



NSW NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Amendment to Weddin Mountains National Park

Plan of Management



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Cover photo: Eualdrie Walking Track, Weddin Mountains National Park. Claire Davis/DPIE

This amendment was adopted by the Minister for Energy and Environment on 22 August 2019.

Weddin Mountains National Park is in the traditional Country of the Wiradjuri People.

This plan of management amendment was prepared by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), in consultation with the Western Rivers Regional Advisory Committee.

For additional information about Weddin Mountains National Park, its plan of management, or this amendment to the plan, contact the NPWS Office at Level 2, 203-209 Russell Street, Bathurst NSW 2795 or by telephone on 02 6332 7640.

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How to read the amendment

This amendment should be read in conjunction with the *Weddin Mountains National Park Plan of Management*, as adopted in 1995.

The adopted plan may be accessed on the [Department of Planning, Industry and Environment website](#). A hardcopy of the plan can be obtained by contacting the NPWS Bathurst Office on telephone 02 6332 7640.

The plan of management has been prioritised for replacement by NPWS in the next five years, as many actions have been completed and a range of information needs updating. Therefore, this amendment has been limited to information relevant to the permissibility or management of horse riding and its potential impacts.

References in this amendment relate to the page numbering used in the online version of the adopted plan.

Weddin Mountains National Park Plan of Management: Amendment for horse riding

Why amend the plan?

The NSW Government is committed to providing appropriate, high-quality horse riding experiences in NSW national parks. Horse riding in national parks provides an opportunity for horse riders to experience national parks and appreciate their natural heritage.

NPWS has developed the [Strategic Directions for Horse Riding in NSW National Parks](#) to guide the provision of improved horse riding opportunities over the coming years.

The strategy recognises the need for horse riding proposals to be sustainable and to ensure that the natural and cultural values of our parks are protected and the safety of all park visitors is maintained.

Interest in horse riding in Weddin Mountains National Park exists locally.

Under the existing *Weddin Mountains National Park Plan of Management*, horse riding is not permitted in the park. Currently, there are provisions for camping and bushwalking in the northern section of the park. Bird watching is a popular activity and there are interesting historic features such as Seatons Farm and Ben Hall's cave.

This amendment provides for low-key horse riding in the southern part of Weddin Mountains National Park, in an appropriate location and under conditions that provide for the protection of its natural and cultural values and visitor safety and enjoyment. The activities enabled in the southern part of the park by this amendment are dependent on the permitted use of Weddin State Forest for horse riding by Forestry Corporation of NSW and access through the state forest to the park.

Bushwalkers currently use this area and local pony clubs have expressed interest in using two management trails, Weddin Gap Trail and Black Spring Trail. These, together with an additional Forestry Corporation of NSW trail (Stoney Creek Trail), form a 20-kilometre loop.

Visitor use needs to be kept at low frequency, low-key in character and undertaken in the appropriate season because the proposed horse riding trails are:

- steep and susceptible to erosion, especially in periods of high rainfall (which usually occurs in winter)

- relatively weed free
- in the vicinity of potential nesting sites used by threatened species, particularly at lower altitudes.

The conditions set out in this amendment will make horse riding available to individuals and modest-sized groups of riders, but not for groups larger than 16 horses or competitive events.

NPWS has liaised with Forestry Corporation of NSW about permitted use of Stoney Creek Trail in the adjacent Weddin State Forest to enable a loop trail for horse riding. Horse riding is generally allowed on trails in state forests in New South Wales.

Weddin State Forest is also declared public land for hunting under the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002*. The licence required to hunt (NSW restricted game hunting licence), obtained through the Game Licensing Unit of the Department of Primary Industries, mitigates against visitor safety risks. Forestry Corporation of NSW advises that licensed hunting is a legitimate and safe recreational pursuit and is compatible with other forest activities.

Amendment

Permissibility of horse riding

1. In Section 4.3.2 Recreation opportunities (page 18)

Replace the following policy:

Horse riding will not be permitted in the park.

With:

Horse riding will be permitted on Weddin Gap and Black Spring trails during autumn (March through to the end of May) on a maximum of 20 calendar days.

Horse riders will require an approved written activity consent. The maximum number of horses allowed on the trails is 16 per day. The maximum number of activity consents allowed per group is two days per annual horse riding season.

Consents will be subject to conditions that minimise impacts on park values and other visitors. Horse riders will be required to follow the *NPWS Code of Practice for Horse Riding in Parks* (OEH 2014). NPWS encourages riders to wear helmets for safety reasons. Horse feed is not permitted in the park. Camping overnight with horses is not permitted in the park.

The two trails authorised for horse riding may be temporarily or permanently closed to riders at any time depending on trail conditions, weather conditions, unacceptable impacts on park values or management needs. This includes wet weather periods, total fire bans or after fire events. Consultation with user groups will be undertaken prior to implementation of any permanent closures.

2. In Section 4.3.2 Recreation opportunities (page 18)

Add underneath the paragraph beginning 'A walking track exists' (and see point 24 of the amendment):

This 20-kilometre loop trail in the southern part of the park is authorised for horse riding. While there is little history of horse riding in the park, a low-key level of recreational horse riding will be permitted due to local interest. Visitor use needs to be kept at low

frequency, low-key in character and undertaken in the appropriate season because the horse riding trails are:

- steep and susceptible to erosion, especially in periods of high rainfall (which usually occurs in winter)
- relatively weed free
- and in the vicinity of potential nesting sites used by threatened species, particularly at lower altitudes.

3. In Section 4.3.2 Recreation opportunities (page 18)

Replace in the last paragraph of text:

Three management tracks are maintained for management purposes and will be promoted as part of the walking track system.

With:

Five management trails are maintained for management purposes. Two of those will be promoted for bushwalking and horse riding is permitted by written consent.

4. In Section 3 Objectives of Management (page 6)

Replace the statement:

The protection of opportunities for solitude and self-reliant recreation in the balance of the park.

With:

The provision of opportunities for targeted low-key recreational activities in a natural setting in the balance of the park.

5. In Section 4.3.2 Recreation opportunities (page 18)

Replace the following policy:

The balance of the park will be managed to provide opportunities for solitude and self-reliant recreation.

With:

The balance of the park will be managed to provide opportunities for targeted, low-key recreational activities in a natural setting.

6. In Section 4.3.2 Recreation opportunities (pages 18-19)

Remove the four actions.

Replace with:

Manage Weddin Gap and Black Spring trails and Stoney Creek Trail, in conjunction with Forestry Corporation of NSW, as authorised horse riding trails.

Develop a local horse riding consent system that includes conditions as outlined above and that may involve a fee.

7. In Section 4.3.4 Management Operations (page 20)

Replace the following text from the first paragraph:

Because of the size and shape of the park only three management tracks are required and maintained:

- major management access into the park is via the Weddin Gap track
- the Holy Camp track follows the eastern boundary of the park from the end of Holy Camp road to the northern tip of the park and
- a track along the south-eastern boundary between the Stock Route road and Weddin Gap.

With:

Five management trails are required and will be maintained as essential or important: Seatons and Holy Camp trails in the northern section of the park; and Weddin Gap, Black Spring and Cochrans Lease trails in the southern section (see Figure 1).

Park values

8. In Section 4.1.2 Native and Introduced Plants (page 9)

Replace the following phrase and indented dot points from the second paragraph:

; of these, the following vegetation types are poorly conserved in the nature conservation system but are found in Weddin Mountains National Park:

large areas of woodland and open forest dominated by mugga ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*);

areas of woodland dominated by white box (*E. albens*), Blakely's red gum (*E. blakelyi*), grey box (*E. microcarpa*) and fuzzy box (*E. conica*). Fuzzy box is particularly important as it is not protected elsewhere in NSW; and

large areas of heath dominated by *Allocasuarina diminuta ssp. diminuta*.

With:

. There are three threatened ecological communities (NPWS 1996; OEH 2011a, 2011b) found in Weddin Mountains National Park:

- Fuzzy Box Woodland on alluvial Soils of the South Western Slopes, Darling Riverine Plains and Brigalow Belt South Bioregions
- Inland Grey Box Woodland in the Riverina, NSW South Western Slopes, Cobar Peneplain, Nandewar and Brigalow Belt South Bioregions
- White Box – Yellow Box – Blakely's Red Gum Woodland.

9. In Section 4.1.3 Native and Introduced Animals (page 12)

Add in the first paragraph after the sentence ending in 'incomplete':

There are 24 threatened animal species (OEH 2018) recorded in the park. All of them are birds.

10. In Section 4.1.3 Native and Introduced Animals (page 12)

Add in the second paragraph, immediately before the last sentence:

The endangered bush stone-curlew (*Burhinus grallarius*) has been recorded in the vicinity of the park. Large parts of the park and adjoining Bimbi and Weddin state forests contain potential habitat for this species, particularly at the lower altitudes (CSIRO 2005).

11. In Section 4.1.3 Native and Introduced Animals (page 12)

Replace the following sentence, the last in the second paragraph:

It is important that their habitat requirements are understood to ensure their survival.

With:

It is important the habitat requirements of all of these bird species are understood to ensure their survival.

Park threats

12. In Section 4.1.1 Geology, Landforms, Hydrology and Soils (page 9)

Replace the third policy:

All management activities will incorporate soil erosion and sedimentation control principles and practices developed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management of NSW.

With:

All management activities will incorporate soil erosion and sedimentation control principles and practices in accordance with NPWS guidelines (OEH 2012).

13. In Section 4.1.2 Native and Introduced Plants (page 12)

Replace the fourth and fifth policies with:

Weeds in the park, including any that are new or emerging, will be managed in accordance with the *Central West Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan* (Central West LLS 2017) prepared under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

14. In Section 4.1.3 Native and Introduced Animals (page 14)

Remove the three actions and **replace** with:

Pest animals in the park will be managed in accordance with the relevant pest management strategy and actions from the *Biodiversity Conservation Program* (OEH 2017).

Other factual corrections

15. In Section 2.2.1 Location and Regional setting (page 2)

Update the reserved area of the park as follows:

8377 hectares

16. In Section 2.2.2 significance of Weddin Mountains National Park (page 3)

Replace the sentence in the first paragraph:

These include the Conimbla Range, Cocopara and Nangar national parks and the Currumbenya, Cocopara, The Rock and Tabletop nature reserves.

with:

These include Conimbla, Cocoparra, Goobang and Nangar national parks and the Cocopara, The Rock and Tabletop nature reserves.

17. In Section 2.2.2 significance of Weddin Mountains National Park (page 5)

Replace the number 10 **with:** several

18. In Section 2.2.2 significance of Weddin Mountains National Park (page 5)

Replace the following sentence contained in the third paragraph:

Other similar camping opportunities are provided in the Towyal, Cumbidjowra, Nangar and Weddin State Forests and in Conimbla National Park.

With:

Other similar camping opportunities are provided in Goobang and Nangar national parks.

19. In Section 4.1.3 Native and Introduced Animals (page 13)

Replace the following policy:

Domestic animals will not be permitted in the park with the exception of guide dogs for the blind.

With:

Domestic animals in the park will be managed in accordance with the *Pets in Parks Policy* (OEH 2015).

20. In Section 4.2 Cultural Heritage (page 15)

Add the words 'and Young' between 'Cowra' and 'Local Aboriginal Land Councils'; and 'Central West Aboriginal Group' in the first policy.

21. In Section 4.3.2 Recreation opportunities (page 17)

Replace, in the first paragraph:

only opportunity for car based camping and bush walking within a national park in the Central West.

With:

an opportunity for car-based camping and bushwalking, in addition to Conimbla, Nangar and Goobang national parks in the Central West.

22. In Section 4.3.2 Recreation opportunities (page 17)

Replace, in the first paragraph:

Access to the park is from both the east via Holy Camp Road and from the west via Nowlands Road. These access roads are unsealed and are for dry weather use only.

With:

Access to the western part of the park is from the north via the Mid Western Highway, Back Piney Range Road, Nowlands Road and Bimbi State Forest. Access to the eastern side of the park is via Mary Gilmore Way and Holy Camp Road. There are clear roadside directional signs on the approach to the park from all directions.

23. In Section 4.3.2 Recreation opportunities (page 18)

Remove from the paragraph beginning with 'Recreational facilities...'

at Holy Camp and Seatons Farm (at the end of the first sentence)

Replace in the same paragraph, in the third sentence,
nearby Seatons camping area

With:

nearby Ben Halls Camping Area

24. In Section 4.3.2 Recreation opportunities (page 18)

Replace the paragraph beginning with 'A walking track...' with:

There are five walking tracks in the northern part of the park and one bushwalking loop trail in the southern part of the park. Ben Halls Cave Track, Berthas Gully track, Lynchs Loop Walk and Basin Gully to Eualdrie Lookout Track are accessed from the Ben Halls Camping Area in the north-west. Eualdrie Walking Track is accessed from Holy Camp Camping Area in the north-east. Basin Gully to Eualdrie Lookout Track links these two camping areas. Weddin Gap and Black Spring trails in the southern part of the park, together with Stoney Creek Trail in the adjoining Weddin State Forest, combine to form a 20-kilometre loop trail (see Figure 1).

25. In Section 4.3.2 Recreation opportunities (page 18)

Replace in the first policy:

Black Gin Gully

With:

Berthas, Little Basin

26. In Section 4.3.2 Recreation opportunities (page 18)

Add an additional policy after the second policy:

Ben Halls Camping Area will provide camping and day use facilities in the north-west part of the park.

27. In Section 4.3.4 Management Operations (page 21)

Remove from the second action:

in consultation with the Department of Conservation and Land Management

28. In Section 5 Plan Implementation (page 22)

Remove and **add** actions as outlined above.

29. In Section 6 Selected References (page 24)

Add the following references in appropriate alphabetical order:

Central West LLS 2017, *Central West Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017-2022*, Central West Local Land Services, accessed 14 February 2018 at http://centralwest.lls.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/722873/Web-version_Central-West-Regional-Weed-Mgmt-Plan..pdf

CSIRO 2005, *The status of the Bush Stone-curlew (Burhinus grallarius) within the mid-Lachlan Catchment with recommendations for management*, report prepared by C Davey, CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, Canberra.

NPWS 1996, *Bathurst District Vegetation Survey*, report prepared by ERM Mitchell McCotter Pty Ltd, NPWS Bathurst, accessed 13 February 2018 at

http://data.environment.nsw.gov.au/dataset/bathurst-district-vegetation-survey-weddin-mountains-national-park-vis_id-101336ac5

OEH 2011a, *Fuzzy Box Woodland on alluvial soils of the South Western Slopes, Darling Riverine Plains and Brigalow Belt South Bioregions – Determination to make a minor amendment to Part 3 of Schedule 1 of the Threatened Species Conservation Act*, viewed 13 February 2018, www.environment.nsw.gov.au/determinations/fuzzybox36a.htm

OEH 2011b, *Inland Grey Box Woodland in the Riverina, NSW South Western Slopes, Cobar Penneplain, Nandewar and Brigalow Belt South Bioregions – endangered ecological community listing*, viewed 13 February 2018, www.environment.nsw.gov.au/determinations/EucalyptusMicrocarpaEndCom.htm

OEH 2012, *Erosion and Sediment Control on Unsealed Roads: A field guide for erosion and sediment control maintenance practices*, Office of Environment and Heritage, Sydney, www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/stormwater/120410unsealedroads.pdf

OEH 2014, *Code of Practice for Horse Riding in Parks*, Office of Environment and Heritage, Sydney, www.environment.nsw.gov.au/policies/HorseridingCOP.htm

OEH 2015, *Pets in Parks Policy*, Office of Environment and Heritage, Sydney www.environment.nsw.gov.au/policies/pets-policy.htm

OEH 2017, Biodiversity Conservation Program, Office of Environment and Heritage, www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspecies/pas.htm.

OEH 2018, *NSW BioNet Atlas*, Office of Environment and Heritage, Sydney, accessed 7 February 2018, www.bionet.nsw.gov.au/

30. Insert the following map (Figure 1) to replace the existing map in the plan (no map currently in the online version).

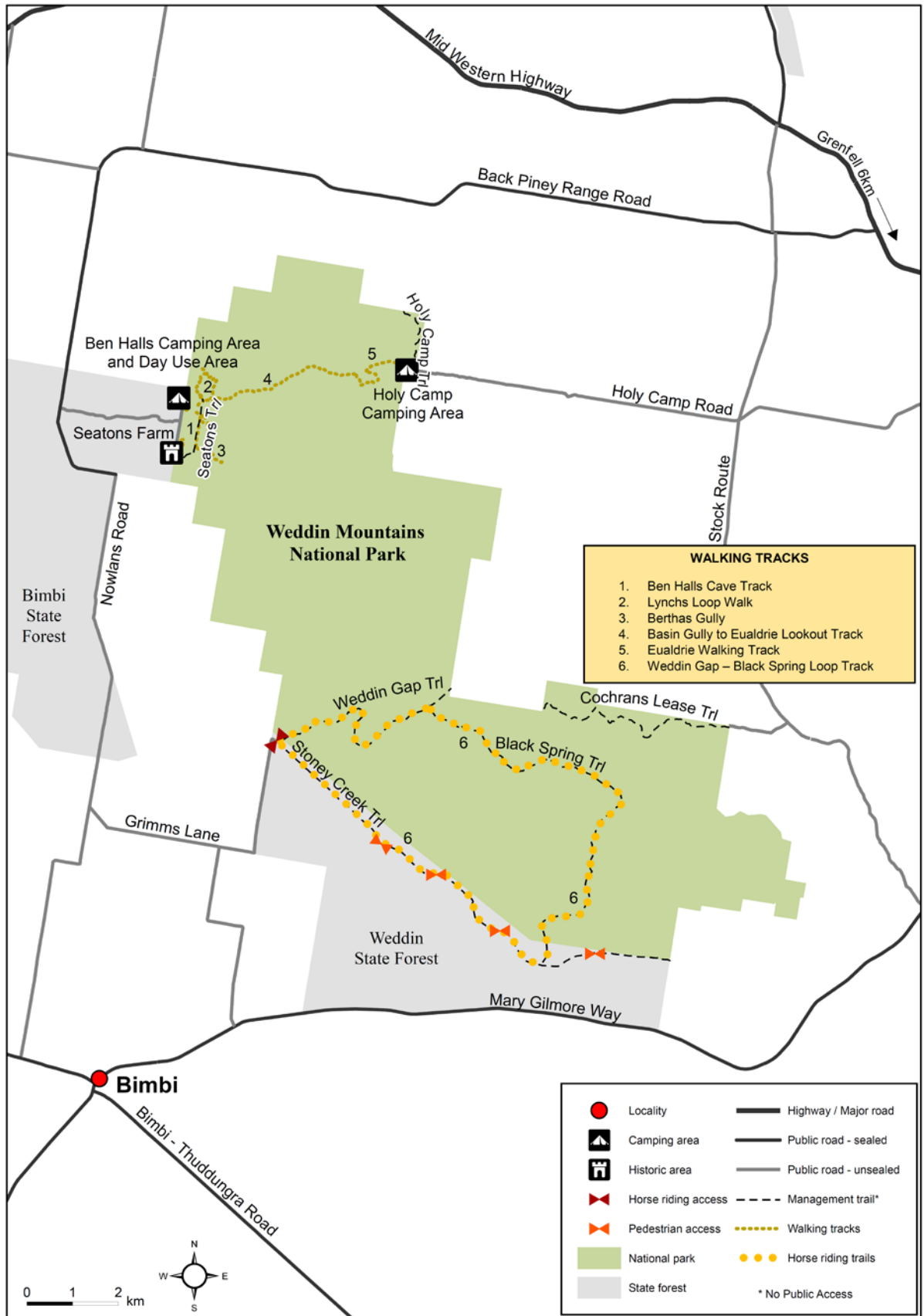


Figure 1: Weddin Mountains National Park horse riding trails