

Kondalilla National Park

Management Plan

1998

Prepared by: **Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS), Department of Environment and Science**

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The Kondalilla National Park Management Plan 1998 has been extended in 2023 in line with the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (s120G). Minor amendments have been made. There has been no change to the plan's original management intent and direction.

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Summary

This management plan provides the framework and guidelines on how Kondalilla National Park will be managed. It sets out the considerations, outcomes and strategies that proposed to form the basis on which day-to-day management decisions are made.

This plan was prepared in May 1998, in accordance with s 125 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Act). In 2023 the plan was extended, in keeping with s 120G of the Act. For further information on this plan or the planning process, please contact the Department of Environment and Science at ParkManagementPlans@des.qld.gov.au.

This management plan was prepared by Department of Environment and Science staff. Thanks are due to those groups and individuals who made submissions in response to the draft plan.

1. Management directions and purpose

1.1 Management directions

Kondalilla National Park is designated under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* as a national park and will be managed in accordance with section 17 of the Act, which sets out the following principles for management:

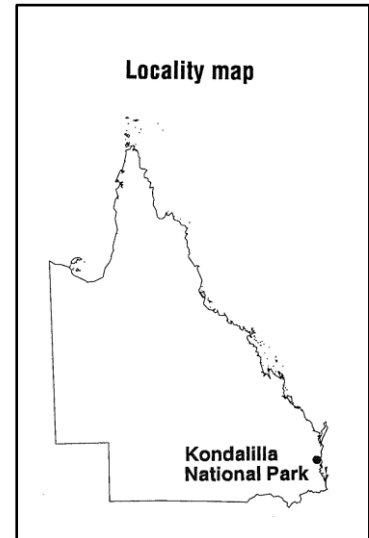
- To provide, to the greatest possible extent, for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition and the protection of the area's cultural resources and values
- To present the areas cultural and natural resources and their values; and
- To ensure that the only use of the area is nature-based and ecological sustainable.

The requirements of other legislation administered by the Department and other State and Commonwealth agencies will be met where necessary.

Kondalilla National Park will be managed as a significant area of remnant rainforest an open forest. It supports rare and threatened plant in the surrounding tourist, residential and horticultural character of the Blackall range.

In the cool rainforest and open forest settings, park visitors will enjoy picnics, Bush walking on a variety of different tracks, bird watching and nature observation. This spectacular waterfall into the deep basaltic Gorge provides a very scenic backdrop for these activities.

Major issues the management plan will cover include weed control, fire management and recreation management.



1.2 Management purposes

The major purposes of management will be to ensure that:

- natural plants, landscape features and creek system integrity are protected, and continuous habitat is conserved where possible
- sensitive habitat and threatened species are monitored and their requirements are reflected in management programs
- sites of cultural significance are managed in consultation with local communities
- scientific and educational opportunities focus on the rare and threatened species and the human impact on the natural landscape and biota
- a range of nature-based recreation opportunities is provided in the mountainous setting
- public education an appreciation of the natural resources and cultural heritage are developed to support park management aims; and
- park neighbours are aware of their impact on the park environment and the need for fire management, water catchment protection and weed control programmes.

2. Management basis

2.1 Bioregional context

Kondalilla National Park covers 327 hectares on the western slopes of the Blackall range in the Sunshine Coast hinterland about 100 kilometres North of Brisbane. The range is characterised by its magnificent views of the Sunshine Coast, its mountain and rural scenery, and the village atmosphere of its urban communities. The first section of the National Park was gazetted in 1945.

The park has volcanic origins. Its deep gorges, ridges and escarpments were carved from basalt lava, which erupted from volcanoes south-west of Maleny. A creek system bisects the park, forming a scenic waterfall which drops over basalt cliffs into a spectacular gorge.

2.2 Kondalilla National Park values

2.2.1 Geology and landform

The Blackall range landscape was shaped by volcanic activity which occurred 25 million years ago.

The present landscape was formed by the geological processes of periodic uplift and erosion. These processes turned the basalt capping the Mapleton-Maleny plateau and hard rhyolitic rocks of the North Arm Volcanics into deeply dissected, elevated terrain. Exposed North Arm Volcanics can be seen at Kondalilla in the flow-banded rhyolitic rock slab above the swimming hole.

2.2.2 Plants and animals

Kondalilla National Park protects remnant warmer subtropical rainforest and associated layered tall open forest growing on basalt soils which once covered much of the Blackall range area. The rainforest supports the most easterly surviving stands of emergent bunya pines *Araucaria bidwillii* and two vulnerable plant species — the red lilly pilly *Syzygium hodgkinsoniae* and the bopple nut *Macadamia ternifolia*.

Kondalilla's lower altitude rainforest is of high regional significance. It has an endangered conservation status, as less than 10 percent of this forest type remained in the South East Queensland biogeographic region due to extensive clearing.

A diverse set of animals, including rare, threatened and geographically restricted species, live in the park's moist upland habitat. Kondalilla conserves the rare Australian marsupial frog *Assa darlingtoni* and the endangered cascade tree frog *Litoria pearsoniana*. The park is the type locality for the endangered southern platypus frog *Rheobatrachus silus* and the endangered southern day frog *Taudactylus diurnus* has also been recorded here. However, these two endangered frogs have not been seen in the wild since 1979.

2.2.3 Cultural heritage

The Blackall range is strongly associated with the religious and social celebration of the Bunya Festival. Coastal and sub coastal Aboriginal people gathered at this festival to harvest and eat the bunya nut. They considered bunya pines very sacred and an important totem, with spiritual powers and legends associated with the trees.

Areas where Aboriginal people held festivals are marked by emergent bunya pine in the rainforest areas of Kondalilla.

2.2.4 Scenic

Kondalilla National Park has outstanding scenic values, with its waterfall, deep gorge, rock pools and creeks, and cool rainforest setting. It caters to day visitors who appreciate the park's spectacular views and natural amenity and the surrounding rural landscape.

2.2.5 Scientific and educational

The park provides an ideal natural resource for education. School groups from Brisbane and local townships and students from tertiary institutions can use the park to study diverse ecosystems and their important interactive components such as geology, plants and animals.

The significant number of rare, threatened and geographically restricted wildlife species within the subtropical rainforest and tall open forest is of scientific value and interest.

2.2.6 Recreation and tourism

Kondalilla National Park offers both passive and active recreational opportunities that contrast significantly with the activities from coastal regions. Bushwalking can be enjoyed in the cool climate throughout most of the year, with walks ranging from 400m to 4.6km. Walks traverse rainforest and tall

open forest and follow creek lines which form cool mountain water holes, popular in summer for swimming. A large resident bird population on the park is good for bird watching.

2.2.7 Economic

Kondalilla National Park's role as a tourist destination has economic value for surrounding townships. Tourist facilities such as lodges, kiosks and camping grounds rely on visitors attracted by the parks scenic and recreational values.

3. Management strategies

3.1 Native plants

Current situation

The park supports around 480 plant species. Two vulnerable species occur in the closed forest: red lilly pilli *Syzygium hodgkinsoniae* and the bopple nut *Macadamia ternifolia*. Another five species are at the limits of their distribution.

Desired outcomes

- Biological diversity of plant communities and species in the park is conserved.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Map plant communities and conduct surveys for noteworthy plant species to determine their distribution, site locations and ecological requirements.
- Habitats vulnerable to human impact, fire, exotic weeds and feral/domestic animals should be identified.
- Control visitor access to localities containing noteworthy species.

3.2 Native animals

Current situation

Animal surveys have found eight species on the park which are rare, threatened and of special cultural significance.

Creek systems, which provide food, shelter and a breeding environment for native animals (including endangered species), under pressure from human activities such as chemical pollution, salt leaching, siltation caused by soil disturbance from construction activity, and weed infestation on Creek verges.

Desired outcomes

- Animal species diversity and abundance, particularly populations of rare, threatened or geographically restricted species, are maintained.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Conduct format surveys for the park.
- Follow actions set out in the recovery plans for the endangered frogs *T. diurnus*, *R. silus* and *L. pearsoniana*.
- Continue monitoring amphibians to assess population changes and trends.
- Control visitor access to localities containing noteworthy species.
- Liaise with the Department of natural resources (DNR), local governments and local communities to support co-operative species management strategies.

3.3 Introduced plants and animals

Current situation

Weeds are recognised as one of the major threats to park integrity. Species causing serious infestations include groundsel and mistflower (both declared noxious weeds), lantana, blackberry and siratro. Park weed control is hampered by both rugged and rocky terrain and weed species in surrounding areas providing a seed bank for reinfestation.

Feral cats, foxes and cane toads are on the park. Feral animal control is currently on an informal basis.

Desired outcomes

- The extent of weed species within the park is reduced and no new weed species are established.
- The impact of feral animals on the park is reduced.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Prepare and implement a weed control action plan in consultation with local governments, surrounding landowners and key community groups.
- Establish a working group with representatives from Department of Environment and Science, Queensland Forest Service, local governments, key community groups, and Department of Natural Resources, to implement a coordinated feral animal control programme.
- Monitor feral animal occurrence at regular intervals to determine effectiveness of control measures.
- Develop public education campaigns about the impact of weeds on native plants and the potential of garden plants as a weed source.

3.4 Fire management

Current situation

Park vegetation is comprised of approximately 50 percent closed forest and 50 percent open forest. Fire history patterns have shown the open forests are the most prone to wildfires during drier seasons. There have been four wildfires in the park over the 40 years. Access for planned burns and wildfire control relies on neighbouring properties because of the park's steep terrain.

Desired outcomes

- Park visitors, infrastructure and adjacent property are protected from impacts of fire.
- Wildfire species diversity is maintained and populations of rare or threatened plants and animals are protected.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Prepare a fire plan — in consultation with relevant landholders and local governments — considering access, boundaries, vegetation maps and fire breaks.
- Liaise with neighbours for access to the park for fire management purposes.
- Established programmes to monitor fire impacts, including photo-monitoring points.
- Incorporate a fire management component in education programmes aimed at park visitors, user groups and local communities.

3.5 Environment and catchment protection

Current situation

Catchment management is necessary to achieve water quality and quantity objectives in relation to providing habitat for animals, a recreational resource and a spectacular scenic amenity.

The quality and quantity of water released from Baroon Pocket Dam is of concern in relation to the Obi Obi Creek system and in particular the Mary River Cod *Maccullochella peelii mariensis*. Obi Obi Creek is one of four critical habitats for the cod.

The park is subject to the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* and regulations relating to environmentally relevant activities. Particular Act provisions and regulations relate to the need for an Integrated Environmental Management System (IEMS).

Desired outcomes

- Water quality and quantity in the park are maintained in accordance with Australian Water Quality Guidelines and environmental flow requirements.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Implement a monitoring programme to test for nutrient levels in Pencil, Picnic, Obi Obi and Skene Creeks using total nitrogen and total phosphorus counts.
- Contact park visitor groups regarding littering and use of chemicals in water (soap, sunscreen), and park neighbours to avoid pollution from upstream (fertilisers, pesticides, herbicide's).
- Continue liaison with Maroochy Shire Council, DNR, Department of Primary Industries- Fisheries and conservation groups on catchment issues.
- Liaise with the Caloundra- Maroochy Waterboard on flow releases from Baroon Pocket Dam.
- Upgrade the on-site waste water treatment and disposal system in the picnic ground to meet guidelines set out in the IEMS and site management plan.
- Monitor the performance of the waste water system.

3.6 Cultural heritage

Current situation

The parks cultural heritage significance has yet to be determined. The cultural heritage of Kondalilla National Park is connected with the religious and social celebration of the Bunya Festival. The particular significance of the park from this perspective is unknown.

The early European settlers and timber getters logged red cedar and white beech from the rainforest.

Desired outcomes

- Park management reflects the interests of Aboriginal people through their involvement.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Establish the indigenous and historic cultural values of the park through involvement with local Aboriginal people and local historical societies.
- Ensure the involvement of relevant local people in developing methods for protecting sites of cultural significance.

3.7 Recreation, tourism and access

Current situation

As Kondalilla receives a large number of visitors each year, a balance between recreation activities and resource protection is essential. Key resources include vegetation, tracks and waterways. A landscape master plan is being developed for the workspace, picnic ground and walking track to Kondalilla Falls.

Desired outcomes

- A limited range of recreation opportunities are provided which emphasise park values and complement other local and regional opportunities.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Implement the landscape master plan.
- Maintain only one designated recreation access point for visitor management and safety reasons. No additional tracks will be made.
- Investigate the use of contractors to maintain bins, toilets and barbecues.
- No rock climbing, abseiling or camping will be allowed on the park.
- Ensure tour operators are appropriately informed of natural resources and are trained in correct behaviour and procedures. Compliance will be a condition of their permit.
- Commercial operations will be restricted to designated walking tracks only.
- Develop an emergency response action plan which would include upgrading communication.

3.8 Public contact

Current situation

Kondalilla National Park receives high visitor use. This provides a good opportunity to deliver important conservation messages and information on the natural and cultural environment.

Kondalilla National Park will be included in an extension programme in the North Coast District to assist neighbours' views on living next to a park, their perceptions of the park's values and expectations of the Department of Environment and Science Rangers.

Desired outcomes

- Community awareness and appreciation of the natural and cultural values of the park are increased.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Determine the placement of directional, interpretive, orientation and safety signs, and construct an interpretive shelter and a guided walk along Picnic Creek as part of a public contact plan for the park.
- Conduct a neighbour survey as part of the extension programme.
- Continue interpretive activities on the history and use of the park.

3.9 Plan implementation and monitoring

Current situation

The park is currently managed from the Department of Environment and Science's Maleny office with support and managerial staff located at Maroochydore and Moggill offices.

Desired outcomes

- The management plan is implemented effectively.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Prepare an implementation plan.