



ADAMS LEAD RESERVE Management Plan

MUDGEE DISTRICT ENVIRONMENT GROUP



Grassy Box Woodland at Adams Lead Reserve

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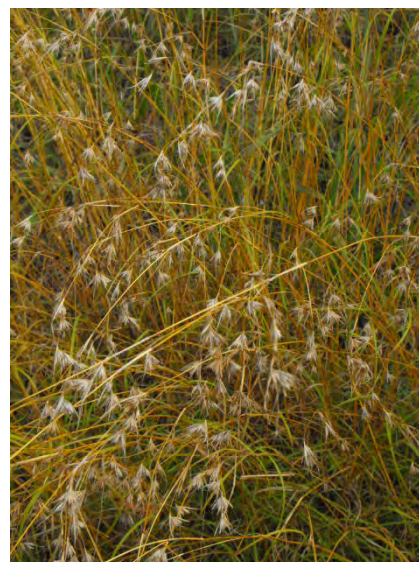
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1. Introduction

Preamble

We respect and acknowledge the Wiradjuri people, the traditional owners of this land. For many generations, on what is now known as Adams Lead Reserve, the people who walked this land gathered food under the shade of the Yellow Box trees.

The Gulgong area was part of the Indigenous trading route from the coast to inland Australia through the Dubbo area. The connection to the east along the Goulburn River was significant because of the low level of the Great Dividing Range in the region. The crossing to the eastern watershed, part way to Ulan, is the lowest access between the coast and inland areas, with no steep escarpments or mountainous terrain.

There is evidence of significant Aboriginal cultural connection to the general area.

The first European settlers brought sheep and cattle and cropping activities. However, the discovery of gold in the Gulgong area saw a major increase in population and the town and district developed into the thriving community that exists today.

Adams Lead Reserve has been managed by the Mudgee District Environment Group since 1989 with the aim of maintaining and enhancing the natural environmental values of the site while protecting the historic values of the old goldfield.

Mudgee and Mid Western Regional Councils have supported this management with the provision of machinery and personnel to slash the boundary fence line, slash and spray blackberries, mow pathways and provide contacts with the community service work program through the Department of Corrective Services.

Mid Western Regional Council has recently confirmed a commitment to provide slashing and spraying on the site twice a year.

This Management Plan provides a basis for a more targeted approach to increasing knowledge of the conservation, cultural heritage and historic values of the site; protecting these values from identified threats; and building partnerships, educational opportunities and community awareness of these values to ensure the long term future of Adams Lead Reserve as a community asset for the Gulgong Township.

Site Description

Adams Lead Reserve is a crown land reserve on the western edge of Gulgong on the Wellington Rd opposite the Gulgong Hospital.

The fenced reserve is 3.297 hectares made up of Lots 409, 431 and 437 DP 755434 in the Parish of Guntawang in Mid Western Regional Council local government area.

The reserve is R95817 for Public Recreation.

The area contains mature remnants of Grassy Box Woodland, historic goldfield diggings and mullock heaps, and a small water body. A small picnic area with BBQ has been developed near the entrance.

Location map



Source: Central West Catchment Management Authority

Executive Summary

Mudgee District Environment Group (the Group) received a small group's grant from the Central West Catchment Management Authority to produce this Management Plan (the Plan) for Adams Lead Reserve.

The plan identifies that the main focus for management of the reserve is the conservation of the natural, cultural heritage and historic values. The secondary focus is on educational and passive recreational opportunities.

The Group will seek funding, sponsorship and assistance to carry out management actions that achieve the above objectives.

The plan identifies seven areas of management action. These are:

- Conservation Management & Enhancement – increasing knowledge of the native plants and animals and indigenous cultural heritage on the site, while improving the maintenance or enhancement of these values.
- Threat Management – establishing a consistent and well resourced approach to invasive species control; protecting the site from wildfire.
- Establishing partnerships with other groups and individuals in the local and broader region to build community ownership of the resource.
- Risk Management – identifying risks to volunteers, workers and visitors on the site and adopting mitigation measures.
- Educational and training opportunities – engaging with educators, trainers and specialists to develop field days, workshops and work experience activities on the site.
- Mapping – developing a comprehensive layout of all elements on the site.
- Infrastructure – planning for the maintenance and improvement of existing infrastructure; identifying future needs and expansion.

The plan has adopted a set of priority recommendations to direct future funding sources, partnerships and effort towards the achievement of SMART targets (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely).

Priority Recommendations

1. Establish interim management committee.
2. Identify existing and future pathways for ongoing slashing and maintenance. Record on site plan and peg out on ground.
3. Determine weed control areas. Record on site plan and peg out on ground.
4. Liaise with contractors to slash pathways and conduct weed control, and local Fire Brigade to conduct burn off.
5. Continue liaison with Council for spraying and slashing.
6. Seek funding for Conservation Volunteers of Australia (CVA) to undertake weed and feral animal management.
7. Seek funding for signage and develop Risk Management Plan.
8. Arrange Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Survey.
9. Develop Timeline Action Plan for other priorities.



Grassy Box Woodland at Adams Lead Reserve

Vision Statement

Adams Lead Reserve is:

- A critically endangered Grassy Woodland Community
- A site like no other in Gulgong - it is unique
- An example of how nature has the ability to revive when combined with the actions of committed people with vision
- The last remaining example of the gold diggings
- Of historical significance and an important connection to the community of Gulgong.

What do we see Adams Lead as being now and in the future?

- ❖ Flora and Fauna Reserve
- ❖ Example of Regeneration and Preservation of Local Native Vegetation
- ❖ A Place to Share and Educate about the Past and Conservation
- ❖ A Hands On Interactive Educational Environment
- ❖ Picnic Area
- ❖ Eco Tourist and Education Site
- ❖ Aboriginal Bush Garden
- ❖ Preserved Historical Site

The outcome of the Vision/Management Plan

- Will lessen the threats and enhance the value of Adams lead as a Reserve
- Provide sustainability into the future.



2. The History of Adams Lead Reserve

Adams Lead Goldfield

Adams Lead was the first lead to be mined on the Gulgong goldfield rising on the western slope of Red Hill. The lead was discovered by R.Adams and party in April 1870 shortly after Tom Saunders found a nugget on Red Hill.

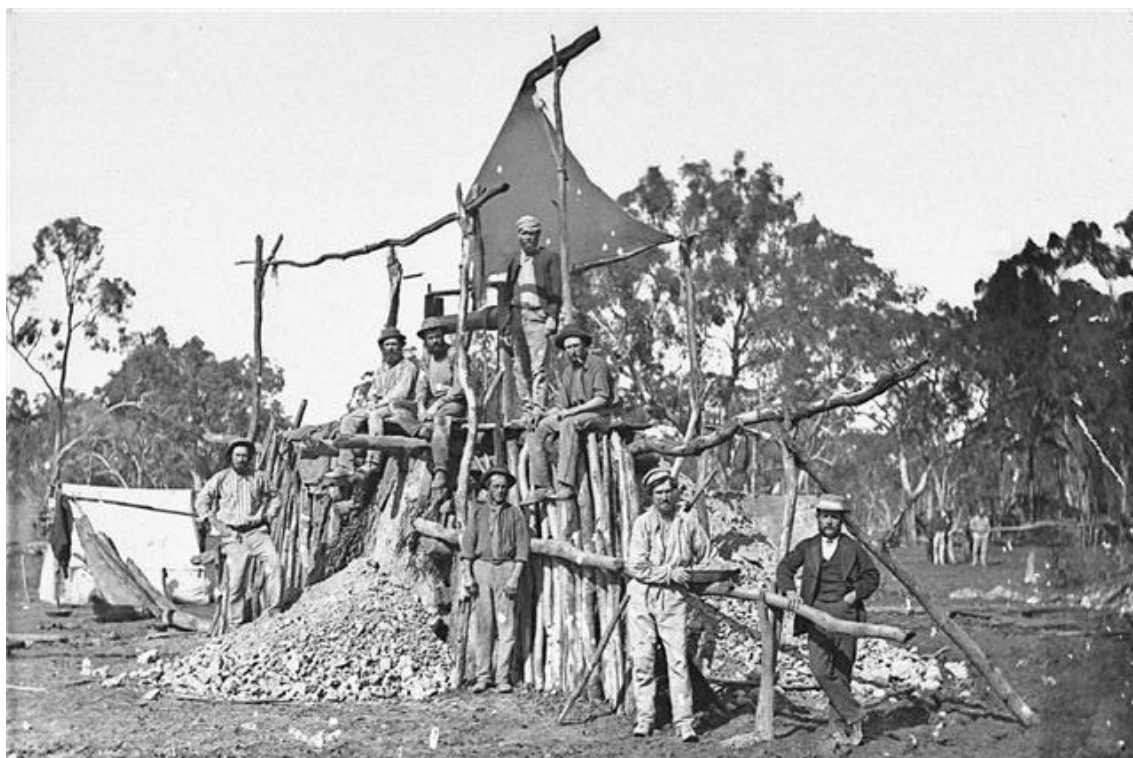
By June 1870 more than 500 people were on the ground and 17 different parties reported payable gold. The Black Lead was discovered next and attracted a further crowd of miners, increasing the population to 3,000 by January 1871.

The shafts in Adams Lead ranged from close to the surface down to 45 metres. Gold values are reported as being 18.6 grams per load. A number of nuggets were found including one of 0.17kg.

Gold mining in the Gulgong area continued up until the early 1900s.

A small parcel of the Adams Lead goldfield was left as vacant crown land by the 1980's. It has the remnants of old shafts and mullock heaps – the only remaining evidence of the feverish activity and work carried out on the site one hundred years previously.

CAPTION



Mudgee District Environment Group involvement

The block of vacant crown land was one of many handed over to Mudgee Shire Council by the NSW Government for divestment or other uses. There was a suggestion to bulldoze the site and create soccer playing fields.



MDEG members at Adams Lead

In 1989 Mudgee District Environment Group (MDEG) wrote to council with a proposal to use the site for tree planting and environmental rehabilitation with the aim of retaining its historic goldfield values. This suggestion was accepted by Council with strong support from Gulgong Councillor, Colin Bailey.

The first trees were planted by Mary Adams and Chris Adams, Shire Engineer, direct descendents of the gold prospector who discovered Adams Lead.

In 1990 the environment group received funding from Greening Australia to purchase trees and shrubs for the first major tree planting. Work had progressed on controlling the blackberries – the most dominant weed on the site.

Fencing materials were donated by Len Norris with assistance from Col Bailey to renew the boundary fence. Council graded the new fenceline. Fencing was carried out under the Community Service Program.

A major tree planting day was held in May 1991, attended by 36 volunteers. A mixture of 340 trees and shrubs were planted, protected by hessian tree guards and timber stakes.

Mudgee Shire Council continued to assist in the management of the site by providing hand equipment to community service workers. Ongoing working bees with local volunteers and MDEG members continued to carry out weed control through slash and burn techniques with assistance from the Deadman's Creek Fire brigade.

Further tree planting occurred in 1992 as part of the Mudgee Shire annual tree planting program.

In 1995 the Landcare and Environment Action Program (LEAP) for unemployed youth between 15 and 20 years was started by the Keating Federal Government. A LEAP team was established in the Mudgee area including young people from Gulgong. The team took over the management of Adams Lead for six months conducting slash & burn control of blackberry and other weeds. The team also constructed pathways, a picnic bench and BBQ and planted more understorey plants.

A LEAP team based in Gulgong commenced in 1996 and continued managing the site.



LEAP workers in 1996 activities

In 1997 a 'Friends of Adams Lead' was formed involving interested local community members. A decision was made to introduce chemical control of the blackberries to follow up the slash and burn work. Ongoing assistance from community service workers and the juvenile justice department took some of the workload away from volunteers.

A working bee and field day was held in June 1998 with the Mudgee Permaculture Group. A trial of planting wattle seed in clay balls was conducted. The severe drought was having an impact on plant growth and direct seeding results.

A follow up working bee in July with Deadman's Creek Fire brigade resulted in a successful burn off and clean up of the site.

A new form of training for unemployed youth was established by the Howard Government in 2001, the Green Corp. A team was established by Mudgee Shire Council and was available to do some of the weed control on Adams Lead.

In 2003 a second Green Corp team was started in Mudgee Shire. This team continued with weed management and new plantings, maintained the pathways, built more seating and installed nesting boxes in the mature trees.

A Volunteer Groups Grant was received in 2004 to purchase a new slasher mower to be used on the site. Various working bees and tree planting days were continued to be held by MDEG over time. Ongoing fundraising to help fund the activities was managed by Di O'Mara and supported by the Gulgong community.

The gazettal of Grassy Box Woodland as a critical endangered ecological community under the Federal Environment Act in 2006 raised awareness of the conservation significance of the site.

In 2008 MDEG received a grant from the Central West Catchment Management Authority to develop this management plan.

Adams Lead has been a major project of MDEG for 20 years and has enjoyed a generous input of time, money and resources from a wide range of people in the local area.



3. Description of Adams Lead Conservation Values

Adams Lead Reserve contains a small remnant of Grassy Box Woodland. This vegetation community consists of the association of White Box, Yellow Box and Blakely's Red Gum and native grasses. The beautiful old growth Yellow Box and Red Gum trees on the reserve are remnants of the open woodland landscape that once covered the Gulgong and Mudgee region.



Grassy Box tree

This vegetation community grows on the rich fertile soils of valley floors. These were also the places best suited for growing wheat and sheep and were therefore cleared for agricultural use.

Grassy Box Woodland was once a dominant feature in the heavily cleared wheat-sheep country of central NSW, Victoria and southern Queensland. It is now protected under the *Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Box-Gum grassy woodland and derived native grasslands was listed as a critically endangered ecological community (CEEC) in 2006.

People all over inland NSW are working to protect and improve patches of Grassy Box Woodland. A network of conservation managers of Grassy Box Woodland has been established to share knowledge and resources. More information is available at www.gbwcmmn.org.au.

4. Management Plan Actions

4.1 Conservation Management / Enhancement

Effective management of the endangered Grassy Box Woodland community will enhance and conserve the flora and fauna and preserve aboriginal cultural heritage. Proactive guardianship of the reserve will safeguard the remnants of the historical gold diggings.

To achieve this the following actions need to be taken.

4.1.1 Identification of existing flora and fauna

- Conduct biodiversity surveys in consultation with local and external specialists.
- Prioritise flora survey as an immediate action.
- Conduct ongoing seasonal surveys of flora and fauna.
- Survey existing fauna – insects, birds, mammals, amphibians, marsupials and reptiles - as a secondary action.

4.1.2 Seed Collection

- Seek advice and guidance from specialists.
- Develop a timetable for seed collection e.g. kangaroo grass late summer-autumn.
- Establish appropriate identification system, correct packaging and storage facility.
- Conduct Seed Collection Field Days at Adams Lead.
- Enlist volunteers through partnerships to sustain seed collecting.

4.1.3 Propagation and Planting

- Identify the gaps in flora population.
- Develop list of correct propagation and planting mediums, techniques and tools.
- Draw up a yearly planner for propagation and planting
- Establish a small nursery facility.
- Conduct Propagation and Planting Field Days.
- Utilise partnerships and networks.
- Develop steps to sustain a healthy environment for planted seedlings.

4.1.4 Water

- Identify water on site (tap water, fossicking holes, pond).
- Map underground water.
- Protect water from chemical spray drift.
- Minimize risk of erosion from surface water run off eg whenever putting in access paths.
- Develop strategies to maximise the drought proofing of the site.



Pond at Adams Lead Reserve

4.1.5 Habitat

- Consult with specialists to identify flora and fauna needs and best practice.
- Identify and carry out activities to maintain and enhance natural habitat e.g.
 - Mulching
 - Retaining and providing extra nesting boxes
 - Preserving old growth trees
 - Retaining fallen tree limbs for ground dwelling fauna.
- Maintain and increase the variety of native grasses.
- Protect waterholes.

4.1.6 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Invite the local indigenous community to:

- Conduct an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Survey
- Identify Aboriginal Bush Tucker.

4.1.7 Historical Site

- Identify features of historical value.
- Develop strategies to preserve these features.
- Promote knowledge of the history of the site.



Nesting box installed in tree

4.2 Threat Management

Consistent management of the invasive species will enhance the biodiversity, amenity and safety of Adams Lead. Actions to be taken:

4.2.1 Identify Invasive Species and control measures

- Conduct a weed survey.
- Carry out a survey of evidence of feral animals.
- Seek guidance and advice from relevant specialists for best practice control measures.
- Prioritize immediate control actions.

4.2.2 Management of Known Weeds

- Explore control actions that pose a minimum risk to the environment and participants.
- Blackberry and Briar Bush - slash, burn and spray.
- St John's Wort – biological control/release of beetle.
- Privet – prune and brush on chemical.
- Paspalum – control burn and dig out root system.
- Any other identified weeds – adopt appropriate methods.
- Continue to revise control actions to reflect best practice.

4.2.3 Management of Known Feral Animals

- Develop action plans that are humane and appropriate.
- Regular update of current technologies.
- Explore ways to reduce intrusion of feral animals.
- Rabbits – integrated control e.g. employ ferreter, destroy burrows, use biological control.
- Foxes – use baiting program.
- Cats – obtain and use trapping boxes.
- Other feral animals are identified and appropriate methods adopted.

4.2.4 Resources

- Department of Primary Industries Fact Sheets
- CSIRO
- Partnerships
- Livestock Health and Pest Authority
- RSPCA
- NPWS
- Wires

4.2.5 Vandalism

- To reduce vandalism build strong community relationships.
- Identify and implement other steps that will assist to further minimize the risk.

4.2.6 Wild Fire Management

- Conduct control burns.
- Slash perimeter.
- Provide fire truck access.

4.2.7 Ongoing Management

- Develop and follow a time line check list.
- Update list and strategies as new threats and procedures are identified.
- Regularly employ contractors to conduct spraying and slashing.

4.3 Risk Management

The development of a safety system aims to minimize the risk of injury to people while engaging in activities at Adams Lead. This is a legal requirement as set out in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2000*.

This will be achieved by:

4.3.1 Identification of Risks

- Landscape: Pond, Fossicking Holes, Mullock Heaps
- Wildlife: Snakes, Spiders
- Work Safety and OH&S
- Wild Fire

4.3.2 Eliminating, minimizing and controlling risks

- Refer to *Risk Assessment Handbook* produced by Conservation Volunteers Australia.
- Obtain C.V.A. *In Safe Hands* tool kit.
- Prepare a hazard identification checklist.
- Implement risk control measures for each hazard identified.
- Seek professional legal advice.
- Formulate emergency procedures.
- Ensure adequate and appropriate insurance is in place.
- Erect signage, and produce brochures.

4.4 Partnerships

Developing partnerships with other conservation groups, agencies and individuals will lead to the long term security of Adams Lead as a reserve. Engaging with the broader community benefits all partners as they work toward fulfilling the potential of Adams Lead.

4.4.1 Partnerships for a Sustainable Future

Partnerships will:

- Increase a sense of community ownership.
- Ensure the effective maintenance of Adams Lead.
- Enhance the conservation values of the Grassy Box Woodland ecological community.
- Extend activities that provide for regeneration and preservation.
- Enable the provision of educational events.
- Advance the evolution of Adams Lead as a bush picnic area.

- Promote the site as a valuable community asset.
- Build community participation.
- Strengthen the financial management of Adams Lead.

4.4.2 Opportunities for Individuals and Community Partners

To experience the satisfaction of:

- Contributing to the future directions of Adams Lead.
- Achieving the conservation and enhancement of an endangered ecological community.
- Sustaining an important historical site.
- Accomplishing the expansion of Adams Lead as an educational site and bush picnic area.

Partners will have the opportunity to:

- Interact with a broad range of community groups.
- Be stimulated by learning from specialists in their field and hands on experiences.
- Increase their health and wellbeing- "Green is the new Beyond Blue".
- Participate in a wide range of activities.
- Develop skills and knowledge.

Agencies will have the opportunity to:

- Facilitate community service with environmental outcomes.
- Strengthen voluntary workforce links.

4.4.3 Developing Partnerships

- Identify potential partners.
- Meet with individuals and local community groups.
- Together formulate ideas to achieve mutual benefits and outcomes.
- Explore the possibility of re-establishing a community group "Friends of Adams Lead".
- Develop structure and financial management.
- Approach groups and agencies to: develop funding opportunities, hands on activities and specialist advice.
- Collect social histories and stories.

4.5 Educational / Training Opportunities

Adams Lead Reserve lends itself to a broad range of educational and training experiences. Target groups can include students from Primary and High Schools, TAFE and University as well as interested community members. Opportunities for skills and knowledge sharing between regional, national and international groups exist. The educational events held at Adams Lead would encourage a greater understanding and awareness between city and country people.

4.5.1 Activities

- Field Days - workshops with experts – e.g Native Grasses
- Biodiversity Surveys using the National Parks Association Manual
- Trials of Revegetation Techniques, Invasive Species and Biological Controls
- Bush Regeneration Methods
- Chemical Safety Ticket training
- Historical/Social Heritage workshops
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage field days
- Conservation Management training

4.6 Mapping

Mapping will assist with the identification of the geographical, historical and conservation features. These maps will guide the management of Adams Lead now and into the future as infrastructure is developed.

4.6.1 Development Strategies

- Select an appropriate map type e.g. aerial, topographical or electronic GIS.
- Develop overlays.
- Use 'mud maps' if necessary.
- Identify location of: pathways, internal fire truck roads, boundary slashing areas, fences, gates, vegetation, weeds, rabbit burrows, aboriginal cultural heritage and bush tucker sites, mullock heaps and fossicking holes.

4.7 Infrastructure

A well maintained infrastructure in the reserve will assist and support all volunteers, workers, community visitors on the site.

4.7.1 Improvement Process:

- Identify existing and future infrastructure e.g. existing - pathways, picnic tables BBQ, fences, gates, future – composting toilet, water tanks, signage.
- Develop a maintenance schedule.
- Prioritize infrastructure construction and maintenance needs.
- Prepare a development strategy.



Picnic tables near the entrance to Adams Lead Reserve

4.8 References

Appendix