

## POST EXCURSION ACTIVITIES



Sugar Glider © MT

## 10. Kinglake National Park management issues and solutions

### Aim

Based on their observations during their fieldwork, talk from a park ranger or their own research, students review park management issues and solutions.

### Materials

- Student fieldwork data.
- Resources sheet: Management issues.
- Resource sheet: Visitor use – effects and management.

### Activities

1. Based on field observations or information provided during the fieldwork, or by reading the resource sheets, students compile a list of park management issues and solutions for Kinglake National Park. Use the table below to help select factors that park managers need to consider.

Pairs or small groups select one issue each and present their results to the class to compile an overall review of the park.

**Table: Management issues and solutions for Kinglake National Park**

	<b>Specific location(s) if any</b>	<b>Potential issues or problems</b>	<b>Park management solutions</b>
Visitor safety			
Visitor requirements			
Native vegetation conservation			
Native animal conservation			
Weeds and pest animals			
Landscape protections			
Cultural heritage conservation			
Other (describe)			

## 10a. Management issues

### Vegetation

Managing the native vegetation in the park involves:

- Conserving native vegetation and habitat values.
- Protecting significant plant communities and species.
- Controlling introduced plants.
- Fire management.

There is a \$5,000 fine for removing ferns from the park. Park regulations (1992) provide for Penalty Infringement notices to be issued on the spot for offences.

### Weeds

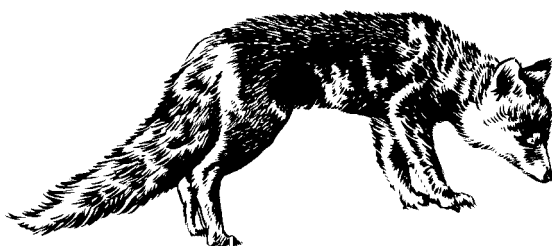
Weed species that occur in the park include Blackberry, Tutsan, Holly and Broom.

### Animals

Significant species in the park include the Large and Small Ant-blue Butterfly and the Tiger Quoll. They are listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act.

### Pest animals and domestic animals

Introduced predators such as foxes, cats and dogs threaten the Lyrebird population in the park. Goats and pigs are threatening some significant vegetation in the park.



Red fox. © MT

### Fire

Fire management involves:

- protection of the park and surrounding areas from damage by fire, and
- the use of fire to maintain vegetation types and habitat for particular species.

Records of fires within the park date back to 1926 when a wildfire burnt a 3 kilometre wide strip through Sugarloaf Block. The largest fire since World War II was in January 1962 when 3500 hectares of the south eastern section of the park was burnt, although some gullies including Full and Plenty Creeks escaped the fire. It is likely these gullies have not been burnt since 1851. Most of the other fires recorded in the park have been relatively small, mostly covering less than 50 hectares.

The installation of coin operated gas barbecues has reduced the risk of wildfire in the park.

Fire breaks have been established along the park's boundaries.

### Erosion

The ridges within the park receive high rainfall (1200 mm annually). Past logging and clearing has led to topsoil erosion, especially in the Chads Creek catchment and severe gully and sheet erosion, which has been contour ripped in an attempt to halt it.

Settlement and horse riding along Wild Dog Creek and its feeder gullies have led to erosion, while at Chalmers Ridge, north of Steels Creek, soil erosion has been caused by gold mining, rabbit and vehicle activities.

## 10b. Visitor use - effects and management

### Tourism

The park attracts many visitors who come to see and experience Melbourne's forested hinterland with its mountain scenery of waterfalls, fern gullies, tall forests and wildlife.

The park's diverse natural and cultural values provide many opportunities for nature-based tourism, particularly ecotourism.

### Vehicle access

The park's access roads and tracks provide for a range of visitor experiences. Road maintenance is an important component of park management.

### Day visits

The improvement of the day visitor facilities at prime sites in the park is a high priority, given that visitor numbers recorded at Masons Falls and Jehosaphat Gully have declined. This decline may be due to the attraction of other destinations in the area or overcrowding at the existing sites.

The long established picnic areas at Masons Falls and Mt Sugarloaf are being redeveloped to provide visitors with high quality experiences in the park setting.

### Bushwalking

A range of bushwalking opportunities is provided in the park as there are over 20 tracks of various lengths.

In the Masons Falls area visitors can choose from several short walks (including the Lyrebird Track loop which is specially designed for people of limited mobility) or combine these to form a full day walk to Mt Sugarloaf covering approximately 13 kilometres.

Similarly in the Everard Block, five tracks can be combined to produce the Everard Circuit walk of about 20 kilometres. In the Wombelano Block, three tracks can be combined to produce a 7 kilometres walk between Andrews Hill and Island Creek.

### Horse riding

Horse riding is popular in the park. Large groups are encouraged to notify ranger staff before they visit the park. Only some tracks within the park are available for horse riding.

Unsurfaced roads can be damaged by horses and become impassable for bushwalkers. Weeds have been introduced along the edges of tracks used for horse riding. Horse riders tend to go off the track or, on trail rides, travel abreast, making wide swathes off the track. This could be avoided if riders travel in single file.

Access is sometimes illegally obtained and horse riders have created tracks leading up some spurs. Increased erosion and grassy weeds have been observed in these areas. These tracks pass through areas with high conservation value. Some tracks have been closed to address this issue.

Commercial operators using the Wombelano Block have contributed to and constructed a separate horse trail parallel to the road to avoid user conflicts and minimise degradation of the road surface.

### Cycling

Cycling has increased in popularity over the last decade, especially with family groups. Bicycles are transported on vehicles to the park, often picnic areas, unloaded, then used for a circuit ride. The group size is usually small.

The park is ideally suited to this activity because of the network of roads connecting and crossing the separated blocks of the park.

### **Orienteering**

This group activity has also increased in popularity and users prefer challenging terrain close to cities. However the defined route for the orienteering exercise can conflict with informal bushwalking and nature study as well as cause possible damage to environmental values. The large numbers of cars involved can also strain the facilities available.

For these reasons orienteering is prohibited in the Sugarloaf Block and Everard Block because these sites have a heavy concentration of picnickers, walkers and sightseers.

### **Fishing**

Fishing is not a very popular activity and is restricted to streams on the north side of the Great Dividing Range.

### **Friends and volunteers**

The Friends of Kinglake National Park, Friends of the Lyrebird, field naturalist clubs, local bird observers and other interested groups or individuals make valuable contributions to park management projects.



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