

Millstream Falls National Park

Management Statement
2013

Prepared by: **Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS), Department of Environment, Science and Innovation**

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The Millstream Falls National Park Management Statement 2013 has been extended in 2024 in line with the Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992 (s120G). Minor amendments have been made. There has been no change to the statement's original management intent and direction.

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Park size:	372ha
Bioregion:	Wet Tropics
QPWS region:	Northern
Local government estate/area:	Tablelands Regional
State electorate:	Dalrymple

Legislative framework

✓	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003
✓	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>

Plans and agreements

✓	Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
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Thematic strategies

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

Vision

Millstream Falls National Park protects an area of high altitude tropical eucalypt woodland and riparian vegetation along The Millstream.

The interests of the Jirrbal people are recognised and provide a basis for ongoing participation in park planning, assessment, and management activities.

Visitor opportunities include day-use activities, providing access to historical sites and the scenic Millstream Falls.

Conservation purpose

In 1909, 109ha of the now 372ha Millstream Falls National Park was gazetted, making it one of Queensland's first national parks.

Millstream Falls National Park was originally established to provide scenic and recreational opportunities for the residents of Ravenshoe. Increasingly, the park has become important for conserving local history and culture, and a diverse range of high altitude forest communities in the Wet Tropics bioregion.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

Millstream Falls is found on a tributary to the Herbert River known as The Millstream. The Millstream flows along the eastern boundary of the park, draining the high altitude ranges of the southern Atherton Tablelands which reach 1,385m at Mount Fisher, Queensland's third highest peak.

The park is along a section of The Millstream where it has incised into the surrounding basalt to form a picturesque gorge and reputedly the widest single-drop waterfall in Australia.

The park is on the western outskirts of Ravenshoe, sharing a boundary with Marshall Park and rural residential properties to the east, and the Kennedy Highway to the west. Parts of the park were used extensively by the military during World War II.

A number of gazetted roads traverse the park. A local electricity supply line follows the eastern boundary of the park.

Regional ecosystems

Millstream Falls National Park contains 16 regional ecosystems, six of which have a biodiversity status of endangered, and seven of concern (Table 1).

The park lies near the boundary of the Wet Tropics and Einasleigh Upland bioregions and conserves a highly diverse vegetation gradient of wet sclerophyll through to dry open woodland. Most of the park is covered in open eucalypt forest and woodland, with riparian vine thickets and rainforest communities surviving in areas sheltered from frequent fire.

Native plants and animals

Millstream Falls National Park protects plant and animal species of conservation significance (Table 2). Three bird species recorded on the park are listed under international agreements (Table 3).

A number of frogs of conservation significance have not been found in the park since the early 1990s. These include the common mistfrog *Litoria rheocoloa*, the waterfall frog *L. nannotis*, and the Australian lacelid *Nyctimystes dayi*. These species disappeared from high altitude sites across the Wet Tropics during the early 1990s.

Aboriginal culture

Millstream Falls National Park forms part of the traditional country of the Jirrbal people. The Jirrbal people express a desire to be involved with Millstream Falls National Park as custodians and land managers. The Jirrbal people have a native title determination over this area.

Story places important to the Jirrbal people are located within the park. These stories are known by Jirrbal elders and their oral tradition continues to this day. Some recreational uses of The Millstream, including swimming in some areas, are not consistent with Jirrbal cultural values.

The Jirrbal people are interested in establishing an Indigenous ranger program, with a view to establishing walking tracks to some cultural sites in order to help preserve and share the sites and knowledge, as well as to potentially guide interpretive tours.

Shared-history culture

During World War II, the military used the area extensively. Today, the remains of sites found in Millstream Falls National Park are the most complete of any of the World War II bases on the Atherton Tablelands. Camp sites, walking tracks, water drains, concrete slabs, trenches, training areas, corduroy roads, a flag pole site and training and parade grounds are still clearly evident.

Units of the 7th Division—some returning from the Kokoda Trail—were the first to arrive and built the initial structures. They stayed for six months, leaving for New Guinea in mid-1943. The units of the 9th Division arrived at Millstream Falls in early 1945 and they improved the existing facilities, adding another layer of history to the area. These units were also deployed to New Guinea, in mid-1945.

The Millstream Falls campsites were built to hold almost 1,000 men each and were mostly tent accommodation with cooking, latrine and washing facilities. A network of rock-lined granite paths and roads linked the facilities. Service units had extra facilities such as roads, car parks and vehicle ramps.

This training area was used continuously until shortly after the war ended in August 1945. The facilities and structures were then demolished and most of the debris buried.

A threat exists to shared-cultural values by the unlawful collection of World War II relics by recreational users and war history enthusiasts using metal detectors, primarily after bushfire events.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

The park is easily accessed year-round by conventional vehicles from the Kennedy Highway and Wooroora Road. It provides a range of day-use activities and provides visitors with an open landscape experience in a region that is largely dominated by humid rainforests.

Millstream Falls National Park contains two major waterfall features including Little Millstream Falls and the Big Millstream Falls which, at 88m wide, is reputedly the widest single drop waterfall in Australia.

Education and science

Millstream Falls National Park offers easy access to aquatic and terrestrial environments in an area with a diverse vegetation gradient. As such, the park provides opportunities to promote environmental education programs to visitors and schools, as well as provide opportunities for low-impact research.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

High biomass grasses pose a threat to ecosystem integrity by, not only displacing native species, but also by altering fire intensity and frequency. This can result in long-term changes to community floristics and structure.

Lantana *Lantana camara* is currently found in wetter areas, particularly in the upstream section of the park. Also, in these moister areas in the north-eastern section of the park, an introduced fodder species, horse gram *Macrotyloma axillare* var. *axillare*, has invaded natural areas.

Fire management

Fire is managed in accordance with the Millstream Falls National Park Level 2 Fire Management Strategy.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
Native plants and animals Information on the occurrence and distribution of plant and animal communities continues to be sufficient for management purposes.	Undertake plant and animal monitoring of particular species or sites in response to management needs.
Aboriginal culture Jirrbal people play an important role in natural resource management and the conservation, protection and appropriate interpretation of their cultural heritage.	Document, map and conserve places of Aboriginal cultural significance in cooperation with Jirrbal people. Develop guidelines for the management of significant cultural sites in conjunction with Jirrbal people. Liaise with Jirrbal people on issues of visitor management, natural resource management, and cultural heritage interpretation.
Shared-history culture The park continues to provide visitors with an opportunity to appreciate World War II history associated with the area.	Relics of the World War II military encampment and training area are appropriately managed. The World War II heritage walk is maintained.
Tourism and visitor opportunities Access to the Big Millstream Falls section of the park is by gazetted road from the Kennedy Highway.	Resurvey and dedicate the gazetted road reserve to reflect present-day road alignment.

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
7.3.26a	Riverine wetland or fringing riverine wetland. <i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i> , <i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> , <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> , <i>Melaleuca leucadendra</i> , <i>M. fluviatilis</i> , <i>Buckinghamia celsissima</i> , <i>Mallotus philippensis</i> woodland and forest with an understorey of <i>Melaleuca viminalis</i> and <i>Bursaria tenuifolia</i> . Fringing forests of larger streams.	Endangered
7.3.28d	Riverine wetland or fringing riverine wetland. Unvegetated rock. Creek beds and banks.	Endangered
7.8.3a	Complex semi-evergreen notophyll vine forest. Uplands on basaltic krasnozems, eucrozem-krasnozems and prairie soil types.	Endangered
7.8.7a	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> open forest, tall open forest and woodland. May also include <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> , <i>E. drepanophylla</i> , <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> and <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i> . Uplands and highlands on basaltic krasnozem and prairie soils, of the moist rainfall zone.	Endangered
7.8.8b	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> , <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> , <i>E. reducta</i> , <i>Angophora floribunda</i> tall open-forest and tall woodland with <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i> . Uplands and highlands on basalt, of the moist rainfall zone.	Endangered
7.8.19	<i>Corymbia clarksoniana</i> open forest to woodland on basalt.	Endangered
7.8.10a	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> , <i>E. drepanophylla</i> , <i>E. portuensis</i> , <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> , <i>C. tessellaris</i> woodland to open forest with <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i> . Uplands and highlands on basaltic eucrozem-krasnozem, of the dry rainfall zone.	Of concern
7.8.17a	<i>Corymbia citriodora</i> , <i>Eucalyptus portuensis</i> , <i>C. clarksoniana</i> , <i>E. granitica</i> woodland to open-forest. Uplands and highlands on basalt, of the moist and dry rainfall zones.	Of concern
7.12.57	Shrubland and low woodland mosaic with <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> , <i>Corymbia abergiana</i> , <i>Eucalyptus portuensis</i> , <i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i> , and <i>Xanthorrhoea johnsonii</i> , on moist and dry uplands and highlands on granite and rhyolite.	Of concern
7.12.58	<i>Eucalyptus reducta</i> , <i>E. granitica</i> , <i>Corymbia dimorpha</i> , <i>C. citriodora</i> and <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> woodland, on granite and rhyolite.	Of concern
7.12.61a	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> open-forest to tall open-forest and woodland. Includes communities ranging from those dominated by <i>E. tereticornis</i> to mixtures of that species with <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> , <i>E. drepanophylla</i> , <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> and <i>Allocasuarina torulosa</i> . Foothills and uplands on granite and rhyolite, of the moist and dry rainfall zones.	Of concern
7.12.65k	Bare granite and rhyolite rock, of dry western areas, associated with shrublands to closed forests of <i>Acacia</i> spp. (wattles) and/or <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> (swamp mahogany) and/or <i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i> (black sheoak) and/or <i>Eucalyptus lockyeri</i> subsp. <i>exuta</i> . Dry western areas. Granite and rhyolite.	Of concern
7.12.69a	<i>Eucalyptus drepanophylla</i> and/or <i>E. granitica</i> and <i>Corymbia erythrophloia</i> woodland to low woodland. Uplands, of the dry rainfall zone.	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
Animals				
<i>Litoria nannotis</i>	waterfall frog	Endangered	Endangered	Low
<i>Litoria rheocola</i>	common mistfrog	Endangered	Endangered	Low
<i>Litoria serrata</i>	tapping green-eyed frog	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Nyctimystes dayi</i>	Australian lacelid	Endangered	Endangered	Low
<i>Petrogale Mareeba</i>	Mareeba rock-wallaby	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Pseudophryne covacevichae</i>	magnificent broodfrog	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
Plants				
<i>Cladopus queenslandicus</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Diuris oporina</i>		northern white donkeys tails	Near threatened	-
<i>Firmiana papuana</i>	lacewood	Near threatened	-	Low

Table 3: Species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	BONN	JAMBA	ROKAMBA	CAMBA
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater	-	✓	-	-
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	rufous fantail	✓	-	-	-
<i>Sympisiarchus trivirgatus</i>	spectacled monarch	✓	-	-	-

BONN – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement