

Black Mountain National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	903ha
Bioregion:	Wet Tropics Cape York Peninsula
QPWS region:	Northern
Local government estate/area:	Cook Shire Council
State electorate:	Cook



View across Black Mountain from the carpark information area. Photo: NPRSR

Legislative framework

✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
✓	<i>Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002</i>
✓	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Commonwealth)</i>
✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>
✓	<i>Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993</i>

Plans and agreements

✓	Eastern Yalanji, the Queensland Government and WTMA Indigenous Land Use Agreement QI2006/026
✓	Japan—Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	National recovery plan for the spectacled flying fox <i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i>
✓	National recovery plan for the bare-rumped sheath-tail bat <i>Saccolaimus saccolaimus nudicluniatius</i>
✓	National recovery plan for cave-dwelling bats, <i>Rhinolophus philippinensis</i> , <i>Hipposideros semoni</i> and <i>Taphozous trough-toni</i> 2001-2005
✓	National recovery plan for the northern quoll (<i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i>)
✓	Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement 2005

Thematic strategies

✓	Level 2 fire management strategy
✓	Level 2 pest management strategy

Vision

Black Mountain dominates the landscape and generates strong emotions for many visitors and local people.

Black Mountain National Park continues to support the entire distribution of some animal species and provides a stronghold for many others. The park continues to play a crucial role in the preservation of biodiversity for the region and is of significance at a global scale.

Conservation purpose

Black Mountain National Park conserves an outstanding geological landscape. This landscape contains high cultural and biological values.

The park protects the distribution of a number of species that are restricted in distribution to the boulder fields and provides habitat for many other species of regional or national importance.

Black Mountain is a significant feature of natural and cultural value.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

The boulder fields of Black Mountain National Park form an impressive and distinctive landscape of outstanding scenic value. This landscape is an important visual component of the 'Cooktown experience' as well as being of international conservation and geological significance.

Black Mountain's characteristic dark boulder fields consist of Trevethan Granite. This rock formed from a mass of magma that cooled and solidified below the earth's surface some 260 million years ago. An unusual, regular jointing pattern led to a network of fractures in the granite mass. Erosion of surrounding softer land surfaces exposed the upper section of granite, accelerating weathering along the regular fractures. Water penetrated the fractures, and resultant chemical weathering isolated rectangular blocks of granite from the underlying mass. These blocks have been progressively rounded into the massive boulders seen today. Blue-green algae have coated the light grey-coloured granite, resulting in the distinct dark appearance of the boulder fields. Small areas in the east and north of the park consist of Quaternary alluvium. Black Mountain's boulder fields are a largely undisturbed and an outstanding geological feature.

Black Mountain National Park is entirely within the Annan River catchment area and contains minor, intermittent or temporary tributaries of this river.

Regional ecosystems

The vegetation of Black Mountain National Park is dominated by eucalypt forest with some rainforest and semi-deciduous vine thicket patches in protected gullies of the predominantly rocky environment.

Of the 12 regional ecosystems mapped in Black Mountain National Park, seven are from the Wet Tropics bioregion and five are from the Cape York Peninsula bioregion. Of these 12 regional ecosystems, two are considered to be endangered and four to be of concern (Table 1).

Native plants and animals

Limited sampling has recorded 93 species of native plants in Black Mountain National Park. Two species with vulnerable conservation status, *Rhaphidospora cavernarum* and the Cooktown orchid *Dendrobium bigibbum*, have been recorded from the park as have two near threatened species, *Gossia lucida* and creek grass *Centotheca philippinensis* (Table 2).

Black Mountain National Park has at least 13 animal species of conservation significance. Of these, three species are considered to be endangered, six vulnerable and four near threatened (Table 2). Three of these species are found only in the boulder fields of Black Mountain National Park and its immediate vicinity; namely the Black Mountain boulderfrog *Cophixalus saxatilis*, Black Mountain skink *Liburnascincus scirtetis* and Black Mountain gecko *Nactus galgajuga*.

One species known from the park, the rainbow bee-eater *Merops ornatus*, is listed in international agreements (Table 3).

Indigenous culture

The Eastern Kuku Yalanji People have a successful Native Title determination over Black Mountain National Park. Indigenous Land Use Agreements have been made that define how native title is articulated on the park.

Traditional Owners continue to use the area for cultural activities and have ongoing commitments and cultural obligations in the management of the area. Activity guidelines based in the Indigenous Land Use Agreements have been jointly prepared to develop an understanding of culturally sensitive areas and mechanisms to address issues regarding the management of the national park. Further activity guidelines may be negotiated between the parties in the future.

Shared-history culture

European exploration of the inland areas between Port Douglas and Cooktown began in 1872 with William Hann, who noted generally friendly encounters with Kuku Yalanji People. Hann's discovery of gold at Palmer River led to a gold rush, however, routes to the goldfields generally bypassed the park area.

Black Mountain National Park includes areas of former forest, timber and stock reserves.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Black Mountain National Park is an imposing visual element of the Mulligan Highway south of Cooktown. Travellers have the opportunity to stop and view the mountain from an interpretative area without accessing the mountain area itself. It creates a gateway to the Cooktown area.

The Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 requires commercial aircraft flying below 1,000 feet to obtain a permit. Helicopters access the parks for emergencies, management and infrastructure surveys only.

Education and science

This park provides a cultural landscape for Traditional Owners to pass on their culture to future generations.

The high natural and cultural values of Black Mountain National Park are the focus of education and scientific investigation. Values include the large number of endemic and threatened plants and animals found in the park.

The provision of relevant educational information about the park is important in promoting an understanding and appreciation of the area's natural and cultural values, appropriate behaviour and potential hazards.

Black Mountain National Park is of significant scientific research interest as it protects a range of species known only from its boulder fields. The park is within the ecotone between the Wet Tropics bioregion and the Cape York Peninsula bioregion resulting in it providing a natural laboratory on the determinants of the distribution of a number of plant and animal species. Opportunities exist for further and ongoing research undertaken in cooperation with Traditional Owners.

Partnerships

The Eastern Kuku Yalanji People's native title rights have been determined over Black Mountain National Park. Traditional Owners have a responsibility under Aboriginal lore for the management of the area and work in together with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS). This relationship has been formalised through Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA) which contain protocols and guidelines to ensure a strong and positive working relationship between Traditional Owners and QPWS.

The sustainable use of the parks is the responsibility of QPWS, however, other agencies administer relevant legislation and neighbouring areas. These include the Cook Shire Council and the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Seven pest plants have been recorded for Black Mountain National Park including Indian jujube *Ziziphus mauritiana* (declared class 2 pest plant), lantana *Lantana camara* and West African tulip tree *Spathodea campanulata* (both declared class 3 pest plants). These species are of particular threat to the park's semi-deciduous vine forests.

Non-declared pest plants include Guinea grass *Megathyrsus maximum*, grader grass *Themeda quadrivalvis*, red natal grass *Melinis repens*, Brazilian nightshade *Solanum seaforthianum* and guava *Psidium* spp.

Feral pigs *Sus scrofa*, feral cats *Felis catus* and wild dogs *Canis familiaris* are present in Black Mountain National Park, and are declared class 2 pest animals. Cane toads *Rhinella marina* are a non-declared pest animal that is known to be present in Black Mountain National Parks; as are the brown rat *Rattus norvegicus*, black rat *R. rattus* and house mouse *Mus musculus*.

Cane toads, pigs, cats and black rats are listed as key threats to the park's natural integrity.

Fire management

A number of regional ecosystems in Black Mountain National Park have been identified as being fire sensitive and require fire exclusion while others require regular burning. A statement of fire management intent has been approved for the park.

Rural Fire brigades also work in partnership with QPWS staff to manage fire.

Other management issues

A power corridor crosses the park and this infrastructure creates the opportunity for the introduction of pests into the park and interrupts the scenic vista.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Landscape</p> <p>The scenic amenity of the park is maintained and protected.</p>	<p>A1. Where possible new infrastructure should be located and/or designed to have minimum visual impact on the landscape.</p>
<p>Native plants and animals</p> <p>Information on the occurrence and distribution of vegetation communities continues to be sufficient for management purposes.</p>	<p>A2. Undertake vegetation monitoring of particular species or sites in response to management needs.</p>
<p>Indigenous Culture</p> <p>Traditional Owners play an important role in natural resource management and the conservation, protection and appropriate interpretation of their cultural heritage.</p> <p>Traditional Owners exercise native title rights in the national park, as outlined in the Native Title determination and ILUAs.</p>	<p>A3. Ensure that activity guidelines meet Traditional Owner and Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Recreation (NPRSR) requirements. Investigate the potential for a public education program, enforcement or further guideline negotiation if activity guidelines are not successful in guiding the exercise of native title rights.</p>
<p>Tourism and visitor opportunities</p> <p>Tourism and visitor use are managed through a Visitor Plan and by the procedures outlined in ILUA Q12006/026.</p> <p>Visitors and the broader community understand and appreciate the values, obligations and potential hazards of Black Mountain National Park.</p>	<p>A4. Develop a statement of interpretative intent that highlights the area's values, visitor opportunities and appropriate behaviour.</p>
<p>Pest management</p> <p>Pest plants are controlled and where feasible eradicated by QPWS and the Eastern Kuku Yalanji People working together.</p>	<p>A5. Develop and implement a pest management strategy for Black Mountain National Park.</p>
<p>Fire management</p> <p>Fire regimes are appropriate to the conservation of natural and cultural values and are undertaken in a cooperative and strategic manner.</p>	<p>A6. Update and implement the fire strategy for Black Mountain National Park identifying fire management zones and priorities for fire management activities.</p> <p>A7. Coordinate fire management activities with other agencies, Traditional Owners, research bodies, neighbours and local or community groups.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem	Description	Biodiversity status
3.3.11	<i>Melaleuca leucadendra</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> open forest on alluvium	Endangered
3.3.2 (a)	Semi-deciduous mesophyll/photophyll vine forest. Occurs on alluvia	Of concern
7.12.6 (a)	Semi-deciduous mesophyll vine forest on granites and rhyolites, of the moist and dry lowlands and foothills	Of concern
7.12.38 (a,b)	Deciduous microphyll vine forest and/or blue-green algae-covered granite and rhyolite boulderfields	Endangered
7.12.55	<i>Eucalyptus leptophleba</i> woodland to open forest of dry foothills and uplands on granite and rhyolite	Of concern
7.12.61 (a)	<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

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>Cophixalus saxatilis</i>	Black Mountain boulderfrog	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Liburnascincus scirtetis</i>	Black Mountain skink	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Nactus galgajuga</i>	Black Mountain gecko	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Aerodramus terraereginae</i>	Australian swiftlet	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Saccolaimus saccolaimus</i>	bare-rumped sheathtail bat	Endangered	Critically endangered	High
<i>Taphozous australis</i>	coastal sheathtail	Vulnerable	-	High
<i>Macroderma gigas</i>	ghost bat	Vulnerable	-	Critical
<i>Rhinolophus philippinensis</i>	greater large-eared horseshoe bat	Endangered	Endangered	High
<i>Hipposideros diadema</i>	diademed leaf-nosed bat	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Hipposideros semoni</i>	Semon's leaf-nosed bat	Endangered	Endangered	Medium
<i>Chalinolobus picatus</i>	little pied bat	Near threatened	-	Medium
<i>Kerivoula papuensis</i>	golden-tipped bat	Near threatened	-	Medium
<i>Murina florium</i>	tube-nosed insectivorous bat	Vulnerable	-	High
<i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i>	spectacled flying-fox	Least concern	Vulnerable	High
<i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i>	northern quoll	Least concern	Endangered	Medium
<i>Rhaphidospora cavernarum</i>	-	Vulnerable	-	Not assessed
<i>Dendrobium bigibbum</i>	Cooktown orchid	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	High
<i>Gossia lucida</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Centotheca philippinensis</i>	creek grass	Near threatened	Vulnerable	Low

Table 3: Species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	BONN	CAMBA	JAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater	-	-	✓	-

BONN: Bonn Convention

CAMBA: China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA: Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA: Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement