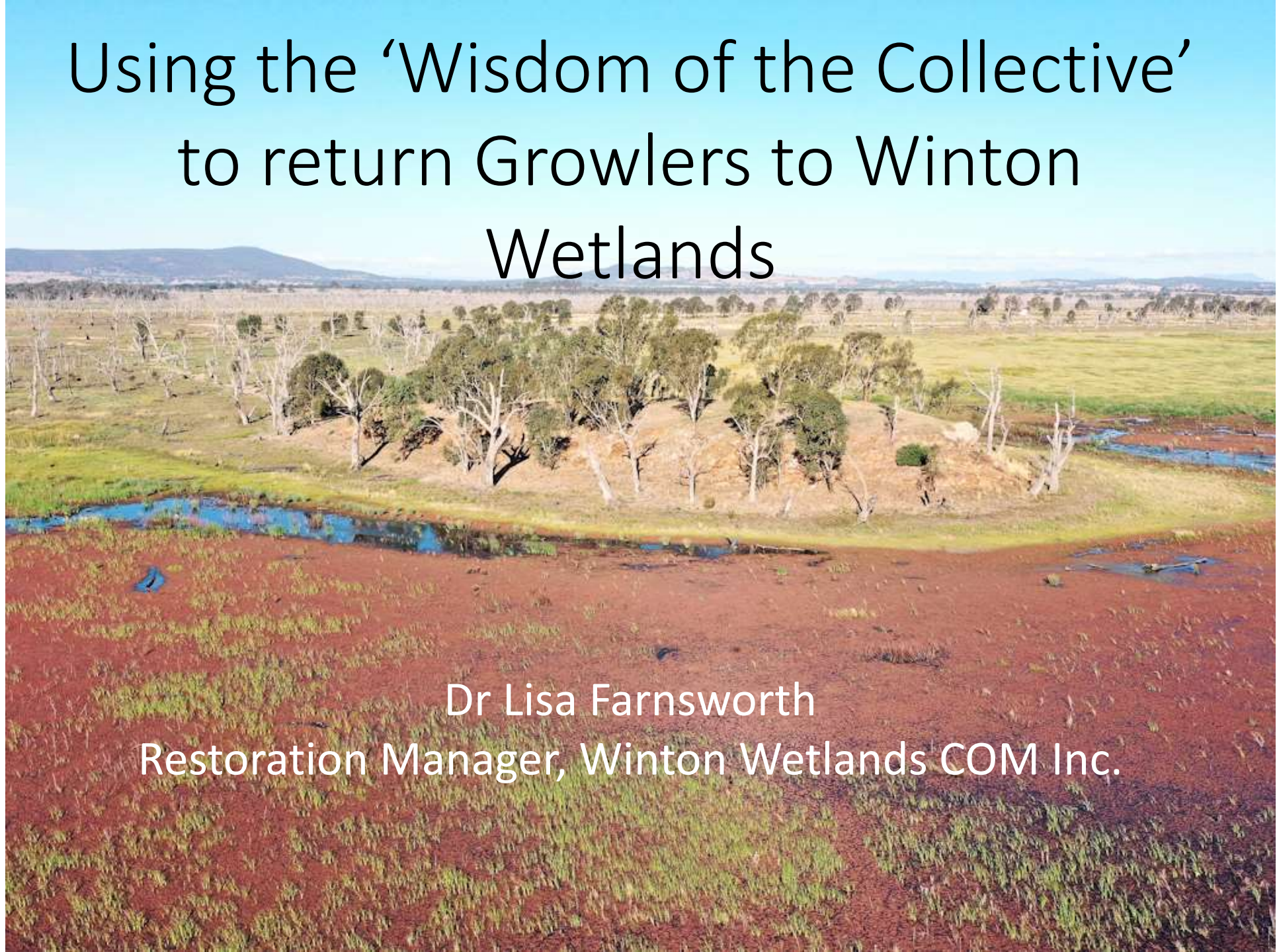


Using the 'Wisdom of the Collective' to return Growlers to Winton Wetlands

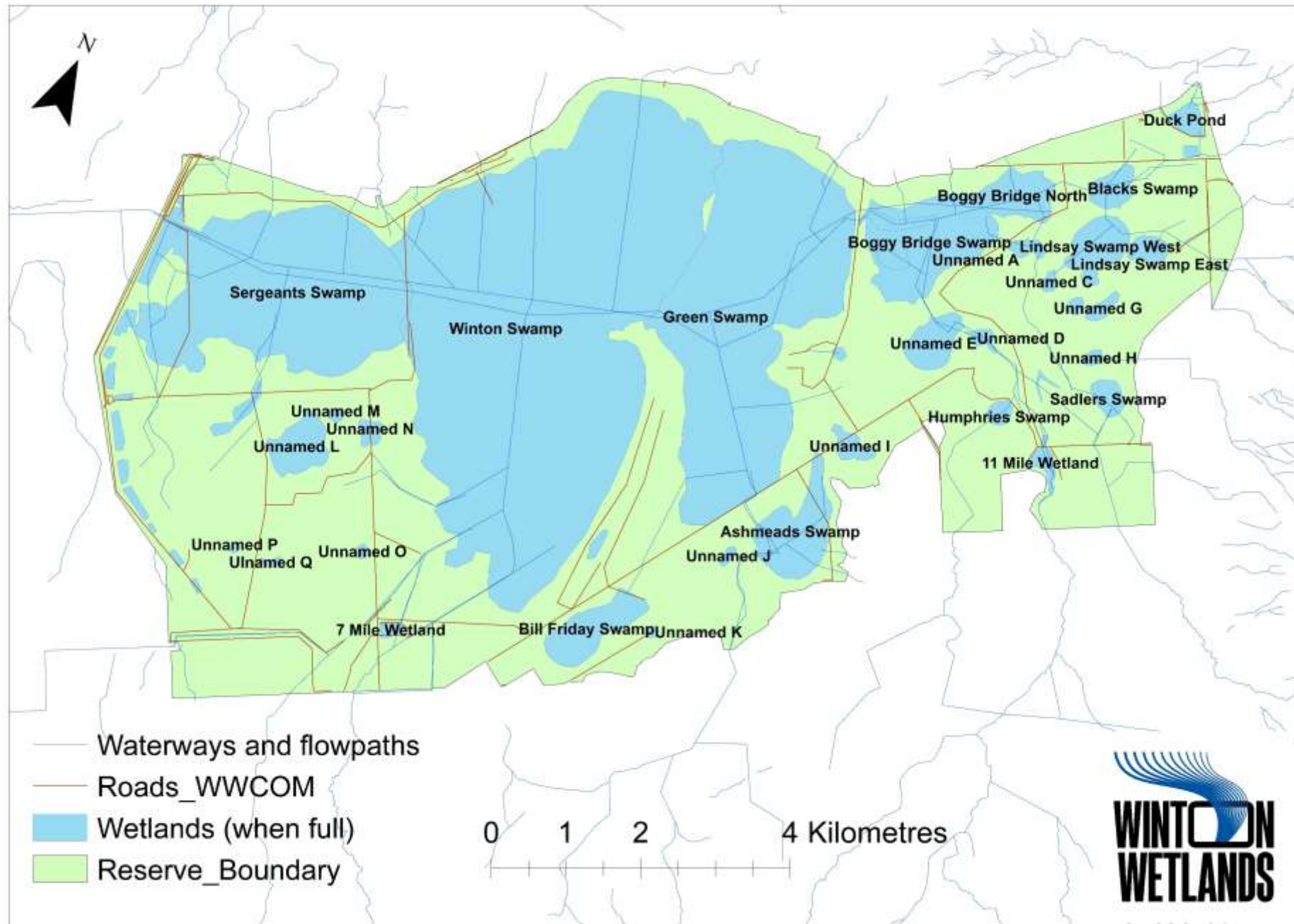


Dr Lisa Farnsworth
Restoration Manager, Winton Wetlands COM Inc.

Where is Winton Wetlands?







Winton Wetlands Land Use History

Many thousands of years ago – 1860s

Yorta Yorta country- important source for seasonally available food and hunting resources, important meeting place



1969

Establishment of Lake Mokoan (Irrigation Water Storage)



2009 - 2109

Anticipated time to renew system



1860's

Yorta Yorta dispossessed, European Settlement, establishment of Agriculture and small townships

2009

Decommissioning of Lake Mokoan
Winton Wetlands Restoration Project begins
Yorta Yorta return to site

OFFICIAL



OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL



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Winton Wetlands Restoration Project

We aim to use adaptive management to implement, monitor and refine works and measures to **improve biodiversity and resilience** of the system

Values- Protection of existing **cultural and ecological** values and enhancement of existing habitat

Threats- Understanding threats and reduction or removal of threats

Processes- Understanding ecosystem processes and enhancing ecosystem function



Why reintroduce Growlers?

- Charisma!
- Functional importance
- Formerly present on site, but absent locally and declining significantly regionally
- No ability to naturally recolonise
- An excellent flagship for wetland restoration
- Suitable habitat for reintroduction and suitable into the future being a restoration site
- Impact of reintroduction beyond WW



Photo credit: Dr Matt West

A close-up photograph of a frog, likely a Green Tree Frog, resting on a bed of dry, brown grass. The frog has a green body with a prominent, darker green stripe running down its back. Its skin appears textured and slightly bumpy. The frog is facing towards the right side of the frame.

What do Growlers need?

- Aquatic vegetation for breeding and refuge
- Basking sites (rocks)- to naturally reduce impact of chytrid fungus
- Food sources- insects, other frogs, fish, small lizards
- Permanent, preferably warmer, slightly saline water
- Protection from invasive fish

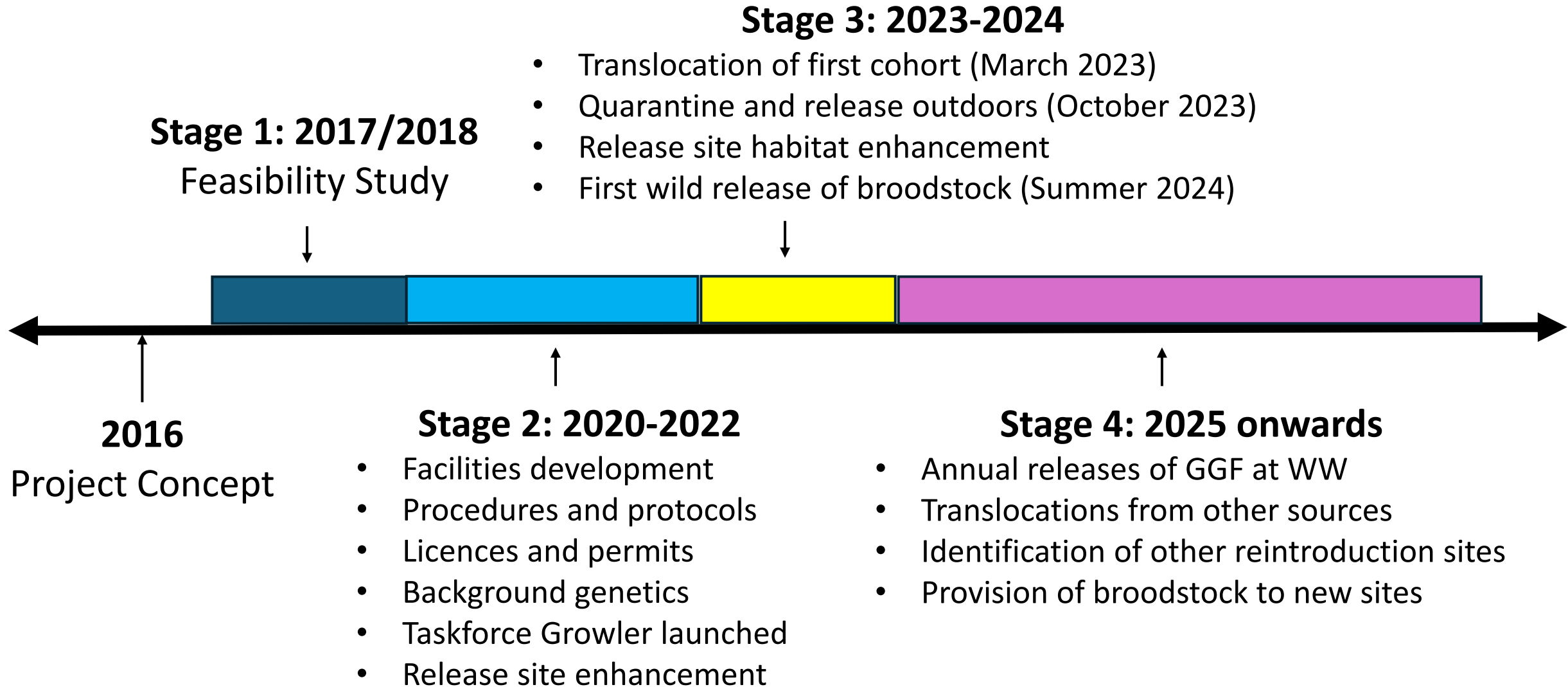
Can WW provide this?

YES.....but.....to make a strong case for a translocation permit, we needed:

- Evidence of GGF absence from site
- Evidence of appropriate existing habitats available for GGF at WW
- An understanding of threats that caused disappearance of GGF and measures in place to remove or mitigate these
- Identify potential source population(s), and evidence that our source population would not be negatively impacted by removal of cohorts
- To custom build a licenced and ethically approved captive breeding and quarantine facility onsite
- Enhancement of wild release sites (e.g. threat reduction, increased vegetation and basking habitat)

These milestones were achieved with significant inputs from an army of enthusiastic project advocates and supporters at every stage.

How did we achieve the translocation?



Taskforce Growler is born!



Our Army- Taskforce Members

- **Winton Wetlands Staff-** project management and reporting, animal husbandry, engagement
- **Funders-** Wettenhall Environment Trust, Ross Trust, state and federal funding, private donors, corporate donors (Biosis Pty Ltd), local schools
- **Expert Advisors and researchers-** Dr Geoff Heard, Dr Matt West, Michael McFadden (Taronga Zoo), Dr Karen Rowe (Museums Victoria)
- **Volunteers ('Friends of Winton Wetlands')-** Carp Muster, data collection, animal husbandry
- **Not for profit organisations-** Swamps, Rivers and Ranges, Nature Glenelg Trust
- **Government organisations-** Catchment Management Authorities, DEECA Natural Environment Programs Manager
- **Private companies-** Coliban Water, AirSeed Technologies, OzMist Wangaratta
- **Citizen Scientists (and Frog Id creators)-** using call records to investigate new sources
- **Local schools and University placement students-** "Growing Grub for Growlers", husbandry
- **Innovative building contractors-** Custom built breeding facilities/roof design, plumbing
- **Local news advocates-** ABC Goulburn Murray, local newspapers

Captive breeding and quarantine



Captive breeding and quarantine



Key learning from the Taskforce

- Offering a range of avenues to assist (through Taskforce Growler) ensures that all individuals feel like they **belong** and can contribute
- **Private landholders** can have an impact on species restoration (e.g. Coliban)
- **Grass roots** volunteer support enabled us to provide vital evidence needed for translocation proposal
- **Ownership** of project locally encourages connection to site and species
- **Generous expert advice** gives us flexibility and confidence to break new ground
- Project funding bids strengthened with **sustained, collective support**
- **News advocacy** raises the profile of the species and site
- The impact and learnings of a site scale reintroduction project can stretch far beyond WW site and are **transferrable** across species

We're not there yet!

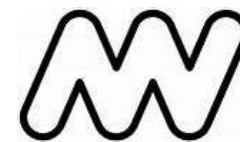


- Increasing capacity of breeding facility to accommodate 'grow out' ponds
- Increasing community engagement
 - Donations and interps station
 - Live feed cameras in breeding pods
- First wild release this year (summer), annually thereafter
- Sharing what we've learnt to date
 - Publication of protocols, key findings
 - Practitioners network to continue
- Scaling up into Northern Victoria

Our sincere thanks to our GGF supporters!



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