

Chapter 5: Lower Cotter Catchment

5.1 Catchment profile

Location	Cotter River; Bendora Dam wall to Cotter Dam wall.
Area	18,221 ha (ACT)
Landuse	70% Conservation, 30% Forestry
Environmental values	Primary: Water supply Secondary: Aquatic habitat, waterscapes, hydro-electric power generation.





Prefire general description: The lower section of the river near Cotter Dam contains large areas of pine forest and some sections of the riverbank (below the dam) have been modified. The terrain is hilly with some steep slopes. Sandy topsoils overlay thick clay subsoils. There is some localised soil erosion from logged areas, tracks and firebreaks. This area is of lesser value ecologically than the Corin and Bendora sub-catchments, but provides a more diverse range of recreational activities.

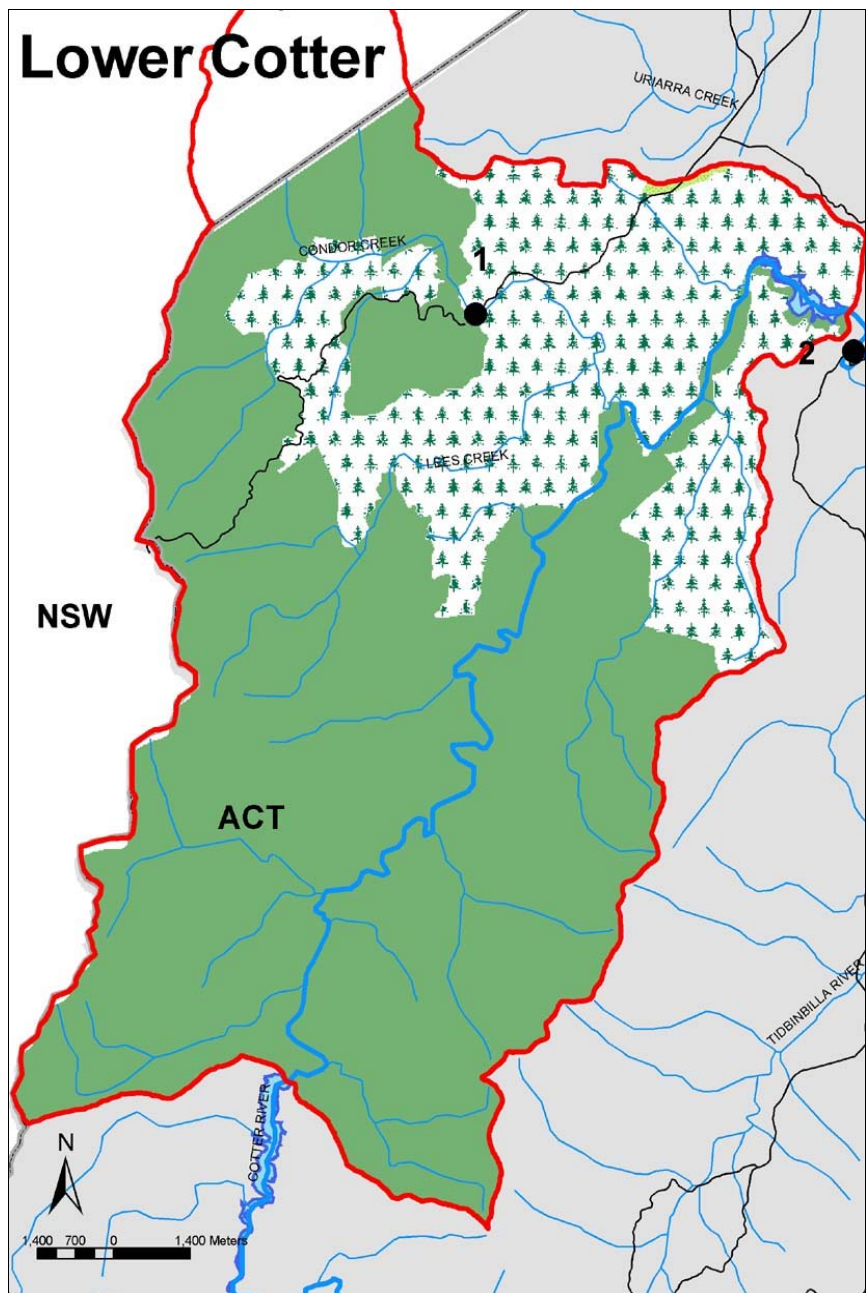
* Think water act water Volume 3 November 2003

5.2 Monitoring sites

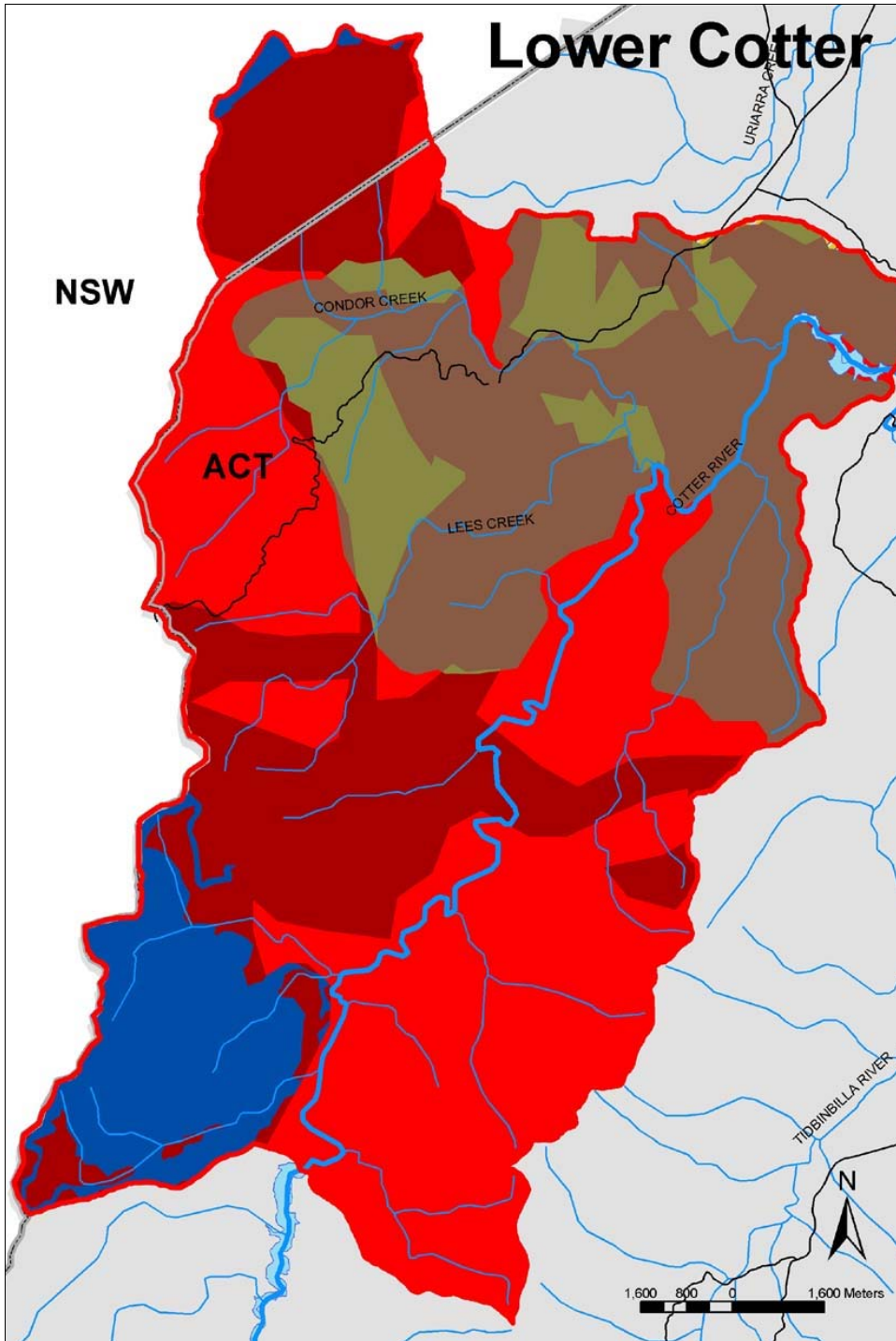
**1. Thomson's Corner—
Condor Creek**
Northing 6081500
Easting 683250

**2. Cotter
Reserve —
Cotter River**
Northing 6081500
Easting 683250

LAND USE	
	Conservation
	Forestry
	Rural
	Urban



5.3 Bushfire severity



Monthly average flow

Ave Month Flow (ML)
January 2,3037
February 1,541
March 932
April 1,146
May 1,319
June 1,869
July 2,735
August 4,428
September 5,600
October 5,800
November 5,053
December 3,583
Total 36,045

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Volume 3 November 2003

	Crownfire
	Crownfire—pines
	Primary grassfire
	Variable — mostly crown scorch
	Variable — mostly crown scorch pines

The Lower Cotter Catchment is part of the ACT water supply system. Fire severity through the Lower Cotter was severe with crownfire dominating most areas.

In Condor Creek, CAMPFIRE data revealed high turbidity, phosphorus and sediment levels after heavy rain mainly in the first year after the fires. Active erosion dominates large areas of the lower Cotter, where there was little before the fires.

The Lower Cotter Reserve CAMPFIRE monitoring site, downstream from the Cotter Dam, regularly exhibits impaired water quality results.