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Project regenerate: Eaglehawk Waterhole returned to nature

By Kate Hill

The wind whips through the tops of blue gums on a property 8km north of Frances in the Upper South East.



In the middle of Eaglehawk Waterhole which Nature Glenelg Trust hopes to return to nature. (ABC Local :Kate Hill)

Eaglehawk Waterhole is 684 hectares of wetlands, woodlands and varied bird and animal life and the property's new owners are excited about returning it back to its raw, natural state.

Mark Bachmann is the Manager of Nature Glenelg Trust, who acquired the land late last year with funding

from the Native Vegetation Council and Nature Foundation SA.

Used as a farming property for the last few decades, the site is set to become Nature Glenelg Trust's first habitat restoration reserve.

Mr Bachmann described the property as unusual in that the current condition lies somewhere between a traditional farm, yet still has large areas of extensive natural vegetation intact.

Driving onto the land, front paddocks are relatively clear with only a scattering of native bushes and trees but a few hundred metres in, the true potential of the property begins to show.

Thick copses of mature trees and wetlands appear, alongside sheds and old machinery leftover from farm life.

"The first time I came here, I noticed not just the amount of tree cover on the place but the amount of regeneration of trees," said Mr Bachmann.

Native trees such as eucalypts, brown stringybark and South Australian blue gums are pushing up through the undergrowth, in spite of animals only recently being removed from the land.

"Ironically some of the features that would have made it less appealing to someone looking to purchase for a farm, for us, make it ideal for a restoration case study," said Mr Bachmann.

He said the trust plans to revegetate and return the property to its natural state, a process that may take years.

Other plans include using the land for various projects in collaboration with other environmental organisations, such as South East Natural Resources, who already have a native vegetation corridor project earmarked for the property.

"The hope is, this will be a demonstration area if you like, that serves to illustrate the value of natural regeneration," said Mr Bachmann.

"Projects that help us share environmental messages but also actively restore the property at the same time."

The first project is simple - to survey and map out the properties varied terrains and put a plan in place for the future.

Map Frances 5262



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