

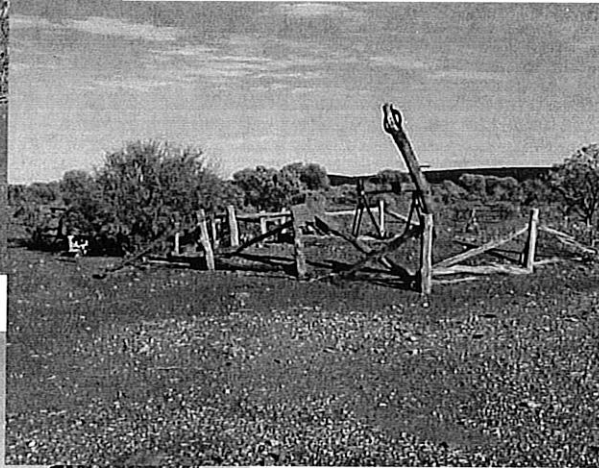
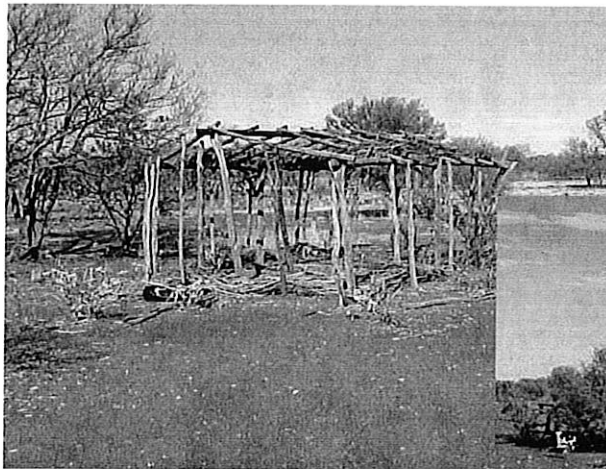


INTERIM MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE

DOOLGUNNA

2002 – 2007

Compiled by Greg Kitson, June 2002.



Revised by David Blood August 2004

INTERIM MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE FOR DOOLGUNNA

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Regional Manager – Midwest Region

Endorsed : _____ Date / /

CALMfire

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Director – Nature Conservation

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of interim management guidelines

These guidelines are required for planning purposes so that certain operations can be carried out in an orderly fashion in the absence of an approved management plan. The operational activities described in the guidelines are defined as those actions necessary for the preservation or protection of persons, property, land, flora and fauna.

It is proposed to vest the land with the Conservation Commission of Western Australia as a Conservation Park, which will formally allow the Conservation and Land Management Act and Regulations to apply in the long term protection and management of the area. The area will also be protected under the Wildlife Conservation Act 1950.

These guidelines, which identify short-term management objectives and actions will be reviewed at least annually and will be put in place for a period not exceeding five years. All works programs emanating from these guidelines, will be approved by the Regional Manager.

1.2 Principal management directions

These guidelines cover the major management issues. These are:

- The conservation of biological, physical, cultural and landscape resources.
- To seek a better understanding of the natural and cultural environment and the impacts of a range of management activities.
- To promote informed appreciation of natural and cultural values.

1.3 Area description

Doolgunna Pastoral Lease comprises an area of about 235 160 hectares and is situated approximately 140kms north east of Meekatharra and 100 kms south of the Collier Range National Park. Doolgunna straddles the boundary between the Murchison and Gascoyne IBRA Regions – regions that are a high priority for extending the conservation estate.

The lease includes some interesting natural features that include the Robinson Ranges, Mt Leake, the flood plains of South Branch of the Gascoyne River and the Fish Holes, permanent rockholes.

This land lies within the Mid West Region of the Department of Conservation and Land Management (DCLM), and will be administered through the Geraldton office of the Department.

The lease was purchased in August 2001 and was held in the name of the Executive Director of the Department of Conservation and Land Management. It is intended to convert the lease to a Conservation Park vested in the Conservation Commission of Western Australia.

The pastoral lease (number 3114/1026) was relinquished by this Department in 2003 and was officially transferred to Department management following the end of the destocking period in December 2003.

2 INTERIM MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The interim Management Objectives for the Doolgunna area are to:

- Complete the removal of all domestic stock from the pastoral lease and close artificial waters not required for strategic water supply at the completion of the destocking period.

- Protect natural and cultural resources of the area.
- Identify and maintain strategic access within the area.
- Control introduced plants and animals as priorities determine and resources allow.
- Carry out management activities that are sympathetic to the requirements of neighbours including the maintenance of boundary fences to a stock proof condition, control of feral predators and participation in projects of mutual benefit.
- Seek to ensure that future development proposals, particularly for mining, include adequate provision for appropriate rehabilitation.
- Protect natural resources, buildings and areas of historic or cultural significance from fires as appropriate.
- Liaise with individuals and organizations with regard to the development and implementation of these guidelines.

3 INTERIM GUIDELINES

3.1 MANAGEMENT FOR CONSERVATION

3.1.1 Geomorphology

The valley plain of the Gascoyne River's south branch followed by the route of the Great Northern Highway separates the station into a gently undulating eastern half, and a more rugged, stoney, dissected western half. The western section contains the eastern end of the two parallel curving fold ridges of the Robinson Range. Geology of the eastern area comprises of a mixed suite of Proterozoic Age metasediments, greywacke, quartz-cherts, chert-haematite-jasper, basalts and dolerites of the Glengarry group. Adamallitic granites outcrop in small areas on the north and southern boundary areas. The western area is composed of granular and banded ironstone and iron shales of the Padbury group (Proterozoic Age) forming the predominant double curved ridges of the Robinson Range. Peak Hill metamorphic schists and Archean granodiorite gneiss and amphibolites capped with duricrust remnants, and basalts of the Glengarry group occupy the area north of the Robinson Range.

The remainder of the landscape surfaces are Quaternary alluvial and colluvial washplains and pediment slopes of the hills, ranges and Tertiary Age oldland convexities.

3.1.2 Vegetation, Flora and Introduced Plant Species

The land supports six vegetation types according to the vegetation mapping at the 1:250,000 scale by J S Beard, all of which are under represented in the reserve system. These are listed in Table 1 in order of their extent within Doolgunna. The table also shows the other IBRA regions in which each of the vegetation types occurs, and the total area over which each of the vegetation types is mapped as being present at the time of European settlement. An inspection of the lease has found the vegetation to be in generally good condition, with improvement expected once stock and feral animals are removed. The predominant cover is of low lying mulga (*Acacia aneura*) woodlands over the whole region, varying in spacement density and height according to soil moisture conditions and topographic position.

Table 1

Veg cod e No	Beard Code	Description	IBRA regions of occurrence	Area in IUCN reserves (ha)	% in IUCN reserves	Area in DCLM reserve (ha)	% in DCLM reserve	Total area of original vegetation (ha)
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18	a ₁ Li	Low woodland; mulga (<i>Acacia aneura</i>)	AW CAR CR COO GAS GD GVD GSD LSD MUR NUL PIL YAL	729,824	3.18	747,737	3.26	22,924,433
29	a ₁ Lp	Sparse low woodland; mulga, discontinuous in scattered groups	CAR GAS LSD MUR PIL	216,724	3.08	216,724	3.08	7,040,810
107	a ₁ e ₂ 1S r ₂ Hi	Hummock grasslands, shrub steppe; mulga and <i>Eucalyptus kingsmillii</i> over hard spinifex	GAS MUR	176,726	5.94	176,726	5.94	2,973,102
39	a ₁ Si	Shrublands, Mulga Scrub	CAR CR COO GAS GD GSD GVD GSD LSD MUR PIL YAL	444,523	9.93	444,523	9.93	4,476,438
202	a _{1,14} Si	Shrublands; mulga & <i>Acacia quadrimarginea</i> scrub	COO GAS MUR YAL	19,167	5.25	19,167	5.25	364,812
166	a _{1,10} Li	Low woodland; mulga and <i>Acacia victoriae</i>	CAR GAS	7,732	2.21	7,733	2.21	350,631

Action

- Undertake flora surveys as resources allow, to determine the occurrence, distribution and abundance of threatened flora, priority flora, or flora of regional significance.
- Protect areas on which threatened flora, priority flora, or flora of regional significance is known to exist.
- Map specific vegetation associations and recording of vegetation quality, to facilitate appropriate management and monitoring of the vegetation.

3.1.3 Native and Introduced Fauna

Published distribution data suggests that Doolgunna potentially supports 82 ground-dwelling vertebrate taxa. Included in these is the Scheduled Rare *Dasyercus cristticauda* and *Petrogale lateralis*, and the Priority species *Sminthopsis longicaudata*. Extinct mounds of *Bettongia leseur* are common across wide areas of the lease. Extinct nests of *Leporillus sp.* are common in breakaways.

Feral goats and camels occur on the lease, although none were sighted during the initial inspection of the lease, and neither was reported as a significant problem by the lessee. Feral cats, wild dogs and foxes also occur on the lease, although foxes have seldom been observed by the caretaker.

The removal of domestic stock and the control of feral herbivores and declared animals should result in a recovery of the native vegetation.

Action

- Undertake surveys to document the fauna of the area as resources allow.
- Protect significant habitats and monitor changes which may occur following the removal of domestic stock and feral herbivores.
- Continue wild dog baiting in conjunction with Agriculture Protection Board and neighbours.

3.1.4 Cultural Resources

Aboriginal people have lived throughout the area now known as the Doolgunna pastoral lease, using the land for hunting, gathering and cultural purposes. There are two Native title claims covering the area of Doolgunna; the first covering all land to the west of the Great Northern Highway, WAG0072/98 WC99/013 for the Nharnuwangga Wajarri & Ngarlawangga (determined), and WAG6132/98 WC99/046, which covers all land to the east of the highway including the DCLM managed Mooloogool Station to the south.

There are two disused stock routes dissecting Doolgunna; Crown reserve number 9700 - the De Grey / Peak Hill stock route which was gazetted in 1905, and CR 20092, which was gazetted in 1929. There are a number of Government wells along these stock routes that may have some historical value.

There are a number of open mine shafts throughout Doolgunna. Other significant historical areas related to early European gold mining are evident, in particular, Boyers Hut (figure 1) which offers an insight into the hardships endured by the gold mining pioneers, and the pioneer cemetery which was once part of the Peak Hill townsite (but is located on Doolgunna).

In addition to the cemetery, there is a known gravesite of a 2 year old boy, Jack Morcks (dating back to the turn of the 20th century) at the area now known as Morcks Well.

In the north of Doolgunna exists an abandoned Main Roads of Western Australia (MRWA) blue metal quarry. The area is accessible to those that are aware of its location and appears to be frequented by travelers looking to distance themselves from night time highway noise.



Figure 1 Boyers Hut

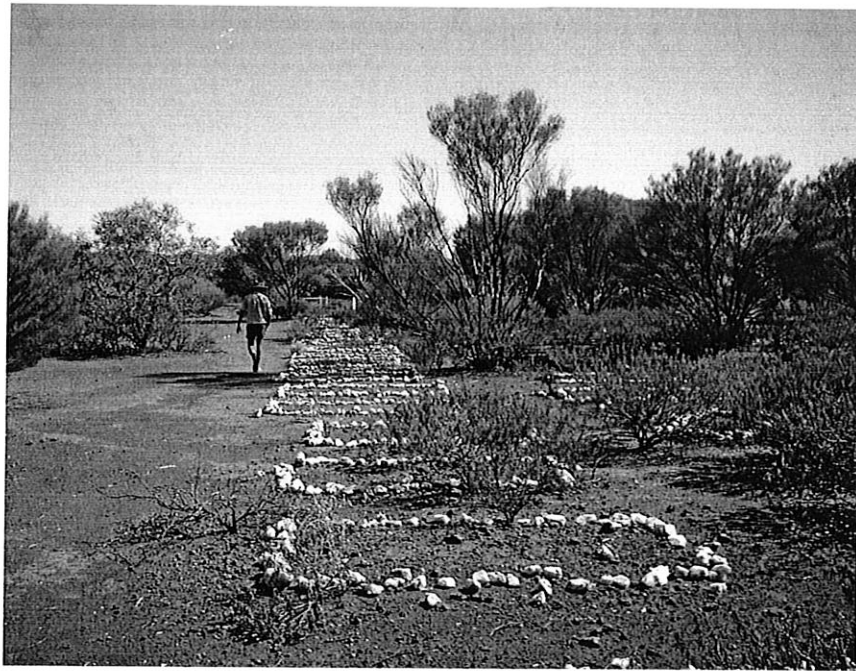


Figure 2 Peak Hill cemetery

Action

- To protect sites of cultural, archaeological or historical significance in accordance with the requirements of the Western Australian Heritage Act, Native Title Act and CALM Act.
- Management and protection of archaeological and cultural sites will be in accordance with current legislation and Departmental Policy No. 11: Protection of Aboriginal Sites (1986).
- Before any proposed development work proceed, a survey of archaeological, ethnographical, cultural and historical sites and an assessment of the likely impact as a result of the development works, will be conducted.
- Maintain close liaison with the Native Title claimants regarding proposed works on Doolgunna any possible management role the traditional owners may play.
- Establish the need to retain existing buildings and structures of significance and demolish those considered unnecessary or unsafe.
- Ensure that the knowledge of the lessee related to the natural and cultural history is recorded.
- Ensure gravesites are maintained.

3.1.5 Erosion, Mining and Rehabilitation

Much of Doolgunna is in a state of recovery following heavy grazing during the 1930's and 40's, indicating that the country has the capability to return to equilibrium after stress (Doolgunna Report, Brandis, 2001).

A considerable area of the lease is under Mining Act tenements either granted or pending.

Action

- Determine the existing mining tenements which occur over the lease.

- Future mining tenements will be granted in accordance with conditions agreed to between the Department of Conservation and Land Management (DCLM) and Dept of Minerals and Petroleum Resources (DMPR). Prior to any ground disturbing activity a detailed program will be prepared by the proponent and referred to the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Rehabilitation requirements will also be addressed as part of this process.

3.1.6 Fire

Fire management considerations include the protection of persons, property and conservation values. Fire is a major ecological process in spinifex communities, which burn readily and are adapted to fire. A range of vegetative successional stages following fires is important in providing habitat for native fauna.

The removal of domestic stock and the control of feral herbivores and declared animals will result in a recovery of the native vegetation. This in turn will create a greater risk of wildfires that can destroy (or seriously modify) habitats, destroy buildings, structures of historical significance and infrastructure on adjoining pastoral leases.

Action

- Where deemed appropriate, protect important habitats, buildings and important structures from the impact of uncontrolled fire.
- Liaise with FESA, local Government and neighbours to determine the requirements for coordinated fire response.
- Develop a fire management plan for the lease.

3.1.7 Boundary, Land Tenure and Fences.

With the exception of DCLM managed property Mooloogool to the south, Doolgunna is surrounded by active pastoral leases. While general condition of boundary fences is good, there are areas of poor quality in the north between Doolgunna and Three Rivers station.. This section has not had stockproof fencing in place since the 1960's and as a result, some cattle from the neighbouring lease graze onto Doolgunna when surface water is available. It is unlikely the neighbours will demand the establishment of new boundary fencing.

In the interests of good neighbour relations, the Department of Conservation and Land Management will maintain boundary fences cooperatively with neighbours.

Action

- Commence process of declaring the lease a protected area under relevant legislation.
- Liaise with neighbours over the maintenance of boundary fences.

3.1.8 Artificial Waters

The developed areas of the lease are reasonably well watered from 50 mills. There is one dam near the Doolgunna homestead.

Artificial waters support artificial population levels of animals, concentrated within each water point biosphere. Recent studies by the CSIRO have provided data about the vegetation within biospheres which indicates that about one third of the plant species has increased in abundance; one third has decreased and the remainder has not changed. There has also been dramatic increases in feral animals as a result of the ready access to water, particularly during dry periods. To control feral animal population numbers and distribution it is important to limit the number of water points on this lease. Those not required for the strategic supply of water will be closed

down with mills, tanks and troughs removed. Closing down operations will be completed during winter months when animals are widely dispersed to avoid high mortality as might occur if they were closed during the dryer months of the year.

The previous lessee is obligated to remove all stock and close artificial water points prior to August 2003.

Action

- Close down water points not required for the strategic supply of water.
- Fill in where appropriate or otherwise make secure all wells and bores.
- Clean up mill sites by removing unwanted yards, fences, tanks and troughs.

3.1.9 Domestic Animals

Domestic animals (other than guide dogs) will not be permitted in Doolgunna. Pets disturb wildlife, can introduce disease, foul recreation areas and water holes, and can interrupt native fauna activity.

3.2 MANAGEMENT FOR RECREATION

Doolgunna is accessible by two wheel drive vehicles throughout most of the year. However, as the area has been operated as a pastoral lease for some time, the level of visitation has been low and with the permission of the lessee. It is not expected that the level of visitation will increase in the next five years.

3.3 RESEARCH AND MONITORING

3.3.1 Nature Conservation

Effective conservation management requires adequate knowledge of flora, fauna and natural processes within the landscape, including baseline condition and changes associated with management, natural events and climate.

Action

- As resources allow, monitor populations of native systems and introduced animals and plants.

3.4 IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of these guidelines will be undertaken within the annual works program developed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Midwest Regional staff. Implementation activities will also be subject to broader regional priorities and will depend on the availability of staff and other resources.

These guidelines may be changed as new information becomes available or policy developments occur.

4 APPENDIX 1 Map showing location of Doolgunna

