

Kuranda National Park and Kuranda West Forest Reserve Management Statement 2013

Park size:	26,880ha
Bioregion:	Wet Tropics
QPWS region:	Northern
Local government estate/area:	Tablelands Regional Council Cairns Regional Council
State electorate:	Barron River Cook



Striped possum. Photo: NPRSR.

Legislative framework

✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Wet Tropics World Heritage Management and Protection Act 1993</i>

Plans and agreements

✓	Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement 2005
✓	Recovery plan for the stream-dwelling rainforest frogs of the Wet Tropics biogeography region of north-east Queensland 2000-2004.
✓	National recovery plan for the spectacled flying fox <i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i>
✓	National recovery plan for the southern cassowary <i>Casuarius casuarius johnsonii</i> 2007

Thematic strategies

✓	Level 2 Fire Management Strategy
✓	Level 2 Pest Management Strategy
✓	Draft QPWS Wet Tropics Region Pest Strategy 2009
✓	Wet Tropics Nature Based Tourism Strategy

Vision

Kuranda National Park maintains and enhances natural and cultural values while providing for nature-based recreation activities.

Conservation purpose

Kuranda National Park area of 26,880ha was previously Kuranda State Forest. The majority of the park is located within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The Barron Falls area was the first national park proposal in Queensland. On 3 February 1940, it became an authorised Reserve for National Park (7,000 acres) on the grounds of its spectacular geology and recreation value.

Kuranda National Park was identified as a critical habitat for a number of iconic wildlife species as well as providing a key corridor. The area conserves essential habitat for birds, cassowaries and frogs and is a critical corridor for providing gene flow of wildlife generally.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

Kuranda National Park spans an altitudinal range from around 400m to 764m at the north summit of Mount Formantine. Six peaks higher than 650m are located on the park, with the Wandana Meteorological Station on Saddle Mountain at 650m. The park is located adjacent to Kuranda State Forest and Barron Gorge, McAllister Range and Mowbray national parks.

The forested hills of the park and the Coral Sea are most often viewed from the Kuranda Range Road that crosses the southern section of the park. Black Mountain Road traverses a range of forest types including rainforests, open woodlands and perched paperbark swamps.

HQ Plantations own and manage commercial stands of timber adjacent to the park and a reserve is located within the park. Erosion of historic logging and military tracks is the primary threat to landscape values within Kuranda National Park. These tracks are often utilised by bushwalkers and other park users and may require condition assessment.

Regional ecosystems

Of the 46 regional ecosystems mapped in Kuranda National Park, 38 are of conservation significance (Table 1). The Molloy Lagoon area is listed in the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* as *Melaleuca viridiflora* swamp.

Threats to the regional ecosystems include inappropriate fire regimes and pest plants and animals.

Native plants and animals

Kuranda National Park is known to protect native plant and animal species of conservation significance (Table 2). The vulnerable tassel fern *Hupzeria tetrastichoides* is threatened by collection for gardens and horticulture.

Species listed under international agreements are recorded in Table 3.

Aboriginal culture

An Indigenous Land Use Agreement (Area Agreement) is registered over a section of the park on the western boundary.

The Djabugay Aboriginal people and the Muluridji people have an interest in the park. No native title claim is currently registered over this area.

Mona Mona is an in-holding leased to the Aboriginal community.

Shared-history culture

Exploration by Europeans in the early 1800s opened the way for gold prospectors and the timber industry and settlement by the pioneers. Barron Falls and the rainforest attracted holiday makers and honeymooners to the area.

During World War II sections of the park (then timber reserve) were used for training by Australian and American forces and the remnants of this use remain apparent in some park sections. Areas of the park may have possible unexploded ordinance.

The Queensland Government undertook a series of native timber species trials including quandong *Elaeocarpus grandis* and black bean *Castanospermum australe* in the area throughout the 1930s to 1970s.

In 1972, plantings of Caribbean pine *Pinus caribaea* were used by volunteers to stabilise parts of the Kuranda Range Road. These trees are non-native and are slowly being replaced now that this is a World Heritage area.

Most of the State forest was used for cattle grazing prior to the World Heritage listing.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

The Wet Tropics Nature Based Tourism Strategy sites on Kuranda National Park and Kuranda West Forest Reserve include Black Mountain Road (East), Rainforest Creek, Kuranda Forestry Station, Pease lookout and the Saddle Mountain track.

Skyrail passes over part of Kuranda National Park and showcases the Wet Tropics forests to thousands of visitors annually.

Walkers enjoy using the Saddle Mountain track from Kuranda into Smithfield Conservation Park.

Pease Lookout, on the escarpment above Deep Creek, is rarely used. A walking track is evident from the Henry Ross lookout to Red Peak. Red Peak is of conservation significance and walkers should tread very lightly.

Black Mountain Road is frequently used by the public to access between Julatten and Kuranda. Black Mountain Road is used for spotlighting tours. School busses, hired four-wheel drives, trail bikes, mountain bikes and walkers use this road. Vehicle speed and driver behaviour as well as the frequency of traffic on this road has been identified as a threat to human lives and wildlife.

Southedge Road (Quaid's Road) passes through Kuranda National Park and Kuranda West Forest Reserve. It is currently closed to the public by Commonwealth regulation. A Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) permit allows maintenance of the road to ensure appropriate environmental standards are kept.

East Black Mountain Road also known as the Twin Bridges track is designated for non-motorised use. Mountain biking, wildlife viewing and walking are the predominate use.

Molloy Lagoon provides an excellent site for bird watching and photography.

Education and science

Scientific research is consistent with park management objectives and is mainly based on Kuranda National Park. Relationships between fire and pest management remain the focus of attention.

Upland frog populations are of interest to researchers. Local community volunteer organisations such as the frog group have requested access to the park to monitor frog populations.

Visitor behaviour and impact studies are part of the long-term monitoring across the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Partnerships

QPWS is responsible for the day-to-day management of the national park in association with the WTMA. The goal of both agencies is to present the area's values while protecting its natural and cultural values.

Traditional Owners are involved in cooperative park management.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Pest plants identified on the protected area include the Gambia pea *Crotalaria goreensis*.

Wild horses *Equus caballus* are known to occur within Kuranda National Park and forest reserves. Feral cats *Felis catus*, pigs *Sus scrofa*, wild dogs *Canis familiaris*, common myna birds *Sturnus tristis* and cane toads *Rhinella marina* are present on the park.

Fire management

The area is managed via the Level 2 Kuranda Range Fire Management Strategy.

Other management issues

A number of communication towers are located on Kuranda National Park. The Commonwealth of Australia has a special lease for the Wandana Meteorological Station on Saddle Mountain.

An area of Aboriginal Land belonging to the Mona Mona Community lies adjacent to Kuranda National Park, Kuranda West Forest Reserve and Kuranda State Forest. Access is gained via Kuranda Forest Reserve or from Black Mountain Road through the southern part of the park.

A number of freehold in-holdings occur within Kuranda National Park. Residents and owners currently have permits to access these properties.

The Kuranda Downhill mountain bike track, on the adjacent Kuranda Forest Reserve, runs from the drop-off point on the Kennedy Highway at the Henry Ross Lookout to the foot of the Kuranda Range near the Smithfield Shopping Centre. The alignment follows the power line corridor and shifts as areas become eroded. This track was opened in May 2011.

Beekeeping occurs in the western region of Kuranda Forest Reserve.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Plants and animals</p> <p>Protect endangered species and their habitats in the long term.</p>	<p>A1. Locate cautionary signage on established wildlife crossings.</p> <p>A2. Develop accurate species lists and ensure they are loaded onto departmental databases.</p>
<p>Aboriginal culture</p> <p>Traditional Owners are involved in cooperative management of the park and reserves.</p>	<p>A3. Support the involvement of the Traditional Owners in park management.</p>
<p>Shared-history culture</p> <p>The risk of unexploded ordnance is clarified and managed.</p>	<p>A4. Investigate the possibility of unexploded ordnance on the park and manage accordingly.</p>
<p>Tourism and visitor opportunities</p> <p>Tourism and recreation experiences are appropriate to the landscape character of the park, safe and sustainable.</p>	<p>A5. Promote and maintain the Saddle Mountain track as a walking track, including creation of a trailhead at the Kuranda end.</p> <p>A6. Maintain a speed limit of 40km/hr on Black Mountain Road and the whoa-boys to slow traffic speeds and signpost wildlife crossings to mitigate wildlife injury.</p> <p>A7. Assess and address the ecological impacts associated with the walking track from Henry Ross Lookout to Red Peak.</p> <p>A8. Develop a statement of interpretative intent for the park.</p>
<p>Science and education</p> <p>Research and monitoring programs have increased knowledge and management responses for the park's natural and cultural values.</p>	<p>A9. Develop and maintain collaborative working relationships between QPWS, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders to improve scientific knowledge and culturally appropriate resource management systems.</p>
<p>Management issues</p> <p>Road access is maintained to protect the ecological and visitor values.</p>	<p>A10. Construct causeways in unstable areas and maintain seasonal road closures in wet conditions.</p> <p>A11. Maintain permitted access to in-holdings.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
7.3.4	Mesophyll vine forest with <i>Licuala ramsayi</i> on poorly drained alluvial plains and alluvial areas of uplands	Endangered
7.3.5	<i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i> and/or <i>Melaleuca cajuputi</i> closed forest to shrubland on poorly drained alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.7	<i>Eucalyptus pellita</i> and <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> open forest to woodland (or vine forest with emergent <i>E. pellita</i> and <i>C. intermedia</i>), on poorly drained alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.8	<i>Melaleuca viridiflora</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus</i> spp. +/- <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> open forest to open woodland on alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.10	Simple to complex mesophyll to notophyll vine forest on moderate to poorly drained alluvial plains of moderate fertility	Endangered
7.3.14	<i>Eucalyptus leptophleba</i> +/- <i>Corymbia clarksoniana</i> +/- <i>Melaleuca dealbata</i> woodland to open forest, on alluvium, in low rainfall areas of the west and north	Of concern
7.3.16	<i>Eucalyptus platyphylla</i> woodland to open forest on alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.20	<i>Corymbia intermedia</i> and <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> , or <i>C. intermedia</i> and <i>Eucalyptus pellita</i> , or <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> and <i>Allocasuarina</i> spp., or <i>E. cloeziana</i> , or <i>C. torelliana</i> open forests (or vine forests with these species as emergents), on alluvial fans at the base of ranges	Of concern
7.3.23	Simple to complex semi-deciduous notophyll to mesophyll vine forest on lowland alluvium	Endangered
7.3.25	<i>Melaleuca leucadendra</i> +/- vine forest species, open to closed forest, on alluvium fringing streams	Of concern
7.3.26	<i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i> woodland to open forest on alluvium fringing streams	Endangered
7.3.28	Rivers and streams including riparian herbfield and shrubland on river and stream bed alluvium, and rock within stream beds	Endangered
7.3.35	<i>Acacia mangium</i> and/or <i>A. celsa</i> and/or <i>A. polystachya</i> closed forest on alluvial plains	Endangered
7.3.43	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> open forest to woodland, on uplands on well drained alluvium	Endangered
7.3.45	<i>Corymbia clarksoniana</i> +/- <i>C. tessellaris</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus drepanophylla</i> open forest to open woodland on alluvial plains	Of concern
7.3.49	<i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> open forest to woodland on alluvial plains	Endangered
7.11.10	<i>Acacia celsa</i> open to closed forest on metamorphics	Of concern
7.11.13	<i>Corymbia torelliana</i> open forest usually with a vine forest element, on metamorphics	Endangered

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
7.11.18	<i>Corymbia intermedia</i> and/or <i>C. tessellaris</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> medium to tall open forest to woodland (or vine forest with these species as emergents), on coastal metamorphic headlands and near-coastal foothills	Of concern
7.11.19	<i>Corymbia intermedia</i> and/or <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> open forest to woodland of uplands, on metamorphics	Of concern
7.11.28	Wind-sheared notophyll vine forest of exposed metamorphic ridge crests and steep slopes	Of concern
7.11.30	Simple notophyll vine forest of <i>Blepharocarya involucrigera</i> on metamorphics	Of concern
7.11.32	<i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> and/or <i>Allocasuarina</i> spp. +/- heathy understorey, medium to tall woodland to open forest (or vine forest with these species as emergents), of steep rocky metamorphic slopes with shallow soils	Of concern
7.11.33	<i>Eucalyptus reducta</i> open forest to woodland on metamorphics	Of concern
7.11.35	<i>Eucalyptus portuensis</i> +/- <i>Corymbia citriodora</i> woodland to open forest, on metamorphics	Of concern
7.11.37	<i>Eucalyptus drepanophylla</i> and <i>Corymbia clarksoniana</i> woodland to open forest, of dry uplands on metamorphics, between Tolga and Mount Molloy	Of concern
7.11.41	Shrubland of <i>Melaleuca viridiflora</i> , <i>M. monantha</i> , <i>Acacia flavescens</i> , and <i>Grevillea</i> spp. with emergent <i>Corymbia clarksoniana</i> , or open woodland of <i>Eucalyptus drepanophylla</i> with <i>M. monantha</i> or <i>Callitris intratropica</i> , on metamorphics	Of concern
7.11.44	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> open forest to woodland of coastal metamorphic foothills	Of concern
7.11.48	<i>Melaleuca viridiflora</i> +/- <i>Corymbia clarksoniana</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus platyphylla</i> woodland to open forest, on metamorphics	Endangered
7.11.49	<i>Eucalyptus leptophleba</i> , <i>Corymbia clarksoniana</i> and <i>E. platyphylla</i> open forest to woodland, on moist metamorphic foothills	Of concern
7.11.51	<i>Corymbia clarksoniana</i> and/or <i>Eucalyptus drepanophylla</i> open forest to woodland on metamorphics	Of concern
7.12.5	<i>Eucalyptus pellita</i> +/- <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> open forest, or <i>Acacia mangium</i> and <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> open forest (or vine forest with these species as emergents), on granites and rhyolites	Endangered
7.12.9	<i>Acacia celsa</i> open to closed forest on granites and rhyolites	Of concern
7.12.48	Wind-sheared notophyll vine forest of exposed granite and rhyolite ridge-crests and steep slopes	Of concern
7.12.59	<i>Eucalyptus leptophleba</i> and <i>Corymbia clarksoniana</i> open forest to woodland, on moist foothills on granite and rhyolite	Endangered
7.12.61	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> +/- <i>E. granitica</i> woodland to open forest of moist and dry foothills and uplands on granite and rhyolite	Of concern

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
9.3.3	Mixed woodland dominated by <i>Corymbia</i> spp. and <i>Eucalyptus</i> spp. on alluvial flats, levees and plains	Of concern
9.3.13	<i>Melaleuca fluviatilis</i> and/or <i>M. argentea</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> fringing woodland on channels and levees. Generally on western flowing rivers	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				
<i>Huperzia tetrastichoides</i>	-	Vulnerable	-	High
<i>Cyathea celebica</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Medium
<i>Elaphoglossum callifolium</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Randia audasii</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Pseuduvaria mulgraceana</i> var. <i>glabrescens</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Liparis simmondsii</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
Animals				
<i>Litoria rheocola</i>	common mistfrog	Endangered	Endangered	Low
<i>Litoria serrata</i>	tapping green eyed frog	Near threatened	Least concern	Low
<i>Accipiter novaehollandiae</i>	grey goshawk	Near threatened	Least concern	Low
<i>Lophoictinia isura</i>	square-tailed kite	Near threatened	Least concern	Low
<i>Aerodramus terraereginae</i>	Australian swiftlet	Near threatened	Least concern	Low
<i>Casuarius casuarius johnsonii</i> (southern population)	southern cassowary (southern population)	Endangered	Endangered	Critical
<i>Cyclopsitta diophthalma macleayana</i>	Macleay's fig-parrot	Vulnerable	Least concern	Low
<i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i>	spectacled flying-fox	Least concern	Vulnerable	High
<i>Hipposideros diadema reginae</i>	diadema leaf-nosed bat	Near threatened	Least concern	Low

Scientific name	Common name	Nature Conservation Act 1992 status	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 status	Back on Track status
<i>Murina florium</i>	tube-nosed insectivorous bat	Vulnerable	Near threatened	High
<i>Kerivoula papuensis</i>	golden tipped bat	Near threatened	Near threatened	Medium
<i>Dendrolagus lumholtzi</i>	Lumholtz's tree-kangaroo	Near threatened	Near threatened	Low

Table 3: Species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	Bonn	JAMBA	ROKAMBA	CAMBA
<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	white-bellied sea-eagle	-	-	-	✓
<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	white-throated needletail	-	✓	✓	✓
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	cicadabird	-	✓	-	-
<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Caspian tern	-	✓	-	✓
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater	-	✓	-	-
<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	black-faced monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Symposiarchus trivirgatus</i>	spectacled monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	rufous fantail	✓	-	-	-

Bonn – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement