

Littleton National Park and Littleton Resources Reserve

Management Statement 2016

Introduction

The *Nature Conservation Act 1992* requires a management statement or plan for all Queensland parks—to set high-level strategies and priorities for managing each park. Management statements are succinct, management oriented documents, which focus on maintaining or improving the condition of key park values and outlining how we will meet management standards (or ‘levels of service’) for the park.

This statement may be read alongside the park’s ‘resource information’ document. Resource information provides more detailed background on Queensland’s parks—providing an understanding of each park’s purpose, values, resources, issues, management considerations and legal and administrative framework. Resource information may be used for a quick overview of the park or to gain a more in-depth understanding of the park’s management issues and background.

Statements, plans and resource information documents are available on the Department on National Parks, Sport and Racing (NPSR) website at www.npsr.qld.gov.au

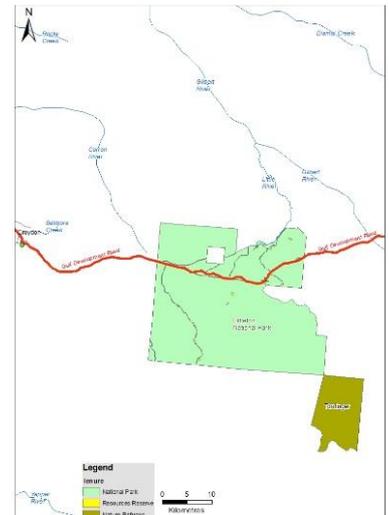
Littleton National Park and Littleton Resources Reserve (jointly Littleton) will also be managed in line with the management principles for the tenure as defined in the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and supporting regulations. Other appropriate legislation including the *Native Title Act 1993*, *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*, Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA) and government policies, procedures, and protocols.

Littleton National Park and Littleton Resources Reserve

Littleton contains regionally significant palustrine wetlands and straddles two bioregions at the convergence of arid and tropical climates. Littleton is part of the Great Artesian Basin Rim state-wide corridor and protects a range of ecosystems that are poorly represented in the protected area estate. Its local refugia provide resilience to climate change and disturbance.

Littleton’s variety of lakes, swamps and other wetlands help to create floristic diversity. Woodlands with perennial grasses provide habitat for species of conservation significance such as the Gouldian finch and black-throated finch.

Aboriginal Cultural sites are a significant value of the park. Littleton lies within the lands of the Tagalaka People who have an ongoing connection to country. They have successful Native Title determinations (QUD6020/2001 & QUD6109/1998) which include Littleton.



Bioregion	Gulf Plains	Area	79444.78ha (NP)
	Einasleigh Uplands		155.22ha (RR)
Local Government Area	Etheridge Shire Council	State electorate	Mount Isa
	Croydon Shire Council		
Management Obligations	JAMBA		

Resource use

Littleton Resources Reserve enables reasonable access to the mineral resources within the reserve and management needs to both consider this access and the rights of leaseholders within the reserve. These leases are currently for the extraction of gravel.

Key park values

While all parks are important, and all values make parks worth protecting, park managers need to focus on protecting and presenting the most important values – the ‘key’ values. These are the values which will form the basis of ongoing evaluation of management effectiveness. Protecting these key values also helps to frame the purpose of management for each park.

This management statement provides high-level, strategic direction for protecting and managing key park values. Each key value is outlined in this section, including tables showing the value’s current condition, trend and our level of confidence about this information. A brief description of the value is provided, followed by threats to the value and the proposed ‘strategic management directions’ which aim to protect the value over the long-term. As well as managing and monitoring these values, there will also be further focus on monitoring the condition and trend of some plants and animals within these broader identified values to provide a more detailed picture of the effectiveness of park management. All key values are summarised in **Table 1** and illustrated in **Map 1**.

Figure 1 explains the meaning of the various symbols, which are used in tables to describe and rate the condition and trend for each key value.

Condition	Good	Good with some concern	Significant concern	Critical
				
Description	<i>The value is in good condition and is likely to be maintained for the foreseeable future, provided that current conservation measures are maintained.</i>	<i>The value is likely to be essentially maintained over the long-term with minor additional conservation measures to address existing concerns.</i>	<i>The value is threatened by a number of current and/or potential threats. Significant additional conservation measures are required to preserve the value over the medium to long-term.</i>	<i>The value is severely threatened. Urgent additional large-scale conservation measures are required or the value may be lost.</i>
Trend rating	Improving 	Stable 	Deteriorating 	No consistent trend 
Confidence	Inferred 	Limited 	Adequate 	

Figure 1 Key to condition, trend and confidence icons

1. Woodlands with perennial grasses and open grasslands

Description	Condition		Trend	Confidence	
	2016:	Desired:		Condition	Trend
Woodlands with perennial grasses and open grasslands					

The grasslands and grassy woodlands of Littleton represent both 'of concern' regional ecosystems as well as significant habitats for species of conservation significance, including grass finches such as the Gouldian finch *Erythrura gouldiae* and the black-throated finch (white-rumped subspecies) *Poephila cincta cincta*. The improvement in the condition of this value is associated with the reduction in total grazing pressure through the ongoing decrease in numbers of cattle and horses from the property.

Threats:

- ❖ Primary: difficulty in managing appropriate fire regimes resulting in changes to perennial grass composition, and age-class structure of the woodland ecosystem (threat: rating high).
- ❖ Secondary: the incursion of pest plants, especially grasses brought into this open habitat by vehicles and livestock (threat rating: high).
- ❖ Other: encroachment into open grass areas by woody thickening mediated by fire regimes (threat rating: high).

Desired outcome: improve the condition of woodlands and their perennial grasses by creating a landscape mosaic of fire age-class, minimising pest plant impacts, and continued management of introduced grazing stock.

2. Littleton wetlands

Description	Condition		Trend	Confidence	
	2016:	Desired:		Condition	Trend
Littleton wetlands Palustrine wetlands, lakes, and swamps					

Littleton has a range of significant wetlands especially palustrine (marsh) areas, lakes and swamps. All of these wetland and waterway areas contribute significantly to the biodiversity of the park as well as providing habitat for a range of species of conservation significance including nationally recognised migratory birds.

Threats:

- ❖ Primary: pest plants such as rubber vine *Cryptostegia grandiflora* have the capacity of changing the ecosystem through forming dense mono-specific culture along the riparian zone (threat rating: medium).
- ❖ Secondary: pest animals, particularly pigs *Sus scrofa*, cattle *Bos spp.* and horses *Equus caballus* damaging vegetation, through grazing and trampling, soil structure and water quality through intensive trampling, wallowing and digging (threat rating: medium).

Desired outcome: improve the condition of the wetland areas on Littleton by minimising the impacts of pest plants and animals on the riparian zone and within the wetlands themselves.

3. Aboriginal cultural values

Description	Condition		Trend	Confidence	
				Condition	Trend
Aboriginal cultural sites Camps, art sites and culturally significant locations and artefacts	2016: 	Desired: 			

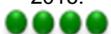
Locations, materials and sites significant to the Tagalaka People occur across the park. Negotiations with the Traditional Owners for country may provide opportunities to formally present specific areas of cultural value to the public.

Threats:

- ❖ Primary: pest animals rubbing against and interfering with artworks and cultural material (threat rating: medium).
- ❖ Secondary: theft or disturbance of cultural materials (threat rating: medium).

Desired outcome: Aboriginal cultural sites and artefacts are not damaged or compromised by the actions of pest animals or visitors. Aboriginal cultural sites are presented where appropriate through agreement with Traditional Owners.

4. Lancewood on sandstone

Description	Condition		Trend	Confidence	
				Condition	Trend
Lancewood on sandstone Lancewood dominated forests on sandstone	2016: 	Desired: 			

Lancewood *Acacia shirleyi* grows on areas of shallow sandstone within the park. These forests are poorly represented within the protected area estate and are of conservation concern.

Threats:

- ❖ Primary: this ecosystem is sensitive to fire and is readily modified by the incorrect application of burning (threat rating: medium).

Desired outcome: The lancewood ecosystems are not damaged or modified by fire.

Table 1. Littleton — Strategic management directions for key values

Condition	Trend	Key threatening process	Strategic management directions: Values	Priority (1-5)
1. Woodlands with perennial grasses and open grass lands				
2016:  Desired: 	↑	Fire	Implement planned burning to maintain a healthy open woodland with perennial grasses as a mosaic of varying fire ages according to recommended guidelines.	3
		Pest plants	Continue to reduce the impacts of pest plants through mapping and treatment of infestations to contain their extent.	2
			Implement weed hygiene measures for agency vehicles and as conditions on mineral authorities.	2
Pest animals	Reduce total grazing pressure and reduce pest plant vectors through continued and ongoing removal of introduced grazing species (cattle and horses) from the protected area.	2		
2. Littleton wetlands				
2016:  Desired: 	↔	Pest plants	Reduce the impacts of pest plants on the Littleton wetlands through the containment and treatment of existing rubber vine infestations.	2
		Pest animals	Minimise trampling and wallowing in wetland areas through the continued reduction of the size of the population of horses, cattle and pigs on the protected areas.	2
3. Aboriginal cultural sites				
2016:  Desired: 	↓	Pest animals	Reduce impacts of pest animals on art sites by reduction of the feral animal population or by exclusion mechanisms.	2
		Theft and vandalism	Minimise visitor impacts on cultural values through site hardening and interpretation.	2
4. Lancewood on sandstone				
2016:  Desired: 	↔	Fire	Reduce impacts of fire on lancewood areas by reduction of fuel in surrounding ecosystems or by exclusion mechanisms to enhance the natural self-protection of the ecosystem.	2

Levels of Service

'Levels of Service' (LoS) is a tool used to help define management standards for all Queensland parks, and to set priorities for allocating resources to achieve those standards. LoS focus management activities and resources where they are most needed, and also help ensure we are managing parks in a consistent, accountable and effective way across the state. Levels of Service are used to identify the current and 'desired' (future) standards for a range of critical management elements and associated performance measures.

There are five LoS, ranging from 'acceptable' to 'exceptional', which are applied to nine management elements (e.g. fire management). The management elements are the most common activities undertaken across all parks and forests. Littleton National Park and Littleton Resources Reserve is assessed as requiring a 'medium' LoS for most elements of management (based on an evaluation of its natural, cultural and social values).

For further detail on the LoS standards for Littleton, refer to Table 2.

Thematic strategies

Each protected area will require one or more thematic strategies depending on the complexity of the values and service issues. The LoS prescriptions provide guidance for each individual element to indicate the requirement for a thematic strategy and its appropriate level.

Thematic strategies cover key park management detail, values and significant service issues. They provide a linkage between the strategic approach and operational services. Thematic strategies present detailed objectives which are specific to the protected area developed from the strategic management directions – LoS.

Thematic strategies required for Littleton National Park and Littleton Resources Reserve

- fire strategy
- pest strategy
- assessment and monitoring strategy.

Evaluation and reporting

Management effectiveness will be evaluated for Littleton as part of a monitoring framework. This will guide an adaptive management approach to set clear benchmarks for management, ensure the condition of key values is within acceptable thresholds, deliver transparent and accountable reporting and inform future management. Management effectiveness will be measured against:

- condition and trend for key values
- achievement of LoS standards
- implementation of management actions
- outcomes of strategic management directions.

Table 2. Littleton National Park and Littleton Resources Reserve – Strategic management directions for Levels of Service

Management element	Current LoS	Desired LoS	Strategic Management Directions (bridging the gap)	Priority
1. Fire	Medium	Medium	Improve knowledge of fire ecology and the impacts of fire on key values.	2
			Improve the current level of stakeholder engagement with park neighbours and stakeholders focussing on asset locations.	2
			Raise the level of priority of fire management by protecting life and property and all key values by implementing the fire strategy.	2
2. Pest	High	Medium	Improve the level of knowledge of pests and their impacts on key values especially impacts to Aboriginal Cultural sites and investigate emerging threats.	2
			Engage with lease holders (on the Resources Reserve) on potential pest issues around gravel extraction activities.	3
			Engage with Traditional Owners on the management of pests in the vicinity of cultural sites.	3
			Engage with Etheridge Shire Council and Croydon Shire Council on the early alert of pest plant incursions into the area.	3
3. Natural values	Medium	High	Implement the relevant sections of the National Recovery Plan for the black-throated finch southern subspecies <i>Poephila cincta cincta</i> and the National Recovery Plan for the Gouldian finch <i>Erythrura gouldiae</i> .	2
			Actively seek to improve baseline information on the natural values of the parks.	3
			Natural values to be a standing agenda item for internal meeting about management of the park.	3
4. Traditional Owner engagement and cultural heritage	Medium	Medium	Engage with the Tagalaka People to identify values including (where appropriate) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the location of cultural values under threat from pest animals options for cultural site management including presentation. 	3
5. Historic cultural heritage	Acceptable	Acceptable	Train staff in heritage identification and documentation.	5
			Record and document any historic values/artefacts located on Littleton.	5
6. Community and third party interests	Acceptable	Medium	Establish a contact system with leaseholders and neighbours to enable rapid, coordinated and suitable responses to fire and severe weather.	5
7. Visitor	Acceptable	Acceptable	Identify with Traditional Owners appropriate visitor opportunities.	2
			Engage with visitors using signs and internet based sources of information.	3
			Investigate and implement the creation of campsites suitable for low levels of use in a low maintenance setting.	2
8. Field management capability	High	Medium	Greater knowledge is being sort on Indigenous and non-Indigenous and natural value details values.	3
9. Operational planning and management	High	Medium	Currently meets LoS Standard – maintain.	3

Map 1: Littleton National Park and Littleton Resources Reserve – key values

