

End of Year Report:

Department of Conservation and Land Management activities at the Mitchell Plateau,

May-October 2001

Prepared by: Chris Brown
Ranger
Mitchell Plateau
5 /11/2001

CONTENTS

PAGE No.

1.0	INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.0	SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES, 2001 SEASON.....	3
3.0	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	6
4.0	VISITOR STATISTICS AND TRAFFIC COUNTS.....	8
5.0	FINANCES AND EXPENDITURE.....	9

(APPENDICES)

APPENDIX 1:	ITEMS STORED FOR WET SEASON MITCHELL FALLS CAMPGROUND 2001.....	11
APPENDIX 2:	MONTHLY VISITOR STATISTICS.....	12
APPENDIX 3:	NGAUWUDU (MITCHELL PLATEAU) LEAFLET	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

From 5th May 2001 to 27th October 2001, the Department maintained a continuous presence at the Mitchell Plateau through a seasonal ranger based at the Mitchell Falls Ranger Station, visits by other Kununurra Work centre staff and the placement of volunteer campground hosts at the King Edward River campsite for the first time.

Visitor statistics were collected over the full season.

A number of improvements were made to the facilities at the Ranger station.

A mini-sat telephone was installed. The solar power system was upgraded with the installation of another 4 panels to better cope with the running of 2 Autofridges, a 24 volt fridge / freezer, fluorescent lights and various other 12 volt appliances.

Water was again pumped from Merten's Creek into a 500-gallon poly storage tank for use on site. A pressure pump was installed to the water tank to provide a constant flow of water to the camp.

Funding and future resources are still the main area of concern.

2.0 SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The major activities carried out during the 2001 season are as follows.

Roading:

- Heavy vehicle traffic last year, followed by a severe wet season left the roads in poor condition at the start of this year's dry, with corrugations, bog holes and eroded sections. Initial maintenance grading could not be carried out until June because of soil moisture levels. The Mitchell Falls Road was realigned at the bottom of the jump-up to bypass a particularly wet area. This new alignment follows the contours and will be less prone to erosion.
- The airstrip was graded in June, with both runways brought into service. This was followed up by dragging to control the re-establishment of termite mounds.
- A further maintenance grade of the roads was carried out in September, including some work on the Surveyors Pool carpark and access track.

Fire:

- Aerial burning was carried out early in the dry season in conjunction with other burning being conducted by FESA in the North Kimberley. The Port Warrender road was flown 3 times during this period to achieve a suitable break up of fuels. This proved invaluable in preventing the spread of 2 large wildfires later in the year.
- Limited handburning was carried out on an opportunistic basis until July to protect infrastructure and rainforest pockets.

- The Kimberley Wilderness Adventures camp upstream from Kandiwal was burnt out in June, incurring some loss of infrastructure. The fire was an escape from KWA's own burning program.
- Department staff attended a wildfire at the airstrip in June, and were able to protect a parked aircraft from certain damage.

Weeds:

- Hand pulling of weeds was carried out on an opportunistic basis throughout the year. The major species targeted was *Hibiscus sabdariffa* (Rosella)

Feral animals:

- Culling was undertaken on an opportunistic basis throughout the area covered under the MOU.
- Discussions were held with the Kandiwal Community and Theda Station concerning the possibility of mustering cattle off the Mitchell Plateau next year.

Tourism:

- Visitor numbers are increasing although part of the apparent increase may be due to the Department using better recording techniques. Nevertheless, there is definitely an increasing trend.
The Department is working with the Kandiwal Community, the Kimberley Land Council and the Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley to effectively manage the foreseeable increases and subsequent pressures.
A good rapport has been built up this season with the Kandiwal Community. We are keen to further this relationship for the mutual benefit of all parties through a possible joint management process.

Below is a month by month summary of some of the major management activities.

May

- Composting toilets readied for use.
- Mitchell Falls campground and Ranger Station slashed to define the camp sites and provide fire protection.
- Mitchell Falls walk trail re-opened and cleared (whipper-snipping, flood debris removal) for new season. Trail marking was re-established.
- Aerial and hand burning was carried out. These burns proved to be invaluable in stopping the run of 2 late season wildfires.

June

- On-going maintenance of campground and facilities at Mitchell Falls Campground and King Edward River camping area.
- Water tank lowered and moved to behind the sea container and pressure pump installed.

- The portable pump and approximately 400 meters of poly pipe was again utilised to great effect for providing a good reliable source of water to the ranger's camp.
- Due to the flow of water over Mitchell Falls an alternate river crossing was marked for people to access the viewing points.
- Maintenance grading was carried out and the Mitchell Falls access road was realigned below the jump-up.
- Surveyors Pool road and carpark was graded.

July

- On-going maintenance of campground and facilities at Mitchell Falls Campground and King Edward River camping area.
- Realigned and upgraded trail marking at Surveyors Pool track.
- Mini – Sat Telephone installed.
- H.F. Radios at Mitchell Falls and King Edward River were upgraded to allow communications with volunteers based at King Edward River.
- An on site meeting occurred between the Department, KLC, Kandiwal and the Conservation Commission.

August

- On-going maintenance of campground and facilities at Mitchell Falls Campground and King Edward River camping area.
- Airstrip graded and runway markers repainted
- Sign posts were repainted throughout the Plateau and Falls area
- Talks held with Heliwork regarding future relocation of their existing operation

September

- On-going maintenance of campground and facilities at Mitchell Falls Campground and King Edward River camping area.
- 12v – 240 Inverter installed
- Fax machine installed
- New workshop pre fabricated in Kununurra.
- Visitor Risk Management signs were installed at Trail heads
- Planning commenced on designs and sites for potential new campgrounds and relocation of the Department's base camp

October

- On-going maintenance of campground and facilities at Mitchell Falls Campground and King Edward River camping area.
- New work shop constructed and commissioned at the Ranger Station.
- Camp pack-up and stock take completed.
- Toilets and platforms secured against possible storm damage.
- Trail markers and larger signs were removed from those sections of the Mitchell Falls trail likely to experience inundation over the wet. These were placed on high ground near the trail, ready for re-siting next year.
- Storage of the bulk of camp equipment in sea-container and new workshop.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Following is a copy of last years recommendations with action items undertaken in 2001 and comments for 2002 at the end of each item in bold type.

During 2000 issues and problems arose, with the list of recommendations below illustrating some possible solutions to these. These are in no particular order of priority.

- 1) A rotation system for volunteers is still required to ensure volunteer staff are not 'tied' to one location under trying conditions, for too long a time frame. With Wolfe Creek coming on line, and with Bungles and Mitchell Plateau firmly established as volunteer campground host destinations. It is suggested that a rotation system for 4 to 5 sets of volunteers be implemented. With the use of well-established local commercial aircraft companies, combined with 4WD vehicles, transport to and from sites should not be too problematic. The volunteers would be required to be totally self-sufficient i.e. own camper trailer or tent etc., and would spend 4 – 6 weeks at each site.

This system was implemented and proved to be a great success. As it was a trial system we asked for each set of volunteers to send us a report with suggestions on how to improve this system. We are still awaiting some of these reports and will consider implementing some of the suggestions next year.

- 2) Walsh Point tip still requires filling in and re-siting to a more appropriate location, perhaps utilising existing costine pits in the area. New fencing and signage would have to be implemented accordingly. Regular 'emu bobs' still required for beach and rock camping areas, as toilet paper, aluminium cans and plastics still represent a significant problem as aesthetic and environmental intrusions.

The area requires a small force of 4-5 people armed with heavy duty sacks and litter collection equipment. Removal of litter by vehicle to better tip site, or burial away from drainage lines. The bulk of remaining litter consists of rusting metal and cans wedged in the rocky area immediately in front of the old shack which, incidentally, is itself falling down and contributing to litter in the area.

This is still an outstanding issue and cleanup was attempted on a minor scale throughout the year. An attempt to co-ordinate a busy bee involving traditional owners and the Department was unsuccessful because it was not possible to arrange for all parties to be present at the same time.

- 3) Now that the sea container is on site at the Departments' camp, and with permanent steel platforms erected for safari tents, the secure and safe storage of firearms should not be a problem. I recommend the purchase of an approved rifle cabinet for securing to the inside of the sea container (which can be locked) or to the wooden floor of one of the platforms. A .22 and .308 rifle should be stored with ammunition in this cabinet for use by Ranger for approved feral animal control.

This was done and the gun cabinet is mounted in the sea container

- 4) The Mitchell Plateau saw increased numbers of self-reliant individuals and groups seeking remote wilderness hiking experiences during the season. With no formal registration system in place for these people, their safe return and specific routes taken are still of major concern to the Department and the traditional owners of the area. The implementation of a registration system for all hikers, to be located at the Heliwork compound or somewhere central in the campground, such that the Department can obtain better information of the numbers and frequencies of hikers coming through. With their impacts on natural ecosystems and sites of cultural significance totally unknown, it is important to gain feedback of this nature.

Still an outstanding issue.

- 5) Arrangements need to be made to access machinery to carry out light grades 3 or 4 key times during the season to maintain roads in a reasonable state.

This was done with the Shire Grader twice throughout the year and a realignment of the road was carried out below the "jump-up" to assist in the prevention of some major erosion problems which were occurring on the old alignment

- 6) As demonstrated by early fires during the 2000 season, the Department needs to implement controlled burns earlier still to reduce the potential for dangerous wildfires later in the year. There are now several items of infrastructure at the Mitchell Falls Campground requiring protection in this way.

Aerial and hand burning was carried out in May and June. This proved invaluable in the stopping of 2 wildfires that started late in the year. There was hope that we could have a year without the late season fires so that a strategy of broadscale Wet season burning could be carried out. This is still possible but, unfortunately on a smaller scale

- 7) The Department, KLC and KAC need to continue their efforts to reach agreements over the immediate recreation and tourism issues as discussed in the most recent discussion paper. Further meetings on site at the Mitchell Plateau, and continuing liaisons with the relevant stakeholders will assist in this. It is hoped that more direction is given to the project from traditional owners and the KLC.

This liaison has continued on an extremely positive note this year with the rapport between the Department, KLC and Kandiwal improving dramatically.

The Department is playing a proactive role by trying to involve the local community in all aspects of management. Through Chris Brown we have established a series of meetings and have discussed issues ranging from potential tourism opportunities to previous traditional and future fire regimes which are an integral part of the management of the land covered under the MOU.

We produced a visitor information leaflet in concert with the Kandiwal community. A copy of the leaflet is attached as an appendix.

4.0 VISITOR STATISTICS AND TRAFFIC COUNTS

A vehicle traffic counter was monitored adjacent to the ranger Station from May to October. Vehicles and campers were physically counted each evening, and an estimate made of the number of day visitors. From this analysis we believe there were 9922 visitors to the Mitchell Falls this year.

A monthly breakdown of the data is shown in Appendix 2.

Statistics for last year were only collected for July and August. A comparison between last year and this year reveals an increase in July vehicles from 209 to 1194 and July visitors from 586 to 3784. The visitor numbers for August are comparable between years.

	VEHICLES	CAMPERS	ESTIMATED DAY VISITORS	TOTAL VISITORS
TOTALS	2862	6919	3003	9922

5.0 FINANCES AND EXPENDITURE

Mitchell Plateau Departmental expenditure October 2000 to October 2001

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	SALARY	WAGES	VEHICLE	MATERIALS	CAMPING ALLOWANCE	TRAINING	PLANT	FUEL	FLYING	TELEPHONE	FREIGHT	TOTAL
142	ROADING MAINTENANCE			8520	3440								11960
144	FACILITIES MAINTENANCE	9866		17745	16732	7175		2253	1544	2600		213	58128
163	INTERPRETATION	793			1665								2458
221	WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION	2225	1955	1646	3	814				1976			8619
301	PARK MANAGEMENT			4068									4068
634	MANAGEMENT OTHER			398							252		650
682	TRAINING						722						722
705	ABORIGINAL LIAISON	196											196
	TOTALS	13080	1955	32377	21840	7989	722	2253	1544	4576	252	213	86801

Mitchell Plateau Trust Fund expenditure October 2000 to October 2001

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	SALARY	WAGES	VEHICLE	MATERIALS	CAMPING ALLOWANCE	CONTRACT	PLANT	FUEL	FLYING	TELEPHONE	FREIGHT	TOTAL
142	ROADING MAINTENANCE						5000						5000
144	FACILITIES MAINTENANCE		15790	2106	14331	3268		409	2382	1411		44	39741
301	PARK MANAGEMENT		24298										24298
634	MANAGEMENT OTHER										47		47
	TOTALS	0	40088	2106	14331	3268	5000	409	2382	1411	47	44	69086

COMMITMENTS FROM NOVEMBER 1ST TO JUNE 30, 2002

➤ Vehicle lease: \$420 per month for 8 months (Landcruiser trayback) =	\$3,360
➤ Vehicle travel costs (driving): @ \$0.50 per km over 550km one way, for say 2 x return trips, with 1 vehicle, 1 x return trip with 2 vehicles:	\$2,200
➤ Fuel and oils (from bowser and bulk drum purchases):	\$1,300
➤ Satellite phone access to service: \$45 per month for 8 months:	\$360
➤ Satellite phone call costs: average of \$100 per month x 2 months:	\$200
➤ Salaries ranger : \$2,564 per month x 4:	\$10,256
➤ Salaries (other staff)	\$3,000
➤ Airfares to and from Plateau: \$400 per person return x 3 trips:	\$1,200
➤ Maintenance of plant and equipment:	\$3,000
➤ Aboriginal employment schemes (Kandiwal):	\$10,000
➤ Local roading contract (Mitchell Plateau track):	(est.)\$2,000
➤ Miscellaneous (staff travel, incidental expenses, allowances, etc.)	\$5,000
➤ Prescribed burning (both aerial and hand)	\$15000
➤ Redevelopment of the campsites etc.	\$25000

TOTAL COSTS: \$81,876

This total is an estimate of **fixed** costs for the remainder of this financial year.

**APPENDIX 1: ITEMS STORED IN SEA-CONTAINER and WORK SHOP,
MITCHELL FALLS CAMPGROUND 2001/2002**

- Approx. 30 bags pre-mix cement
- 2 x large sheets compressed Hardiplank
- 2 x rolls black garden plastic
- 1 x insect closure and poles
- 3 x jerry cans (2 ULP, 1 diesel)
- 1 x 20L engine oil (2/3 full)
- 2 x 1L 2-stroke lube
- 2 x 4L 4-stroke quadbike engine oil
- 1 x 5L 2-stroke fuel can
- 2 x 4L bar and cutter lube
- Boxes misc., solar equipment
- 2 x whirlybird sewer vents
- 1 x 4L turps (full)
- 1 x 20L turps (1/2 full)
- 1 x 10L 'Mist Green' paint (2/3)
- Misc. paint and primers
- 15 (50mm x 50mm) arrow symbols
- 2 x plastic toilet pedestals
- 3 x hinged plastic toilet seats
- 1 x 20L linseed oil (1/2 full)
- 2 x tek guns
- 1 x angle grinder and tool box, accessories
- Shower bags
- Rubbish bins
- 1 x first aid kit
- Misc. bolts/nuts/screws
- 2 x safari tents
- 2 x pumps (1 fire unit, 1 water)
- 1 x pressure pump
- 2 x fire unit
- 1 x mini sat phone
- various 200l drums of fuel
- 1 x 24 volt upright fridge / freezer
- 1 x socket set
- 3 x single bed frames
- 1 x queen size bed frames
- 4 x foam mattresses
- 2 x 3-drawer chests
- 1 x 2-drawer filing cabinet
- 2 x kit-form desks
- 3 x large gas bottles (full)
- 2 x Autofridges
- 2 x plastic tables and chairs
- 2 x steel fold-up tables
- 2 x rubber buckets
- 2 x rubber basins
- 2 x brooms
- Tent poles for safari tents
- 1 x hand operated fuel pump
- 2 x extension cords
- 1 x large roll fencing/general purpose wire
- Tool box and assorted tools
- Crockery/cutlery
- Spare lengths/rolls of low loss power cable for solar equipment

APPENDIX 2: MONTHLY VISITOR STATISTICS

MAY			
DATE	VEHICLES	CAMPERS	ESTIMATED DAY TRIPPERS
1 st			
2 nd			
3 rd			
4 th	3	6	
5 th			
6 th			
7 th	2	2	
8 th			
9 th			
10 th	1	3	
11 th	1	3	
12 th			
13 th	2	6	
14 th			
15 th	2	6	
16 th	3	8	
17 th	4	10	
18 th	3	6	
19 th	4	8	
20 th	3	6	
21 st	5	13	
22 nd	3	7	
23 rd	3	8	
24 th	7	16	
25 th	8	21	
26 th	6	20	
27 th	13	30	8
28 th	6	12	
29 th	7	21	
30 th	9	24	10
31 st	7	28	
Total	102	264	18

JUNE			
DATE	VEHICLES	CAMPERS	ESTIMATED DAY TRIPPERS
1 st	10	28	
2 nd	10	48	
3 rd	21	50	
4 th	21	50	
5 th	9	19	
6 th	11	32	
7 th	10	20	
8 th	17	50	8
9 th	5	29	14
10 th	27	70	
11 th	10	20	
12 th	22	50	22
13 th	13	34	34
14 th	10	74	12
15 th	34	116	8
16 th	21	50	16
17 th	13	26	24
18 th	23	62	33
19 th	18	54	30
20 th	28	72	28
21 st	27	79	26
22 nd	22	60	18
23 rd	26	60	27
24 th	33	89	22
25 th	No stats collected		
26 th	22	44	23
27 th	25	50	19
28 th	17	44	25
29 th	15	40	24
30 th	48	110	24
31 st			
Total	569	1529	437

JULY			
DATE	VEHICLES	CAMPERS	ESTIMATED DAY TRIPPERS
1 st	42	95	40
2 nd	50	126	32
3 rd	38	110	28
4 th	58	140	39
5 th	54	145	52
6 th	51	108	27
7 th	49	110	19
8 th	48	116	42
9 th	66	153	43
10 th	44	125	39
11 th	66	168	38
12 th	64	152	35
13 th	42	111	37
14 th	No stats collected		
15 th	26	69	24
16 th	36	85	34
17 th	40	101	37
18 th	42	110	45
19 th	38	105	34
20 th	No stats collected		
21 st	No stats collected		
22 nd	19	38	19
23 rd	16	32	13
24 th	40	84	27
25 th	46	111	34
26 th	41	93	21
27 th	44	102	23
28 th	46	114	25
29 th	No stats collected		
30 th	48	102	27
31 st	22	44	19
Total	1194	2931	853

AUGUST			
DATE	VEHICLES	CAMPERS	ESTIMATED DAY TRIPPERS
1 st	21	36	18
2 nd	30	71	23
3 rd	35	72	24
4 th	32	77	26
5 th	25	56	19
6 th	25	53	31
7 th	23	52	25
8 th	16	38	23
9 th	25	49	27
10 th	34	66	31
11 th	28	57	28
12 th	22	51	21
13 th	26	50	18
14 th	26	54	19
15 th	27	53	24
16 th	28	51	21
17 th	21	37	19
18 th	25	48	22
19 th	26	60	31
20 th	14	37	18
21 st	20	34	21
22 nd	8	22	19
23 rd	10	30	27
24 th	13	34	21
25 th	18	45	36
26 th	21	38	31
27 th	14	35	25
28 th	15	36	24
29 th	12	28	18
30 th	13	32	21
31 st	13	28	22
Total	666	1430	733

SEPTEMBER			
DATE	VEHICLES	CAMPERS	ESTIMATED DAY TRIPPERS
1 st	12	27	17
2 nd	12	27	27
3 rd	17	39	25
4 th	7	15	23
5 th	7	20	17
6 th	17	35	32
7 th	11	30	27
8 th	7	13	25
9 th	8	19	19
10 th	10	22	31
11 th	9	16	19
12 th	8	14	19
13 th	4	10	21
14 th	6	17	9
15 th	11	25	25
16 th	8	19	23
17 th	6	15	31
18 th	4	9	28
19 th	8	20	29
20 th	5	10	17
21 st	4	8	12
22 nd	4	9	13
23 rd	3	6	16
24 th	3	6	27
25 th	2	4	17
26 th	10	18	28
27 th	8	29	16
28 th	5	12	6
29 th	7	20	23
30 th	5	15	18
31 st			
Total	228	529	640

OCTOBER			
DATE	VEHICLES	CAMPERS	ESTIMATED DAY TRIPPERS
1 st	3	8	16
2 nd	5	12	12
3 rd	6	12	14
4 th	8	22	12
5 th	3	24	12
6 th	9	20	30
7 th	7	3	15
8 th	4	11	
9 th	1	2	
10 th	9	5	40
11 th	3	12	34
12 th	4	14	21
13 th	3	5	12
14 th	1	2	
15 th	3	17	
16 th	2	5	
17 th	4	9	
18 th	2	4	40
19 th	1	2	
20 th	2	4	
21 st	4	8	15
22 nd	1	2	12
23 rd	2	4	
24 th	2	3	8
25 th	2	4	12
26 th	1	2	4
27 th	2	4	6
28 th	2	4	3
29 th	2	4	1
30 th	2	4	3
31 st	2		
Total	103	236	322

NGAUWUDU – MITCHELL PLATEAU

The Ngauwudu landscape

Ngauwudu is the name Wunambal Aboriginal people give to the Mitchell Plateau area in the far north Kimberley. At Punamii-unpuu, the Mitchell River and its tributaries have carved spectacular gorges and waterfalls into the sandstone bordering the laterite-capped plateau.

The area is biologically important with landscapes around the plateau varying from mangroves and swamps to woodlands and lush rainforest patches, with diverse wildlife. Darngarna (livistona palm) woodland is found on the lateritic soils of the plateau. Endemic to the north Kimberley, darngarna (*Livistona eastonii*) may grow 18 metres tall. Some palms are up to 280-years-old.

The rugged sandstone areas are home to some rare residents such as the monjon (a small rock wallaby), the rough-scaled python and dalal, the black grasswren.



Wunambal country

Wunambal Aboriginal people have lived in the vicinity of Ngauwudu for thousands of years. Wunambal people refer to Wandjina as Gulingi. They believe that Gulingi and Wunggurr creators travelled the land making the earth, seas, mountains, rivers, waterholes and all living things. The Gulingi and Wunggurr then gave the Wunambal people the land and the law for living in the land. Wunambal people welcome visitors to their country but ask that visitors respect their responsibility and authority for the land and the Wandjina-Wunggurr Law.



Gulingi

Gulingi or Wandjina are associated with regeneration, creation of rain, renewal of resources and continuation of life. Gulingi left themselves throughout the region as landscape features and distinctive cave paintings.

**Wunambal
Gaambera
Aboriginal
Corporation**



Wunggurr

Wunggurr are creator snakes: their winding travels through the country with Gulingi made the rivers. Many came from the seas, and now reside in deep pools and waterholes.

Punamii-unpuu

Punamii-unpuu, the Mitchell Falls area, is culturally and spiritually significant for Wunambal people. Wunggurr travelled from various places to meet up at Punamii-unpuu which is now one of their main homes. It is also a creation place where the spirits of children and other living things yet to be born are found.

European exploration

It was not until 1921 that Europeans explored the area. William Easton led a State government expedition into the north Kimberley, naming the Mitchell River after Sir James Mitchell, then Premier of Western Australia.

In 1965 a mining camp was established on the plateau by Amax Bauxite.

Where is it?

The plateau is 350 kilometres north east of Derby and 270 kilometres north west of Wyndham by air. Vehicle access is via the Mitchell Plateau track (4WD only) from the Kalumburu Road, 172 kilometres north of the Gibb River Road junction. The track may have wash-outs and corrugations so drive with extreme care. Tracks north of the airstrip are rough while tracks north of Anuayu (Surveyor's Pool) are very rough and may be impassable. Tracks and roads may be closed during the wet season (November to April).

Caution

In the Kimberley, travelling on tracks and roads other than major highways during the wet season (November to April) is hazardous and dangerous. This is particularly the case in this remote area. Check road conditions with Main Roads Western Australia (phone 1800 013 314) or the Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley.

Aerial access

Air charter companies fly to the airstrip on Ngauwudu. During the dry season (May to October) helicopter flights and ground tours are available. Contact local tourist bureaux and travel agents for details and bookings.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT



Facilities

Visitors should be totally self-sufficient as this is a remote area with few facilities. Throughout the dry season (May to October), fuel, food and mechanical repairs are available from Drysdale River Station (phone (08) 9161 4326). Fuel and food are also available from Kalumburu.

Camping

There are camping areas with toilets at Munurru (King Edward River Crossing) and at Punamii-unpuu. It is advisable to boil or treat water taken from creeks before drinking. Do not leave food or rubbish unattended where animals can scavenge. Please take your rubbish with you as there is no rubbish collection facility. Collect firewood only from the designated firewood collection zones. Use fuel stoves wherever possible and use firewood sparingly, as dead wood is an important ecological resource.

Pets

Pets are not permitted.



Rangers

A ranger is based at Punamii-unpuu camping area from May to October.

Nearest CALM office

Kimberley Regional Office, Messmate Way, Kununurra. Phone (08) 9168 4200.

Wunambal Gaambera Aboriginal Corporation

Kandiwal, PMB 16, via Wyndham, 6740. Phone (08) 9161 4405.

What to do

Walking, nature observation, scenic helicopter flights. Visitor activities such as guided walks are held periodically; check with the ranger.

Punamii-unpuu — Mitchell Falls Walk

The 6km return walk to Punamii-unpuu (Mitchell Falls) from the camping area is moderate to difficult as it traverses rocky terrain. Take care near the many cliffs. The track continues past Little Mertens Falls and Big Mertens Falls

Wunambal people know the falls as a powerful place for their Wandjina-Wunggurr law and one of the main homes for Wunggurr. They ask visitors to show respect, approach the area quietly, and stop for a moment to think about where they are.

Aunauyu — Surveyor's Pool Walk

It is an easy to moderate 8km return walk to Aunauyu (Surveyor's Pool) from the car park. Aunauyu is also an important place for Wunggurr. The big white rocks found there are the eggs of the snake.

Swimming

Aboriginal traditional owners ask that you do not swim in the deep pools at Punamii-unpuu (Mitchell Falls) and Aunauyu (Surveyor's Pool). Wunggurr creator snakes live in these deep pools and may punish for this disrespect. Only swim in the Mitchell River above the falls or in the creek above the falls at Aunauyu.

Aboriginal Sites

Aboriginal sites are of special significance to Aboriginal people and important to the cultural heritage of all Australians. They are also protected by law. Do not touch paintings or engravings and do not disturb or remove artefacts.

