Beninbi National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	**2,586.35ha**
Bioregion:	South Eastern Queensland
QPWS region:	Sunshine and Fraser Coast
Local government estate/area:	North Burnett Regional
State electorate:	Callide

Legislative framework

✔	*Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*
✔	*Native Title Act 1993* (Cwlth)
✔	*Nature Conservation Act 1992*

Thematic strategies

✔	Level 2 fire management strategy
✔	Level 2 pest management strategy

Vision

Beninbi National Park will conserve significant biodiversity values and protect part of a riparian landscape corridor for Barambah Creek, which runs through the park. These values will be protected so that the park will continue to provide significant wildlife refugia and connectivity to other habitats in the bioregion. Regional ecosystems and plants and animals of conservation significance will be protected from threatening processes and the park will be managed to retain its natural values. Cultural heritage values will be identified and protected.

Conservation purpose

Beninbi National Park was gazetted in 2006 as part of the South East Queensland Forests Agreement tenure conversion process. The park was previously forest reserve and is protected for its high biodiversity values and role in protecting connectivity through lowland areas of South East Queensland. The area in which the park is located is identified as having special biodiversity value, supporting areas of wildlife refugia and areas with concentrations of taxa at the limits of their geographic range. Barambah Creek forms part of a riparian bioregional corridor which maintains and encourages connectivity of riparian and associated ecosystems.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

Beninbi National Park is located in the Burnett River catchment. The terrain in the park consists of hills and lowlands on granitic rocks and shallow soils of low fertility. Cainozoic alluvial plains and older floodplain complexes are evident along the eastern and northern boundaries of the park along Barambah Creek. Surrounding land is used mainly for grazing and a current grazing lease exists on the park. The steep banks and rough terrain along Barambah Creek deter cattle from crossing and provide some protection for small pockets of vine scrub. Hardwood timber harvesting occurred prior to its 2006 gazettal as park but was not heavy enough to significantly change the long-term vegetation structure. Old forestry and lessee tracks are used for park management purposes and erosion of these tracks is an ongoing problem. Several track sections, particularly along the southern boundary, require maintenance and in some cases upgrading.

The steep banks of Barambah Creek and the hilly terrain in the park provide high value scenic opportunities.

Regional ecosystems

Vegetation on the park includes tall woodlands, open forest to woodland, grassy woodland and areas of low microphyll rainforest and semi-evergreen vine thicket. The understorey is generally grassy with a sparse mid-stratum. The regional ecosystem 12.3.3 *Eucalyptus tereticornis* open-forest to woodland is endangered and five regional ecosystems of concern are known on the park (Table 1). Very few stands of *E. tereticornis* remain intact and in 2006 less than 10% of the pre-clearing area remained in the region as less steep areas have been extensively cleared for pasture. *Eucalyptus tereticornis* grows into a very large hollow-forming tree and has a special significance for animals, especially in drier areas. Threats to this regional ecosystem and the five of concern regional ecosystems on the park include pest plant incursion and inappropriate fire regimes.

Native plants and animals

The near threatened plant *Notelaea pungens* is the only species of conservation significance recorded on Beninbi National Park (Table 2). Plant and animal lists are incomplete and comprehensive surveys are needed to provide accurate and current information to inform park management decisions.

Aboriginal culture

The extent of occupation and the degree of its cultural significance to Traditional Owners remains largely unknown by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). The Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay Burnett areas 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.

A Native Title claim (Wakka Wakka People #5 (QUD93/12 QC12/4)) has been lodged over an area that includes the park. The park also is included in an area under an ILUA between Wakka Wakka #2 and Tarong Energy Incorporation Limited for a mining lease.

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

Shared-history culture

The area in which the park is located has been grazed and harvested for timber since early European settlement. Old fences and dams are evidence of these activities on the park although no formal assessment of their cultural heritage value has been undertaken.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Visitor use of the park is very low and recreational opportunities are limited by the topography. Access to the park is through private property. No visitor infrastructure is provided. The rough terrain and track conditions limit the potential for a significant increase in recreational activities.

Education and science

The factors limiting recreational opportunities also restrict the potential to use the park for educational purposes. The usefulness of the park for scientific purposes cannot be gauged fully while plant and animal values are not known and fully understood. This situation provides an opportunity for meaningful research

Partnerships

Regular liaison is maintained with neighbours, local authority representatives and local fire management bodies on shared management issues such as fire and pest plant management. There is scope for improved liaison with Traditional Owners on these issues. There is also potential for improved communication with neighbours regarding fire management.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Lantana *Lantana camera* is growing along Barambah Creek in small patches. While it presents only a minor threat to most regional ecosystems at this time, care must be taken to ensure it does not spread into the low microphyll vine forest and semi-evergreen vine thicket which is susceptible to damage from this pest plant. No other significant populations of pest plants are known and prescribed control programs are unnecessary at present.

Pigs *Sus scrofa*, dogs *Canis lupus familiaris*, foxes *Vulpes vulpes* and cats *Felis catus* have been sighted on the park but populations are small and the threat to wildlife from these animals is considered to be minor.

The park has a Level 2 pest management strategy.

Fire management

Fire is an important park management tool and is used for several purposes including control of pest plants and reduction of fuel loads. Generally the aim is to maintain ground litter and fallen timber habitats by burning only with sufficient soil moisture to produce fine scale mosaics of unburnt areas. Some regional ecosystems require treatment specific to their fire ecology. *Eucalyptus tereticornis* open-forest to woodland will generally perform best when prescribed burns are low intensity at three to six year intervals, as will *E. melanophloia* grassy woodland, open-forest woodland of *Corymbia citriodora* and *E. cebra* grassy woodland.

The low microphyll vine forest and semi-evergreen vine thicket must not be burnt deliberately. This regional ecosystem is fire sensitive and is best protected using broad-scale management of surrounding country with small scale fires throughout the year to reduce the extent of wildfire.

Grazing by cattle has reduced the ground fuel load. The park has a Level 2 fire management strategy.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
Landscape Park management personnel are able to safely access all areas of the park.	A1. Maintain existing road infrastructure to a standard which facilitates access for management purposes, including upgrades where necessary.
Native plants and animals Species lists are accurate and up-to-date.	A2. Conduct plant and animal surveys for native and introduced species and use to inform management decisions, including fire and pest management.
Fire management Fire is used appropriately to protect habitat diversity and wildfire risks are minimised.	A3. Continue to monitor medium to long-term effects of fire to identify the most suitable burning regimes for the vegetation communities on the park. Factors to be considered include frequency, intensity and timing of planned burns. A4. Improve cooperative fire management with Traditional Owners and neighbours, specifically establishing wildfire buffer zones along the park boundary where appropriate.
Aboriginal culture Aboriginal cultural values of the conservation parks are identified and protected.	A5. Encourage and support Traditional Owners in conducting a comprehensive cultural heritage survey of the parks across the Sunshine Coast Burnett region including recording stories, language names and cultural heritage places.

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem Number	Description	Biodiversity status
12.3.3	*Eucalyptus tereticornis* open-forest to woodland.	Endangered
12.12.8	*Eucalyptus melanophloia*, usually with *E*. *crebra* ± *Corymbia erythrophloia* grassy woodland.	Of concern
12.12.9	Shrubby woodland with *Eucalyptus dura* usually on rocky peaks on Mesozoic to Proterozoic igneous rocks.	Of concern
12.12.12	*Eucalyptus tereticornis*, *E. crebra* (sometimes *E*. *siderophloia*) open-forest to woodland.	Of concern
12.12.18	Low microphyll vine forest ± *Araucaria cunninghamii* and semi-evergreen vine thicket.	Of concern
12.12.25	*Eucalyptus fibrosa* subsp. *fibrosa* open-forest to woodland ± *Corymbia citriodora*, *Angophora leiocarpa*, *E*. *acmenoides*.	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				
Notelaea pungens	-	Near threatened	-	Low