

Management of Access in Informal Reserves and Other Protected Areas Within State Forest and Timber Reserves



Sustainable Forest Management Series

Department of Environment and Conservation

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Some or all of this document will form part of the proposed
Guidelines for the Management of Informal Reserves



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Framework for Guidance Documents from Sustainable Forest Management Division

The Forest Management Plan 2004-2013 (FMP) requires that there be developed *Guidelines for the management of informal reserves*. The Guidelines, when developed, will cover the following topics:

- Types of informal reserves and other sensitive areas;
- Identification and demarcation in the field;
- Disturbance and allowable activities;
- Approval process for disturbance operations; and
- Information management.

Guidance for operations staff on the above topics is currently available in a number of existing documents (see below). This Advisory Note, and others that are being developed, is to provide guidance on issues not already covered in existing documents but needed before the Department has synthesised existing guidance information and developed all the new material required to produce the *Guidelines for the management of informal reserves*.

This Advisory Note relates to existing guidance documents, and proposed and existing Advisory Notes associated with the management of informal reserves as outlined in the table below.

Existing guidance documents related to the management of informal reserves	Proposed and approved Advisory Notes related to the management of informal reserves
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Management Plan 2004-2013, Appendix 3 • Manual of Management Guidelines for Timber Harvesting in Western Australia • Contractors' Timber Harvesting Manual – South West Native Forests (FPC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blade-up Access on State Forest and Timber Reserves. SFM Advisory Note No. 2 (2006) • Management of Access in Informal Reserves and Other Protected Areas Within State Forest and Timber Reserves. SFM Advisory Note No. 3 (2006) • Pre-operation Checklist for Disturbance Operations on State Forest and Timber Reserves. Proposed SFM Advisory Note • Approvals Matrix for Operations on State Forest and Timber Reserves. Proposed SFM Advisory Note • Salvage of Logs in Association with Informal Reserves. Proposed SFM Advisory Note

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*Cover photograph: Ash deposition Little Darkin River 2005 –
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1 Background and context

1.1 Purpose

The Forest Management Plan 2004-2013 (FMP) introduces a range of new requirements for the management of access in informal reserves in native forests. The intent of these requirements is to protect the values contained in the informal reserve or other protected area, and to reduce the severity of disturbance associated with road and trail construction and maintenance operations within these areas.

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedures to be used to manage access into informal reserves and other protected areas, and to provide guidance on acceptable processes and disturbance limits.

1.2 Scope

This document applies to State forest, timber reserves managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and freehold land held in the name of the CALM Act Chief Executive Officer.

This document applies to all activities, unless the activity is covered by an authority that overrides the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* or the *Forest Management Plan 2004-2013*.

1.3 Background

The FMP states in Appendix 3 (page 90) that:

Road and trail construction

In general, new road, walking trail or other track construction should not occur in informal reserves. However, in some cases the construction of a new road, walking trail or other track in an informal reserve is necessary. Examples occur where stream crossings are required in timber harvesting operations or when the upgrade of an existing track through an informal reserve may be more environmentally acceptable than other options. Road, walking trail or other track construction within an informal reserve, other than old-growth forest reserve, shall not occur without the approval of the relevant Regional Manager of the Department.

Construction or upgrading of new roads, walking trails and other tracks in old-growth forest reserve is to occur only with the approval of the Director of Forests, who will give that approval only where the construction of that road, walking trail or other track in old-growth forest reserve is considered essential.

*The placement of roads, walking trails and other tracks upslope from informal reserves other than stream zones is generally to be avoided, particularly in the case of roads to be used in all weather conditions, in order to reduce the risk of introducing *Phytophthora* to the informal reserve.*

The objective of this document is to provide guidance for the management of activities associated with the construction, and maintenance of access requirements, in informal reserves and other protected areas within State forest, timber reserves and freehold land held in the name of the CALM Act Chief Executive Officer.

1.4 Custodianship and management of this document

The custodian of this document is the Manager of the Forest Policy and Practices Branch of the Sustainable Forest Management Division in the Department of Environment and Conservation. Much of this document will become part of the proposed *Guidelines for the Management of Informal Reserves* and will be reviewed as part of the preparation of that guideline.

2 Definition of key terms

Roads	A constructed form of pavement or surface intended for access by vehicular traffic.
Scrub rolling	<p>The process of laying over, or flattening of understorey vegetation and suppressed trees to provide either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Line of sight for operational planning; - Improved accessibility for operational staff for planning forest operations; - Improved access for forest workers and fallers in areas of impeded access or heavy understorey; or - Increased manageability of edge fuels during prescribed burning or fire suppression operations.
Slashing	The process of cutting down understorey vegetation and suppressed trees by manual or mechanical means to reduce its height.
Temporary Access	A road / track of any standard that is constructed for use in a particular operation, but that is not required to be retained for DEC use at the completion of the operation, and must be rehabilitated.
Tracks	An informal thoroughfare intended for vehicular traffic that does not necessarily conform to a formal design or construction standards.
Trails	Access routes that are intended for use by various users including pedestrians, cyclists, canoeists and horse-riders (non-vehicular) as well as motorcycles/trail bikes, 4WD/ORV and boats (vehicular) that are actively promoted and managed.

3 Work descriptions

The information in Table 1 is intended to provide a description of the various work components as a basis for making decisions about where the proposed activity fits with respect to the requirements of the FMP. It will be important to use the correct nomenclature for the operations to ensure that the work is appropriately considered and approved.

The associated approval levels can be identified using the *Approvals Matrix for Operations on State Forest and Timber Reserve*.

Table 1: Work description for various types of work associated with access in informal reserves.

Type of Work	Works description
New road or track construction	Selection, clearing, forming, surfacing of roads or tracks and construction of bridges, culverts, and off- shoot drains to a defined road standard. Associated work may include hazardous tree removal, debris stacking, sign installation and scrub removal for safety and visibility.
Recreation trail construction	Selection, clearing, forming, surfacing of recreation tracks or trails, including construction of bridges, culverts and drains to a defined standard.
Carpark construction	Selection, clearing, forming, surfacing of carparks or parking bays off road alignments. Includes removal of trees, clearing of scrub, surfacing of carpark area, and installation of culverts and drains to a defined standard.
Road upgrading	Resurfacing and / or widening of existing roads, including limited removal of trees, the installation of additional pipes and off-shoot drains.
Recreation Trail upgrading	Resurfacing or extending the surfacing on existing trails, including limited removal of overstorey or mature secondary storey trees, the installation of additional boardwalks and drains.
Major maintenance of roads	Removal of tree and understorey regrowth from the road surface and batters, grading and or patching of the road surface, minor realignment of corners (without tree removal), maintenance of pipes and sumps, additional construction / maintenance of cross drains or offshoot drains.

Type of Work	Works description
Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	New surfacing of the track alignment, installation of boardwalks on the existing alignment, realignment of corners (without tree removal), maintenance of bridges, boardwalks, pipes or sumps requiring the use of earthmoving or lifting equipment, additional construction / maintenance of offshoot drains.
Tree removal	Removal of individual trees for safety reasons along roads, around recreation sites or adjacent to work sites.
Scrub removal	Work to modify scrub height or structure off the access corridor including scrub modification or slashing from the inside of corners or on batters for safety and visibility, scrub modification or slashing of roadside vegetation for burn preparation or strategic fire management in accordance with an approved burn prescription and scrub modification or slashing for recreation amenity.
General road maintenance	Work within the high point of the batters on an established road alignment. Types of work to include removal of tree and understorey regrowth from the road surface and batters, grading of the road, patching of the road surface, and resurfacing and maintenance of carparks. There is to be no additional clearing of surrounding overstorey trees or understorey vegetation or machine movement outside the high point of the road batter.
General recreation track or trail maintenance	Removal of tree and scrub regrowth from the track surface and batters, grading and or patching of the track surface, maintenance of bridges, boardwalks, pipes and sumps, additional construction or maintenance of cross drains.
Temporary access	<p>A road or track of any standard that is constructed for use in a particular operation, but that is not required to be retained for DEC use at the completion of the operation. This generally relates to providing the access required for emergency activities such as rescue activities etc. These access ways will be rehabilitated following use.</p> <p>*This classification may be applied to some alignments used for timber harvesting or other planned activities, but the approvals for these will generally incorporate the need for field survey of alignments for DRF / priority flora, topsoil management (removal and stockpile for use in rehabilitation) and drainage.</p>

4 Issues relating to the purpose of intrusions

Table 2 relates the type of work in each type of protected area to a category of acceptability. For the purpose of using this information the proponent must correctly identify the location of informal reserves and other protected areas in relation to the proposed operation, and use this information to assess whether an operation may be appropriate (Table 3).

Table 2 is intended to identify areas and types of work that are allowed for in the FMP as essential and necessary cases. In addition the column titled *Category of acceptability* identifies numerous levels of acceptability that are further clarified in Table 3.

Table 2: Category of acceptability in relation to type of protected area and type of work on State forest, timber reserve and land held in the name of the CALM Act CEO.

Type of area protected in the FMP	Type of work	Category of acceptability
INFORMAL RESERVES		
River and stream zones	New road or track construction	Acceptable 3.
	Recreation trail construction	Acceptable 4
	Carpark construction	Essential cases only
	Road upgrading	Acceptable 5.
	Recreation trail upgrading	Acceptable 5.
	Major maintenance of roads	Acceptable 2.
	Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	Acceptable 2.
	Tree removal	Necessary cases only.
	Scrub removal	Necessary cases only.
	General road maintenance	Acceptable 1.
Recreation track / trail maintenance	Acceptable 1.	
Diverse ecosystem zones (DEZ)	New road or track construction	Necessary cases only.
	Recreation trail construction	Necessary cases only.
	Carpark construction	Necessary cases only.
	Road upgrading	Acceptable 5.
	Recreation trail upgrading	Acceptable 5.
	Major maintenance of roads	Acceptable 2.
	Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	Acceptable 2.
	Tree removal	Necessary cases only.
	Scrub removal	Necessary cases only.
	General road maintenance	Acceptable 1.
Recreation track or trail maintenance	Acceptable 1.	
Less well reserved vegetation complexes	New road or track construction	Necessary cases only.
	Recreation trail construction	Necessary cases only.
	Carpark construction	Essential cases only
	Road upgrading	Acceptable 5.
	Recreation trail upgrading	Acceptable 5.
Major maintenance of roads	Acceptable 2.	

Type of area protected in the FMP	Type of work	Category of acceptability
	Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	Acceptable 2.
	Tree removal	Necessary cases only.
	Scrub removal	Necessary cases only.
	General road maintenance	Acceptable 1.
	Recreation track or trail maintenance	Acceptable 1.
Poorly reserved forest ecosystem	New road or track construction	Necessary cases only.
	Recreation trail construction	Necessary cases only.
	Carpark construction	Essential cases only
	Road upgrading	Acceptable 5.
	Recreation trail upgrading	Acceptable 5.
	Major maintenance of roads	Acceptable 2.
	Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	Acceptable 2.
	Tree removal	Necessary cases only.
	Scrub removal	Necessary cases only.
	General road maintenance	Acceptable 1.
Recreation track or trail maintenance	Acceptable 1.	
Old-growth forest	New road or track construction	Essential cases only
	Recreation trail construction	Essential cases only
	Carpark construction	Essential cases only
	Road upgrading	Essential cases only
	Recreation trail upgrading	Essential cases only
	Major maintenance of roads	Essential cases only
	Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	Essential cases only
	Tree removal	Essential cases only
	Scrub removal	Essential cases only
	General road maintenance	Acceptable 1.
Travel route zones	Recreation track or trail maintenance	Acceptable 1.
	New road or track construction	Necessary cases only.
	Recreation trail construction	Necessary cases only.
	Carpark construction	Necessary cases only.
	Road upgrading	Acceptable 2.
	Recreation trail upgrading	Acceptable 2.
	Major maintenance of roads	Acceptable 2.
	Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	Acceptable 2.
	Tree removal	Necessary cases only.
	Scrub removal	Necessary cases only.
RFA accredited linkage zone	General road maintenance	Acceptable 1.
	Recreation track or trail maintenance	Acceptable 1.
	New road or track construction	Necessary cases only.
	Recreation trail construction	Necessary cases only.
	Carpark construction	Essential cases only.
	Road upgrading	Acceptable 5.
	Recreation trail upgrading	Acceptable 5.

Type of area protected in the FMP	Type of work	Category of acceptability
	Major maintenance of roads	Acceptable 2.
	Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	Acceptable 2.
	Tree removal	Necessary cases only.
	Scrub removal	Necessary cases only.
	General road maintenance	Acceptable 1.
	Recreation track or trail maintenance	Acceptable 1.
Areas previously classified as old-growth forest	New road or track construction	Necessary cases only.
	Recreation trail construction	Necessary cases only.
	Carpark construction	Necessary cases only.
	Road upgrading	Acceptable 2.
	Recreation trail upgrading	Acceptable 2.
	Major maintenance of roads	Acceptable 2.
	Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	Acceptable 2.
	Tree removal	Necessary cases only.
	Scrub removal	Necessary cases only.
	General road maintenance	Acceptable 1.
Recreation track or trail maintenance	Acceptable 1.	
ALL TYPES	Fireline construction or emergency access	Acceptable 6.
	Construction of secondary firelines	Acceptable 7.
	Felling of burning trees	Acceptable 8.
OTHER AREAS		
Declared rare flora (DRF)	New road or track construction	Essential cases only
	Recreation trail construction	Essential cases only
	Carpark construction	Essential cases only
	Road upgrading	Essential cases only
	Recreation trail upgrading	Essential cases only
	Major maintenance of roads	Essential cases only
	Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	Essential cases only
	Tree removal	Essential cases only
	Scrub removal	Essential cases only
	General road maintenance	Essential cases only
Recreation track or trail maintenance	Essential cases only	
Threatened ecological communities (TEC)	New road or track construction	Essential cases only
	Recreation trail construction	Essential cases only.
	Carpark construction	Essential cases only.
	Road upgrading	Necessary cases only.
	Recreation trail upgrading	Necessary cases only.
	Major maintenance of roads	Acceptable 5.
	Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	Acceptable 2.
	Tree removal	Necessary cases only.
	Scrub removal	Necessary cases only.
	General road maintenance	Acceptable 1.
	Recreation track or trail maintenance	Acceptable 1.

Type of area protected in the FMP	Type of work	Category of acceptability
Fauna habitat zone (FHZ)	New road or track construction	Acceptable 4.
	Recreation trail construction	Acceptable 4
	Carpark construction	Essential cases only
	Road upgrading	Acceptable 5.
	Recreation trail upgrading	Acceptable 5.
	Major maintenance of roads	Acceptable 2.
	Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	Acceptable 2.
	Tree removal	Necessary cases only.
	Scrub removal	Necessary cases only.
	General road maintenance	Acceptable 1.
	Recreation track or trail maintenance	Acceptable 1.
Other	New road or track construction	Essential cases only
	Recreation trail construction	Essential cases only
	Carpark construction	Essential cases only
	Road upgrading	Necessary cases only.
	Recreation trail upgrading	Necessary cases only.
	Major maintenance of roads	Acceptable 5.
	Major maintenance of recreation tracks or trails	Acceptable 2.
	Tree removal	Necessary cases only.
	Scrub removal	Necessary cases only.
	General road maintenance	Acceptable 1.
	Recreation track or trail maintenance	Acceptable 1.
ALL TYPES	Fireline construction or emergency access	Acceptable 6.
	Construction of secondary firelines	Acceptable 7.
	Felling of burning trees	Acceptable 8.

5 Guidelines for decisions

Table 3 provides some examples and details about categories of acceptability identified in Table 2. The approval level required for these operations is contained in the *Approvals Matrix for Operations on State Forest and Timber Reserves*.

Table 3: Description and examples for each of the categories of acceptability for works in protected areas on State forest, timber reserves and land held in the name of the CALM Act Chief Executive Officer.

Category of acceptability	Description	Example
Essential cases only	Cases where the type of work is determined to be essential.	Essential cases will be determined and approved by the Director of Sustainable Forest Management on the basis that failure to undertake the type of work is likely to lead to significant environmental degradation or major economic, social or safety impacts.
Necessary cases only	Cases where the type of work is determined to be necessary.	In general new road, recreation trail or other track construction should not occur in informal reserves and other protected areas. Necessary cases will be determined by the Regional Manager on the basis that failure to undertake the type of work may lead to minor environmental degradation or significant economic, social or safety impacts.
Acceptable 1	Acceptable where roads / tracks have not been identified for closure.	Acceptable on the basis that the proposed works are limited to the existing disturbed area.
Acceptable 2	Acceptable, but operation must minimise disturbance outside existing corridor.	Acceptable on the basis that the proposed works are largely limited to the existing disturbed area and the proposed disturbance outside of this area will have a limited impact.
Acceptable 3	FMP indicates disturbance is acceptable for stream crossings associated with harvesting.	Stream crossings are required for timber harvesting and are to be identified on roading proposals by FPC.
Acceptable 4	Acceptable but not preferred.	In general new road, recreation trail or other track construction should not occur in informal reserves and other protected areas.
Acceptable 5	Acceptable where alternatives are considered to be less environmentally acceptable.	Upgrading of an existing track through an informal reserve or other protected areas may be more environmentally acceptable than the alternatives.

Acceptable 6	Acceptable where alternatives are considered to be less environmentally acceptable.	Construction of firelines associated with direct and indirect attack of a fire, or other emergency incident. Approval must incorporate a commitment to rehabilitate the disturbance following the incident being declared safe.
Acceptable 7	Acceptable where alternatives are considered to be less environmentally acceptable.	Relates to the establishment of new tracks, proposed for construction as part of fall back strategies for fire suppression, where a more detailed analysis of values and consequences related to the proposal can reasonably be required.
Acceptable 8	Acceptable for fire-fighter and / or public safety, and burn security.	In all cases it is expected that the felling of trees in the informal reserves and other protected areas should only be approved by the Incident Controller following the consideration of non-destructive measures to achieve burn security or safety.

Note: The decision to establish a carpark in an informal reserve or other protected area has been raised to Essential cases only because it is considered that a carpark is an extensive disturbance and is a destination. Carparks should be located outside the informal reserve or other protected area to reduce the impact of the operation on the values of the protected area. Users can be reasonably expected to walk from the carpark to the associated feature or facility if this is established within the reserve. In this case the additional disturbance in the protected area would be restricted to a trail.

The decisions related to temporary access should be made on the basis that these roads will be required to be fully rehabilitated including:

- Topsoil must be stockpiled as part of the clearing of the alignment;
- Recovery of road hardware (pipes etc) and associated infrastructure;
- Recovery of basic raw materials;
- Deep ripping of alignment to 0.8 metres with a winged-tyne ripper;
- Re-establishment of natural land contours on road alignment and associated drains and sumps;
- Replacement of stockpiled topsoil;
- Scarification of the surface;
- Replacement of the understorey species by seeding and fertilising; and
- Planting of seedlings for revegetation to a defined stocking and survival rate.

6 Records

The intention to enter informal reserves or other protected area should be identified in the relevant prescription or approval process e.g. DEC Pre-operations Checklist or DEC Burn Prescription, prior to the commencement of the operation.

For example the FMP (Appendix 3, page 91) requires that:

A burn prescription for an area that includes an informal reserve must identify the informal reserve and any special requirements with respect to prescribed burning. However, the inclusion of informal reserves in areas burnt by low intensity prescribed fire to meet general fuel reduction or biodiversity objectives is generally acceptable with no special precautions to be applied.

Therefore although no specific precautions are required for burning in these types of prescribed burns, it is necessary for any proposed disturbances related to boundary or firebreak construction to be identified and special requirements prescribed.

7 Useful reading

Department of Conservation and Land Management (2004). *Forest Management Plan 2004-2013*. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Perth.