

West Hill National Park

Management Statement

2013



Queensland
Government

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

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The Department of Environment and Science 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.

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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 West Hill National Park Management Statement 2013 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 statement's original management intent and direction.

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Park size:	1 080 ha
Bioregion:	Central Queensland Coast
QPWS region:	Capricornia
Local government estate/area:	Isaac Regional
State electorate:	Mirani

Legislative framework

✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
✓	<i>Marine Parks Act 2004</i>
✓	<i>Native Title Act 1993</i>
✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>
✓	<i>Queensland Heritage Act 1992</i>

Plans and agreements

✓	China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA)
✓	CMS Convention
✓	IUCN Red List for Threatened Species
✓	Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA)
✓	Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (ROKAMBA)

Thematic strategies

✓	Statement of Fire Management Intent
✓	Level 2 Pest Management Strategy

Vision

West Hill National Park will conserve ecosystems, habitat and species; especially those of state, national and international conservation significance and with an increased understanding of the diversity of natural environments.

Visitor experiences and recreation opportunities are in keeping with the undeveloped natural environment of the management area.

Partnerships with the local community, Traditional Owners, neighbours, research institutes and conservation groups are established and contribute to the area's ongoing management.

Conservation purpose

The objectives of management for West Hill National Park are to:

- conserve the management areas natural, cultural and scenic values
- incorporate the rights and interests of the Traditional Owners and their affiliations to the area and manage cultural heritage of significance
- provide for low-impact, nature-based recreation
- through appropriate research and monitoring, provide direction and actions to protect the natural, cultural and social values
- foster cooperative relationships with neighbouring land holders to build stronger partnerships
- continue to build on the co-operative broad scale land management activities with neighbours, stakeholders and the local community.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

West Hill National Park is located 10 km north east of Carmilla and 70 km south of Mackay on the central coast of Queensland. West Hill Island is approximately 700 m from the coast adjacent to the national park. The mainland section comprises 685 ha while the Island is 397 ha. The hill itself is a prominent landscape feature along the coastline. The northern boundary of the mainland section of the park runs along the southern side of West Hill Creek. It is with the Central Queensland Coast Bioregion. The island section was gazetted as national park in 1938, within the mainland section being included some time later in 1978.

The park contains coastal sand dunes and estuarine country poorly conserved elsewhere in the local area. Pockets of dune scrub occur on the mainland section with extensive marine samphire and mangrove areas. Low lying inland areas are seasonally inundated. The island section contains extensive areas of dry rainforest (QPWS 2007).

Native plants and animals

West Hill National Park contains six significant regional ecosystems (RE) (Table 2). The mangrove ecosystem, although not formally recognised as significant, provides habitat for a number of significant fauna species including; water mouse *Xeromys myoides* a vulnerable species under state and commonwealth legislation, estuarine crocodile *Crocodylus porosus* vulnerable under state legislation, sooty oyster catcher *Haematopus fuliginosus* near threatened under state legislation as well as a large number of bird species listed under international agreements (Table 4) (QPWS 2007).

The samphire ecosystem contains wetland indicator species such as bead weed *Sarcocornia quinqueflora* and provides habitat for species such as the near threatened sooty oyster catcher *Haematopus fuliginosus*, Burdekin duck *Tadorna radjah* and the endangered little tern *Sternula albifrons* under state legislation (QPWS 2007).

The marine grassland ecosystem identified on the RE mapping provides habitat for the near threatened Burdekin duck *Tadorna radjah*, other significant migratory bird species as well as the threatened water mouse. This ecosystem occurs in small patches adjacent to saltpans and mangroves and is threatened by agricultural or urban development, heavy grazing and is vulnerable to disturbance caused by vehicle use (QPWS 2007).

The rainforest/vineforest ecosystem likely provides habitat for significant species including reptile species such as the near threatened orange-sided skink *Eulamprus amplus* and the vulnerable *Eulamprus luteilateralis*. It is also likely to support the vulnerable rufous owl *Ninox rufa queenslandica*. It also supports significant flora species such

as the near threatened *Actephila sessilifolia*, *Bonamia dietrichiana*, *Brachychiton compactus*, giant ironwood *Choricarpia subargentea*, *Cassia* sp. (Paluma Range G.Sankowsky+ 450), scarlet fuchsia *Graptophyllum excelsum* and the vulnerable holly-leaved graptophyllum *Graptophyllum ilicifolium* (QPWS 2007).

The coastal beach scrub community supports the locally significant *Acacia dietrichiana*, which is listed as least concern under state legislation. It also provides habitat for the near threatened grey goshawk *Accipiter novaehollandiae* and the vulnerable beach thick-knee *Esacus magnirostris*. It is also known to support a diverse range of reptile species due to well developed ground litter layers (QPWS 2007).

Indigenous culture

Traditional Owners are an important part of effectively managing the area as they have a strong desire for continued involvement in its cultural and sustainable use. There are isolated stone artefacts and flakes along creek lines; however no sites of significance are identified.

A joint initiative between Queensland Government, Reef Catchments and the Gia, Ngaro, Yuibera, Koinjmal, Wiri and Juru people through the Mackay/Whitsunday Indigenous Protected Areas Co-Management Project, has developed protocols for the co-management of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) estate in the Mackay region. These protocols are detailed in the document 'Working together on country' (2011).

It is important for QPWS to continue to work with Traditional Owners to identify cultural connections and ensure appropriate measures are taken to protect known sites in the area. QPWS will work towards ensuring Traditional Owners are actively participating in the day-to-day management and that cultural heritage is protected by maintaining relationships with the Traditional Owners.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

West Hill National Park provides an opportunity for nature-based appreciation of the natural, cultural and scenic values and supports low-impact recreation opportunities such as bushwalking, fishing and photography. The area has been classified as a setting of 1-2 within the Landscape Classification System. The area will be managed as a remote-natural zone 1 within the QPWS visitor management zones.

Visitor use in the management area is low. Visitors to the area come for the opportunity to explore the area's remote and natural setting and must be self-reliant. There are currently no commercial activity permits in the national park. Commercial and tourism activities that are low key, have minimal impact, do not require visitor infrastructure, and are in keeping with the natural setting; will be encouraged.

Public access is limited, with no gazetted vehicular access. Both the mainland and island sections can be accessed via boat from nearby boat ramps (QPWS 2007).

Education and science

Research permits have been issued for the national park for monitoring and collecting data on nesting turtles and hatchlings by local turtle watch associations.

Research has been undertaken into beach scrub communities in the past. There are opportunities at West Hill for research into water mouse, quoll *Dasyurus hallucatus* and bat populations. It is currently unknown whether these species occur in the national park or to what extent.

Partnerships

QPWS is directly responsible for planning, managing and regulating activities in the national park. Working with neighbours, Traditional Owners, organisations, user groups and individuals with similar interests in managing the park is highly desirable to achieve the vision. Efficiencies in resource sharing, improved communications, decision making and enhanced on-ground outcomes; is to be facilitated, where possible, through working partnerships.

QPWS has a working relationship with Queensland Rural Fire Service, Isaac Regional Council, neighbours and community and conservation groups to assist in the management of fire, pests and grazing.

Climate change

Climate change is expected to promote the spread of pest plants, alter fire regimes and change the structure of native vegetation. QPWS will continue to improve knowledge, understanding and modelling of climate change and potential impacts on the management area, particularly with respect to ecosystems and species that may be vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Management will aim to maintain the health of native plant and animal populations by reducing threats and minimising the stress of climate change to species in the future.

Pest management

A bioregional pest strategy exists for the Central Queensland Coast bioregion.

Lantana *Lantana camara* occurs on both the island and mainland and is spread by birds. It can dominate disturbed areas, compete with native vegetation, increase biomass and impact on the intensity of fire events and decrease scenic amenity. Need to monitor populations in the sensitive beach scrubs.

Prickly pear *Opuntia* spp. occurs within beach scrub communities and populations will be monitored. It is capable of dominating these communities and is hard to control due to access difficulties along the coast and the strength of the chemicals required. Biocontrol is not an option close to the coast due to restricted access.

Pigs *Sus scrofa* occur on both the island and mainland sections however populations are seasonally variable. They damage turtle nests, feed on turtle eggs and crustaceans, cause erosion in mangrove communities and pose a disease risk. Opportunities to control are limited however any control must be undertaken collaboratively with neighbours in order for it to be successful. Impacts are static and seasonally variable.

Predation of native animals by foxes *Vulpes vulpes* and cats *Felis catus* is suspected within the park. If so they pose a potential threat to water mouse, northern quoll, marine turtle and ground nesting bird populations by feeding on nests and young.

A natural water source on top of West Hill poses an opportune location for pest animals to thrive; with limited access for the purposes of control.

Fire management

A Fire Management System has been adopted state wide by QPWS which is the primary agency for fire management on protected areas and State forests. Fire strategies provide the overall framework and direction for fire management and are the foundation from which planned burn programs are developed. A Fire Management Strategy exists for West Hill National Park.

The main objectives for fire management are; protection of life and property on the reserve and neighbouring properties, protecting fire sensitive communities from adverse effects of planned burning, maintenance of habitat diversity within fire-tolerant communities, develop and maintain mosaic of fire frequency, intensity and season consistent with the ecological limits of the vegetation community and broadly maintain the current distribution of vegetation types and provide for a diverse range of habitat conditions (QPWS 2007).

Authorities

No authorities or structures currently occur on the national park. Authorities may be issued under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* to allow certain types of infrastructure. QPWS will ensure that facilities on the park are correctly authorised under the *Nature Conservation Act* and/or *Marine Parks Act 2004* and consistent with management strategies and plans.

References

QPWS 2011, Working Together on Country.

QPWS 2007, Statement of Fire Management Intent, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service – Fire Management System.

Definitions

Landscape Classification System (LCS)

Landscape Classification System is a visitor management and planning framework for quantifying the physical, social and managerial attributes of individual sites in the landscape. This is quantified by the defined area's degree of naturalness on a continuum of "settings" ranging from the least to the most impacted by current and previous patterns of human use. The framework is based scoring a defined area attributes on a spectrum scale from one to nine where 1 are unmodified, remote and wild sites and 9 are highly developed and modified sites.

Management Directions

Table 1: Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
<p>The full range of naturally occurring biological diversity, ecological processes and landscape dynamics are maintained.</p> <p>Plant species and communities and animal species of significance are protected.</p> <p>The composition and extent of vegetation is maintained or increased.</p>	<p>Monitor the impacts from natural processes, pests, fire and recreation. Use the information to guide management decisions and amend current and future plans and strategies.</p> <p>Ensure any activities are consistent with the high scenic landscape values. Activities that compromise these values, and cannot be mitigated or managed, will not be permitted.</p> <p>Minimise threats through the development and implementation of fire regimes and pest plant and animal control.</p> <p>Maintain relationships with neighbouring properties to ensure collaborative management of fire and pests.</p> <p>Encourage and allow access for the implementation of research programs, particularly those that will benefit conservation management. Incorporate new information about threatened plants, animals or communities into plans and strategies and WildNet.</p>
<p>Threatening processes exacerbated by climate change are minimised through appropriate pro-active management practices.</p>	<p>Incorporate measures of climate change risk and species vulnerability into threatened species registers and provide adaptive management strategies for those species.</p>
<p>Visitor use is low-impact and self-reliant, in the absence of permanent facilities.</p> <p>The effectiveness of future management is strengthened through cooperative partnerships.</p>	<p>Allow access for low-impact and self reliant recreation use. Adapt management as visitor needs change.</p> <p>Continue to build relationships with the local community, Traditional Owners, organisations, visitors and interest groups to improve knowledge of the management area, and to highlight its significance to the region.</p>

Tables – Conservation Values Management

Table 2: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	DSITIA biodiversity status
8.1.2	Samphire open forbland to isolated clumps of forbs on saltpans and plains adjacent to mangroves	Of concern
8.1.3	<i>Sporobolus virginicus</i> grassland on marine sediments. Estuarine wetland	Of concern
8.2.6a	<i>Corymbia tessellaris</i> + <i>Acacia leptocarpa</i> + <i>Banksia integrifolia</i> + <i>Melaleuca dealbata</i> + beach scrub species open forest on coastal parallel dunes	Of concern
8.3.2	<i>Melaleuca viridiflora</i> woodland often with emergent eucalypts and grassy/herbaceous ground layer, on seasonally inundated alluvial plains with impeded drainage	Endangered
8.3.5	<i>Corymbia clarksoniana</i> + <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> + <i>Eucalyptus platyphylla</i> woodland, or <i>E. platyphylla</i> woodland on alluvial plains	Endangered
8.3.13	Grassland on alluvial and old marine plains	Endangered

Table 3: Species of conservation significance

Scientific name	Common name	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> status	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> status	Back on Track species prioritisation framework (BOT)
<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>	estuarine crocodile	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Erythrotriorchis radiatus</i>	red goshawk	Endangered	Vulnerable	High
<i>Fregetta grallaria</i>	white-bellied storm-petrel	Least concern	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Geophaps scripta scripta</i>	squatter pigeon	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Medium
<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	southern giant-petrel	Endangered	Endangered	Medium
<i>Pterodroma neglecta</i>	Kermadec petrel	Least concern	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Rostratula australis</i>	Australian painted snipe	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Medium
<i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i>	northern quoll	Least concern	Endangered	Medium
<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	humpback whale	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Medium
<i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i>	spectacled flying-fox	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	High
<i>Xeromys myoides</i>	water mouse	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	High
<i>Leucopogon cuspidatus</i>	-	Least concern	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Taeniophyllum muelleri</i>	-	Least concern	Vulnerable	-
<i>Caretta caretta</i>	loggerhead turtle	Endangered	Endangered	Critical
<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	green turtle	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Critical
<i>Denisonia maculata</i>	ornamental snake	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Medium
<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	leatherback turtle	Endangered	Endangered	Critical
<i>Egernia rugosa</i>	yakka skink	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Medium
<i>Eretmochelys imbricate</i>	hawksbill turtle	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Critical
<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>	olive ridley turtle	Endangered	Endangered	Critical
<i>Natator depressus</i>	flatback turtle	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Critical
<i>Pristis zijsron</i>	green sawfish	-	Vulnerable	High
<i>Rhincodon typus</i>	whale shark	-	Vulnerable	Low

Table 4: Species listed in international agreements

Family	Scientific name	Common name	CMS	JAMBA	ROKAMBA	CAMBA
Apodidae	<i>Apus pacificus</i>	fork-tailed swift		✓	✓	✓
Ardeidae	<i>Ardea modesta</i>	eastern great egret		✓		✓
Procellariidae	<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	southern giant-petrel	✓			
Laridae	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	little tern	✓	✓	✓	✓
Balaenopteridae	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>	Bryde's whale	✓			
Cheloniidae	<i>Caretta caretta</i>	loggerhead turtle	✓			
Cheloniidae	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	green turtle	✓			
Crocodylidae	<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>	estuarine crocodile	✓			
Dermochelyidae	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>	leatherback turtle	✓			
Cheloniidae	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>	hawksbill turtle	✓			
Cheloniidae	<i>Lepidochelys olivacea</i>	olive ridley turtle	✓			
Balaenopteridae	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	humpback whale	✓			
Cheloniidae	<i>Natator depressus</i>	flatback turtle	✓			
Delphinidae	<i>Orcaella heinsohni</i>	Australian snubfin dolphin	✓			
Delphinidae	<i>Orcinus orca</i>	killer whale	✓			
Delphinidae	<i>Sousa chinensis</i>	Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin	✓			
Scolopacidae	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	bar-tailed godwit	✓	✓	✓	✓
Accipitridae	<i>Haliaeetus leucogaster</i>	white-bellied sea-eagle				✓
Apodidae	<i>Hirundapus caudacutus</i>	white-throated needletail		✓	✓	✓
Hirundinidae	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	barn swallow		✓	✓	✓
Meropidae	<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater		✓		
Monarchidae	<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	black-faced monarch	✓			
Monarchidae	<i>Symposiarchus trivirgatus</i>	spectacled monarch	✓			
Monarchidae	<i>Myiagra cyanoleuca</i>	satin flycatcher	✓			
Scolopacidae	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	common sandpiper	✓			
Ardeidae	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	cattle egret		✓		✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	ruddy turnstone	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	red-necked stint	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	great knot	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charadriidae	<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	lesser sand plover	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Gallinago hardwickii</i>	Latham's snipe	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Tringa brevipes</i>	grey-tailed tattler	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	black-tailed godwit	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	eastern curlew	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Numenius minutus</i>	little curlew	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	whimbrel	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charadriidae	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	Pacific golden plover	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charadriidae	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	grey plover	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rostratulidae	<i>Rostratula australis</i>	Australian painted snipe	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scolopacidae	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	terek sandpiper	✓	✓	✓	✓

BONN: Bonn Convention; CAMBA: China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement; JAMBA: Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement; ROKAMBA: Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement