Pinnacles National Park Management Statement 2013

Park size:	1,137ha
Bioregion:	Einasleigh Uplands Brigalow Belt
QPWS region:	Central
Local government estate/area:	Townsville City
State electorate:	Burdekin

Legislative framework

a	*Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*
a	*Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwlth)
	Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)
a	*Nature Conservation Act 1992*

Plans and agreements

a	National recovery plan for the black-throated finch southern subspecies *Poephila cincta cincta*

Pinnacles National Park. Photo: NPRSR.

Vision

Pinnacles National Park is managed to conserve the integrity and rugged bushland setting of the Townsville scenic rim.

Pinnacles National Park has been incorporated into the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service's (QPWS) public lands estate linking Mount Flagstone Forest Reserve in the south to Paluma Range National Park in the north.

Conservation purpose

In March 2011, Pinnacles National Park was the first part of a larger national park proposal—designed to protect the scenic rim of Townsville—to be gazetted.

The current park covering the Hervey's Range provides scenic amenity of a regional significance to the population of the city of Townsville.

Protecting and presenting the park's values

Landscape

The landscape of the Pinnacles National Park includes features from floodplain, hill slopes to the upper plateau of the Harvey's Range area. The geology of the park is composed of granites and granite-derived alluviums. Erosional processes such as the weathering and breakdown of the exposed batholith to form new soils are evident within the park.

Regional ecosystems

Seven regional ecosystems have been mapped for Pinnacles National Park. Two of these are listed as of concern for their biodiversity values (Table 1) and five have low representation in protected area estate.

As a juncture between ecological bioregions, the park has a great diversity of habitats. The steep slopes of the park and exposed bluffs give rise to rapidly transitioning vegetation patterns and small pockets of specialised habitats. However, the complexity of vegetation communities within the park is poorly reflected in mapping when viewed at the broader scale.

Native plants and animals

While the vegetation units of Pinnacles National Park have been mapped and documented to a reasonable scale, individual plant and animal species remain poorly understood by QPWS staff. Local botanists may have data on the species present.

The endangered plant *Sannantha papillosa* is known from only four sites including the Pinnacles National Park (Table 2).

The endangered southern form of the black-throated finch *Poephila cincta cincta* occurs within the floodplain habitats of the park. Linking with Department of Defence training areas and the Townsville City Council Lake Ross catchment, the area is proving to be core habitat for this species (Table 2).

Aboriginal culture

Little is known by QPWS about the Aboriginal cultural values of the park, or the significance of the area to Traditional Owner groups.

Shared-history culture

A stock route once traversed the Pinnacles National Park. It was used to travel stock and mining resources on horseback between Townsville and inland areas.

Tourism and visitor opportunities

Pinnacles National Park currently has no formed access, tracks, campgrounds or facilities.

The park and adjacent State land potentially offer a series of regionally significant rock climbing opportunities. While a largely informal activity, rock climbing is well organised and planned for in the area. An information brochure has been developed for climbers visiting the area.

Education and science

Knowledge gained from research and monitoring programs is an integral part of adaptive park management. However, research projects should conform to park management objectives.

Partnerships

Where possible, fire and pest management activities are coordinated with park neighbours.

Other key issues and responses

Pest management

Pinnacles National Park has a well-established population of *Senna siamea* (Class 1 pest plant), with a target of national eradication. Control of this species is led by Biosecurity Queensland with support from QPWS and the Department of Defence.

Class 2 pest plants found within the park include rubbervine *Cryptostegia grandiflora* and Indian jujube *Ziziphus mauritiana*. There are scattered occurrences of both throughout the park and adjacent properties. Lantana *Lantana camara* (Class 3) occurs in varying densities across the park.

Wandering stock, primarily cattle *Bos* spp., are the most commonly sighted pest animal on Pinnacles National Park. Boundaries are largely unfenced. Feral pigs *Sus scrofa* are present but the significance of their impact is unknown, and less obvious than the impacts of wandering stock.

Feral cats *Felis catus* occur at low numbers throughout the park. The pressure they exert on the native wildlife through predation is currently unknown. Cane toads *Rhinella marina* are toxic to native predators, eat small native animals and compete with them for food and breeding resources.

Fire management

Fire regimes on Pinnacles National Park have been difficult to manage due to the access restrictions, topography and proximity of neighbours with differing fire requirements.

The climate, soil types and topography result in a landscape that transitions rapidly from moist to quite dry. As a result, there is often only a short interval within the year where planned burns can be satisfactorily conducted.

Other management issues

Safety

The natural environment within Pinnacles National Park presents some significant safety hazards, including the steep terrain and cliffs that need to be traversed with care.

Management directions

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
Landscape Landscape and catchment values are largely undisturbed. The health, diversity and integrity of regional ecosystems are protected and maintained.	A1. Maintain the biodiversity and complexity of native vegetation communities, including important escarpment areas, through appropriate fire and pest management. A2. Maintain the open structure of the eucalypt woodlands and the wet grassy flats through a combination of stock management and implementation of appropriate fire regimes. A3. Review the need for the existing artificial waters and remove any waters in excess to requirements.
Native plants and animals Species of conservation significance and ecosystems with a significant biodiversity status are protected through direct and active management activities.	A4. Implement fire regimes that maintain suitable foraging and nesting habitat for the black-throated finch. A5. Focus management on species and ecosystems that have a limited distribution and are currently threatened by human impacts, fire, pest plants or pest animals (e.g. vine-scrubs).
Aboriginal culture Places and species of cultural significance are appropriately protected and presented.	A6. Identify the Traditional Owners for the area, and ensure the responsibilities, interests and aspirations of the Traditional Owners are acknowledged and respected in park management.
Shared-history culture Sites of heritage significance are appropriately protected and presented or allowed to decay where appropriate.	A7. Identify and record shared-history cultural heritage places within suitable databases, including documentation of their significance, if known.
Tourism and visitor opportunities Existing visitor opportunities are formalised and enhanced	A8. Manage rock climbing within the park through active involvement and consultation with existing users. A9. Manage and promote walking trails that are safe and sustainable. A10. Develop a visitor management strategy, with a focus on the provision of appropriate rock climbing and walking opportunities. A11. Monitor recreational impacts on a regular basis.
Education and science Research and monitoring programs increase understanding of values and provide information to improve management decisions.	A12. Actively engage in a monitoring program for the black-throated finch and feed this information back into the fire program. A13. Support research projects associated with the control of Siam weed.
Partnerships Park staff maintain good working relationships with community partners and collaborative management occurs across the landscape.	A14. Maintain good working relationships with neighbouring landholders and, where possible, cooperatively undertake fire and pest management programs. A15. Provide priority support to the Siam weed eradication program.

Desired outcomes	Actions and guidelines
Pest management The integrity of native plant and animal communities is maintained through strategic, sustained pest management.	A16. Undertake pest plant surveillance and implement control programs where it remains possible to eradicate or contain newly identified pest plant infestations. A17. Develop and implement a Level 2 pest management strategy that considers the most effective methods for control and involves cooperative management of species where appropriate.
Fire management The integrity of native plant and animal communities is maintained through strategic, sustained fire management.	A18. Develop a fire management strategy for all of the Townsville Scenic Rim land managed by QPWS.

Tables – Conservation values management

Table 1: Endangered and of concern regional ecosystems

Regional ecosystem number	Description	Biodiversity status
9.3.1	*Eucalyptus camaldulensis* or *E. tereticornis* +/-*Casuarina cunninghamiana* +/-*Melaleuca* spp. fringing woodland on channels and levees. Generally on eastern flowing rivers.	Of concern
9.12.39	*Melaleuca viridiflora*, *Lophostemon suaveolens*, *Eucalyptus granitica*, *E. tereticornis*, *Corymbia citriodora* and *E. exserta* mixed species woodland on uplands.	Of concern

Table 2: Species of State or national conservation significance

Scientific name	Common name	*Nature Conservation Act 1992* status	*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* status	Back on Track status
Plants				
Sannantha papillosa	-	Endangered	-	Low
Animals				
Poephila cincta cincta	black-throated finch	Endangered	Endangered	High