

Woondum National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	4,001ha
Bioregion:	South Eastern Queensland
QPWS region:	Sunshine and Fraser Coast
Local government estate/area:	Gympie Regional Council
State electorate:	Gympie

Legislative framework

a	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
a	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
a	<i>Forestry Act 1959</i>
a	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>

Plans and agreements

a	Bonn Convention
a	China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA)
a	Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA)
a	South East Queensland Horse riding Trail Network Management Plan 2011

Thematic strategies

a	Level 2 Pest Management Strategy
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Vision

Woondum National Park protects a range of regional ecosystems and listed species, while preserving the nature-based recreational value of the reserve.

Conservation purpose

The 4,001ha area of Woondum National Park was gazetted in 2009 from Woondum Forest Reserve 1. Prior to 2001, Woondum Forest Reserve 1 was gazetted as Woondum State Forest 393.

In 1995, 380ha of the north western part of Woondum State Forest was declared scientific area (Woondum 1 – Mothar Mountain Scientific Area 65) under the *Forestry Act 1959* for its significant areas of rainforest, scribbly gum and other forests on a geology unique to the region, as well as its scenic qualities (DPI 1996). The scientific area was later converted to national park.

Woondum National Park contains a diverse landscape and range of ecosystems close to Gympie. The park contains eight vulnerable or near threatened species, as well as one endangered and five of concern regional ecosystems.

The national park also has significant recreational value to the local community and visiting tour groups for horse riding, four-wheel-drive vehicle touring and walking.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

Woondum National Park is located 18km south-east of Gympie and 4km west of Kin Kin. The main landscape features within the park are the two peaks of Mount Boulder and Mothar Mountain, local namesake of the reserve. The park covers a significant area of mountainous country and is the source of several major creeks which feed north into the Mary River Catchment through Gympie. Its eastern escarpment is also the upper catchment for several tributaries of Kin Kin Creek and the Noosa River to the south-east. The 4,001ha area is largely consolidated, with a relatively low level of fragmentation. The land adjacent to the park is mostly grazing country, with limited connective corridors to other protected area estate.

Mount Boulder and its adjoining ridges are composed primarily of granite and its creeks and gullies are characterised by granite rocks and boulders. Boulder Creek joins Woondum Creek near the eastern edge of the park forming a series of picturesque rock pools which have been popular as a local swimming area for over 40 years.

Much of the surrounding landscape is based on decomposed granite and any disturbance from illegal motorised access or road building and maintenance is highly prone to erosion due to the friable nature of granitic soils.

Regional ecosystems

Fourteen regional ecosystems occur in the park, including one endangered and five of concern ecosystems (Table 1). The endangered ecosystem 12.3.1 is notophyll vine forest and sensitive to fire.

Native plants and animals

Rising to 430m above sea level, Woondum National Park supports upland eucalypt forests and sheltered gullies of rainforest, providing habitat for a diverse array of native species. The park supports four vulnerable and four near threatened fauna species (Table 2). Bird species recorded on the park which are protected under international agreements are listed in Table 3.

Lace monitors *Varanus varius* and brush turkeys *Alectura lathami* are often seen in the day-use area.

Aboriginal culture

The park is covered by a native title claim (claim no.: QC2013/003) on behalf of the Kabi Kabi First Nation people. The area holds high importance to Aboriginal people and there are many sites of cultural importance across the region. Mothar Mountain rock pools and Kabi boys Creek, used for initiation ceremonies for the Kabi Kabi language group, are listed as significant sites. These sites are currently not assessed. Limited information is available.

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

Shared-history culture

Several early forestry sites are listed for the Mothar Mountain area, including Mothar Mountain Forest Station and Forestry barracks and the Wattle Pocket Camp site. The significance of these sites is currently not assessed.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

The Rock Pools day-use area is a popular destination for local day trippers from Gympie. Picnicking facilities, including toilets, are provided at the day-use area on Hill Road near the rock pools on Boulder Creek. There is a short formal walking track from the rock pools, as well as opportunities for informal walking along the creek bed or fire trails. Visitors can walk to the summit of Boulder Mountain through tall open forest with a rainforest understorey and open forest with grass trees. The Boulder Mountain hiking trail is a steep 3.2km return trail and is only recommended for visitors with a reasonable level of fitness.

Horse riding, mountain biking and walking occurs on Hill Road, Madill Road, Traveston Road and Coomber Road as part of the Noosa Trail Network managed by Noosa Council. The Noosa Trail Network is a series of trails that pass through national park, State forest, forest reserve, private property, council parks and road reserves from Tewartin to Kin Kin.

Horse riding is also permitted on the South East Queensland Horse Riding Network sections (forest reserve tenure) within Woondum National Park.

Registered trail bikes and four-wheel-drive vehicles are permitted access for touring along the main circuit road in the park. Motorised access is permitted from the day-use area along Hill Road, around to Coomber Road, Traveston Road and Madill Road. This access is utilised by commercial operators and four-wheel drive touring clubs under group or commercial activity permit including quad bike tours, as well as four-wheel drive day-trip visitors.

Outside the main day-use area, walking tracks and recreational trails, the majority of the park area has a low level of informal access and remains undeveloped.

Illegal access by trail bike riders and four-wheel-drive vehicles causes significant damage to internal roads and drainage infrastructure. Access has been restricted along these trails due to the unsustainable impact of motorised access or because they have been set aside for non-motorised multi-use. This is particularly important for trails branching off Hill Road and Madill Road, due to the steep terrain and friable nature of the soil.

Education and science

School groups from the local area often stay at the nearby Boulder Mountain Holiday Centre and use the national park for school activities and educational purposes.

The national park is also an important seed collecting site for scientific purposes for spotted gum *Corymbia citriodora* and Gympie messmate *Eucalyptus cloeziana*, as well as other *Eucalyptus* spp.

The University of Queensland and the Queensland Museum have permits to collect and take fungi, lichen, moss and plants listed under schedules 2, 3, 5 and 6 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* for research purposes.

Partnerships

Regular liaison is maintained with neighbours and organisations with shared interests in park management.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) has a cooperative arrangement with the local Council in the management and maintenance of horse trails on QPWS estate, including the Noosa Trail Network.

QPWS also participates in an annual dog control and monitoring program in conjunction with Gympie and Noosa councils and local property owners. QPWS staff has been extensively involved with trapping wild dogs on neighbouring freehold land as part of cooperative approach to wild dog management across the landscape.

QPWS undertake joint compliance operations with Gympie Police targeting illegal motorised access.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Declared weeds found in the park include groundsel *Baccharis halimifolia*, lantana *Lantana camara*, camphor laurel *Cinnamomum camphora*, umbrella tree *Schefflera actinophylla* and giant rat's tails grass *Sporobolus pyramidalis*. Lantana is common and well-established on park edges and internal roadsides. Other common weeds include silver-leaf desmodium *Desmodium uncinatum* and mistflower *Ageratina riparia*.

The park contains three pine plantations, planted as an experimental trial while the park was a State forest. QPWS is in the process of removing these plantations. Some follow-up monitoring and weed control work will be required to ensure that the cleared areas regenerate properly. Seven hardwood *Eucalyptus grandis* plantations were also established under State forest tenure in the eastern portion of the national park. It is intended that these plantations be left to regenerate naturally through wildfire and natural attrition.

Wild dog *Canis familiaris* populations are present in the surrounding landscape and often traverse the park. Wild dogs threaten the biodiversity of ecosystems through predation of ground dwelling mammals, birds and reptiles. They also are a potential threat to public or staff safety and social well-being or economic livelihood of neighbouring rural residences. QPWS is actively involved in a cooperative trapping and baiting program in conjunction with Gympie and Noosa councils and neighbouring landholders.

Foxes *Vulpes vulpes* and feral cats *Felis catus* also occur in the park and may have impact on ground dwelling mammal, bird and reptile populations. There are significant recorded levels of feral pig *Sus scrofa* populations within the national park and surrounding area. Feral pigs may have a detrimental effect on ecosystem structure, rare and threatened species and the health of creek systems.

Woondum National Park will be managed according to its current approved Level 2 Pest Management Strategy.

Fire management

Six of the regional ecosystems within the park are fire sensitive and not normally flammable—specifically 12.3.1 (endangered) gallery rainforest (notophyll vine forest); 12.8.13 (of concern) Araucarian complex microphyll vine forest; 12.11.1 simple notophyll vine forest often with abundant *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana* (gully vine forest); 12.11.10 notophyll vine forest +/- *Araucaria cunninghamii*; 12.12.1 (of concern) simple notophyll vine forest usually with abundant *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana* (gully vine forest); 12.12.16 notophyll vine forest. These ecosystems are not to be burnt deliberately and any planned burns should not create running fires into these communities, particularly vine forests.

Other management issues

There are 21 apiary sites within the park, established when the park was State forest. Fifteen of these sites are still currently active and managed under the QPWS apiary management policy.

When the park was State forest, a telecommunications site was established at the summit of Mount Boulder. At the time of gazettal to national park, there were 25 occupation permits under the *Forestry Act 1959*. The Mount Boulder site remained as forest reserve tenure, allowing the occupation permit holders to continue operation at the site. However, the permit holders continue to access the site through national park. While the primary access to the site is on national park, the maintenance of the access road is the responsibility of the primary users at the Mount Boulder site. Permit holders require the authorisation of QPWS for any maintenance works on the road.

References

Department of Environment and Resource Management 2011. South East Queensland Horse Riding Trail Network Management Plan 2011.

Department of Primary Industries 1996. Management Plan Mothar Mountain Scientific Area 65 State Forest 393 Woondum.

Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2010. Sunshine Coast Biodiversity Strategy 2010–2020.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Landscape</p> <p>Catchment protection services are maintained.</p>	<p>A1. Monitor changes in vegetation structure to identify potential erosion issues and mitigate impacts.</p> <p>A2. Maintain walking tracks, roads and timber bridge crossings in good condition.</p> <p>A3. Monitor adjacent, upstream land practices to ensure catchment protection.</p> <p>A4. Manage restricted motorised access to fire and multi-use trails not part of the Madill Road/Hill Road loop.</p> <p>A5. Continue participation in joint enforcement activities with Gympie police.</p> <p>A6. Rationalise management roads, bridges and fire breaks.</p>
<p>Native plants and animals</p> <p>Information on plant, animal and ecosystems is comprehensive and current.</p>	<p>A7. Review currency of species records and conduct surveys to inform management decisions.</p> <p>A8. Review mapping of regional ecosystems and facilitate improvements to mapping refinements where needed.</p>
<p>Cultural heritage</p> <p>Traditional Owners have meaningful involvement with park management planning and direction.</p> <p>Shared-history cultural values are identified and protected.</p>	<p>A9. 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>A10. Support an assessment of the shared-history cultural values of the park.</p>
<p>Tourism and visitor opportunities</p> <p>The park retains its natural state for the use of visitors.</p>	<p>A11. Manage visitor use with the following intent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · maintain infrastructure in keeping with the retention of the landscape setting of the park · manage horse riding and bicycle riding on the designated trail networks · general access for motorised use is restricted to the Madill Road/Hill Road loop · continue with the review of toilet facility at Rock Pools day-use area. <p>A12. Monitor impacts of horse riding and mountain bike riding on approved trails as per the South East Queensland Horse Riding Trail Network Management Plan 2011.</p>
<p>Pest management</p> <p>Impacts from pests and cattle grazing on the park are managed effectively.</p>	<p>A13. Monitor the impacts from pest plants and changes to vegetation structure with particular focus on lantana.</p> <p>A14. Work with neighbours to mitigate the impact of encroaching grazing stock.</p> <p>A15. Continue cooperative wild dog, pig and other feral animal control programs with neighbours and regional councils.</p> <p>A16. Manage according to the current approved Level 2 Pest Management Strategy.</p>

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
Fire management Appropriate fire management practices.	A17. Complete a Level 2 Fire Management Strategy for the park. In the interim, manage the park according to the current approved Statement of Fire Management Intent.

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
12.3.1	Gallery rainforest (notophyll vine forest) on alluvial plains	Endangered
12.3.2	<i>Eucalyptus grandis</i> tall open forest on alluvial plains	Of concern
12.12.1	Simple notophyll vine forest usually with abundant <i>Archontophoenix cunninghamiana</i> (gully vine forest) on Mesozoic to Proterozoic igneous rocks	Of concern
12.8.13	Araucarian complex microphyll vine forest on Cainozoic igneous rocks	Of concern
12.12.14	Shrubby woodland of <i>E. racemosa</i> subsp. <i>racemosa</i> , <i>Corymbia trachyphloia</i> usually near coastal areas on Mesozoic to Proterozoic igneous rocks	Of concern
12.12.12	<i>E. tereticornis</i> , <i>E. crebra</i> or <i>E. siderophloia</i> , <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> open forest on granite	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
<i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>	grey goshawk	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Adelotus brevis</i>	tusked frog	Vulnerable	-	Medium
<i>Climacteris erythrotripes</i>	red-browed treecreeper	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Erotoscincus graciloides</i>	elf skink	Near threatened	-	Medium
<i>Litoria pearsoniana</i>	cascade tree frog	Vulnerable	-	Medium
<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i> (southeast Queensland bioregion)	koala	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	-
<i>Podargus ocellatus plumiferus</i>	plumed frogmouth	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Tyto tenebricosa tenebricosa</i>	sooty owl	Near threatened	-	Low

Table 3: Bird species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	BONN	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	cicadabird	-	-	ü	-
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	white-throated needle-tail	-	ü	ü	ü
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater	-	-	ü	-

Scientific name	Common name	BONN	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	black-faced monarch	ü	-	-	-
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	rufous fantail	ü	-	-	-
<i>Symposiarchus trivirgatus</i>	spectacled monarch	ü	-	-	-

BONN – Bonn Convention,

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement,

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement,

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement.