Open for Nature-based Business

2020

Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, Northern Inland, NSW
Overview – 2019–20 Bushfire Season

Content

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Aboriginal Heritage Impact

• important to acknowledge upfront there are **3879 known Aboriginal sites** in burnt areas across the National Parks and Wildlife Service estate

• a post-fire Aboriginal Cultural Heritage assessment in partnership with Aboriginal communities across New South Wales has begun and is in its early stages

• information sessions in fire-affected areas are planned with some already started in the north of the State

• NPWS staff are engaging with Aboriginal communities across NSW to help understand the impacts to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and values and plan the recovery effort
NPWS and the NSW Visitor Economy

• lead provider of nature-based destinations and visitor experiences in NSW

• Over 870 parks and reserves = 11% of the state

• national park visitors boost NSW’s economy and support regional/local visitor economies

• 60 million+ visits in 2018 to NSW national parks

• nature-based visitors to NSW generated $21.3 billion in expenditure in 2018

• visitor engagement with nature is critical to achieving the NSW Government’s Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan targets to 2030
Overall National Park Impact

• 5.3 million hectares (6.7%) of NSW was affected by the bushfires

• 270+ national parks and reserves (2.7m hectares) severely impacted, mostly coastal

• that’s 37% of the national park estate

• and over 225 visitor destinations

• impacts in North Coast, Northern Inland, Blue Mountains, South Coast and Snowy Ranges NPWS Branches

• the economic impact from the closure and damage to national parks is estimated to be around $15m each month in lost value
Overall National Park Impact

• more than 80% of the World Heritage listed Greater Blue Mountains Area

• 54% of the NSW components of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage property

• more than 60 threatened animal species, including 32 species for which 30% or more of all recorded locations occur in the burn areas

• many NSW communities and businesses that rely on nature-based tourism and its visitor economy

Spotted Quoll, Cathedral Rock National Park
Conservation and Wildlife Impact

Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby – Supplementary Feeding
Looking towards Ben Boyd Tower

Track to carpark – Ben Boyd Tower
Kosciuszko NP – Impact

• 230,000 hectares (33.5%) of Kosciuszko NP burnt

• more than 40,000 additional hectares burnt in NPWS’ Southern Ranges Branch

• that’s 11 Parks / Reserves additional to Kosciuszko NP

• in excess of 840km of roads and trails within Kosciuszko National Park have been fire affected

From Cabramurra down to Tumut Pond

Gabriel Wilks/NPWS
Kosciuszko NP – Impact

Gabriel Wilks/NPWS
Kosciuszko NP – Selwyn Skifields

Selwyn visitor building

Snow machine
Visitor facilities Impact

The fires were devastating for the natural environment, animals and plants, local communities, and local economies – many of which are supported by the park infrastructure that enables nature-based tourism

- 11,100 kilometres of roads and fire trails
- 126 kilometres of sealed roads
- 189 vehicle bridges
- 105 accommodation assets ranging from huts upwards
- 213 amenity buildings
- 1000 kilometres of walking tracks
- 143 camping areas
- 85 elevated walkways
- 143 lookouts and viewing platforms
- 102 pedestrian bridges
- 6500 signs
- 580 picnic tables
- 1200 bollards
- 8000 kilometres of boundary fences
Murraramang NP – South Coast
NPWS Commercial Impact

- NPWS has licensed 308 commercial tour operators who offer visitor experiences across NSW national parks.

- more than a third of NPWS licensed operators have been directly and indirectly impacted by the bushfires.

- we recognise commercial tour operators need our support alongside NPWS educational tours and visitor centre services.

- although we are working as quickly and safely as possible to restore the infrastructure which supports and enables visitor experiences in parks, it will take some time to reopen many national parks.
Heritage Impact

- we are the keepers of some of NSW’s most significant heritage buildings and places
  eg: agriculture, military, whaling and convict heritage – many not impacted by bushfires
- 69 heritage assets were impacted in mapped burnt areas across NPWS estate
- Kiandra mining village
- 11 historic huts in Kosciuszko NP, including Wolgal Hut
- process of assessing impacts has commenced and recovery effort planning is underway
Kiandra Courthouse - Heritage
Heritage Impact – Huts

Oldfields Hut, wrapped for protection

Wolgal Hut
Recovery Actions

- over 52 destinations were reopened within two months and NPWS staff are now focused on reopening remaining areas

- roads and trails are being cleared of fallen trees and debris and road signs, guide markers and safety barriers are being reinstated

- dangerous trees close to public areas such as picnic and campgrounds, car parks and walking tracks are being assessed to mitigate safety risks

- impacted structures such as road and pedestrian bridges, boardwalks and lookouts, buildings and vital utilities such as power and water supply are being assessed

- destinations are being opened once safe to support tourism recovery

- rebuilding to restore tourism and assist communities to recover as quickly as possible has been prioritised
Recovery Actions

• **social media activity** profiling NPWS’ fire fighting capacity and ability, recovery efforts (conservation and wildlife focus) and visitation information (alerts, closures and openings)

• ensuring **park closures and opening information** are updated, accurate and inform all visitor communications channels

• managing bookings related to **campground and accommodation** closures and resulting cancellations, refunds and revenue loss analysis. Discounted accommodation offers between March – September.

• regular engagement with **third party event owners** scheduled to undertake events on national parks in coming weeks and months.

• regular engagement and support for NPWS licensed **commercial tour operators**. Waived quarterly trip return fees to December 2019 and will waive to March 2020 to mitigate financial and business impacts.

• incorporating bushfire impacts and recovery into **education programs** for school groups and creation of a **volunteer registration** function for community recovery assistance

• facilitating **filming and photography permits** for tourism agencies and media to film recovery campaigns and media stories

• regular **engagement** with tourism and visitor economy stakeholders, particularly local government tourism representatives in fire affected areas
Promotional Activity – #NSWParks

• continue NPWS marketing activity welcoming visitors back to national parks across NSW

• encourage overnight stays in national parks eg: incentives offered for camping and accommodation

• leverage campaigns including Tourism Australia’s #HolidayHereThisYear, Destination NSW’s ‘Now’s The Time to Love NSW’ and local/regional campaigns

• continue to inspire and engage with potential visitors via NPWS digital channels, especially social media

• NPWS website is the third most visited NSW Government website - we will use its popularity to inspire our community whilst providing valuable information on park access and visitor experiences in our national parks
“No one will protect what they don’t care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced”

-Sir David Attenborough
Thank You – Time for Recovery!

Gabriel Wilks/NPWS