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# WALPOLE-NORNALUP NATIONAL PARK

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## Draft Management Plan



Noisy Scrub-bird

A Draft Management Plan for Walpole-Nornalup National Park has been prepared for public comment. For those who do not want to tackle the whole plan but are interested in specific issues, a series of issue papers has been prepared. If you would like to make a submission, guidelines are available at CALM offices at Walpole, Manjimup and Como. If you would like to find out more of what is proposed you can obtain a copy of the plan at the above offices, or borrow them from the Denmark and Manjimup libraries. Submissions are welcome until September 20 and should be sent to: Executive Director, Dept. of CALM, 50 Hayman Rd, Como, 6152, Attention: Jim Williamson.

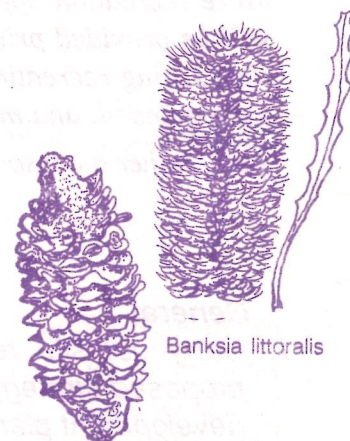
### RECREATION

#### RECREATION SITES

Annual visitation to the Park (1989) is estimated to be about 78 000 people, which represents a tripling in numbers since 1978 (Albone *et al.*, 1990).

#### OBJECTIVES

1. Provide in a variety of the Park's environments, a range of high quality, well-designed recreation sites which blend with the natural environment, have a minimal impact and provide a variety of experiences.
2. Minimise conflict between users by careful site location and design.
3. Design to minimise safety hazards.
4. Ensure, where possible, all recreation sites are capable of sustaining increased use in the future.
5. Design to minimise maintenance requirements.



Banksia littoralis



Red-Flowering Gum  
(*Eucalyptus ficifolia*)

Splendid Fairy-wren



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT



## PROPOSED STRATEGY

The provision of recreation sites and their level of development will be governed by the zoning plan and will provide a variety of recreation opportunities and experiences. Therefore, in high use recreation zones a high volume of visitors will be provided for, with a relatively high level of development. In medium use recreation zones a number of recreation opportunities will be provided, catering for lower numbers of people who will perhaps be staying longer in the Park. In natural environment zones, low density use will be catered for, with minimal facilities or development.

More recreation opportunities such as picnic areas, walk trails and camping areas will be provided principally in medium and high density recreation zones. Many of the existing recreation sites will have the range of recreation opportunities provided for expanded, and most will be re-designed. There will be little development of new sites, rather a consolidation and re-design of existing sites.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### General

1. Carry out site redesign, modification and management according to the proposed strategy (and specific recommendations in the plan). Prepare site development plans for all major proposals.
2. Base all site development plans on an up-to-date hygiene plan and an approved Seven Way Test. Ensure no priority flora or fauna are adversely affected.
3. Design all facilities, trails etc to require minimum maintenance.
4. Encourage users to help reduce maintenance requirements e.g. take home rubbish.
5. Provide facilities for disabled access at key sites in recreation zones.
6. Ensure recreation facilities are developed outside areas of possible future water level rises.

The draft management plan also gives recommendations for specific recreation sites and for specific activities such as bushwalking and camping.

### VALLEY OF THE GIANTS

The very name 'Valley of the Giants' is a major attraction to any visitor to the area. While many have not heard of the Walpole-Nornalup National Park, most visitors have heard of the Valley of the Giants. The irony is that the Valley of the Giants Road does not in fact traverse a valley but follows in a saddle between two ridges,

and contains few giant Tingles.

Valley of the Giants receives more visitors than any site in the Park (in 1989 about 70 000); about 66% of all visitors go to Valley of the Giants (Albone *et al.*, 1990).

The major recreation site, Big Tree, was not designed to cater for such numbers and often does not cope with the demand. Problems with the site include: the overall design of the site means the main experience for people at peak times is that of a large gravel expanse in a sea of cars, buses and caravans, with the occasional large tree; many people do not find the toilets or walktrail; there is much compaction; the topography does not allow for expansion. Overall, visitors do not have a high quality experience of the tingle forest.

## OBJECTIVE

Provide opportunities for experiencing good representative areas of the tingle forest by large numbers of visitors at a site of high quality.

## PROPOSED STRATEGY

Some areas of the Valley of the Giants will be the major focus for high density use in the Park. A new major recreation area will be developed at a site which includes numerous examples of large trees. It will be designed to cater for a large volume of usage, by tourist buses, caravans and cars. Parking areas will be screened and separated from the major focal points. Picnic sites will be scattered throughout the main site, and numerous bushwalks (of varying lengths) will be provided. Thomson and 28 Mile Roads (currently management-only) will be upgraded to provide an experience of high scenic quality and will be incorporated into the major access route to the site. The road will be sealed. The existing Big Tree site will be closed and rehabilitated; it will then be redesigned and developed as a picnic area with walk trails.

Other picnic areas will be developed within the Valley of the Giants area catering for a variety of group sizes.

A major camping area will be provided in a regeneration area of Valley of the Giants to provide a forest camping experience in the Park.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Carry out detailed design of the major access road and recreation site including:
  - catering for average peak day numbers
  - picnic sites catering for varying group sizes
  - walk trails of various lengths
  - toilets.
2. Ensure tingle trees are protected from compaction of soil; ensure the granite



outcrop on Rate Road is protected.

3. Provide comprehensive information on the tingle forest and recreation opportunities in the Walpole area.
4. Progressively develop other complementary picnic sites, catering for varying group sizes, in the area.
5. Develop the camping area.
6. Provide safe photographic stopping points in the Valley of the Giants.
7. Investigate alternative sources of funding for development of the new site.

### COALMINE BEACH CARAVAN PARK

Coalmine Beach Caravan Park is situated in Walpole-Nornalup National Park, adjacent to Nornalup Inlet. It was established by the former National Parks Authority in 1960. Management until early 1987 was by the resident ranger, after which a caretaker was appointed.

The caravan park contains 20 powered sites (suitable for caravans and tents) and 35 unpowered sites. It is situated in an idyllic setting, amongst peppermint trees, adjacent to the protected Coalmine Beach. There is an ablution block with toilets, showers and a laundry, and barbecues, picnic tables and water are provided. The park has always been managed as a low key facility, with no promotion. Interpretive programs, incorporating a variety of aspects of the National Park, have been conducted from the caravan park in summer for the past two years; they have proved very popular.

Numbers and types of visitors vary throughout the year. Peak times are the Christmas school holidays (particularly Christmas-New Year) and Easter. Numbers over winter are very low. Visitors at the peak times tend to be from Western Australia, many of whom are regulars who have been going to the caravan park for many years. During the remainder of the year, the majority of visitors are those on a tour of the South-West (many are from interstate); these visitors peak from September to November.

Visitation since 1983 has risen by about 65%; the figures (of adults) are as follows:

1983	2130	1986	3533
1984	3120	1987	3557
1985	2769	1988	3260

The user surveys and submissions have revealed the following information and comments (Smith 1989c; Albone *et al.*, 1990):

- strong feelings that the present character of the caravan park (low-key style with

minimal development; quiet, peaceful, friendly atmosphere; surrounding natural environment) should be maintained.

- the need for the following improvements: better quality shower and toilets; dryers in laundry; more short-term campsites; telephone available; better night lighting; regular cleaning of ablution block; provide a campers' kitchen; less dense campsites; improved childrens' play area.

CALM has two main options for the future management of the caravan park; these are:

1. Continue CALM management
2. Lease out to private enterprise.

In order to assess the two main options, CALM appointed consultants to carry out an analysis of the feasibility of possible management options, as well as a brief assessment of the caravanning industry, possible improvements and the likely interest in the venture.

Based upon market demand factors, the competitive situation, user needs and CALM's management objectives, the consultants consider there are four alternative development options that CALM can consider for Coalmine Beach Caravan Park. These are:

1. CALM undertake an extensive redevelopment programme and lease out to a commercial operator or allow a commercial operator to undertake the redevelopment themselves;
2. Maintain and marginally improve the existing facilities, increase the level of promotion of the park and lease out to a commercial operator or continue to operate under CALM management;
3. Redevelop to more of a low key caravanning-camping and day visitor area, with only minimal facilities provided, and operated by CALM on a needs basis;
4. Close the caravan and camping facility altogether and operate as a day visitor area only

(See Table 10 for major features of each option).

The consultants carried out a financial evaluation of each option and arrived at the following results:

- Option 1 would require substantial investment; there would not be sufficient return for a commercial operator and if CALM carried out the development the payback period would be in excess of 40 years but with a small annual surplus.
- Option 2 would require less investment than Option 1; there would be insufficient return for a commercial operator and if CALM carried out the devel-



opment there would be a payback period of about 16 years but with a small annual surplus.

- Option 3 - would result in a loss to a commercial operator and CALM.
- Option 4 - would result in a loss to a commercial operator and CALM.

**TABLE 10 FEATURES OF EACH DEVELOPMENT OPTION FOR COALMINE BEACH CARAVAN PARK**

OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3	OPTION 4
Repairs to existing ablutions	Additional ablution block	Repair existing ablutions	Removal of facilities
Ensuite ablutions	Repairs to existing ablutions	Signs	Rehabilitation
Extra powered sites(20)		Laundry troughs only	Signs
Camp kitchen	Extra powered sites(20)		
Lighting	Camp Kitchen		
Shop extension	Lighting		
Hire facilities	Shop extension		
Petrol-fuel sales	Hire facilities		
Electric clothes drier	Electric clothes drier		
Public telephone	Signs		
Recreation building			
Signs			
Landscaping			
Chalets-units (8)			

Critical to the annual surplus of option 1 is fuel and shop sales, and of option 2 is shop sales. There are likely to be objections from Walpole shop owners of competition by CALM. Without fuel and shop sales options 1 and 2 would incur an annual loss to CALM.

#### RECOMMENDED OPTION

Option 3 - Redevelop Coalmine Beach Caravan Park to more of a low key caravanning-camping and day use area, with minimal facilities provided and operated by CALM on a needs basis.

While Option 2 would also be desirable to CALM and some users, the levels of development and loss (without shop sales) that CALM would incur is considered too great.

#### OBJECTIVES

Manage Coalmine Beach Caravan Park so that it:

- has a good standard of amenity and service
- has a relaxed informal atmosphere
- has a minimal impact on the surrounding natural environment
- provides opportunities to explore and understand the National Park.

#### PROPOSED STRATEGY

Coalmine Beach Caravan Park will be managed as a low key facility in keeping with the style of most CALM camping areas (e.g. Shannon camping area). However, because the caravan park already contains powered sites and hot water it will have a greater level of development than most CALM camping areas, and will still cater for caravans.

Throughout most of the year it will not have any full time management, simply staff to collect fees, clean and carry out maintenance. At peak times, other arrangements will be investigated. A campers' kitchen will be developed.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Upgrade or replace existing ablution block.
2. Investigate measures to reduce running costs such as coin-operated showers, or conversion to wood chip heaters; reduction of street lighting; closure of park in winter months.
3. Investigate the following for maintenance and collection of fees:
  - recreation site maintenance person.
  - contract cleaners
  - ranger collection of fees on weekends
  - volunteer campground hosts for peak times.
4. Construct a campers' kitchen incorporating shelter, barbecues and a sink.
5. Consider incorporating bookings within the Walpole District camping booking system; consider appointment of a camping booking person in the Walpole District office if demand is too great for present staff.
6. Consider alternative ablution facilities for peak demand.
7. Continue to use the caravan park as a base for interpretive activities.
8. Encourage interaction with the environment by children as a preference to provision of facilities.



9. Incorporate the caravan park and day use area with the redesign of the whole Coalmine Beach area.

### NUYTS WILDERNESS AREA

The Nuyts area was designated a Wilderness Area in 1978 and has been the State's only designated Wilderness Area for many years. It comprises an area of about 4 500 ha. Vegetation communities include coastal heath, karri-tingle forest and those associated with granite outcrops.

Public access is by foot only and is gained from three main points: from the east from either Crystal Springs, Mandalay Beach or Long Point; at Deep River near Tinglewood (which is the main trailhead, with registration book and information); and via boat to The Depot near the mouth of Nornalup Inlet. Most users start at the Deep River trailhead. An old vehicle track provides a route through to Thompson Cove (and the main camping area) with tracks leading off to Mt Hopkins, Aldridge Cove, Crystal and Boggy Lakes and Forest of Arms. The only facilities provided are two bridges (across the Deep River and a swampy tributary) and a few track markers, all within the first kilometre.

#### Zoning

The very word "wilderness" causes confusion because it essentially refers to two very different values: biological and human. However human values are considered to be of priority in wilderness areas (CONCOM, 1986). In terms of human values the "wilderness experience" is an individual experience which is different for everyone and it is therefore very difficult to define. In terms of biological values it is an area large enough to contain a self-sustaining ecosystem (Wilderness Working Group, 1985).

In an attempt to ensure consistency of values, criteria for wilderness areas have been established by some agencies in Australia (although these differ in some ways). Some of the criteria adopted are:

- remoteness from settlement
- remoteness from access (constructed vehicle access routes)
- aesthetic naturalness (landscape free of permanent structure)
- biophysical naturalness (free of biophysical disturbance)  
(Lesslie and Taylor, 1985; CONCOM, 1986; Lesslie *et al.*, 1987; Lesslie *et al.*, 1988)
- minimum core area of 25 000 ha
- core area free from major indentations
- core area of at least 10 km<sup>2</sup> without 2WD roads
- a management buffer zone surrounding the core of about 25 000 ha or more (Helman, 1980)
- an area beyond one day's walk from any access point; although coastal areas are

considered a separate class because of the "add on" effect of the ocean (provided it is of sufficient length to make it a remote area). (Helman, 1980). This is an indication of the level of commitment required of the recreationists.

Clearly, in terms of size (Nuyts is about 4 500 ha) and remoteness from settlement (there is private property adjoining the northern edge of the area) the Nuyts area does not strictly fit all the criteria for a wilderness area. However, there are a few areas in NSW designated as wilderness, with sizes between 2 400 and 4 000 ha (Wilderness Working Group, 1985). With distance away from the private property, any effects of the proximity of the property diminish to nil. Denseness of vegetation and range of topography also affect the wilderness quality.

However, it has also been argued that fixed values should not be ascribed to hugely varied conditions and environments in Australia, and instead that wilderness should be regarded at the wild end in a range of conditions in a continuum extending from highly inaccessible and virtually undisturbed wild land at one end to settled land at the other (Lesslie and Taylor, 1985). Within this concept of a range of wilderness qualities (low - medium - high - very high), Nuyts is probably in the medium range at its northern end (closer to settlement) and high to very high closer to the coast. So despite not fitting closely with some criteria, Nuyts has considerable value as a wilderness area, particularly closer to the coast and in the inaccessible areas away from existing tracks.

Despite the area's relatively small size, and its relative lack of remoteness from settlement and the degradation of some areas, most comments received from users express satisfaction in the wilderness experience attained.

### RECOMMENDATION

*The area remains a designated wilderness area.*

#### Wilderness Management

Since it was designated a Wilderness Area, increasing numbers of people have been attracted by the idea of having a "wilderness experience". Much of the area is in sandy coastal soils which are very prone to erosion. There are also extensive areas of high sensitivity (including the area used for the translocation of the Noisy Scrub-bird). Hence, it does not have the capacity to sustain much use, particularly intensive camping.

Most of the tracks are well defined; in some areas several tracks lead to one site (eg. to Mt Hopkins). The levels of use already experienced have caused degradation of some tracks. Also, there is very limited firewood available in the coastal heath, so dead wood is scarce and trees are often denuded. Dieback disease is present, particularly along the main access track. It is highly probable that foot traffic will continue to spread the disease, particularly from areas which become inundated, if remedial action is not taken.



The increasing number of people attracted to the area, between 2000 to 4000 per year, reaches levels at peak times (from January to April) at which the very experience visitors seek can be negated by the level of contact with other people. Numbers of people and group sizes in the Wilderness Area (including adventure-based tours) may need to be controlled (particularly at peak times) to keep degradation to a minimum and also to ensure that the experience of solitude for all users is maintained. However, this is difficult to control unless there is regular management presence in the area. Patrol by rangers of the Wilderness Area is difficult because of the foot-only access and their many other duties.

If use of the Wilderness Area continues to increase, remedial action will need to be taken to prevent some small areas becoming badly degraded. There is an inherent conflict between taking remedial action and maintaining an environment free from evidence of humans and/or management. However the highest priority is the protection of the environment, particularly areas of high conservation value. It is important that all management and remedial works are carried out with sensitivity and care so that evidence of management is minimal.

While fuel reduction burning in the Wilderness Area is a significant human intervention in an area which is not meant to have human interference, it is not desirable to have the entire area burnt out at once by uncontrolled fire; there are also values such as the Noisy Scrub-bird habitat and neighbouring property which require protection from fire. Camp fires are not acceptable in the Wilderness Area because of the lack of availability of firewood and risk of wildfires.

The remoteness and lack of easy vehicle access means there are potential safety problems if accidents or wildfires occur; however this may be part of the attraction of the Wilderness Area to some users.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Maximise the naturalness and remoteness (ie. wilderness quality) of the area. In particular, minimise evidence of humans and management and allow indigenous plants and animals to maintain their ecological processes without intervention.
2. Maintain opportunities for wilderness-dependent experiences such as solitude, self-reliant recreation and aesthetic enjoyment of a near-pristine environment, whilst encouraging minimum impact activities.
3. Rehabilitate degraded areas.

## PROPOSED STRATEGY

*While it is desirable to have no evidence of management in the Wilderness Area, allowance of degradation of the environment is not acceptable and is against the*

*objectives of the National Park. Therefore some remedial action will be taken to rehabilitate degraded areas, prevent erosion, prevent the spread of dieback and reduce the number of tracks. This is consistent with approaches taken elsewhere in Australia (CONCOM, 1986); all action will be done as discreetly as possible. A limited amount of fuel reduction burning will occur to prevent the whole Wilderness Area burning at one time and to protect biological values and neighbouring property. Numbers of users may be controlled if necessary; the use of volunteers to assist in managing the Wilderness Area will be investigated.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Undertake remedial action to rehabilitate degraded areas in the Wilderness Area, prevent erosion and the spread of dieback. Carry out all action with the minimum amount of physical and visual impact and minimum amount of materials.
2. Reduce the number of paths where necessary; define paths discreetly (without use of signs) to encourage use of existing ones. Ensure tracks are in areas able to sustain such use.
3. Carry out some prescribed burning where necessary, without the use of machinery.
4. Continue to monitor visitor numbers. Investigate more accurate methods of recording all visitors from all entry points.
5. Investigate other areas in the Region that can be designated as wilderness, to cater for increasing demand and to take some of the pressure off Nuyts.
6. Implement the bushwalking plan to provide alternative longer walks to take pressure off Nuyts.
7. Change the area designated as Wilderness to exclude Poison Hill (which will be zoned Special Conservation); consider inclusion of Landers Gully (when it is added to the Park) and the area to its east into the designated Wilderness Area.
8. Monitor the effectiveness of remedial action. If degradation continues to occur and/or wilderness values are compromised consider instigating measures to limit visitor numbers and group sizes; consider:
  - incorporating the Nuyts within the proposed District camping booking system
  - using a volunteer Nuyts Wilderness Area host at peak times to ensure appropriate behaviour, care and use of the area.
9. Promote a Code of the Wilderness at all entry points, incorporating the principles of minimum impact activities. Provide information regarding peak times, and encourage use outside peak times.
10. Ensure information is readily available to wilderness users on fire safety procedures.



11. Enforce the ban on wood fires in the Wilderness Area; encourage the use of portable camp stoves.
12. Limit sizes of groups to a maximum of 8 people, including adventure-based tours and school groups. Limit stays overnight in peak season to one night at each campsite. Monitor the effectiveness of these limits and adjust if necessary.
13. Continue low level maintenance of the vehicle track into the Wilderness Area to enable access in case of emergency.
14. Ensure walkers do not traverse areas which are dieback-infected or are at high risk either by relocating sections of the track or provision of simple walkways (e.g. planks) across the small inundated areas.
15. Manage those areas identified as deserving special conservation zone status according to the principles of management of these zones.
16. Monitor the condition of sensitive sites. Do not promote the use or location of sensitive sites. If there is deterioration, instigate remedial action.

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