

Gadgarra National Park and Gadgarra & Little Mulgrave Forest Reserves

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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The Gadgarra National Park and Gadgarra & Little Mulgrave Forest Reserves Management Statement 2013 has been extended in 2024 in line with the Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992 (s120G). Minor amendments have been made, including the revocation of Gillies Highway Forest Reserve and subsequent renaming of the aggregation. There has been no change to the statement's original management intent and direction.

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Park size:	8,272ha
Bioregion:	Wet Tropics
QPWS region:	Northern
Local government estate/area:	Tablelands Regional Council
State electorate:	Dalrymple

Legislative framework

✓	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i>
✓	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>
✓	<i>Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993</i>
✓	<i>Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)</i>
✓	Native Title (Indigenous Land Use Agreement) Regulation 1999 (Cwlth)

Plans and agreements

✓	Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Regional Agreement 2005
✓	National recovery plan for the southern cassowary <i>Casuarius casuarius johnsonii</i> 2007
✓	National recovery plan for the spectacled flying-fox <i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i>

Thematic strategies

✓	Statement of Fire Management Intent
✓	Level 2 Pest Strategy

Vision

Gadgarra National Park protects a variety of habitats that support species of conservation significance such as the southern cassowary and Herbert River ringtail possum, as well as migratory birds visiting from around the world. The park continues to provide visitor opportunities. The Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji people are involved in ongoing park management.

Conservation purpose

Gazetted in December 2010, Gadgarra National Park amalgamated Gadgarra Forest Reserve.

The park protects an important connection for animals moving across the landscape.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

Gadgarra National Park is located approximately 25km east of the town of Atherton, rising to 903m at Mount Nomico. The park is adjacent to Wooroonooran, Little Mulgrave and Danbulla national parks.

Gadgarra National Park is a very scenic, elevated landscape on the Atherton Tablelands.

The park is predominantly within the Mulgrave–Russell rivers catchment, although a small part of the park is within the Barron River catchment.

Grazing and dairy industries are predominant to the west of the park.

Regional ecosystems

Thirty-two regional ecosystems are conserved in the park. Endangered and of concern ecosystems cover about 48 per cent of the park (Table 1).

The dominant regional ecosystem is notophyll vine forest of moist to very wet metamorphic uplands and highlands (7.11.12). It covers about 27 per cent of the park. The second most dominant ecosystem is an of concern eucalyptus open-forest to woodland (or vine forest with these as emergents) on metamorphics (7.11.31) which covers about 18 per cent of the park.

Native plants and animals

A diversity of native plant and animal species, including some endemic species and species of conservation significance locally, nationally and internationally.

There are about 750 native plant and animal species have been recorded from the park, including about 130 animal species, 49 species of fungi. Twenty-three species of conservation significance are conserved on the park (Table 2).

Six birds recorded for the park are listed in international agreements (Table 3).

Many of the park's regional ecosystems provide important arboreal (tree-dwelling) mammal habitat for species such as the near threatened green ringtail possum *Pseudochirops archeri* and Herbert River ringtail possum *Pseudochirulus herbertensis*.

Although not recorded, endangered southern cassowaries *Casuarius casuarius johnsonii* (southern population) are most likely present on the park. The park includes large areas of primary and secondary cassowary habitat and maintaining its quality and integrity is important.

Aboriginal culture

Most of the park is part of the combined Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji native title claim determination (QC01/014). The determination took final effect on 23 August 2010 when four Indigenous Land Use Agreements were negotiated; two with the respective local authorities, one with Ergon Energy and one with the State of Queensland (the Wooroonooran Indigenous Land Use Agreement).

A small area of the park has a registered native title claim currently active for the Tableland Yidinji people (QC99/36).

Aboriginal cultural sites are known to exist on the park, including burial sites and artefact scatters. Walking tracks cross this park and were regularly used to access the coast or tablelands as the seasons dictated. The Robsons track is considered to be the most important to Traditional Owners, who refer to it as the Old People's track.

Shared-history culture

The area was transformed through the gold rush years in the 1870s. Some historical mines and stone walls can be found on the park. The Gadgarra, Mailman's (Cairns) and Robsons tracks were all used throughout settlement period to access the tablelands from the port of Cairns.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Walking is the dominant visitor activity on the park. There are a number of established walking tracks and potential for new opportunities exist.

Historic routes known to be used intermittently include the Mailman's (Cairns), Windin Falls, Robsons and Butchers Creek tracks. The condition of the tracks varies from developed to rough tracks.

The park was well known for the Giant Gadgarra red cedar tree, which served as a reminder of the giant trees that once dominated the Atherton Tableland's forests. However the tree fell during Cyclone Larry in 2006. The Wet Tropics Nature Based Tourism Strategy (2000) had identified the Red Cedar Site as a quality presentation site.

Windin Falls track, Robsons track and Cedar Camp Road are identified in the Wet Tropics Management Authority Walking Strategy as potential walking tracks that should be developed for walking only.

Robson's, Mailman's (Cairns) and Gadgarra tracks are thought to be Aboriginal walking tracks that were later used by the new settlers as they moved west from the coast seeking gold and timber.

Cedar Camp Road is not cleared or used by vehicles other than mountain bikes. It is part of the Robsons track leading out of Tinaroo and is generally steep and eroded because the soils are easily weathered.

The Windin Falls track is connected to the Mailman's or Cairns track and walkers and mountain bikes can use the gazetted section of the track. No motorised vehicles use this track.

Mailman's or Cairns track links the tablelands to the Goldsborough Valley at Swipers Flat where the Mulgrave River intersects with the Goldsborough Road. Previously a much used and favourite track, it has become overgrown and collapsed in places.

Mountain biking is also popular. Cyclists use most of the available gazetted tracks and roads in the park. The Cairns Mountain Bike Strategy does not support ongoing use of Robsons or Zig Zag tracks. Walking tracks identified in the Wet Tropics Management Authority Walking Strategy are not recommended to be used for cyclists.

Access to the Gillies Lookout and hang-gliding site is partly within Gadgarra National Park, with the take-off point being the accessed from Danbulla Forest Drive.

Commercial operators use the park, principally along the Gillies Lookout Track and West Butchers Creek Track.

Education and science

The park has the potential to be of interest to school groups, and group activity permits have previously been issued for school excursions.

Partnerships

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) is responsible for the day-to-day management of the national park. The Wet Tropics Management Authority regulates activity in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The goal of both agencies is to present the area's values while protecting its natural and cultural values.

Traditional Owners are involved in cooperative park management.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Fifteen introduced species have been recorded from the park—two animal species and 13 plant species. There is one class 2 pest plant species, *Senna hirsute* and two class 3 pest plant species, small-leaved privet *Ligustrum sinense* and lantana *Lantana camara* (a Weed of National Significance). Cane toads *Rhinella marina* are known from the park.

There is a Level 2 pest management strategy for the tablelands which includes a large number of parks, including the then Gadgarra Forest Reserve.

Fire management

The Crater Lakes Statement of Fire Management Intent (Level 2 Fire Management Strategy) was prepared in 2003 over four protected areas, including the then Gadgarra Forest Reserve. The Danbulla Statement of Fire Management Intent (Level 2 Fire Management Strategy) was prepared in 2003 over three protected areas, including the former Gillies Highway Forest Reserve.

Eucalyptus and Corymbia open-forests (such as endangered regional ecosystem 7.11.14 and of concern 7.11.31) are threatened by vine forest invasion which prevents fire regeneration of eucalyptus.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
Native plants and animals Habitat for species of conservation significance is conserved.	Enhance knowledge and understanding of the park's native and pest plants and animals by undertaking surveys, species lists and regularly updating Wildnet.
Aboriginal culture Traditional Owners are involved in cooperative park management.	Support the involvement of the Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji people in park management.
Tourism and visitor opportunities Safe and sustainable visitor opportunities are provided and maintained.	Review the use of the park for cycling and trail biking in consultation with relevant user groups.
Fire management Fire management protects species diversity, life, property and infrastructure.	Review the existing statement of fire management intent and prepare a level 2 fire management strategy.

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
7.11.14	<i>Eucalyptus grandis</i> open-forest to woodland, or <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> , <i>E. pellita</i> and <i>E. grandis</i> open-forest to woodland (or vine forest with these species as emergents) on metamorphics.	Endangered
7.11.16	<i>Eucalyptus portuensis</i> and <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> open-forest to woodland on wet and moist metamorphics of foothills and uplands.	Endangered
7.11.19	<i>Corymbia intermedia</i> and/or <i>Lophostemon suaveolens</i> open-forest to woodland, on uplands on metamorphics.	Of concern
7.11.26	Rock pavements with <i>Allocasuarina littoralis</i> and <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> open to closed shrubland or <i>Bombax ceiba</i> and <i>Cochlospermum gillivraei</i> open-woodland, or <i>Acacia</i> spp. shrubland, on metamorphics.	Endangered
7.11.30	Simple notophyll vine forest of <i>Blepharocarya involucrigera</i> on metamorphics.	Of concern
7.11.31	<i>Eucalyptus resinifera</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus portuensis</i> +/- <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> open-forest to woodland (or vine forest with these species as emergents) on metamorphics.	Of concern
7.11.32	<i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> and/or <i>Allocasuarina</i> spp. +/- healthy understorey, to tall woodland to open-forest (or vine forest with these species as emergents) on steep rocky metamorphic slopes with shallow soils.	Of concern
7.11.38	<i>Lophostemon confertus</i> low woodland to low closed-forest +/- <i>Acacia celsa</i> , <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> and <i>Allocasuarina</i> spp. on steep metamorphic slopes.	Of concern
7.11.44	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> open-forest to woodland on coastal metamorphic foothills.	Of concern
7.11.51	<i>Corymbia clarksoniana</i> and/or <i>Eucalyptus drepanophylla</i> open-forest to woodland on metamorphics.	Of concern
7.11.6	<i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> +/- <i>Eucalyptus pellita</i> open-forest of deep soils on metamorphics.	Endangered
7.12.21	<i>Eucalyptus grandis</i> open-forest to woodland, or <i>Corymbia intermedia</i> , <i>E. pellita</i> and <i>E. grandis</i> open-forest to woodland, (or vine forest with these species as emergents) on granite and rhyolite.	Endangered
7.12.22	<i>Eucalyptus resinifera</i> +/- <i>E. portuensis</i> +/- <i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i> tall open-forest to tall woodland (or vine forest with these species as emergents) on moist to wet granite and rhyolite uplands and highlands.	Endangered
7.12.39	Complex mesophyll vine forest on fertile, well drained granites and rhyolites of very wet and wet lowlands, foothills and uplands.	Of concern
7.3.10	Simple-complex mesophyll to notophyll vine forest, on moderately to poorly-drained alluvial plains, of moderate fertility.	Endangered
7.3.28	Rivers and streams including riparian herbfield and shrubland on river and stream bed alluvium, and rock within stream beds.	Endangered
7.3.43	<i>Eucalyptus tereticornis</i> open-forest to woodland on uplands on well drained alluvium.	Endangered
7.3.49	Notophyll vine forest on rubble terraces of streams.	Of concern
7.8.13	Simple notophyll vine forest of <i>Blepharocarya involucrigera</i> of high rainfall, cloudy uplands on basalt.	Endangered
7.8.1	Complex mesophyll to mesophyll vine forest on well drained basalt lowlands and foothills.	Endangered
7.8.2	Complex mesophyll vine forest of high rainfall, cloudy uplands on basalt, including small areas of wind-sheared notophyll vine forest on ridgelines.	Of concern
7.8.3	Complex semi-evergreen notophyll vine forest of uplands on basalt.	Endangered

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>Aceratium sericoleopsis</i>	silky aceratium	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Agathis microstachya</i>	bull kauri	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Alloxylon flammeum</i>	-	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Asplenium excisum</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Cyclophyllum costatum</i>	-	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Low
<i>Endiandra dichrophylla</i>	coach walnut	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Endiandra sideroxylon</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Haplostichanthus submontanus</i> subsp. <i>sessiliflorus</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Linospadix microcarya</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Pararistolochia praevenosa</i>	-	Near threatened	-	High
<i>Parsonsia wildensis</i>	-	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Peripentadenia mearsii</i>	buff quandong	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Pseuduvaria mulgraveana</i> var. <i>glabrescens</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Rourea brachyandra</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Sarcopteryx acuminata</i>	-	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Schizomeria whitei</i>	white birch	Near threatened	-	Low
Animals				
<i>Aerodramus terraereginae</i>	Australian swiftlet	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Cyclopsitta diophthalma macleayana</i>	Macleay's fig-parrot	Vulnerable	-	Low
<i>Erythrura trichroa</i>	blue-faced parrot-finch	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Litoria serrata</i>	tapping green eyed frog	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Antechinus godmani</i>	Atherton antechinus	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Pseudochirops archeri</i>	green ringtail possum	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Pseudochirulus herbertensis</i>	Herbert River ringtail possum	Near threatened	-	Low
<i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i>	spectacled flying-fox	Least concern	Vulnerable	High

Table 3: Species listed in international agreements

Scientific name	Common name	Bonn	JAMBA	ROKAMBA	CAMBA
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater	-	✓	-	-
<i>Coracina tenuirostris</i>	cicadabird	-	✓	-	-
<i>Ardea ibis</i>	cattle egret	-	✓	-	✓
<i>Monarcha melanopsis</i>	black-faced monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Symposiarchus trivirgatus</i>	spectacled monarch	✓	-	-	-
<i>Rhipidura rufifrons</i>	rufous fantail	✓	-	-	-

Bonn – Bonn Convention

CAMBA – China–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

JAMBA – Japan–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement

ROKAMBA – Republic of Korea–Australia Migratory Bird Agreement