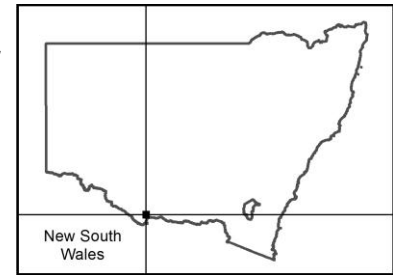


Statement of Management Intent



Murray Valley National Park and Murray Valley Regional Park

1. Introduction

This statement outlines the main values, issues, management directions and priorities of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) for managing Murray Valley National Park and Murray Valley Regional Park. This statement, together with relevant NPWS policies, will guide the management of these parks until a plan of management has been prepared in accordance with the [National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 \(NPW Act\)](#). The NPWS [Managing Parks Prior to Plan of Management Policy](#) states that parks and reserves without a plan of management are to be managed in a manner consistent with the intent of the NPW Act and the ['precautionary principle'](#) (see Principle 15).

2. Management principles

National parks are reserved under the NPW Act to protect and conserve areas containing outstanding or representative ecosystems, natural or cultural features or landscapes or phenomena that provide opportunities for public appreciation, inspiration and sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment. Under the NPW Act ([section 30E](#)), national parks are managed to:

- conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem functions, and protect geological and geomorphological features and natural phenomena and maintain natural landscapes
- conserve places, objects, features and landscapes of cultural value
- protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations
- promote public appreciation and understanding of the park's natural and cultural values
- provide for sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment that is compatible with conservation of natural and cultural values
- provide for sustainable use (including adaptive reuse) of any buildings or structures or modified natural areas having regard to conservation of natural and cultural values
- provide for appropriate research and monitoring.

The primary purpose of national parks is to conserve nature and cultural heritage. Opportunities are provided for appropriate visitor use in a manner that does not damage conservation values.

Regional parks are reserved under the NPW Act to protect and conserve areas in a natural or modified landscape that are suitable for public recreation and enjoyment. Under the NPW Act ([section 30H](#)), regional parks are managed to:

- provide opportunities for recreation and enjoyment in natural or modified landscapes
- identify, interpret, manage and conserve the park so as to maintain and enhance significant landscape values
- conserve natural and cultural values
- promote public appreciation and understanding of the park's natural and cultural values
- provide for sustainable visitor or tourist use and enjoyment that is compatible with conservation of natural and cultural values
- provide for sustainable use (including adaptive reuse) of any buildings or structures or modified natural areas having regard to conservation or natural and cultural values.

Regional parks are established for the purpose of providing recreational opportunities while protecting natural, cultural and landscape values.

3. Context

Reservation details: Murray Valley National Park and Murray Valley Regional Park were reserved on 1 July 2010.

Size: Murray Valley National Park is 38,632 hectares and Murray Valley Regional Park is 10,263 hectares.

These parks comprise a series of land parcels located on the floodplains of the Murray and Edward rivers in the Southern Riverina of New South Wales. The most western parcel of land lies 30 kilometres south of Balranald and the most eastern parcel is 4 kilometres west of Howlong. The majority of the parks' land area lies between Deniliquin and Moama on the Murray and Edward rivers. All precincts fall within the Riverina Bioregion.

For management purposes the parks are subdivided into precincts mostly within two major management groups: Millewa located between Deniliquin and Moama, and Mulwala extending east from Millewa.

Millewa management group		Mulwala management group	
National park precincts	Regional park precincts	National park precincts	Regional park precincts
	Bama	Barooga	Barooga
	Benarca	Boomanoomana	
	Deniliquin		Collendina
Gulpa Island	Gulpa Island	Corowa	
	Horseshoe Lagoon	Cottadidda	
Millewa	Millewa		Mulwala
	Moama	Native Dog	
Moira	Moira		Quat Quatta
Tuppal			Quat Quatta East
		Thornley	
		Woperana	

There are a number of precincts outside these major management units that extend west and north of the Millewa group: Kyalite, Liewa, Noorong, Tholobin, Wetuppa and Whymoul. The former state forest names are used to refer to precincts for the purpose of managing the parks.

The parks' precincts are spread across the administrative areas of Balranald, Wamba Wamba, Deniliquin, Moama, Cummeragunja and Albury & District local Aboriginal land councils and Yorta Yorta Nations; Murray and Western Local Land Services; and Wakool Shire, Murray Shire, Deniliquin, Conargo Shire, Berrigan Shire, and Corowa Shire councils.

Murray Valley National Park and Murray Valley Regional Park comprise former state forests. The parks were identified following an assessment of the Riverina Bioregion by the Natural Resources Commission in 2009. They were reserved under the *National Park Estate (Riverina Red Gum Reservations) Act 2010* (Riverina Red Gum Reservations Act).

Together with the Barmah National Park on the Victorian side of the river, Murray Valley National Park and Murray Valley Regional Parks' Millewa, Moira and Gulpa Island precincts protect the largest contiguous stand of river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) forest in Australia. The forests are recognised for their outstanding natural and indigenous values and they have also been declared Ramsar wetland sites of international significance.





4. Values

- Murray Valley National Park and Murray Valley Regional Park protect part of the largest continuous tract of river red gum forest in the world.
- The parks protect numerous Aboriginal sites including middens, oven mounds and scarred trees. For thousands of years the Riverina river red gum forests have been special to Aboriginal people and provided a wealth of resources. The 2009 review by the Natural Resources Commission concluded access to the forest and continued practices such as collecting foods and telling stories is critical for cultural survival.
- The Riverina river red gum forests protected by Murray Valley National Park and Regional Park provide an ecosystem for a multitude of threatened species and communities. There are 50 terrestrial animals species listed as threatened under the NSW *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* (TSC Act) known to occur in the parks, including the endangered southern bell frog (*Litoria raniformis*) and vulnerable squirrel glider (*Petaurus norfolcensis*) and many vulnerable woodland birds.
- Native plants listed as vulnerable under the TSC Act that have been recorded in the parks include river swamp wallaby-grass (*Amphibromus fluitans*), slender darling-pea (*Swainsona murrayana*), silky swainson-pea (*Swainsona sericea*), chariot wheels (*Maireana cheelii*) and a spear-grass, *Austrostipa metatoris*.

- The parks protect five terrestrial endangered ecological communities including the TSC Act listed Sandhill Pine Woodland in the Riverina, Murray–Darling Depression and NSW South Western Slopes Bioregions; White Box Yellow Box Blakely's Red Gum Woodland; and Inland Grey Box Woodland in the Riverina, NSW South Western Slopes, Cobar Peneplain, Nandewar and Brigalow Belt South Bioregions.
- The waterways flowing through these parks are listed as the Aquatic Ecological Community in the Natural Drainage System of the Lower Murray River Catchment endangered ecological community under the *Fisheries Management Act 1994*. This community is characterised by meandering channels and wide floodplains, and includes 23 native fish species and over 400 recorded native invertebrate species.
- Murray Valley National Park and Regional Park protect significant breeding habitat for 18 migratory bird species listed under international agreements, such as Latham's snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*) and the common sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*).
- The wetlands of Murray Valley National Park and Regional Park are of highly significant ecological, social, cultural and economic importance. The Millewa precinct is an iconic site managed under the Australian Government's The Living Murray program, which is the largest river and wetland restoration program ever undertaken in Australia.
- Murray Valley National Park and Regional Park have considerable recreational value with large numbers of visitors returning year after year using the parks for camping, fishing, water skiing, swimming, four-wheel driving, trail bike riding and birdwatching.

5. Issues

- Vertebrate pest species that occur in these parks include rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), wild dogs (*Canis lupus* ssp.), foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*), feral cats (*Felis catus*) and introduced rodents.
- The parks contain numerous weed infestations including burrs (*Xanthium* spp.), St John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*), white horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), Paterson's curse (*Echium plantagineum*), vipers bugloss (*Echium vulgare*), thistles (*Onopordum* spp.), sticky ground cherry (*Physalis hederifolia*), spiny burrgrass (*Cenchrus incertus* and *C. longispinus*), golden dodder (*Cuscuta campestris*), willows (*Salix* spp.), arrowhead (*Sagittaria montevidensis*), blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), sagittaria (*Sagittaria platyphylla*), silver-leaved nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium*), hardhead thistle (*Rhaponticum repens*), African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*), Chilean needle grass (*Nassella neesiana*) and prickly pear (*Opuntia* spp.)
- Introduced European carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) is an issue within waterways and channels and wetland habitat.
- Some of the management precincts are bordered by rivers prone to flooding, making access difficult from time to time.
- The small size of each precinct in the Mulwala management group, and the large edge-to-area ratio, make the parks prone to edge effects including weed and stock incursions and erosion.
- The proximity of many of the precincts to urban areas means that illegal uses, including off-road motorbike riding and firewood collection, are an ongoing issue for these parks.
- Previous state forest activities that have resulted in ongoing management issues include environmental impacts caused by historical timber harvesting, seasonal grazing, apiary sites and hunting.

6. Key management directions

- Fire is managed in accordance with the Murray Valley National Park and Murray Valley Regional Park [Fire Management Strategies](#).
- Pest management programs will be implemented in accordance with the [NPWS Regional Pest Management Strategy: Western Rivers Region](#). Current priorities focus on protecting endangered ecological communities, threatened species' habitats and wetland and riparian landscapes through weed management, feral pig and fox control and European carp control actions. Where appropriate, weed and pest control programs will be conducted in cooperation with neighbouring landowners and organisations including Local Land Services and local councils.
- Relevant strategies and actions for threatened species conservation contained in the NSW *Threatened Species Priorities Action Statement* and species' recovery plans will be implemented, including any relevant actions identified under the Saving our Species program.
- Enforcement actions and patrols will continue to be carried out to reduce the occurrence of inappropriate and illegal activities within the parks.
- An adaptive management approach will continue, taking into account past management practices, recognising important ecological values that are at risk, integrating vegetation and water management and developing appropriate management objectives.
- Monitoring and reporting of significant biodiversity values will continue, including the health and condition of the river red gum ecosystem.
- Ecological thinning will be trialled within river red gum forests as a biodiversity conservation tool for improving forest health and condition.
- Land, water and biodiversity conservation management planning will be integrated within broader initiatives for the Murray–Darling Basin and Riverina Bioregion by participating in relevant working groups and forums. These include cross-border forest management, Aboriginal community interests, and water management.
- Joint management arrangements for the parks will continue with the Aboriginal community.
- Permissive occupancies held by third parties will be managed in accordance with NPWS policies.
- Grazing by domestic stock in the river red gum parks under existing occupation permits will be managed in accordance with NPWS policies and licence conditions.
- Visitor opportunities and experiences will be developed in accordance with the [NSW River Red Gum Nature Tourism Action Plan](#)
- Licensed firewood collection will be allowed in designated firewood collection zones only, in accordance with the NPWS Collection and Removal of Firewood from River Red Gum Reserves Policy.
- All management activities will be preceded by the preparation of an environmental assessment or heritage assessment where this is a requirement of NPWS policy or legislation.
- Environmental repair and threat management programs, such as erosion mitigation measures, pest management, and activities arising from threatened species requirements may be implemented in accordance with NPWS policies and procedures.
- Non-intrusive works may be undertaken where necessary to protect cultural heritage items from further deterioration, to ensure the safety of visitors, to protect wildlife or to prevent damage to park assets.

- A plan of management will be prepared to set out the ongoing management objectives for the parks. The plan of management is a statutory document under the NPW Act which will be available for public comment. NPWS will also encourage the community to contribute to the ongoing conservation of the parks by promoting and raising public awareness of their special values.

For additional information or enquiries about any aspect of these parks or this statement, contact the NPWS Moama (Murray Area) Office on (03) 5483 9100 or Factory 5, 23 Neil St, Moama NSW 2731.

Disclaimer: This is a statement of intent to guide the management of the parks prior to the development of a plan of management. Any statements made in this publication are made in good faith and do not render the Office of Environment and Heritage liable for any loss or damage. Provisions in the final plan of management may vary from those identified in this document as a result of new information and community consultation. The maps in this statement are intended to show the parks' location and basic features only, and are not suitable for use when navigating to or exploring within parks.

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