

Tregole National Park

Management Plan

1998

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

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The Tregole National Park Management Plan 2011 has been extended in 2023, in line with the Queensland *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (s120G). Minor amendments have been made. There has been no change to the plan's original management intent or direction.

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Summary

This management plan provides the framework and guidelines on how Tregole National Park will be managed. It sets out the considerations, outcomes and strategies that proposed to form the basis on which day-to-day management decisions are made.

This plan was prepared in May 1998, in accordance with s125 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (the Act). In 2023, the plan was extended in keeping with s120G of the Act. For further information on this plan or the planning process, please contact the Department of Environment and Science, at ParkManagementPlans@des.qld.gov.au.

This management plan was prepared by Department of Environment and Science staff. Thanks are due to those groups and individuals who made submissions in response to the draft plan.

1. Management directions and purpose

1.1 Management directions

Tregole National Park is dedicated under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and must be managed in accordance with section 17 of the Act:

- To provide for the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition to the greatest possible extent
- To present the areas cultural and natural resources and their values; and
- To ensure that the only use of the area is nature-based and ecologically sustainable.

Tregole National Park, dedicated in 1995, conserves 7,579 hectares of residual mulga ridges, undulating brigalow plains and poplar box flood plains. The primary purpose of the park is to conserve and present a small sample of ooline which is now considered vulnerable, due to clearing for agriculture and grazing.

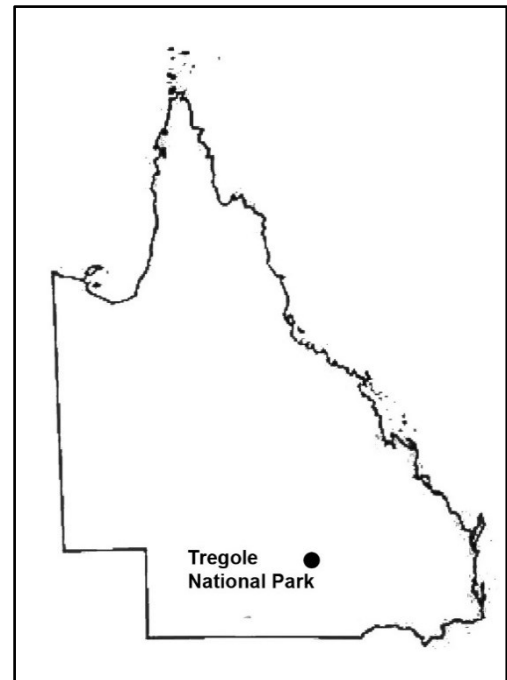
The park has no permanent ranger presence and is patrolled from Charleville.

Park visitors have access to a day-use area located approximately 11 kilometres south of Morven along the Morven-Bollon Road. Camping is not permitted and visitor use, at present, infrequent. The park is most suited to visitors who are interested in minimal impact, nature-based activities in a natural, undeveloped setting.

1.2 Purpose

The major purposes of management will be to ensure that:

- viable populations of rare and threatened species, such as ooline *Cadellia pentastylis* are protected and maintained
- natural plant and animal communities are conserved
- areas of cultural and historic significance are identified and, if appropriate, conserved through specific management strategies
- a range of recreational opportunities consistent with conservation objectives are provided; and
- neighbours, local government, Aboriginal groups and other interested parties are aware of park management issues and are provided with opportunities to be involved in the process of managing the park where appropriate.



Map 1. Tregole National Park location map

2. Basis for management

2.1 Bioregional context

Tregole National Park is situated where the Brigalow Belt South and Mulga Lands biogeographic regions meet and conserves an extensive stand of ooline, and representative samples of the brigalow province habitats. The majority of vegetation communities within Tregole have been extensively cleared in the region to make way for grazing and, to a lesser degree, dry-land cropping. Tregole is adjoined by pastoral holdings and the Morven Town Common.

Until recently, the only known stands of ooline conserved in national park were a small population at Sundown National Park and an area of semi-evergreen vine thicket with emergent ooline in the Moolyamber section of Carnarvon National Park.

Tregole National Park is well signposted. Public access for conventional vehicles is provided to a small day-use area located off the Morven-Bollon Road.

2.2 Values of Tregole National Park

2.2.1 Geology and landform

Tregole National Park is dominated by weathered mudstones and siltstones of the Wallumbilla Formation of the Cretaceous period (Neldner, 1984). The soils are varied and include texture contrast soils, lithosols, loamy red earths, cracking clays on plains and cracking clays on alluvial plains.

Tregole lies in the upper catchment of the Warrego River. Drainage lines within the park do not provide permanent sources of water. Drainage lines show evidence of scouring and degradation in places.

2.2.2 Plants and animals

Nine vegetation communities occur on Tregole National Park. These are:

- belah with or without brigalow, with patches of mountain yapunyah and brigalow
- poplar box, brigalow end false sandalwood
- brigalow and false sandalwood with or without eucalypts and/or tall shrubs with patches of poplar box, brigalow and false sandalwood
- popular box, mulga and/or silver-leaved ironbark and mulga
- curly and barley Mitchell grass with or without hoop Mitchell grass
- mulga, poplar box and silver-leaved ironbark
- poplar box with a grassy understorey
- mountain yapunyah and brigalow; and
- brigalow and false sandalwood with or without eucalypts and/or tall shrubs with patches of curly Mitchell grass, white spear grass and wild millet, interspersed with mountain yapunyah and/or belah.

Tregole National Park conserves the largest stand of ooline in Queensland's protected area estate. Ooline, a rainforest relic plant from the Pleistocene era when rainforest covered much of Australia, is extremely restricted in distribution.

As a remnant, the park may contain invertebrate and vertebrate species which are now rare elsewhere in the region or extinct. No fauna surveys have been undertaken.

2.2.3 Cultural heritage

Although there is evidence of Aboriginal use of the area, little is known of the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of Tregole.

Tregole is a former grazing property, as seen by much of the infrastructure throughout the park. Little is currently known about the history of the property.

2.2.4 Scenic and aesthetic

The dense ooline forests create a cool and calming contrast to the often harsh conditions experienced in this semi-arid landscape.

2.2.5 Scientific and educational

Very little is known about the biology of ooline. An opportunity exists for the research of this species at Tregole. Other research projects may include the effects of fire and the recovery of vegetation communities after the removal of domestic and feral animals.

The rare and threatened plant communities at Tregole lend themselves to educational programmes which outlined the importance and value of remnant vegetation in rural areas.

2.2.6 Recreation and tourism

Given the close proximity of Tregole to the highway, and bitumen access, significant numbers of people are expected to visit the park in future years. It is likely that the local community will promote the park as a local asset.

The day-use area consisting of picnic tables, a pit toilet, information board and a parking area has recently been constructed. Visitors have the opportunity to enjoy low-key, nature-based recreation pursuits such as nature observation, photography, picnicking and bushwalking.

2.2.7 Economic

Visitors wishing to stay overnight are encouraged to seek accommodation in the nearby townships of Morven, Mungallala and Bollon, and should thus boost local economies.

3. Management strategies

3.1 Native plants

Current situation

Many of the vegetation communities have received significant levels of broad-acre tree clearing. No detailed native plant work has been undertaken. The biological requirements of rare and threatened species occurring in the park is poorly understood. The collection and storage of herbarium specimens has been commenced but is not comprehensive.

Desired outcomes

- The biological diversity and integrity of the ecosystems are conserved.
- Maintain diversity of plant species and communities, particularly those which are endangered, vulnerable and rare and those of limited geographic distribution.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Research into rare and threatened species to learn more about their ecological requirements, sensitivities and preferences will be encouraged.
- Vegetation will be regularly monitored for signs of disturbance arising from visitor use, impacts of feral animals, encroachment of introduced species and broad vegetation dynamics.
- The acquisition of up-to-date background resource information (e.g. aerial photography) will be an integral part of monitoring programmes.
- The herbarium collection will be increased and maintained.

3.2 Native animals

Current situation

Little detailed native animal work has been conducted. Bird species appeared to be typical of the eastern mulga lands and western section of the brigalow region. Known ground fauna are typical of the mulga lands with no known rare and threatened species.

Desired outcomes

- Park staff have a thorough knowledge of the fauna in the local area.
- The diversity of animal species and any found populations of endangered, vulnerable and rare native species is maintained.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Management actions will be developed for species of conservation significance to enhance their continued presence in the park.
- An intensive trapping programme will be undertaken to gain species information for the park. Incidental fauna sightings, observations and records will be gradually collected and collated.

3.3 Introduced plants and animals

Current situation

Two species at Tregole are declared plants in Queensland; Bathurst burr *Xanthium spinosa* and common pest-pear *Opuntia stricta*. Other species of concern include garden ornamentals and buffel grass. Active weed management has not yet been undertaken.

Goats, pigs, fox's, cats and rabbits have been recorded at Tregole. Goats posed the greatest threat to the park environment. Park staff mass muster and sell feral goats when population levels are significant. Funds are reinvested into park management.

Desired outcomes

- Number and distribution of introduced plants and animals on the park are maintained at current low levels.
- Areas degraded by introduced plant and animal species are rehabilitated.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- The extent and density of weed species will be monitored.
- Appropriate control action will be instigated, with emphasis placed on declared species.
- Pigs, foxes and rabbits will be baited or shot, as necessary. Baiting will occur only as part of a coordinated programme with neighbouring landholders.
- Mustering of feral goats at Tregole will continue. Alternative management options may be considered.
- An action plan will be developed for the control of introduced species. The plan will outline species present, their location, abundance and status, and will recommend control strategies and list priority actions.

3.4 Fire management

Current situation

Fire management at Tregole aims to reduce fuel loads, encourage species diversity and decrease the dominance of undesired species (e.g. woody weeds). Vastly different fire regimes are required for the different communities.

Fire breaks are maintained around existing park boundaries and follow internal access roads and fence lines. Permits are obtained before commencement of any prescribed burning.

A wildfire response procedure has been developed for the park. The Department largely relies on park neighbours to detect and report fire outbreaks. Close liaison with park neighbours is thus a high priority for effective fire management.

Desired outcomes

- Species diversity within communities is maintained and populations of rare or threatened native plants and animals are protected.
- The risk of fire having an impact on park visitors, infrastructure and adjacent property is minimal.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Staff responsible for burning activities conducted on Tregole will receive appropriate levels of fire training.
- Fuel build-up in eucalypt and grassland communities will be periodically assessed and prescribed burning will be undertaken, if feasible.
- In the event of an outbreak of fire on park, neighbours are asked to contact Department of Environment and Science staff. No backburning or clearing of new fire breaks on the park will be undertaken without appropriate Departmental permission.
- Signs at the day-use area will inform visitors to the park of fire conditions and appropriate behaviour under extreme fire conditions.
- Research into, and monitoring of, suitable fire regimes for the various vegetation communities within the park will be encouraged.

3.5 Landscape, soil and catchment protection

Current situation

Erosion at Tregole is related to:

- Topography and soil type
- Poorly placed and/or maintained infrastructure (i.e. roads, fences, etc); and
- Disturbed or degraded sites.

A number of bores also occur on the park.

Desired outcomes

- Soil erosion and compaction within the park is minimal.
- Park operations have a minimal impact on the quality of ground and surface water in the catchment area.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Where soil erosion is currently a problem, natural (i.e. vegetation stabilisation of soil) or artificial (i.e. diversion of run off) methods of control will be implemented.
- Any new tracks or track realignments will be constructed so as to minimise erosion.
- All watering points in the park will remain open to be used as a source of water for fire-fighting.

3.6 Cultural heritage

Current situation

Three native title claims have been placed over Tregole. No Aboriginal groups with interests in the park have been contacted. No surveys have been conducted to locate specific sites of cultural significance.

Relics of European pastoral heritage include the old homestead complex, shearing shed and stock yards. Little is currently known about the European heritage significance of the area.

Desired outcomes

- To have sites and associations of Aboriginal cultural heritage identified and protected.
- Park management reflects the interests of Aboriginal people through their involvement in park management.
- Infrastructure with European heritage value is conserved where appropriate.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Existing Aboriginal interests in the park will be identified. Opportunities will be provided for appropriate groups and individuals to participate in the planning and management of the park.
- Privacy of spiritual associations with sites/places will be respected.
- A pastoral history of Tregole National Park will be compiled within the life of this plan.

3.7 Recreation and tourism

Current situation

A day-use area has been developed at Tregole. No figures are available on the number of visitors using the site.

A self-guided walking track is provided at the day-use area.

Desired outcomes

- Recreational access and facilities on the park complement the natural setting and do not compromise conservation values.
- Diverse walking opportunities which are compatible with the conservation and natural values of the park are provided.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Day-use facilities only will be provided at Tregole, in line with the expected rise in visitor levels and the remote management and servicing of the park.
- Within the life of this plan, 500m and 2km extensions to the existing walking track will be developed. Planning for additional walking tracks will be undertaken.
- Regular maintenance of the day-use area will be undertaken. Rubbish bins will not be provided. Visitors will be responsible for removing their own rubbish.
- Indicators by which changes in the recreation setting can be measured overtime will be identified.
- A regular programme to monitor recreation and setting condition will be implemented.
- Tregole National Park will complement, and not compete with, tourism opportunities offered in the region.

3.8 Education and interpretation**Current situation**

A visitor information sheet has been developed for the park. Directional signs to the park are located in more than and a standard park named sign exists at the entrance to the day-use area. An information board is also located within the day-use area. Where appropriate, interpretive activities are conducted on-park for school groups. Activities generally focus on the theme of threatened species.

Desired outcomes

- Community awareness and appreciation of the natural and cultural values of the region is raised.
- Visitors behave responsibly towards the parks natural cultural features and ensure their own safety and other visitors safety.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Local schools will be encouraged to use the park as a venue for environmental education.
- Information will be provided to visitors on safety precautions to be taken in semi-arid parks.
- Voids in the information base for Tregole will be identified and a public contact plan for the park will be developed.

3.9 Resource use**Current situation**

No research is currently being undertaken at Tregole. High-voltage power lines crossed the park. Due to the poor condition of boundary fencing, stock occasionally stray onto the park. Staff liaise with neighbours to determine fencing needs and priorities. Tregole is fenced into 12 small paddocks which are unnecessary for the management of a national park.

Desired outcomes

- Continued opportunities for research and monitoring activities are provided in order to improve and evaluate management decisions.
- Environmentally friendly management practises are used in the management of public utilities.
- Boundary fences are maintained in a stock-proof condition.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Research will be encouraged on the park. A major focus will be on the ecological requirements of ooline.
- The use of Landcare principles in the management of the power line easements will be encouraged.
- Department staff will continue to liaise with neighbours to ensure a cooperative approach to fencing the park boundary.
- The condition and heritage value of internal fences will be assessed during the life of this plan. Those not required for management or interpretive purposes will be removed.

3.10 Plan implementation and monitoring

Current situation

Work programmes are completed as resources permit.

Desired outcomes

- Resources assigned to Tregole National Park are adequate and enable the park management plan to be implemented.

Proposed policies, guidelines and actions

- Tregole will be managed in accordance with the guidelines contained in this management plan for the next 5-7 years.