

EVERICK Heritage Pty Ltd

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01 July 2019 Our Ref: EV.857

Sue Walker Area Manager Tweed Byron North Coast National Parks and Wildlife Service 0429 393 437 Sue.Walker@environment.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sue,

# RE: ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSESSMENT LETTER OF ADVICE PROPOSED UNICORN FALLS PRECINCT AND LINK TRACK, NEAR UKI NSW.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide advice relating to Aboriginal Heritage for the proposed Day-Use Area Upgrades, Campground and Link Track at Unicorn Falls near Uki NSW ('Project Area' see Appendix 1). The Proposed Works include;

- the construction of a new 'Unicorn' camp ground area, including a picnic area with three (3) table seats in an existing disturbed clearing;
- a new carpark with ten (10) parking bays;
- a double stall gable toilet with upgraded access;
- a skillion information shelter with welcome message and precinct information;
- Re-use of an old existing logging road as a walking trail; and
- Construction of a new 1 km walking link track to Unicorn Falls.

#### Please find **enclosed**:

- a) results of the AHIMS and NSW Heritage database search (Appendix 2);
- b) an analysis of relevant landforms the types of disturbance that may affect the nature and distribution of Aboriginal Objects (Appendix 3);
- c) a review of relevant legislation (Appendix 4); and
- d) statements addressing the 'Due Diligence Code or Practice' requirements for the project (Appendix 5).

A site inspection was carried out on Wednesday 29 May 2019 with Mr Warren Phillips and Maurice Gannon from Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council ('LALC') and Mr Paul and Grant Buxton. The following general statements summarise the outcomes of the site inspection and consultation;





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- No Aboriginal Objects were identified from the survey and it is unlikely that the Project Area will contain sub-surface archaeological sites.
- It was suggested that the Rock Pool features at the Day Use site may well be of significance to Aboriginal women which may require additional consultation with Aboriginal women.
- Given there may be Aboriginal Significance attached to the Day Use Site it may be appropriate that no additional facilities be installed at all.
- It was generally agreed that the proposed track across the steep terrain was not likely to impact on Aboriginal sites. However, a walking track following more closely the route of Mann and South Chowan Rd would be more viable.
- Control of illegal camping, trail bikes and inappropriate use of the Day Use site particularly around the time of Byron Bay 'festivals' was an ongoing problem for NPWS staff and potentially the management of Aboriginal sites and places of cultural value.

The Consultant is of the opinion that the Proposed Works will not impact on Aboriginal Objects. Precautionary measures are recommended to mitigate the potential for harm to Aboriginal Objects. These include an Aboriginal Object Finds Procedure and Human Remains Procedure (Appendix 6).

Please contact Principal Archaeologist (Coffs Harbour) Tim Hill on 0422 309 822 or <a href="mailto:t.hill@everick.com.au">t.hill@everick.com.au</a> to further discuss the results of the site inspection and recommendations.

Yours faithfully,

Tim Robins Director

Everick Heritage Pty Ltd

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# APPENDIX 1: PROJECT AREA LOCATION

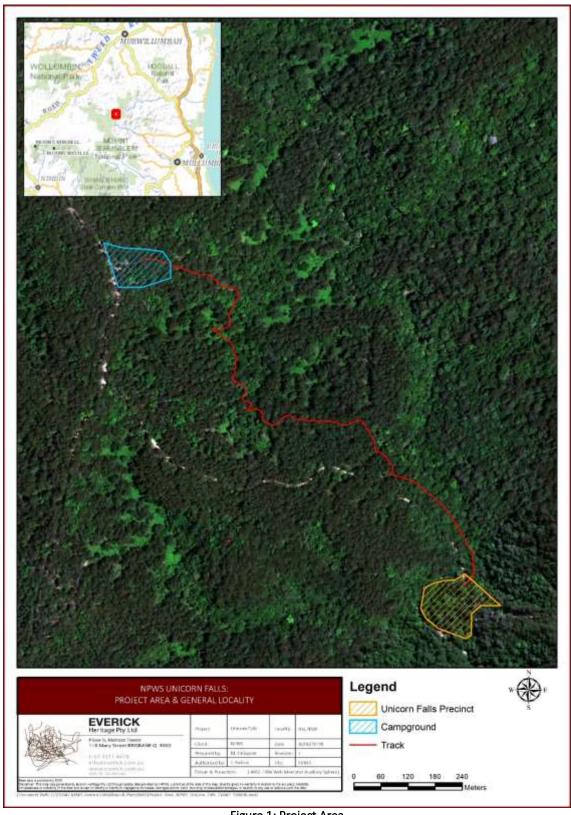


Figure 1: Project Area







Figure 2: Proposed location of the day use precinct.







Figure 3: Proposed Campground Precinct.



### APPENDIX 2: DATABASE SEARCHES

## 1.1 Tweed Local Environment Plan (2014) Search

The Project Area is not identified as an item of environmental heritage (Schedule 5) under the Tweed Local Environment Plan 2014.

The Project Area is identified as "Aboriginal Place of Heritage Significance" under the Tweed Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan (2017 see Figure 4). This is specifically in the area of the campground.

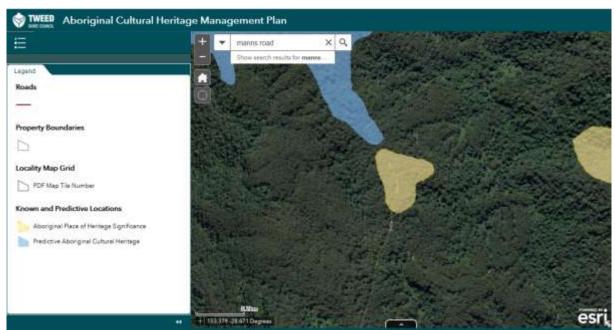


Figure 4: Results of Tweed ACHMP mapping search (source Tweed Shire Council)



#### 1.2 AHIMS Search Results

A basic search was conducted on 15 April of the OEH Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS service number 415297) for latitude and longitude coordinates of -28.4688, 153.3807 to -28.4687, 153.3808 with a 1000 m buffer. The search identified two (2) registered Aboriginal Sites within the search area and no Aboriginal Places. On the basis of this search an extensive search was requested for the same latitude and longitude coordinates (AHIMS service number 415310). The extensive search identified the two sites as being one (1) open site, and one closed site, both of which were recorded by Mr. Ian Fox. Due to restrictions in place by the OEH, no further information is available as to the nature or location of both of these sites in proximity to the Project Area. The contact name provided by the OEH for this restriction is 'Searle.'

Table 1: Results of AHIMS search (AHIMS #ID415310).

Site ID	Site name	<u>Datum</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>	Site features
04-1-0122	Restriction applied				
04-1-0123	Restriction applied				





#### APPENDIX 3: LANDFORM AND DISTURBANCE ANALYSIS

The *Due Diligence Code of Practice* (OEH 2010:12) identifies broad types of 'landscape features' which are considered to be consistently associated with Aboriginal Objects. These include areas:

- within 200 m of water;
- located within a sand dune system;
- located on a ridge top, ridge line, or headland;
- located within 200 m below or above a cliff face; or
- within 20 m of, or in a cave, rock shelter, or cave mouth.

Having consideration for the general topography of the Project Area it is not considered that the ridge crest provides access to a particularly unique resource, including fresh water, estuary or rainforest that is not similarly provided by other nearby ridges and toe slopes. Whilst it is noted that there is a strong Aboriginal Tradition that Aboriginal people have utilised ridge lines in general as pathways, this does not necessarily mean that the ridge crest will contain Aboriginal Sites. Equally, it is not necessarily the case that proximity to water will increase the potential of nearby areas to contain Aboriginal Sites as water is so abundant in the landscape.



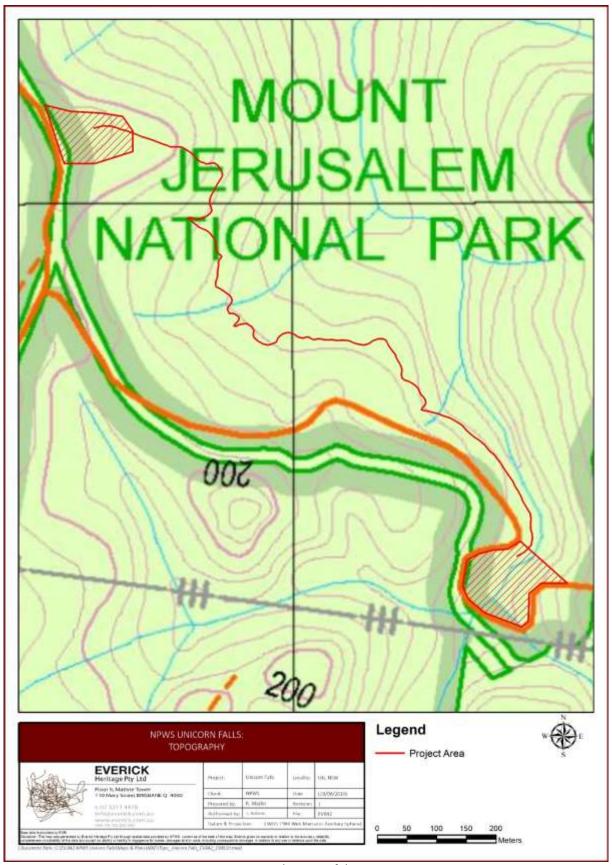


Figure 5: Topographic map of the Project Area.





The majority of the Project Area is mapped as part of the Frogs Hollow soil landscape (Morand 1996). Frogs Hollow soil landscape comprises the majority of the Project Area in the west, south-west, while Burringbar persists in the east, north-east. The Frogs Hollow soil landscape, derived from Triassic Volcanics, rhyolite, rhyolitic tuff and claystone, comprises the following geology;

"moderately deep to deep (100-200 cm), moderately well-drained Brown Podzolic Soils and Brown Earths (Db3.51) on ridges and upper slopes. Deep (>200 cm), moderately well-drained Red Podzolic Soils (Dr4.21, Dr2.21, Gn 3.14) and Red Clays (Uf 6.31, Uf 4.41) elsewhere" (Morand 1996:74).

Aboriginal sites are known to occur on deep podzolic soils. In addition, rhyolite is a stone material which is suitable in structure and hardness for stone tool production.

A small portion of the Project Area is mapped as part of the Burringbar soil landscape which comprises soils derived the Jurassic Neranleigh-Fernvale group are described as;

"shallow to moderately deep (100 cm), moderately well-drained Red Podzolic Soils (Dr2.21, Dr2.31, Gn3.24) on slopes of deeply weathered siltstone/mudstone/shale; shallow (50–100 cm), poorly drained Yellow Podzolic Soils (Gn2.34, Dy3.21) on slopes of quartzite/phyllite; deep (>200 cm), moderately well-drained Red Earths (Uf6.31) on footslopes /l ower slopes; deep (>150 cm), imperfectly drained stony Yellow Podzolic Soils (K-Gn2.81) on old coastline" (Morand 1996:64).

Vegetation within the Frogs Hollow soil landscape is modelled as being "partially cleared open-forest (wet sclerophyll" (Morand 1996:74). Dominant species modelled in Frogs Hollow landscapes include blackbutt (*Eucalyptus pilularis*), grey gum (*E. punctata*), white mahogany (*E.acmenoides*), grey ironbark (*E. paniculata*) tallowwood (*E. microcorys*), flooded gum (*E. grandis*), brush box (*Lophostemon confertus*) and turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*) (Morand 1996:74). Aboriginal sites are not common with wet sclerophyll forests, with the exception of ridge crests which are typically drier and more exposed to winds.

The Due Diligence Code of Practice (OEH 2010) provides the following definition of 'disturbed land':

"Land is disturbed if it has been the subject of human activity that has changed the land surface, being changes that remain clear and observable. Examples include ploughing, construction of rural infrastructure (such as dams and fences), construction of roads, trails and tracks (including fire trails and tracks and walking tracks), clearing vegetation, construction of buildings and erection of other structures, construction or installation of utilities and other similar services (such as above or below ground electrical infrastructure, water and sewerage pipelines, stormwater drainage and other similar infrastructure) and construction of earthworks" (OEH 2010:18)





The Project Area is located within land subject to the following types of disturbance;

- historic forest clearing during state forest operations;
- existing NPWs day use infrastructure; and
- public access roads (Mann and South Chowan Road).

It is reasonable to conclude that the Project Area contains very few areas where the topsoil layer has the potential to contain Aboriginal Objects. In particular the steepness of the terrain is expected to have been subject to significant erosion following disturbance activities.





#### APPENDIX 4: LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING CONTEXT

The following legislation provides the context for cultural heritage in NSW: The *National Parks and Wildlife Act* 1974 (NSW) the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* 1979 (NSW) and the *Heritage Act* 1977 (NSW). The Commonwealth also has a role in the protection of nationally significant cultural heritage through the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* 1999 (Cth), *The Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act* 1986 (Cth) and the *Historic Shipwrecks Act* 1976 (Cth).

Approval from the OEH will only be required should the Project impact on identified Aboriginal Objects. The information below lists the legislative and policy framework within which this assessment is set.

# The National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW) and the National Parks and Wildlife Regulations 2009 (NSW)

The *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NSW) (NPW Act) is the primary legislation concerning the identification and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage. It provides for the management of both Aboriginal Objects and Aboriginal Places. Under the NPW Act, an Aboriginal Object is any deposit, object or material evidence (not being a handicraft made for sale) relating to the Aboriginal habitation of the area, regardless of whether the evidence of habitation occurred before or after non-Aboriginal settlement of the land. This means that every Aboriginal Object – regardless of its size or seeming isolation from other Objects – is protected under the Act.

An Aboriginal Place is an area of significance to Aboriginal people which has been *declared* an Aboriginal Place by the Minister. The drafting of this legislation reflects the traditional focus on Objects, rather than on areas of significance such as story places and ceremonial grounds. However, a gradual shift in cultural heritage management practices is occurring towards recognising the value of identifying the significance of areas to Indigenous peoples beyond their physical attributes. With the introduction of the *National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Act 2010* (NSW) the former offence provisions under Section 86 of 'disturbing', 'moving', 'removing' or 'taking possession' of Aboriginal Objects or Places have been replaced by the new offence of 'harming or desecrating'. The definition of 'harm' is 'destroying, defacing or damaging an Object'. Importantly in the context of the management recommendations in this assessment, harm to an Object that is 'trivial or negligible' will not constitute an offence.

The new amendments also significantly strengthen the penalty provisions. The issue of intent to harm Aboriginal cultural heritage has been formally addressed by separating it from inadvertent harm. The penalty for individuals who inadvertently harm Aboriginal Objects has been set at up to \$55,000, while for corporations it is \$220,000. Also introduced is the concept of 'circumstances of aggravation' which allows for harsher penalties (up to





\$110,000) for individuals who inadvertently harm Aboriginal Cultural Heritage in the course of undertaking a commercial activity or have a record for committing similar offences. For those who knowingly harm Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, the penalty will rise substantially. The maximum penalty will be set at \$275,000 or one-year imprisonment for individuals, while for corporations it will rise to \$1,100,000.

Where a land user has or is likely to undertake activities that will harm Aboriginal Objects, the Director General (OEH) has a range of enforcement powers, including stop work orders, interim protection orders and remediation orders. The amended regulations also allow for a number of penalties in support of these provisions. The NPWA also now includes a range of defense provisions for unintentionally harming Aboriginal Objects:

- a) undertaking activities that are prescribed as 'Low Impact';
- b) acting in accordance with the new Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects in New South Wales (2010) ('Due Diligence Code');
- c) using a consulting archaeologist who correctly applies the OEH *Code of Practice for Archaeological Conduct in New South Wales* (2010) ("Archaeological Code of Practice") (see Appendix A); and
- d) acting in accordance with an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP).

#### 'Low Impact Activities'

The new regulations allow for a range of low impact activities to be undertaken without the need to consult the OEH or a consulting archaeologist. Generally, those who undertake activities of this nature will not be committing an offence, even if they inadvertently harm Aboriginal Objects. These activities include:

- a) Maintenance For example on existing roads and tracks, or on existing utilities such as underground power cables and sewage lines.
- b) Farming and Land Management for land previously disturbed, activities such as cropping, grazing, bores, fencing, erosions control etc. \*
- c) Removal of dead or dying vegetation only if there is minimal ground disturbance.
- d) Environmental rehabilitation weed removal, bush regeneration.
- e) Development in accordance with a Development Certificate issued under the EPA Act 1979 (provided the land is previously disturbed). \*
- f) Downhole logging, sampling and coring using hand held equipment.
- g) Geochemical surveying, seismic surveying, costeaning or drilling. \*





\* This defense is only available where the land has been disturbed by previous activity. Disturbance is defined as a clear and observable change to the land's surface, including but not limited to land disturbed by the following: soil ploughing; urban development; rural infrastructure (such as dams and fences); roads, trails and walking tracks; pipelines, transmission lines; and storm water drainage and other similar infrastructure.

#### Due Diligence Code of Practice for the Protection of Aboriginal Objects

The Due Diligence Code operates by posing a series of questions for land users before they commence development. These questions are based around assessing previous ground disturbance. An activity will generally be unlikely to harm Aboriginal Objects where the activity is in an area where there is no known Aboriginal Cultural Heritage, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage is not reasonably likely to occur and:

- a) will cause no additional ground disturbance; or
- b) is in a developed area; or
- c) is in a significantly disturbed area.

Where these criteria are not fulfilled, further assessment for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage will typically be required prior to commencing the activity.

#### The *ACHCRP* (2010)

The OEH has recently published the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents* (2010) (ACHCRP). The ACHCRP provide an acceptable framework for conducting Aboriginal community consultation in preparation for Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permits. Proponents are also required to follow the ACHCRP where undertaking a project that is likely to impact on cultural heritage and/or where required by the consent authority. As the proposed maintenance works will not impact on Aboriginal cultural heritage, following the ACHCRP is not required. For planning purposes, it should be noted that completion of the ACHCRP can take between 3 and 6 months.



#### APPENDIX 5: DUE DILIGENCE STATEMENTS.

The purpose of the Due Diligence Assessment is to determine if there are areas that have a potential to contain Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and to assess whether the proposed development will destructively impact upon known and / or concealed heritage sites. The Due Diligence Code of Practice recommends a staged analysis of cultural and archaeological factors. This section discusses the analysis of the Project Area when compared against these guidelines.

#### 1.2.1 Step 1: Will the activity disturb the ground surface?

Yes, the proposed works will disturb the ground surface. The nature of this disturbance will include construction of the campground, visitor trail and day-use area. The footprint of these works is outlined in Figure 1 - Figure 3.

#### 1.2.2 Step 2a: Search of AHIMS Database

A basic search was conducted on 15 April of the OEH Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS service number 415297) for latitude and longitude coordinates of -28.4688, 153.3807 to -28.4687, 153.3808 with a 1000 m buffer. The search identified two (2) registered Aboriginal sites within the search area and no Aboriginal Places. On the basis of this search an extensive search was requested for the same latitude and longitude coordinates (AHIMS service number 415310). The extensive search identified the two sites as being one (1) open site, and one closed site, both of which were recorded by Mr. Ian Fox. Due to restrictions in place by the OEH, no further information is available as to the nature or location of both of these sites in proximity to the Project Area. The contact name provided by the OEH for this restriction is 'Searle.'

# 1.2.3 Step 2b: Is the activity in an area where landscape features indicate the presence of Aboriginal cultural heritage?

The Due Diligence Code of Practice (OEH 2010:12) identifies broad types of 'landscape features' which are considered to be consistently associated with Aboriginal Objects. These include areas:

- within 200 m of water;
- located within a sand dune system;
- located on a ridge top, ridge line, or headland;
- located within 200 m below or above a cliff face; or
- within 20 m of, or in a cave, rock shelter, or cave mouth.





Having consideration for the general topography of the Project Area it is not considered that the ridge crest provides access to a particularly unique resource, including fresh water, estuary or rainforest that is not similarly provided by other nearby ridges and toe slopes. Whilst it is noted that there is a strong Aboriginal tradition that Aboriginal people have utilised ridge lines in general as pathways, this does not necessarily mean that the ridge crest will contain Aboriginal Sites. Equally, it is not necessarily the case that proximity to water will increase the potential of nearby areas to contain Aboriginal Sites as water is so abundant in the landscape.

#### Step 2c: Is there evidence of past ground disturbance?

The Due Diligence Code of Practice (OEH 2010) provides the following definition of 'disturbed land':

"Land is disturbed if it has been the subject of human activity that has changed the land surface, being changes that remain clear and observable. Examples include ploughing, construction of rural infrastructure (such as dams and fences), construction of roads, trails and tracks (including fire trails and tracks and walking tracks), clearing vegetation, construction of buildings and erection of other structures, construction or installation of utilities and other similar services (such as above or below ground electrical infrastructure, water and sewerage pipelines, stormwater drainage and other similar infrastructure) and construction of earthworks" (OEH 2010:18)

The Project Area is located within land subject to the following types of disturbance:

- historic forest clearing during state forest operations; and
- Existing NPWs day use infrastructure; and
- Public access roads (Mann and South Chowan road).

It is reasonable to conclude that the Project Area contains very few areas where the topsoil layer has the potential to contain Aboriginal objects. In particular the steepness of the terrain is expected to have been subject to significant erosion following disturbance activities.

#### Step 3. Additional Steps

A site inspection was carried out on Wednesday 29 May 2019 with Mr Warren Phillips and Maurice Gannon from Tweed Byron local Aboriginal Land Council ('LALC') and Mr Paul and Grant Buxton. The following staff from NPWS also attended the site inspection;

- Simon Hughes;
- Simon Beswick;
- Phil Browning;
- Keith Close;

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- Garnett Donnelly; and
- Brett Budd.

The site inspection was undertaken by Everick Senior Archaeologist Adrian Piper. The site inspection focused on the following three components of the Project;

- provision of a campground on Mann Road;
- provision of day usage facilities on South Chowan Road; and
- provision of a foot track linking the two sites.

The Mann Rd Campground is proposed on a hill crest formally a forestry camp or log loading site. The site is wet sclerophyll regrowth with a thin cover of grasses and weeds. Clay shale road base and basalt boulders have been stock piled on the site for future uses. The top soils have been stripped and highly disturbed, evidenced by low mounds of soil and timber on the east of the clearing. Several trees carry machine scars. A snigging track exits the clearing down a steep slope toward a narrow gorge and Chowan Creek.

The area inspected was approximately 1.5 hectares and surface visibility ranged between 100 % and 20 %. All exposed surfaces were inspected in an opportunistic manner using pedestrian transects. The road surface and cuttings of Mann Rd were inspected for approximately 50 m either side of the frontage to the campground.

No Aboriginal Cultural Heritage was found. The thin remnant soil horizon is considered unlikely to retain Aboriginal objects and unlikely to warrant further investigation.

The Day Use Facility, South Chowan Road is located at a lower elevation on a promontory in the bend of the headwaters of Chowan Creek immediately below South Chowan Road. Two (2) rock pools linked by a waterfall are particular features with the potential to contain Aboriginal heritage values or significance. Vegetation is mature wet sclerophyll / rainforest although logged. A narrow track leads to a bare earth clearing on the crest of the promontory from which a steep earth track leads down to the upper rock pool.

All bare earth was inspected although the exposed rock at the surface suggests the soil horizon is very thin. Visibility was 100 % due to permanent shadow of forest cover. No Aboriginal Cultural Heritage was found. The thin remnant soil horizon is considered unlikely to retain Aboriginal Objects and unlikely to warrant further investigation.

**Proposed Linking Track.** The link track was identified in the original location along Chowan creek and as by the GPS file identified by Simon Beswick (NPWS) which traversed the steep slope. The survey team undertook surveys of a nearby snigging track nearby to the Campground for approximately 200 m and a second survey of approximately





400 m along the creek line. Whilst the survey transect was not able to confidently locate the trail it was generally agreed that the location of the trail across the steep slope or the creek line was unlikely to contain Aboriginal Sites.

The following general statements summarise the outcomes of the site inspection and consultation:

- No Aboriginal Objects were identified from the survey and it is unlikely that the Project Area will contain sub-surface archaeological sites.
- It was suggested that the Rock Pool features at the Day Use site may well be of significance to Aboriginal women which may require additional consultation with Aboriginal women.
- Given there may be Aboriginal significance attached to the Day Use Site it may be appropriate that no additional facilities be installed at all without additional consultation to understand the potential of visitor infrastructure and interpretive material to impact on intangible heritage values.
- It was generally agreed that the proposed track across the steep terrain was not likely to impact on Aboriginal Sites. However, a walking track following more closely the route of Mann and South Chowan Rd would be more viable.
- Control of illegal camping, trail bikes and inappropriate use of the Day Use site particularly around the time of Byron Bay 'festivals' was an ongoing problem for NPWS staff and potentially the management of Aboriginal Sites and Places of cultural value.





Figure 6: Former snigging track from Campground.



Figure 7: Proposed campground showing the regrowth and old log dump.





Figure 8. Day use area showing open ground and leaf litter.





#### APPENDIX 6: MANAGEMENT RECOMENDATIONS

The Consultant is of the opinion that the Proposed Works will not impact on Aboriginal Objects. Having consideration for the outcomes of the Due Diligence assessment the following management recommendations are provided;

### Recommendation 1: Aboriginal Objects Find Procedure

It is recommended that if suspected Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Objects have been uncovered because of development activities within the Project Area:

- a) work in the surrounding area is to stop immediately;
- a) a temporary fence is to be erected around the site, with a buffer zone of at least 10 metres around the known edge of the site;
- b) an appropriately qualified archaeological consultant is to be engaged to identify the material;
- c) if the material is found to be of Aboriginal origin, the Aboriginal community is to be consulted in a manner as outlined in the OEH guidelines: *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Consultation Requirements for Proponents* (2010); and
- d) should the works be deemed to have harmed the Aboriginal objects the OEH should be notified immediately via the EPA Enviro Hotline.

It is recommended that representatives of the Aboriginal community are engaged to support the implementation of the Aboriginal Objects find procedure.

#### Recommendation 2: Potential Intangible Values

Based on the outcomes of the community consultation it is recommended that additional consultation with Elders and female representatives of the Aboriginal community with respect to the potential of the proposal to impact on 'intangible' cultural heritage values associated with the Project Area is undertaken prior to the development of additional visitor infrastructure, interpretive signage and visitor information for the Unicorn falls area generally. This may require the development of protocols for the protection of cultural information and for the restriction of access to specific locations and/or features within the Project Area which may meet the criteria of an Aboriginal Place as defined by the NPW Act.





#### Recommendation 3: Aboriginal Human Remains

Although it is unlikely that human remains will be located at any stage during earthworks within the Project Area, should this event arise it is recommended that all works must halt in the immediate area to prevent any further impacts to the remains. The Site should be cordoned off and the remains themselves should be left untouched. The nearest police station the Tweed Byron LALC and the OEH Regional Office (Coffs Harbour) are all to be notified as soon as possible. If the remains are found to be of Aboriginal origin and the police do not wish to investigate the Site for criminal activities, the Aboriginal community and the OEH should be consulted as to how the remains should be dealt with. Work may only resume after agreement is reached between all notified parties, provided it is in accordance with all parties' statutory obligations.

It is also recommended that in all dealings with Aboriginal Human Remains, the Proponent should use respectful language, bearing in mind that they are the remains of Aboriginal people rather than scientific specimens.

#### Recommendation 4: Conservation Principles

It is recommended that all effort must be taken to avoid any impacts on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage values at all stages during the development works. If impacts are unavoidable, mitigation measures should be negotiated between the Proponent, OEH and the Aboriginal community.