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NOMINAL INDEX  
COMO

FORESTS DEPARTMENT  
22 NOV 1979  
PERTH. W.A.

ASST. CONSERVATOR EASTMAN  
COMO

## FIRE PROTECTION COCANARUP RESERVE

### 1. PREAMBLE

The attached letter (Robley 21/9/79) from Bush Fires Board sets out proposals for fire breaks and buffer burning in the Cocanarup Reserve. The proposal involves constructing 70 km of firebreak at a cost of \$4,900 to Forests Dept. in the 1980/81 financial year. The Cocanarup firebreak system will be part of a much larger firebreak scheme financed by Government for the Fitzgerald R. area.

After discussion with Mr. Richmond, inspections were carried out last week to determine fire control requirements for a number of reserves, including Cocanarup. Another report will be made on total requirements, in the meantime Cocanarup does rate a priority.

Although the 1977 fires burnt a large part of the reserve, there are areas of heavy fuels in the remainder of the reserve, particularly the south-east portion which adjoins P.P.

### 2. TIMBER VALUE

The reserve area south of the main Jerramungup to Ravensthorpe Road has considerable value as it includes fine stands of salmon gum and jam (outside the fire area).

The value of the northern portion is less obvious. There is a large area of sand plain scrub until Hicks and Long Creek, where there are good stands of jam.

On priority basis, expenditure on firebreaks and fire protection for the southern area appears more necessary and justifiable than in the north area. The southern portion could be protected by a double firebreak and burnt buffer along the main road. The jam stands along the Creek complex in the northern portion are evident in the southern portion.

Buffer burning will require careful planning. Many parts of the reserve carry significant amounts of dead groundwood and it is most unlikely edge burns would be self-extinguishing. In these areas a double firebreak system would be required before burning could be safely undertaken. There are tracks within the reserve that should be located and assessed for value as access for fire control or burn perimeters.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

If the whole reserve is to be protected, Bush Fires Board proposals to locate firebreaks outside the reserve boundary, but including main timber stands, has considerable merit. An additional strategic buffer along the main road is warranted to decrease risks of fire penetrating the valuable southern portion of the reserve.

If finance is limiting, the southern portion could be fire-brokeed as suggested, with additional burnt buffers along the

main road. The northern area could be burnt by farmers and maintained as protective low fuel area. This option would result in the northern portion deteriorating in value as a reserve, but as already discussed, a large part of the area appears to be of lesser value for timber reserve.

*G B Peet*  
G B PEET  
INSPECTOR, PROTECTION

Como Protection

20 November 1979

Copy - Mr. Richmond, Kalgoorlie

Attachments: Copy Bush Fires Board letter  
Copy Cocanarup map.

364/79 ERH:ALB  
Dr. Hopkins

The Shire Clerk  
Ravensthorpe Shire Council  
Post Office Box 43  
RAVENSTHORPE. W.A. 6346

Dear Sir,

MINERS HOMESTEAD LEASE NO. 74/338

Further to your inquiry of November 9th and the telephone discussion with Mr. Trainer of this Department on November 19th, it is necessary to confirm that the lease was issued without any reference to this Department.

The Forests Department would have opposed the lease if it had been aware of its possible re-issue on the grounds that the reserve should be maintained in as natural a state as is possible.

Access to the lease should be kept external to the reserve unless a further internal road favoured fire protection within the reserve management area.

Yours sincerely,



# BUSH FIRES BOARD

ALBERT HOUSE, 10 VICTORIA AVENUE,  
PERTH, W.A. 6000. Telephone 325 8588 Area Code 09

IN REE  
OUR REF  
ENQUIRIES MR

Robley

Conservator of Forests  
Forests Department  
121 Todd Avenue  
COMO 6152

FORESTS DEPT.  
FIRE CONTROL  
9 OCT 1979  
COMO

Attention Mr. G.P. Peet

Re: Cocanarup Timber Reserve

As discussed Peet-Robley on 21st September 1979 the Board have recently completed a survey of the Fitzgerald River area which includes the Cocanarup Timber Reserve under the control of Forests Department.

The Board are currently engaged in the preparation of a district fire protection plan for the area which involves the integration of fire protection measures to be taken by Brigades, National Parks Authority, the Department of Lands and Surveys and the Forests Department.

The majority of fuels on the reserve are light and there would appear to be no immediate requirement for broad scale fuel reduction. A large proportion of the reserve carries fuels about 2 years old following the 1977 fire. In other unburnt areas (up to 15 years old) there is no extensive heavy fuel build up.

Firebreaks however are required to protect areas of good Jam regeneration following the 1977 fire and there are also good stands of mature Jam trees.

The boundary of the reserve is difficult to identify on the ground and Jam stands exist in adjoining areas of vacant Crown land.

In addition the southern boundary of the reserve lies in rugged country, steep in part.

I believe it would be preferable to associate firebreak construction with the Jam stands and to follow the most easily accessible country rather than to slavishly attempt to follow the actual reserve boundaries.

Where vacant Crown land adjoins the area to be protected breaks can be extended by edge burning into the Crown land. On private property boundaries however, edge burning will have to be carried out on the protected area.

If edge burning can be carried out safely and effectively there should be no need for a double break system as has been developed at Denbarker - however this remains to be tried.

The northern boundary is the exception to this rule as this is assessed as the area of greatest vulnerability from the point of view of fire weather and density and extent of fuels. On this area a double break with a 300 metre burnt buffer is recommended.

The location of this double break north of Cartacup Pool is determined by the extent of the Jam stands.

To Forests Department, Como

- 2 -

Additional firebreak construction around the Cocanarup homestead is not considered necessary at this time due to previous fire activity in 1977.

The width of breaks proposed are 6 metres or two cuts of a dozer blade.

This proposal involves 70 km of firebreak construction at an estimated cost of \$70.00 per km. Although a large proportion of the breaks are not located on the reserve all are associated with protection of the timber stands and are considered to be a legitimate charge on the Forests Department.

A draft interagency agreement is attached which sets out the division of responsibility between the Forests Department and the Bush Fires Board.

If these proposals are acceptable to you I would anticipate work could start in 1980/81.

I would be grateful for your comments.

SUPERINTENDENT

21st September 1979  
JAWR:FC

*What is additional private length of cut  
Why a forest fire would 3m break fire break order.  
What cost involved with slope burning.*

*6m required for every 100m of slope  
of local installed fence.*

*12 year cycle.*