

Beeron National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	7,003ha
Bioregion:	South Eastern Queensland
QPWS region:	Sunshine and Fraser Coast
Local government estate/area:	North Burnett Regional Council
State electorate:	Callide

Legislative framework

✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
✓	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>

Plans and agreements

✓	Multi-species recovery plan for <i>Acacia eremophiloides</i> , <i>Acacia grandifolia</i> , <i>Bertya granitica</i> and <i>Newcastelia velutina</i>
---	--

Thematic strategies

✓	Level 2 fire management strategy
✓	Level 2 pest management strategy

Vision

The very high conservation values of Beeron National Park, in particular high vascular plant species endemism and floristic values, are protected and conserved by carefully managing impacts and potential threats. Cultural heritage values will be identified and protected. The park will continue to provide opportunities for education and scientific use.

Conservation purpose

Beeron National Park is 7,003ha in area and was gazetted in 2009. Formerly known as Beeron Holding, or 'Rocky' paddock, the park is located south-west of Mundubbera. It was previously leasehold land used mainly for light cattle grazing and infrequent harvesting of eucalypt species for timber. It is conserved for its high vascular plant endemism and to protect several species of threatened plants. The park has six endemic species and three plants of conservation significance that have restricted distribution in the central Burnett.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

The park terrain comprises rocky outcrops, steep hills and lightly undulating country. It protects part of the Burnett River catchment and contains numerous drainage lines, including Tailors and Rocky creeks. The park adjoins Allies Creek State Forest (70,900ha) and contributes to the management of the catchment area. Grazing land borders the park along 75% of its boundary, and while clearing on this land is very light close to the boundary it increases further away from the park.

Regional ecosystems

There are 12 regional ecosystems on the park, three of which have a biodiversity status that is of concern (Table 1). *Corymbia*/Eucalypt woodlands and open forest are the main vegetation communities on the park. Each

of the regional ecosystems of concern provide habitat for plant species of conservation significance and all extend into neighbouring property. Of particular note is 11.12.20, covering 1,709ha, as it contains all the endemic species. It is highly desirable to extend the park boundary to encompass areas of regional ecosystems that are of concern but located on neighbouring land. This would also provide a buffer from wildfire which threatens the existence of several species of conservation significance.

Native plants and animals

Two endangered vascular plant species, *Bertya granitica* and *Acacia porcata*, are present and are endemic to Beeron National Park. Other species of vascular plants endemic to the park include *A. eremophiloides* (vulnerable), *Boronia beeronensis*, *Commersonia* sp. and *Newcastelia velutina*. *Corymbia petalophylla* (vulnerable) and *Hibiscus* sp. are found in only one other location in the central Burnett and *Macrozamia crassifolia* (vulnerable) is found in three other locations in this area. Inappropriate fire regimes, pest plant incursion and unauthorised grazing are the main threats to species of conservation significance on the park. A multi-species recovery plan has been developed for *A. eremophiloides*, *A. porcata*, *A. grandifolia*, *Bertya granitica* and *Newcastelia velutina*. The *Burnett Mary Natural Resource Management Region Back on Track Actions for Biodiversity* identifies threats to a number of species recorded for the park as well as actions to protect them.

The near threatened grey falcon *Falco hypoleucos* is the only animal of conservation significance recorded for the park. Plants and animals of conservation significance and their Back on Track status are listed in Table 2. Animal species lists for the park do not include any species listed under international agreements.

Aboriginal culture

Two native title claims over the area in which the park is located were lodged in late 2011; QC11/5 Wulli Wulli people #2 and QC11/10 Wakka Wakka people #3. The extent of occupation and the degree of its cultural significance to Traditional Owners is unknown by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) at present. The Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay Burnett areas still hold high importance to Aboriginal people and there are many sites of Aboriginal cultural importance across the region. Site records in the surrounding region include Aboriginal burials, middens and canoe trees but none have been recorded for the park possibly due to the absence of formal surveys.

Opportunities exist to improve relationships with local Traditional Owner groups and involve them in park management.

Shared-history culture

There are remnants from grazing and timber harvesting activities such as fences, an old camp site, a water tank and a bore casing still evident on the park. Long term local residents confirm a beacon was located on the park during World War II. No formal assessment of the possible cultural heritage values of the park has been undertaken.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Beeron National Park has few recreational visitors due to the steep terrain. Birdwatchers use the park although their numbers have decreased in recent times. The network of management roads provides the only visitor infrastructure on the park. Access is along a road reserve. The track does not follow the gazetted road for its entirety and detours into leasehold and freehold land.

The park is primarily managed to retain its natural values as much as possible and protect its high conservation values.

Education and science

The park has excellent education and science values due to the very high endemic and floristic values of the vegetation. The park has hosted several research programs in relation to the six species endemic to the park and a further three which have a very restricted distribution in the region. Examples of the type of scientific uses of the park include the development of recovery plans for endangered and vulnerable plant species, identification and descriptions of new species and data collection.

Partnerships

Regular liaison is maintained between QPWS and neighbours, local authority representatives, local fire management bodies and neighbouring forest plantations regarding shared management issues such as fire and pest plant management. There is scope for improved liaison with Traditional Owners on these issues. In addition, there is potential for improved communication with neighbours regarding cattle straying onto park and fire management, particularly regarding protecting endangered and of concern regional ecosystems that extend from the park onto neighbouring land.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Giant rat's tail grass *Sporobolus natalensis* has been found growing near the old camp site and water tank. Creeping lantana *Lantana montevidensis* may be on the park as it is present on the neighbouring land to the north. Some African love grass *Eragrostis curvula* is growing on the park and tree pear *Opuntia* sp. is present to a minor degree although populations are isolated and patchy. Control of pest plants is limited by access difficulties, and although regular fire is a suitable control agent, too frequent fire is a serious threat to threatened plants and regional ecosystems. Chemical controls are not currently used.

Threats from pest animals are minor at present. Foxes *Vulpes vulpes*, pigs *Sus scrofa*, cats *Felis catus* and wild dogs *Canis lupus familiaris* are likely to frequent the park but impacts on values are not severe enough to warrant the use of baiting or trapping.

A Level 2 pest management strategy is in place for the park.

Fire management

Care needs to be taken when using fire as a management tool in several regional ecosystems on the park. The three of concern regional ecosystems all require burn intervals of six to ten years with less than 30% of their extent burnt in any year. Management of these and other fire tolerant Corymbia/Eucalypt woodlands and open forest should be based on maintaining vegetation composition, structural diversity, animal habitats and preventing extensive wildfire. They require a fire regime that maintains a diverse understorey and a fire mosaic to protect habitat and mitigate against wildfires.

In areas where eucalypts have been harvested in the past, there are fewer large sized trees and important habitat trees have been lost. While fire exclusion is not necessary in these areas, protection against wildfires is best achieved with the creation of a multi-aged mosaic in surrounding vegetation and perimeter burning.

Fire has been observed to kill individuals of the endangered species *Acacia porcata* with no regeneration from the root, stem or shoots. Germination of seed is strongly promoted by fire but seedling mortality may be high.

Any fire that kills the foliage of the vulnerable *Acacia eremophiloides* is fatal. Seed biology studies over a two year period found that this species flowered prolifically but did not produce seed.

Wildfires often escape from adjoining properties and regularly affect large areas of the park. Fires are difficult to manage and maintaining a mosaic composition is an issue as there is no fire infrastructure (fire breaks) on park due to the steep terrain.

The park has a Level 2 fire management strategy.

Other management issues

Cattle from neighbouring properties stray onto the park. Completion of suitable fencing or other options for managing straying cattle and feral cattle on park is a priority.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Landscape</p> <p>Protected habitat will be consolidated and extended as opportunities arise.</p>	<p>A1. Seek opportunities to increase the park area to acquire contiguous land supporting regional ecosystems of concern, and ensure the park boundary follows terrain that assists in enabling the completion of perimeter fencing.</p> <p>A2. Work with neighbours to complete fencing or implement other options for preventing cattle from straying onto the park.</p>
<p>Native plants and animals</p> <p>Communities and species of conservation significance are protected and appropriately managed.</p>	<p>A3. Establish key population and condition benchmarks and objectives for species of conservation significance on the park, and support monitoring programs that achieve these objectives.</p>
<p>Aboriginal cultural</p> <p>Aboriginal cultural values of the national park are identified and protected.</p>	<p>A4. Encourage Traditional Owners to identify and document values, sites, artefacts and places of cultural heritage significance so that management strategies and decisions relating to fire regimes, access and track maintenance minimise potential threats to these values.</p>
<p>Tourism and visitor opportunities</p> <p>Visitor use does not impact on the high conservation values of the park.</p>	<p>A5. Maintain existing road infrastructure to a standard which facilitates access for self-reliant visitors in four-wheel drive vehicles and for management purposes.</p>
<p>Fire management</p> <p>Threat of fire entering the park is reduced and fire is used to maintain ecosystem diversity and species of conservation significance.</p>	<p>A6. Improve cooperative fire management with Traditional Owners and neighbours, specifically establishing wildfire buffer zones along the park boundary where appropriate.</p> <p>A7. Investigate options for implementing mosaic burning in the absence of fire breaks.</p> <p>A8. Investigate options for developing/maintaining a fire break system for the park in order to better implement a mosaic burn strategy.</p> <p>A9. Continue implementing and updating the Level 2 fire management strategy with any new fire ecology information as it becomes available.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
11.12.3	<i>Eucalyptus crebra</i> , <i>E. tereticornis</i> , <i>Angophora leiocarpa</i> woodland on igneous rocks especially granite	Of concern
11.12.5	<i>Corymbia</i> spp., <i>Lysicarpus angustifolius</i> , <i>Eucalyptus crebra</i> , <i>E. cloeziana</i> woodland on igneous rocks (granite)	Of concern
11.12.20	<i>Corymbia</i> spp., <i>Eucalyptus baileyana</i> , <i>E. dura</i> , <i>E. exserta</i> woodland on igneous rocks	Of concern

Table 2: Species of conservation significance

Scientific name	Common name	Nature Conservation Act 1992 status	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 status	Back on Track status
Plants				
<i>Acacia eremophiloides</i>	-	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	High
<i>Acacia grandifolia</i>	-	Common	Vulnerable	-
<i>Acacia porcata</i>	-	Endangered	Endangered	High
<i>Bertya granitica</i>	-	Endangered	Endangered	Low
<i>Commersonia beeronensis</i>	-	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Corymbia petalophylla</i>	-	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Hibbertia monticola</i>	mountain guinea flower	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Kunzea flavescens</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Macrozamia crassifolia</i>	-	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Critical
<i>Newcastelia velutina</i>	-	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Notelaea pungens</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
Animals				
<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>	grey falcon	Near threatened	-	Data deficient