

A photograph of a cyclist riding through a shallow stream in a lush, green forest. The cyclist is wearing a light blue t-shirt, dark shorts, a white helmet, and sunglasses. They are splashing water as they ride. The stream is bordered by rocks and dense vegetation. The text "Should we be pedalling in our national parks?" is overlaid in the center of the image.

# Should we be pedalling in our national parks?

Management approach to cycling – QPWS&P

# Relevant legislation – protected areas

## *Nature Conservation Act 1992 (NCA) – cardinal principal*

Bicycles defined as ‘vehicles’ and allowed on:

- Gazetted and management ‘roads’ unless restricted by regulatory notice or sign.
- Trails/tracks (are not ‘roads’) where permitted by a regulatory notice.

## *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006*

- Bicycles defined as ‘vehicles’
- ‘roads’ include tracks established for use by vehicles (incl. purpose built bicycle tracks and shared trails)

### Regulatory notice

## Mountain-bike riding permitted on designated trails only



In Bunyaville Conservation Park, mountain bikes are only permitted to be ridden on the mountain-bike trails, shared trails and paths, management tracks and roads shown on the map as designated trails.

Riding in all other areas of the conservation park is prohibited.



Contravention of a requirement of this notice is an offence against the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.  
Maximum penalty: 20 penalty units. On-the-spot-fines apply.

WELCOME

# SMITH-FIELD MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK

The Wiradjuri Aboriginal Traditional Owners have a long lasting connection with this park. They welcome you to their country and ask that you respect this special area.

In the heart of the coastal range, Smithfield Conservation Park features a number of shared trails for walking and mountain bike riding. Winding through tropical rainforest and natural woodland, the trails explore the gullies, ridges, creeks, valleys and coastal plains of the park showcasing a range of different habitats.

### RIGHT PLACE

• Mountain-bike riding is permitted on the trails shown on the map. Contravention of a requirement of this notice is an offence against the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.  
Maximum penalty: 20 penalty units. On-the-spot-fines may apply.

### SAFELY

• These are shared trails. Walkers and horse riders may be present at any time. Please be courteous to other trail users.

### RESPONSIBLY

• Stay on marked trails and avoid areas of erosion. Do not dig for water or create any other tracks. Do not dig for water or create any other tracks. Do not dig for water or create any other tracks.

### CARE FOR OUR TRAILS

• Avoid the spread of weeds – regularly check your clothing, shoes, bikes and other equipment for seeds. Remove weeds and place them in the bin.

### SAFELY

• Wear appropriate riding gear and be realistic about your riding abilities.  
• Know where you are going and what the skill level of the trails require before riding there.  
• Take care of the trails when you are riding.

### RESPONSIBLY

• Give way to walkers – refer to a gentle parking space.  
• Give way down slopes and alert other riders and hikers when approaching.

### CARE FOR OUR TRAILS

• Avoid the spread of weeds – regularly check your clothing, shoes, bikes and other equipment for seeds. Remove weeds and place them in the bin.

### CARE FOR OUR TRAILS

• Keep trails in good condition and help others to do the same by reporting any damage to the park office.

### EASY

• Wide trail with gentle gradient and smooth surface. Some obstacles such as roots, logs and rocks. Suitable for beginner mountain bikers with basic riding skills and a mountain bike.

### INTERMEDIATE

• Some technical terrain and uneven surface and obstacles. May include steep and slippery sections. Suitable for intermediate mountain bikers with a reasonable level of fitness and off-road riding skills.

### DIFFICULT

• For experienced mountain bikers. Challenging trail. Large, unmovable obstacles and boulders. Long steep climbs for descents and loose surfaces.

### EXTREME

• All sections are extremely challenging. Suitable for highly experienced mountain bikers with excellent skills, used to physically demanding routes. Navigation and personal survival skills are highly desirable. Suitable for advanced riders only.

## Regulatory notice:

Mountain-bike riding is permitted on the trails within Smithfield Conservation Park, as shown on the map. Contravention of a requirement of this notice is an offence against the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

Maximum penalty: 20 penalty units. On-the-spot fines may apply.

# Values Based Management Framework (VBMF)

Department of Environment and Science

## Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park

Incorporates: Lawn Hill (Arthur Creek) Resources Reserve, Lawn Hill (Creek) Resources Reserve, Lawn Hill (Gorge Mouth) Resources Reserve, Lawn Hill (Gregory River Base) Resources Reserve, Lawn Hill (Gregory) Resources Reserve, Lawn Hill (Lydsdale) Resources Reserve, Lawn Hill (Littles Range) Resources Reserve, Lawn Hill (Stockyard Creek) Resources Reserve, Lawn Hill (Widdallion) Resources Reserve, Australian Fossil Mammal Sites (AFMS) World Heritage Area (Riversleigh section)

Department of National Parks, Sports and Racing

## Hinchinbrook Island National Park

Incorporates: Eva Island, Agnes Island and Haycock Island

Management Plan  
2022

Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park Management Plan

Visitor Strategy  
2017

- Assessment of a park's values e.g:
  - cultural values
  - natural values (e.g. ecological communities, etc)
  - ecotourism/recreation/visitor experience
- Identifying needs for each park and management direction based on key values
- Monitoring – collecting data over time
- Evaluating and reporting and used to inform next planning cycle.
- Visitor strategies are key to recreation planning

# Policy

- where cycling can occur in QPWS-managed areas
- promotes environmental sustainability
- promotes proactive management
- promotes safe, high quality experience for all park visitors to foster appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of natural and cultural features of parks and forests.
- IMBA trail building guidelines
- IMBA trail classification guidelines

**Operational policy**  
Visitor Management

---


**Mountain biking in QPWS managed areas**

*Operational policies provide a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation and for the management of non-legislative matters by the Department of Environment and Science. Operational policies are not intended to be applied inflexibly in all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require a modified application of policy.*

**Purpose**  
The purpose of this policy is to provide an overview of the management of mountain biking on Queensland Parks and Wildlife (QPWS) managed areas, including:


- where mountain bike riding can occur on QPWS managed areas,
- what permits and other approvals may be required; and
- when and how QPWS engages with interest groups on MTB management, trail construction and maintenance.

Appendix 1 includes definitions used in this policy.



**Background**  
QPWS supports recreation activities which are consistent with the management principles for protected areas and forests under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and *Forestry Act 1959*. These principles support sustainable nature-based activities in a variety of protected areas while protecting the areas cultural and natural resources and values.  
QPWS adopts a whole-of-landscape approach to recreation supply and works with other land managers, including non-government agencies, to promote appropriate uses of parks and forests. QPWS endeavours to provide a wide range of nature-based recreation opportunities, with an emphasis on the provision of a variety of landscape settings to cater for different visitors without compromising conservation outcomes.  
Mountain biking has become an extremely popular recreation activity since its development in the 1980s. There is broad recognition that high quality riding opportunities are poorly catered for in many areas of Australia, including Queensland.  
**Mountain biking trends and needs**  
Primary demand is for quality trails catering for rides of 1- 3 hours within close proximity to population centres. Many QPWS managed areas currently, or have the potential to, support cross country style riding. Limited opportunities are also available for downhill, touring and freestyle types of MTB riding.  
Several areas provide MTB single-use trails, with the best examples at Daisy Hill Regional Park (RP), Bunyaville RP, Smithfield RP and Tewantin National Park (NP) while many other QPWS managed areas provide access to multi-use trails on fire breaks and management roads.

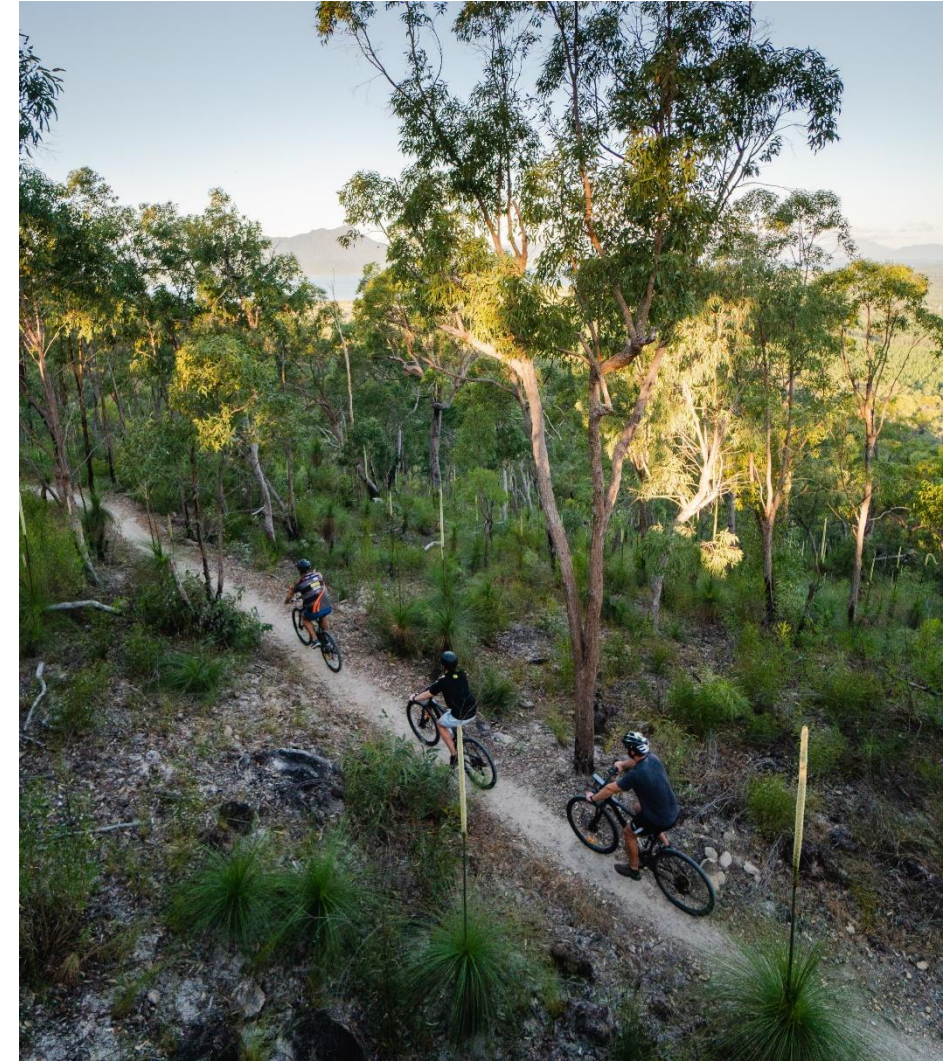
Page 1 of 8 - QPW/2014/1122 v1.03 ABN 46 040 294 465



	<b>Very easy</b>	Wide trail with a gentle gradient, smooth surface and no obstacles. Suitable for beginner cyclists with basic bike skills, and most bikes.
	<b>Easy</b>	Wide trail with gentle gradient and smooth surface. Some obstacles such as roots, logs and rocks. Suitable for beginner mountain bikers with basic mountain-bike skills and off-road bikes.
	<b>Intermediate</b>	Trail with moderate gradients, variable surface and obstacles. May include steep sections. Suitable for skilled mountain bikers with mountain bikes.
	<b>Difficult</b>	Suitable for experienced mountain bikers, used to physically demanding routes. Navigation and personal survival skills are highly desirable. Expect large, dangerous and unavoidable obstacles and features. Challenging and variable with long steep climbs or descents and loose surfaces. Some sections will be easier to walk.
	<b>Extreme</b>	Suitable for highly experienced mountain bikers, used to physically demanding routes. Navigation and personal survival skills are highly desirable. Severe constructed trails and/or natural features—all sections are challenging. Includes extreme levels of exposure and/or risk. Expect large and unavoidable obstacles and features. Some sections will be easier to walk.

# Cycling in protected areas

- Most trails are carry-over from State forest conversion to national park
- Cycling 'precincts' still tend to be in State forests or conservation parks
- As per VBMF and associated zoning plans cycling must be considered alongside other park values as well as (but not limited to):
  - ability for QPWS&P to maintain quality of trails
  - availability/connectivity to other trails in area
  - site suitability for cycling; potential for long-term damage
  - compatibility with other user groups.
- E-bikes allow greater participation and increased track use
  - speed tampering the main issue.



# Types of cycling generally supported



Whole-of-landscape approach to recreation planning:

- demand for outdoor activities/connecting with nature higher than ever
- increased demand for commercial tours and coaching activities
- need to work with other land managers and stakeholders
- Trailcare groups and engaged stakeholders are an asset.

**National parks:**

- Cross-country/touring is considered most suitable (generally easy/green and intermediate/blue).

**Conservation parks:**

- Cross-country and, in certain areas, downhill (green, blue, difficult/black diamond)

# Unauthorised trails

- Generally poorly constructed, not to best-practice standards, and through areas not suitable for the activity (dangerous, environmentally damaging).
- QPWS increasingly taking zero-tolerance to illegal trail building
- Community and stakeholder education and engagement
- Compliance activities



## In conclusion:

- Cycling in protected areas is a legitimate activity as long as it meets legislative, policy and planning frameworks.
- Whole-of-landscape approach needed.
- Visitor strategies and visitor zoning to inform recreation planning.
- Trails built and maintained to IMBA standards are most sustainable.
- Trailcare groups and stakeholder buy-in (collaborative agreements).
- Downhill/freestyle/enduro generally not supported in national parks.
- Moving toward zero-tolerance for unauthorised trails.
- Supportive of privately operated MTB parks.

