

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL

MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR

WANNON FALLS SCENIC RESERVE

AND

NIGRETТА FALLS SCENIC RESERVE

**Adopted by Southern Grampians Shire Council
on 14th September 2005**

MANAGEMENT DIRECTIONS

This Management Plan document provides the basis and direction for the future management of the Wannon Falls Scenic Reserve and the Nigretta Falls Scenic Reserve.

The document has been prepared by Parks Victoria and modified by the Southern Grampians Shire Council following consideration of comments received from the public when the plan was placed on public exhibition.

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Chief Executive

Southern Grampians Shire Council

Disclaimers

This document is prepared without prejudice to any negotiated or litigated outcome of any native title determination applications covering land or waters within the planning area.

It is acknowledged that any future outcomes of native title determination applications may necessitate amendment of this plan; and the implementation of this plan may require further notifications under the procedures in Division 3 of Part 2 of the *Native Title Act 1993* (C'wlth).

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this report is accurate. Southern Grampians Shire Council does not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind, and therefore disclaims all

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and planning area

Wannon Falls Scenic Reserve and Nigretta Falls Scenic Reserve are located approximately 250 km west of Melbourne in Victoria's Western District.

Wannon Falls Reserve (65ha) and Nigretta Falls Reserve (8 ha) are referred to in this document as 'the reserves'.

Wannon Falls Reserve is adjacent to the Glenelg Highway approximately 15 km west of Hamilton. Nigretta Falls Reserve is approximately 7 km upstream and situated to the north of the Glenelg Highway. The reserves are located on the Wannon River which flows into the Glenelg River.

Adjacent conservation areas include:

- Flora Reserve H10 (12 ha). Protects an important native grass area.
- Flora Reserve H11 (8 ha). Protects an important heathy woodland with a diverse native flora.
- Public Land Water Frontage K1. Protects the stream and banks of the Wannon River upstream of Wannon Falls.
- Grampians National Park. Located approximately 30km to the north-east.
- Mount Napier State Park . Located approximately 20 km to the south.

1.2 Legislation, LCC recommendations, guidelines

Various sections of the reserves were permanently reserved by the Government of Victoria between 1912 and 1925 to provide recreation benefits for visitors. Currently the

Reserves are temporarily reserved under section 14 of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978.

The Land Conservation Council provided descriptions and recommendations on the management of the reserves as part of the final recommendations for South –Western Study Area District 2 (LCC 1982).

The State Government has accepted LCC recommendations that:

- The Reserves be permanently reserved as Scenic Reserves under section 4 of Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978
- The aims of management of these areas should be to maintain the character and quality of the landscape, to maintain the native vegetation, and where necessary to protect water quality.

The LCC's descriptions for these reserves include the following:

“P5 Refers to 8 ha north of allotment 4A, Parish of Bochara, being in the area south of the Wannon River and including Nigretta Falls.”

“P6 65 ha south of and abutting the Glenelg Highway at Wannon, Parishes of Bochara and Redruth; including the Wannon Falls and public land on both sides of the Wannon River. This area adjoins a major tourist route. Facilities for picnicking and resting – away from the highway environment- may be developed here, as for areas recommended as Highway Parks.”

“Note: P5 and P6 include parts of the Wannon River valley, which contains representatives of native plants of the Dundas tablelands, where public land is now of very limited extent. The management

authority should protect the native flora and fauna and the streamside environs of these areas.”

1.3 Management authority

Under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, the Minister for Planning may appoint a Committee of Management as the delegated manager for a specific area of Crown land.

In 2004 and with the agreement of Council, the Southern Grampians Shire was appointed as the Committee of Management for the Wannon and Nigretta Scenic Reserves.

In practical terms, this means that the day to day management responsibility for the reserves lies with Council.

The Department of Sustainability and Environment has an ongoing role as the “landowner” of the reserves.

1.4 Visitation

Wannon and Nigretta Falls Scenic Reserves provide opportunities to view spectacular waterfalls. Visitors also can extend their visit by taking short walks or utilising picnic areas, camping facilities or the oval at Wannon Falls.

The reserves have a long history as a scenic attraction and a picnic destination. The waterfalls, native flora and exotic trees, and the adjacent agricultural landscape create a semi natural setting ideal for sightseeing, picnic and other passive recreational activities.

The reserves are a regular destination for Hamilton residents and an important tourism destination for the area. It is estimated that 15,000 to 17,000 visitors per annum visited the Falls in the period 1993 to 1998.

2 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

2.1 Vision for the reserves

Families and friends from the Hamilton area continue to meet at these reserves, which are an important tourism attraction. Visitors enjoy their visits by participating in a variety of activities, and especially enjoy relaxing in these scenic and peaceful areas.

Visitor facilities cater for traditional use by local groups and are in keeping with the significant landscapes. Interpretation of the reserves' natural and cultural values provide visitor with a lasting impression of the reserves and the region's special values.

The local community continue to undertake a custodial role through participation in management activities undertaken by a diverse variety of groups.

2.2 Management directions

Major management directions for the reserves are:

2.2.1 Resource conservation

- Significant geological features will be protected.
- Endemic flora communities will be protected, and whilst existing exotic tree species will be maintained further planting of exotic trees will be discouraged.
- Flora values will be enhanced through ongoing revegetation and visitor impacts minimised by placing appropriate access restrictions and signage.
- Native grasslands will be actively and appropriately managed. Further plantings are to be of plants of local provenance only.

- Fauna surveys and other research programs will be encouraged.
- Landscape values will be protected from developments both within the reserves and on the surrounding freehold land.
- Significant Aboriginal and European archaeological sites will be protected.
- Programs for pest plant and pest animal control will be implemented.

2.2.2 Visitors

- Interpretive trails linking sites of archaeological and historic significance will be developed.
- A facility maintenance schedule will be developed to ensure maintenance is undertaken regularly and to appropriate standards.
- Potential conflict between vehicle use and pedestrians will be resolved.
- The walking track network will maintained and enhanced.
- Existing uses including horse riding, orienteering and the walking of dogs on leads will continue.
- Visitor facilities and signage will be managed to minimise risk to visitors
- Information and interpretation of the reserves' features will be improved, with an information shelter to be constructed at Nigretta Falls.
- The current lookout at the top of Nigretta Falls will be assessed, and if necessary upgraded to ensure visitor safety.

2.2.3 Community awareness and involvement

- Local organisations such as the Hamilton Field Naturalists Club will be encouraged to continue or become involved in volunteer work .
- The formation of a Friends Group for the reserves will be encouraged.
- Educational institutions will be encouraged to become involved in research and monitoring programs.
- Reserve neighbours will be informed of relevant management issues.
- Activities, opportunities and values of the reserves will be promoted within the community.
- Landscape values will be protected when potential developments adjoining the reserves are proposed.

3 STRATEGIES FOR CONSERVATION

3.1 Geological and landform features

Both Wannan and Nigretta Falls have considerable geomorphic and geological significance. Although the falls occur within 10 km of one another, they have been developed with quite different geomorphic processes on rocks of different age and character.

Wannan Falls has a single drop of 24.3 metres. The key to the formation of this waterfall is the existence of a layer of hard basalt rock overlying softer rock. Splash from the plunge pool at the base of the falls erodes the softer rock and undermines the resistant cap.

The whole waterfall migrates slowly upstream and has moved about 2 kilometres since the lava flow initiated the falls 1-2 million years ago. This has left a narrow gorge below the falls.

The source of the lava flow appears to have been a volcano 10 km to the south-east. Eruptions created lava flows down the ancestral valley of the Grange Burn (south of the reserves) forcing lava to flow upstream in the Wannan valley.

One of the features of the Wannan Falls is the existence of the crystalline vivianite and sub fossil wood (Lignite). Illegal mining of the rock at the base of Wannan Falls has occurred from time to time, particularly in the early 1970s.

Nigretta Falls has a drop of 18.3 metres.

These falls contrast with Wannan Falls in that they have a multiple 'cataract' effect of smaller drops and bounces. These falls have developed on a much thicker stratum of hard volcanic rock (rhyolite). There is no softer underlying rock and no corresponding undermining. The age of the volcanic rock is approximately 410 million years.

Aim:

- ? Protect the significant geological and geomorphic features within the reserves.

Management Strategies:

- *Monitor visitor impacts on geological features and respond as appropriate to ensure the protection of these values.*
- *Maintain the current interpretation material on the geology and geomorphic history at Wannan Falls, and provide similar information at Nigretta Falls..*

3.2 Vegetation

Within the Wannan River valley, 350 indigenous plant species have been recorded to date.

At Wannan Falls, the main vegetation community is Manna Gum woodland, and the flora reserve north of the highway contains about 250 indigenous plant species. The old recreation ground at Wannan Falls is a healthy native grassland. The roadside vegetation, on the Wannan Nigretta Road, particularly in the first 2 km from the Wannan also comprises remnants of native plants rare to this area.

At Nigretta Falls, woodland is also the major vegetation type, with River Red Gums prominent along the river banks. About 165 indigenous plant species have been recorded. Remnants of native grasslands are found north and west of the River.

Within the reserves, the major indigenous tree species are River Red Gum,. Manna Gum, Drooping She-oak, Silver Banksia and Tree Violet.

A number of non- indigenous species are present in (and adjoining) the reserves, including Golden Rain Wattle, Sugar Gum, Poplars in the gorge below the Wannan Falls, Pinus spp. and Rosemary Grevillea on the Glenelg Highway west of the bridge. Some of these plant species have spread and threaten the conservation value of the reserve by displacing native flora. This in turn affects the suitability of the habitat for native fauna. In 2000, veteran Pinus radiata trees were removed from the car park at Wannan Falls and were replaced with indigenous species.

On the eastern side of the Wannan Falls and bordering Morgiana Road, a commercial pine plantation was managed by the Grey Street Primary School during the last half of the 20th Century. It was felled and cleared during the 1990s. The area has been replanted with indigenous species by the Hamilton Field Naturalists Club.

Native grasses on the oval adjacent to the Wannan Falls campground area should be protected from excessive mowing and weeds.

At the Nigretta Falls picnic area, plantings include London Planes, pears, Silver Poplar, Pinus radiata and Pinus halapensis. Although not native to the area, these species provide shade and considerable amenity value and do not appear to be spreading. Replacement of these trees with indigenous trees is only recommended as the existing trees age and deteriorate.

Visitor safety is a key component of vegetation management.

Aim:

- ? Enhance and preserve the integrity of natural plant communities whilst preserving historical plantings where appropriate.

Management Strategies:

- *Undertake routine inspections to assess the safety of exotic trees within visitor precincts and carry out maintenance (eg dead limb removal) where required.*
- *Mow the oval at appropriate times (avoiding late spring-summer) to protect native grass species and minimise vehicular traffic on the oval .Do not fertilise the oval or permit heavy traffic or disturbing activities when ground conditions are wet.*
- *Maintain the integrity of the natural communities through the removal of weeds and wildlings of plants not indigenous to the reserves.*
- *Identify areas of indigenous vegetation that require protection from visitor pressure and implement protection measures.*
- *Actively support the revegetation of areas requiring revegetation including the former Grey Street School plantation (see Friends and volunteers).*
- *In consultation with the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority remove poplars and suckers from the gorge downstream from the Wannan Falls.*

3.3 Fauna

Since European settlement, the depletion and degradation of natural habitats, combined with the introduction of exotic pests has led to the demise of a number of native animal and bird populations in the Hamilton area.

Species such as the Australian Bustard, Spotted-tailed Quoll and Eastern Barred Bandicoot were once common in the area but are now locally extinct.

Because the reserves contain remnants of natural vegetation once widespread around Hamilton, they provide valuable habitat for native fauna. They provide further value as they also make up part of the 'wildlife corridor' of the Wannon River Valley.

Native animals still found within the reserves include the Platypus, Koala, Water Rat, Bush Rat, Feather-tail Glider, Sugar Glider, Eastern Grey Kangaroo, Swamp Wallaby, Brush-tailed Phascogale, Ring-tailed Possum, Brush-tailed Possum and Echidna.

Although no animal species recorded within the reserves are listed as rare, vulnerable or endangered (NRE 1998), the protection and re-establishment of the natural plant communities is an important step towards the long term survival of those native animals still present.

Further benefits to the conservation of fauna is gained by the preservation and enhancement of wildlife corridors. The public land frontage along the Wannon River provides an ecological linkage between the two reserves which increases the conservation value of the reserves considerably.

Research is an integral part of wildlife conservation. Fauna surveys are needed to assess habitat requirements and the need for management to limit threats to existing species. The development of research partnerships with local institutions such as Deakin or Ballarat University, TAFE and RMIT should be encouraged.

Aims:

- Protect local populations of animals and birds found within the reserves.
- Preserve and enhance the integrity of natural habitats.

Strategies:

- *Encourage replanting with appropriate indigenous plant species within the reserves.*
- *Investigate the possibility of undertaking revegetation work along the Wannon River public land water frontage to enhance the wildlife corridor between the reserves.*
- *Encourage fauna surveys and other research programs with local learning and research institutions.*
- *Control pest animals within the reserves.*
- *Ban the use of dead or fallen timber for firewood. Implement a "bring your own wood" policy or provide firewood.*

3.4 Landscape

Wannon Falls and Nigretta Falls are significant landscape features in south-west Victoria. Along with Hopkins Falls near Warrnambool and McKenzie Falls in the Grampians National Park, they are among the best known falls in this part of the State.

The scenic grandeur of Wannon Falls was captured by the nineteenth Century artists, Louis Bouvelot and Eugene Von Guerard, and their paintings now provide useful historical documentation of the falls and the surrounding landscape.

Bouvelot's painting depicts a European view of the landscape typical of the period, showing the landscape as a large parkland along with introduced cattle grazing. Early developments at the Reserves followed this view with introduced species planted to provide contrast to the Australian landscape and remind early settlers of their origins.

In recent years some of these introduced trees have reached maturity and are starting to decline. The pruning of limbs and removal

of trees for safety purposes has been carried out.

Replacement plantings have been carried out with plant species indigenous to the area. This replacement on a section by section basis should be encouraged to enhance natural landscape values and habitats.

Other cultural elements of the reserves such as the windmill and tank at Nigretta Falls may have a role in the interpretation of the history of the Reserves.

Consideration of the heritage value as well as the safety and maintenance requirements of these structures should be given before any decision is made regarding their removal or long term retention.

Screen plantings to soften structures within the reserves should be encouraged. From a landscape view the visual impact of structures such as the current timber lookout at the car park at Nigretta Falls would benefit from the softening effect of low growing indigenous species such as Tree Violet.

With increasing urban expansion in recent years the number of houses and outbuildings being built in close proximity to Wannon Falls Reserve has increased. Without appropriate siting and screening these structures affect the broad rural nature of the surrounding countryside and reduce the landscape values of the reserve. Preservation of the landscape character needs to be taken into account in the administration of the Shire's planning scheme.

Aims:

- Minimise visual impacts of adjoining developments and land uses on the landscape values of the reserves, especially from major viewing points.

Strategies:

- *Ensure that the design and siting of any new facilities are in character*

with existing facilities and the natural landscape.

- *Use screening plantings of local indigenous species to limit the visual impact of adjoining private buildings and other structures.*

3.5 Aboriginal cultural heritage

Prior to European occupation, numerous lakes, rivers and swamps in the Western District provided habitat for an abundant food source for the survival of Aboriginal populations. At the time approximately four thousand people lived in the area.

The section of the Wannon River on which the Wannon and Nigretta Falls are located formed the boundary of the territories of two Aboriginal language groups, the Jardwadjali to the north and the Gundidjmara to the south. The Bung bung gul gundidj clan of the Jardwadjarli occupied the Wannon Falls area (Clarke 1990).

European settlement from the 1840s had dramatic impacts on the lives of the local Aboriginal people. Their environment was significantly changed; native food sources were depleted and access to tribal lands became limited. The movements of the Aboriginal people were mainly restricted to government-declared reserves including the Lake Condah Mission to the south. By 1870 the local Aboriginal population was almost severely depleted by a combination of violent encounters with the early European settlers, exposure to diseases such as smallpox and influenza, and relocations.

There is very little recorded information on the significance of the reserves to the traditional owners. However it is likely that the Wannon River and the falls themselves would have provided a source of food and spiritual enrichment to these people. Current Aboriginal elders have expressed a wish to be involved in the development of future management directions.

Aims:

- Protect archaeological sites within the Reserves.
- Improve community understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Management Strategies

- *In conjunction with Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation, identify archaeological sites and develop strategies to ensure their protection.*
- *Undertake archeological surveys and consultation with Winda Mara Aboriginal Corporation prior to any management activities which may impact on unrecorded archaeological sites.*

3.6 Post settlement cultural heritage

Major Thomas Mitchell, the first known European to visit the area, gave the Wannon River its name in 1836 during his 'Australia Felix' expedition. Redruth, renamed Wannon in 1908, was first settled in the 1850s. In 1849, William Stucky opened Wannon Inn at Rocky Ford on the Wannon River, and a small country community with two schools and a store developed. Four sawmills operated nearby.

By the 1880s, a high level of agricultural production in the area was achieved with exports of wool, wheat and wattlebark. Tourism started in the area in the 1850s with visits to the falls, and by the 1890s excursion trains travelled out from Hamilton. In 1881 Prince George, later to become King George V, stopped there on route from Penola to Hamilton in a Cobb and Co coach.

From the time of the formation of the reserves in the early 1900s, the local community has been involved in the management of the reserves through the Committee of Management.

The historic significance of the Wannon Falls reserve, bridge, the former Wannon Inn, Wannon River, and Redruth area is noted in LCC (1997). The report makes mention of early tourism, European painters, quarrying at the base of the Falls in the 1880s and the building of a lodge in the 1920s. It also makes mention of the rotunda, remains of an old post and cable fence and the 'boomerang gates'.

Aims:

- Protect historic sites with the reserves
- Improve community understanding of European use of the area, and the value and management of archaeological sites.

Management Strategies:

- *Protect and preserve historic sites and relics, in conjunction with stakeholder groups.*

3.7 Fire management

Fire protection works for areas managed by a Committee of Management are the responsibility of the Committee. Fire suppression is the responsibility of the Country Fire Authority (CFA).

In recent years fire protection works within the reserves has been limited to occasional slashing along the Glenelg Highway within the vicinity of the Wannon Falls.

Aims:

- Protect human life, property and conservation values from injury by fire.
- Minimise the adverse effects of fires and fire suppression methods.
- Implement fire regimes, based on research findings, appropriate to the conservation of native fauna and flora.

Strategies:

- *Implement a “fires in fireplaces only” policy by signage and visitor education.*
- *Place signs advising visitors of Days of Total Fire Ban on declared days.*
- *Undertake ecological burning as appropriate (e.g. in native grasslands or to help control pest plant species).*
- *Rehabilitate any area disturbed during fire suppression activities.*

3.8 Pest plants and animals

Within the reserves, a number of environmental weeds exist, including non-indigenous Australian species that have been planted in the reserves in the past and are now spreading. Some of these species appear to be threatening the integrity of the surrounding indigenous vegetation and its value as habitat for native fauna.

Weeds are the most significant environmental problem in the reserves.

The most significant weed species are:

3.8.1 Wannan Falls

- Harlequin Flower
- Wild Garlic (Angled Onion)
- Bridal Creeper
- Freesia
- Arum Lily
- Watsonia
- Coast Tea-tree
- Desert Ash
- Fern-leaf Wattle
- Poplars in stream
- Sparaxis

- Coast Wattle in flora reserve

3.8.2 Nigretta Falls

- Blue Periwinkle
- Gorse
- Gladiolus
- Rosemary Grevillea
- Phalaris
- Paspalum

Rabbits and foxes pose problems within the reserves and numbers should be regularly monitored and appropriate control measures initiated when necessary.

Aim:

- Control and where possible eradicate, pest plants and animals, including invasive non-indigenous native species.

Management Strategies:

- *Using recommended procedures and at optimum timing, control priority introduced pest plants and spreading non indigenous native plants found within the reserves.*
- *Re-establish indigenous vegetation in areas previously infested by pest plants.*
- *In liaison with DPI and adjoining land holders, initiate control programs for pest animals.*

4 STRATEGIES FOR VISITORS

4.1 Day visit activities

The main attraction at Wannon Falls is the lookout. Other facilities provided for day visitors are toilets, picnic tables, barbecues, (including a free electric BBQ near the lookout) an interpretive centre and walking tracks. A small spillway above the falls has been created to establish a swimming area. The adjacent oval provides opportunities for a variety of activities such as ball games.

Nigretta Falls also has a major lookout and picnic area, with toilet, barbecues and tables. This area has several lookouts and an walkway down to the water's edge. A central grassed area is ideal for picnics and other activities. Along the river above the falls there are a variety of informal access points suitable for fishing or swimming.

An old water tank and windmill are located at Nigretta Falls. These structures are unsafe for reserve visitors and should be removed or made safe after consideration of any heritage value.

The Wannon and Nigretta Falls Risk Evaluation and Risk Management Report (Marsh and McLennan 1997) made a number of recommendations of which some have been already addressed. Other actions remain a high priority.

Aims:

- Maintain current facilities to appropriate standards.
- Minimise risk of accident or injury to visitors.

Strategies:

- *Develop and implement a maintenance schedule to maintain*

facilities to appropriate standards .This will include cleaning of toilets and barbecues, rubbish removal and grass mowing.

- *Repair or replace all unserviceable facilities as soon as practicable.*
- *Encourage all visitors to adopt minimum impact techniques, including policies such as 'take your rubbish home'.*
- *Promote and enforce a 'dogs on leads only' policy by signage and education..*
- *Undertake a detailed annual assessment of all lookouts, stairways and other structures to ensure visitor safety.*
- *Conduct regular tree limb risk assessments, particularly in picnic areas, car parks and the campground. Remove limbs where necessary.*
- *Remove or make safe the old water tank and windmill at Nigretta Falls.*
- *Develop a partnership with the State Emergency Service to facilitate an appropriate response to any incident.*

4.2 Vehicle Access

The location of roads is shown on Maps 1 and 2. Both reserves have bitumen road access to the main car parks.

In 1978, a 30 km/hr speed limit was introduced at Wannon Falls. In 1982, access of vehicles to the oval at Wannon Falls was restricted to protect visitors and grassland values.

At Nigretta Falls, several informal vehicle tracks lead off the main road. Some of these tracks are causing environmental impacts.

Aims:

- Provide appropriate design, maintenance and safety standards for visitor access roads.
- Minimise the impact of vehicles on natural and cultural values.

Strategies:

- *Install water run-offs on the gravel road from the Nigretta Falls toilet north to the river.*
- *Permanently close the informal tracks shown on maps 1 and 2, by one or a combination of the following methods: installing bollards, laying branches, placing rocks, ripping and revegetation.*
- *Define a turning circle / carpark at the river end of the track from the Nigretta Falls entrance.*
- *Install signs to encourage traffic to travel anti-clockwise around the Nigretta Falls picnic area.*

4.3 Walking

The location of walking tracks is shown on Maps 1 and 2. Wannan Falls has an extensive system of walking tracks while Nigretta Falls has a short track linking lookout points and following an existing safety barrier.

A short walking track upstream from the Wannan Falls lookout car park leads to concrete spillway across the Wannan River. This track extends along the western side of the river to further viewing areas. There are safety risks to walkers using the concrete spillway and an assessment should be undertaken to identify and minimise the risks.

Aims:

- Maintain and enhance existing walking tracks whilst minimising environmental impacts.
- Provide access to facilities and lookout points for visitors, including those with limited mobility.
- Minimise safety risk to walkers using tracks.

Strategies:

- *Install adequate signs and track marking along all walking tracks.*
- *Maintain walking tracks by attention to drainage and removal of encroaching vegetation.*

4.4 Camping

Camping takes place at Wannan Falls in the defined camping area opposite the oval.

Fees do not apply, and extended stays by some campers place an additional maintenance load on reserve management.

Aim:

Provide for overnight camping at Wannan Falls.

Strategies:

- *Permit camping, for one night only, at the camping area at Wannan Falls. Prohibit camping elsewhere in both reserves.*
- *Install signage at the camping area advising campers of the one-night limit, advising that fires may be lit only in the fire places provided, encouraging the use of gas stove and prohibiting the collection of dead fallen or standing dead timber from the reserve.*

4.5 Swimming

Currently each reserve has an area for swimming within the Wannon River. However, the risks associated with swimming in these areas should be assessed and addressed.

Aims:

- Minimise risks to swimmers.

Management Strategies:

- *Carry out a risk management analysis of the current designated swimming areas and act on any recommendations.*
- *Inspect swimming areas particularly after high flows and prior to summer, and remove any debris or other hazardous material.*
- *Undertake regular inspections and removal of rope swings on the Wannon River.*
- *Provide warning signs at each swimming area, covering the dangers of diving, alcohol and swimming, and the need for supervision of children.*

4.6 Horse Riding and Orienteering

Horse riding is an occasional activity within the reserves, and it recommended that horses be restricted to vehicle tracks only.

Wannon Falls is occasionally used for orienteering and is quite suitable for this use.

4.7 Visitor information, interpretation and education

In 1999, the old rotunda at Wannon Falls was renovated and adapted to house a small interpretive display. The display provides information on cultural and natural history, geology and general information.

Current signage is inconsistent and confusing, and does not convey clear orientation, advisory or safety messages. Signage should be thoroughly reviewed and upgraded to meet current standards and convey clear messages.

Risk management signage at lookouts and swimming areas is a particular priority for improvement.

Aims:

- Enhance visitors enjoyment and appreciation of the reserves including natural and cultural values.
- Minimise risks to visitors.

Management Strategies:

- *Prepare and implement a signs plan for the reserves to address visitor orientation, advisory and safety issues. The plan will address the use of appropriate and consistent sign designs, including internationally-recognised symbol signs.*
- *As a priority, review risk management signage at Wannon Falls and Nigretta Falls lookouts and both swimming areas to ensure warnings are clear and consistent with national standards.*
- *Liaise with tourism bodies to ensure appropriate promotion of the reserves.*
- *Develop an information sheet for the reserves highlighting facilities, features of interest, specific guidance on permitted or prohibited activities and hazard/safety information.*
- *See the various sections under 4 Strategies for Visitors for specific signage requirements.*
- *Provide interpretive information at Nigretta*

5 STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT FRIENDS AND VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers have had a tradition of involvement with the management of the reserves. In the past, most of the development of the reserves was carried out through local volunteer labour.

In recent years, volunteer work has been continued through the Hamilton Field Naturalists Club. Other volunteers could assist with important management activities within the reserves and could be accessed through the following groups:

- Neighbouring landholders and other interested parties in the community, including the local Country Fire Authority and State Emergency Service.
- Education institutions including regional Universities and TAFE, looking at aspects of research and monitoring .
- Possibly a Friends Group for the reserves.

Aim:

- Encourage volunteer groups to undertake or participate in appropriate management, interpretation and monitoring tasks in the reserves.

Strategies:

- *Continue to encourage the partnership with the Hamilton Field Naturalists Club in the management of the Reserves.*
- *Encourage other local organisations to become involved in volunteer work.*
- *Develop a register of suitable projects for volunteers.*

- *Encourage the formation of a Friends Group for the reserves.*
- *Encourage educational institutions to become involved in research and monitoring programs.*

5.1 Community awareness and neighbours

The local community and particularly neighbouring residents have an interest in protecting the values of the reserves. This can be achieved through both active involvement in management and support for management objectives.

The way in which neighbouring land is managed will have a significant effect on the reserves, particularly in relation to fire management, control of pest plant and animals and landscape values.

Aims:

- Encourage awareness and knowledge among the local community of the values and management of the reserves.
- Encourage conservation and sound practices on adjoining private land.

Management strategies:

- *Maintain a database of contact details of park neighbours and ensure that they are kept informed of relevant issues.*
- *Provide relevant information about the reserves to adjacent land holders, including ways in which they may assist in protecting them.*

6 REFERENCES

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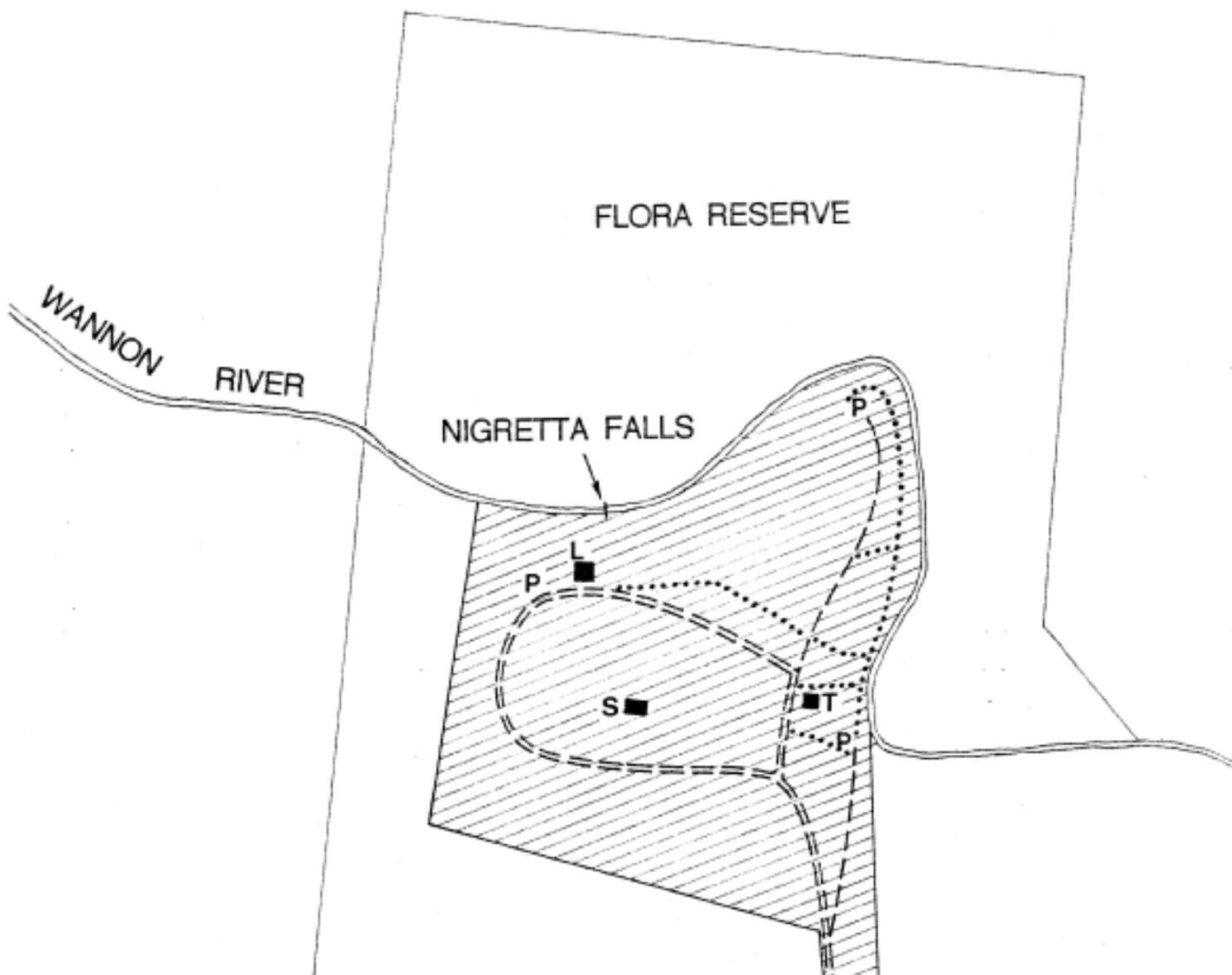
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NIGRETТА FALLS SCENIC RESERVE



LEGEND



SCENIC RESERVE

- L Lookout
- P Parking Area
- S Picnic Shelter
- T Toilet

==== Sealed Road

---- Gravel Road

..... Vehicle Track (to be closed and rehabilitated)

NIGRETТА FALLS
ACCESS ROAD

WANNON — NIGRETТА FALLS

ROAD

NORTH



SCALE 1 : 4000