



CALM BRIEFING PAPER 1/86

BUNGLE BUNGLE NATIONAL PARK

INTRODUCTION

On 26 April the Government announced its approval of the reservation of the Bungle Bungle sandstone massif and adjacent land as a 'C' Class National Park. In addition an area of land adjacent to the north and west of the Park was approved as a 'C' Class Reserve for Conservation pursuant to Section 5(g) of the CALM Act, vested in the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority (see attached map).

The area of the Park is approximately 225 000 hectares, and of the Conservation Reserve approximately 85 000 hectares.

The present interim boundaries of the National Park exclude areas that are highly prospective for minerals.

It is proposed that the Park be upgraded to 'A' Class status when satisfactory long-term boundaries are decided following the preparation of a management plan.

CONDITIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

The Government has directed that CALM proceed along some specific lines of management of the Park. These include:

1. Taking immediate action to protect the environment of the Park while maintaining reasonable access to and within the Park.
2. The preparation of a detailed longer-term management plan for the Park to ensure:
 - (a) the involvement of interested parties including Aboriginal people with traditional affiliations with the area, the Tourism Commission, and Local Government;
 - (b) the development of a means of facilitating meaningful management input of Aboriginal people with traditional affiliation with land in the Park.

3. Ensuring that employment opportunities are provided for Aboriginals in the management of the Park and its interpretation for tourists.
4. The establishment of an Aboriginal National Park Ranger Training Program for the Park.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

The proposed Park is located in the Kimberley Region 160 kilometres south of Kununurra and 120 kilometres north-east of Halls Creek.

Most of it forms part of an existing 'C' Class Reserve established for the "Regeneration of Eroded Areas in the Ord River Catchment". The Department of Agriculture and the Agriculture Protection Board retain an ongoing commitment to remove cattle and feral donkeys from the area, and to revegetate areas that are badly eroded due to overgrazing in former years when the area was a pastoral lease.

Cattle mustering and aerial shooting of donkeys have been taking place in the current "dry" season. This coincides with the peak of the tourist season.

There are two tracks accessing the Park, both of which have no legal status and traverse pastoral leases. Both tracks are rough, unformed, and impose a 5 hour, 40 kilometre, four-wheel drive journey to reach the Park. The Park area is nevertheless a popular tourist attraction due to the promotion of the spectacular Bungle Bungle massif in tourist literature.

Aerial tours are regularly conducted from Halls Creek and Kununurra. Ground tours using four-wheel drive vehicles are becoming increasingly popular, and at least 70 such tours are known to be visiting the Park in the period April to September this year.

The Park is rich in Aboriginal history. The pattern of land occupancy by Aboriginals was severely disrupted by the introduction of the pastoral industry to the area resulting in a wide dispersion of the former inhabitants. They, and their descendants now reside in communities throughout the east Kimberley and into the Northern Territory. However, they retain their affiliations with the area, and express a strong desire to be involved in the management of their traditional homelands. This is reflected in the directives for management imposed by Government.

CALM's immediate commitments are to manage the 1986 tourist visitation to the Park, to get a management plan under way, and to establish contact and dialogue with the traditional Aborigines of the area.

SHORT-TERM ACTION

Financial Arrangements

Due to the remoteness of the Park and its difficulty of access, operations are likely to be expensive.

The Government has allocated an additional budget of \$146 000 to CALM in 1986/87 to institute on the ground management and commence the management planning for the National Park.

These funds will enable two Rangers to be employed, vehicles to be purchased, minor roading improvements to be made and the preparation of a management plan to commence.

The allocation of these funds at a time of financial restraint indicates a considerable commitment by Government to the creation of the Park.

Management - 1986 Visitor Season

Many of the activities proposed for the management of the Park will depend on how soon Rangers can be in place, and on the goodwill and co-operation of local pastoralists on whose leases some operations are proposed.

No visitor facilities will be provided this season, apart from advisory signs and a brochure.

In order to protect the Park environment in general, and Aboriginal sites in particular, all parts of the Park not normally visited by tourists will be temporarily declared a prohibited area. Additional restrictions for visitors occur in areas where cattle mustering and aerial shooting operations are in progress.

CALM will recommend to the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority that a substantial entry fee be levied on visitors to help offset the heavy costs involved in Park development and management. Tour operators have been consulted and have accepted that a substantial entry fee should be imposed.

Preparing a Management Plan

The funds allocated for the Park include provision for the employment of a professional planner on contract.

Irrespective of this appointment there is an urgency that a planning team proceed with the planning process for the Park.

Involvement of Aborigines

Traditional Aborigines from the Park area are to be directly involved in the planning and management of the Park.

Contact has already been established with the people having an affiliation with the Park from the nearby Turkey Creek community. This will be expanded to include people from other, more remote communities.

Because of the dispersed location of these people and language and communication difficulties, negotiations are likely to be very prolonged. CALM staff with experience in negotiations of this type are few.

THE FUTURE

Only minor developments associated with visitor safety and protection of the Park environment, and classifiable as "essential operations" will be possible in the immediate future. Major development and management will need to await the production of an approved management plan.

FURTHER READING

"Bungle Bungle Working Group - Report to the Environmental Protection Authority" - Department of Conservation and Environment Bulletin No. 192, May 1985.

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September 10, 1986
PCK:SF

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ADDENDUM

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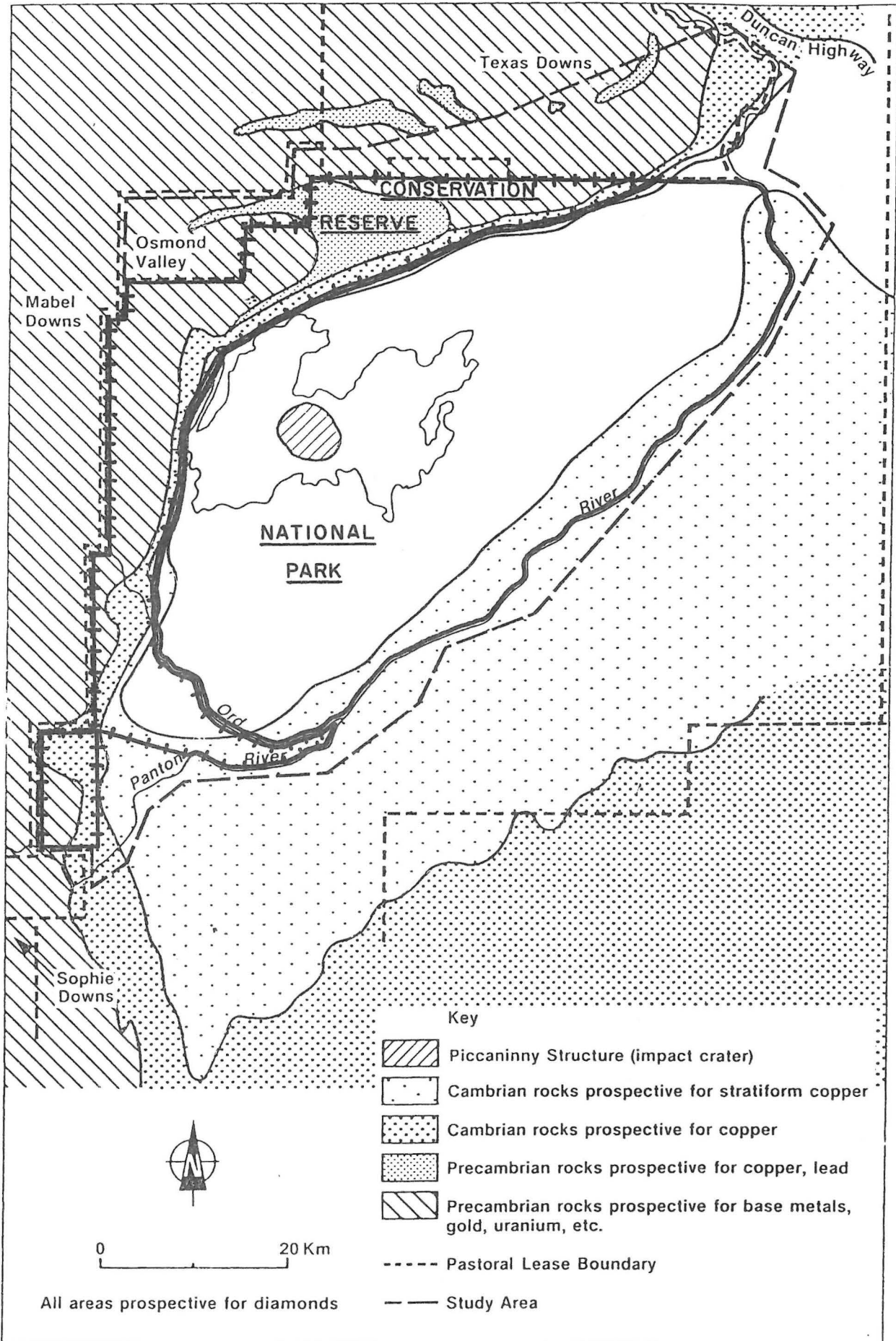
BUNGLE BUNGLE NATIONAL PARK

DEPT OF CONSERVATION
AND LAND MANAGEMENT

1

COMO RECORDS BRANCH

PROPOSED NATIONAL PARK AND CONSERVATION RESERVE



Key

- Piccaninny Structure (impact crater)
- Cambrian rocks prospective for stratiform copper
- Cambrian rocks prospective for copper
- Precambrian rocks prospective for copper, lead
- Precambrian rocks prospective for base metals, gold, uranium, etc.

----- Pastoral Lease Boundary

—— Study Area

All areas prospective for diamonds