DORRIGO NATIONAL PARK
PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
October 1998
This plan of management was adopted by the Minister for the Environment on 4 October 1998.

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Dorrigo National Park has an area of 7,885 hectares and is located 4 kilometres east of Dorrigo township which in turn lies 590 kilometres by road from Sydney. Dorrigo township is the centre of the rich agricultural lands of the Dorrigo Plateau. The town of Bellingen lies 25 kilometres to the east of the park and is the main town servicing the Bellinger Valley. The mid-north coast is within one hour's drive of the park with the increasing population of centres such as Coffs Harbour and Nambucca Heads an important factor in park use and management.

Part of Dorrigo Mountain was first protected in 1901. The area of reserved lands was progressively enlarged and granted increased protection until in 1967 when it was reserved under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1967 as a State Park. Under the National Parks and Wildlife Act of 1974 Dorrigo State Park was accorded national park status. In 1986 it was incorporated in the World Heritage List as one of the Sub-tropical and Warm Temperate Rainforest Parks of Eastern Australia, now known as the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia.

Dorrigo National Park is one of an important group of conservation areas on the Great Escarpment which include New England, Guy Fawkes River, Cathedral Rocks and Oxley Wild Rivers National Parks and Mount Hyland and Guy Fawkes River Nature Reserves.

The objectives, policies and actions for managing the area as a national park also meet the requirements of the World Heritage Convention. To this end particular emphasis is given to:

- protecting the outstanding combination of physical, biological and scenic features of the park and to management of the whole area as an interrelated system;
- promoting the importance of Dorrigo National Park, New England National Park and Mount Hyland Nature Reserve as one of the eight groups of protected areas which conserve the major centres of rainforest distribution in NSW; and
- promoting the importance of Dorrigo National Park as one of a system of national parks within the region which protect areas containing plant and animal communities typical of the eastern rim of the New England Tableland and the Great Escarpment.

The park provides significant opportunities for recreation in a rainforest setting along the mountainous escarpment between the North Coast and New England Regions. The North Coast Region has been identified as a priority area for tourism development in New South Wales and emphasis is being given in the region to identifying potential tourism development areas with outstanding environmental and aesthetic qualities.

This plan of management establishes the scheme of operations for Dorrigo National Park. In accordance with the provisions of Section 75 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974, this plan of management is hereby adopted.

PAM ALLAN

Minister for the Environment
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1. INTRODUCTION

The National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974, requires that a plan of management be prepared for each national park. A plan of management is a legal document that outlines how the area will be managed in the years ahead.

The procedures for the adoption of a plan of management are specified in the Act and involve five stages:

* The Director-General gives notice that a plan of management has been prepared.
* The plan is placed on public exhibition for at least one month and any person may make representations about it.
* The plan and copies of all representations are referred to the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council for consideration.
* The Director-General submits the plan together with any comments and suggestions of the Advisory Council to the Minister.
* The Minister may adopt the plan, with or without alterations, after considering the recommendations of the Advisory Council or may refer the plan back to the Director-General and Council for further consideration.

A draft plan of management for Dorrigo National Park was placed on public exhibition for a period of three months ending 19th August 1996. During the period of public exhibition seventeen representations were received which raised twelve issues. The comments and suggestions of the Advisory Council were in turn considered by the Minister when adopting this plan.

For additional information or enquiries about the management of Dorrigo National Park, please contact the Service’s Dorrigo District Office at the Rainforest Centre, Dorrigo National Park, via Dorrigo or by phone on (066) 57 2309.
2. MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

2.1. WORLD HERITAGE

The International Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1972. The Convention provides a permanent legal and administrative framework for international co-operation and the collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value.

New England and Dorrigo National Parks, Mount Hyland Nature Reserve and Cunnawarra Flora Reserve are one of eight groups of protected areas which, in 1998, comprise the World Heritage Area of the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia. The rainforests of New South Wales represent a natural heritage of international significance as ancient and isolated reservoirs of a great variety of plant and animal species of considerable value. The sub-tropical and temperate rainforest parks of eastern Australia were accepted for listing in 1986 on the basis of their natural heritage values which include:

* outstanding examples of the major rainforest types of New South Wales;
* sites in which rainforest forms a large proportion of the total vegetation cover;
* rainforest stands sufficiently large and appropriately buffered by surrounding vegetation for the long term integrity of their vegetation to be assured;
* the major regional centres of rainforest present at the time of European settlement; and
* sites with other features of international or national significance in addition to the rainforests; for example, outstanding geological or scenic features or particularly fine examples of sclerophyll communities.

The inclusion of the Sub-tropical and Temperate Rainforest Parks of Eastern Australia in the World Heritage list in 1986 added to the listing in Australia of Kakadu National Park, Uluru National Park, the Great Barrier Reef, Willandra Lakes Region, Western Tasmania Wilderness National Parks and the Lord Howe Island Group.

The World Heritage Convention is designed to complement, aid and stimulate national initiatives, but not compete with them or take their place. The Convention clearly identifies that it is for each country to accept the responsibility for the conservation of its own heritage.

2.2 NATIONAL PARKS IN NSW

The national park concept was introduced into Australia through the establishment of Royal National Park in 1879.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) in 1994 defined a national park as:

“A natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area, and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.”

National Parks are a part of the regional pattern of land use. The management of a
national park aims at minimising disturbance to the natural and cultural heritage. Other land uses such as agriculture, forestry and mining are distinguished by an acceptance or encouragement of environmental modification. National parks, therefore, provide for only a limited part of the land uses in any region.

2.3 DORRIGO NATIONAL PARK

2.3.1 Location and Regional Context

Dorrigo National Park has an area of 7,885 hectares (February 1998) and is located 4 kilometres east of Dorrigo township which in turn lies 590 kilometres by road from Sydney. Dorrigo township is the centre of the rich agricultural lands of the Dorrigo Plateau. The town of Bellingen lies 25 kilometres to the east of the park and is the main town servicing the Bellinger Valley. The national park is situated on the escarpment of the Dorrigo Plateau and protects the entire upper catchment of the Rosewood and Never Never Rivers and Wild Cattle Creek. The altitude within the park ranges from about 61 metres on the Bellinger River to 990 metres at Dome Mountain.

Dorrigo National Park is one of an important group of conservation areas on the New England Tableland which include New England, Guy Fawkes River, Cathedral Rocks and Oxley Wild Rivers National Parks and Mount Hyland and Guy Fawkes River Nature Reserves.

Three major additions to Dorrigo National Park were reserved in 1974, 1977 and 1985 that were excised from adjoining State forests:

- the upper Rosewood River catchment (exclusive of the McGraths Hump area) in 1974;
- the McGraths Hump area of the park in 1977; and
- the Killungoondie - Never Never River area of the park in 1985

In 1996, the government reserved Bellinger River National Park which adjoins Dorrigo National park immediately to the west and which links Dorrigo with New England National Park.

These additions to the nature conservation system protect the magnificent escarpment of the Dorrigo Plateau between Mount Wonurrigah in the north-east and Diamond Flat in the south-west.

The park is situated between the grazing and agricultural lands of the tablelands and the timber production and grazing areas of the coastal valleys. Whilst the escarpment itself is still largely in a natural condition, the Dorrigo Plateau and the Bellinger Valley have been intensively developed. The populated coastal plain is within one hours drive of the park, with the increasing population of centres such as Coffs Harbour and Nambucca Heads an important factor in park use and management.

2.3.2 Significance of Dorrigo National Park

Dorrigo National Park lies within the New England Fold Belt of eastern Australia. This geological structure occupies the north-eastern corner of NSW and extends into southern Queensland. During the Carboniferous and Permian Periods (335-220 million years ago) eastern Australia underwent a prolonged process of land building. Part of the Crossmaglen Fault, one of the major structures of the New England Fold Belt, cuts through the park.

The next major chapter in the story of the landscape of what is now Dorrigo National
Park was the uplift of parts of eastern Australia as part of the break-up of the ancient super-continent Gondwana. This gave rise to renewed erosion activity which produced the prominent Great Escarpment along virtually the entire eastern coast of Australia.

Dorrigo National Park lies partly on the eroded surface of the Ebor-Dorrigo Volcano which has been dated at 19 million years and is one of a number of Miocene volcanoes in NSW which are important because they outline the chronology in the evolution of the eastern Australian landscape. It is understood that these volcanoes developed in two distinct lines; one to the east comprising the Tweed Volcanoes, the Ebor-Dorrigo Volcano and a volcano at Comboyne. The second line of volcanoes lies 250 kilometres to the west and comprises Mount Kaputar, the Warrumbungles and Mount Canobolas. These two lines have related volcanoes in Queensland and Victoria.

These volcanoes demonstrate decreasing age from north to south and a substantial reduction in the volume of igneous material flowed through each successive volcano onto the earth's surface. This has been interpreted as evidence of the northward drift of the Australian plate over a source of hot igneous rock near the earth's surface but which diminished in activity as successive volcanic flows drained the magma source.

These volcanoes were all characterised by a low angle shield form or dome. The shield of the Ebor-Dorrigo Volcano has largely been eroded away, but the main vent area is believed to lie in New England National Park in the vicinity of The Crescent.

Many aspects of the evolution of the eastern Australian vegetation since the early Tertiary Period also occur in the park. Our contemporary understanding of this long term history suggests that these communities are the product of climatic changes and evolutionary isolation. This occurred as the Australian continent separated from the Gondwana super-continent and drifted north to its current location. The vegetation of the Australian continent during the early periods of its drift north was typically rainforest.

Following the final separation of Australia from Antarctica, some 45 million years ago, perhaps the earliest change in the Australian flora was the differentiation of warm/cool and moist/dry forms of rainforest. Also becoming widely spread during this period were the sclerophyllous communities which were adapting to the increasing incidence of fire, seasonality of climate and low fertility soils.

The past 2 million years have seen a succession of major ice ages either directly or indirectly affecting the entire globe. Australia was no exception and the tablelands along the eastern margin were decidedly cooler than at present and supported an alpine or sub-alpine flora. The continent has been warming since about 17 000 years ago and these vegetation communities have all but disappeared from the lower tablelands. A relic of cooler climates is represented by the occurrence of Antarctic beech in Dorrigo National Park.

Today the Australian natural landscape is dominated by dry forests and woodlands; predominantly the dry sclerophyll eucalyptus communities. These inhabit a wide variety of regions from the dry interior to the sub-alpine and tropics. The broad-leaved rainforests typical of Dorrigo National Park and the nearby New England National Park now only occur in fire and drought resistant refugia, such as along the Great Escarpment.

The majority of rainforest flora in Australia originally evolved in the supercontinent Gondwana. Following its separation from Antarctica, Australia moved north, carrying its cargo of rainforest plants through the belt of high pressure systems which are characterised by a drier climate than that which occurred in the higher latitudes of the time. It is now generally accepted that these plant communities split into three main groups; sub-tropical/temperate, tropical and monsoonal. Differences in environmental factors such as climate, geology and soils resulted in varying degrees of mixing between these three groups. The Dorrigo area is part of the core area of the temperate rainforest
types and a secondary core area and refugia for the sub-tropical group.

Few of the remaining areas of rainforest remain intact. Removal of rainforest has been differential, emphasis being placed upon stands on the more fertile and accessible soils which has all but eliminated the sub-tropical rainforest on coastal volcanics (The Big Scrub, Illawarra, Milton, Tilba Tilba) and sub-tropical rainforests on the plateau basalts (Comboyne, Bulga, Dorrigo, Robertson). In this way the sub-tropical rainforests have been diminished; surviving in only small pockets in less accessible locations.

Prior to European settlement, rainforest represented less than 1% of the area of present NSW. Within 200 years this has been reduced to less than half. The rainforests in Dorrigo National Park are a remnant of the previously extensive Dorrigo/New England/Bellinger rainforests; including the so-called "Dorrigo Scrub" which once covered most of the eastern half of the Dorrigo Plateau. By the second decade of the twentieth century extensive clearing and burning of the rainforest on the Dorrigo Plateau and in the Bellinger Valley had taken place.

Dorrigo National Park is part of the New England Group of rainforests in the Dorrigo/New England/Bellinger area which is recognised as one of the major centres of refuge for rainforests and the native animal communities which are dependent upon them in eastern NSW. The Dorrigo group is recognised as one of eight centres of significant rainforest distribution remaining in NSW and protected in conservation areas. The others are:

- the Main Range Group;
- Focal Peak Group
- Shield Caldera Group;
- Iluka Group;
- Gibraltar Range Group;
- Hastings Macleay Group; and
- Barrington Tops Group.


Living evidence of past links with other rainforests areas survive in the forests of the park. Examples of these links are demonstrated by the presence of species such as Dorrigo plum (Endiandra introrsa), Dorrigo waratah (Alloxylum pinnatum), pink cherry (Austrobruxus swainii), monkey nut (Hickesbeschis pinnatifolia), southern quassia (Quassia sp.), brown tamarind (Castanospora alphandii) and blunt-leaf steelwood (Toechima dasyrrache). These species occur in the Dorrigo area and are also found further north on the Tweed Caldera.

The Dorrigo Mountain and rainforest has a long history of more than one hundred years of concern for its protection. Official awareness of the Dorrigo rainforest followed an inspection of the area by the government botanist Mr J H Maiden in 1893 which reported on the variety, size and quality of plant species in the rainforest. Because of its isolation, up to that time there had only been sporadic logging, via the 'Fernyface Shoot' (in the vicinity of the Waterfall Way), where logs were 'shot' over the escarpment into the Bellinger River valley below.

The first move to reserve part of Dorrigo Mountain was the recommendation in 1900 of
the district surveyor in Grafton to set aside two small parcels of land (totalling a little over 8ha) for the protection of the two cascades in the vicinity of the Waterfall Way from Dorrigo to Bellingen which had recently been opened. These reserves were enclosed by a much larger reserve in 1917 which totalled 1656 ha. In 1927 a smaller area of 1414 ha was rededicated as a park ‘for the preservation of native flora’. Trusteeship of the park passed to the local council in 1954 and the area was popularly known as ‘Dorrigo National Park’ by the late 1950’s.

Dorrigo National Park, therefore exhibits a variety of both Gondwanan and post Gondwanan elements of Australia’s geological, climatic and biological evolution.

The park provides a significant component of the wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities offered by the mountainous escarpment between the North Coast and New England Regions. The north coast region has been identified as a priority area for tourism development in New South Wales. Emphasis is being given to identifying potential tourism development areas with outstanding environmental and aesthetic qualities. Tourism development in these areas will be sympathetic to the environment and aim to encourage the appropriate use of natural attractions and visitor facilities.

A study undertaken in 1989 demonstrated that rainforest was a major attraction for a large number of visitors to Dorrigo National Park. The results of this study have been consistent with tourism studies undertaken elsewhere on the north coast.

Dorrigo Rainforest Centre is of regional significance in promoting an awareness of the importance of rainforest; in particular those listed as World Heritage Areas. The Rainforest Centre was established as a regional interpretation centre for the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia listed as a World Heritage Area. Dorrigo National Park is best situated to function as a regional interpretation centre because of its accessibility and ability to cater for large numbers of visitors. Other national parks included on this World Heritage listing are less accessible.

The significance of Dorrigo National Park is summarised below:

**World Conservation Value**

The park is included in one of the eight groups of protected areas which conserve the major centres of rainforest distribution in NSW and South East Queensland which are accorded World Heritage Status.

**Continental Conservation Value**

The park:
- includes geological structures and rock types which demonstrate the tectonic evolution of the New England Tablelands during the late Palaeozoic Era
- provides refugia for dry, cool temperate, warm temperate and sub-tropical rainforest communities which evolved during the Tertiary Period and sclerophyll eucalypt communities which evolved during the late Tertiary. These are important for understanding climatic change on the Australian continent since it drifted clear of Antarctica; and
- demonstrates the mix of rainforest elements that comprise the Macleay-McPherson Overlap of Indo-Malayan and Gondwana vegetation.

**Regional Ecological Value**

The park:
- is part of a system of reserved lands which include New England, Guy

- is an important link in the conservation and protected forest areas along the Great Escarpment; and

- protects the catchment of the Rosewood River.

Regional Landscape Value.

The park:
- includes geological structures and landscape features which demonstrate the Great Escarpment; and

- includes geological structures and landscape features which demonstrate the Ebor Volcano.

Regional Educational and Recreational Value.

The park:
- promotes, through the Dorrigo Rainforest Centre, an awareness of the importance of rainforest; in particular those listed as World Heritage Areas;

- contains a variety of scenery and plant and animal communities suitable for public recreation and education;

- provides opportunities for low key, low impact recreational activities in natural settings;

- is an important destination for tourists visiting the north coast; and

- is close and accessible to residents of the mid-north coast and New England Regions.

Local Scenery Protection Value

The park protects the scenic backdrop for the headwaters of the Bellingen Valley.
3. OBJECTIVES OF MANAGEMENT

Dorrigo National Park, as part of the World Heritage Listing of the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia, will be managed in accordance with the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The preparation of this plan of management is one of the obligations under the World Heritage Listing.

The following general objectives relate to the management of national parks in New South Wales:

* the protection and preservation of scenic and natural features;
* the conservation of wildlife;
* the maintenance of natural processes as far as is possible;
* the preservation of Aboriginal sites and historic features;
* the provision of appropriate recreation opportunities; and
* the encouragement of scientific and educational enquiry into environmental features and processes, prehistoric and historic features and park use patterns.

In addition to the general objectives stated above, the following specific objectives relate to the management of Dorrigo National Park:

* To protect the outstanding combination of physical, biological and scenic features of Dorrigo National Park and to manage the whole area as an interrelated system.
* To protect areas of scientific importance and areas which are sensitive to disturbance.
* To protect rare, endangered and/or isolated plant and animal species and communities.
* To promote public awareness of the park, with emphasis on:
  the World Heritage status of the park; and
  the impact of human use on World Heritage values.
* To enable visitors to experience the outstanding scenic and natural qualities of the park by providing facilities and vehicle access to selected sites on the Great Escarpment section on the south-western boundary of the park.
* To enable visitors to experience a forest setting in the park by providing limited and low-impact vehicle access to, and facilities at, the Never Never Picnic Area.
* To provide opportunities for visitors to experience a range of remote natural settings throughout the balance of the park.
* To encourage the development of appropriate tourist and recreation facilities on lands adjacent to or in the proximity of the park.
3.1 OVERALL STRATEGY

The emphasis of management for Dorrigo National Park for the lifetime of this plan will be on the protection of the area.

Promotion of the park will focus on providing opportunities for promoting public awareness and appreciation of the World Heritage values of the park and the maintenance of the existing facilities on the park.
4. POLICIES AND FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGEMENT

This section contains the policies and framework for the management of Dorrigo National Park together with relevant background information. Policies and actions are summarised under the following headings:

* conservation of nature;
* cultural heritage;
* the use of the area.

The policies established in this plan of management will provide the framework for management consistent with anticipated resources available to the Service and anticipated community trends over the next five to ten years.

The actions identified are those to which priority will be given in the foreseeable future. Other management actions may be developed over the life span of this plan of management consistent with the policies set out in the plan.

4.1 CONSERVATION OF NATURE

4.1.1 Geology, Landforms, Hydrology and Soils

Dorrigo National Park lies on the eastern edge of the Dorrigo Plateau which is part of the New England Tablelands. Both plateau and escarpment land systems are represented in the park. Three important streams; Rosewood River and Never Never River which both flow to the east into the Bellinger River, and Wild Cattle Creek which flows into the Nymboida River to the west and north have their headwaters in the park.

Although Wild Cattle Creek, Never Never River and Rosewood River are all head-water catchments and do not drain large areas, the high rainfall of the area results in them being substantial water systems. A number of spectacular, and major waterfalls are located within the park, notably Gleniffer, Cedar and Casuarina Falls.

The northern section of the park is located on elevated, undulating land on the edge of the Dorrigo Plateau and is drained by Never Never River to the east and Wild Cattle Creek to the west. The edge of the plateau in this section forms a dramatic escarpment in the north-eastern area of the park within the Never Never River catchment. Wild Cattle Creek flows through the basin-like Killungoondie Plain.

The central section of the park is located in the headwaters of the Rosewood River. The river is moderately entrenched with local relief up to 940 metres. The area is hilly and contains two prominent features of the eastern Dorrigo Plateau; Dome Mountain and Dibbs Head.

The southern section of the park takes in part of the eastern escarpment of the Dorrigo Plateau. The escarpment has resulted from the headward erosion of the Rosewood River to form a deep valley. Slopes are steep and vary from 16 to 33 degrees. Local relief is up to 700 metres. Numerous small streams flow from the plateau edge to the Rosewood River, passing over cascades and waterfalls in their steep descent. A prominent feature of this section of the park is McGraths Hump (853 metres altitude) which was once part of the plateau but has now been almost isolated by erosion by the Rosewood River.

The Dorrigo Plateau is a remnant of the Ebor Volcano and basalt outcrops of that volcano occur in the south-western part of Dorrigo National Park. Much of the plateau region of the park is made up of Carboniferous metamorphic rocks mainly argillite and slates of the Moombil beds. Igneous rocks of Permian age outcrop in the southern part
of Dorrigo National Park.

The formation and distribution of soil types in the park is largely influenced by the underlying geology, topography and climate. Climatic factors become increasingly important in soil formation as elevation increases. On the more elevated sections of the park, where high rainfall, relatively cold temperatures and low rates of evaporation are experienced, soils tend to be acid, strongly leached with a high organic content from slow rates of decomposition. At lower elevations and progressively drier climates, the soils become less acid, with lower organic content, and exhibit a range of sub-soil colours.

The Catchment Management Act came into effect in 1989. Total catchment management provides an umbrella framework to aim for amongst other matters, cleaner water, less soil erosion, improved vegetation cover, the maintenance of ecological processes and a balanced and healthier environment. It also provides a focus to balance conservation needs and development pressures and encourages a more aware and involved community. An important means of achieving these aims is the formation and support of catchment management committees at a local level.

**Policies and Actions**

* The outstanding scenery and natural features of Dorrigo National Park will be protected.

* Features and sites of geological, geomorphic, and/or pedological significance will be protected.

* The water quality of catchments will be maintained and all practical steps taken to limit the entry of pollutants into catchments.

* All management activities in Dorrigo National Park, where relevant, will incorporate soil erosion management principles and practices developed by the Soil Conservation Service of NSW.

* All disturbed sites not required for public use or management purposes will be progressively rehabilitated.

* Emphasis will be given to promoting amongst visitors an understanding and appreciation of the geological and geomorphological features of Dorrigo National Park.

* The district will seek the co-operation of the Bellinger Catchment management Committee, Council, the public and other government authorities where necessary to maintain catchment stability and protection.

**4.1.2 Native Plants**

Dorrigo National Park encompasses a diverse range of physical environments, from high cool windswept and often mist-shrouded plateau margins to warm sheltered low altitude river valleys. Although relatively fertile soils occur in small areas, poor soil types are found over much of the park. The relief of the park is such that cool southern and eastern aspects to warm northern and western aspects occur, and relatively flat areas give way to precipitous falls. Because of these dramatic variations in the physical environment there are significant variations in vegetation.

The vegetation of Dorrigo National Park is classed into seven types; sub-tropical rainforest, dry rainforest, warm temperate rainforest, cool temperate rainforest, tall open forest, heath and grassland.
The park is predominantly rainforest. The northern plateau section supports mostly warm temperate rainforest with stands of tall open forest along some ridgetops and a few patches of cool temperate rainforest at the head of the Rosewood River. Isolated stands of heath occur on parts of Dome Mountain and along the ridgetop near Dibbs Head.

The vegetation of the southern escarpment sections of the park are less uniform. Rainforest extends from the rim of the Dorrigo Plateau, down the gullies to the alluvial flats along the Rosewood River. The narrow ridges separating the gullies support tall open forest. The main rainforest type is sub-tropical although warm temperate rainforest and dry rainforest also occur along the escarpment.

A summary of the vegetation types and some of their important features follows:

**Sub-Tropical Rainforest:** This rainforest type is the most luxuriant in the park and is found under the most favourable habitat conditions. Characteristic features include the great variety of tree species, tall closely spaced trees, a wealth of epiphytic ferns, orchids, numerous large vines and the frequency of trees with special growth forms such as palms, strangling figs, trees with large buttresses and trees with large simple or compound leaves.

There are two major occurrences of sub-tropical rainforest in the park. One is along the edge of the basalt-capped plateau and appears to be favoured by the deep red basalt soils and a high rainfall of about 2300 mm a year. The second is found at lower altitudes in gullies and on the alluvial flats of the Rosewood River. Its occurrence seems to be favoured by fertile alluvial soils, sheltered moist microclimate conditions and the warm coastal climate.

Both communities are of complex composition. The rainforest on the basalt cap is generally dominated by yellow carabeen (Sloanea woollsii) and black booyong (Argyrodendron actinophyllum). Other common associates are the strangler fig (Ficus watkinsiana), giant stinging tree (Dendrocnide excelsa), prickly ash (Orites excelsa) and black apple (Planchonella australis).

The park also contains the most southern occurrence of Argyrodendron trifoliatum.

**Dry rainforest:** Several patches of marginal dry rainforest occur within the southern escarpment section of the park along the Waterfall Way. They are found in the area where the Dorrigo Mountain complex of igneous rock is exposed below the basalts of the plateau. The presence of this rainforest community appears to be determined by the steep slopes of the escarpment which are covered only with a shallow, skeletal soil and rock outcrops. Another small patch is located 5 kilometres to the north-east below the cliffs at Cedar Falls, also within the park. This occurrence is also associated with a band of resistant rock that has given rise to shallow stony soils.

The community is stunted and open in some places but tall and reasonably dense in others. Vines are well developed, but epiphytes are less abundant and diverse than in the sub-tropical rainforest communities. Palms are absent and the occasional strangling figs are the small-leafed fig (Ficus obliqua) rather than the common strangling fig. Hoop pine (Araucaria cunninghamii) occurs as a tall emergent tree in some of the dry rainforest patches.

Several other trees and shrubs are species found in both sub-tropical rainforest and dry rainforest. Examples include flame tree (Brachychiton acerifolius), guioa (Guioa semiglauca), black apple (Planchonella australis), sweet pittosporum (Pittosporum undulatum) and rosewood (Dysoxylum fraseranum).
**Warm-Temperate Rainforest:** This is the second important rainforest type in terms of area in the park and occurs extensively on the northern plateau section of the park and to a limited extent on the escarpment to the south. Its distribution appears to be determined by the poorer soils derived from the slates and siltstones of the Moombil Beds and the light granite soils derived from the Dorrigo Mountain Complex.

The community is less complex and less luxuriant than sub-tropical rainforest. It has fewer large vines and epiphytes and a comparative lack of large palms, figs and buttressed trees. Tree ferns and ground ferns are abundant and thin wiry vines are common. Several tree species are common including coachwood (*Ceratopetalum apelatum*), sassafras (*Doryphora sassafras*), corkwood (*Ackama paniculata*), jackwood (*Cryptocarya glaucescens*), crab apple (*Schizomaria ovata*), prickly ash (*Orites excelsa*) and Dorrigo plum (*Endiandra introrsa*). In some areas hoop pine occurs as an emergent.

The main occurrence of warm temperate rainforest lies within that part of the park that before 1974 was part of Never Never State Forest. Annual records of timber removal go back 60 years and show that the heaviest and most extensive logging took place in the 1950s. Except for the northern side of the Rosewood River and two other small areas within the former trig reserves at Dibbs Head and Rocky Peak the warm temperate rainforest in the park has been heavily logged.

Although pockets of slightly disturbed warm temperate rainforest do occur in the heavily logged area much of the logged rainforest consists of remnant trees interspersed with small to medium sized fast growing species such as blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), callicoma (*Callicoma serratifolia*) and sweet pittosporum.

**Cool Temperate Rainforest:** Small areas of cool temperate rainforest characterised by the presence of Antarctic beech (*Nothofagus moorei*) occur within the park along the Rosewood River and the ridgetop in the Killungoondie section of the park. Some scattered trees of Antarctic beech also occur on Dome Mountain. The Antarctic beech forests contain hoop pine emergents.

Cool temperate rainforest represents the cool and moist extreme in rainforest development.

**Tall Open Forest:** Tall open forest is one of the main vegetation types in the park. In the southern escarpment section it extends down the steep ridges separating the rainforest gullies. On the northern plateau it occurs mainly along the plateau margin. Many of the stands are completely surrounded by rainforest and have probably escaped fire for long periods.

The forests are mostly of the wet sclerophyll type. The trees attain heights of sixty metres and usually have a dense to mid-dense understorey of mesophytic shrubs. However on some of the ridges below the Waterfall Way, the forests tend to be of a drier type. The shrub layer is less mesic and more open. A blady grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) ground cover is well developed. This may be due to a combination of a greater incidence of fire in this area, its exposed northern aspect and lower rainfall.

The main tree species are tallowwood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*), brush box (*Lophestemon confertus*), Sydney blue gum (*E. saligna*) and coastal blackbutt (*E. pilularis*). These trees form a variety of associations throughout the park. Brush box tends to dominate the margins of rainforest communities. Forest oak (*Casuarina torulosa*) is often present as a smaller tree layer. Less abundant species present include white mahogany (*E. acmenoides*), turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*), flooded gum (*E. grandis*), grey gum (*E. propinqua*), red bloodwood (*E. gummifera*), New England blackbut (*E. campanulata*) and white tip box.
The shrub layer is usually dense and tall and contains a high proportion of rainforest species. Burrawangs (*Lepidozamia perrofskyana*) are both widespread and common.

**Heath Scrub:** This community is found in the Dome Mountain and Dibbs Head sections of the park where it occurs in very small stands on high rocky outcrops. It is dominated by shrubs and ranges from a low stratum of 1-2 metres to a high stratum of 4-5 metres. It occurs where a combination of shallow well drained soils and a high degree of exposure to winds favour this community instead of a tree dominated community.

The main shrub species are oval mint bush (*Prostanthera ovalifolia*), New England tea tree (*Leptospermum sp. nov.*), burgan (*Leptospermum phyllicoides*), lemon scented tea tree (*Leptospermum petersonii*), creek tea tree (*Leptospermum flavescens*), mountain pomaderris (*Pomaderris nitidula*) and giant grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea australis*). The large fruited needle bush (*Hakea macreana*) occurs at both Dome Mountain and Dibbs Head. This species has a very disjunct distribution and outside Dorrigo National Park its only other occurrence is on the south coast of NSW. An unnamed species of *Baeckea* has previously been located in the same area and is considered an extremely rare plant. Recent searches for this plant have been unsuccessful.

**Grassland:** Grassland is confined to the Killungoondie Plain. It occurs on relatively fertile soils and may have developed because of past burning but is now maintained by frosts.

Forty five threatened or otherwise significant plant species are known from the park. A number of these species are of interest because they are very localised and are therefore vulnerable to localised threats. One plant *Olearia flooktoniae* has been recorded in Dorrigo National Park which is listed on Schedule 1 of the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995 as endangered and one *Sarcochilus fitzgeraldii* which is listed on Schedule 2 as vulnerable.

In addition to the native plant communities noted above there are a number of areas of cleared land within the park all of which support exotic grass species. The major cleared area is along the Rosewood River and this is currently undergoing revegetation. These cleared lands were planted with brush box, flooded gum, tallowwood and coastal blackbutt during 1976. There is still, however, a dense ground layer of kikuyu and lantana which is inhibiting the establishment of a shrub layer under the trees.

There is a cleared area on the plateau edge on the western boundary of the park. This area once supported basalt cap rainforest which is of high conservation value. An important management programme for the park is to restore this areas to rainforest.

Some of the sclerophyll forest areas of the park have been affected by logging and clearing. Within that area of the park which was previously part of Never Never State Forest, these sclerophyll forests were considerably thinned by logging in the 1950s. Logging in this area also included rainforest species such as brush box (*Lophostomen conferta*) and coachwood (*Ceratapetalum apetalum*).

**Policies and Actions**

* The management of plant communities will be directed towards promoting biodiversity and the protection of rare, endangered or threatened species in particular.
* Where a species or community under threat is sensitive to disturbance, or is rare, restricted or endemic, action will be taken to control or eliminate threats and provide additional protection where considered appropriate.

* Scientific enquiry into the distribution and habitat requirements of rare species will be encouraged.

* The distribution of plant communities within Dorrigo National Park will be mapped.

* The location of rare or endangered species will be mapped and local staff made aware of the locations of such species.

* Cleared areas not required for management or public use will be progressively revegetated.

4.1.3 Native Animals

Fauna surveys have been carried out in Dorrigo National Park as part of a major Northern Region Biodiversity Study. The data gathered is available for park management purposes on the Service’s computer geographic information system (GIS). For its size the park has a rich native fauna, some of which is considered threatened or otherwise of conservation significance. Of the threatened fauna recorded in the park four are frogs, seven are birds and seven are mammals.

Thirty species of native mammals have been confirmed as living in the park with some additional sightings, such as the parma wallaby (*Macropus parma*) requiring verification. The largest mammal inhabiting the park is the swamp wallaby (*Wallabia bicolor*). This species is common and is found throughout the park. Red-necked pademelons (*Thylogale thetis*) and long-nosed potoroos (*Potorous tridactylus*) are also found in rainforest, but are less common.

The red-legged pademelon is listed under Schedule 2 of the Threatened Species Conservation Act as vulnerable. This species is also found on the edge of the park where the rainforest and cleared land meet. The grassy land cleared of trees is understood to be important for the survival of this species. The long-nosed potoroo is also listed as vulnerable under the Threatened Species Conservation Act.

Four species of climbing possums are recorded in the park, including the common grey brush-tailed possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*), the mountain brush-tailed possum (*Trichosurus caninus*) which appears almost black in colour, the ring-tailed possum (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*) and the pygmy possum (*Cercartetus nanus*). The two brush-tailed species are understood to inhabit most of the heavily forested areas of the park. They require the hollows of mature trees for shelter and breeding sites.

The ring-tailed possum occurs in all forested areas of the park but is most common in the highland sub-tropical and warm temperate rainforest. The pygmy possum is the smallest possum in the park, about the size of a house mouse. It has only been recorded in sub-tropical rainforest.

At least four species of gliding possums are known from the park. The largest is the greater glider (*Schoinobates volans*) which is found in the eucalypt forests. The squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) and the sugar glider (*Petaurus breviceps*) have also been recorded in the park. Feather-tailed gliders (*Acrobates pygmaeus*) are also found in the park. The yellow-bellied glider (*Petaurus australis*), listed as vulnerable under the Threatened Species Conservation Act, has been recorded in the park.
Other species recorded in Dorrigo National Park include two species of bandicoot, the long-nosed bandicoot (*Parameles nasuta*) and northern brown bandicoot (*Isoodon macrourus*), spotted-tail quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*), koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) and brush-tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*). The last three animals are listed as vulnerable under the Threatened Species Conservation Act. Also found in the park are the eastern water rat (*Hydromys chrysogaster*), dingo (*Canis familiaris dingo*), several species of native rats and several species of bats.

Both of the Australian monotremes; the platypus (*Ornithorhynchus anatinus*) and the echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) occur in the park.

The most observable animals in the park are the birdlife. One hundred and twenty-eight species have been recorded and many of these species depend on the rainforest for their existence. Included in this category are many of the fruit eating pigeons, noisy pittas (*Pitta versicolor*), regent bower bird (*Sericulus chrysocephalus*), paradise rifle bird (*Ptiloris paradiseus*) and green catbird (*Ailuroedus crassirostrus*). Birds of special interest, because of their low density over an extensive distribution, are the powerful owl (*Ninox strenua*), masked owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*) and sooty owl (*Tyto novaehollandiae*) all of which are listed as vulnerable under the Threatened Species Conservation Act.

Other birds listed as vulnerable and which are found in the park are the wompoo fruit dove (*Ptilinopus magnificus*), Rose-crowned fruit dove (*Ptilinopus regina*), glossy black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus lathami*) and turquoise parrot (*Neophema pulchella*).

Due to the dense nature of the forest covering most of the park, the reptiles of the area are seldom seen. Some 44 species have been recorded including the southern angle-headed dragon (*Gonocephalus spinipes*), which is confined to the rainforest.

The moist forests and streams within the park also support a large number of frogs and toads. Of particular interest are the pouched frog (*Assa darlingtoni*), sphagnum frog (*Philoria sphagnicola*), *Mixophyes balbus* and *Litoria subglandulosa* all of which are listed on Schedule 2 of the Threatened Species Conservation Act as vulnerable. The amphibian population of the park is recognised as being a particularly useful indicator of the health of streams and other wetlands in protected areas. Monitoring of amphibian communities may indicate changes in the status of aquatic and riparian habitats.

Little is known, however, of the composition and distribution of amphibians and reptiles.

Numerically the greatest faunal resource of the park are the insects. Only a limited amount of identification of butterflies and moths has been done with no records on hand for the remaining insect inhabitants. Recent survey work carried out by the Service in collaboration with the Australian Museum, when published, will greatly improve this situation.

Under the Threatened Species Conservation Act a recovery plan must be prepared for endangered and vulnerable flora and fauna. The purpose of a recovery plan is to promote the recovery of a threatened species, population or ecological community with the aim of returning the species, population or ecological community to a position of viability in nature.

The Act provides that a recovery plan for a plant or animal listed on Schedule 1 must be prepared within five years from December 1995. The Act also provides that a recovery plan for a plant or animal listed on Schedule 2 must be prepared within ten years from December 1995.

A threat abatement plan outlines the management of key threatening processes with a view to their abatement, amelioration or elimination.
Recovery plans and threat abatement plans are prepared as part of a Service wide program and are not the responsibility of any one park or district.

**Policies and Actions**

* Native animal communities will be conserved by maintaining natural processes and diversity of habitats.

* Encouragement will be given to scientific and educational enquiry into animal species and their habitat requirements, with emphasis placed upon rare and endangered plants and threatened fauna.

* Cleared areas within the park which are known to be important habitat for the red-legged pademelon will be maintained.

* The habitats of rare or endangered species may be protected and manipulated where necessary to favour the species.

* The location of rare or endangered species will be mapped and local staff made aware of the locations of such species.

* Amphibian communities will be monitored as a means of assessing any changes to the aquatic and riparian habitats of the park.

**4.1.4 Introduced Plants and Animals**

Non-native plants are generally restricted in Dorrigo National Park to the areas previously disturbed and modified by fire, logging and/or clearing. These sites occur generally around the margins of the park, but a number of introduced species have established populations within the park.

The main problem plants in the park are lantana (*Lantana camara*), mist flower (*Ageratina riparia*) large leafed privet (*Ligustrum lucidum*) and small-leafed privet (*Ligustrum sinensis*). Madiera vine and mist flower are potentially the greatest ecological threat to the park.

Lantana is restricted in its occurrence, probably for climatic reasons, to areas predominantly below about 450 metres above sea level but has been located in very isolated patches as high as 700 metres ASL. It occurs as scattered, less vigorous bushes in lightly logged open forest and as dense thickets in heavily logged rainforest and regenerating farmland. Although commonly associated with human disturbance it has also established itself in natural open areas along the banks of the Rosewood River and along small watercourses.

Small-leafed privet occurs extensively on the Dorrigo Plateau and grows on the margins of the plateau rainforest in the park. Although privet appears to be a stabilising component of the rainforest/ farmland interface, it also forms dense thickets in some areas. Invasion of the adjoining rainforest has not taken place although there is potential for the establishment of privet in areas of high light intensity along streams, or where the forest canopy is opened up. The work of a volunteer, Mr Charles England, over a number of years has virtually removed privet from the Lower Rosewood River.

Lantana, Madeira vine (*Andredera cordifolia*), mist flower and kahill ginger (*Hedychium gardenianum*) are problems at the road verge and areas downslope of the Waterfall Way which dissects the park.

Lantana, privet, mist flower, Madiera vine and Kahill ginger are all considered major threats to the high natural values of Dorrigo National park and priority is being given to
their control. Wandering Jew *Tradescantia albiflora* also occurs on the park and has the potential to become a major environmental weed. There are, however, no long term biological control agents currently available for these weeds but significant control can be progressively extended by a limited use of herbicides, particularly if applied when most effective immediately preceding the flowering season to inhibit the spread of weeds.

In general control of privet is not as high priority as the control of mist flower, Kahill ginger and Madiera vine. However, where it can be demonstrated that privet is posing a direct threat to the conservation of native plant or animal communities, priority for its control will be high.

Manual control of weeds is not a cost effective means of weed control in the absence of a regularly available corps of volunteers.

Introduced animals found within the park include the fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), feral cat (*Felis catus*), black rat (*Rattus rattus*) the common house mouse (*Mus musculus*) and goat (*Capra hircus*). All these animals have an impact on the park either by displacement or competition with native animals, by predation and the grazing of plants or directly through soil disturbance.

1080 is used for feral animal control in Dorrigo National Park, primarily for fox control but it is also used for dog control where warranted. Red-legged pademelons living on the edge of cleared lands are vulnerable to fox predation and priority will be given to fox control along the margins of the park where cleared land and rainforest abut.

Feral animal control programs cover not only the park but also adjacent lands and are undertaken in co-operative programs with neighbours. 1080 is a preferred means of feral animal control because it is not indiscriminate, can be targeted to specific pest species and its use has been endorsed by the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The use of 1080 by the Service is subject to an environmental impact assessment, including the monitoring of water quality.

Two species of introduced bird are known in the park; the starling and goldfinch. Their occurrence, however, seems to be limited to the fringe areas of the park.

Brown trout are known to occur in the headwaters of two of the small tributaries of the Rosewood River and Wild Cattle Creek within the park.

There are no licensed apiary sites in Dorrigo National park.

**Policies and Actions**

* Introduced plants and animals will be controlled and where possible eradicated. Preference will be given to control techniques which have minimal environmental impact.

* Introduced plant and animal control programmes will be undertaken in conjunction with Bellingen Council, Rural Lands Protection Board and neighbours where appropriate.

* Priority for control of introduced plants and animals will be given to those which:
  - conflict with significant natural heritage;
  - are damaging cultural heritage;
  - are or may affect neighbouring lands;
  - may be a threat because of disease;
  - have a high capacity for dispersal;
  - are new isolated occurrences;
have the potential to be spread along roads and management tracks

Priority for research will be given in the following areas:
- biological control methods;
- assessment of the distribution, abundance and impact of introduced species on nature conservation values.

Dogs, domestic stock and other introduced animals will not be permitted in the park with the exception of guide dogs for the blind.

No apiary will be licensed in Dorrigo National Park.

The known occurrence, distribution and density of introduced plants and animals causing significant environmental damage will be mapped.

A program for the control of introduced plants and animals will be implemented. This will involve:
- Biological control agents will be used for control of pest species wherever available;
- Chemical treatment of lantana will be carried out on the higher altitude infestations to slow the progress of the species onto the Dorrigo Plateau area;
- Privet will be controlled within the park where it is identified as a threat to specific plant communities and wildlife habitats and follow up programs will be carried out in those areas where it has been successfully removed;
- Chemical treatment of mist flower will continue on the Rosewood River and its tributaries;
- Physical and chemical treatment of Madeira vine will continue; and
- Areas previously treated for Kahill Ginger will be monitored and treatment repeated if necessary by chemical spraying and physical removal.

Priority will be given to fox control along the margins of the park where cleared land and rainforest abut.

The involvement of volunteers in manual weed control programs will be sought.

4.1.5 Fire Management

Fire has long been an important phenomenon in determining the pattern of native plant and animal distribution in Australia and much of the Australian flora and fauna is adapted to the impact of fire. Rainforest communities, however, unlike the eucalypt communities, are particularly sensitive to fire.

Because of its distribution within the high rainfall belt of the east coast of Australia, rainforest is normally not susceptible to wildfire. Rainforest microclimates add further protection because a high level of humidity is maintained within the forest itself and fire will only occasionally burn through rainforest during exceptional periods of low rainfall. This produces a pattern of many years with little or no fire threat and occasional seasons with great potential for fire to cause serious damage. As these extreme fire seasons are infrequent and no formal recording process has previously existed for the area of the park, little is known of the local fire history.
In close association with the rainforest and occupying a considerable area of the park are the sclerophyll communities. The most significant influence of fire on rainforest is the delimiting of rainforest margins when fire burns through the adjacent fire tolerant eucalypt forests. Over a long period this may have a cumulative effect on the distribution of both rainforest and the adjacent plant communities.

Thus effective exclusion of fire from rainforest may result in extension of the rainforest into adjoining eucalypt communities whilst wildfire under conditions which allow it to penetrate rainforest may result in a retreat of the rainforest and advance of the eucalypts.

In Dorrigo National Park the distribution of rainforest and eucalypt forest is that of a complex mosaic. Many eucalypt stands are now completely or almost completely surrounded by fire barriers in the form of rainforest. These fire shadow stands often have a dense moist forest understorey and are in a transitional stage from a eucalypt dominated community to that of a rainforest community.

Due to the natural factors of high rainfall and the extensive development of rainforest within Dorrigo National Park, the incidence of fire from natural causes is very low. Because of the extent of the original Dorrigo Plateau rainforest and the moist nature of the escarpment forests between the Rosewood River and the plateau, it is assumed that historically most fires would have travelled along the McGraths Hump spur east of the Rosewood River.

For communities such as the wet sclerophyll forest and heathlands, there is insufficient information to identify their fire requirements. However fire at infrequent intervals and affecting only localised areas is unlikely to cause significant ecological damage. Scientific understanding of the fire regime for the Killungoondie grasslands is not good. An increased incidence of fire may be required to maintain this area as grassland.

Fire management in Dorrigo National Park will continue to emphasise the early suppression of all unscheduled fire. Experimentation with fire on communities such as the sclerophyll forests and grasslands and the monitoring of the invasion of these communities by other plant species or forest types may lead to the adoption of fire prescriptions that will maintain these communities as a complex mosaic of rainforest and other communities.

The most likely threat to the park in modern times is the escape of fire from the Waterfall Way or from farmlands adjoining lower altitude hardwood forests along the Rosewood River.

Under the Rural Fires Act (1997) the Service is a fire authority and is responsible for containing fires on areas of national park and to ensure they do not cause damage to other land or property. This responsibility includes the implementation of fuel management programs by prescribed burning and other mechanical means. The Service may also assist with the control and suppression of fires adjacent to reserved lands.

The Service regards co-operative fire management as essential for both the protection of property and of the natural resources of the national park. An important part of the Service’s fire management is participation as a member of Bellingen and Coffs Harbour District Bushfire Management Committees in the preparation of a plan of operations and a bush fire risk management plan under Section 52 of the Rural Fires Act.

These plans contain an introduction and address operational arrangements, fuel management planning and include a resources directory. The commitments each organisation makes in these plans are legally binding. The plans recognise the need to systematically map or otherwise identify all environmental resources, including vegetation, topography, and Aboriginal or historic heritage sites.
In accordance with the Service wide program on fire management planning, a fire management plan for Dorrigo National Park will be prepared which will identify the bushfire threat, requirements for the conservation of native plants and animals and provide the basis for management strategies and prescriptions. The plan will establish community protection measures in areas where it is identified that fire is a threat to both property and biodiversity.

**Policies and Actions**

* Fire in Dorrigo National Park will be managed in accordance with a Fire Management Plan so as to protect:
  - human life and property;
  - biodiversity; and
  - Aboriginal sites, historic places, management facilities.

* In accordance with Service policy and priorities a fire management plan will be prepared for Dorrigo National Park. The fire management plan will be placed on exhibition for public comment before its final adoption by the Service.

* All wildfires occurring in Dorrigo National Park will be suppressed.

* Preference will be given to fire suppression methods which have least adverse environmental impact on the national park.

* Use of heavy plant and equipment off existing roads and tracks will be avoided where possible.

* Liaison will be maintained with bushfire brigades, local government and neighbours to ensure co-ordination in suppression of wildfires in the park and on adjoining lands.

* The Service will continue to develop co-operative strategies with other authorities and landholders as a basis for fire management.

* Priority in all fire management will be given to areas of the park adjoining property where there is potential high fire risk.

* The Fire Management Plan will include as high priority public and neighbour education and liaison programs to foster an awareness of the Service’s objectives and management programs with respect to fire management for the national park.

* Research into the management of fire will be encouraged to develop and where necessary modify fire prescriptions, in particular:
  - the responses of individual plant and animal communities to fire;
  - the fire requirements of the rainforest/wet sclerophyll interface; and
  - the species composition and response to fire of the Killungoondie grassland.

* Research into fire history and the impact of fire on past and present native plant and animal communities will be encouraged.

* As research findings relevant to fire effects on vegetation communities and animal habitats are made available, they will be incorporated in fire management plans.
* The Service will contribute to the preparation of Section 52 plans of operations and bush fire risk management plans by Bellinger and Coffs Harbour District Fire Committees.

* Records of fire occurrence will be maintained for the park.

* Until more information becomes available covering the effects of fire, prescribed fire will be excluded from the following areas as far as practical:
  - rainforest communities; and
  - habitats of rare and endangered plant and animal species.

4.2 CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Dorrigo Plateau lies within the territory of the Gumbaingerii Aboriginal people. To date, however, the archaeological evidence for their use of the present area of Dorrigo National Park and the escarpment forests to the west and north is minimal, due partly to a lack of archaeological surveys in the area. In addition, archaeological surveys elsewhere in the northern forests of NSW have demonstrated that the material record of Aboriginal use of the rainforest is elusive, sometimes cryptic. The record is easily disturbed and often has been destroyed by European use of the land.

The following Aboriginal site types could be expected to have occurred in the park; river campsites, stone quarries and workshops, shelter deposits and ceremonial sites. Campsites are located primarily on terraces adjacent to perennial streams, although stone tool workshops can be found away from water.

There is no satisfactory chronology for Aboriginal use of the upper catchments of the North Coast rivers, such as in Dorrigo National Park, although it is known that exploitation of the escarpment forests by Aboriginal people increased about 5 000 years ago.

Dorrigo National Park falls within the area of the Gumbaingerri Local Aboriginal Land Council.

Early European use of the area was predominantly timber getting, in particular red cedar and hoop pine. This was followed by clearing for pasture and agriculture.

The most impressive evidence of past timber getting exists on Syndicate Ridge within the park, State forest and Crown Land, where the remains of a tramway can be found. The tramway was constructed in 1912 to carry Hoop Pine down the escarpment to Glennifer in the Bellinger Valley. A walking track exists along part of the route of the tramway. The remains of the tramway are most readily viewed from within the park.

Part of Dorrigo National Park was first reserved in 1901 to protect the Sherrard and Newell Falls on the Waterfall Way. This small area was subsequently reserved for public recreation in 1902. Although parts of the park were first reserved in 1902 most areas have been, to differing extents, affected by logging. In particular, those most recently added having previously been State Forest.

Policies and Actions

* The provisions of the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra charter) will guide management decisions for Aboriginal sites and other significant cultural places in Dorrigo National Park.

* Aboriginal sites will be recorded, conserved, and protected in consultation with
the Gumbaingerri Local Aboriginal Land Council.

* Sites of cultural heritage significance will be protected. Where appropriate:
  - the natural degradation of sites will be retarded; and
  - sites protected from user and management activities.

* Further research into the cultural and scientific significance of Aboriginal sites in the park will be encouraged.

* The park's registers of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sites will be maintained and updated.

* A conservation plan will be prepared for the Syndicate Tramway and precinct.

* The continued co-operation of State Forests and the Bellinger Valley Historical Society will be sought to maintain those parts of the Syndicate Track outside the national park as a site of cultural significance.

4.3 USE OF THE PARK

Dorrigo National Park will be managed to ensure that its use, whether by the general public, special interest groups, Service managers or other authorities, is appropriate and conforms with the management objectives and policies of this plan.

The major categories of use that may be appropriate within Service areas are:

- promotion of natural and cultural heritage conservation and environmental education;
- recreation in a natural setting;
- research; and
- management operations by the Service and other authorities.

The extent to which these categories of use are appropriate to Dorrigo National Park are indicated below.

4.3.1 Promotion of the Park

Interpretation and environmental education programmes are an important responsibility of the Service and assist in the protection of natural and cultural features. To this end Dorrigo National Park offers a wide range of rainforest types and associations typical of the east coast of Australia. Dorrigo National Park is perhaps the most accessible national park to the public along the Great Escarpment of the north coast of NSW.

A further important aspect of the strategy of promoting the park is the encouragement of an appreciation and understanding by visitors to the park of the relationship of the park to other conservation areas in NSW. In the case of Dorrigo National Park important programmes with this aim concern:

- the importance of Dorrigo National Park, New England National Park and Mount Hyland Nature Reserve as one of the eight groups of national parks which conserve the eight centres of rainforest distribution in NSW; and
- the importance of Dorrigo National Park as one of a system of national parks
within the region which protect areas containing landscapes and plant and animal
communities typical of the New England Tableland and the Great Escarpment.

Dorrigo Rainforest Centre is of regional significance in the interpretation of rainforests,
in particular those listed as World Heritage Areas. The Rainforest Centre is the regional
interpretation centre for the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia World
Heritage Area. Dorrigo National Park was considered best suited to this function
because of its accessibility and ability to cater for large numbers of visitors.

The Rainforest Shop and Canopy Cafe are both situated at the Rainforest Centre and
are operated by district staff of the Service. These two facilities are operated on a
commercial basis and are integral parts of the Rainforest Centre, in keeping with the
style and quality of the centre as a whole. Shop and cafe staff are trained public contact
personnel and assist in the provision of information as well as their other duties, thus
contributing to consistency in public relations and therefore park management.

The majority of visitors visit the Rainforest Centre and the Upper Dorrigo Escarpment
area of the park. Interest has, however, been shown in other commercial activities
including bush walking tours. These activities are considered to be potentially
appropriate uses of the park.

The Service will provide a range of information to the public about Dorrigo National Park
and its management. Information will also be available in the form of brochures and
information sheets to assist the general community and visitors to the park.

The Field Study Centre has been established in the park near the Rainforest Centre for
education and training, with accommodation for approved groups. This facility is also
used for Discovery Ranger programmes and is available for scientists and students
undertaking research and education projects. It is also used as a Regional staff training
centre.

Holiday interpretive activities are run by the District as part of the Discovery Ranger
programmes. These activities are designed to introduce visitors to the park’s natural
and cultural features and their management.

In addition to the programmes proposed above, promotion of the park will emphasise
explaining to neighbours of the park the Service’s land care responsibilities; particularly
with respect to fire management, feral animal control and weed control.

**Policies and Actions**

* Interpretation programmes, including the Discovery Ranger programme, will
  promote public awareness of the park with emphasis on:

  - the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia World Heritage
    Areas of north eastern New South Wales;

  - the importance of Dorrigo National Park, New England National Park and
    Mount Hyland Nature Reserve as one of the eight groups of national parks
    which conserve the eight centres of rainforest distribution in NSW;

  - the importance of Dorrigo National Park as one of a system of national
    parks within the region which protect areas containing plant and animal
    communities typical of the New England Tableland and the Great
    Escarpment on the north coast;

  - the park’s geological features; and
- cultural features of the park.
* Emphasis will be placed on explaining to neighbours of the park the Service's programmes for fire management, feral animal control and weed control.
* The Rainforest Centre will be the focus for interpretative activities.
* Use of the Field Study Centre will be promoted amongst schools, other educational institutions and local environmental interest groups.
* A range of information including brochures, display panels and videos will be provided to help people understand and appreciate Dorrigo National Park and the park system as a whole.
* Promotion of the park will be directed towards encouraging its appropriate and low key use with emphasis on protecting the area from degradation.
* Guided walks (low impact) and tours will be permitted as commercial activities utilising existing facilities.
* The District will continue to manage the Cafe and Rainforest Shop.
* Certification and training will be provided to those tour operators using the park to ensure that non-Service publicity and interpretation programmes are consistent with the aims of the Service’s visitor education objectives.
* Training and support for public contact staff including volunteers will be provided.
* All tour operators conducting commercial activities in the park will be required to be licensed under the National Parks and Wildlife Act (1974).

* The provision of self-funding activities outside school holiday programs will be established.

* Visitor use of the Rainforest Centre will continue to be monitored as a basis for keeping management in touch with visitors expectations.

### 4.3.2 Recreation Opportunities

Dorrigo National Park provides a significant and long established component of the outdoor recreation opportunities on the Dorrigo Plateau. This role has been greatly enhanced in recent years with the establishment of the Rainforest Centre. The result has been an increase in visitation to the park and to the Dorrigo Plateau and in 1994-95 162,000 visitors passed through the Rainforest Centre.

A study undertaken in 1989 by the Centre for Leisure and Tourism Studies, Ku-ring-gai college of Advanced Education (now the University of Technology, Sydney) demonstrated that rainforest was a major attraction for a large number of visitors to Dorrigo National Park (39% of visitors rated rainforest as very important).

The Centre for Leisure and Tourism Studies also found that almost two thirds of visitors to the park (63%) came from outside the Dorrigo/mid-North Coast area; most of these visitors were on holidays.

Three recreation settings are provided in Dorrigo National Park which cater for different expectations of visitors:

- **the Rainforest Centre and the Glade** are located on the escarpment rim along the western boundary of the national park. The Rainforest Centre and the nearby Glade picnic area cater for a high number of visitors and are easily accessible by vehicle on sealed roads. Facilities provided in addition to the Rainforest Centre include car parking, a sky-walk at the Rainforest Centre, viewing points and access for the disabled.

  The track system leading from both the rainforest Centre and The Glade has been surfaced to minimise wear and elevated board walks and lookouts have been provided along the track linking the two areas. A highlight is the Walk with the Birds at the edge of the Glade picnic area. Other walking tracks included in this setting are the Wonga Walk which gives access to Tristania Falls and Crystal Shower Falls.

- **the Never Never area** is a relatively remote picnic area accessible by vehicle via the unsealed Dome Road. The area has a well established system of natural surface walking tracks and is located on Sassafras Creek, a tributary of the Rosewood Creek. Walking tracks in the Never Never area are of moderate length and give access to features of interest such as Coachwood Falls, Cedar Falls, Casuarina Falls and Callicoma Falls. The Never Never area provides a different recreational setting to that offered by the Rainforest Centre and The Glade with less visitors, less development and more demanding walks.

- **remote natural areas** are areas within the park such as the Killungoondie area, Never Never River (both Upper and Lower) and the Lower Dorrigo Escarpment/Bellinger Valley that are capable of providing opportunities for solitude and self-reliant recreation. The remote natural areas setting includes all those areas of the park outside the established walking track networks of the Upper Dorrigo Escarpment and the Never Never Picnic Area. These areas include walking routes.
A number of public roads give access to the boundaries of, or pass through Dorrigo National Park:

- **The Waterfall Way** (Main Road 76), is the main road access between the high population centres of the coast and the New England Tablelands and is used by a large number of trucks and other heavy vehicles. The section of the road through the park is steep, narrow and winding and is excluded from the park. Main Road 76 is the only access to Dorrigo National Park from the surrounding coastal and New England regions. On the basis of the information collected by the Centre for Leisure and Tourism Studies many of the tourists using this road visit the park.

- **Bellingen Council** maintains three rest areas on the side of the Waterfall Way at Newell Falls, Mountain Top and Thora.

- **Dome Road** links Main Road 76 with Dorrigo National Park in the vicinity of the Rainforest Centre. This road carries all of the traffic to the Rainforest Centre and The Glade. Dome Road also skirts the western and part of the north-western boundary of the park until in the vicinity of Dome Mountain and gives access to the Never Never Picnic Area.

- **Slingsbys Road** provides access to the Killungoondie area of the park from the west.

- **Whitneys Track** provides access to the northern boundary of the park on the watershed of the remote Never Never River area of the park.

- **Little North Arm Road** provides access to the south-eastern section of the park on the lower Rosewood River. No formalised walking track exists in this area, however the road is used in this area by walkers.

Two roads within the park provide vehicle access and are the responsibility of the National Parks and Wildlife Service:

- **An extension of the Dome Road** from the park boundary near Dome Mountain to the Never Never Picnic Area.

- **Lyrebird Lane** provides access to the Field Study Centre and The Glade picnic area from the Rainforest Centre.

The public vehicle access system is outlined on the map, centre pages.

There are two main walking tracks systems within the park:

- in the Upper Dorrigo Escarpment near the Rainforest Centre an the Glade Picnic area;

- around the Never Never Picnic Area;

and walking routes

- in the remote northern area of the park where a walking route has been established along Slingsbys Track within the Killungoondie Plain; and

- below Glennifer Falls on the Lower Never Never River and along Whitneys Track within the headwaters of the Never Never River.

Each of these areas provides different opportunities to experience the park. The Satinbird Stroll and the Walk with the Birds at the Glade have an emphasis on
interpretation and provision of facilities for inexperienced, elderly or disabled walkers. The walks around the Never Never Picnic Area are of moderate length but easy grade. Whitneys Track and Slingsbys Track provide self reliant walking routes through the Never Never River area and the Killungoondie area of the park. These walks offer overnight camping opportunities.

The walks in the most accessible parts of the park around the Rainforest Centre and The Glade attract the largest number of visitors. In comparison, the Never Never area receives a moderate level of use and the routes in the balance of the park attract the least use.

The walking track system in the area of the Rainforest Centre and The Glade is a major feature of the park and requires a high degree of development and maintenance to ensure that the level of use and the expectations of visitors are satisfied. Maintaining the walking track system in this area to a high standard is an important strategy to promote the importance of rainforest conservation and the importance of the World Heritage Rainforests.

No camping area with amenities exists within the park. Bush camping is permitted in the Killungoondie area by overnight walkers. A range of camping and accommodation facilities exist nearby to the park at the Mountain Top and within Dorrigo township.

Day use and parking facilities are provided at the Rainforest Centre and the Glade and the Never Never Picnic Area. The facilities include picnic grounds, barbecue facilities, toilets, shelters and access to the walking track system.

Parking facilities are adequate for the Glade and Never Never Picnic areas. The Rainforest Centre car parking facilities often become over-loaded during peak periods and remain so for extended periods due to the popularity of the facilities provided at the Rainforest Centre.

Picnic, barbecue and shelter facilities at the Rainforest Centre and Never Never Picnic Area are adequate. The Rainforest Centre provides picnic facilities in open space and landscaped gardens. The Glade now duplicates this facility and will be redeveloped with appropriate tree planting and regeneration. Redeveloped barbecue and picnic facilities will complement the associated walks and the forest itself. The amenities block is difficult to service due to its age and is not an efficient use of space as it was designed as a camping facility not a day use facility. Redevelopment of The Glade will be subject to interpretation of the physical evidence and of the association of The Glade with the early development and use of the park.

Horseriding is not permitted within the national park because of the steep grades and high rainfall which make soil erosion a potentially major problem.

**Policies and Actions**

* The existing day use facilities within the park will be maintained in a manner consistent with the recreation settings outlined in this plan.

* Subject to environmental and other considerations, day use and parking facilities may be modified to reduce traffic congestion and overcrowding in a manner consistent with the recreation settings outlined in this plan.

* The present car park at the Rainforest Centre will be extended.

* Subject to on site interpretation showing the association of the evidence at The Glade with the early development and use of the park, The Glade will be redeveloped by replacing the old amenities block with a galley and toilet block and partly re-vegetating the grassed area to create discrete barbecue sites.
Management of the remote natural areas will be characterised by a minimum of facilities, services and regulation that reflects their natural and remote setting.

Liaison will be maintained with Bellingen Council and the Roads and Traffic Authority over maintenance and upgrading of access roads to the park with the aim of reducing any unacceptable environmental impacts on the park.

The existing roads within the park will be maintained:
- the Dome Road which gives access to Never Never Picnic Area; and
- Lyrebird Lane which gives access to The Glade.

Heavy vehicles will be advised of the limitations of vehicle access along the road to Never Never Picnic Area.

The existing walking track systems will be maintained:
- in the Upper Dorrigo Escarpment area near the Rainforest Centre and the Glade picnic area; and
- around the Never Never Picnic Area.

Walking tracks will be maintained to a standard necessary for the level of use they receive, the most efficient means of maintenance and in a manner consistent with the recreation settings outlined in this plan.

All walking tracks will be graded according to difficulty for walkers. Where required, information will be displayed at entry points to tracks and routes notifying walkers of track difficulty.

Track markers will be installed on those walking routes where visitors often experience navigation problems.

The Wonga Walk will be surfaced with a material such as gravel to minimise wear where necessary to improve visitor safety and comfort and to avoid track deterioration due to increased visitor usage.

Slingsbys and Whitneys tracks in the north of the park will be promoted as walking routes within the remote natural area.

The Code of Minimal Impact Bushwalking will be promoted for users of Dorrigo National Park.

Bush camping will be permitted in the remote natural areas of the park subject to the code of minimal impact camping.

Horse riding will not be permitted in the park.
4.3.3 Research

The purpose of scientific study in Dorrigo National Park is to improve the Service’s understanding of the park’s natural and cultural heritage and the processes which affect them. Research will also establish the requirements for the management of particular species. Data and findings from research studies and surveys will be utilised in park management. The park has long been important to research and educational institutions in Armidale.

The Service does not presently have the resources to undertake any long term research in the park and relies upon work done by outside scientific institutions. Recent studies undertaken in the park includes research into the following:

- The southern angle headed dragon;
- Various invertebrates including *Lepidoptera*;
- Growth forms and ecology of plants, particularly rainforest species;
- North East Forest Biodiversity Survey undertaken by the National Parks and Wildlife Service; and
- North East Forest Invertebrate Survey undertaken by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Australian Museum.

The information gathered by these surveys is recorded in the Service’s GIS data base and is used for park management and other purposes.

For the effective management of research and teaching activities in the park there are three important components:

- establishment of priorities for research projects and monitoring programs which reflect park management needs;
- establishment of a system for the documentation and dissemination of research results and the management of research and educational programs through controls on all such activities, whether carried out by the Service or by other agencies or people; and
- application of criteria and conditions, so that the natural values and features preserved in the park and other management objectives are not compromised.

Policies and Actions

* Priority will be given to research into:
- the ecology, status and distribution of plant and animal species and communities;
- comparative studies of the reserves and other conservation areas in the Dorrigo and New England region;
- the effects of fire on the reserves plant and animal communities;
- the protection of rare plant and animal species;
- the impacts of pest species, and potential control measures.
- the effects of management on the ecology of the park; and
the effects of visitor use on the natural and cultural heritage of the park.

* All research will be subject to Service policy and procedures for scientific permits.

* A prospectus will be prepared as a guide to preferred research projects in the national park.

4.3.4 Management Operations

A number of facilities necessary for the management of the park are located within the park. These facilities include the Dorrigo District office of the Service which is part of the Rainforest Centre Complex.

A system of park management trails is maintained within the park. This system includes:

- That part of Slingsbys Track within the park which will be maintained for emergency and management vehicle access into the Killungoondie Plain area of the park. This track is also used by walkers in the park to gain access to the spectacular Lanes Lookout which overlooks the escarpment at the head of the Never Never River; and

- The Devils Elbow and Fernyface trails near the southern boundary of the park.

The management trail system within the park links with trails in adjacent State Forests and private lands and provides access for fire prevention and control.

No vehicle tracks will be maintained in the upper catchment of the Never Never River.

The management track system is outlined on the map, centre pages.

In addition to the above, a number of government organisations and a neighbour occupy or use lands within Dorrigo National Park. All such works, facilities and operations require a lease, licence or easement under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. A licence is current for access across the park to Portion 107, Parish of Never Never, County of Raleigh.

Main Road 76 passes through the park on Dorrigo Mountain and a large section of the park lies downslope of the road. The road is an existing and potential threat to the park through weed infestation, stream pollution from road surface run-off, rubbish and debris from the high usage rest area and passing traffic, vehicle accidents, plant pilfering and feral animal ingress.

A vehicle accident involving a chemical or fuel spill and/or explosion would pose a major threat to the park's native plant and animal communities.

The Megan to Mt Moombil Road is a minor road that defines part of the northern boundary of Dorrigo National Park. This road provides access to the Mt Moombil telecommunications tower, and is maintained by Bellingen Council, the Forestry Commission and Telecom Australia with restricted public access.
Policies and Actions

* A system of management trails will be maintained by the Service for essential management purposes as outlined on the map, centre pages.

* Only authorised use of the management trail system will be permitted.

* Bellingen Council and the Roads and Traffic Authority will be urged to upgrade Main Road 76 to reduce threats to the park, improve safety and improve water catchment quality.

* Existing leases, licences and other occupancies in the park will be kept under regular review and where appropriate the facility or occupancy, including associated roads, will be relocated or closed and the site rehabilitated.

* For those works, facilities and operations found to be essential and for which no formal agreements with the Director-General or Minister are current, action will be taken to lease or licence the works, facilities or operations under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.

* All such leases, licences or easements granted under the Act will be managed in accordance with the principles and objectives of this plan of management and in accordance with the conditions of the lease, licence or agreement document.

* For those other works, facilities and operations where leases and licences are not granted, action will be taken to remove them.

* New works, facilities or operations proposed by any organisation or individual will not be licensed unless they are consistent with the purpose of reservation of the park and with the principles and objectives of this plan of management.

* Slingsbys walking track within the park will be maintained to allow emergency and management vehicle access to the Killungoondie Plains area of the park as far as Lanes Lookout.

* The Service will seek the co-operation of all relevant authorities in the preparation of an emergency plan for the Waterfall Way. The plan will:
  
  - identify the potential threats and impacts arising from an emergency on the road:
  
  - co-ordinate the roles of the various authorities responsible for emergency operations;
  
  - specify the procedures for limiting the immediate impact of any emergency; and
  
  - specify the responsibilities and procedures for undertaking any moderate to long term rehabilitation of the park arising from any emergency.
5. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This plan of management is part of a framework of management developed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The framework includes the National Parks and Wildlife Act, field management policies, established conservation and recreation philosophies, and strategic planning at corporate, regional and district levels.

The orderly implementation of this plan will be undertaken within the annual programmes of the Service’s Dorrigo District. Priorities, determined in the context of district and regional strategic planning, will be subject to the availability of necessary staff and funds and to any special requirements of the Director-General or Minister.

District programmes are subject to ongoing review, within which, works and other activities carried out at Dorrigo National Park are evaluated in relation to the objectives laid out in this plan.

The environmental impact of all development proposals will continue to be assessed at all stages of the development and any necessary investigations undertaken in accordance with established environmental assessment procedures.

Section 81 of the Act requires that this plan shall be carried out and given affect to, and that no operations shall be undertaken in relation to the national park unless they are in accordance with the plan. However, if after adequate investigation, operations not included in the plan are found to be justified, this plan may be amended in accordance with section 74(8) of the Act.

As a guide to the orderly implementation of this plan, relative priorities for identified activities are summarised below:

**Plants (native and introduced)**

* **High Priority** The distribution of plant communities within Dorrigo National Park will be mapped.

* **Medium Priority** Cleared areas not required for management or public use will be progressively revegetated.

* **High Priority** The known occurrence, distribution and density of introduced plants causing significant environmental damage will be mapped.

* **Medium Priority** Biological control agents will be used for control of pest species wherever available.

* **Medium Priority** Chemical treatment of lantana will be carried out on a higher altitude infestations to slow the progress of the species onto the Dorrigo Plateau area.

* **High Priority** Privet will be controlled within the park where it is identified as a threat to specific plant communities and wildlife habitats and follow-up programs will be carried out in those areas where it has been successfully removed.

* **High Priority** Chemical treatments of mist flower will continue on the Rosewood River and its tributaries.

* **High Priority** Physical and chemical treatment of Madeira vine will continue.
* **High Priority** Areas previously treated for Kahill Ginger will be monitored and treatment repeated if necessary, by chemical spraying and physical removal will continue.

**Animals (native and introduced)**

* **High Priority** The location of rare or endangered species will be mapped and local staff made aware of the locations of such species.

**Fire Management**

* **High Priority** The Service will contribute to the preparation of District Fire Management Plans.

* **Medium Priority** Records of fire occurrence will be maintained for the park.

* **Medium Priority** Until more information becomes available covering the effects of fire, prescribed fire will be excluded from the following areas as far as practical:

  - rainforest communities; and
  - habitats of rare and endangered plant and animal species.

* **Medium Priority** A Fire Management Plan will be prepared for Dorrigo National Park in accordance with the Service wide priorities for Fire Management Plan preparation.

**Recreation Opportunities**

* **High Priority** Surface the Wonga Walk to minimise wear where necessary to improve visitor safety and to avoid track deterioration due to increased visitor usage.

* **Medium Priority** The present car park at the Rainforest Centre will be extended.

* **Medium Priority** The glade will be re-developed by replacing the old amenities block with a galley and toilet block and partly revegetating the grassed area to create discrete barbecue sites and providing on-site interpretation.

* **High Priority** Heavy vehicles will be advised of the limitations of vehicle access along the road to Never Never Picnic Area.

* **Medium Priority** Liaison will be maintained with Bellingen Council regarding the maintenance of the Dome Road outside the park.

* **Medium Priority** All walking tracks will be graded according to difficulty for walkers. Where required, information will be displayed at entry points to tracks and routes notifying walkers of track difficulty.

* **High Priority** Track markers will be installed on those walking routes where visitors often experience navigation problems.

* **High Priority** The Code of Minimal Impact Bushwalking will be promoted for users of Dorrigo National Park.
Cultural Heritage

* Medium Priority  A conservation plan will be prepared for the Syndicate Tramway and precinct.

* Low Priority  The continued co-operation of the State Forests and the Bellinger Valley Historical Society will be sought to maintain those parts of the Syndicate Track outside the national park as a site of cultural significance.

* Low Priority  The park’s registers of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sites will be maintained and updated.

Promotion of the Park

* High Priority  The District will continue to manage the Cafe and Rainforest Shop.

* High Priority  Training and support for public contact staff including volunteers will be provided.

* High Priority  All tour operators conducting commercial activities in the park will be required to be licensed under the National Parks And Wildlife Act.

* Medium Priority  Certification and training will be provided to those tour operators using the park to ensure that non-Service publicity and interpretation programmes are consistent with the aims of the Service’s visitor education objectives.

* Medium Priority  The provision of self-funding interpretative activities outside school holiday programs will be established.

* Medium Priority  Visitor use of the Rainforest Centre will continue to be monitored as a basis for keeping management in touch with visitors expectations.

Research

* Medium Priority  A prospectus will be prepared as a guide to preferred research projects in the national park.

Management operations

* Low Priority  Whitney’s walking track within the park will be maintained to allow emergency and management vehicle access to the headwaters of the Never Never River area of the park.

* High Priority  An Emergency Plan for the Waterfall Way will be prepared in consultation with Bellingen Council and the Roads and Traffic Authority

* Low Priority  Slingsbys walking track within the park will be maintained to allow emergency and management vehicle access to the Killungoondie Plains area of the park.
6. SELECTED REFERENCES


Bodkin, F. (1986) *Encyclopaedia Botanica.* Angus and Robertson


