1. Management directions and purposes

1.1 Management directions

Mt Hector Conservation Park lies near the township of Louisa Creek, approximately 25km south of Mackay. It will be managed to maintain its vegetation diversity and associated animal communities. This will be achieved through the appropriate use of fire and the minimisation of external impacts. The identification of cultural resource values will also be a high priority. Recreational and scenic values will be protected.

No visitor facilities are provided on the park, although use of the area for low impact and self sufficient recreational, educational or scientific use will be allowed.

1.2 Purposes

The major purposes of management of Mt Hector Conservation Park will be to ensure that:

- the park's vegetation is maintained in its natural condition and is protected from grazing and weed infestation;
- fire management is conducted where appropriate;
- rare and threatened plant and animal species are identified and monitored to ensure their protection from potential threats;
- Aboriginal artefacts are identified and protected from potential threats;
- self-reliant recreational, scientific and educational use of the park is allowed, provided that these activities do not threaten the area's ecological integrity;
- neighbours, local government, Aboriginal people with traditional links to the area and other interested parties are made aware of park management issues and are provided with opportunities to contribute to management; and
- continued access is provided to the electricity authority for maintenance of the existing powerline.

2 Basis for management

Mt Hector Conservation Park is gazetted under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and must be managed under s 20 of the Act to:

- conserve and present the area's cultural and natural resources and their values;
- provide for the permanent conservation of the area's natural condition to the greatest possible extent; and
- ensure that any commercial use of the area's natural resources, including fishing and grazing is ecologically sustainable.

2.1 Regional and management context

Mt Hector Conservation Park is located within the Sarina-Proserpine Lowlands natural province of the Mackay Central Coast biogeographic region. It covers 15ha of coastal headland. A number of vegetation types are represented within the park, including beach scrub and grass tree headland vegetation. The park's primary conservation value lies in its representation of beach scrub and poplar gum/broad-leaved paperbark communities. Cliffs along the south-eastern foreshore and the park's natural vegetation ensure Mt Hector is of high scenic value. A number of Aboriginal artefacts have been reported within the park. The park provides opportunities for low-impact, nature-based recreation, mainly for the local community. Access to the park is by boat, or by walking across Louisa Creek at low tide.

Management of the park is undertaken by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Mackay District Office.

2.2 Values of Mt Hector Conservation Park

Geology and landform

The majority of the park lies on the Campwyn Beds formation, which consists of intermediate, basic and acid volcanics, siltstone, sandstone, conglomerate and limestone. The headland is tertiary acid and intermediate flows and pyroclastics, with minor siltstone and sandstone.

The rocky headland of Mt Hector reaches an elevation of 59 metres.

Plants and animals

The park contains a number of vegetation associations, including areas of:

- beach scrub;
- grasstree *Xanthorrhoea johnsonii* headland vegetation;
- bloodwood *Corymbia clarksoniana* with grasstree and banksia *Banksia integrifolia subsp compar* understorey and occasional cocky apple *Planchonia careya*;
- eucalypt/paperbark woodland *Eucalyptus platyphylla, Corymbia clarksoniana, Melaleuca viridiflora*; and
- samphire *Halosarcia pergranulata* and saltwater couch *Sporobolus virginicus* flats leading into mangroves.

Both the beach scrub and eucalypt/paperbark woodland have important conservation value. Beach scrub vegetation consists of rainforest floristics (including tanjong tree *Mimusops elengi*, red ash *Alphitonia excelsa*, mongo *Pouteria sericea*, Burdekin plum *Pleiogynium timorense*, peanut tree *Sterculia quadrifida* and native cherry *Exocarpus latifolius*) on coastal dune systems. These areas are important migratory feeding areas for the pied imperial pigeon and other rainforest fruit pigeons. The bloodwood/poplar gum/broadleaved paperbark woodland is an important ecotone between the samphire flats and woodland. These vegetation types are generally highly disturbed within the region. The grasstree and samphire/saltwater couch communities are well represented in other parks and are not considered to be threatened.

Little information is available on the park's fauna. No detailed surveys have been conducted to date, and the presence of rare and threatened plant or animal species is unknown.

Cultural heritage

Aboriginal artefacts have been reported within the park, however no information is available on either the traditional use of the area by Aboriginal people or its cultural significance.

Scenic and aesthetic

The coastline cliffs and undisturbed headland vegetation give the park a high scenic value in relation to surrounding lowlands. Mt Hector is considered to be scenically significant by the local community. The park may also provide a buffer from future industrial developments in the area.

Scientific and educational

The presence of an area of undisturbed beach scrub may be of scientific interest in the future. Limited access to the park makes it unsuitable for large scale educational trips, although the park may be of value to small educational groups.

Recreation and tourism

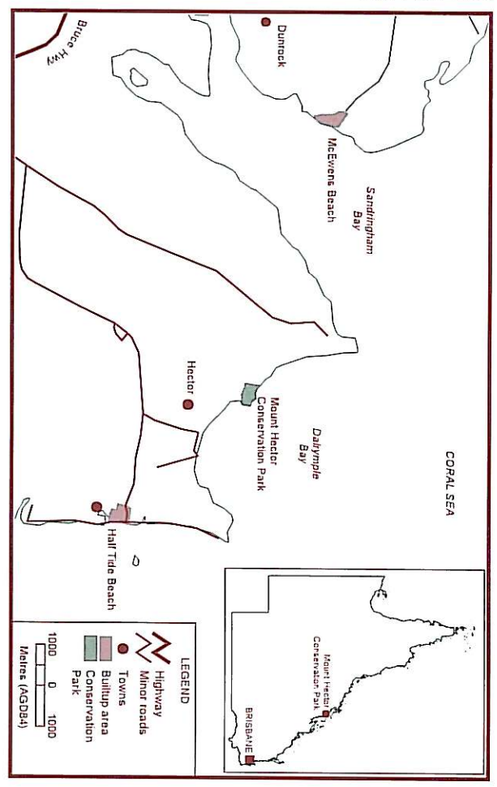
The park is an important local recreational area, used for bush walking, bird watching and rock scrambling. No visitor facilities are available.

Summary

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

This plan was prepared in October 1999 and, in accordance with s 125 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*, will be reviewed not later than 10 years after its approval. For further information on this plan or the planning process, please contact the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Central Regional Office in Rockhampton on (07) 4936 0567.

This management plan was prepared with the assistance of Vicki Cramer, Bill Lavarack, Martin O'Malley, Michael Overland, David Marshall, Bill Fisher and Rose Trapnell. Thanks are due to those groups and individuals who made submissions in response to the draft plan.



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Mt Hector Conservation Park

Management plan

Central Mackay Coast Biogeographic Region August 2000

Queensland Government
Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

3 Management strategies

Current situation	Desired outcomes	Policies, guidelines and actions
Native plants and animals		
Little detailed information is available in relation to the park's plants and animals. Detailed vegetation and fauna surveys have not been undertaken. There is no information on rare and threatened species. Current threats to the park's vegetation include: • uncontrolled wildfire; • changed vegetation composition due to the absence of fire from fire-tolerant vegetation types; • weed infestation; and • potential cattle grazing if the boundary fence becomes damaged.	The integrity and extent of plant and animal associations are maintained. The habitat of rare and threatened plant and animal species is identified and conserved. More extensive knowledge of the park's vegetation and fauna is gained through surveys and monitoring programs.	Undertake plant and animal surveys. Maintain the integrity and extent of the park's vegetation associations through the appropriate use and exclusion of fire, and the reduction of weeds and feral animals. Establish a monitoring program to assess changes in plant species composition, animal communities and their habitat. Monitoring programs will pay particular regard to the influence of fire management strategies on vegetation types, and the presence of weed species. Prevent stock access to the park through maintenance of boundary fencing.
Introduced plants and animals		
There is little information on the occurrence of weeds in the park. Lantana, prickly pear and snakeweed have been recorded on the park. There are several additional weed species along the park's boundary fence, where soil has been disturbed. While the presence of feral animals is unknown, feral cats, pigs and cane toads may be present. The park boundary is fenced, so neighbouring stock are excluded.	Weeds and feral animals are managed so that their presence has no significant impact on native plant and animals.	Weeds, feral animals and other threats will be identified and controlled within the park, subject to available resources. Special consideration will be given to the control of weeds along the park boundary, so they are prevented from spreading into the park. Note the presence and extent of weed species during vegetation monitoring, and the impact of fire management on these species. Conduct periodic surveys for feral animals. Grazing stock on the park will not be permitted. Liaise and negotiate with the park's neighbour in relation to maintaining the existing fence in stock proof condition, in accordance with the Service's Good Neighbour Policy.
Fire management		
The park has not been burnt for 10-15 years. Visual evidence suggests that lack of fire has led to gradual changes in vegetation (eg. the reduced presence of grasses in headland vegetation and the presence of fire sensitive invasive weed species). Various plants within the park require different fire management strategies. Beach scrub requires complete protection from fire. Other species require varying levels of fire intensity and frequency.	The biological diversity and integrity of native plant and animal communities are maintained through appropriate fire management. Human life, park infrastructure and neighbouring properties are protected as far as possible from fire originating within the park or entering the park from neighbouring properties.	Develop a fire management plan which uses controlled fire management to maintain current vegetation distribution and to control weed infestations. Controlled burns will also be used to reduce fuel loads should they increase to the point where the risk of intense wildfire develops. Monitor vegetation to assess the role fire management should play in the long-term maintenance of natural diversity. Liaise with neighbours in relation to fire activities.
Cultural heritage		
The park is an important relatively undisturbed part of the Aboriginal landscape which may be culturally and spiritually significant for traditional owners of the area. No Aboriginal cultural heritage investigations have been conducted in the park but it is possible that there are significant places for Aboriginal people. Traditional owners have made a number of native title claims over lands which include the park to have their native title rights recognised.	Traditional owners have ownership, control and/or management of their cultural heritage. Cultural sites are identified and protected in accordance with the wishes of Aboriginal people with an interest in the area. Native title rights are not limited or compromised by this plan.	Undertake surveys to document cultural heritage sites within the park. Keep open lines of communication with traditional owners and people with a historic connection to the park. After any successful native title determination, traditional rights to the land will be recognised and traditional owners will be involved in joint management of the park, including the protection of their cultural heritage.
Recreation and tourism		
No visitor facilities are provided. Although the current visitor level is unknown, it is expected to be low. No formal park entrance exists. Directional and boundary signs are not provided.	Recreational activities have no significant impact on park values.	No visitor facilities will be provided. No restrictions will be placed on recreational day-use of the park unless monitoring programs suggest that flora, fauna or the physical habitat is being significantly disturbed. Minimal bush camping will be permitted. Camping permits must be obtained from the Mackay Office of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. Camp fires will not be permitted. Park identification signs will be erected on boundaries. Any proposals for commercial use of the park will be considered and approved only if they have no significant impact on the natural environment.
Education and interpretation		
Difficult access makes the park unsuitable for educational purposes, although some low-key educational use by small groups may occur. There is no park information sheet.	Information on the park is available to the public.	A park information sheet will be prepared.
Resource use		
A power line crosses the park. There is an ongoing need to clear below this line for maintenance purposes. No commercial use of the park is currently authorised.	Maintenance of the powerline has minimal impact on the park's native plants and animals. Opportunities for low-impact relevant scientific research are available.	Negotiate a formal agreement for maintenance of the power line with the electricity authority. Scientific research will be permitted, provided it has minimal impact and provides valuable information to managers. Apart from uses proposed within this management plan, no other use of the park's resources will be permitted.
Plan implementation and monitoring		
This is a little-used park which requires only minimal management. Priorities are to obtain more information on the natural and cultural resources, and to ensure that there is an appropriate fire regime to maintain habitat diversity and limit weed infestation.	The park is being managed in line with the provisions of this plan.	Priority will be given to the collection of information on the park's plants, animals and cultural resources, and to fire management. The plan will be implemented as resources permit. Information collected as a result of the implementation of this plan will be used to modify management strategies as required. Ranger-in-charge to submit a brief annual report on the success of the plan implementation. Review the management plan within 10 years of approval according to s 125 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.