



Plan of Management



Biddon State Conservation Area

Biddon Community Conservation Area Zone 3

BIDDON STATE CONSERVATION AREA
Community Conservation Area Zone 3
PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

October 2012

This plan of management was adopted by the Minister for the Environment on 2nd October 2012.

Acknowledgements

This plan of management is based on a draft plan prepared by staff of the Northern Plains Region of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), part of the Office of Environment and Heritage, Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The NPWS acknowledges that this park is in the traditional country of the Weilwan Aboriginal people.

Cover photograph: Remains of former oil store, Biddon Forest Workers Precinct, by Ray Christison.

For additional information or any inquiries about Biddon State Conservation Area or this plan of management, contact the NPWS Coonabarabran Area Office, 30 Timor St, Coonabarabran or by telephone on (02) 6842 1311

Published by:
Office of Environment and Heritage
59–61 Goulburn Street
PO Box A290
Sydney South 1232

© Copyright State of NSW and the Office of Environment and Heritage NSW: Use permitted with appropriate acknowledgment.

ISBN 978 1 74293 865 3

OEH 2012/0838

Printed on recycled paper

FOREWORD

Biddon State Conservation Area covers 3,352 hectares and is located Pilliga sub-region of the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion, approximately 15 kilometres north-west of Gilgandra. It was reserved as a state conservation area (Community Conservation Area Zone 3) on 1st December 2005.

Biddon State Conservation Area forms part of a vegetated corridor linking Goonoo forest to the south and the Warrumbungle National Park and Pilliga forest reserves to the north. It contains six vegetation communities, including one not well represented elsewhere in the reserve system, and 100 species of native animals, including six threatened species. Biddon State Conservation Area also contains relics from its past use as a state forest and over 40 Aboriginal sites.

The New South Wales *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* requires that a plan of management be prepared for each state conservation area. A draft plan of management for Biddon State Conservation Area was placed on public exhibition from 13 May to 29 August 2011. The submissions received were considered by the Community Conservation Area Committee and the National Parks and Wildlife Council, and their recommendations considered, before adopting this plan.

The plan contains a number of actions to achieve the NSW 2021 goal to protect our natural environment, including the undertaking of biodiversity monitoring, the implementation of actions to assist the recovery of threatened species, control of introduced plants and animals, and the undertaking of soil erosion control works. The plan also provides extensive opportunities for driving, bushwalking, horse riding and cycling.

This plan of management establishes the scheme of operations for Biddon State Conservation Area. In accordance with section 73B of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, this plan of management is hereby adopted.



Robyn Parker MP
Minister for the Environment

MAP 1. BIDDON SCA



1. LOCATION, GAZETTAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Biddon State Conservation Area (SCA) is approximately 15 kilometres north-west of the township of Gilgandra. The SCA is 3,352 hectares in size, with a boundary of 26 kilometres. It lies in the Pilliga sub-region of the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion and is within the Central West Catchment Management Authority. Prior to being reserved as a state conservation area in December 2005, the SCA was managed by Forests NSW as a commercial cypress pine forest and included grazing leases.

Biddon SCA is within the Gilgandra Local Government Area and zoned 8 (a) (National Parks) under the Gilgandra Local Environment Plan 2004. The SCA is also within the area administered by the Gilgandra Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) being part of the traditional lands of the Weilwan Aboriginal people.

Biddon SCA is one of the reserves established under the *Brigalow and Nandewar Community Conservation Areas Act 2005* (BNCCA Act) and as such forms part of a chain of reserves stretching the length of the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion. It provides connectivity between the larger reserved lands to the north - Warrumbungle National Park and the Pilliga conservation reserves, and the Goonoo forest reserves to the south. It is surrounded by private properties used for grazing and cropping.

Biddon State Conservation Area includes several roads that are vested in the Minister under Part 11 of the NPW Act to ensure continued access to neighbouring land (see Map 1). These roads do not form part of the gazetted area of the park but their management is subject to this plan, the NPW Regulation and the requirements of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EPA Act). (Refer to Section 4.5 Management Operations).

2. MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

2.1 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The management of the state conservation area is in the context of a legislative and policy framework, primarily the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NPW Act) and Regulations, the Community Conservation Agreement developed under the BNCCA Act, the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act) and the policies of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

Other legislation, strategies and international agreements may also apply to management of the area. In particular, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EPA Act) may require assessment of environmental impact of works proposed in this plan. The Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) may apply in relation to actions that impact on matters of National Environmental Significance, such as migratory and threatened species listed under that Act.

A plan of management is a statutory document under the NPW Act. Once the Minister has adopted a plan, the plan must be carried out and no operations may be undertaken within Biddon SCA except in accordance with the plan. This plan will also apply to any future additions to Biddon SCA. Should management strategies or works be proposed in future that are not consistent with this plan, an amendment to the plan or a new plan will be prepared and exhibited for public comment.

2.2 MANAGEMENT PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES

Biddon State Forest was dedicated under the BNCCA Act to be managed as Biddon State Conservation Area.

State conservation areas are reserved under the NPW Act to protect and conserve areas that contain significant or representative ecosystems, landforms or natural phenomena or places of cultural significance; that are capable of providing opportunities for sustainable visitor use and enjoyment; the sustainable use of buildings and structures; or research; and that are capable of providing opportunities for uses permitted under other provisions of the Act.

Under the Act (section 30G), state conservation areas are managed to:

- conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem functions, protect natural phenomena and maintain natural landscapes;
- conserve places, objects and features of cultural value;
- provide for the undertaking of uses permitted under other provisions of the NPW Act (including uses permitted under section 47J such as mineral exploration and mining), having regard to the conservation of the natural and cultural values of the state conservation area;
- provide for sustainable visitor use and enjoyment that is compatible with conservation of the area's natural and cultural values and with uses permitted in the area;
- provide for sustainable use (including adaptive reuse) of any buildings or structures or modified natural areas having regard to conservation of the area's natural and cultural values and with other uses permitted in the area; and
- provide for appropriate research and monitoring.

Land is reserved as a state conservation area where mineral values do not allow for reservation under another category. The NPW Act requires a review of the classification of state conservation areas every five years in consultation with the Minister administering the *Mining Act 1992*. A review was undertaken in November 2008 in which the status of Biddon Community Conservation Area, Zone 3 State Conservation Area remained unchanged.

In the long term it is intended for Biddon Community Conservation Area, Zone 3 State Conservation Area to become a national park, and therefore management of the state conservation area will be guided as far as possible by the management principles for national parks.

2.3 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Biddon SCA is considered to be of significance for:

- Off-park ecological conservation: The SCA contributes to landscape connectivity by providing a native vegetation corridor between the conservation lands of the Goonoo forest to the south, and the Warrumbungle National Park and Pilliga forest reserves to the north. This is of particular importance for woodland birds and reptiles in such a fragmented landscape.
- Biological Values: Biddon SCA contains over 240 species of native plants and 100 species of native animals. Five bird species and one mammal (the koala) are listed as vulnerable under the TSC Act.
- Aboriginal Heritage: The SCA protects over 40 known Aboriginal sites, with potentially more sites yet to be found. It provides an important connection to land for the local Aboriginal community.
- Historic Heritage: Biddon SCA contains remnants of its past use as a state forest.

2.4 SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT DIRECTIONS

Management of the SCA will focus on the protection of the significant vegetation communities, the protection of Aboriginal heritage, and encouragement of the use of the SCA for educational purposes.

Major strategies to achieve these objectives are:

- on-going fire management so that people and property are protected from wildfire, and the SCA's conservation values are maintained;
- on-going control of weeds and pest animal species to minimise their impact on the SCA's values;
- protection and, where necessary, restoration of natural vegetation;
- protection of cultural heritage places with community involvement, in particular from members of the local Aboriginal community; and
- provision for opportunities for low key, independent recreation.

3. VALUES

The location, landforms and plant and animal communities of an area have determined how it has been used and valued. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people place values on natural areas, including aesthetic, social, spiritual and recreational values. These values may be attached to the landscape as a whole or to individual components, for example to plant and animal species used by Aboriginal people. This plan of management aims to conserve both natural and cultural values. For reasons of clarity and document usefulness, various aspects of natural heritage, cultural heritage, threats and on-going use are dealt with individually, but their inter-relationships are recognised.

Biddon SCA protects areas of narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*) and white cypress pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) woodland, with some mallee-broombush (*Eucalyptus viridis*-*Melaleuca uncinata*) and significant areas of old growth forest. It is a significant reserve within the Northern Plains Region as it protects a representative sample of the flora and fauna of the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion. This is particularly important as it provides refuge and habitat for woodland birds and reptiles in a highly fragmented landscape (NPWS 2009).

3.1 GEOLOGY, LANDSCAPE AND HYDROLOGY

Located in the southern section of the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion, Biddon SCA is composed of gentle rising country, draining to the north-east. Ridge-tops to the eastern and southern ends of the SCA rise to 420 metres above sea level.

The geology is predominantly Jurassic coarse-grained sediments of the Great Artesian-Surat Basin, with a composition of quartz sandstone, conglomerate and claystone. These overlie the Permian Triassic rocks of the Gunnedah Basin. Potential coal resources have been identified in the Gunnedah Basin Sequence in the Tooraweenah Trough. The area has potential for coal seam methane and conventional petroleum. The soils are predominantly massive red and yellow earths with small areas of red brown earths in the northwest (Hunter, 2008). These soils are highly erodible.

There are a number of intermittent creeks that flow west through the SCA. These creeks have their headwaters within the SCA or on adjacent private lands.

3.2 NATIVE PLANTS

Biddon SCA contains a total of 241 plant species, representing 61 families and 150 genera (Hunter 2008). The SCA contains six different vegetation communities, five of which are well reserved across their known ranges and are not of conservation concern. These are communities dominated by narrow-leaved ironbark (*Eucalyptus crebra*), white cypress pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*), Pilliga box (*Eucalyptus pilligaensis*), bull oak (*Allocasuarina leuhmannii*), black pine (*Callitris endlicheri*) and blue ironbark (*Eucalyptus nubila*). One vegetation community, the white cypress pine-green mallee (*Eucalyptus viridis*) community is not well represented in reserves elsewhere.

3.3 NATIVE ANIMALS

Biddon SCA is home to 100 species of native animals. This includes 68 species of birds, 13 mammals, 16 reptile species and 3 different types of amphibians.

Of these, the barking owl (*Ninox connivens*), grey-crowned babbler (*Potamostomus temporalis temporalis*), brown tree creeper (*Climacteris picumnus*), varied sitella (*Daphoenositta chrysoptera*), speckled warbler (*Pyrrholaemus saggitatus*) and the koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) are listed as vulnerable under the TSC Act, which states that they 'are likely to become endangered unless the circumstances and factors threatening their survival or evolutionary development cease to operate'.

3.4 ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

Aboriginal communities have an association and connection to the land. The land and water within a landscape are central to Aboriginal spirituality and contribute to Aboriginal identity. Aboriginal communities associate natural resources with the use and enjoyment of foods and medicines, caring for the land, passing on cultural knowledge, kinship systems and strengthening social bonds. Aboriginal heritage and connection to nature are inseparable from each other and need to be managed in an integrated manner across the landscape.

Biddon SCA falls within the Gilgandra Local Aboriginal Land Council area and is the country traditionally used by the Weilwan people.

Several sites of cultural significance were identified as part of the Brigalow Belt South Regional Assessment surveys. A more comprehensive site survey was conducted in September 2008 by members of the Uambi Community Development Employment Program (based at Gilgandra), in conjunction with TAFE Indigenous Land Management students. Over 40 Aboriginal sites have been recorded in Biddon SCA, including artefact scatters, scarred trees, ochre quarries and wild resources such as bush food plants (DECC 2007a).

Biddon SCA and the surrounding area provides the local Aboriginal community with an opportunity to get back onto Country, pass on important cultural information to their children and train young people in land management skills. Recent survey work revealed a variety of food and medicinal plants, as well as materials for making utensils and sites of prior occupation and use. The Gilgandra Local Aboriginal Land Council has expressed an interest in conducting on-going site surveys and using the SCA for educational programs for local Aboriginal high school students.

3.5 HISTORIC HERITAGE

The region around Biddon SCA was settled in the 1830s as a result of pastoral expansion, with the first commercial timber mill in Gilgandra established in 1890. The site was recognised as an active sleeper cutting area in the early 20th Century.

Forest Reserve No. 1690 was formally established in 1884 and was incorporated into Biddon State Forest (known as State Forest No. 449) when that was dedicated in 1917 (Christison, 2009).

A forestry headquarters was developed in the northern section of what is now the SCA, and various forest foremen (and their families) lived at the site between the mid 1930s until some time around 1960. The remains of the headquarters' site are still evident in the SCA. The surviving footings, stumps, concrete slabs, building frames, fences and other structures provide a clear indication of the functional areas and activities associated with a forest headquarters. Dump sites may also provide evidence of consumption patterns in isolated government settlements in the mid 20th century. The precinct and its component features have moderate archaeological significance at the local level (Christison, 2009).

During the Second World War (WWII), charcoal kilns were set up and ironbark and other hardwood species including bull oak were harvested to produce charcoal to fuel automotive 'gas producers'. The charcoal burning precinct (See Map 1) has been heavily remediated and contains little physical evidence of its former function apart from the extensive mounds of charcoal residue present. Some brick features provide evidence of the possible location of huts on the site. The site has moderate archaeological significance at a local level (Christison, 2009).

In 1943, an internment camp for "enemy aliens" was located in the forest in response to a government need to house civilian internees (mostly Italian immigrants) and Italian prisoners of war. They were involved in charcoal burning tasks and employed on nearby pastoral properties.

There are also several old wooden bridges and blazed survey marker trees which have historic value as part of the era of Forests NSW management.

Whilst under the management of Forests NSW, grazing licences were issued for sheep grazing with a strict regime of stocking limits and triggers for destocking over the summer months (Deane *pers. comm.* 2010).

The majority of tracks were established to service the timber industry after WWII, when excess road-making machinery became more freely available. However, many of the older, winding tracks are a remnant of the earlier sleeper cutting period.

3.6 VISITOR USE, EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

3.6.1 Visitor Use

The SCA currently receives very little visitation. Past recreational use of the area has been limited to occasional visits by locals picnicking or riding motorbikes on the tracks.

There are no visitor facilities in the SCA other than the road network. The nearest public picnic facilities and toilets are at Gilgandra, 15 kilometres to the south-west.

Public access is available to the SCA at three main points; from the Biddon Forest Road, from the Biddon Bearbung Road onto Kings Road and from Hosegoods Road.

Most roads are suitable for two-wheel drive vehicles although these can become inaccessible after rain.

Several old wooden bridges located throughout the SCA were assessed as potentially hazardous and were closed to general traffic in 2008.

3.6.2 Education

Biddon SCA has been used as a training area for Gilgandra TAFE students studying Indigenous Land Management, as part of a Cultural Site Survey conducted in 2008.

3.6.3 Research

During its time as a State forest, Biddon was used as a research area for tree growth trials, and a remnant of a fenced trial plot is evident along the eastern end of Plot Rd (see Map 1). However an exhaustive search of the historical research records was unsuccessful and it is assumed that any useful data has been lost (Deane *pers. comm.* 2010).

4. ISSUES

4.1 WEEDS AND PEST ANIMALS

The Northern Plains Pest Management Strategy 2008-2011 (DECC 2007b) lists several species of pest animals and identifies their respective populations in Biddon SCA. According to this schedule, rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), wild dogs (*Canis lupus*), cats (*Felis catus*) and deer species occur in 'isolated populations restricted to small areas', whilst feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*) are in 'scattered populations' and foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) are 'widespread throughout the reserve'. The brown hare (*Lepus capensis*) is also listed as being present. Cooperative pig trapping programs have been undertaken with neighbours, and a winter fox baiting program has been running since 2006.

The introduced plant blue heliotrope (*Heliotropium amplexicaule*) occurs in isolated infestations around the forest headquarters precinct and along Wards Road (see Map 1) on the western boundary. Common prickly pear (*Opuntia stricta*) has also been recorded in low densities.

4.2 FIRE

The primary fire management objectives of the NPWS are to protect life and property and community assets from the adverse impacts of fire, whilst managing fire regimes to maintain and protect biodiversity and cultural heritage.

Fire is a natural feature of many environments and is essential for the survival of some plant communities. However, inappropriate fire regimes can lead to loss of particular plant and animal species and communities, and high frequency fires have been listed as a key threatening process under the TSC Act.

There have been two recorded wildfires within the SCA since the 1950s. Barry Johnson, who grew up on a farm beside Biddon and later worked for Forests NSW, recalls a large fire in the northern part of the forest in the late 1950s, and another in the top north-eastern block (forestry compartment 11) around 1973 (Johnson 2010 *pers. comm.*). An area of mallee-broombush vegetation immediately south of the forest headquarters precinct (see Map 1) was subject to a prescribed burn in 1996.

A separate (map-based) fire management strategy has been prepared for the SCA (DECC 2008b). The fire management strategy outlines the key assets within and adjoining Biddon SCA including sites of natural and cultural heritage value, fire management zones which include asset protection zones, and fire control advantages such as management trails and water supply points. Hazard reduction programs, ecological burning proposals and fire trail works are submitted annually to the Castlereagh Bush Fire Management Committee (BFMC).

4.3 ISOLATION AND FRAGMENTATION

The area surrounding Biddon SCA has been extensively cleared, which has resulted in a high loss of biodiversity and fragmentation of habitat in the region. Long term conservation of biodiversity depends upon the protection, enhancement and connection of remaining habitat across the landscape, incorporating vegetation remnants on both public and private lands. Nearby vegetated areas contribute to the habitat values of the SCA and provide ecological corridors to other vegetated areas. Maintaining the integrity of the remaining habitat within the SCA and, where possible, linking this to adjacent areas of vegetation to facilitate wildlife corridors is important in ensuring long term viability of the SCA's biological values.

4.4 MINING AND MINERAL EXPLORATION

Exploration for minerals and petroleum, as well as mining and petroleum production, are permissible uses within state conservation areas. The SCA is not currently covered by an exploration licence.

The Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services (DTIRIS) is the lead authority for mining and petroleum activities, including mineral exploration and mine site rehabilitation. DTIRIS is required under the EPA Act to undertake environmental assessments for mining and exploration activities in all SCAs.

4.5 MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS AND OTHER USES

There are two small parcels of vested land within the SCA, with a total area of one and a half hectares. These are located along the southern and western edges of the SCA and were previously used as quarries. These are currently disused and no parties have an interest in them.

Boundary fences are generally old, but in fair condition.

There are four dams on the SCA which are in good condition, one of which has a 'bush' loading ramp. These are suitable as water supplies for fire fighting.

Within Biddon State Conservation Area are the following roads which are Part 11 Lands vested in the Minister responsible for the administration of the NPW Act:

- the southern boundary from Biddon Forest Road around to the eastern end of Red Scheme Road -that is Charcoal Road (south from Biddon Forest Road), Far End Road and Eastside Road (south of Red Scheme Road);
- Red Scheme Road between Charcoal Road and Camp Road;
- Camp Road between Far End Road and Red Scheme Road; and
- Charcoal Road between Biddon Forest Road and Red Scheme Road.

These roads allow access to neighbouring properties. All other roads within the SCA are park roads.

4.6 CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change has been listed as a key threatening process under the TSC Act. Projections of future changes in climate for NSW include higher temperatures, increasing sea levels and water temperatures, elevated CO₂, more intense but possibly reduced annual average rainfall, increased temperature extremes and higher evaporative demand. These changes are likely to lead to greater intensity and frequency of fires, more severe droughts, reduced river runoff and water availability, regional flooding and increased erosion.

Climate change may significantly affect biodiversity by changing population size and distribution of species, modifying species composition, and altering the geographical extent of habitats and ecosystems. The potential impact of climate change is difficult to assess since it depends on the compounding effects of other pressures, particularly barriers to migration and pressure from feral animals. Species most at risk are those unable to migrate or adapt, particularly those with small population sizes or with slow growth rates.

Programs to reduce the pressures arising from other threats, such as habitat fragmentation, invasive species, bushfires, pollution and urban expansion, will help reduce the severity of the effects of climate change.

5. REFERENCES

Christison, R 2009, *Conservation Management Strategy- Biddon Forest Workers' Precinct - A report prepared for the NSW NPWS by High Ground Consulting, Lithgow, NSW*, unpublished report

DECC 2007a, *Biddon CCA Zone 3 Cultural Heritage Report*, Department of Environment and Climate Change, unpublished internal report

DECC 2007b, *Northern Plains Region Pest Management Strategy 2008-2011*, Department of Environment and Climate Change, Sydney, NSW, <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/pestsweeds/RegionalPestStrategyNTR.pdf>

DECC 2008a, *Northern Plains Region Biodiversity Monitoring Strategy 2009 – 2014*, Department of Environment and Climate Change, unpublished internal report

DECC 2008b, *Biddon State Conservation Area- Fire Management Strategy 2008-2013*, <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/firemanagement/final/20080478BiddonFMS2008.pdf>

Hunter 2008, *Vegetation and Floristics of Biddon State Conservation Area - A report to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service*, unpublished report

NPWS 2009, *Fauna Survey of Biddon State Conservation Area*, Department of Environment and Climate Change, unpublished report

Personal Communications

Andrew Deane, Resources Forester Forests NSW, Western Region 2004-2006

Barry Johnson, Forests NSW Operations Foreman Gilgandra Depot

6. IMPLEMENTATION

| Current Situation | Desired Outcomes | Strategies | Priority |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>6.1 On-park Ecological conservation</p> <p>There is a potential soil erosion issue where Loan Hill Road crosses a small creek near the southern boundary. Without remedial action this could make the road inaccessible to larger vehicles required for fire fighting operations.</p> <p>One hundred fauna species have been recorded. There is potential to gain a fuller understanding of the fauna values. The SCA is home to at least 6 threatened species. The Northern Plains Region Biodiversity Monitoring Strategy (DECC 2008a) provides a framework for monitoring.</p> <p>Broad vegetation communities have been identified and mapped. There is some minor grazing pressure from straying stock.</p> <p>Only 25% of the SCA boundary has a native vegetation buffer, the remainder being cleared agricultural land. As such it is important that any native vegetation buffers be preserved.</p> | <p>Soil erosion is minimised.</p> <p>Roads are accessible.</p> <p>All native plant and animal species and communities are conserved. Key threatening processes are reduced.</p> <p>Structural diversity and habitat values are maintained or improved.</p> <p>A buffer of native vegetation is conserved where it exists.</p> | <p>6.1.1 Assess the creek crossing at the southern end of Loan Hill Road and take action to arrest the erosion (refer to section 6.8).</p> <p>6.1.2 Undertake all works in a manner that minimises erosion and water pollution.</p> <p>6.1.3 Implement the relevant actions from Priority Action Statements and Recovery Plans for the barking owl, grey-crowned babbler, brown treecreeper, hooded robin, speckled warbler and koala.</p> <p>6.1.4 Undertake ongoing biodiversity monitoring surveys to enhance management activities for the management of flora and fauna of the SCA.</p> <p>6.1.5 Improve boundary fencing to a standard that prevents straying stock.</p> <p>6.1.6 Work with neighbours and the Catchment Management Authority to encourage conservation of remnant native vegetation in the vicinity of the SCA.</p> | <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>High</p> <p>Low</p> |

| Current Situation | Desired Outcomes | Strategies | Priority |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>6.2 Weeds and Pest Animals</p> <p>Weed control is on-going and undertaken in accordance with priorities outlined in the Northern Plains Regional Pest Management Strategy (2007b).</p> <p>Pest animal control is undertaken in accordance with priorities outlined in the Regional Pest Management Strategy. A fox baiting program is conducted between April and September.</p> <p>It appears that overall pest animal density is low and the potential exists to maintain low populations.</p> | <p>The impact of introduced species on native species and neighbouring lands is minimised.</p> <p>Small and isolated pest populations are controlled.</p> | <p>6.2.1 Continue weed control programs as outlined in the regional pest management strategy and annual pest operations plan. The priority will be the control of blue heliotrope.</p> <p>6.2.2 Monitor for noxious and significant environmental weeds and treat any new outbreaks.</p> <p>6.2.3 Work cooperatively with Central West Livestock Health and Pest Authority, Castlereagh Macquarie County Council and neighbours in implementing weed and pest animal control programs.</p> <p>6.2.4 Continue pest animal control programs as outlined in the Northern Tablelands Regional Pest Operations Plan. The priority will be the control of foxes.</p> <p>6.2.5 Pest animal sightings are recorded and the regional pest management strategy is updated.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>High</p> |

| Current Situation | Desired Outcomes | Strategies | Priority |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>6.3 Fire management</p> <p>A reserve fire management strategy for the SCA was adopted in 2007 in consultation with neighbours and the Castlereagh BFM.</p> <p>Fire intervals are above optimal for the majority of the SCA and there is a risk of summer wildfires damaging SCA values.</p> <p>Some, but not all, assets are identified and mapped.</p> <p>Regional staff have worked closely with neighbours and fire agencies to develop the Bidon Fire Management Strategy 2008-2013 (DECC 2008b).</p> | <p>Life, property and natural and cultural values are protected from bushfire.</p> <p>Fire regimes are appropriate for conservation of plant and animal communities.</p> <p>Cultural features are protected from damage by fire.</p> <p>Stakeholders participate in fire management planning and operations.</p> | <p>6.3.1 Manage wildfires and conduct prescribed burning programs in accordance with the Bidon State Conservation Area Fire Management Strategy 2008-2013 (DECC 2008b), and update this strategy as appropriate.</p> <p>6.3.2 Encourage further research into the ecological effects of fire in the SCA, and undertake ecological burning as appropriate and as identified in the Bidon State Conservation Area Fire Management Strategy.</p> <p>6.3.3 Cultural heritage assets need to be identified and incorporated into fire planning.</p> <p>6.3.4 Continue to participate in Castlereagh Bush Fire Management Committee. Maintain coordination and cooperation with Rural Fire Service brigades, Council fire control officers and neighbours with regard to fuel management and fire suppression.</p> | <p>High</p> <p>Low</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> |

| Current Situation | Desired Outcomes | Strategies | Priority |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>6.4 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage</p> <p>Over 40 Aboriginal sites were recorded on the SCA, from two surveys, in which local Aboriginal people were involved.</p> <p>Aboriginal people have expressed an interest in continuing this involvement, including continued youth training opportunities.</p> <p>The Gilgandra Local Aboriginal Land Council and Weilwan Elders represent Aboriginal interests in the area.</p> | <p>Aboriginal cultural features and historic features and values are identified and protected.</p> <p>Aboriginal people are involved in management of the Aboriginal cultural values in the SCA.</p> | <p>6.4.1 Undertake an archaeological survey and cultural assessment prior to all works with the potential to impact on Aboriginal or historic sites and places.</p> <p>6.4.2 Consult and involve the Gilgandra Local Aboriginal Land Council and Weilwan people in the management of Aboriginal sites, places and values, including interpretation of places or values.</p> <p>6.4.3 Encourage further research into the Aboriginal heritage values of the SCA in close consultation with the Gilgandra Local Aboriginal Land Council and Weilwan Elders.</p> | <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> |
| <p>6.5 Historic Heritage</p> <p>A Conservation Management Strategy has been developed for the former Forest Headquarters precinct on Kings Road and the charcoal burning site on Charcoal Rd (see map 1).</p> <p>Four old wooden bridges that have been assessed as unsafe have been closed off and had detours created around them. Their conservation significance is unknown.</p> <p>Several blazed survey trees dating from 1917 have been recently discovered but have not been recorded.</p> | <p>Historic heritage features and values are identified and protected.</p> | <p>6.5.1 Manage the historic heritage of the Forest Headquarters precinct and charcoal burning site according to the Conservation Management Strategy.</p> <p>6.5.2 Conduct an assessment of the conservation significance of the bridges. Depending on the outcome, investigate options for their future management.</p> <p>6.5.3 Record any blazed survey trees and protect the trees from fire and other damage.</p> | <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> |

| Current Situation | Desired Outcomes | Strategies | Priority |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>6.7 Infrastructure Use and maintenance</p> <p>Roads are at an adequate standard for fire and pest operations, and are suitable for two-wheel drive vehicles.</p> <p>Four dams are suitable for fire fighting.</p> <p>An open laneway at the northern end of Charcoal Rd allows unrestricted access to wandering stock and vehicles.</p> <p>The SCA boundary is fenced to a stock-proof standard.</p> <p>There are two disused quarries within the boundaries of the SCA that are vested in the Minister (under Part 11 of the NPW Act).</p> | <p>Management facilities adequately serve management needs and have acceptable impact.</p> <p>Fire fighting capacity is maximised within the SCA's existing resources</p> <p>Access should not reduce reserve values</p> <p>Domestic stock do not enter the SCA.</p> <p>Degraded lands will be rehabilitated.</p> | <p>6.7.1 Maintain the roads shown on Map 1 to an appropriate standard for public access and management purposes.</p> <p>6.7.2 Retain the dams as fire fighting water supplies and maintain as required.</p> <p>6.7.3 Install a gate across the laneway at the northern end of Charcoal Rd.</p> <p>6.7.4 In conjunction with neighbours and according to the boundary fencing policy, maintain boundary fences and determine strategies to exclude stock where boundary fencing is difficult.</p> <p>6.7.5 The quarries will be included in the SCA and rehabilitated, when their existing leases expire.</p> | <p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> |

High priority activities are those imperative to achievement of the objectives and desired outcomes. They must be undertaken in the near future to avoid significant deterioration in natural, cultural or management resources.

Medium priority activities are those that are necessary to achieve the objectives and desired outcomes but are not urgent.

Low priority activities are desirable to achieve management objectives and desired outcomes but can wait until resources become available.

