Retaining mature native vegetation or EECs for conservation purposes may attract incentive funding. Funding is allocated to landholders by the local Catchment Management Authority (CMA) according to the priorities set out in their Catchment Action Plan and strategies. For more information contact your local CMA or email: info@nativevegetation.nsw.gov.au

For further assistance
This and other EEC guidelines are available on the DECC website: at www.environment.nsw.gov.au

The references listed below also provide further information on EECs.


What is an Endangered Ecological Community?
An ecological community is a group of trees, shrubs and understorey plants that occur together in a particular area. An Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) is an ecological community listed under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 as being at risk of extinction unless threats affecting these areas are managed and reduced.

What is McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest?
McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest is an open forest primarily occurring on reddish, weathered soil (latertis). It is found in low lying areas on hill slopes and open depressions on the New England Tablelands and North West Slopes. Characteristic canopy tree species are McKies Stringybark (E. mckieana) New England Blackbutt (Eucalyptus andrewsi) and Black Cypress Pine (Callitris endlicheri). Other tree species may also be present. A wide range of shrub and herb species make up the understorey.

Where is McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest found?
McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest has a restricted distribution occurring between Kings Plains in the north to Bundarra in the south and out to the west of Uralla. It is known from the Inverell local government area, but may occur in Goom and Uralla and possibly may occur in other adjoining local government areas. Examples of McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest occur in Clive State Forest west of Tingha, along the Old Armidale Road east of Tingha and in Single and Kings Plain National Parks.
Why is it important?
Native vegetation across most of the area where this EEC is found has been extensively cleared and now exists as remnants which are often isolated from each other. As a result, only small areas of McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest remain many are now narrow remnants on roadsides and in travelling stock routes whilst others exist on private lands. In many cases these areas are threatened by weed invasion, road works or widening, clearing for fences, clearing for tracks or powerlines, unsustainable grazing, too frequent burning, excessive use of fertilizers and selective logging.

Description of the community

The tree layer
The most common trees occurring in the canopy of McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest are McKies Stringybark, New England Blackbutt and Black Cypress Pine. There may also be a number of other eucalypt species which occasionally occur.

The shrub layer
The shrub layer is generally sparse. Examples of shrub species that may occur include Box-leaved Wattle, Slender Tick-trefoil, Silver Wattle, Tufted Hedgehog Grass, Rough-barked Apple, Coarse Stinkweed, Narrow-leaved Ironbark, Forest Hedgehog Grass, Spring hardy Wattle, Silver Wattle (Acacia neriifolia) and Tea Tree (Leptospermum brevipes).

How can I identify an area of McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest?
The following is a list of key characteristics to help identify an area of McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest.

• Is the site on the New England Tablelands or the North-west Slopes?
• Is the vegetation open forest with a grassy or shrubby understorey?
• Does the canopy contain any of the following tree species: McKies Stringybark, New England Blackbutt, Black Cypress Pine?

If you answer yes to the above questions, the area is likely to be McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest.

The ground layer
There is usually a ground layer of grasses and herbs, including Wallaby Grass (Austrostipa rudis), Speargrass (Austrostipa nuda), Hedgehog Grass (Echinopsorum species), Blady Grass (Imperata cylindrica) and Forest Fern (Cheilanthes sieberi). A list of canopy trees and understorey plants that characterise patches of McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest is provided in the table at the back of this profile. Not all the species listed need to occur at any one site for it to be considered McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest and in some cases additional species not included in the table may occur.

Vocation in the community
At heavily disturbed sites only some of the species which characterise the community may be present. For example, Black Cypress Pine may occur in very small numbers or not at all in some sites. In addition, above-ground individuals of some species may not be present, but the species may be represented below ground in the soil seed banks or as bulbs, corms, rhizomes or rootstocks.

Species List
McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest is characterised by the species listed in the table below. The species present at any site will be influenced by the size of the site, recent rainfall or drought conditions and by its disturbance (including fire and logging) history. Note that NOT ALL the species listed below need to be present at any one site for it to constitute McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest.

What does this mean for my property?
As a listed EEC under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest has significant conservation value and some activities may require consent or approval. In addition, the tree McKies Stringybark, is a threatened species. Clearing or damage to the EEC and/or a McKies Stringybark seed capsules and juvenile leaves

What does this mean for my property?
As a listed EEC under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest has significant conservation value and some activities may require consent or approval. In addition, the tree McKies Stringybark, is a threatened species. Clearing or damage to the EEC and/or a McKies Stringybark tree may require consent or a licence under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. Please contact the Department of Environment and Climate Change for further information.

Determining the conservation value of remnants

As a listed EEC under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, McKies Stringybark/Blackbutt Open Forest has significant conservation value and some activities may require consent or approval. In addition, the tree McKies Stringybark, is a threatened species. Clearing or damage to the EEC and/or a McKies Stringybark tree may require consent or a licence under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. Please contact the Department of Environment and Climate Change for further information.