

# MARK OLIPHANT CONSERVATION PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Central Region

South Australia



**National Parks and Wildlife Service**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**



**This plan of management has been prepared and  
adopted in pursuance of section 38 of the  
National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972-81**

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## **FOREWORD**

Mark Oliphant Conservation Park, formerly Loftia Recreation Park is probably best known for its small area of recreation facilities but in fact contains a significant area of indigenous native vegetation which provides valuable habitat for native fauna. The park provides an important link in the distribution of remnant native vegetation within the Mount Lofty Ranges. The park is also part of an important water catchment area.

The natural values of the park have been consolidated with the dedication of additional land. Steps have been implemented to ensure that the proclamation of the additional land, the adoption of this plan of management and the re-proclamation of the entire reserve as the Mark Oliphant Conservation Park occurred concurrently.

The change in name and classification both reflects the conservation status of the land and honours the contribution made by former SA Governor, Sir Mark Oliphant to nature conservation in the Mount Lofty Ranges.

This plan identifies a need to manage the park as two distinct zones; a larger conservation zone which incorporates most of the natural habitat and a smaller recreation zone containing the existing recreation developments. The Loftia recreation zone will be operated under a lease agreement.

This plan was released in draft form for public review in March 1995 under the title "Loftia Recreation Park". At the close of the period for public consultation, 16 submissions had been received. Those comments, and the draft plan, were subsequently reviewed by the Reserves Advisory Committee resulting in a number of changes being made to the plan text.

The plan of management for the Mark Oliphant Conservation Park is now formally adopted under the provisions of section 38 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972.



**Hon. David Wotton, MP**

**MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

## *THE PLANNING PROCESS*

The National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972 provides the means by which the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources controls and manages all reserves in South Australia which are proclaimed under the Act.

Section 38 of the Act states that plans of management are required for all reserves. Plans should include proposals for the management and improvement of reserves and indicate the means by which relevant objectives of the Act are to be achieved.

Section 37 lists ten objectives which the Minister, Chief Executive Officer and Director "shall have regard to" in managing reserves:

1. The preservation and management of wildlife.
2. The preservation of historic sites, objects and structures of historic or scientific interest within reserves.
3. The preservation of features of geographical, natural or scenic interest.
4. The destruction of dangerous weeds and the eradication or control of noxious weeds and exotic plants.
5. The control of vermin and exotic animals.
6. The control and eradication of disease of animals and vegetation.
7. The prevention and suppression of bushfires and other hazards.
8. The encouragement of public use and enjoyment of reserves and education in, and a proper understanding and recognition of, their purpose and significance.
9. In relation to managing a regional reserve - to permit the utilisation of natural resources while conserving wildlife and the natural or historic features of the land.
10. Generally the promotion of the public interest.

These objectives form the foundation for all management plans and have been duly considered in this plan of management for the Mark Oliphant Conservation Park.

## ***PURPOSE OF THE PLAN***

The Mark Oliphant Conservation Park includes one of the small, remnant parcels of high quality forest that is characteristic of the native vegetation of the higher rainfall areas of the Adelaide Hills

This plan highlights the significant natural values of the Mark Oliphant Conservation Park and addresses the major issues relating to its conservation and management of the Loftia recreation zone. Within that zone established facilities provide an important venue for various sporting and less formal recreation activities.

This plan includes a philosophy for management of the park, lists a series of management objectives and describes how these are to be achieved. The protection of the native forest and the education of park visitors in its conservation value is the major aim of this plan.

## ***PARK DESCRIPTION***

### **Location and Size**

Mark Oliphant Conservation Park is located 14 km south-east of Adelaide in the Heathfield/Ironbank area of the Adelaide Hills. The park comprises Sections 1663, 1681, 1557, 1558, Pt Section 421 and Pt Section 422, Hd of Noarlunga. In addition, Lot 3 Pt Section 419 Hd of Noarlunga, and Lot 205 (DP 34327), Hd of Noarlunga have been purchased and proclaimed as additions to the park to coincide with the release of this plan. The park now has an area of 178 ha.

The District Council of Stirling has agreed to the section of road reserve between Sections 1557 and 1558 being closed. This matter is being pursued. If the road is closed, this land will be added to the park.

Access from the northern side of the park is by a bitumen road from the South Eastern Freeway through Stirling and Heathfield; from the east, access is through Mylor and Longwood and from the south-west, the park may be approached through Cherry Gardens and Ironbank.

A survey has been completed around the 8 ha section of park that is to be managed as the Loftia recreation zone. This zone includes the tennis courts, toilets, oval, picnic areas and a residence.

### **History**

#### **Aboriginal Heritage**

Mark Oliphant Conservation Park is situated on the western boundary of Peramangk country, which runs along the edge of the Adelaide Hills (Tindale 1974, Coles and Draper 1988). Western neighbours were the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains. The gorges of the major rivers issuing from the southern hills, such as the Sturt and the Onkaparinga, provided the major travelling routes between the hills and the plains for Aboriginal groups of the Adelaide and Murray regions.

There is some archaeological evidence of Aboriginal use in the park.

Archaeological material has been observed on sandy flats and the lower, flatter margins of hill slopes along gullies and stream channels. This material consists of numerous stone artefacts of quartz, and occasionally quartzite. The artefacts may be difficult to identify in some situations where there is also a high density of slope washed pieces of naturally fractured quartz and other materials. No fireplaces or other archaeological features of Aboriginal campsites have been discovered, though these may possibly occur. Stone artefacts mixed in with a natural scatter of weathered rock also occur on the upper slopes of some hills, adjacent to small outcrops (veins or reefs) of high grade quartz which have been quarried for tools. Rare quartzite stream cobble artefacts (hammers and anvils), which were used to manufacture small quartz tools, occur at these locations, which may have been campsites. Associated with these

flatter, sandy areas on the shoulders and summits of hills, there is a good outlook over the surrounding country, not far from a stream where water could be obtained.

The archaeological pattern for this area appears to be one of small sites and low density, extensive scattering of artefacts around these general locations, rather than concentrated, stratified archaeological sites (though these may exist undetected). No rock art sites, or likely locations are known in the park.

### European Heritage

While little research has been carried out on the European history of the park, there is some evidence of early European occupation. Local community members too have anecdotal information. This aspect warrants further investigation. Researching the history of the park could be an ideal project for students undertaking a Wildlife and Park Management or similar institution course.

The change of park name commemorates the long standing association of Sir Mark Oliphant with the Stirling district and his personal interest in preserving the natural attributes of the 'Mount Lofty Ranges.

### **Climate**

The park, the eastern end of Belair National Park and the nearby township of Longwood are all at the same altitude (400m above sea level) and have similar rainfall. Longwood, approximately two km east of the park, has an average annual rainfall of 963 mm. Rainfall occurs mainly during the winter and spring months with few falls during summer.

Generally the park experiences hot dry summers and cool wet winters.

The hottest months in the area are January and February, with an daily average summer temperature of 26 degrees Celsius. At nearby Belair National Park there is an average of 31 days per year exceeding 30 degrees Celsius, eleven of which are over 35 degrees Celsius.

The park is located in an area where climate and summer weather conditions are conducive to severe bushfires. The official fire danger season is from 1 December to 30 April each year. During this period winds are predominantly mild, cool, south easterlies. Less frequent northerly winds are often strong and accompany high temperatures and are therefore associated with extreme fire danger conditions.

### **Topography**

The park is in the Clarendon environmental association, as described by Laut et al (1977). Hilly uplands, with dissected lateritic tableland remnants, make up the landscape of the area around the park. Slopes in the park are moderate to steep. Altitudes range from 470m-370m.

### **Soils**

Ridge crests and upper slopes consist of hard, apedal mottled yellow duplex soils which are moderately deep and imperfectly drained, making them subject to seasonal water logging. Deeper valleys and lower slopes consist of sandy, apedal mottled yellow duplex soils which are also imperfectly drained, but quite deep with a neutral ph.

Other soil types probably occur along the valley floor, including those areas with a *E. rubida* community.



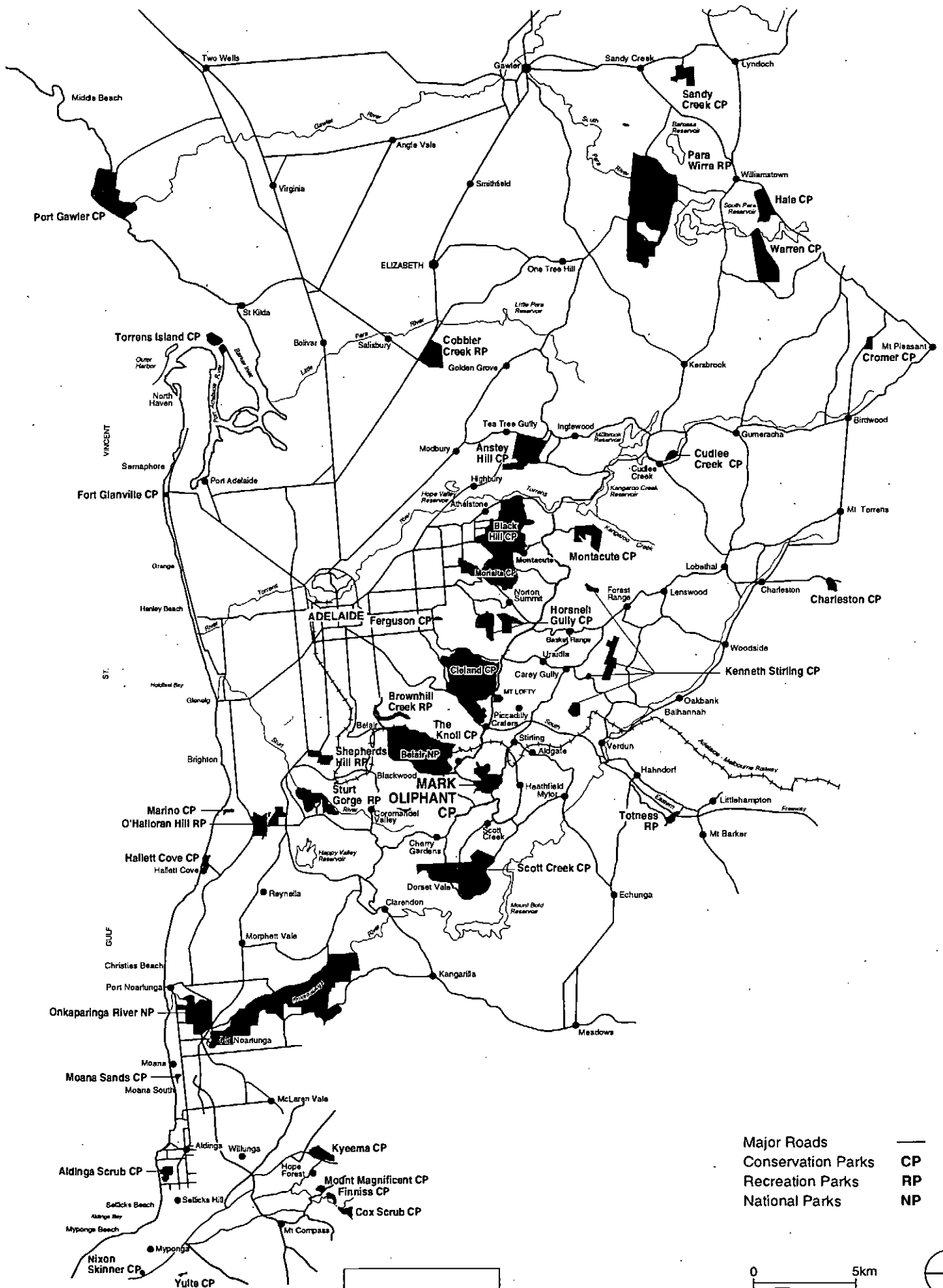
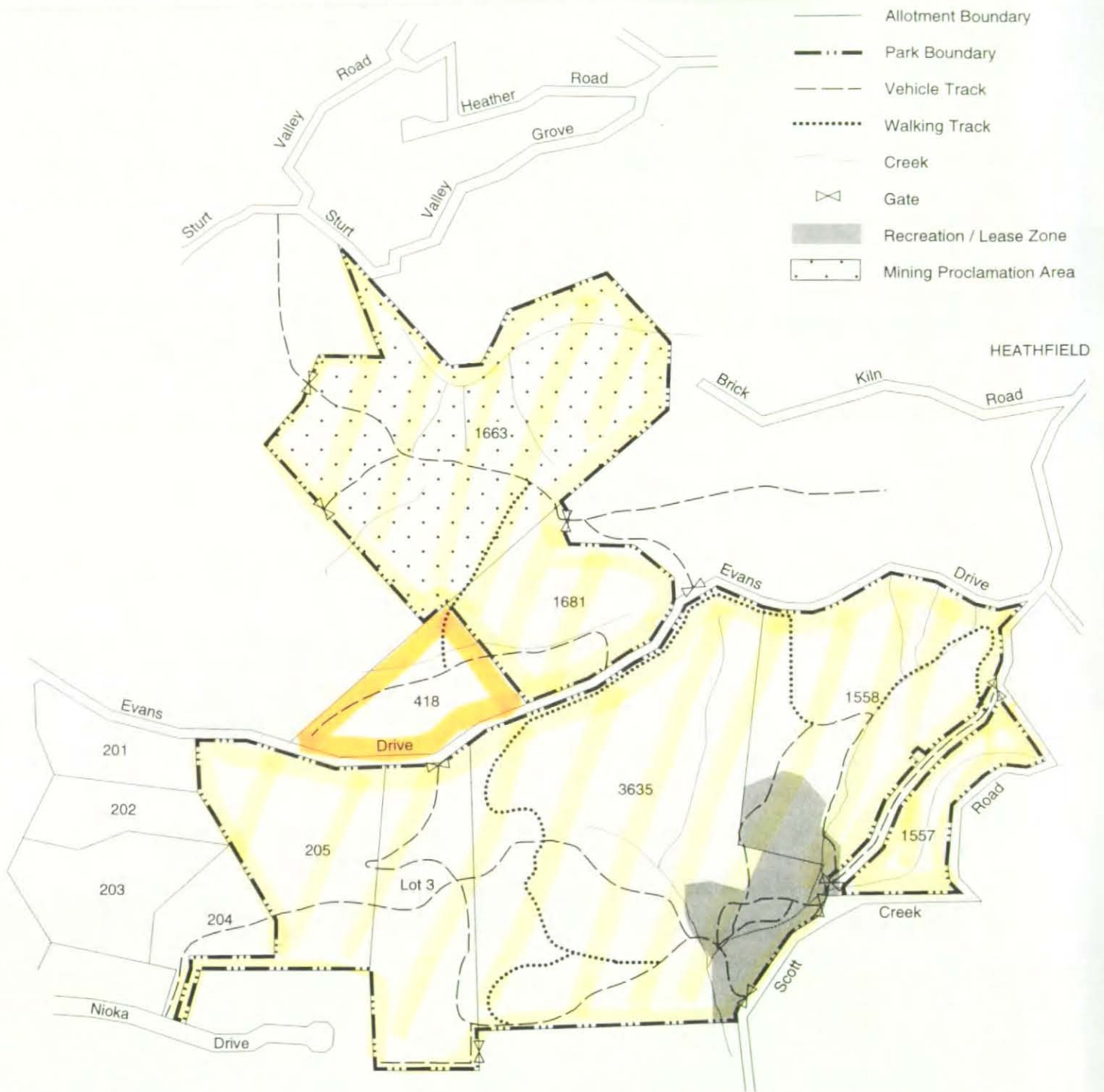


Figure 1

**Mark Oliphant Conservation Park  
Location Map**



**Figure 2**  
**Mark Oliphant Conservation Park**  
**Park Boundary and Access**

## Vegetation

The majority of the park is covered in a fine example of the sclerophyll forest which is associated with the higher rainfall areas of the Adelaide Hills.

Messmate stringybark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) and pink gum (*E. fasciculosa*) are the dominant eucalypts in the park, in some locations this is associated with cup gum (*E. cosmophylla*). The understorey associated with these trees contains needle bush (*Hakea rostrata*), silver banksia (*Banksia marginata*), native cherry (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*) and fire weed (*Ixodia achillaeoides*). The northern creek line has an open forest formation of *Eucalyptus obliqua* with *E. viminalis*.

On the lower slopes scattered individuals of South Australian blue gum (*E. leucoxydon*) is associated with golden wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) and guinea flower (*Hibbertia exiliacis*).

Candle bark (*E. rubida* - an endemic and rare species in South Australia) occur near the creek lines in the southern valley. The park supports a dense, diverse ground cover which contains many native orchids and lilies. In the north of the park the rare maiden hair fern (*Adiantum capillusveneris*) occurs.

A number of alien plants have become established, mainly in creek beds and sites disturbed by previous land use. These include blackberry (*Rubus ulmifolius*), broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), olive (*Olea europaea*), salvation jane (*Echium plantagineum*), *Watsonia bulbilifera*, cape tulip (*Homeria collina*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*), *Pinus* and *Prunus* species. *Erica* spp., *Acacia longifolia* and *Pittosporum undulatum* are also of concern.

While it is highly desirable that all alien plant species should be removed as a matter of priority, some dense patches of blackberry were playing an important role in the survival of the southern brown bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus obesulus*). However a bushfire in January 1995 burnt out this area and is no longer useful as bandicoot habitat. The patches of blackberry which provided protection from introduced predators such as fox and cat will now be treated as a normal pest plant problem. The overall effect of the fire on southern brown bandicoot populations within the park remains unclear.

### Notable Plant Species

*Callitris rhomboidea*, *Eucalyptus rubida* and *Adiantum capillusveneris* are species of interest which occur within the park. The following is a list of some of the plant species of conservation significance recorded for the park.

	Aust	S.Aust	Southern Lofty
<i>Acacia verniciflua</i>	-	U	U
<i>Acrotriche fasciculiflora</i>	-	U	U
<i>Billardiera bignoniacea</i>	-	U	U
<i>Callitris rhomboidea</i>	-	U	U
<i>Olearia grandiflora</i>	-	U	U
<i>O. tubuliflora</i>	-	U	U
<i>Pultenaea acerosa</i>	-	N	U
<i>P. hispidula</i>	-	U	R
<i>P. involucrata</i>	-	U	U
<i>Viola hederacea</i>	-	N	R
<i>Eucalyptus rubida</i>	-	R	R

U = Uncommon.      R = Rare.      N = not of particular significance statewide

## Fauna

Despite its relatively small size, this park is a very important area within the district as it provides habitat for native animals. Urbanisation and relentless habitat destruction in the surrounding region has had a major impact on wildlife. To ensure the long-term survival of the park's fauna, there needs to be further evaluation and purchase of suitable adjoining land. This will be given, within budgetary constraints, a high priority. The adjoining land is integral with the territory of much of the park's fauna.

### Mammals

While many of the mammal species occurring in the Mount Lofty Ranges at the time of European settlement are now extinct in the park area, recent observations and studies have confirmed ten native species are still present within the park.

Yellow footed antechinus (*Antechinus flavipes*), southern bush rat (*Rattus fuscipes*), brushtail possums (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) and common ring tail possums (*Pseudocheirus peregrinus*) appear to have reasonable stable populations, while echidnas (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*) and small numbers of western grey kangaroos (*Macropus fuliginosus*) frequent the area. Small populations of water rats (*Hydromys chrysogaster*) and the vulnerable southern brown bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus obesulus*) are known to be present. At least two species of bats (*Eptesicus pumilus* and *Tadarida australis*) are present. In addition, koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) a species introduced to the region, are frequently seen.

The survival of these species relies very much on sound and proper land management practices being implemented.

As well as the native mammals, a number of introduced pest species occur including fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) domestic cat (*Felis catus*) rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) black rat (*Rattus rattus*) and the house mouse (*Mus musculus*). Domestic dogs (*Canis familiaris*) also wander into the park from time to time.

### Birds

As is the case with all the fauna groups, populations of bird species have been considerably affected by reduction of habitat in the region. Some species are better able to utilise the remnants of native vegetation scattered throughout the area. Examples are the birds which follow the native plants in blossom (lorikeets and honeyeaters) and to that end, small reserves such as this fulfil an important role.

The larger eucalypts provide important nesting sites for parrots particularly crimson rosella (*Platycercus elegans* sub spp *adelaide*), laughing kookaburra (*Dacelo novaeguineae*) and more importantly the vulnerable yellow-tailed black cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*). Some of the more commonly observed birds include scarlet robin (*Petroica multicolor*), superb fairy-wren (*Malurus cyaneus*) red-browed firetail (*Emblema temporalis*), grey shrike-thrush (*Colluricincla harmonica*), eastern spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*) Australian magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) and black-faced cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina novaehollandiae*). The status of White's Thrush and painted button quail requires confirmation.

## **MANAGEMENT CONTEXT**

### **Park Status**

What is now the Loftia recreation zone of the park was first developed and used for public recreation in the 1930s. It was acquired by the Young Men's Christian Association of Adelaide Incorporated (YMCA) in 1945 and used as a camp for their members until 1953. The YMCA then offered the area to the Government to be retained as a National Pleasure Resort. In 1953 Loftia National Park was dedicated under the control of the National Parks Commission. In 1972 the National Parks and Wildlife Act was passed and the park was renamed Loftia Recreation Park. In 1981 the State Planning Authority (SPA) purchased a parcel of land comprising 41.17 ha, north of the existing reserve but not contiguous with it. Then in 1985 the National Parks and Wildlife Service purchased 14.16 ha which joined the original park to the SPA land. A further 15.91 ha on the western side of the park was purchased in 1989. This section along with Lot 205 was proclaimed in 1996 as additions to the park and coinciding with the adoption of this plan and the name change to Mark Oliphant Conservation Park. Loftia will be retained as the name of the recreation zone.

### **Management Issues**

The park is managed as part of the Sturt District within the Central Region of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The principal management aim is to protect and maintain the conservation status of the natural habitat within this reserve. The secondary management aim is the provision of recreational facilities in the reserve within a specific area.

A number of current uses and management issues have the potential to impact on the reserve and therefore need to be taken into consideration. Three issues which need to be considered are:

1. The management of the Loftia recreation zone. Negotiations between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the YMCA are currently proceeding towards finalising a lease agreement over the entire recreation zone. Management of this zone will be undertaken with close liaison and consultation between the lessee and the department.
2. The negative impact on natural features within the conservation zone caused by indiscriminate use. Strategies outlined in this plan will protect and enhance the natural values of the park by preventing such inappropriate use.
3. Possible future urban development, associated services and transport routes. Close liaison with all authorities on future developments in the region will be given high priority to ensure the integrity of the park is maintained.

## **MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY**

This park contains a fine example of open sclerophyll stringy-bark forest, with a rich ground cover of native heath species. The forest supports a population of the vulnerable southern brown bandicoots, the vulnerable yellow-tailed black cockatoos and other native fauna. The majority of the park remains in a natural condition serving an important nature conservation function which has justified the change of classification to conservation park. The park plays an important corridor role in linking remnant native vegetation from Mount Bold in the south to Cleland in the North.

The park will be managed to conserve its natural and cultural values, including habitat for species of conservation significance, while providing for controlled recreation use.

Measures undertaken in line with this philosophy should include; removal of alien plant and animal species, rehabilitation of eroded areas and control of recreational activities that impact on the park's natural values. The developed Loftia recreation zone is relatively small and can be managed separately, enabling resources to be focused on the conservation function of the park. It should however be noted that the recreation zone is still part of the conservation park and important natural values that occur within this zone will still be carefully managed to limit impacts. The occurrence of stands of *E. rubida* within the recreation zone is a good example of this.

## ***MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES***

1. To protect and enhance the natural and cultural values of the park, and encourage natural regeneration.
2. To redesignate the park to a more appropriate reserve category that reflects its conservation value.
3. To undertake fire management practices to reduce the incidence and impact of wild fire, while maintaining natural values.
4. To accommodate a range of appropriate recreation activities in the recreation zone under lease arrangement.
5. To monitor and control populations of exotic plants and animals. This is a significant long term management problem.
6. To evaluate and acquire land to increase the conservation value of the park.
7. To provide within the conservation zone a network of walking trails to control human impact.
8. To provide information and education for visitors on the natural features of the park.
9. To promote community involvement in the care and maintenance of the park.

## ***CONSIDERATIONS, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS***

### **OBJECTIVE 1**

#### **To protect and enhance the natural and cultural values of the park and encourage natural regeneration.**

##### **Background**

The park is recognised as a significant example of remnant vegetation which was once common in the southern central Mt Lofty Ranges. The vegetation is contiguous with natural vegetation to the north and to the south east of the park that is privately owned. This vegetation is relatively unmodified on the slopes, ridges and drier gullies where the understorey consists of a wide variety of sclerophyllous shrubs. This important fauna corridor contains a number of rare plant species.

This plan divides the park into two zones; a conservation zone which includes the majority of the natural habitat, and a smaller Loftia recreation zone which includes developed facilities.

##### **Current Uses within the Conservation Zone**

Current uses of this zone include bushwalking and some illegal horse, mountain bike and motorcycle riding. These activities have created a number of informal trails. The illegal recreation activities contribute to vegetation damage, cause erosion of trails and spread weeds. Sometimes boundary fences are cut to gain entry. Currently pest plants occur in small pockets of disturbed soil and creek lines. Radiata pines and olives are invading the park where the native vegetation has been disturbed.

##### **Cultural Values**

Maintenance of existing tracks and facilities within the park is unlikely to cause any significant disturbance to Aboriginal archaeological sites, although there is the possibility that any earthmoving work could expose previously buried archaeological material. This is more likely to occur along the sandy flats adjacent to stream courses, where there are suitable locations for modern recreational facilities. Within these recreation areas, any new developments which involve substantial earthmoving, should be subject to prior archaeological assessment. If any earthmoving work within the park exposes concentrations of transported, flaked/broken stone, charcoal or burnt stone resembling fireplaces, or bone or mussel shells, this should be reported to the appropriate authorities.

##### **Actions**

- Management actions undertaken should have conservation as the main priority to ensure that the reserve is managed to protect the natural environment in perpetuity.
- Sites of cultural significance will be assessed and protected during any works programs.
- Establish a friends group to assist with surveys and monitoring of wildlife.



- Protect significant native plant species and associations by re-location of walking trails.
- Walking trails will be assessed and if necessary closed or relocated to protect cultural or natural values.
- Signs will be erected to indicate the prohibition of horses, motor cycles and mountain bikes in the park.
- Liaison will be established and maintained with the management of the YMCA recreation area to obtain their co-operative use of the leased area of the park.
- Liaison will be maintained with District Council of Stirling regarding development of the area surrounding the park, to ensure that consideration is given to protecting the park's natural assets.
- Post-fire surveys for species of plants and animals of conservation significance will be conducted.
- Programs should be set up to monitor the condition of the natural systems within the park. Education institutions and special interest groups will be encouraged to undertake some of this work. Changes in species composition of mature vegetation and infiltration of pest species need close attention.
- A vegetation management action plan will be compiled and implemented as funding permits.

## **OBJECTIVE 2**

**To redesignate the park to a more appropriate reserve category that reflects its conservation value.**

### **Background**

The major portion of the park consist of high quality stringybark forest that serves an important conservation function. It is most appropriate that this reserve should be redesignated as conservation park, as only very small remnants of this forest type remain.

Various name changes were canvassed, including: Heathfield Conservation Park, Sir Mark Oliphant Conservation Park, Mark Oliphant Conservation Park and Loftia Conservation Park. The Minister after careful consideration and advise, determined that the Park would be named the Mark Oliphant Conservation Park

## Action

- Take appropriate steps to re-proclaim the reserve as Mark Oliphant Conservation Park. Existing mining rights over section 1663, are to be retained.

## OBJECTIVE 3

**To undertake fire management practices to reduce the incidence and impact of wild fire, while maintaining natural values.**

### Background

This plan is to be complemented by the Fire Management Plan. The Fire Management Plan is being produced separately by National Parks and Wildlife management in conjunction with local authorities.

Guiding principles for fire management should generally preclude any fuel reduction burning but should ensure that the strategic system of fire access tracks within the park is maintained. Any fires that do occur should be responded to immediately.

The Fire Management Plan provides for the ;

- description of the park and its values, including plants of conservation significance.
- identification of fire hazards and possible risk agencies.
- definition of fire management objectives.
- description of fire management resources; e.g. staff, equipment, access tracks, water supply etc.
- description of strategies for fire prevention.
- prescription of strategies for fuel management.
- prescription of actions to be taken in the event of fire.

### **Actions**

- Involve the Country Fire Service in the preparation of a Fire Management Plan and make the plan available for comment by Stirling District Council and other interested groups or individuals.
- Adopt and implement the Fire Management Plan, once public consultation has been completed.

- Maintain liaison with ETSA for ongoing maintenance of the power line corridor easement and explore with the agency possible undergrounding of supply to the recreation zone.

#### **OBJECTIVE 4**

##### **To accommodate a range of appropriate recreation activities within the Loftia recreation zone under lease arrangement**

###### **Background**

The majority of visitors to Mark Oliphant Conservation Park are families or groups who use the facilities located within the recreation zone for playing tennis, sporting games on the oval and picnicking. Bookings for these developed facilities are made mostly by family groups and local clubs. Visitors who travel to the park use private transport as there is no public transport available.

The Loftia recreation facilities are used by a wide variety of people but predominantly by YMCA venturer and explorer groups and schools. Negotiations are currently nearing finality between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the YMCA for a leasing agreement over the 8 hectare recreation zone. Any upgrading or development will take place within the terms of the lease agreement and after consultation with the Department Environment and Natural Resources. A five year plan for maintenance and upgrading of facilities will be implemented.

###### **Action**

- Regular and close liaison and consultation on the use and management of the recreation zone will occur between the YMCA and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources as part of the lease administration process.

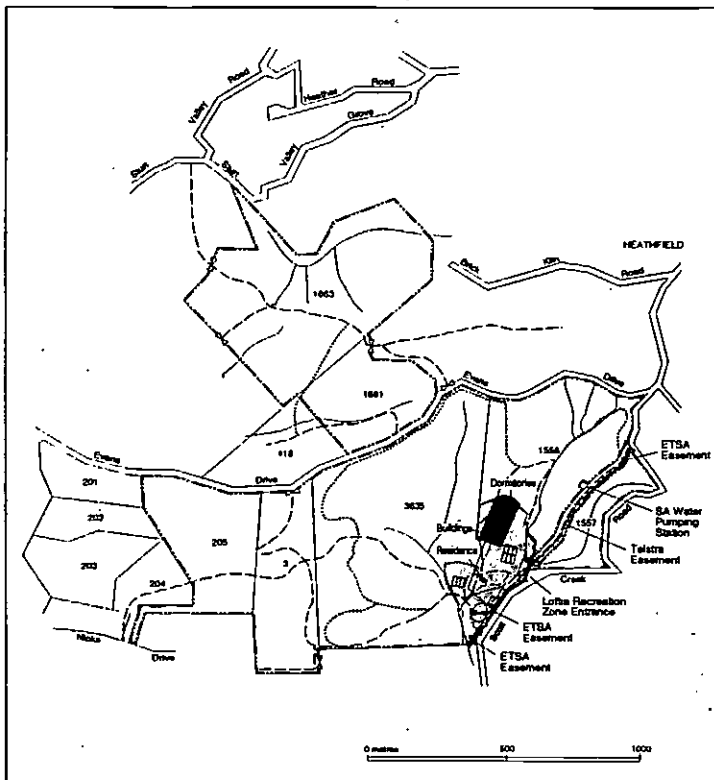
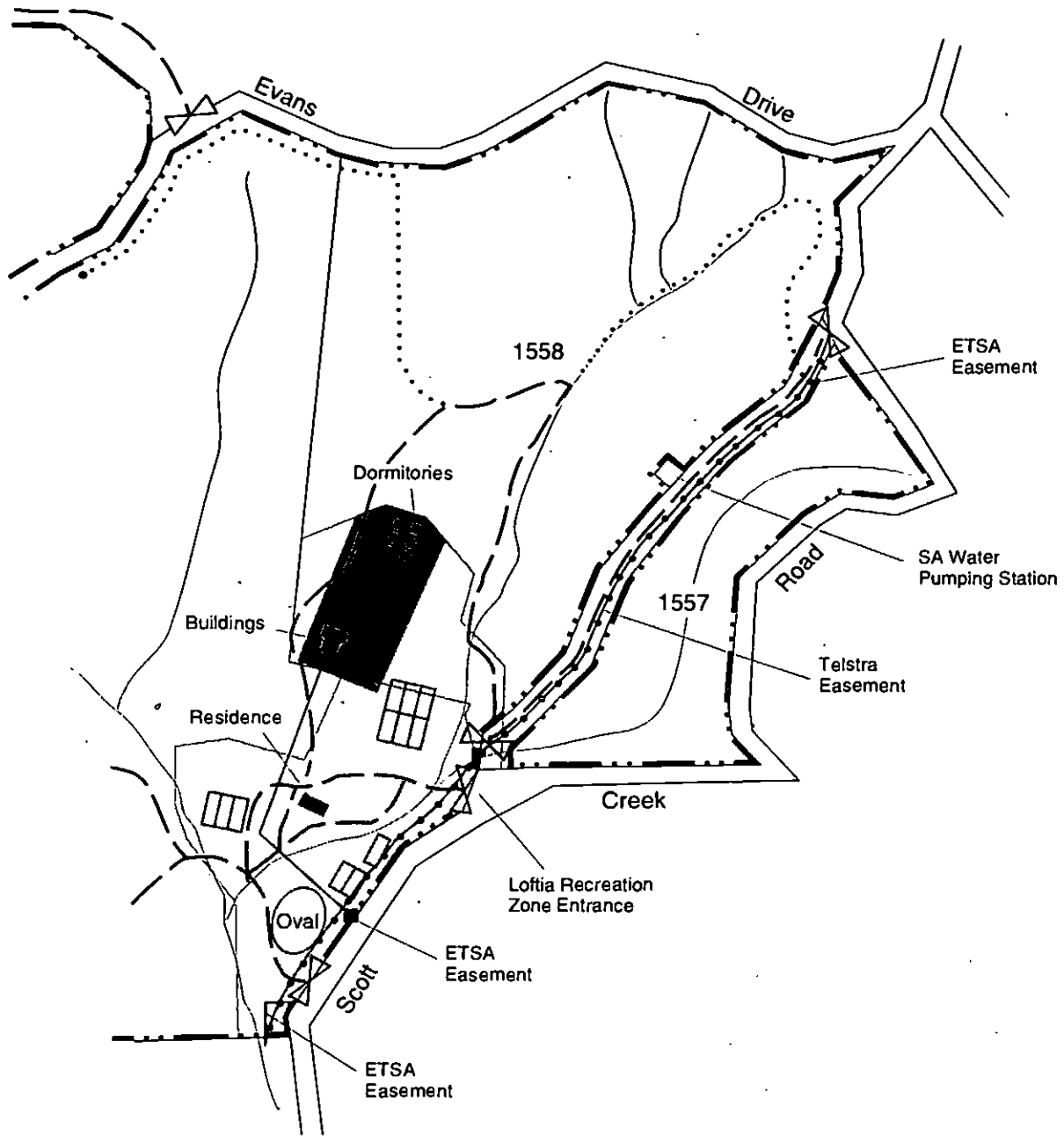
#### **OBJECTIVE 5**

##### **To monitor and control populations of exotic plants and animals**

###### **Background**

There are a number of introduced pest plants and animals within and adjacent to the reserve. Pest animals include rabbits, feral cats, foxes and introduced rats and mice. Dogs and cats occasionally stray into the park from neighbouring properties. Foxes and black rats are regarded as the most significant problem at this time because of their impact on the small native mammals and birds relying on understorey vegetation for survival.

The advent of European settlement resulted in the introduction of alien plants causing substantial changes to the natural landscape. Although the majority of the park is relatively free of weeds, several weed species have



- Allotment Boundary ———
- Park Boundary - · - · -
- Vehicle Track - - - - -
- Walking Track · · · · ·
- Creek ~~~~~
- Gate ⊗
- Recreation / Lease Zone □
- Tennis Courts □
- Loftia Camp ■



0 metres 500

**Figure 3**

**Mark Oliphant Conservation Park  
Loftia Recreation Zone and Alien Tenures**

colonised disturbed areas and creek lines. Woody species, including radiata pines are invading the park. Weed seed carried from neighbouring land will continue to infest the scrub edges.

It is vital that weed control works have minimal impact on native vegetation. This approach demands that weeds be removed carefully by hand from the areas of good native vegetation. While it is necessary to control the further spread of blackberries in the long term, any dense patches (remaining post-fire) which are shown to be providing refuge for small mammals (possibly still including southern brown bandicoot) will be given temporary special habitat status. Blackberry removal programs will include gradual replacement with the native plant species which provided shelter for native fauna prior to interference by European settlement. Revegetation programs should be implemented such that substitute (native) habitat is available before weed habitat is removed.

Small infestations of weeds near to the park should be removed immediately, before they can infest large areas.

### **Actions**

- Undertake a monitoring program to identify which feral animal species are significant pests and assess their effect on the natural values of the park.
- Implement and monitor programs to control introduced animals.
- Pest plant species identified as having the most immediate threat to significant natural values of the park will be given priority for removal. Woody species will be removed to discourage further invasion.
- Removal of pest plants should be carried out with minimum disturbance to native vegetation. A vegetation management program will be developed that takes into account the requirements of species of conservation significance, uses of indigenous seed stock from the park and utilises minimum disturbance techniques, where appropriate
- Issues associated with water born weeds from roads and culverts will be investigated and monitored. Discussions to manage any problems will be held with DC of Stirling, as required.

### **OBJECTIVE 6**

#### **To evaluate and acquire land to increase the conservation value of the park**

##### **Background**

The total area of the park is quite small (even with the latest additions) and may not be large enough to maintain its ecological viability in the long term. Native vegetation on adjoining and nearby land would be included in the territories of much of the park's fauna, thereby contributing to the long term preservation of those species.

To enhance the chances of long term viability for the park and its inhabitants, evaluation and purchase of any suitable adjoining land that comes onto the market will be given, subject to budgetary constraints, high priority. Alternatively, consideration will be given to encouraging private landholders to enter into heritage agreements to ensure the protection of natural habitat external to the park..

#### **Actions**

- Evaluate and purchase any suitable (and available) adjoining land for addition to the park.
- Discuss the environmental value of private land with private land owners and encourage them to develop management regimes sympathetic to conservation.
- Increase community awareness of the vulnerability of this environmental association.

#### **OBJECTIVE 7**

##### **Provide within the conservation zone a network of walking trails to control human impact**

#### **Background**

Over a number of years a proliferation of tracks has been created throughout the conservation zone resulting in soil erosion and destruction of vegetation. It is feasible to reduce the number of tracks while still allowing adequate visitor access to the attractive natural areas of the park.

#### **Actions**

- Modify existing track layout to form a trail system compatible with the fragile nature of the park.
- Tracks not included in the system to be closed and allowed to regenerate.
- Interpretive/educational/directional signs to be placed at trail heads, to direct and assist visitors.

## **OBJECTIVE 8**

### **To provide information and education for visitors on the natural features of the park**

#### **Background**

It is a major responsibility of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to make people aware of the conservation philosophy and the benefits to the community that result from a system of conservation reserves. Many people visiting the park do so primarily for outdoor recreation, while others perceive the main role of the park to be preservation of the natural environment. People moving into the conservation zone from the Loftia recreation zone may inadvertently be contributing to erosion problems and vegetation damage.

The modification of the walking trail system and the installation of interpretive, educational and directional signs should greatly improve the visitor experience and help reduce damage to the natural features.

#### **Actions**

- Survey and assess the requirements for interpretive, educational and directional signs.

## **OBJECTIVE 9**

### **To promote community involvement in the care and maintenance of the Park**

#### **Background**

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is only able to provide a basic care and maintenance role for the park.

The department relies upon voluntary community support and assistance in the care and management of reserves throughout the State.

The park is of high conservation value and it is therefore essential for the protection of these natural and cultural values that the community be involved in future management. Friends of Parks Groups have been established for numerous parks throughout the State and the formation of the Friends of Mark Oliphant Conservation Park could be most beneficial to the long term future of the park.

#### **Actions**

- Establish a Friends Group for the park.
- In conjunction with the department, encourage members of a Friends Group, research and educational institutions and the local community to participate in activities that maintain and improve the park. Such activities could include revegetation programs, weed control, walking trail maintenance, guided walks and special projects relating to monitoring and research of flora and fauna.
- Maintain liaison with those community groups interested in issues that relate to the park.

## ***ACTION SUMMARY***

This section provides a summary of the key management proposals outlined in this plan.

<b><u>PROJECT</u></b>	<b><u>PRIORITY</u></b>	<b><u>DURATION</u></b>
Re-gazette the park	High	Short
Protect significant habitat associations, particularly fragile areas and rare plant species, by appropriate means.	High	Ongoing
Re assess walking trail system and implement maintenance programs.	High	Ongoing
Liaise with recreation zone lessee.	High	Ongoing
Liaise with District Council of Stirling regarding surrounding developments and pest plants.	High	Ongoing
Adopt and implement Fire Management Plan.	High	Ongoing
Produce a vegetation action management plan and implement	High	Ongoing
Survey weed species, implement weed control.	High	Ongoing
Survey vermin fauna, implement control program.	High	Ongoing
Survey historical sites, implement protection measures if necessary.	Moderate	Ongoing
Establish a Friends Group	High	short
Liaise with Friends Groups and local community on issues affecting the park.	High	Ongoing
Acquire any suitable, available land adjoining park to increase habitat viability.	High	Ongoing
Prepare and implement sign installation program for information, education and directions.	Moderate	Ongoing



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