

Bulleringa National Park

Management Statement

2013



The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land. We recognise their connection to land, sea and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

The department is committed to respecting, protecting, and promoting human rights, and our obligations under the Human Rights Act 2019.

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All due diligence and care has been taken in the preparation of this document based on the information in the 2013 management statement. The department holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions within this document. Any decisions made by other parties based on this document are solely the responsibility of those parties.

The Bulleringa 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:	54,400ha
Bioregion:	Einasleigh Uplands Gulf Plains
QPWS region:	Northern
Local government estate/area:	Tablelands Regional Council; Etheridge Shire Council
State electorate:	Cook

Legislative framework

✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002</i>
✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>

Plans and agreements

✓	Japan—Australia Migratory Bird Agreement
✓	National recovery plan for the Gouldian finch <i>Erythrura gouldiae</i>

Thematic Strategies

✓	Level 1 fire management strategy
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Vision

Bulleringa National Park is managed to conserve its natural and cultural values, with particular emphasis on maintaining and protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage and the park's high diversity of plants.

The aspirations and cultural rights and responsibilities of the Traditional Owners are recognised and reflected in park management.

Conservation purpose

Bulleringa National Park was gazetted in 1992 to conserve significant landscapes and biological communities at the intersection of the Einasleigh Uplands and Gulf Plains bioregions.

The park contains significant Indigenous cultural heritage.

Protecting and presenting the area's values

Landscape

The eastern part of Bulleringa National Park is a hilly landscape derived from volcanic rock with an elevation ranging from 300m to 480m. This section is within the Einasleigh Uplands Bioregion and displays rounded hills with tor fields and granite outcrops. Its shallow soils support open grassy eucalypt woodlands and shrublands.

Western and northern parts of the park are derived from sedimentary rock with elevation ranging from 250m to 400m. These sediments form mesa and plateaus separated by deeply incised valleys, gorges and escarpments. This section is in the Gulf Plains Bioregion and deeper soils here support shrubby eucalypt forests.

The Red River and Dickson Creek systems respectively drain the western and eastern sections of the park with deeply incised gorges, large permanent waterholes and rare black soil marshes. Red River drains the western part of the park into the Staaten River. Bull Spring Creek and Donkey Spring Creek are deeply incised tributaries of the Red River with strong perennial springs. Ecologically significant marshes have developed on deep soils in the upper gorges, including sedge and grass dominated area of 10ha in upper Bull Spring Creek.

Some old infrastructure, such as disused fencing, occurs throughout the park. Some areas of erosion exist, associated with vehicle tracks and cattle-watering and grazing areas.

Regional ecosystems

Bulleringa National Park has a diversity of vegetation types, reflecting its varied geology. The park contains 24 regional ecosystems; nine of these are not found in any other protected area.

Much of the eastern part of the park is dominated by lancewood *Acacia shirleyi* woodland on acid volcanic rocks. The prevalent regional ecosystems in the western part include lancewood and eucalypt woodland on skeletal soils; mixed eucalypt woodland on plateaus, mesas and scarps; and Darwin stringybark *Eucalyptus tetradonta* and bloodwood *Corymbia* spp. woodland to open forest on red and yellow earth plains.

The park has nine regional ecosystems of conservation significance (Table 1). These include river red gum woodland, alluvial mixed eucalypt woodland, mixed woodland on channels, riverbed vegetation and woodland dominated by the vulnerable tree *Macropteranthes montana*.

The 'gorge marsh communities' found on springs in gorges and sandstone gullies are considered endangered. They are small in extent and threatened by grazing and feral pigs. This regional ecosystem type is not found on any other protected area.

Plants and animals

There have been 290 native plant species recorded in the park. Three plant species are of conservation significance, including the vulnerable tree *Macropteranthes montana* (Table 2).

Limited surveys have recorded 150 native animals on Bulleringa National Park including 97 birds, six mammals, 30 reptiles, eight frogs, seven fish and two crayfish. Recorded species of conservation significance are listed in Table 2 and includes the endangered Gouldian finch *Erythrura gouldiae* and red goshawk *Erythrotriorchis radiatus*.

The park protects a number of species at their known geographical range limits, for example, the spinifex pigeon *Geophaps plumifera* at its eastern limit.

Aboriginal culture

The entire landscape, including geological features and biodiversity, has cultural significance. The park remains an important area, due to its relative abundance of surface water and associated food resources. It contains extensive evidence of use, including significant rock art and artefact scatters.

Consultation with Traditional Owners is required to further understand the cultural heritage on the park, Traditional Owner land management, knowledge and aspirations and to ensure management of cultural heritage is appropriate. Bulleringa National Park's Traditional Owners are the Ewamian and Wakamin people.

It is an aspiration of the Traditional Owners to secure access and to provide guided tours for visitors. However, there is presently no formal agreement between Traditional Owners and neighbouring landholders to ensure access the park.

Shared-history culture

Non-Indigenous influence on the Bulleringa National Park area began in the 1890s with the establishment of tin mining in the Brodies Camp area just outside the current southern park boundary. Around this time, there was some itinerant occupation of the park area by settlers. Remains of a camp from this period at Chesterfield Spring are almost erased by weathering and natural revegetation.

A Cobb and Co. wagon and mail route from Chillagoe to Georgetown commenced the early 1890s and passed through the eastern part of the park; horses were changed at Brodies Camp. This route was abandoned in the early 1930s and was mostly destroyed by bulldozing along the same alignment in 1973.

The Bulleringa Pastoral Holding was known as Cope Holding until 1948. Significant pastoral development only began in 1946, when the Martin family established Old Bulleringa Homestead. This homestead was abandoned and dismantled in 1981 with the establishment of New Bulleringa Homestead. The Borgert family owned and ran the property until the land became a national park in 1992. Shared-history cultural items are no longer evident at many historic sites.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

There is no gazetted or constructed access to Bulleringa National Park.

Education and science

Preliminary surveys of the park's plants, animals and Aboriginal cultural heritage have been undertaken. More comprehensive baseline data on the park's biodiversity would assist management.

Partnerships

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) works in partnership with Traditional Owners, consulting on park management issues including fire and pest management and the development of new infrastructure and signs. The Ewamian Land and Sea Rangers have assisted in management of the park. Traditional Owners have expressed interest in establishing a shared base camp with QPWS inside the park for joint use.

QPWS works in partnership with Traditional Owners, neighbours, Etheridge Shire Council, Tablelands Regional Council and Northern Gulf Resource Management Group Ltd on pest management programs in the area.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Four pest plant species have been recorded from Bulleringa National Park, although it is likely that there are more species present. Rubber vine *Cryptostegia grandiflora* is a serious threat to the park. An infestation in the Troopers Creek area was eradicated during the 1990s.

The non-declared pest hyptis *Hyptis sp.* has invaded river terraces within the park, and grader grass *Themeda quadrivalvis* is widespread in suitable habitats.

Feral pigs *Sus scrofa* and feral horses *Equus caballus*, as well as straying cattle *Bos spp.* and horses from neighbouring properties, have the potential to cause significant erosion, foul water, spread pest plants, trample vegetation and damage fencing. A 13,000ha breeding paddock was fenced while the park was a grazing property. Its perimeter fence is approximately 84km long and encloses significant areas, including the Bull Spring and Donkey Spring gorges and associated marsh habitats. The fence is currently being finished and now excludes straying and feral stock from gorge marsh habitats.

Rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, wild dogs *Canis familiaris*, feral cats *Felis catus* and cane toads *Rhinella marina* have been recorded on the park.

Fire management

Fire management prescriptions for Bulleringa National Park recognise the fire sensitive gorge marsh habitats and Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>Landscape</p> <p>Watercourses, perennial springs, groundwater and catchments are protected.</p>	<p>Map the locations and monitor the condition of all known springs and important waterholes.</p> <p>Assess and close all bores and dams not required for management or environmental purposes.</p>
<p>Plants and animals</p> <p>Vegetation communities and species of conservation significance are mapped and protected.</p> <p>Native animal populations are maintained and threatened native species populations are maintained or increased.</p>	<p>Undertake detailed vegetation mapping, including locations of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • springs and associated vegetation • species of conservation significance and their habitats. <p>Prioritise the monitoring of regional ecosystems and plant species of conservation significance, especially vegetation associated with perennial springs and wetlands.</p>
<p>Cultural heritage</p> <p>Traditional Owners are involved in identification, conservation, protection and appropriate interpretation of the natural and cultural heritage.</p> <p>Information about the history of the parks and surrounding area is retained and presented, where appropriate.</p>	<p>Involve Traditional Owners in park management, particularly in regard to identifying, documenting and protecting Indigenous cultural places and providing advice on other cultural interests and concerns.</p> <p>Investigate the implementation of restricted access areas for cultural purposes on Bull and Donkey springs.</p> <p>Support the preparation of an inventory of shared-heritage places, determine their significance and develop management strategies as required.</p>
<p>Partnerships</p> <p>Good working partnerships with park stakeholders are retained and further developed.</p>	<p>Continue to participate, support and encourage strategic and holistic landscape management through partnerships with Traditional Owners, Ewamian rangers, neighbours and other government departments.</p>
<p>Pest management</p> <p>Pest plants and animals are controlled so that their effects on the natural and cultural resources of the park are not significant.</p>	<p>Develop and implement a Level 2 Pest Management Strategy under the QPWS Pest Management System by 2014 including working with Traditional Owners on planning and onsite implementation.</p> <p>Maintain former breeding paddock fencing to exclude stray stock from significant areas on Bulleringa National Park.</p> <p>Construct new stock exclusion fencing on park boundary sections where stock incursion is a problem and where terrain and resources permit.</p>
<p>Fire management</p> <p>Fire is used to maintain the natural and cultural values of the park.</p>	<p>Work with Traditional Owners in fire management practices, including planning and onsite implementation. Utilise Traditional Owner knowledge in fire management practices, where possible.</p>

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
2.3.24b	Weeping paperbark <i>Melaleuca spp.</i> woodland-open forest on sands in channels and on levees.	Of concern
2.7.1	Lancewood <i>Acacia shirleyi</i> low open forest or <i>Melaleuca tamariscina</i> shrubland on laterised mudstones on skeletal soils.	Of concern
2.9.6	Paperbark <i>Melaleuca spp.</i> and bloodwood <i>Corymbia polycarpa</i> woodland on pale earths on mudstones.	Of concern
2.9.7	<i>Eucalyptus chlorophylla</i> woodland on lowlands on earths and clays.	Of concern
2.10.8	Springs associated with quartzose sandstone or lateritised sandstone gullies and gorges	Endangered
9.3.3	Mixed woodland dominated by <i>Corymbia spp.</i> and <i>Eucalyptus spp.</i> on alluvial flats, levees and plains	Of concern
9.3.12	River beds and associated waterholes	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
9.12.9	<i>Macropteranthes montana</i> low open forest on acid and intermediate volcanic rocks	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>Macropteranthes montana</i>	-	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Drummondita calida</i>	-	Vulnerable		Low
<i>Stylidium trichopodium</i>	-	Near threatened		Low
Animals				
<i>Erythrura gouldiae</i>	Gouldian finch	Endangered	Endangered	Medium
<i>Lophoictinia isura</i>	square-tailed kite	Near threatened		Low
<i>Erythrotriorchis radiatus</i>	red goshawk	Endangered	Vulnerable	High
<i>Petrogale mareeba</i>	Mareeba rock-wallaby	Near threatened		Low
<i>Lerista storri</i>	Chillagoe fine-lined slider	Near threatened		Low

Table 3: Species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	CMS	JAMBA	CAMBA	ROKAMBA
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	cicadabird	-	✓	-	-

BONN (CMS) – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement