



Newsletter

Edition 5 - February 2005



Green tree frog

NT Parks and Conservation Masterplan: *Progress with the Draft*

Update on the draft

The draft Northern Territory Parks and Conservation Masterplan is nearing completion. Consultation with key stakeholders, through the Community Advisory Committee, Interagency Advisory Committee and the Project Control Group is continuing, with all feedback being carefully reviewed, in preparation of the draft Masterplan.

Revised timetable

The revised timetable below shows an outline of the timeline and actions involved from the preliminary stage of the draft to the final published version:

Timeline	Actions
current	the Masterplan is in a preliminary stage with Parks and Wildlife and key stakeholders who have been busily writing and editing the draft from all the feedback, including public submissions, received to date
end of April	the aim is for the draft Masterplan to be launched by the Northern Territory Government for public comment over a 6 week period
June to July	all feedback received will be carefully reviewed in preparation for the final Masterplan
August	target date for the final version of the Masterplan to be published and made available to the public

Ongoing consultation

Ongoing consultation will occur as part of the community engagement plan to ensure everyone has the opportunity to have their say and provide feedback on the draft Masterplan.

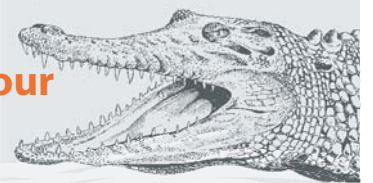
The draft Masterplan will be advertised through various media outlets and be made available on the website at www.parksmasterplan.nt.gov.au. Copies of the draft will also be available on CD or in hard copy (black and white/colour photocopied).

Public forums/displays

Dates, times and venues will be set for public forums prior to the release of the draft and will be advertised on the website and in local and regional newspapers.

Public displays will be located at Casuarina, Darwin, Palmerston, Litchfield, Nhulunbuy, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

The draft Masterplan will also be on display at the upcoming Freds Pass Rural Show to be held on Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 May.



Register your interest

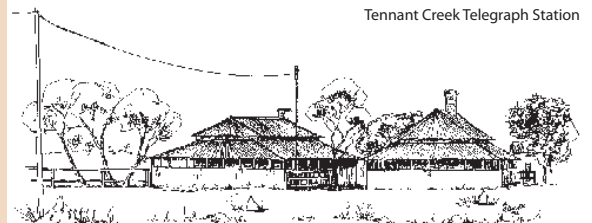
If you would like to receive a copy of the draft Masterplan, are interested in attending a public forum/display or would like a meeting organised to suit the requirements of your community group or organisation - you can **register your interest** by contacting the Masterplan Project Officer on **1800 813 337** or via email at parksmasterplan@nt.gov.au.

Community feedback

Over the next few months, public involvement in the Masterplan will be vital - it is the collective responsibility of us all to ensure that biodiversity and the products and services that biodiversity provides are maintained for all Territorians and future generations to enjoy.

"The purpose of each species is internal to the species; its purpose is simply to be that kind of thing, or, more definitely, to grow and reproduce its kind, to have sensation, and to move, as freely and efficiently as the conditions of its existence - its habitat, for instance - allow."

Aristotle (384-322 BC)



Tennant Creek Telegraph Station



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Snippets from the draft Masterplan ...

The Masterplan pays particular attention to the Territory's system of parks and reserves, focusing on their role in the conservation of biodiversity and in providing inspiration and enjoyment for present and future generations of Territorians and for the many tourists who come to the Territory seeking to enjoy our natural and cultural heritage.

Submissions from the public have proved very valuable and have been taken into consideration in the formulation of the Masterplan. Several submissions, notably that from the NT Cattlemen's Association and the combined submission from the Environment Centre NT, the World Wildlife Fund, the Threatened Species Network and the Australian Marine Conservation Society, have amounted to major pieces of work and have contributed substantially to the form and content of the Masterplan.

The Territory's scenery, wildlife and the outback tradition attract large numbers of visitors from all over the world and form the base of a tourism industry that is a major employer and contributor to the Territory economy.

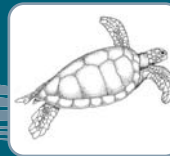
Aboriginal people have been part of the environment for 50,000 years or more and through continuous land management have played an integral role in the evolution and conservation of the Territory's variety of plants and animals, or biodiversity. Across the Territory, rock art and cave paintings of world significance are testament to the durability and persistence of this cultural legacy.

The Territory includes some of Australia's most important wetlands, and across a huge variety of types. Many of the river systems of the Top End are amongst the most natural and unmodified large watercourses ("Wild Rivers") in Australia. The swamps and billabongs of the floodplains are some of our richest and most distinctive environments.

An unusually high proportion of Territory animals - such as magpie geese and other waterfowl, flying foxes and small insectivorous bats, shorebirds, fish, marine turtles, some butterflies, flock pigeons, water pythons, and long-haired ("plague") rats - form large aggregations at feeding, breeding or roosting sites.

Some of these aggregations may be the most spectacular and largest of their kind in the world. Some provide memorable examples of the plenitude of nature to Territorians and visitors: they are one of the showpieces of a Territory experience.

In the Territory we have an unrivalled opportunity to maintain functioning tropical and desert ecosystems operating over vast scales. This is an asset that we should acknowledge and cherish, that will become even more valuable as comparable opportunities are surrendered elsewhere in the world.



Green sea turtle

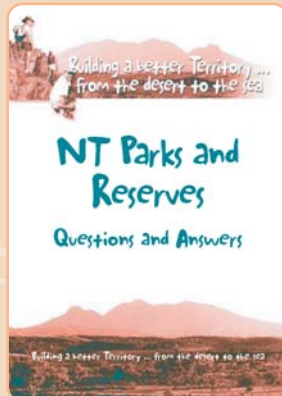


Water lilies



Black flying fox

NT Parks and Reserves - Questions and Answers



Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act 2003

The historic *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act* provides a framework for settling Aboriginal land and native title issues in relation to a large number of the Territory's Parks and Reserves. It does so in a way that reconciles Aboriginal interests with the Government's commitment to the retention of existing Parks and Reserves in the Territory for public use and enjoyment, whilst at the same time expanding and enhancing the Territory's Parks system.

The legislation provides a way forward to enrich the management of our Parks and Reserves by recognising traditional Aboriginal culture, and acknowledging and incorporating Aboriginal land management practices that have shaped the landscape for more than sixty thousand years.

The Office of Indigenous Policy (Department of the Chief Minister) website provides a brief guide to the legislation and the joint management arrangements that will be put in place between the Government and the Traditional Owners.

For more information visit the **Office of Indigenous Policy** website at:
www.dcm.nt.gov.au/dcm/parks/index.shtml



Gum nuts



Northern brushtail possum

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