



NSW **National Parks
and Wildlife Service**

Amendments to Scheyville National Park and Pitt Town Nature Reserve Plan of Management

May 2009

Department of **Environment & Climate Change** NSW



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INTRODUCTION

The following amendments to the *Scheyville National Park and Pitt Town Nature Reserve Plan of Management* (2000) were adopted by the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment on 25th May 2009.

AMENDMENTS

Fire Management (Section 4.1.7)

1. Preventing Wildfire (page 31)

Old policy: “A fire management plan for Scheyville National Park will be prepared by December 2000.”

Adopted new policy: “*A Reserve Fire Management Strategy for Scheyville National Park and Pitt Town Nature Reserve will be prepared, publicly displayed and adopted.*”

2. Preventing Wildfire (page 31)

Old Policy: “Fire danger signs will be erected on the national park, and fire regulations will be publicised.”

Adopted new policy: “*Total Fire Bans and fire regulations affecting park visitors will be publicised.*”

3. Fuel Reduction Activities (page 31)

Old policy: “The NPWS will encourage fuel reduction activities off-park as an alternative to fuel reduction on the national park and nature reserve.”

Adopted new policy: “*The NPWS will encourage fuel reduction activities off park as an alternative to fuel reduction on the national park and nature reserve. It will contribute to the integrated management of fuel and other fire hazards across all tenures through participation in the District Bushfire Management Committee and the implementation of relevant portions of the Committee’s approved Bush Fire Risk Plans.*”

4. Fuel Reduction Activities (page 31)

Old policy: “Planned fuel reduction burning may be undertaken on Scheyville National Park to reduce the risk of high intensity fire close to property (consistent with the criteria for determining the fire hazard and associated fuel reduction zones) and to protect areas where there are fire sensitive soils, communities , habitats or species. Fuel reduction burning will not be undertaken close to Longneck Lagoon, Llewellyn Creek or Longneck Creek.”

Adopted new policy: *“Prescribed burning may be done in Scheyville National Park and Pitt Town Nature Reserve to reduce fuel, with the aim of lessening the risk of high intensity fire close to property or assets (consistent with bushfire risk management planning and the adopted Reserve Fire Management Strategy) and for ecological purposes. It may also be done to protect areas where there are fire sensitive soils, vegetation communities, habitats or species, to control weeds, and to provide fuel-reduced areas in strategic locations. Prescribed burning in riparian areas needs particularly careful attention and will only be done after careful consideration of any environmental effects.”*

5. Fuel Reduction Activities (page 32)

Old policy: “No large area burning will be undertaken in Scheyville National Park without detailed research into the fire ecology of Cumberland Plain vegetation.”

Adopted amendment: Delete policy.

Management of Hydrology and Water Quality (section 4.1.2)

6. Management of Long Neck Lagoon (page 13)

Current Text: “In the 1980s investigations were undertaken by the Longneck Lagoon Trust into the possibility of installing sluice gates on Longneck Lagoon so that the height of water in the Lagoon could be regulated to approximate natural changes in water levels. It is now considered that changing the water level will have a major impact on the surrounding vegetation which has adapted to the new water levels and that it would reduce the value of the lagoon as a habitat for waterbirds during drought years.”

Adopted new text: *“Since 2000, Longneck Lagoon has been invaded by the aquatic weed Salvinia molesta. This highly invasive and fast-growing weed has completely covered the lagoon twice, causing major loss of habitat for birds and aquatic life.*

The lagoon has also been through at least two major drought periods, during which the water level has dropped significantly. This has allowed NPWS staff to observe the ways in which the lagoon and its vegetation (both native and weed) react to drying and wetting phases.

Salvinia is greatly advantaged by relatively unfluctuating water levels, and these appear to be the conditions under which it grows best. However, drying phases not only make Salvinia easier to control by reducing its movement around the lagoon, but they also strand a significant proportion of the population, killing some and making it easier to collect the remainder. By contrast, the native aquatic and shoreline vegetation has been observed to respond extremely well to alternate wetting and drying phases, which is the water regime under which it has evolved. This drying and wetting also provides a significant boost to the primary productivity

of lagoon, as the vegetation and litter accumulated during the drying phase provides food for the aquatic life that multiplies during the wetting phase.

There has also been no evidence that waterbirds are disadvantaged by the drying of the lagoon during drought periods. On the contrary, there has been a major influx of birds to the Longneck Lagoon during the drying phases. The muddy shoreline formed during drying phases is a major habitat component for birdlife at Longneck Lagoon. Wading species particularly like to feed in the mud, while pelicans and spoonbills (among others) concentrate in the shallow areas where they feed on the fish and invertebrates. It is extremely unlikely that the lagoon will dry out completely, even under the longest droughts, and the artificial wetlands at the McGraths Hill Sewage Treatment Plant provide a nearby permanent waterbody that will provide alternative habitat when the lagoon is at its driest.”

Adopted new action (page 14): *“The weir on Longneck Lagoon may be modified or removed after suitable environmental investigation and assessment, and after consideration of public comment, to provide greater variability in the water levels within Longneck Lagoon so as to improve the long-term ecological viability of the lagoon.”*

7. Pitt Town Lagoon “habitat islands” (page 13)

Old Text: *“A number of islands were constructed in the lagoon in 1985 to provide protection for water birds and enhance the lagoon’s value as a resting and breeding area for wetland [bird] species. The habitat values of Pitt Town Lagoon islands in their present configuration will be assessed”*

Adopted new text: *“Pitt Town Lagoon was formerly significant habitat for migratory waders, which historically visited the lagoon in large numbers. A series of ‘muddy rises’ in the lagoon appear to have been of particular importance. These muddy rises were raised above the water level by around a metre or more in 1985, through scraping the sediments from the lagoon floor and pushing it onto the rises to form a series of islands. Subsequently, vegetation was established on the islands from a mix of natural and man-made sources, including tree-planting.*

The decrease in the numbers of waders in particular appears to be associated with the raising of the islands and subsequent vegetation growth. It is therefore considered that restoring the original level of the islands should be investigated, together with vegetation removal. Such restoration would of course require environmental assessment, and would probably be initially done to some of the islands only, so that the differences in habitat value can be easily seen and measured.”

Adopted new action (page 14): *“The feasibility of lowering the islands in Pitt Town Lagoon will be investigated and assessed, with the view to making them more useful as habitat for wading birds. If the assessment is favourable, then at least some of the islands will be lowered to approximate their original (pre-1985) level.”*

Native vegetation (section 4.1.3)

Old policy (page 18): "A bush regeneration plan will be prepared for Scheyville National Park (excluding historic areas, see section 4.1.5). Regeneration will be encouraged through appropriate fire regimes, distribution of seed and selected planting with locally indigenous species. Locally collected seed stock will be used where practical. Priority will be given to revegetation of the creek lines, tracks and trails not required for visitor or management purposes, and around existing single trees or small stands of trees in grassland areas."

Adopted new policy: *"A bush regeneration plan will be prepared for Scheyville National Park. Regeneration will be encouraged through weed control programs, appropriate fire regimes, distribution of native seed and selected planting with locally indigenous species. Locally collected seed stock will be used where practical."*

Additional new policy: *"The oval at the former show jumping site is a modified natural area. It will not be revegetated, and the site plus associated infrastructure will be considered for use, including short term licensing for community events."*

Management of Historic Heritage (section 4.1.5)

8. Management of Historic Heritage (page 25)

Current Policies: "The historic sites and structures identified in the Edds report as being of high significance (see list on page 24), the remaining building foundations/cement slabs, the small Nissen huts and all structures associated with the early agricultural use of the Park will be retained."

"Historic buildings and structures will be stabilised where necessary."

Adopted new policy (to replace both the above policies): *"All historic sites and structures within Scheyville National Park will be retained. Conservation work will be done on historic sites and structures in accord with the priorities identified in the approved Conservation Management Plan (Beaver, 2007). However, where the fabric of a site or structure is compromised such that it poses a major safety hazard, it may be removed if the Conservation Management Plan, or a Statement of Heritage Impact prepared by a suitably qualified person, concludes that repair or reconstruction is not practical or feasible."*

9. Proposed Construction (page 25)

Current Policy: "No new buildings will be constructed in the historic precinct around the Dreadnought complex or near the pre-1929 sites."

Adopted new policy: *"New construction will only be permitted within the historic precinct around the Dreadnought complex or near the pre-1929 sites where it does not reduce the significance of the place, has a low visual impact on the setting and preserves significant landscape elements."*

“New structures may be erected over existing hut foundation slabs provided that new work is interpreted and reflects the form and scale of the original hut buildings.”

“Any new public facilities such as toilets blocks, picnic tables, benches, shelters and directional signage will be sited and designed to minimise impacts on the setting and important view corridors.”

10. Building Utilisation (page 25)

Old Policy: “Uses for the historic buildings on the national park, such as accommodation, interpretation and offices, which are consistent with the National Parks and Wildlife Act and protection of the natural and cultural environment will be investigated. Any proposal which involved changes in the management or use of the buildings will be placed on exhibition for public comment.”

Adopted new policy: *“Uses for the historic buildings on the national park, such as accommodation, interpretation and offices, which are consistent with the National Parks and Wildlife Act, the adopted Conservation Management Plan, and protection of the natural and cultural environment will be investigated. Any proposal which involves changes in the management or use of the buildings will be placed on exhibition for public comment.”*

Adopted additional policy (section 4.1.5): *“Adaptive reuse of buildings and structures in the park may be permitted, provided any proposed modification and use is carried out in a sustainable manner, is consistent with the conservation of the natural and cultural values of the park and any adopted Conservation Management Plan, and is compatible with the retention of the cultural significance of the buildings and structures. A range of possible future permissible uses is listed below. This does not necessarily mean that all the uses listed will actually occur in the park.*

The buildings and structures within the Scheyville Camp precinct (see map) may be considered for leasing under Section 151B of the NPW Act for:

- (a) the provision of educational facilities for natural heritage, cultural heritage, park management or fire management,*
- (b) the provision of research facilities for natural heritage (including natural phenomena) and cultural heritage,*
- (c) the provision of retail outlets commensurate with the needs of the area in which that outlet is located,*
- (d) the provision of restaurants, cafes, kiosks and other food outlets,*
- (e) the provision of cultural institutions, including museums and galleries,*
- (f) the provision of visitor and tourist accommodation,*

- (g) *the provision of facilities for conferences and functions,*
- (h) *the provision of sporting facilities,*
- (i) *the provision of facilities and amenities for tourists and visitors, including information centres and booking outlets,*
- (j) *the provision of facilities in relation to Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal cultural activities.*

Land, buildings and structures in the Camp Precinct (see map) may be requested for short-term (not more than 3 day) exclusive uses such as community events, private functions (eg weddings), group picnics and cultural events. Licences will be considered on a case by case basis and must be consistent with conservation of the natural and cultural values of the park and the cultural significance of the buildings.

11. Structural Alterations (page 25)

Old Policy: “No structural alterations will be undertaken to the external fabric of historic buildings on the park except for the possible removal of the enclosed verandah around the former managers residence on the right hand side of drive, however doors, windows, roofs, etc. may be replaced and changes may be made to the internal fabric of the buildings to make the building usable.”

Adopted new policy: “*The external fabric of historic buildings will be conserved and maintained in accord with the Burra Charter and the adopted Conservation Management Plan, so as to maintain their historic character. The internal fabric of buildings may be altered in accord with the Burra Charter and the adopted Conservation Management Plan, so as to make them more usable where required.*”

12. Excavation Work (page 25)

Old Policy: “No excavation work will be undertaken in the historic precinct around the Dreadnought/migration buildings or the pre-1929 sites without an excavation permit issued under the Heritage Act 1977.”

Adopted new policy: “*No excavation work will be done in any site within the area identified in the Conservation Management Plan as the Zone of Archaeological Sensitivity unless appropriate approvals are first obtained.*”

Recreation Opportunities in Scheyville National Park (section 4.2.2)

13. Camping (page 39)

Old Policy: “Camping will not be permitted in the national park except for educational groups, as provided in section 4.2.1”

Adopted new policy: *“Camping will be permitted for educational groups at the Longneck Field Studies Centre in accordance with section 4.2.1. Short term camping may also be permitted in the area bordered by Scheyville Road, Old Pitt Town Road and Longneck Creek as part of a specifically-approved educational or community activities. No camping will be allowed elsewhere in the park.”*

14. Horse Use (page 39)

Old Policy: *“Gates which permit access by horses will be constructed at the entrances to horse trails”*

Adopted new policy: *“Access for horses and horse-floats will be provided through the existing gate system around the designated horse-riding area. The need for specific access gates for horses will be reviewed over the next five years”*

15. Shooting (pages 38 and 39)

Adopted new action: *“Any cultural heritage values of the firing range structures will be assessed and recommendations developed to guide future management and, if appropriate, interpretation of the site.”*

Management Operations (Section 4.2.4) –

16. Local Council (Rural Fire Service Use)

Adopted New Text: *“The Oakville Fire Brigade of the NSW Rural Fire Service plays a key role in the response to wildfires in, and in the vicinity of, Scheyville National Park. The Brigade currently relies upon a fire-tanker which is garaged on private land immediately adjacent to the reserve. This site will become unavailable in 2007 and no alternative site on private land has been identified. Hawkesbury City Council has sought ‘in principle’ endorsement from the NPWS for the construction of a replacement shed within Scheyville National Park.*

There is a clear nexus between the location of a tanker shed within the reserve and the ongoing management of Scheyville National Park, specifically the conduct of hazard reduction activities and wildfire suppression. On this basis, the NPWS supports the proposal ‘in principle’. However, formal approval for the construction of a tanker shed will be subject to appropriate environmental impact assessment and control under the National Parks and Wildlife Act and Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

Should construction of a new fire-tanker shed proceed, occupation of the shed would require the issue and periodic review of a licence issued by NPWS”.

Adopted New Policies (page 43): *“Uses consistent with the purposes for which the park is reserved, including fire management facilities, may be permitted within*

the park. In granting such permission, NPWS will consider the availability and appropriateness of alternative sites outside the park.”

“Any new works or facilities approved for construction within the park must be subject to appropriate environmental assessment and approval. Occupation and use of any new or existing facilities will be subject to a licence issued by NPWS, and such licence will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that use remains appropriate and compatible with the purposes and aims of park management”.

17. References

Add to the reference list: Beaver D. (2007) *Conservation Management Plan for Scheyville Historic Precincts within Scheyville National Park Volume 1*. Unpublished report completed for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.



Scheyville National Park and Pitt Town Nature Reserve

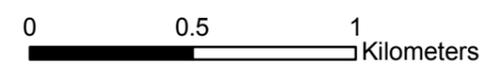


Legend

- Reserved Land
- Heritage Sites**
 - Office
 - ▲ Water Tower
- Special Use Area**
 - Camp Precinct
 - RFS fire shed
- Roads**
 - Road
 - Management Trail
 - +— Management / Horse Trail
 - - - - - Walking Track
- Catchment**
 - Waterbody
 - River
- Easements**
 - == Transmission Line
 - === Sydney - Newcastle Gas and Oil Pipeline



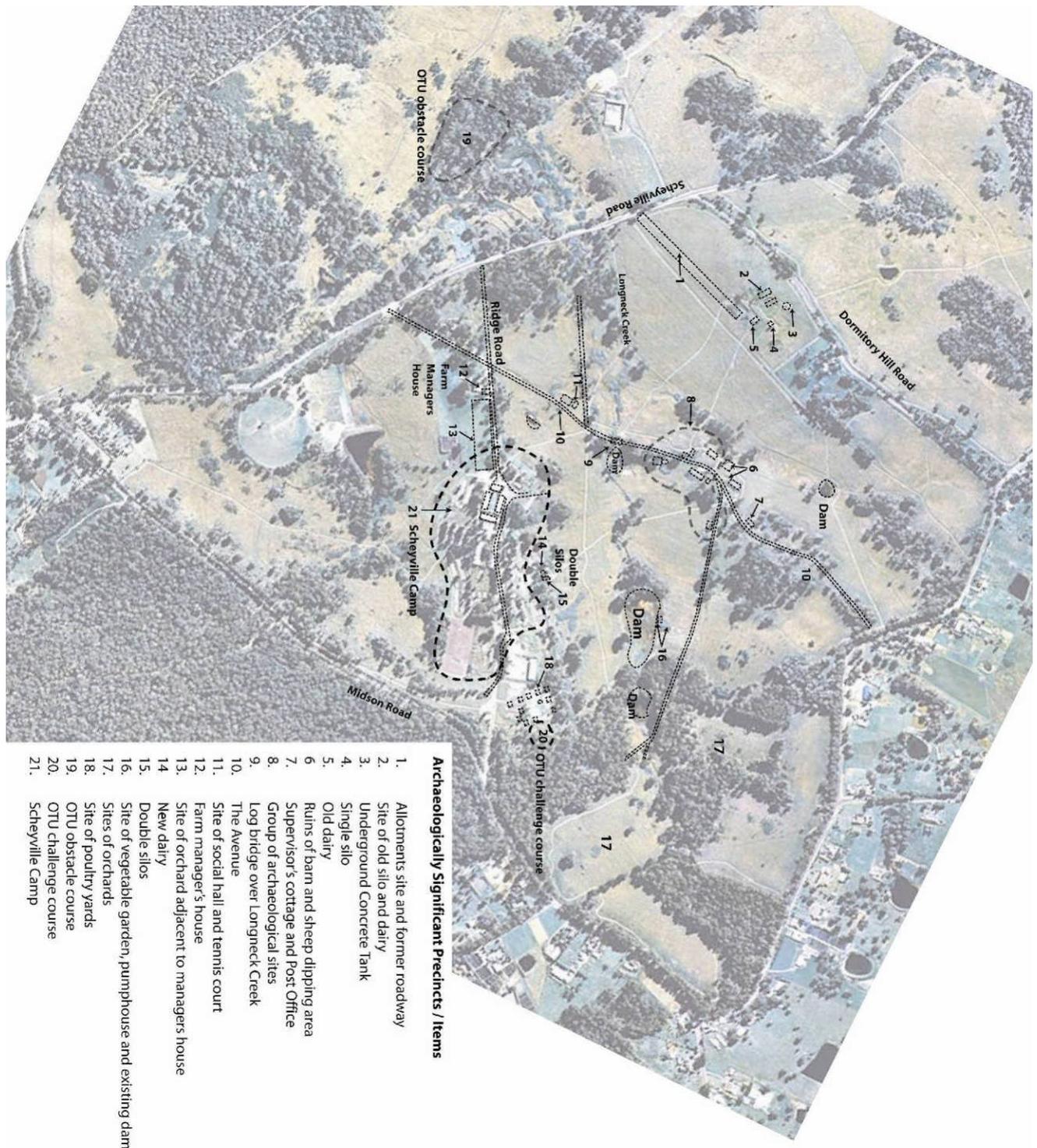
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Projection: AGD1966 AMG Zone 56

Appendix 1 – Archaeologically significant precincts and items



(Adaptation from Harrison, R. 2002 *Pastoral lands and the NPWS estate: A cultural heritage discussion paper*. NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Hurstville, pp.24-27)