

Baffle Creek Conservation Park

Management Statement

2026



Queensland
Government

This management statement has not been co-designed with First Nations partners. This document has been prepared by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation to provide management guidance and adaptive management until such a time as the department can engage with First Nations partners in the co-design of a management instrument.

Management statements are prepared under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. These documents may also include management direction for other State tenure for which QPWS has management responsibility.

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1. Introduction

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), within the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI), applies a contemporary management process that is based on international best practice and targets management towards the most important features of each park: their 'key values'.

The Values-Based Management Framework (VBMF) is an adaptive management cycle that incorporates planning, prioritising, doing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting into all areas of our business. This enables the agency to be more flexible and proactive and to improve management effectiveness over time. A glossary of VBMF terms and concepts used within this document is provided at the end of this document (Section 5 – Glossary).

As a land manager, QPWS has a custodial obligation to ensure our estate is managed to provide appropriate and safe access, protect life and property, be a good neighbour and work cooperatively with partners across the landscape. The agency does this as part of setting the 'levels of service' for each park. Levels of service is a management standard that considers an area's values, threatening processes, custodial obligations, risks and overall management complexity.

This management statement has been prepared by QPWS to provide management guidance and adaptive management until such a time as the department can engage with First Nations partners in co-design of a management instrument.

2. Park overview

The following figure and table (Figure 1, Table 1) provide an overview of information related to the parks included in this management statement, including their locality, legislative framework and applicable plans/agreements.

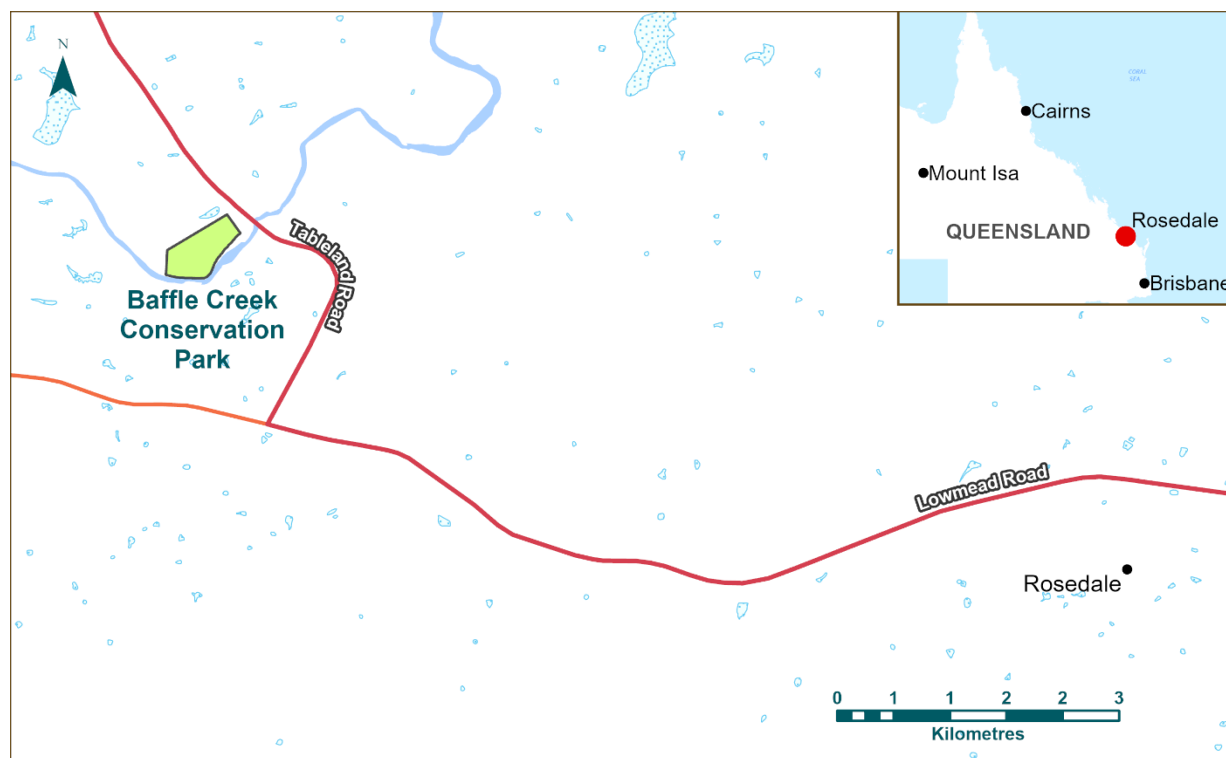


Figure 1. Locality of Baffle Creek Conservation Park

Table 1. Overview of Baffle Creek Conservation Park

Park size	Baffle Creek Conservation Park	19 ha
Bioregion	South Eastern Queensland	
QPWS region	South East Queensland	
Local government area	Gladstone Regional Council	
State electorate	Burnett	
Relevant legislation	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cwlth) (EPBC)	
	<i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> (NCA)	
	<i>Biosecurity Act 2014</i>	
	<i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i>	
	<i>Native Title Act 1993</i> (Cwlth)	
	<i>Vegetation Management Act 1999</i>	

3. Key values

All parks, forests and reserves contain a range of natural, cultural, social and economic values that contribute to the state's comprehensive and representative protected area and forest estate. The VBMF provides a framework for identifying and protecting the most important of these—referred to as *key values*—which in turn guides the allocation of management resources.

The location of each key value is shown in Figure 2. An assessment of each key value—including its current and desired condition, trend, and the confidence level of the assessment—is presented in the following tables and can be interpreted using Table 2. The assessment also outlines the main threats to each key value and provides broad strategic management direction to address these threats and achieve desired outcomes over time.

Table 2. Description of condition and trend icons used in the key values assessment

Condition of key value	Good  The value is in good condition and is likely to be maintained for the foreseeable future, provided that current measures are maintained	Good with some concern  The value is likely to be maintained over the long term with minor additional conservation measures to address existing concerns	Significant concern  The value is threatened by a number of current or potential threats. Significant additional conservation measures are required to preserve the value over the medium to long term	Critical  The value is severely threatened. Urgent additional large-scale conservation measures are required or the value may be lost
Trend of key value condition	Improving 	Stable 	Deteriorating 	No consistent trend 
Assessment confidence	Inferred 	Limited 	Adequate 	

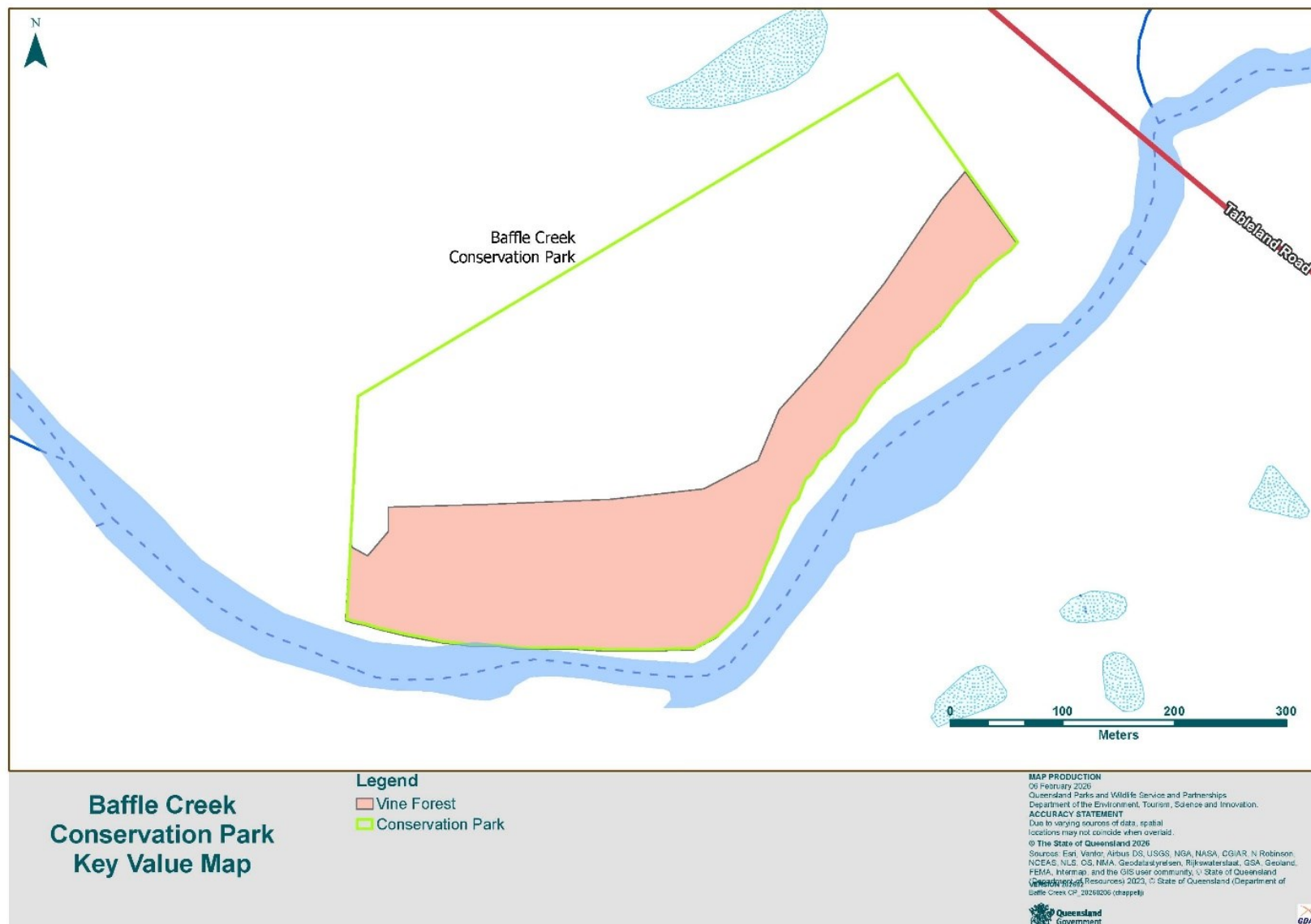


Figure 2. Baffle Creek Conservation Park key values

3.1 Vine forest

Key value category	Key value description	Current condition	Assessment confidence	Current trend	Assessment confidence	Desired condition (short term)	Desired condition (long term)
Significant ecosystems (terrestrial)	The vine forest extends across one third of the park and includes simple notophyll fringing forest and complex notophyll to microphyll forest. The two regional ecosystems that comprise the vine forest have endangered biodiversity status and are sensitive to fire. BVG 4b Evergreen to semi-deciduous mesophyll to notophyll vine forest, frequently with <i>Archontophoenix</i> spp. (palms) fringing streams. Regional ecosystems RE 12.3.17 (Of Concern) Simple notophyll fringing forest usually dominated by <i>Waterhousea floribunda</i>. Covers 4.34 hectares (23.44 per cent) of the park — while this is less than one per cent of the regional ecosystem remaining in Queensland, it is 10.32 per cent of that within the protected area estate. This is the second highest representation in the 10 protected areas with the regional ecosystem. While this RE is known to be important for fruit-eating birds, many of which migrate seasonally from upland to lowland rainforest, no species have been recorded from the park. RE 12.3.16 (Endangered) Complex notophyll to microphyll vine forest on alluvial plains. Covers 1.45 hectares (7.81 per cent) of the park — less than 0.5% for RE remaining in Queensland or in the protected area estate. This regional ecosystem is known to provide habitat for threatened plant species including <i>Xanthostemon oppositifolius</i>, <i>Fontainea rostrata</i> and <i>Macadamia ternifolia</i>; and threatened fauna species including <i>Cyclopsitta diophthalma coxeni</i> and <i>Ornithoptera richmondia</i>. While it is known to be important for fruit-eating birds, many of which migrate seasonally from upland to lowland rainforest, no species have been recorded from the park. RE 12.3.17 and 12.3.16 both correspond with a critically endangered ecological community 'Lowland rainforest of subtropical Australia' which is listed under the EPBC. This ecological community may be present in the park, and ground truthing would be required to confirm.						
Desired outcome Vine forests are healthy, resilient, protected and effectively managed, supporting thriving biodiversity, sustaining natural processes, and providing long-term viable habitats for fauna species.							

Threats to key value

Threat process	Threat category	Description	Threat level	Threat rating
1. Bushfire	Natural system modifications	Vine forests do not require burning and need protection relieing on broad-scale management of the surrounding country. Potential arson given proximity to road, likely to only be in really hot seasons.	Primary	Low
2. Introduced weeds	Invasive and other problematic species, genes and diseases	Vine forests are prone to invasion by weeds such as camphor laurel, broad-leaved pepper tree and cat's claw creeper. Cat's claw creeper is known to be present throughout the park. Likely the giant rats tail grass may be on park as it is in surrounding landscape. The park adjoins the river so transport of weeds likely during flood events.	Secondary	Medium
3. Introduced animals	Invasive and other problematic species, genes and diseases	Cattle from neighbouring properties may be using the park. Presence and condition of boundary fencing is unknown. Cattle can spread weeds, trample vegetation and graze.	Other	Low

Strategic management directions

Strategic management direction	Priority*
Protect vine forest through appropriate fire management of adjacent fire-adapted communities.	4
Reduce the impacts of cat's claw creeper on the vine forest.	4
Prevent establishment of pests that may impact the vine forest.	4
Prevent cattle from entering the park by collaborating with neighbours to improve and maintain boundary fencing.	5

*Key value priority: 1 – Critical, 2 – Very high, 3 – High, 4 – Moderate, 5 – Desirable (see Appendix 1)

4. Management direction

QPWS manages protected areas and forests to protect their values and deliver our custodial obligations as a land manager. A levels of service (LoS) assessment allows QPWS to consider the management of each park in a state-wide context and determine desired levels of management effort for each park in a consistent and equitable way. An LoS assessment lets QPWS staff and the public know what level of management activity to expect on each park, forest or reserve. There are six LoS ratings ranging from 'below acceptable' to 'exceptional', and an 'acceptable' rating is the minimum standard required to deliver good management and meet our legislative and custodial obligations.

This section provides a strategic management direction for each management theme, identifying its current LoS and desired LoS which can be interpreted using Figure 3.

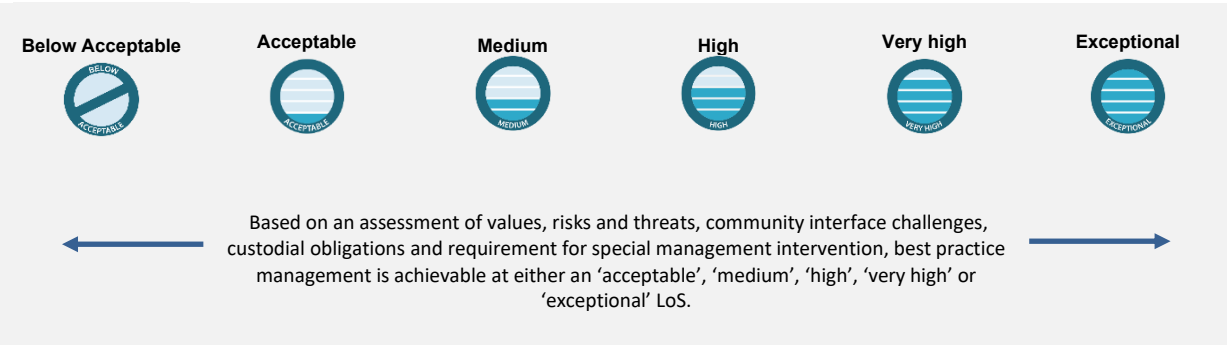


Figure 3. Description of LoS icons

4.1 Management directions

Management theme	Current	Desired	Strategic management direction	Priority (1–5) *
Fire management			Improve the current knowledge and understanding of all fire dependent and fire-sensitive vegetation.	5
			Improve the current level of consultation with neighbours for the annual planned burn program.	5
			Establish effective relationships and communication with neighbours to improve fire management, including fire preparedness, bushfire response and implementing planned burns.	4
			Improve current approach to fire management by increasing the priority for implementing conservation planned burns for key values.	5
			Improve fire management through preparation of an area fire strategy.	4
Pest management			Improve knowledge and understanding of current and emerging weeds and the impacts on natural values, including their distribution and extent.	5
			Improve consultation with neighbours for the development of the annual pest program.	5
			Improve the priority for pest management through increased operational capacity to target identified pest threats in key values.	5
			Improve pest management through preparation of an area pest strategy.	4
			Improve current approach to pest management through working with neighbours to manage protected area margins and interface.	5
Natural values management			Improve knowledge of fauna and flora species through targeted surveys and monitoring programs.	5
			Improve knowledge of the condition of the vegetation communities through the collation of historical vegetation monitoring and the management of the health check program.	5
			Maintain current level of consultation and engagement with regional and centric units to support natural values management.	5
			Increase the management effort, including greater planning support, to improve the condition of key values.	5
Historic cultural heritage management			Maintain a contemporary knowledge of the park's post-contact cultural heritage management requirements.	5

Management theme	Current	Desired	Strategic management direction	Priority (1–5) *
Visitor management			Maintain current approach to visitor management.	5
Community, partnerships and other interests			Maintain contemporary knowledge of all stakeholders and management requirements.	5
			Increase staff capabilities in cultural heritage management and cross-cultural engagement through training opportunities.	5
			Enhance the relationship with the First Nations Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang Bunda People Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC by expanding communication and knowledge sharing to incorporate Baffle Creek Conservation Park.	4
			Maintain current approach to the management of First Nations Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang Bunda People Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC identified cultural heritage areas.	5
			Increase the priority for informed management of First Nations Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, Taribelang Bunda People Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC identified cultural heritage areas through collaborative efforts with centric and regional support units.	5
Field management capability			Improve staff knowledge and capacity to manage key values through training and information sharing.	5
			Enhance field management capacity by increasing the strategic use of regional and centric teams as needed.	5
			Improve current field management capability and capacity by working with other work units to prioritise work programs.	5
Operational planning and management support			Maintain knowledge of available operational planning and management support within the region to guide and support park management operations.	5
			Maintain relationships with regional and centric support units.	5
			Increase operational planning for key management priorities including fire, pest and regional ecosystems.	5

*Level of Service priority: 1 – extremely urgent and extremely necessary, 2 – very necessary and very urgent, 3 – moderately necessary and moderately urgent, 4 – somewhat necessary and somewhat urgent, 5 – optional and not urgent (see Appendix 1)

5. Glossary

The following glossary contains VBMF terms and concepts used within this document.

Term	Description
Adaptive management	The process of adjusting and improving how we manage parks, forests and reserves after assessing the outcomes of previous strategies and on-ground actions.
Condition and trend	The condition of a key value is assessed as either good, good with some concern, significant concern or critical. Trend describes what is happening to the condition: is it improving, stable, or deteriorating? A key value's current condition is determined during the planning process. A desired condition is a realistic goal for the future condition of the key value. The ongoing condition and trend of key values is assessed with regular health checks, or monitoring and scientific assessment.
Custodial obligations	The legal and policy requirements QPWS has as a land manager to ensure that parks, forests and reserves are managed properly and lawfully. This includes protecting life and property, maintaining biosecurity, building positive relationships with adjacent communities and landholders, and safeguarding the values of the land.
Desired outcome	A statement in the key value and management direction statements about moving from the current status (condition or LoS) to a desired status. The goal for management.
Health check	Basic form of monitoring that uses indicators and visual assessments to regularly evaluate the condition of key values. Regular health checks ensure QPWS can respond quickly to adverse change and redirect management priorities.
Key value	A natural, cultural, social or economic value that is most important, significant, unique or irreplaceable and helps define the essence of the area. If lost, it would diminish what makes the area distinct from others.
Level of service (LoS)	Management standards for maintaining an area based on its values, threats and the complexity of management. There are six LoS ratings ranging from 'below acceptable' to 'exceptional', noting that an 'acceptable' rating is the minimum standard required to deliver good management and meet our custodial obligations under law as a land manager. A 'current' LoS rating is the level at the time of planning, the 'desired' LoS is where we want to be.
Management direction	An assessment of the current and desired LoS for each management theme, with prioritised strategic management directions.
Management instrument	A management plan or management statement.
Management theme	Common management themes across parks, forests and reserves, including fire management; pest management; natural values management; post-contact cultural heritage management; visitor management; community, partnerships and other interests; field management capability; operational planning and management support.
Strategic management direction	A broad strategy aimed at mitigating or removing a threat to a key value and maintaining or improving the condition of a park's value; or addressing the gap between the current LoS and desired LoS for a management theme.
Threat or threatening process and threat rating	Based on IUCN's classifications, QPWS has identified threatening processes that have the potential to affect Queensland's values (e.g. natural systems modifications, invasive species). Current and potential threats to key values are identified and given a threat rating based on a combination of the extent of the impact, the severity of the impact and the urgency of action.

Appendix 1

Term	Description
Priority rating (key value SMDs)	A rating given to a strategic management direction according to the need for action to prevent further decline, stabilise current condition, or restore and enhance values, with consideration given to legislative obligations, cost, and social, economic and political factors.
	Critical (1) – Loss or very significant decline in the condition of the key value is highly likely if action is not taken OR significant improvement in the condition of the key value is highly likely if action is taken.
	Very high (2) – Significant decline in the condition of the key value is likely if action is not taken OR significant improvement in the condition of the key value is likely if action is taken.
	High (3) – Decline in the condition of the key value is likely if action is not taken OR improvement in the condition of the key value is likely if action is taken.
	Moderate (4) – Some decline in the condition of the key value is possible if action is not taken OR some improvement in the condition of the key value is possible if action is taken.
	Desirable (5) – While decline in the condition of the key value is not likely in the short term, the action, if taken, would help build long-term resilience of the key value.
Priority rating (LoS SMDs)	A rating given to an LoS or custodial obligation strategic management direction. A scale from 1 (extremely urgent) to 5 (not urgent or optional) is assigned, with consideration given to legislative obligations, cost, and social, economic and political factors.