

# Torrington State Conservation Area

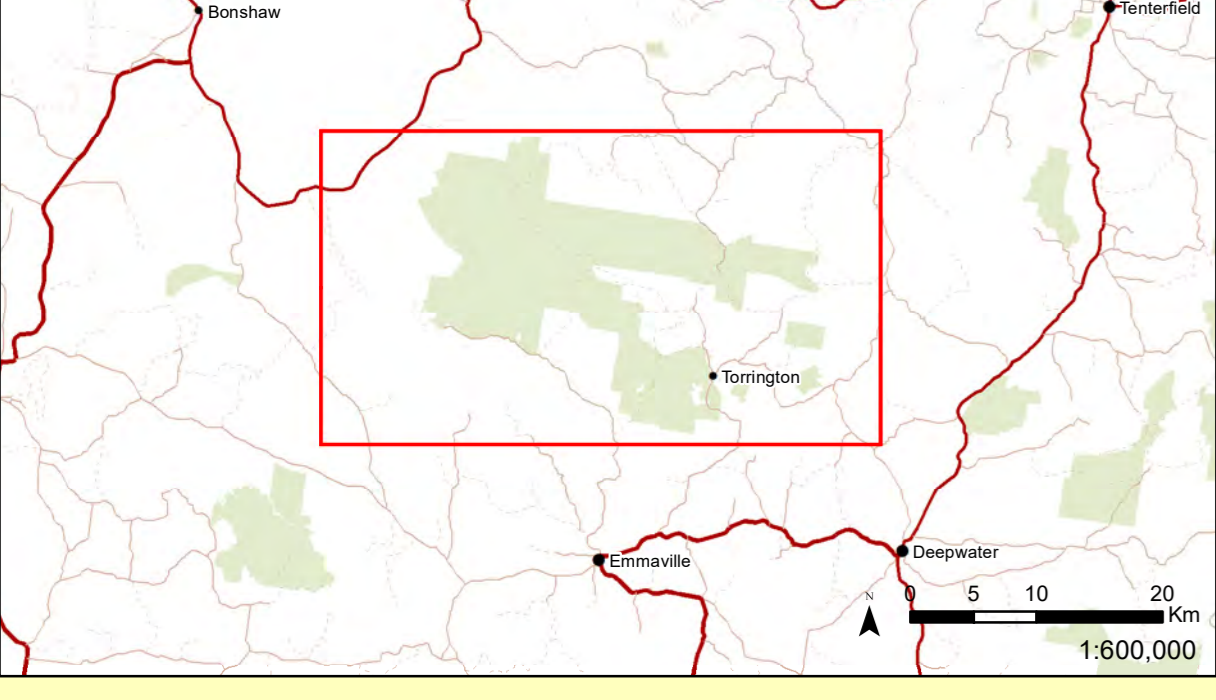
Fire Management Strategy (Type 2)  
2021 – 2026

This strategy should be used in conjunction with aerial photography and field reconnaissance. These data are not guaranteed to be free from error or omission. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and its employees disclaim liability for any and all consequences of such use or reliance on this strategy.

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This strategy is a relevant Plan under Section 38 (4) and Section 44 (3) of the Rural Fires Act 1997.

## Locality Map



Datum: GDA\_1994\_MGA\_Zone\_56    Geographic Coordinate System: GCS\_GDA\_1994    Noted scale: True when printed on A0 size paper

Local Government Area: Glen Innes Severn Hinterland    Topographic Map 1:250,000    Murrumbidgee River Catchment

Agency	Position / Location	Phone
National Parks & Wildlife Service	Area Manager - Damian Pitt Duty Office (24 hour)	0422 212 215 6275 1742
NSW Rural Fire Service Northern Tablelands	Northern Tablelands Area Office (24h, 7 days) NT Zone Manager - Chris Warbridge NT Duty Officer	0428 657 647 0732 7048 0732 7045
Forest Corporation of NSW	Coffs Harbour Coffs State Duty Officer	0655 0111 0649 2232 0655 4375
Fire & Rescue NSW	Police, Fire, Ambulance	000
SES	Emergency	132 900
Police	Emergency	02 734 7344
Council	Glen Innes Severn	0730 2300
Local Aboriginal Land Council	Murrumbidgee	0730 3219
Local Government Area	Contact Northern Tablelands Area Office	0730 0700
Emmaville Hospital	Glen Innes Road	0734 7900

Service	Channel	Location and Comments
NPWS	331.352 or 335	• Mt Rose, Mt Mackenzie or Hillman's Hill depending on location
Repeaters	631.632 or 635	• North Voke Group
FC NSW	Hillman's Hill (Hillman's Hill)	• Fire coverage as normalised
RFS	ND11	• Not currently programmed into NIB FCNSW radios. • NPWS radio channels hand held at Torrington and vehicle mounted at Amidale
UHF - CB		• Northern Tablelands Digital Voice
Australian CTAF	124.70	• Small free channel 10, large free determined by MTF
Mobile phone		• NBN frequency areas, another frequency is allocated on an incident
Satellite Phone	0147 160 975 0147 154 159	• Coverage is patchy throughout the reserve. There is good reception at Nomads day use area. • Based at Glen Innes

## Fire Season Information

**Wildfires**  
The critical wildfire season coincides with periods of thunderstorm activity that generally occurs during September to December. This period may extend into January if the normally reliable summer rainfall does not occur.

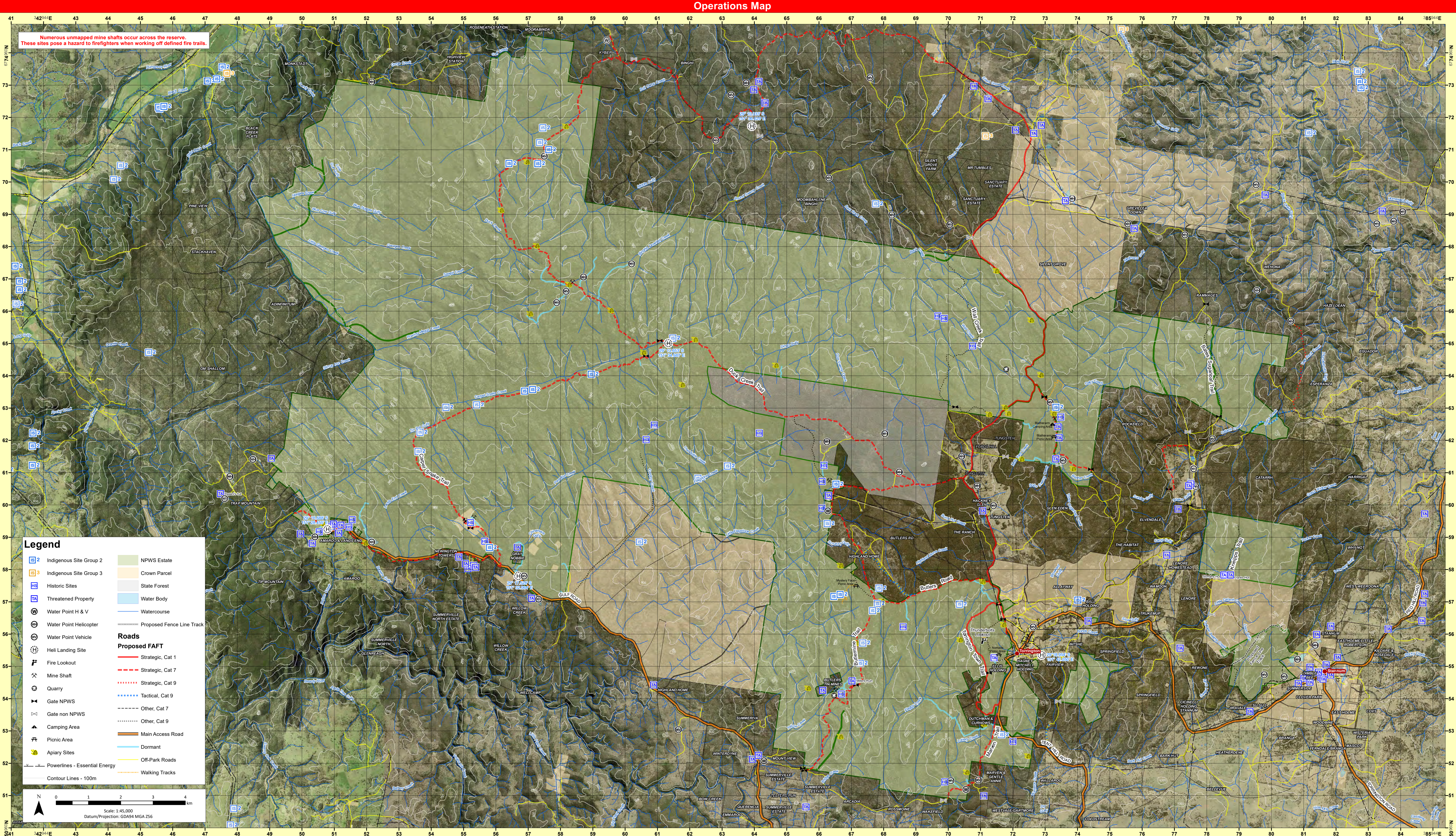
**Prescribed Burning**  
The preferred period for prescribed burning is autumn to early spring when conditions favour self-entrenchment over-ripen and fuel have less impact on critical life stages of biodiversity. Prescribed burning should consider the low density of fire trails and the possibility of dry westerly winds causing regional well after the burn is complete.

## Operational Guidelines

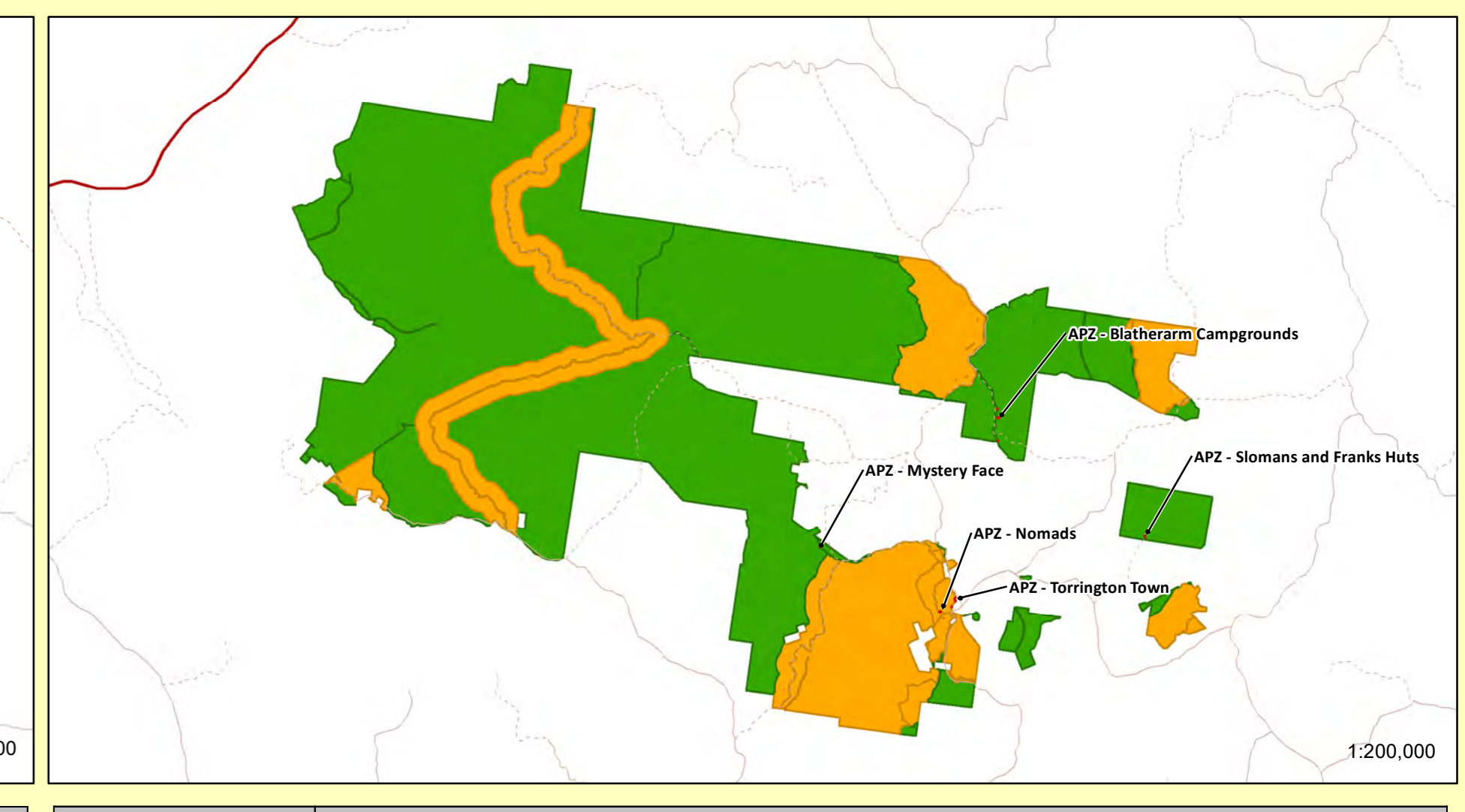
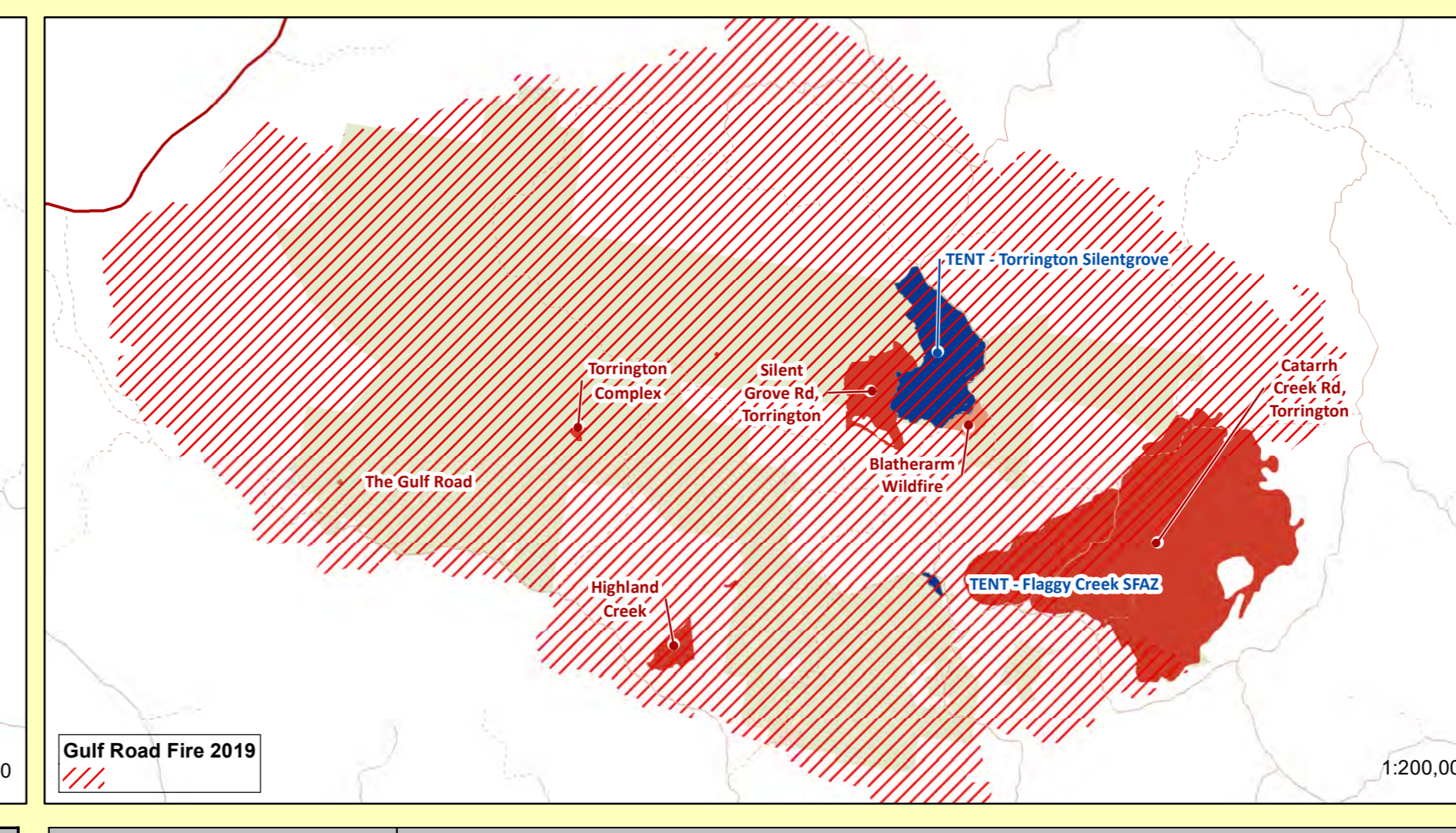
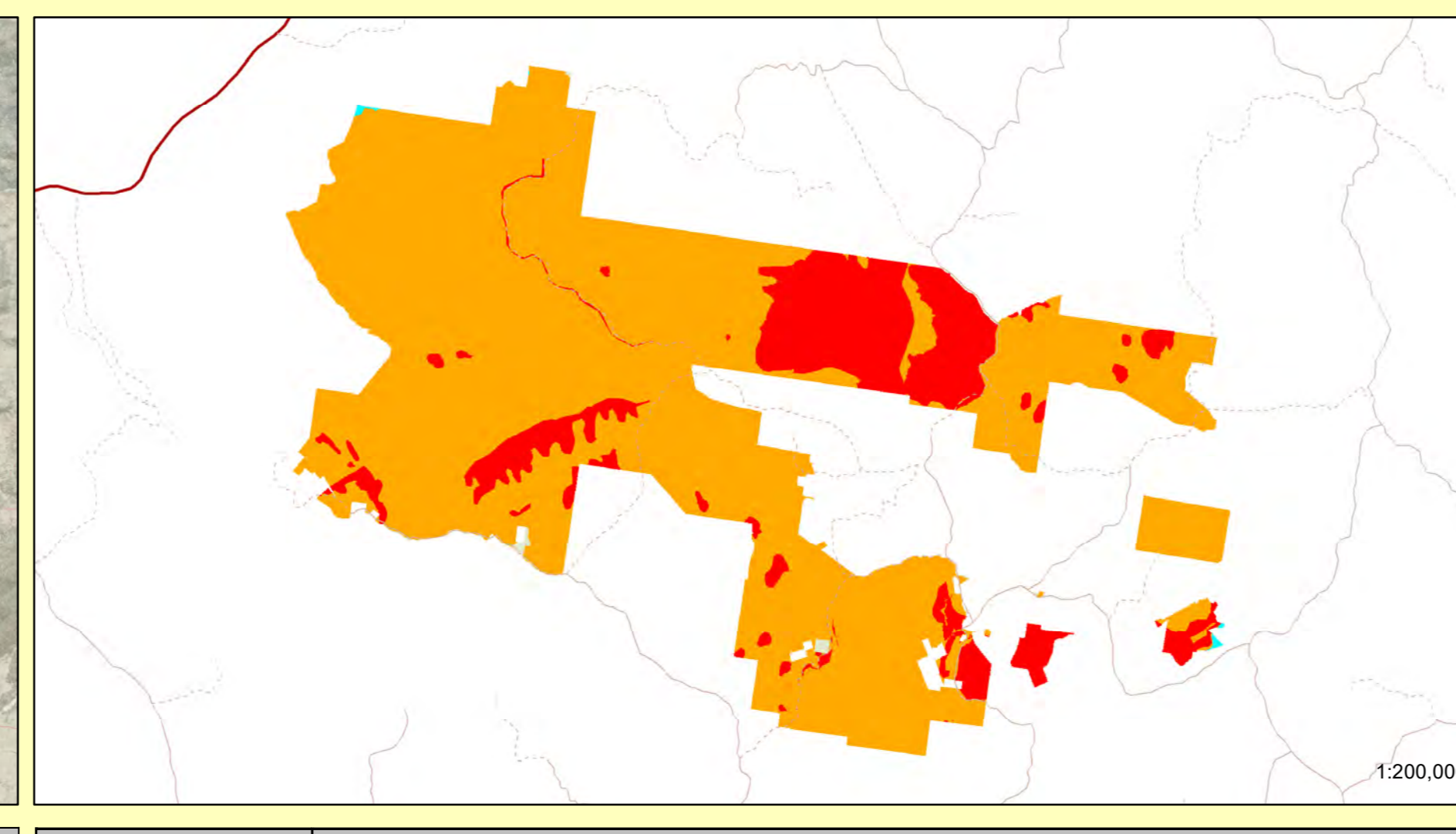
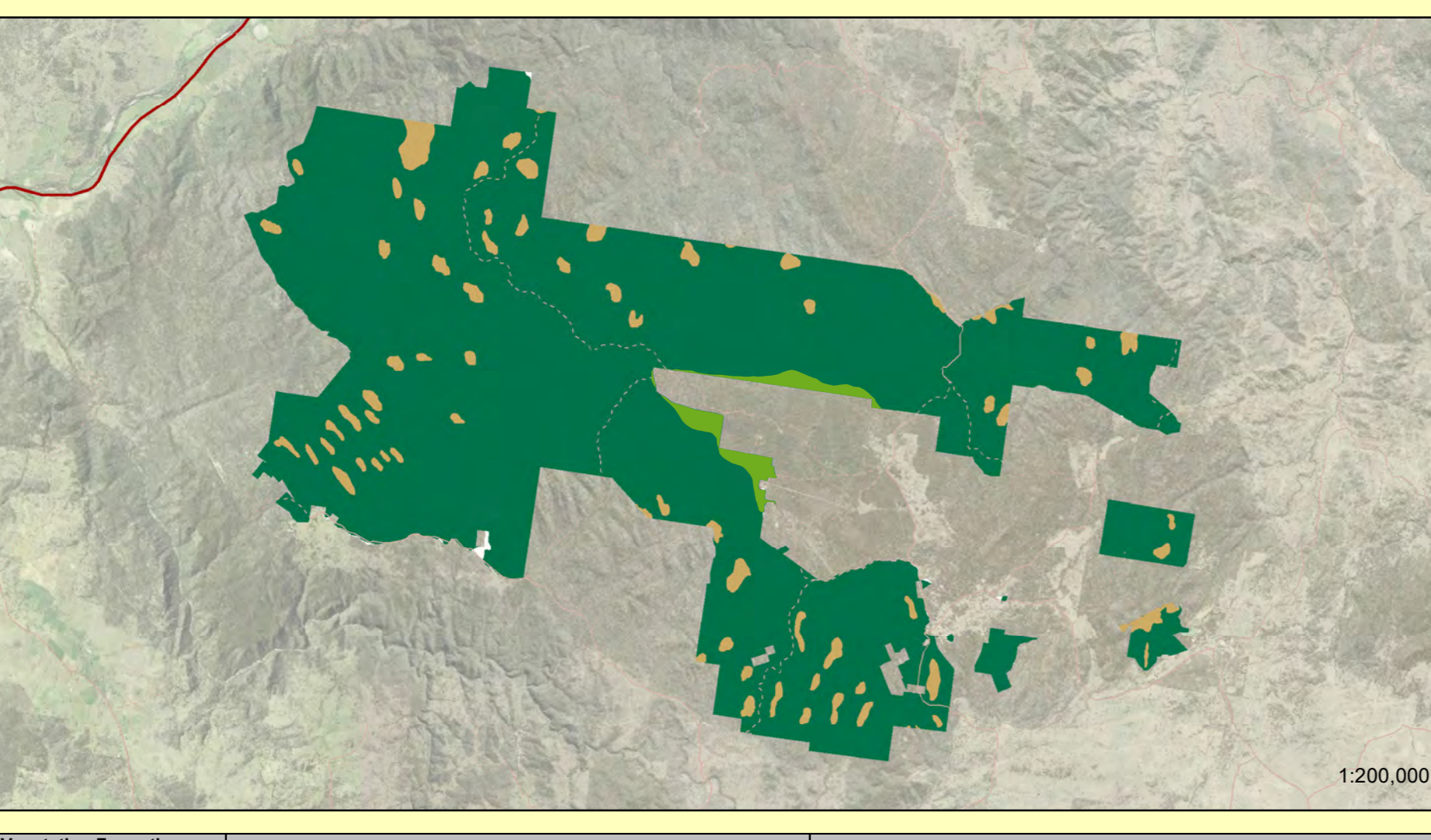
- Community Protection Plan**
  - This Reserve Fire Management Strategy has considered the contents of the Torrington Community Protection Plan and is complementary to that plan.
  - This strategy also contains measures to minimise the risk to and from the reserve, and intentions to direct traffic away from the reserve where appropriate.
- Hazard Reduction Burning**
  - Landscape scale fires have occurred across the reserve. Hazard Reduction activities in Land Management Zones should be limited to hazard reduction burning which aims to create a mosaic of age classes across the landscape.
  - Aerial operations will be managed by trained and competent personnel. This includes directing aerial bombing and aerial ignition operations.
  - The use of bombing aircraft without the support of ground-based suppression crews should be limited to very specific circumstances.
  - All aerial ignition operations require the consent of a senior NPWS officer or the Section 44 Approver.
  - Threatened species are often associated with rocky outcrops. Aerial ignition should be avoided where possible. If ignition is necessary, it should be directed away from the outcrop to minimise the impacts of fire and radiant heat on these outcrops. Ignition on the uphill side of rocky outcrops to create a low intensity backing fire wherever possible.
- Backburning**
  - All personnel must be fully briefed before backburning operations begin.
  - Backburning in areas of Low - Moderate OFI will require the use of wind, or low humidity to assist effectiveness.
- Command & Control**
  - The first combatant agency on site may assume control of the fire, but must ensure the relevant land management agency is notified promptly.
  - The initial Incident Controller will liaise with the RFS to ensure that the agency in command is identified and an Incident Controller is appointed.
  - New containment lines require the prior consent of a senior NPWS officer.
  - Construction of new containment lines should be avoided, where practicable, except where they can be constructed with minimal environmental impact.
  - All personnel involved in containment line construction should be briefed on, and must consider both natural and cultural heritage sites in the location.
  - All containment lines required for other purposes should be rehabilitated and closed immediately at the cessation of the incident.
- Containment Lines**
  - Plant must always be guided and supervised by an experienced officer and accompanied by a support vehicle (NPWS). When engaged in direct or parallel attack, this vehicle must be a fire fighting vehicle.
  - Plant must be washed down, where practicable, prior to entering NPWS estate and again on exiting NPWS estate.
  - Earth moving equipment must be carefully supervised and directed when working near rocky outcrops.
- Earthmoving Equipment**
  - The use of foam, wetting agents and retardants will NOT be permitted within 50 metres of dams and watercourses.
  - The aerial use of foams and retardants should be approved by a senior NPWS officer.
  - The use of retardants requires the approval of a senior NPWS officer.
- Fire Suppression Chemicals**
  - Where practicable, containment lines should be stabilised and rehabilitated as part of the wildfire suppression operation.
  - Waterpoints may not be reliable in dry conditions. Consider deployment of a bulk water carrier to support fire operations.
- Rehabilitation**
  - Potential smoke impacts and mitigation tactics will be considered during the planning of fire operations.
- Waterpoints**
  - In Severe + Fire Danger at the Branch Directors discretion, reserves or sections of the reserve may be closed or evacuated.
  - Ensure the closure is advertised on the NPWS visitor website.
  - Advise agencies of fire threats, and the restrictions in place for entry to the reserve.
  - Mine shafts pose a significant risk to fire fighters.
  - During severe and above fire danger ratings containment should be undertaken on the boundary of the park adjacent to close country so that escape is available.
- Smoke Management**
  - Heritage Guidelines
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage**
  - Torrington SCA has many Aboriginal Cultural Heritage sites located both on fire trails and on creek lines. Green points on Carpet Snake Road indicate where heavy plant must lift the blade. The property "Moombahlane" to the north of the Reserve contains multiple Indigenous sites. Protection of these sites should be a consideration in the event of wildfire.
  - SB 1 - As far as possible protect the site from fire. Do not cut down trees.
  - SB 2 - As far as possible protect the site from fire. Avoid all ground disturbance and driving over sites. Avoid water bombing which may cause ground disturbance.
  - SB 3 - Avoid all ground disturbance. Avoid water bombing. Site may be burnt by fire without damage.
  - Modified trees
    - As far as possible, protect the site from fire, and do not cut trees.
    - Use of foams & retardant is acceptable.
  - Habitat sites
    - Exclude control line construction from sites. Consider a buffer zone of about 50 metres from the sites.
    - Always detour as much as possible to avoid construction of control lines in their vicinity.
    - The use of foam and retardants is acceptable.
- Historic Sites**
  - Torrington SCA has numerous mine sites and associated historic heritage.
  - As far as possible protect these sites from fire and avoid construction of control lines in their vicinity.
  - Montane peatlands and swamps of the New England Tablelands are a Threatened Ecological Community that exists in various locations across the reserve. These include Gales Wetlands.
- Threatened Fauna & Flora**
  - Protective actions to maintain the health and viability of these communities and to maintain a variety and diversity of habitats for both flora and fauna species are:
    - Maintain a range of age classes in time across the landscape, and allow for some long unburnt areas where possible.
    - Minimising the extent of frequent high intensity fires.
    - Some protective actions for threatened flora and fauna have been incorporated into the Operational Guidelines.
- Soil Erosion Management**
  - The soils within the reserve are generally shallow and erodible. Steep terrain is susceptible to erosion after disturbance. Fire trails used in fire operations should be drained as soon as possible after use.

## Suppression Strategies

Conditions	Guidelines
<b>All vegetation types</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the property of Torrington SCA and surrounding country was burnt by intense wildfires in 2015 in the Gull Road Fire. The aim of suppression should be to minimise the extent and intensity of fire, until large areas of the reserve return to acceptable biodiversity thresholds. Suppression activities should aim to minimise fire intensity on headlands where possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire danger rating LOW - HIGH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wherever possible and safe, direct attack may improve to minimise the fire area.</li> <li>If direct attack is not possible, consider a broad control line using existing roads.</li> <li>Direct, parallel and indirect attack may be applied with earthmoving machinery and fire units. Pay attention to the risk of fire on the road produced downwind and the eastern containment line.</li> <li>Consider indirect attack along existing or newly constructed control lines.</li> <li>Close parallel or direct attack may be an option at night depending on weather conditions.</li> <li>Distance between the bank and machinery and the fire units should be kept to a minimum.</li> <li>Secure and maintain lines on the road predicted downwind side of the fire.</li> <li>Identify and prepare contingency containment lines.</li> <li>Will require aerial support to manage spot fires and monitor fire spread.</li> <li>Warning: Entrapment risk is High.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire danger rating VERY HIGH</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For fire safety the personnel consideration is deployment.</li> <li>Understand broad containment strategies using man fire trails and cleared country.</li> <li>Minimise the use of backburning until conditions moderate.</li> <li>Tactics will include property protection where safe and necessary.</li> <li>Close parallel or direct attack and / or mop up of fire edge may be an option at night depending on weather conditions.</li> <li>Warning: Entrapment risk is High.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire danger rating SEVERE - EXTREME +</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For fire safety the personnel consideration is deployment.</li> <li>Understand broad containment strategies using man fire trails and cleared country.</li> <li>Minimise the use of backburning until conditions moderate.</li> <li>Tactics will include property protection where safe and necessary.</li> <li>Close parallel or direct attack and / or mop up of fire edge may be an option at night depending on weather conditions.</li> <li>Warning: Entrapment risk is High.</li> </ul>



## Vegetation, Vegetation Fire Thresholds, Fire History, Risk Management Information



Vegetation Formation (Keith)	Vegetation Management Guidelines	Fire Behaviour
<b>Cleared Land</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Past clearing events have generated this variable class of vegetation that can include native grasses and shrubs, introduced weeds and regenerative native overstorey species. In this case the cleared areas are minimal in size.</li> <li>No fire intervals are prescribed for cleared areas and fire management should be based on the revegetation intent.</li> <li>Avoid Fire intervals of less than 7 years and greater than 30 years.</li> <li>A diversity of fire intervals across the local landscape should be maximised.</li> <li>These headlands can be associated with other threatened species.</li> <li>Avoid any incendiary on rocky outcrops associated with these headlands.</li> <li>A diversity of fire intervals across the local landscape should be maximised.</li> <li>The minimum interval between low intensity fires should be more than 5 years.</li> <li>The maximum interval between high intensity fires should be less than 50 years.</li> <li>The minimum interval between high intensity fires should be evaluated on forest condition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential rates of spread are variable from Low to High given the variation that exists within this distributed class of vegetation. Fire behaviour should be assessed on metrics and the vegetation present.</li> <li>OFI is highly dependent on time since fire. Wind and terrain effects are magnified in turning head fires. The potential rates of spread can vary from Moderate to Very High.</li> </ul>
<b>Headlands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These headlands can be associated with other threatened species.</li> <li>Avoid any incendiary on rocky outcrops associated with these headlands.</li> <li>A diversity of fire intervals across the local landscape should be maximised.</li> <li>The minimum interval between low intensity fires should be more than 5 years.</li> <li>The maximum interval between high intensity fires should be less than 50 years.</li> <li>The minimum interval between high intensity fires should be evaluated on forest condition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OFI is highly dependent on time since fire. The potential rates of spread vary from Moderate to Very High due depending on OFI.</li> <li>This class of vegetation is often associated with hilly and steep terrain which cause variable fire behaviour with due to terrain driven factors.</li> <li>The potential rates of spread during extended dry seasons can be very high due to terrain factors. The very steep terrain, skeletal soils and dry nature of these escarpment sites mean OFI is normally in the range of Moderate to Very High.</li> <li>Spotting associated with uphill fire runs can be severe.</li> </ul>
<b>Dry Scirpophyllous Forests (Shrubgrass sub-formation)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These headlands can be associated with other threatened species.</li> <li>Avoid any incendiary on rocky outcrops associated with these headlands.</li> <li>A diversity of fire intervals across the local landscape should be maximised.</li> <li>The minimum interval between low intensity fires should be more than 5 years.</li> <li>The maximum interval between high intensity fires should be less than 50 years.</li> <li>The minimum interval between high intensity fires should be evaluated on forest condition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OFI is highly dependent on time since fire. The potential rates of spread vary from Moderate to Very High due depending on OFI.</li> <li>This class of vegetation is often associated with hilly and steep terrain which cause variable fire behaviour with due to terrain driven factors.</li> <li>The potential rates of spread during extended dry seasons can be very high due to terrain factors. The very steep terrain, skeletal soils and dry nature of these escarpment sites mean OFI is normally in the range of Moderate to Very High.</li> <li>Spotting associated with uphill fire runs can be severe.</li> </ul>

Vegetation Threshold	Treatment
<b>Too Frequently Burnt</b>	Fire thresholds have been exceeded. Protect from fire as far as possible.
<b>Vulnerable to Frequent Fire</b>	The area will be Too Frequently Burnt if it burns this year. Protect from fire as far as possible.
<b>Within Threshold</b>	Fire history is within the threshold for vegetation in this area. A burn is neither required nor avoided unless necessarily be avoided.
<b>Long Unburnt</b>	Fire frequency is below fire thresholds in the area. A prescribed burn may be advantageous. Consider allowing unplanned fires to burn.
<b>Unknown</b>	Insufficient data to determine fire threshold.
<b>No Regime Assigned</b>	Areas which do not have recommended fire intervals assigned to them eg. cleared land, rock.

Fire Type	Fire Details
<b>Prescribed Burn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2017-18: Torrington Silent Grove - A medium intensity hazard reduction burn.</li> <li>2018-19: Flaggy Creek SFAZ - A hazard reduction that removed all available fuels.</li> <li>2015-16: Torrington Town Trail SFAZ - A hazard reduction burn that removed most available fuels.</li> </ul>
<b>Wildfires</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2019-20: Gull Road - A crown fire in extreme conditions that burnt the 70,000 ha of the reserve and surrounds.</li> <li>2018-19: Catarrh Creek Road - A hot fire in high FDI's that mainly burnt private country to the east of the reserve</li> <li>2018-19: Silent Grove Road - A hot fire in high FDI's that was contained with the use of retardant.</li> <li>2018-19: Torrington Complex - A series of lightning strikes that were detected the morning they started and were extinguished RAFT direct attack.</li> <li>2018-19: Highland Creek - An off-reserve fire that was extinguished with RAFT and retardant.</li> <li>2015-16: Baltharum - A fire due to arson that was contained on roads then extinguished by rain.</li> </ul>

Fire Management Zone	Treatment
<b>Asset Protection Zones</b>	The objective of APZs is the protection of human life and property. This will have precedence over guidelines for the management of biodiversity. Maintain Overall Fuel Hazard at Moderate or below.
<b>Strategic Fire Advantage Zones</b>	The objective of SFAZs is to reduce fire intensity in locations to assist containment of wildfires, by maintaining the Overall Fuel Hazard less than HIGH.
<b>Land Management Zones</b>	The objective of LMZs is to conserve biodiversity and protect cultural heritage. Manage fire consistent with fire thresholds.