

Geham and Hampton national parks Management Statement 2013

Park size:	Geham National Park 22ha Hampton National Park 4ha
Bioregion:	South Eastern Queensland
QPWS region:	South West
Local government estate/area:	Toowoomba Regional Council
State electorate:	Nanango

Legislative framework

✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>

Thematic strategies

✓	Level 2 Fire Management Strategy
✓	Level 2 Pest Management Strategy



Geham National Park. Photo: NPRSR.

Vision

Geham and Hampton national parks will continue to conserve a representative example of blackbutt open forest that was once common along the dividing range north of Toowoomba.

Conservation purpose

The blackbutt open forest is an endangered regional ecosystem that is poorly represented within the protected area estate in Queensland. These parks will be managed to conserve this vegetation community.

Both parks were previously declared scientific areas under the *Forestry Act 1959* prior to their gazettal as national park in 2006. The change in tenure was an outcome of the South East Queensland Forests Agreement (SEQFA) process. These small parks provide refuge for various animals and plants in a highly altered landscape.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

The parks are located in a significant altered landscape and have poor connections with other nearby conservation areas due to the lack of remnant corridors. The nearest protected area is Crows Nest National Park some 3km from Hampton National Park and 8km from Geham National Park. Geham National Park adjoins Geham State Forest (364ha).

Geham National Park is in the Cooby Dam catchment area while Hampton National Park is in the Perseverance Dam catchment and the parks have little impact on water quality of these catchments because of their small size. Both of these catchments supply water to the Toowoomba Regional Council area.

Surrounding land uses include:

- Geham National Park has exotic pine plantation to the north and west. While to the south areas have been cleared for grazing and along the eastern boundary there are number of lifestyle blocks.
- Hampton National Park is generally surrounded by rural residential development and orchards.

It is expected that the surrounding landscape will continue to be developed for rural lifestyle blocks in the short to medium term. This development is likely to cause further habitat fragmentation. The area also has coal exploration permits covering the surrounding areas.

The existing development surrounding the two parks limits the opportunity to increase wildlife corridors in the region. Existing corridors should be maintained such as to the south of Geham National Park.

A minor concern at Geham National Park is siltation from the formed road drainage depositing onto the park.

Regional ecosystems

Only one regional ecosystem is mapped over both reserves and it is classed as endangered.

Regional ecosystem 12.5.6 contains grey ironbark *Eucalyptus siderophloia*, small-fruited grey gum *E. propinqua*, tallowwood *E. microcorys* and/or blackbutt *E. pilularis* open forest on remnant Tertiary surfaces and is usually on deep red soils. Sydney blue gum *E. saligna* is also present at Geham National Park.

The forest at Geham National Park is in reasonable condition but some lantana *Lantana camara* and broad leaf privet *Ligustrum lucidum* is starting to dominate the shrub layer around the road edge boundary. Lack of fire in this ecosystem in the longer term will cause the thickening of the understory and stop the recruitment of canopy species such as blackbutt.

Native plants and animals

No detailed surveys have been undertaken on these two national parks. However, there are a number of incidental fauna records taken within a 2km radius of the parks and it would be expected these species would be found on the parks. So far 55 plants, three fungi and 103 animals have been recorded in the local area.

Species of significance that have been recorded on park include grey goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae*, powerful owl *Ninox strenua*, glossy black-cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami*, and koala *Phascolarctos cinereus* (South Eastern Queensland bioregion) (Table 1).

Aboriginal culture

There is no current native title claim over the two parks. The Aboriginal cultural values of the area are not known. There are no known recorded sites on the parks.

Shared-history culture

Limited information is available concerning shared-history culture. The area around Geham and Hampton national parks was used as a soldier settlement area after World War I.

The old Crows Nest to Toowoomba rail line ran along the northern and eastern boundary of Geham National Park. This line was opened in 1886 and the track was closed on 1 July 1961. Very little evidence of it being in existence still remains.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

The very small size of these parks and their close proximity to private accommodation combined with low visitor numbers has not justified the construction of visitor facilities. Information about the parks has been provided off park.

Geham National Park

Access to the park is via gazetted roads which are on three sides of the park. An informal track passes along the other side of the park between the park and State forest.

The remnant vegetation in a generally modified landscape provides a glimpse of what the country looked like before development. The habitat is of sufficient size that the park is a designated site along the Crows Nest bird trail.

Opportunity for bird watching and nature study has seen an increase in the number of people using the Crows Nest bird trail and visiting the park.

Hampton National Park

Access to the park is via a sealed road along the eastern boundary. There is an unformed gazetted road along the north-western boundary. The area also provides opportunity for bird watching and nature study.

The park is one of the smallest terrestrial parks in the state. As part of the acquisition process under the Forestry Act there was an agreement there would be no development for recreation on the previous scientific area.

Education and science

Geham National Park was a trial area for regeneration of blackbutt between 1980 and 1994. Due to the low intensity burning there was no visible regeneration and the program has not continued.

There is opportunity because of the size of these parks to investigate the use of a vegetation mulcher and burning to encourage grassy understorey.

Partnerships

Geham National Park is adjacent to Geham State Forest and forms part of a joint management area with Hancock Queensland Plantations. Consultation with Hancock Queensland Plantations through joint management areas has and will provide opportunity for improved environmental management outcomes through the use of fire and pest management systems and working in collaboration.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

A Level 2 pest management strategy has been developed for both parks. This document provides direction for the control of pest species.

Species of most concern that will impact on the biodiversity of the park include lantana, broad leaf privet, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* (Geham National Park only) and African love grass *Eragrostis curvula*. The continued invasion of lantana and broad leaf privet is changing the blackbutt open forest vegetation structure on these parks.

Impacts from pest animals are generally low on both of these parks. Species of most concern are feral pigs *Sus scrofa* for soil disturbance; European fox *Vulpes vulpes* for predation on native wildlife; and domestic cats *Felis catus* and dogs *Canis lupus familiaris* for their predation on wildlife.

The Geham rubbish tip was closed in early 2012. While not a major issue at present, there is potential for an increase in the incidental dumping of rubbish on Geham National Park, which could introduce new weed species.

Fire management

A Level 2 fire management Strategy has been developed for the area. This document outlines the fire management objectives for both of these parks, except for boundary breaks (formed roads). Liaison with Hancock Queensland Plantations is undertaken to assist with joint management of fire.

There is no fire infrastructure on these parks. Given the small size of these parks there has been no need to construct any further fire control lines beyond those around the perimeter.

Due to the lack of fire there is a high potential for acacia species, lantana, broad leaf privet and rainforest species to dominate the understory and increase fuel loads.

After any fire there is also a strong possibility for the above species to dominate the understory unless there are more frequent planned burns undertaken to reduce the recruitment and seed stock.

Other management issues

Geham National Park has one apiary site. Under the SEQFA the apiary site and access to the site needs to be maintained until 2024.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Regional ecosystems</p> <p>The endangered regional ecosystem 12.5.6 is maintained.</p> <p>Forest with a grassy (<i>Themeda</i> sp.) to native shrubby understory is maintained.</p>	<p>A1. Review, implement and monitor strategies for pest and fire management.</p> <p>A2. Encourage research/monitoring of ecosystem condition and use updated information to inform management programs.</p>
<p>Native plants and animals</p> <p>Native species, including species of significance, continue to be observed, recorded and maintained.</p>	<p>A3. Encourage the surveying of plants and animals to confirm species on park.</p>
<p>Cultural heritage</p> <p>Cultural values of the parks are known and recorded.</p>	<p>A4. Encourage and support Traditional Owners in conducting a comprehensive cultural heritage survey of the park including recording stories, language names and cultural heritage places.</p> <p>A5. Encourage and support conducting a shared heritage survey of the parks and recording recent history.</p>
<p>Presentation</p> <p>The current level of visitor infrastructure on each park is maintained.</p>	<p>A6. Maintain current access to the parks.</p> <p>A7. Promote alternate protected areas for camping as these small parks lack the capacity for this activity.</p> <p>A8. Provide information about the parks using off-park mechanisms.</p>
<p>Other management issues</p> <p>The Geham National Park apiary site is maintained until 2024.</p>	<p>A9. Maintain access to and at the apiary site.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Species of conservation significance

Scientific name	Common name	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> status	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> status	Back on Track status
Animals				
<i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>	grey goshawk	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Calyptorhynchus lathami lathami</i>	glossy black-cockatoo	Vulnerable	-	High
<i>Ninox stenua</i>	powerful owl	Vulnerable	-	Medium
<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i> (South East Queensland Bioregion)	koala	Vulnerable	-	Low