



NSW NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE

South East Forest National Park and Egan Peaks Nature Reserve Amendment to the Plan of Management

Return of threatened and declining species
and improving ecosystem health



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Summary

South East Forest National Park and Egan Peaks Nature Reserve are reserved to achieve the objects of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act). These objects are centred on conserving nature, conserving cultural heritage values, and fostering public appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of these special values.

The South East Forest National Park and Egan Peaks Nature Reserve Plan of Management (DEC 2006) was adopted in 2006 and describes how these objects will be achieved. All operations undertaken in the parks are in accordance with this plan of management.

An amendment to a plan of management will be progressed if a change to the plan of management is needed to achieve the objects of the NPW Act. Section 73B of the NPW Act enables the Minister to amend a plan of management following public consultation.

A draft amendment to the South East Forest National Park and Egan Peaks Nature Reserve Plan of Management was placed on public exhibition between 6 May 2022 and 16 June 2022. A total of 17 submissions were received. The draft amendment and submissions received were considered by the South Coast Regional Advisory Committee on 24 June 2022.

This amendment to the South East Forest National Park and Egan Peaks Nature Reserve Plan of Management will ensure the objects of the NPW Act can be achieved, by:

- mitigating the major risk to threatened mammals – predation by feral cats and foxes
- facilitating establishment of visitor facilities in the Genoa and Coolangubra sections of South East Forest National Park including a walking track and campsites in the Genoa section, a basic camping area at Myanba Gorge and a short loop walking track at Pheasants Peak. This work will help to foster public appreciation and enjoyment of South East Forest National Park.

In preparing this amendment the following were considered:

- the eight management principles for national parks listed under section 30E of the NPW Act and the five management principles for nature reserves listed under section 30J of the NPW Act
- the matters listed under section 72AA of the NPW Act
- submissions received during public exhibition of the draft amendment
- advice provided on the draft amendment and submissions received during public exhibition by the South Coast Regional Advisory Committee.

The amendment replaces some of the existing plan of management's text, provides new text and provides a new map. These changes should be read in conjunction with the adopted plan of management. Section and page numbers refer to the adopted plan of management. Where a change is made to an action in the body of the plan, corresponding changes will be made to Section 5 'Plan Implementation' as required.

Background

Returning threatened and declining species and improving ecosystem health

Australia has the worst mammal extinction in the world. Over 30 Australian mammal species have been driven to extinction since European settlement, with feral cats and foxes the main drivers for at least two-thirds of these losses. Land clearing, livestock grazing and other pest animals have also contributed to species decline and extinction. The decline in biodiversity is ongoing. In New South Wales, around 50 to 60 per cent of surviving mammals are threatened with extinction. A general pattern of long-term biodiversity decline is evident in reductions to the range or abundance of many native vertebrate species. The number of native animal species considered at risk of extinction continues to rise.

Feral cats are found throughout mainland Australia and are estimated to kill 1.5 billion native animals every year. They have contributed to most of the small mammal extinctions in Australia over the last 250 years and continue to have a significant impact on native mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds. Despite extensive and ongoing efforts, there is currently no effective strategy for landscape-scale control of feral cats, and landscape-scale fox control has had mixed results.

The effective control of feral predators, particularly cats and foxes, is essential for the recovery of many threatened animal species, especially mammals and ground-dwelling birds. To this end, there is strong scientific support for the establishment of feral predator-free areas using conservation fencing, as an essential component of any overall strategy to prevent further mammal extinctions and promote the recovery of our most susceptible species. This reflects a consensus that other feral predator control measures, such as baiting, can deliver significant ecological benefits but are generally not able to reduce feral cat densities to a level that will promote the sustained recovery and reintroduction of our most susceptible mammals.

A network of feral predator-free areas, including islands and enclosures, has been recognised by the Australian Government's National Environment Science Program as a necessary complement to the conventional reserve system, and is required in the short to medium-term to prevent extinction of predator-susceptible threatened mammal species. The establishment of a network of feral predator-free areas in the NSW national parks system will complement existing threatened species conservation strategies which will continue to be implemented across the State.

Despite ongoing feral animal control and management operations, the native animals in South East Forest National Parks and Egan Peaks Nature Reserve have been widely impacted by feral animals – particularly predation by feral cats and foxes, but also competition with pigs for food resources and grazing by feral herbivores such as goats and deer. A range of small- to medium-sized animals are now thought to be locally extinct (e.g. eastern quoll) or declining and potentially vulnerable to local extinction (e.g. long-footed potoroo and smoky mouse).

Establishment of a feral predator-free area in South East Forest National Park will contribute to the objects of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act), which include: 'the conservation of nature, including, but not limited to, the conservation of biological diversity at the community, species and genetic levels'. It will also strengthen the role this park plays in meeting management principles for national parks including: 'the conservation of biodiversity, the maintenance of ecosystem function, the protection of geological and geomorphological features and natural phenomena and the maintenance of natural landscapes'.

Therefore, the proposed feral predator-free area is consistent with the objects of the NPW Act and complementary to the management principles for National Parks under the NPW Act.

Enhancing opportunities for visitors

The changes to the plan of management enable the establishment of walking route through the park. This route may include new walk-in campsites and a section of new track in the Genoa section of the park.

The changes to the plan also enable the development of a new walking track at Pheasants Peak and the establishment of a new camping area at Myanba Gorge.

Some restrictions on visitor access to the feral predator-free area will be required. This will include restrictions on vehicle and walk-in access. Horse riding and camping are not compatible with the establishment of a feral predator-free area. However, walking or cycle-based guided tours may be permitted within the feral predator-free area.

Managing fire

This amendment outlines fire management strategies for the feral predator-free area and provides an updated description of the fire history in South East Forest National Park and Egan Peaks Nature Reserve which were both significantly impacted by the 2019–20 bushfires.

Amendments

Amendment 1. Returning threatened and declining species and improving ecosystem health

Amendments to the plan

Section 2.2 Importance of South East Forest National Park

Plan reference: pages 5–6, under Biological values

Add after sixth paragraph:

Despite ongoing control programs, many of the park's threatened native animals continue to be at risk from feral predators and other pests. A feral predator-free area will be established in the park to provide improved protection for existing native animals and support reintroduction of native animals lost from the park and those whose populations have declined or are declining significantly.

Section 3.1 Specific objectives for South East Forest National Park and Egan Peaks Nature Reserve

Plan reference: page 9

Replace:

maintenance, and where necessary recovery, of populations of threatened species found in the south east forests, with highest priority to endemic plant species and endangered forest-dependent fauna species such as the long-footed potoroo and smoky mouse

With:

maintenance, and where necessary recovery, of populations of threatened species found in the south east forests, with highest priority to endemic plant species and endangered forest-dependent native animals such as the long-footed potoroo and smoky mouse. Recovery of priority native animals will be facilitated through the establishment of a feral predator-free area

Section 4.1.2 Native vegetation

Plan reference: pages 21–22, under Threats, after fifth paragraph

Add:

A feral predator-free area will be established in the park (see section 4.1.6). Construction of facilities, including predator-proof fencing and vegetation setbacks, may require clearing of native vegetation and disturbance of the soil. All works will be subject to environmental impact assessment and approvals, and measures will be applied to limit the extent of site disturbance and minimise clearing of vegetation.

Plan reference: page 22, under Policies, after fifth dot point

Add:

Vegetation clearing for the establishment of a feral predator-free area will be minimised by using roads and trails or other previously cleared areas where practicable.

Section 4.1.3 Native animals

Plan reference: page 24, under Threatened species

Add after second paragraph:

Many of the parks' threatened native animals are subject to ongoing predation pressures by feral cats and foxes. Some are also threatened by other pest animals such as pigs, goats and deer that compete for food resources or adversely impact on habitat quality and/or availability. Following ecological and operational feasibility assessments, the Genoa section of South East Forest National Park has been identified as the preferred location for the establishment of a feral predator-free area to support the reintroduction of locally extinct and declining native animal species and to better protect existing native animals from feral predators (see section 4.1.6).

Replace:

The table below sets out management issues and approaches for each of the threatened species. These guidelines will be followed as far as is practicable, but this may not always be possible because of conflicts in the needs of different plant and animal species living in the same area, particularly with regard to fire regimes (see section 4.1.5).

With:

The table below sets out management issues and approaches for threatened native animals known to occur in the park. These guidelines will be followed as far as is practicable, but this may not always be possible. For example, there may be differing life history traits and fire response strategies of native plant and animal species living in the same area (see section 4.1.5).

Site specific strategies for managing native animals, infrastructure, visitor activities, pests and fire within and adjacent to the feral predator-free area may differ from those applied elsewhere in the park.

Plan reference: page 24, under Threatened species

Replace the last 2 paragraphs:

As for threatened plant species, recovery plans may be prepared for threatened fauna. Recovery plans are in preparation for most of the species found in the park and will be implemented when completed. These will detail information about species biology, distribution, status, habitat requirements and associated management strategies.

Recovery plans may provide for community education for particular species such as the koala, for which significant habitat occurs on private land. Neighbours will be encouraged to report sightings of threatened species.

With:

Strategies for the recovery of threatened species, populations and ecological communities have been set out in a statewide Biodiversity Conservation Program

(formerly known as the Threatened Species Priorities Action Statement). These actions are currently prioritised and implemented through the *Saving our Species* program which aims to maximise the number of threatened species that can be secured in the wild in New South Wales for 100 years. The National Parks and Wildlife Service Threatened Species Framework (DPIE 2021) outlines a series of actions designed to secure and restore threatened species populations on the national park estate, including establishing a network of feral predator-free areas (see Section 4.1.6). Individual recovery plans may need to be prepared for threatened species listed under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Individual recovery plans are prepared for nationally listed threatened species and some recovery plans were previously prepared for some species listed in New South Wales to consider management needs in more detail. To date, recovery plans have been prepared for long-footed potoroo, southern brown bandicoot, smoky mouse, spotted-tailed quoll, large forest owls and several other threatened species.

Plan reference: pages 25–30, under Guidelines for management of threatened fauna species

Add the following footnote to the table:

These guidelines may not always be applied in or around the feral predator-free area. Site specific strategies will be developed and implemented for the feral predator-free area.

Plan reference: page 32, under Policies

Replace:

Threatened species will be managed as far as practicable in accordance with the principles in the table in this section of the plan and the provisions of species recovery plans.

With:

Threatened species will be managed, as far as practicable, in accordance with the principles in the table in this section of the plan and relevant actions in line with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Program and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Threatened Species Framework. Site specific strategies will be developed to manage threatened species within the feral predator-free area.

Replace the seventh policy:

Following investigations, and subject to policy, the NPWS may reintroduce locally extinct or depleted species such as the koala and the brush-tailed rock wallaby into the park.

With:

Subject to relevant policy and approvals, NPWS may reintroduce locally extinct or declining species such as the long-footed potoroo and smoky mouse into the park.

Add a new fourth policy:

Existing threatened species and reintroduced species within the feral predator-free area will be managed in accordance with species management plans, translocation plans, and any conditions associated with licences and ethics approvals to ensure their survival and population establishment.

Plan reference: page 32, under Actions

Replace:

The Potoroo Management Area will continue to be targeted for research work.

With:

The Potoroo Management Area and the feral predator-free area will be a priority for research work.

Replace:

Provisions contained in threatened species recovery plans will be implemented as these are developed.

With:

Implement relevant actions in line with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Program and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service Threatened Species Framework for threatened species and populations present in the park.

Add after third dot point:

Reintroduce locally extinct and declining native animal species within the feral predator-free area to restore ecosystem function and processes and improve ecosystem health.

Section 4.1.4 Introduced species

Plan reference: page 34, under Actions, after seventh dot point

Add:

Construct feral predator-proof fencing in the Genoa section of South East Forest National Park and eradicate feral predators and feral herbivores from within the feral predator-free area.

Section 4.1. Nature Conservation

Plan reference: page 37, after Section 4.1.5

Add:

4.1.6 Establishment of a feral predator-free area

Background

Feral predators have had a significant impact on Australian native animals. Australia has the worst mammal extinction rate in the world. Over 30 Australian mammal species have been driven to extinction in the past 250 years, with cats and foxes the main drivers for at least two-thirds of these losses (Woinarski et al. 2018). Predation by cats and foxes has also led to declining populations and reduced distributions of many existing Australian native animals (Legge et al. 2018). Feral cats are found throughout mainland Australia and are estimated to kill 1.5 billion native animals every year (John Woinarski, pers. comm., 2021).

Effective control of cats and foxes is essential for the recovery of many of our threatened and declining native animals, especially small terrestrial mammals and ground-dwelling birds. However, despite extensive and ongoing efforts, there is no effective strategy for landscape-scale control of feral cats, and landscape-scale fox control has had mixed results.

Widely used feral predator control measures (e.g. baiting) deliver significant ecological benefits, but in isolation are unable to reduce feral predator densities to levels that will promote sustained and widespread recovery of our most susceptible mammals.

A network of feral predator-free areas, including islands and enclosures, has been recognised by the Australian Government's National Environment Science Program as a necessary short term complement to the reserve system, required to prevent the extinction of many predator-susceptible threatened mammal species (Woinarski et al. 2018). The establishment of a network of feral predator-free areas within the NSW national parks network will complement those established on private land. This significant commitment will be implemented by the NSW Government as part of the National Parks and Wildlife Service Threatened Species Framework (DPIE 2021), in parallel with its suite of existing threatened species conservation strategies.

The varied landforms, climate and geology of South East Forest National Park, and its occurrence at the junction of the South East Corner and South East Highlands biological regions, give the park high biological diversity. The park's outstanding native animal species diversity includes arboreal mammals, hollow-nesting birds and many threatened species. A major reason for the park's creation was to protect a range of high fertility old growth forest ecosystems.

Ongoing programs to control feral animals and other pests have been undertaken to protect the park's extensive eucalypt forests, its significant areas of old growth and its diversity of native animals. However, despite these efforts, the park's native animals have been widely impacted by feral animals – particularly predation by feral cats and foxes, but also competition with pigs for food resources and grazing by feral herbivores such as goats and deer. A range of small- to medium-sized animals are now thought to be locally extinct (e.g. eastern quoll) or declining and potentially vulnerable to local extinction (e.g. long-footed potoroo, smoky mouse).

Species lost and those suffering serious population declines played important ecosystem roles, such as by turning over soil, spreading native seed and fungal spores, or as native predators. Consequently, loss of native species diversity, and decline in abundance of existing native species, significantly diminishes the ecosystems where these species occurred.

Establishment of a feral predator-free area within the Genoa section of South East Forest National Park is a critical step in restoring these diminished ecosystems. The predator-free area will be approximately 2000 hectares and include a smaller internal early release area. It will enable reintroduction of native species previously lost locally and/or more broadly from New South Wales including:

- re-establishment of eastern bettong (*Bettongia gaimardi*), currently listed as extinct in New South Wales
- establishment of new populations of species that are locally extinct or declining such as eastern quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*), long-footed potoroo (*Potorous longipes*) and smoky mouse (*Pseudomys fumeus*).

It will also provide conservation benefits for populations of existing native species, enabling them to recover and be supplemented with reintroduced individuals, including:

- species that are expected to benefit directly from feral exclusion, such as brush tailed phascogale (*Phascogale tapoatafa*), eastern pygmy-possum (*Cercartetus nanus*), long-nosed potoroo (*Potorous tridactylus tridactylus*), southern brown bandicoot (eastern) (*Isodon obesulus obesulus*), spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus*

maculatus), white footed dunnart (*Sminthopsis leucopus*) and striated grasswren (*Amytornis striatus*)

- species that are expected to benefit from feral exclusion in combination with management interventions such as ecological fire management, habitat augmentation and overall improvements in ecosystem health, including yellow-bellied glider (*Petaurus australis*), giant burrowing frog (*Heleioporus australiacus*), flame robin (*Petroica phoenicea*), hooded robin (south-eastern form) (*Melanodryas cucullata cucullata*), scarlet robin (*Petroica boodang*) and large forest owls.

Final selection of species for reintroduction will be made after scientific assessment and in accordance with a translocation proposal consistent with the Translocation Operational Policy (DPIE 2019) and in consultation with relevant state and national species experts.

The feral predator-free area will also contribute to protection and conservation of native species more broadly by:

- generating knowledge through research and innovation which can be applied to mitigate the impact of feral predators and improve conservation outcomes 'beyond the fence'
- establishing insurance populations of threatened species until effective methods for landscape control of cats and foxes are developed
- providing source populations for the restoration of species across the landscape
- promoting public awareness of, and appreciation for, the value of native wildlife, including through such measures as interpretive signs and interpretive walking tracks.

Within and around the feral predator-free area, vehicle access trails will be constructed and maintained to enable ongoing maintenance of the fence, management of vegetation setbacks adjacent to the fence, eradication of feral predators, monitoring of reintroduced species and management of fire. While the fence will follow existing roads and trails where practicable, realignment of existing roads and trails and/or the construction of some new trails will be necessary.

New facilities may be required to support the storage of materials and equipment, fence construction, predator eradication, research and monitoring, education and other management activities.

A small operational base may be established within or adjacent to the feral predator-free area to support construction, maintenance and ongoing operation of the feral predator-free area. The operational base may also include basic accommodation for NPWS staff, researchers, contractors or other personnel directly involved in managing the feral predator-free area.

Site selection

Identification of sites has been guided by a large body of scientific literature and by lessons learned from earlier rewilding initiatives. A key driver of site selection is past and present distribution of target species. NPWS aims to maximise the number of species that will benefit from feral animal exclusion – including reintroduced species and extant species currently suppressed by feral predation. Species most at risk, and those not already protected in a predator-free area, have been prioritised.

A statewide analysis identified 4 bioregions across New South Wales – north east, western Sydney, south east and central New South Wales – as areas with a significant number of potential rewilding species.

Within the south east, a range of sites across NPWS reserves were reviewed to assess their suitability. Factors used to assess potential locations included ecological, cultural, operational, social and economic considerations.

Following feasibility assessments, the preferred area for siting the feral predator-free area is shown in Figure 1. Final alignment of the feral predator-free area will be subject to environmental and cultural heritage assessments.

Operational Plans

The feral predator-free area is expected to overlap with State Heritage Register item number 01906. To ensure that the values associated with this listing are protected, walking access through the feral predator-free area along the indicative walking route defined in Figure 1 will be provided. In addition, establishment and management of the feral predator-free area will be undertaken in accordance with a standard exemption to the *Heritage Act 1977* (Standard exemption 3: alteration to non-significant fabric).

Impacts associated with construction of the feral predator-free area, eradication of feral predators and the reintroduction of species will be minimised as far as practicable. Measures to minimise or mitigate impacts will be identified during the environmental assessment and approvals process. These may include measures to reduce the extent of vegetation clearance during fence construction, including avoiding removal of trees with important habitat value where practicable.

Operational plans prepared to direct establishment and management of the feral predator-free area will also aim to minimise potential impacts. Relevant operational plans will include:

- Translocation plans to guide the selection, reintroduction and management of species for reintroduction will be developed in accordance with the department's Translocation Operational Policy and in consultation with relevant state and national species experts
- Pest eradication and management strategies to direct feral predator eradication programs and other pest management within the feral predator-free area
- A monitoring and research strategy to increase knowledge about threatened species, monitor the effectiveness of reintroduction strategies and to inform adaptive management of the program. Establishing a monitoring and research strategy at the commencement of the project will ensure that risks to native animal species, their habitats and the park, are avoided and minimised wherever practicable. Outcomes from research and monitoring will be applied to ensure best practice management of the feral predator-free area.

The reserve fire management strategy will be reviewed and updated to guide fire management and to minimise the risk of bushfire to infrastructure and to the welfare and survival of native animals within the feral predator-free area.

Key stakeholders, such as Aboriginal groups and traditional owners, neighbours, the Rural Fire Service and local volunteer bush fire brigades, local government, Transport for NSW, NSW Forestry Corporation, researchers and scientific specialists, will be consulted during the development of operational plans.

Policies

- Feral predators and other pest animals will be removed from a fenced area to establish a feral predator–free area within which locally extinct and declining native animal species will be reintroduced.
- Management activity within and immediately around the feral predator–free area will be focussed on improving the ecosystem health of the area by removing feral predators and other pests and returning threatened and declining species.
- A monitoring and research strategy will be prepared to ensure ecosystem health and function within the feral predator–free area is monitored.

Actions

- Subject to environmental and cultural heritage assessments, construct feral predator–proof fencing, release enclosures and associated facilities in the Genoa section of South East Forest National Park to facilitate eradication of feral predators and other pests from within the feral predator–free area, reintroduction of locally extinct and/or declining native animals, recovery of existing native animals and ongoing management of the site.
- Monitor ecosystem health and functioning within the feral predator–free area, including its reintroduced animals and its recovering populations.
- Establish a small operations facility within or nearby the feral predator–free area to support construction, maintenance and ongoing operation/management of the feral predator–free area. The operations facility may include basic accommodation for staff, researchers, contractors and other relevant personnel.

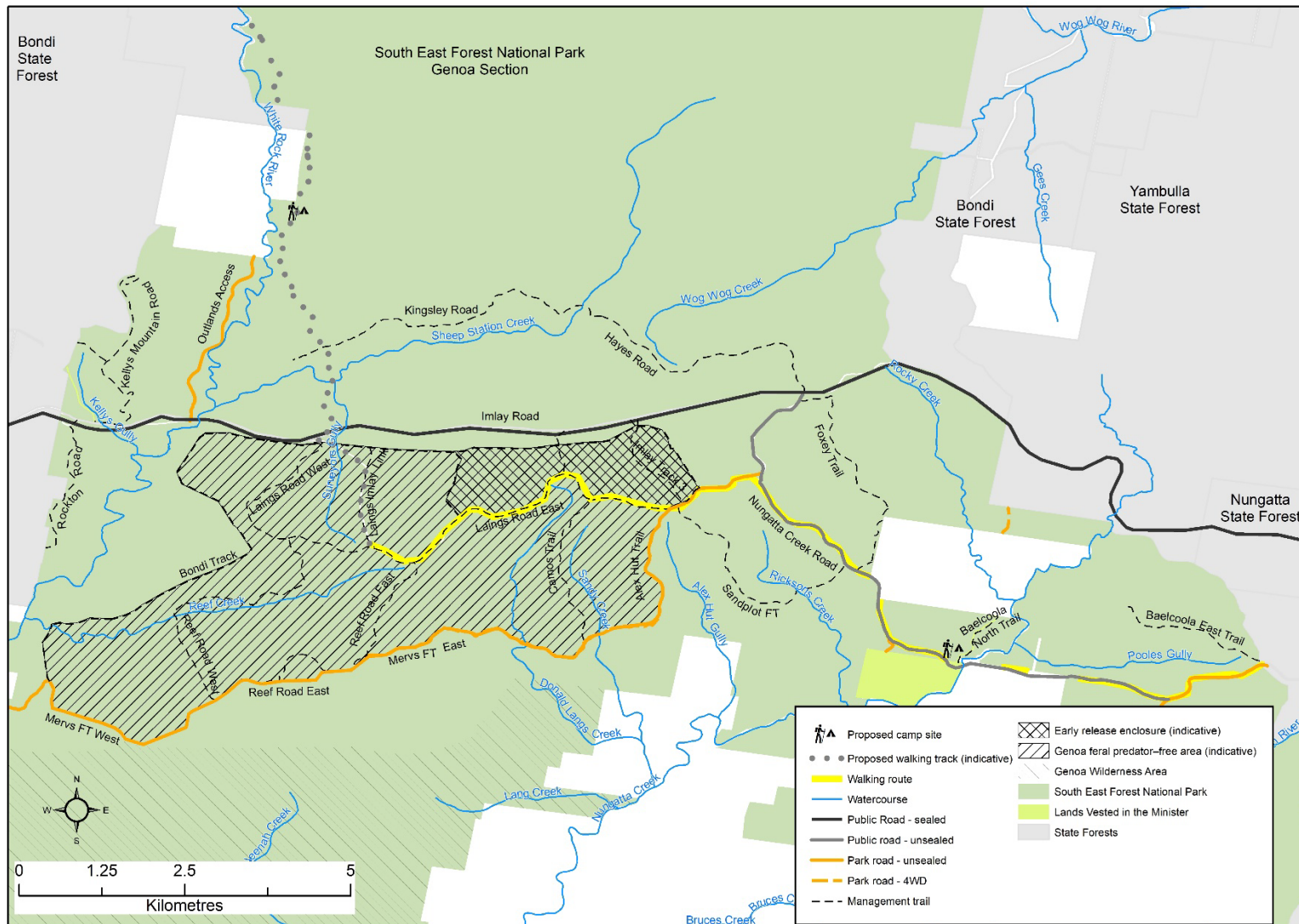


Figure 1 Genoa section of South East Forest National Park including preferred area for siting of feral predator-free area and indicative walking track route

Section 4.3.3 Vehicle access and maintenance of roads and trails

Plan reference: page 52 after the Road network section

Add:

Feral predator-free area

To ensure the ongoing integrity and effectiveness of the feral predator-proof fence, vehicle access and vegetation setbacks will be maintained adjacent to it. While the fence will follow existing roads and trails where practicable, realignment of existing roads and trails and construction of new management trails will be necessary to facilitate construction and ongoing maintenance of the fence.

New management trails will also be required within the feral predator-free area to facilitate predator control works, for monitoring of reintroduced species or for improved fire management capability. Existing trails no longer required for management purposes may be closed and, where appropriate, rehabilitated.

Plan reference: page 52, under Policies

Add:

New management trails may be constructed, and existing park roads and management trails realigned, to support establishment of the feral predator-free area.

Plan reference: page 53, under Actions

Add a new high priority action:

Construct new management trails and realign existing park roads and management trails as necessary to support the feral predator-free area, including for maintaining fence lines, facilitating pest control, monitoring of reintroduced animals or protecting the feral predator-free area from fire. Road and trail location, design and construction will require environmental impact assessment and relevant approvals.

Add a new medium priority action:

Implement the Reserve Access Strategy, including seeking easements to secure access to NPWS estate, arranging for boundary adjustments to realign public road corridors, and the gazettal of appropriate public road reserves as additions to the park.

Appendix 2 Vehicle access and maintenance of roads and trails

Plan reference: page 66, under Genoa

Replace the existing Genoa management unit section of the table with the details below:

| Management unit | Roads and trails | Length (kms) | Condition assessment | Access category |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------|----------------------|--|
| Genoa | Laings Rd east | 5.4 | 2WD dry weather | Seek closure of current Council road reserve partly aligned with Laings Rd, so that Laings Rd becomes a park road outside feral predator-free area |

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| Management unit | Roads and trails | Length (kms) | Condition assessment | Access category |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------|--|--|
| | | | | (FPFA) and management trail within FPFA |
| | Reef Rd east | 4.3 | 2WD dry weather | Park road outside FPFA Management trail within FPFA |
| | Merv's Fire Trail (west) | 4.6 | All weather 4WD | Park road outside FPFA |
| | Outlands Access | 2.8 | 2WD dry weather | Park Road |
| | Hayes Rd South | 3.1 | 2WD dry weather | Management trail |
| | Laings Rd west | 4.1 | 2WD dry weather | Seek closure of current Council road reserve partly aligned with Laings Rd, so that this section of Laings Rd becomes a management trail |
| | Reef Rd west | 3.8 | 2WD dry weather | Management trail |
| | Rockton Rd | 2.5 | All weather 4WD | Management trail |
| | Foxy Trail | 3.2 | 4WD dry weather | Management trail |
| | Alex Hut FT | 6.0 | East – 2WD dry weather South – 4WD dry weather | Park road outside the FPFA |
| | Kelly's Mtn Rd | 2.7 | 4WD dry weather | Management trail |
| | Genoa River Rd (East) | 4.3 | 4WD dry weather | Management trail |
| | Nungatta Fire Break | 10.9 | 4WD dry weather | Management trail |
| | Kingsley Rd | 4.5 | 4WD dry weather | Management trail |
| | Camo's FT | 2.4 | 4WD dry weather | Management trail |
| | Hayes Rd North | 1.2 | Close | Closed |
| | Genoa River Rd (West) | 2.3 | Close | Closed |
| | Imlay Track #1 | 2.4 | Close | Closed |
| | Imlay Track #2 | 1.0 | Close | Closed |
| | Imlay Track #3 | 6.3 | South of Imlay Rd – 4WD dry weather North of Imlay Rd – close | Management trail south of Imlay Rd Closed north of Imlay Rd |

| Management unit | Roads and trails | Length (kms) | Condition assessment | Access category |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------|---|--|
| | Laings/Imlay Links | 2.7 | Inside FPFA – 4WD dry weather Outside FPFA – close | Management trail inside FPFA Closed outside FPFA |
| | Dingo Rd | 0.4 | Close | Closed |
| | Bondi Track | 3.7 | 4WD dry weather | Management trail |
| | Nungatta Creek Rd | 4.8 | 2WD dry weather | Public road – north Park road – south. Seek revocation of a strip of park to allow dedication of this road as a Council public road |
| | Sandplot Fire Trail | 3.3 | 4WD dry weather | Management trail |

Plan reference: pages 60–62, under References

Add new references:

DPIE (2019) *Translocation operational policy*, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Sydney, www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Animals-and-plants/Threatened-species/translocation-operational-policy-190552.pdf

DPIE (2021) Zero extinctions – National parks as a stronghold for threatened species recovery: National Parks and Wildlife Service Threatened Species Framework, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Parramatta, www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/threatened-species-zero-extinctions-framework

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Amendment 2. Enhancing opportunities for visitors

Amendments to the plan

Section 4.1.3 Native animals

Plan reference: page 24, under Threatened species, last paragraph

Replace:

Public access to the PMA will be restricted to minimise threats to this very rare species.

With:

Public access will be limited in the PMA and in the feral predator-free area to minimise impacts on the long-footed potoroo and other threatened species.

Plan reference: page 25, Table under Guidelines for management of threatened fauna species

Replace the current infrastructure guideline for the long-footed potoroo:

Exclude from PMA, close and rehabilitate existing roads except those essential for research and management

With:

Exclude from PMA with the exception of Class 5 walking tracks indicatively shown on Figure 1 and two low key camp sites. Close and rehabilitate existing roads except those essential for research and management.

Plan reference: page 32, under Policies, fifth policy

Replace:

Access will be minimised in the Potoroo Management Area.

With:

Public access will be limited in the Potoroo Management Area and in the feral predator-free area.

Section 4.3.1 Promotion and interpretation

Plan reference: page 42, under Major communication themes for take home messages

Add a new final paragraph:

The feral predator-free area provides a significant opportunity to improve community appreciation and understanding of threatened species, the threats to these species and the importance of reducing predation by feral predators.

Plan reference: page 42, under Actions

Add a new high priority action:

Interpretive and directional signs may be installed within and adjacent to the feral predator-free area to promote visitor appreciation and understanding of the threatened species protected in the park and the threats to those species.

Add a new medium priority action:

Interpretive walking tracks and observation points may be constructed within and adjacent to the feral predator-free area to enable guided visitor access to the area and promote visitor appreciation and understanding of the threatened species protected in the park and the threats to those species. Walking trackheads including car parks may be provided adjacent to the feral predator-free area.

Section 4.3.2 Recreation and tourism opportunities

Plan reference: page 44, under Walking

Add a new second and third paragraph:

A walking route and camp sites may be established in the Genoa section of the park. The walking route generally follows existing public roads, park roads, management trails and walking tracks. However, in some places the construction of new Class 5 walking tracks (OEH 2016) will be required. Low-key walk-in camp sites with basic facilities may be designated and established at several sites along the proposed walking route. Figure 1 indicates the preferred locations for walking and camping sites however these details remain subject to further consultation with the Aboriginal community and environmental and cultural heritage assessment. Where the final location of the feral predator-free area overlays the proposed walking route (see Figure 1), walker access will be provided through the feral predator-free area.

Once works are completed, the walking route will provide additional walking and camping opportunities in South East Forest National Park to those described under the Walking and Camping subheadings above or in the Visitor Facilities table below.

Section 4.3.2 Recreation and tourism opportunities

Plan reference: page 44, under Camping

Add a new last sentence to the second paragraph:

Subject to environmental assessment, an additional camping area may also be established at Myanba Gorge.

Replace the last paragraph:

Given the size of the park and low use levels, camping will be permitted throughout the park at locations more than 500m from roads, camping and picnic areas but not in the Potoroo Management Area.

With:

Given the size of the park and low use levels, camping will be permitted throughout the park at locations more than 500 metres from roads, camping and picnic areas. Camping will only be permitted in the Potoroo Management Area at 2 designated sites (see Figure 1 for indicative locations). Camping will not be permitted in the feral predator-free area.

Plan reference: page 45, under Bicycling

Add a fourth sentence:

Bicycling may be permitted within the feral predator-free area where it is part of NPWS approved guided visitor access.

Plan reference: pages 45–47, under Visitor Facilities table, Proposed management, Myanba Gorge – Coolangubra section

Add:

Camping – Establish a basic camping area.

Replace:

Walking Track/s – Maintain fire trail as access track to peak with minimal signage and erosion control as required.

With:

Walking Tracks – Maintain fire trail as access track to peak with minimal signage and erosion control as required. A short loop walk may be constructed around Pheasants Peak subject to environmental and cultural assessment.

Plan reference: page 47, under Horse riding, second paragraph

Add:

Horse riding will also be excluded from the feral predator-free area.

Plan reference: pages 48–49, under Policies

Replace:

Walk-in camping will be allowed outside designated camping areas throughout the park at locations more than 500m from roads, camping and picnic areas but not in the Potoroo Management Area. It may be restricted in other areas if necessary, for protection of significant natural and cultural features. Minimal impact camping and walking will be promoted through the park information program.

With:

Walk-in camping will be allowed outside designated camping areas throughout the park at locations more than 500 metres from roads, camping and picnic areas but not in the feral predator-free area. Walk-in camping will only be allowed at designated sites within the Potoroo Management Area. It may be restricted in other areas if necessary, for protection of significant natural and cultural features. Minimal impact camping and walking will be promoted through the park information program.

Replace:

Bicycle riding will be allowed on all roads and management trails in the park (with the exception of the Potoroo Management Area). It will not be allowed on walking tracks or in declared wilderness areas.

With:

Bicycle riding will be allowed on all roads and management trails in the park (with the exception of the Potoroo Management Area). It will not be allowed on walking tracks, in the feral predator-free area or in declared wilderness areas. However, cycling may be considered within the feral predator-free area as part of a licenced guided tour.

Section 4.3.3 Vehicle access and maintenance of roads and trails

Plan reference: page 51 under The road network, Management trails

Replace the last sentence of the second paragraph:

The use of management trails by the public will not be permitted other than for bushwalking, bicycling (with the exception of the Potoroo Management Area and wilderness), or access to private property with approval of the relevant landholder.

With:

The use of management trails by the public will not be permitted other than for bushwalking, bicycling or access to private property with approval of the relevant landholder. Bushwalking will not be permitted in the feral predator-free area, other than along the proposed walking route shown on Figure 1. Guided visitor access within the feral predator-free area may be considered once resilient populations of threatened species have been established. Cycling will not be permitted in the Potoroo Management Area, the feral predator-free area or in wilderness. However, cycling may be considered within the feral predator-free area as part of a licenced guided tour.

Section 4.3.5 Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management, Research and Monitoring

Plan reference: page 54 under Research and monitoring, key areas of research

Replace:

surveying and monitoring of threatened plants and animals (as identified by species recovery plans)

With:

surveying and monitoring of threatened plants and animals, the feral predator-free area, its reintroduced animals and its recovering populations

Plan reference: page 55 under Policies

Add a new final sentence to the fourth policy:

NPWS will pursue collaborative partnerships with relevant research institutions for research relating to the feral predator-free area.

Plan reference: pages 60–62, under References

Add new reference:

OEH (2016) Office of Environment and Heritage, *Park Facilities Manual*, Sydney.

Amendment 3. Managing fire

Amendments to the plan

Section 4.1.2 Native vegetation

Plan reference: page 21, under Management history, second paragraph

Replace:

Extensive wildfires occurred during the 1930s and in 1952, 1958, 1972/73 and 1982/83.

With:

Extensive wildfires occurred during the 1930s and in 1952, 1958, 1972–73, 1982–83, 2018–19 and 2019–20.

Section 4.1.5 Fire Management

Plan reference: pages 34–35, under Fire history, first and second paragraph

Replace:

Available fire history records for the park area commenced in 1948/49 but records are incomplete and sometimes inaccurate prior to the 1970s. The information shows that wildfires have occurred in approximately half of the 56 years since 1948/49. Large wildfires (more than 10,000 ha) occurred in the 1951/52 fire season and in 1957/58, 1972/73 and 1982/83. Smaller sized fires have generally occurred since the early 1970s. The reduction in large high intensity fires is probably a result of improvements in detection, response and suppression of fire. Approximately a third of the park has no recorded wildfires since 1948/49.

The prescribed burning data shows that nearly half of the park has been affected by prescribed fire in the past twenty years, and that a small proportion has been prescribed burned three or four times. In some areas, fires have been too frequent for optimal conservation of plant and animal communities.

With:

Available fire history records for the park area commenced in 1948–49 but records are incomplete and sometimes inaccurate prior to the 1970s. The information shows that wildfires have occurred in 33 fire seasons, or approximately every second year, since 1948–49. Large wildfires (more than 10,000 hectares) occurred in the 1951–52 fire season and in 1957–58, 1972–73, 1982–83, 2018–19 and in 2019–20 when almost two thirds of South East Forest National Park were burnt. Just over 36,000 hectares have been prescribed burned since 2000.

Plan reference: page 36, under Policies

Add a new policy:

Fire will be managed to minimise the risk of a single wildfire affecting the entire feral predator-free area and to maintain a spatial and temporal diversity of functional habitats for reintroduced and existing native animals within the feral predator-free area.

Plan reference: pages 36–37, under Actions

Add a new high priority action:

Undertake and implement fire management planning for the feral predator-free area. This may be done as part of the reserve fire management strategy or as a separate strategy.

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