



Anglesea Heath

Conservation Position Paper

The Great Otway National Park (Anglesea Heath) is an area of natural and cultural significance. Parks Victoria is responsible for ensuring the ongoing protection and management of the Anglesea Heath through a range of conservation projects and works, presented in this paper for community consideration.

Summary

The Anglesea Heath has recently been incorporated into the Great Otway National Park. This site is one of the most biodiverse areas in the state. It accounts for one quarter of Victoria's plant species, of which 20 are threatened at the state level and 8 are threatened at the national level. It also provides habitat for 29 recorded mammal species and more than 100 native bird species.

Heathlands are particularly sensitive to disturbance and are unlikely to recover from significant impacts. Understanding and conserving cultural heritage is also vital. Appropriate use is therefore a priority to ensure the heathland's biodiversity and cultural values are both protected and celebrated.

This paper outlines a range of conservation projects and works Parks Victoria is undertaking to manage and protect the Anglesea Heath.

Context

In **Shaping Our Future**, Parks Victoria recognises the importance of conserving Victoria's special places, aiming to ensure that our valued parks, and the natural assets and cultural heritage they hold, can be enjoyed now and by future generations.

The Great Otway National Park is managed in accordance with relevant national and state legislation, regulation, policy and guidelines to protect and conserve natural and cultural features. The **Great Otway National Park Management Plan** states that visitors will be encouraged to develop an enhanced appreciation of these values and to expand their awareness of the potential for human impacts on such values.

All recreation activities and infrastructure must be managed sustainably and restricted to areas set aside for these activities. Research also plays an important role in increasing both Parks Victoria's and the community's knowledge, leading to better management and use of parks.

Conservation objectives

The **Anglesea Futures Land Use Framework** was informed by extensive community consultation. The direction determined for the Great Otway National Park area (incorporating the Anglesea Heath) was to prioritise the protection of flora and fauna, with complementary active recreation where this would not detract from the main land use of conservation. This has informed Parks Victoria's approach.

The following objectives have been developed to manage the integration of the Anglesea Heath into the Great Otway National Park:

1. Minimise the spread of Cinnamon Fungus (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*)
2. Support research that will inform the management and protection of the Anglesea Heath
3. Remediate and revegetate illegal tracks, redundant tracks and other disturbed areas where this will improve conservation outcomes for biodiversity or cultural heritage
4. Reduce vehicle access in high value heathlands to improve the protection of these areas while maintaining access for lower impact activities where appropriate
5. Undertake pest plant and animal control programs, prioritising areas of high environmental value
6. Ensure recreation infrastructure and facilities are sensitively designed and located to avoid and minimise impacts on significant natural and cultural values
7. Increase compliance, education and visitor information to improve the protection and appreciation of fragile heathland communities.

What we are seeing

A large informal track network has developed and is continuing to grow due to illegal off-road vehicles, horse riding and mountain biking in the Anglesea Heath. This creates erosion, fragmentation and increases the spread of weed species and Cinnamon Fungus, a pathogen that attacks and destroys plant root systems. With increased visitor numbers to the Anglesea Heath, there is a growing need to ensure visitor experiences and opportunities are well managed.

What is proposed and why

Parks Victoria is undertaking the following projects and works to conserve the Anglesea Heath:

- Cinnamon Fungus threat mapping and the development of management recommendations
- Biodiversity study with Museum Victoria to improve understanding of ecological values
- Increased compliance programs and activity, with a strong focus on illegal track development and use in fragile heathlands
- Cultural Heritage investigation to enhance future management and cultural connection
- Rehabilitation and revegetation of redundant tracks as well as sections of the extensive illegal informal track network (see the Trail Biking and Four Wheel Drive Position Paper)

- Strategic control of pest plants such as Boneseed, Coast Wattle, Blackberry, Bluebell Creeper and Coastal Teatree, which pose a serious threat to areas of high biodiversity value (see map)
- Sensitive design and placement of capital works in areas with existing disturbance footprints (see the Visitor Facilities Position Paper)
- An education and awareness program with the main park user groups to encourage appropriate behaviours within the Anglesea Heath
- Improved park and interpretive signage for visitors to create awareness on how people can sustainably enjoy the park.

What do you think?

- What do you think of the conservation projects and works that are underway or planned?
- Are there any other conservation projects or works you think should be undertaken, for example particular sites for targeted protection or restoration?
- Is there additional environmental or cultural research that should be carried out?

Have your say on the Great Otway National Park (Anglesea Heath)

Parks Victoria is interested in your thoughts. You can contribute by:

- Visiting the Parks Victoria stand at Anglesea Riverbank Market on Saturday 12 January (5:30-8pm)
- Attending a drop-in session on Wednesday 16 January (5-7:30pm) or Saturday 2 February (11-1:30pm) at Anglesea Hall - 1A McMillan Street, Anglesea
- Completing a survey at engage.vic.gov.au or
- Emailing your comments to Angleseaheath@parks.vic.gov.au

For more information go to www.engage.vic.gov.au

