

Somerton National Park Fire Management Strategy 2013 - 18

This strategy should be used with aerial photography and field reconnaissance. This is a relevant Plan under Section 38 (4) and Section 44 (3) of Rural Fires Act 1997. These data are not guaranteed to be free from error or omission. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife and its employees disclaim liability for any act done on the information in the data and any consequences of such acts or omissions. This document is copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of study, research criticism or review, as permitted under the copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is part of the Office of Environment and Heritage. Published by: Office of Environment and Heritage (NSW). Contact: NPWS Northern Plains Region, PO Box 72 Narrabri NSW 2390, Ph 6792 7350

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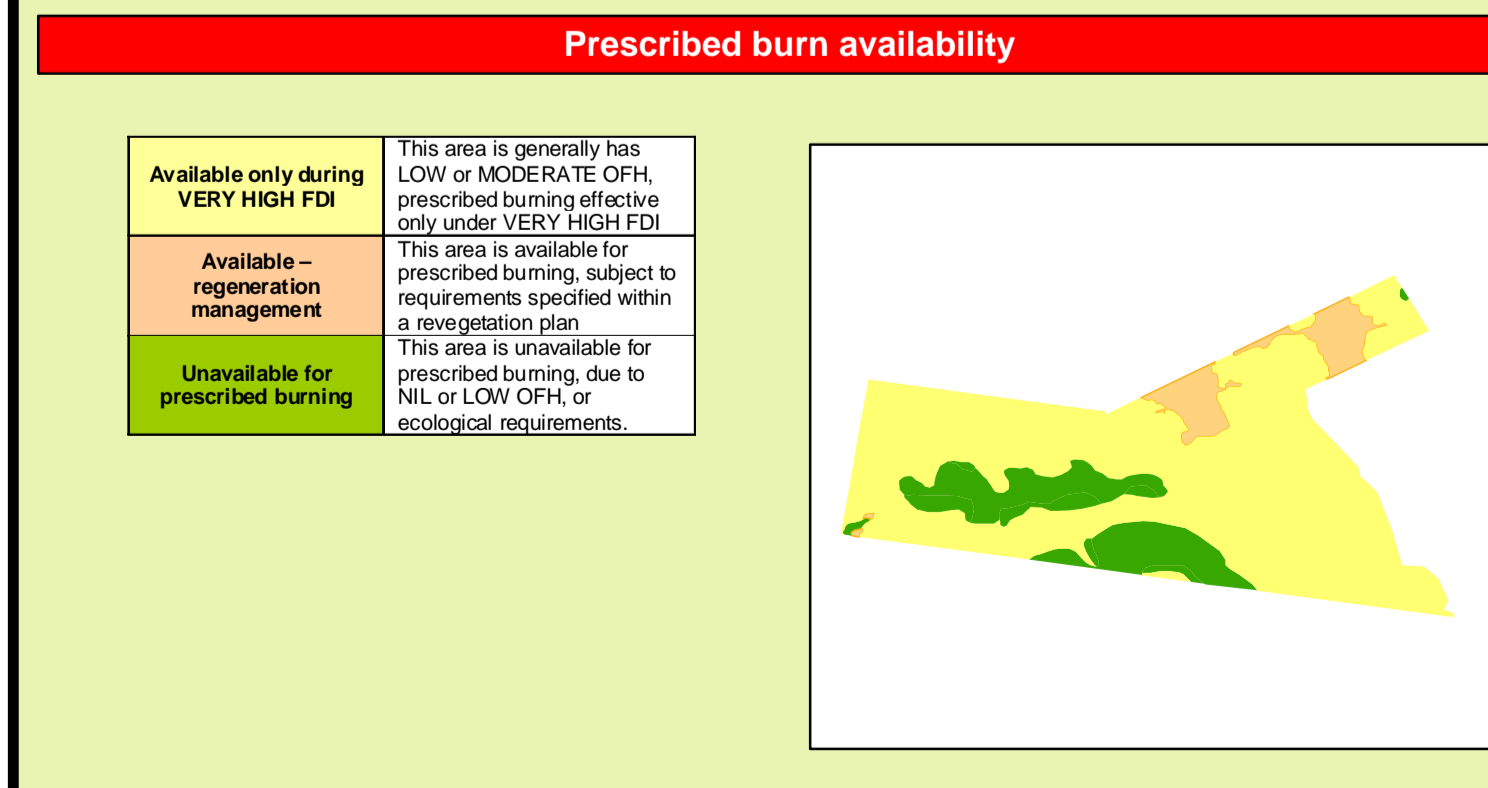
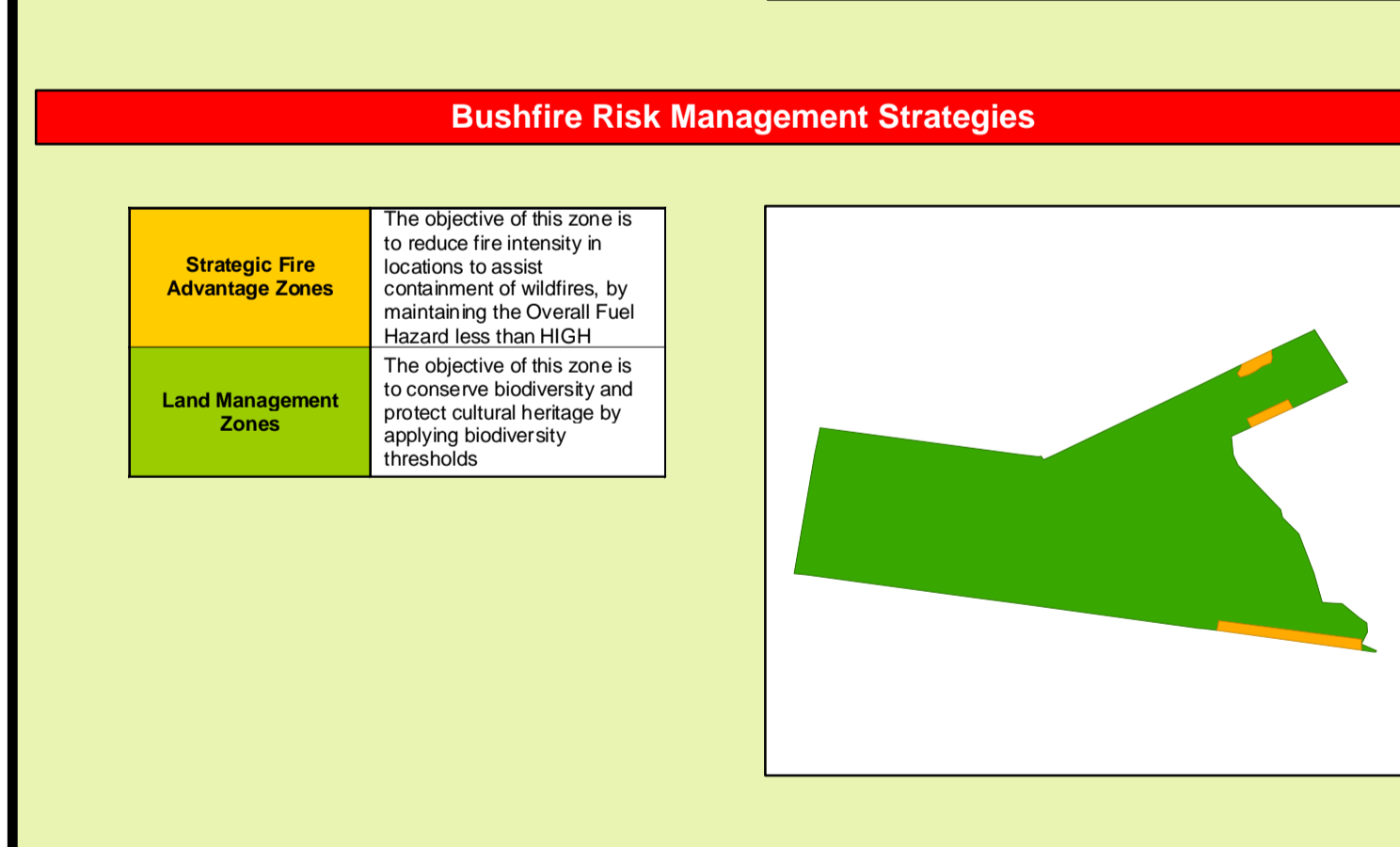
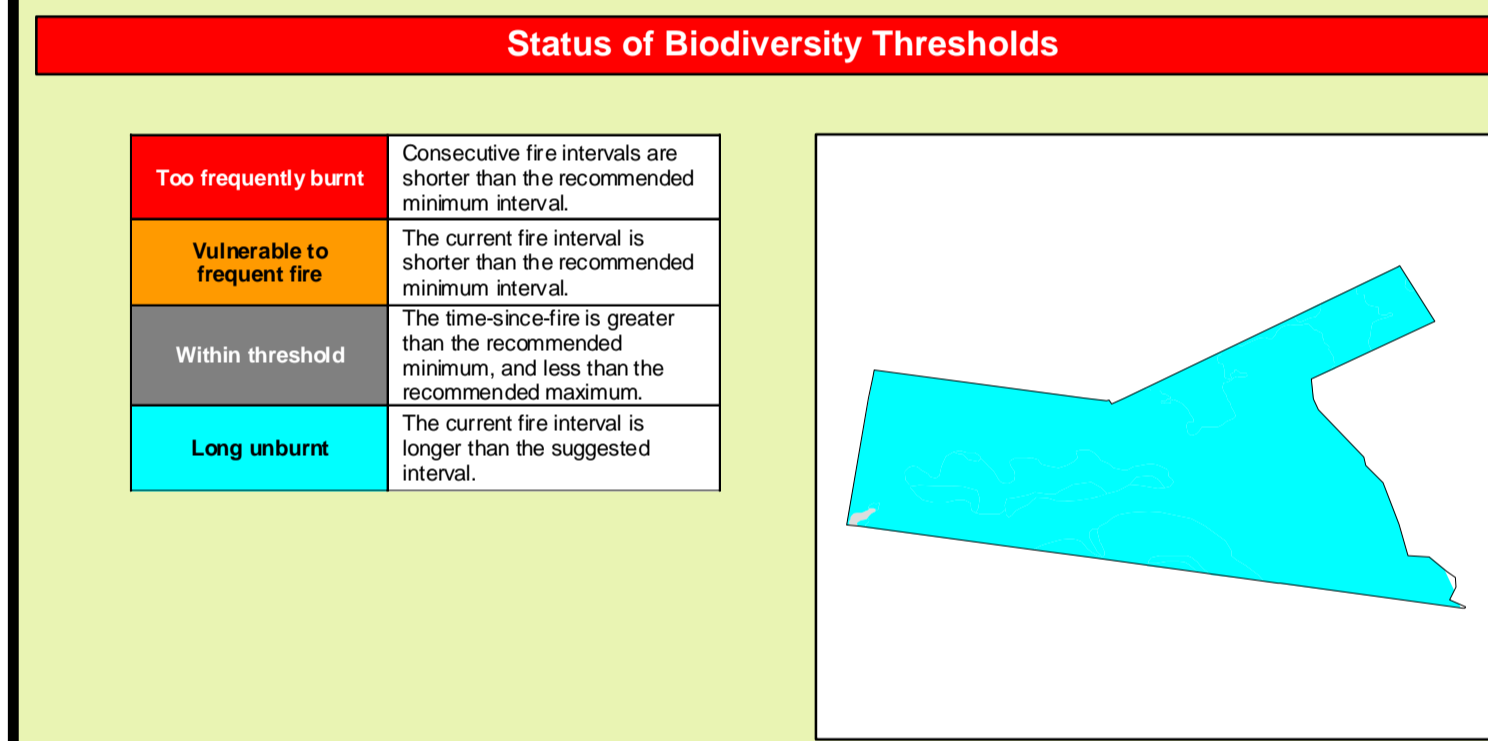
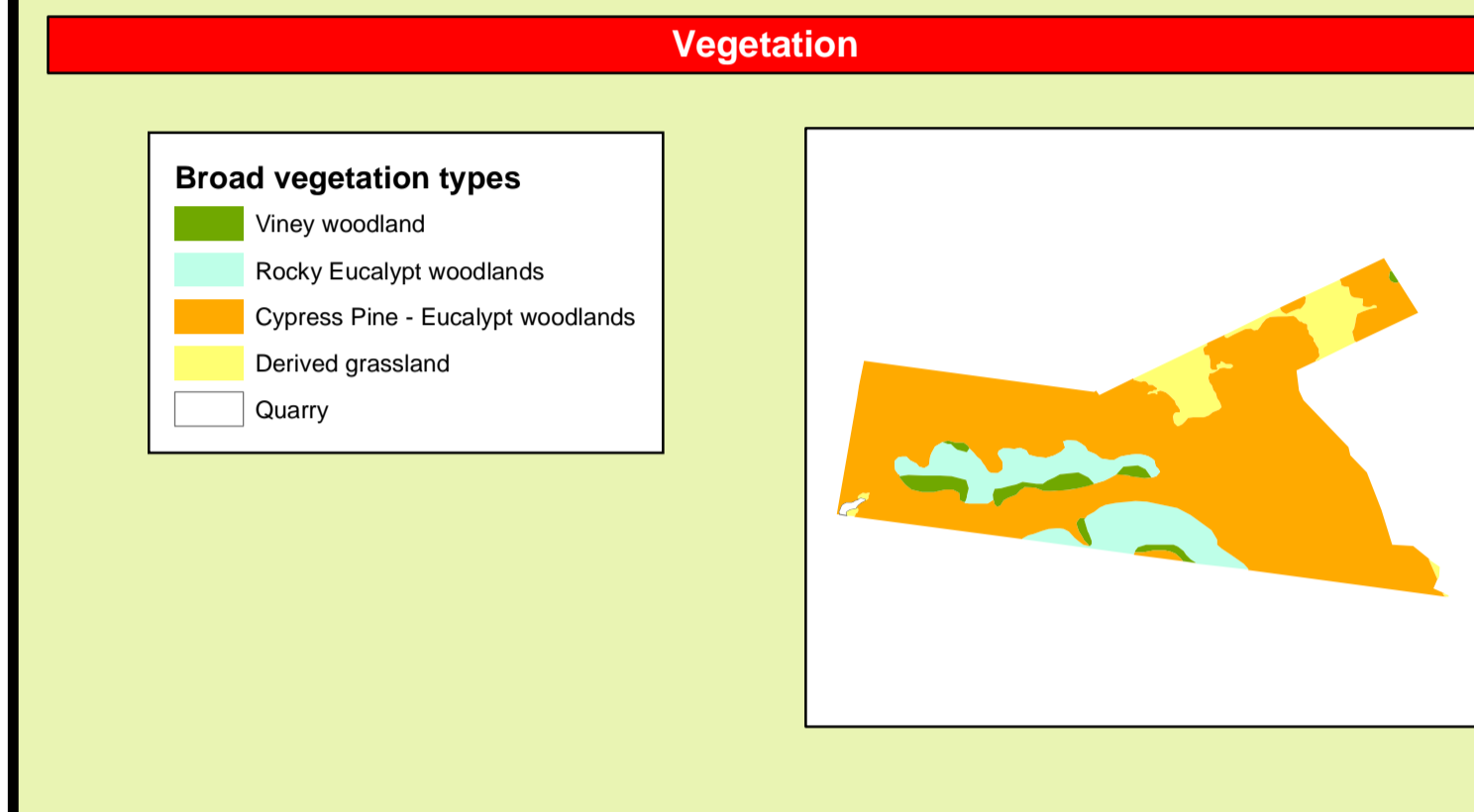
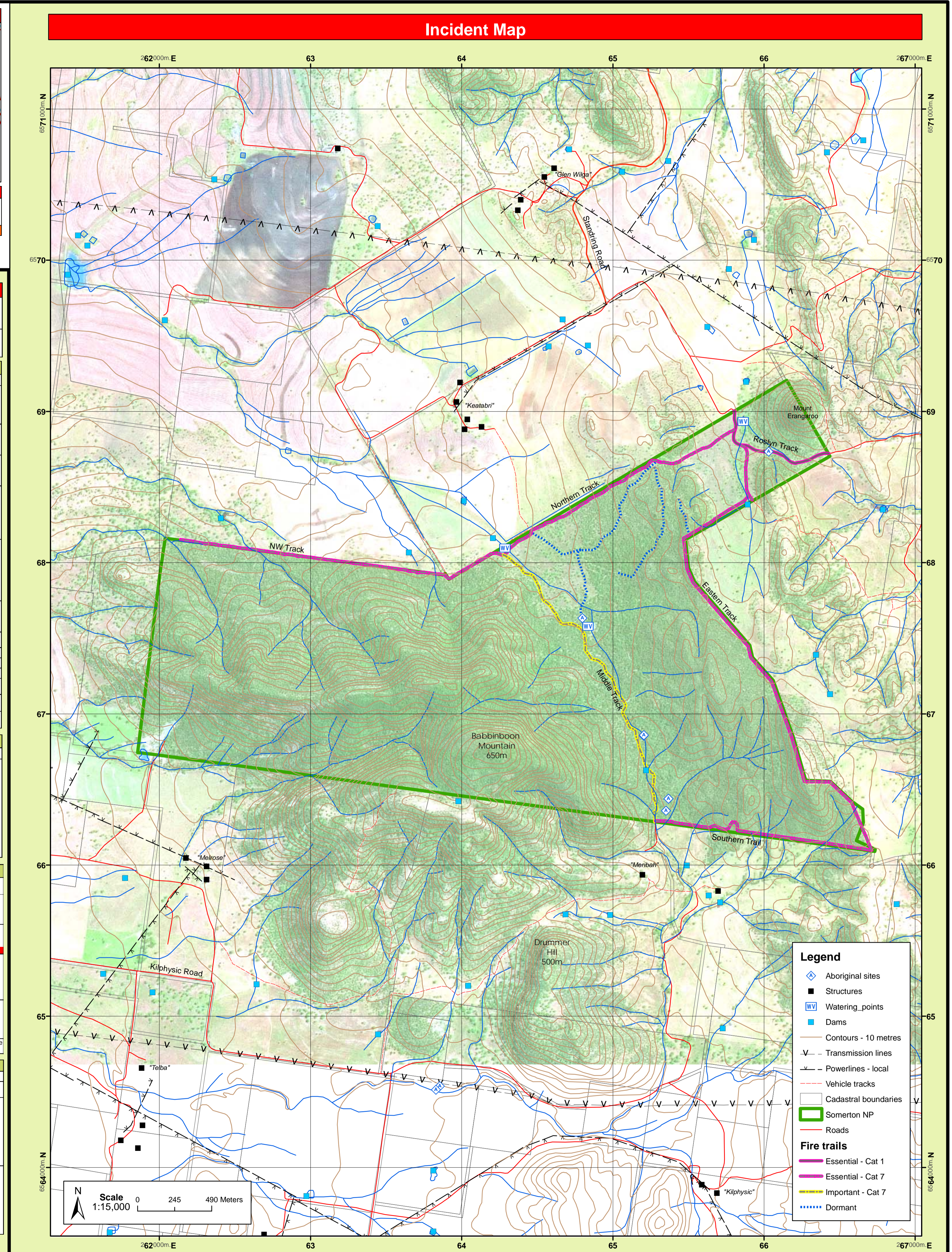
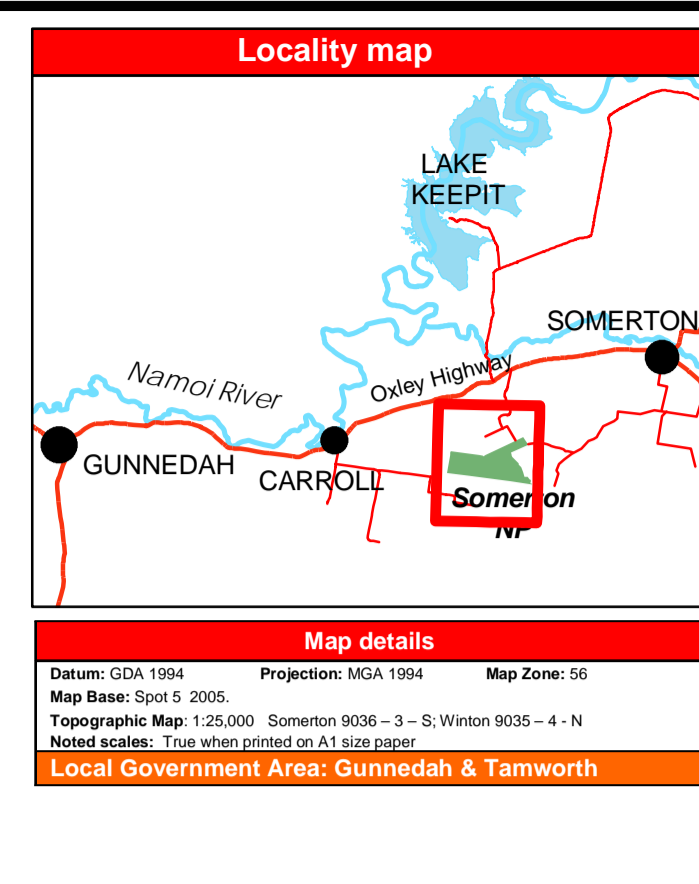
Related and reference documents

- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (2012) Fire Management Manual
- Hunter, JT (2008) Vegetation and floristics of Somerton National Park. Report to NSW NPWS

| Communications Information | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|---|
| Service | Channel | Location and Comments |
| NPWS VHF | 30 | The Governor - from high points only Most of the reserve does not have line-of-sight NPWS communications |
| RFS | P037 | Black Jack Mountain (Liverpool Ranges) (high points only) |
| UHF - CB | P006 | Mount Baldwin (Tamworth) (north aspects only) |
| Aviation | 127.4 119.4 | Small fires - Channel 10 Large fires - determined by IMT CTAF - Gunnedah (YGDH - 25 kms) CTAF-APRU - Tamworth NOTE: Restricted airspace applies |
| Cellphone | | Telstra 3G coverage on high points and northern aspects |

Portable repeaters should be considered for incidents.

| Contact Information | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Agency | Position / Location | Phone |
| National Parks & Wildlife Service | Duty Officer (24 hour) | 6842 3041 |
| | Coonabarabran Area Office (bus. hours) | 6842 1311 |
| NSW RFS Liverpool Zone | Zone Manager | 0427 306 845 |
| | Duty Officer | 6747 1493 |
| NSW RFS Tamworth Zone | Zone Manager | 0427 895 619 |
| | Duty Officer | 6762 7641 |
| RFS Rural Fire Brigades | Control - Dave Woodhouse | 6743 1774 |
| | Somerton - Peter Norris | 6769 7532 |
| NSW Fire Brigade | Newcastle | 4929 7177 |
| | Police, Fire, Ambulance | 000 |
| SES | SES | 13 2500 |
| | Police | 6742 9099 |
| Council | Gunnedah | 6740 2100 |
| | Gunnedah Shire | 6740 2100 |



Fire Season Information

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Wildfires | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The critical wildfire season generally occurs during November and December. During periods of strong negative Southern Oscillation Indices (El Nino events), this period may commence late September and extend into the first half of January. The end of the critical fire season is often marked by wet storm activity. |
| Prescribed Burning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective prescribed burning may need to be conducted once the "critical fire season" and thunderstorm season is over. This is due to the LOW - MODERATE Overall Fuel Hazard for most vegetation types. Prescribed burning attempted after autumn rain is unlikely to be effective. |

Operational Guidelines

| General | Guidelines |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Aerial operations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 the NPWS Regional Manager or the Section 44 Appointee. All personnel must be fully briefed before back burning operations begin. Restrictions for back burning in Suppression Strategies Backburning in areas of Low - Moderate OFH will require the use of wind, slope or low humidity to maximise effectiveness. |
| Backburning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first combatant agency on site may assume control of the fire, but then must ensure the relevant land management agency is notified promptly. On the arrival of other combatant agencies, the initial Incident Controller will consult with regard to the ongoing command, control and incident management team requirements as per the relevant BFMC Plan of Operations. |
| Command & Control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 not required for other purposes should be closed immediately at the cessation of the incident. |
| Containment Lines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant may only be used with the prior consent of a senior NPWS Officer. Plant must always be guided and supervised by an experienced officer, and accompanied by a support vehicle. When engaged in direct or parallel attack, this vehicle must be a fire fighting vehicle. Containment lines running along valley areas should be constructed at 20 - 50 metres from the gullyline to avoid severe erosion. Plant use will be excluded from steep areas, which covers most of the reserve. Plant must be washed down, where practicable, prior to it entering NPWS estate and again on exiting NPWS estate. |
| Earthmoving Equipment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of foam, gels and retardants will NOT be permitted within 50 metres of dams and watercourses holding water. The aerial application use foam, gels and retardants requires the approval of the Regional Manager or delegate. |
| Fire Suppression Chemicals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where practicable, containment lines should be stabilised and rehabilitated as part of the wildfire suppression operation. Consider deployment of a bulk water carrier to support fire operations. Potential smoke impacts and mitigation tactics will be assessed during the planning of fire operations. This reserve will be closed to visitors during fire danger periods rated Severe or higher. Caution should be exercised during RAFT operations when an evening easterly change is forecast. |
| Rehabilitation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> East-west running transmission lines are located north and south of the reserve |
| Watering points | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restricted air space centred on Tamworth Airport, extending adjacent to the reserve |
| Smoke Management | |
| Visitor Management | |
| WARNINGS | |
| AVIATION HAZARDS | |
| AVIATION RESTRICTION | |

Operational Guidelines - Heritage

| Resource | Guidelines |
|--|---|
| Modified trees (AS1), including scarred trees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the site from fire, clear base of litter and shrubs, exclude site tree from fire where possible Foam may be used to protect the tree, or to extinguish fire Do not cut trees |
| Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Site Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground based sites (AS2), including: artefacts, grinding grooves and stone arrangements Protect site from any ground disturbance, including the use of earth-moving equipment and vehicles Apply a machinery exclusion area where there is a high concentration of known sites Shelter based sites (AS3), including: habitation sites and deposits Protect sites from any disturbance by excluding operations by at least 25 metres |

Vegetation management

| Community | Management guidelines | Fire Behaviour |
|---|---|--|
| Viney woodlands White Box / Red Ash woodlands Hunter community C1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An interval between fire events less than 20 years should be avoided. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential rates of spread is low due to LOW OFH |
| Rocky Eucalypt woodlands Tumble-down Gum / Moenumbah woodland Hunter community C2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require dry season summer fire events for regeneration An interval greater than 50 years is preferred. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential rates of spread downslope is low due to LOW OFH |
| Cypress Eucalypt woodlands White Pine / White Box woodlands Hunter community C3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An interval between fire events less than 20 years should be avoided A high intensity fire may be permitted after an interval > 30 years Burning should be considered after an interval of 40 - 50 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential rates of spread downslope is low due to LOW OFH Upslope runs during Severe + FDI may result in spotting |
| Derived grasslands Hunter community C4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum interval between fire events should be greater than 4 - 8 years Prescribed burning in regeneration areas should be scheduled according to a revegetation / rehabilitation plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential rates of spread dependant on seasonal conditions A LOW OFH occurs during dry seasons A MODERATE - HIGH OFH may develop after successive wet seasons producing continuous cover |

OFH - Overall fuel hazard - A rating system that measures leaf litter, grasses, shrubs, bark type and bark condition. Consists of ratings for surface fuel, near-surface fuel, elevated fuel and bark.

Suppression Strategies

| Conditions & forecast | Guidelines |
|--|---|
| <p>The steep terrain has LOW OFH will act to limit the spread of wildfires. It may take a long time for a fire to burn downslope. The chance of fire self-extinguishing in moderate seasons is high.</p> <p>LOWER LEVELS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A broad containment strategy using existing tracks, low fuel areas, open areas and recently burnt areas. <p>STEEP TERRAIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor fire spread Prepare control lines at base of steep terrain (usually existing roads). These may be supported by handtool lines on spurs. Backburn upslope only when fire fronts are close to containment lines | <p>LOWER LEVELS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contain fire to the smallest area practical, as a first response. <p>STEEP TERRAIN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider deployment of RAFT crews as a first response in steep terrain. Backburn upslope only when fire fronts are close to containment lines, to avoid spotting. Use aerial incendiaries to remove unburnt areas that may cause upslope runs. <p>NOTE: Upslope runs could cause long distance spotting.</p> |