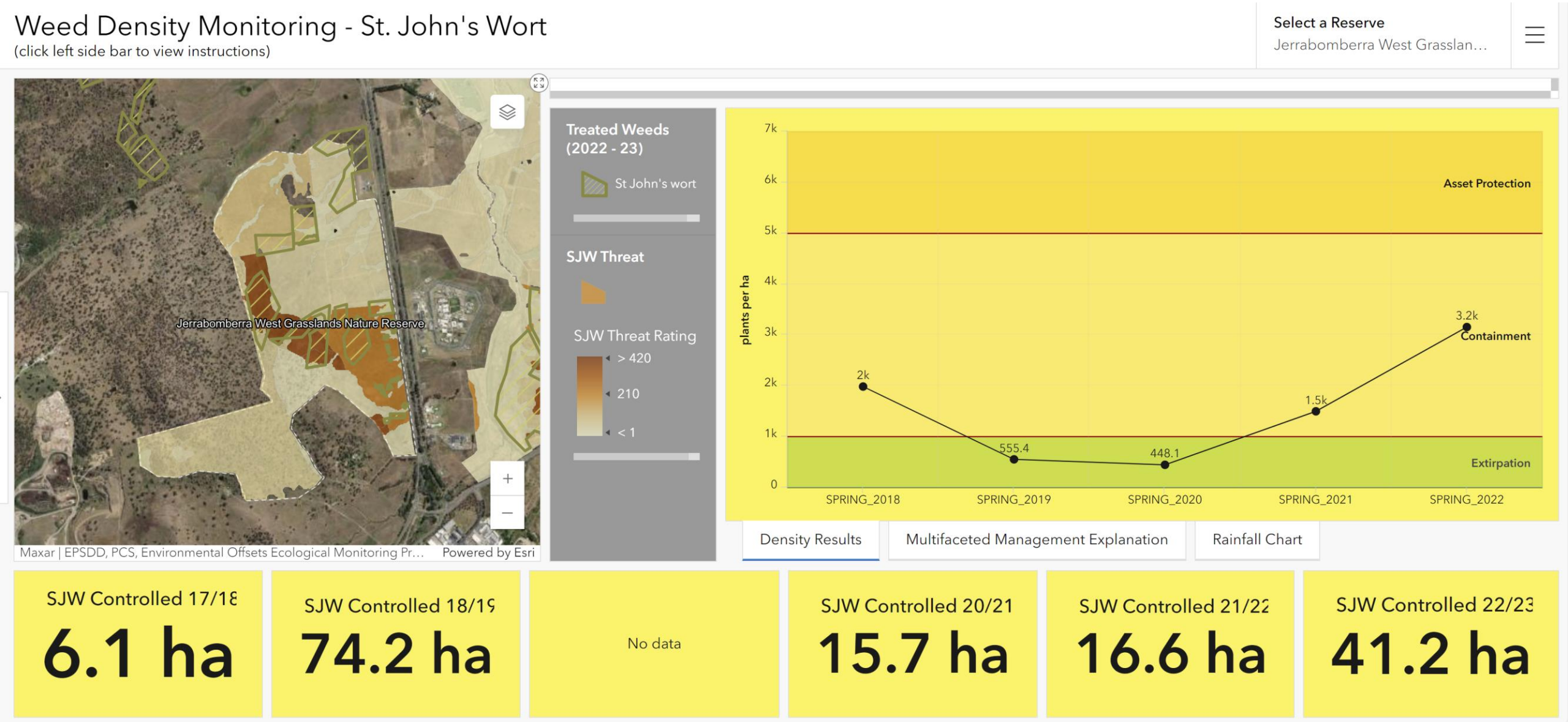
Environmental Offsets

Waterbodies

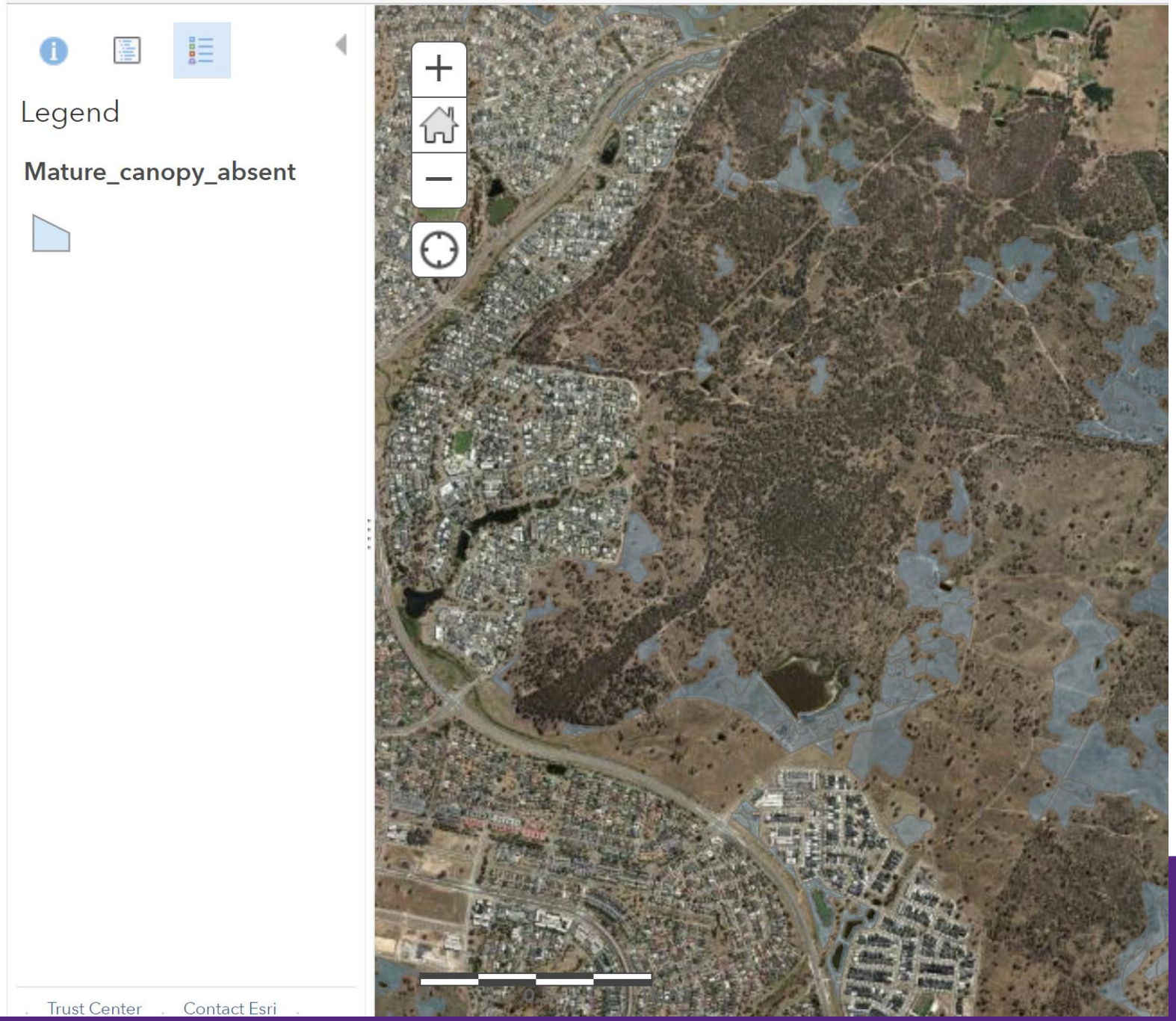
Note: UHCP Fragmentation layers are not shown in the legend due to complexity. Interpretive text is provided in the left panel.

ACT Government

Weed dashboard



Questions



ACT Government