Department of Environment
Government of Western Australia

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 1057/1
Permit type: Area Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Shire of Murray

1.3. Property details

Property: ROAD RESERVE (COOLUP 6214)
Local Government Area: Shire Of Murray
Colloquial name:

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
0.1	30	Mechanical Removal	Road construction or maintenance

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description	Clearing Description	Vegetation Condition	Comment
Beard vegetation association 999 - Medium woodland; marri Heddle vegetation complex - Guildford complex - mixture of open forest to tall open forest of *E.calophylla - E.wandoo - E.marginata* and woodland of *E.wandoo*. Minor components include *E.rudis - M.rhaphiophylla*	The proposal includes the clearing of approximately 30 trees within approximately 0.1ha of road reserve. The purpose of the clearing is to allow for the upgrade of a 300m section of gravel road. Vegetation under application comprises a narrow remnant of mostly *Eucalyptus calophylla* adjacent to the gravel road. The understorey is sparse and consists of *Xanthorrhoea preissii* and weed species.	Completely Degraded: No longer intact; completely/almost completely without native species (Keighery 1994)	Vegetation description was obtained during a site visit on Thursday 9th of March 2006.

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

(a) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises a high level of biological diversity.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle
The clearing is limited to approximately 30 individual native plants of two species that are not considered to be of conservation significance. It is therefore not considered likely that the vegetation under application is representative of higher biological diversity in the local area

Methodology Site visit 9/3/06

(b) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of, a significant habitat for fauna indigenous to Western Australia.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle
The site inspection confirmed that there was limited native understorey within the area under application that could provide habitat for smaller native fauna such as *Isoodon obesulus fusciventer*. The *Eucalyptus calophylla* within the area under application did not contain any hollows. Given the small scale of the area under application and the completely degraded condition of the vegetation, it is not considered likely to be significant habitat for native faunal species.

Methodology Site visit 9/3/06

(c) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it includes, or is necessary for the continued existence of, rare flora.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

There are no known examples of Declared Rare or Priority Flora (DRF) within the local area (5km radius of the application). The clearing is limited to *Eucalyptus calophylla* and *Xanthorrhoea preissii*, which are not considered to be DRF, or necessary for the maintenance of any DRF.

Methodology Site visit 9/3/06
GIS Database: Declared Rare and Priority Flora List - CALM 01/07/05

(d) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it comprises the whole or a part of, or is necessary for the maintenance of a threatened ecological community.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

There are no records of Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC) in the vicinity of the area under application. Due to the completely degraded condition, the vegetation under application is also not considered likely to be representative of, or to be necessary for the maintenance of any TEC.

Methodology Site visit 9/3/06
GIS Database: Threatened Ecological Communities - CALM 12/4/05

(e) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is significant as a remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The vegetation under application is part of Beard vegetation association 999 and Heddle vegetation complex - Guildford Complex, of which there is 11.8% and 5.0% respectively of pre-European vegetation remaining (Shepherd et al. 2002).

The State Government is committed to the National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation which includes a target that prevents clearance of ecological communities with an extent below 30% of the present pre-European settlement (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002, EPA 2000).

Although these vegetation associations are well below the recommended 30% representation of pre-European extent, the area under application only consists of *E.calophylla* and *X.preissii*, is considered to be in a completely degraded condition and is therefore not likely to be representative or of conservation significance.

Methodology Heddle et al. (1980)
JANIS (1997)
Shepherd et al. (2001)
EPA (2000)
EPA (2003)

(f) Native vegetation should not be cleared if it is growing in, or in association with, an environment associated with a watercourse or wetland.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The area under application is located approximately 1km from a watercourse and, although not associated with any wetlands of a high conservation value, the area under application is part of a large palusplain multiple use wetland.

Given the limited area under application, it is considered that there will be no substantial alteration to the water table and it is therefore unlikely that the clearing will impact hydrological function of the wetland. In addition, no wetland vegetation was observed during the site visit.

Methodology Site Visit 9/3/06
GIS Databases:
Geomorphic Wetlands (Mgt Categories), Swan Coastal Plain - DOE 15/9/04
Hydrography, linear (hierarchy) - DOE 13/4/05

(g) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause appreciable land degradation.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The vegetation under application is located directly adjacent to a gravel road, in an area that has been extensively cleared. The area under application falls within an area with a high risk of waterlogging, eutrophication and Acid Sulphate Soils (ASS) occurring at greater than 3-metres in depth.

Based on the limited area proposed for clearing the proposal is not considered likely to cause appreciable land degradation.

Methodology

State of Western Australia (2005)
GIS Databases:
Acid Sulfate Soil Risk Map, SCP - DOE 04/11/04
Salinity Risk LM 25m - DOLA 00

(h) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any adjacent or nearby conservation area.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The closest conservation area is located approximately 7km to the east of the area under application. Given this distance and the degraded condition of the vegetation under application, the proposal is not considered likely to have an impact on the environmental values of any nearby conservation area.

The benchmark of 15% representation in conservation reserves (Janis Forests Criteria 1997) has not been met for Beard vegetation type 1001 and Heddle vegetation association - Dardanup Complex. However, the area under application consists of remnant vegetation in a completely degraded condition and is not likely to be representative of the vegetation type, and is considered to be of limited conservation value.

Methodology

Site visit 9/3/06
Janis Forest Criteria (1997)
GIS Databases:
Salinity Risk LM 25m - DOLA 00

(i) Native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The area under application is not located within a prescribed groundwater area or a Public Drinking Water Source Area. The nearest waterbody is located 1km to the west of the area under application.

Based on the limited area proposed for clearing, and the distance to the nearest waterbody, the proposal is not considered likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or groundwater.

Methodology

Site visit 9/3/06
GIS Databases:
Hydrography, linear (hierarchy) - DOE 13/4/05
RIWI Act, Groundwater Areas - WRC 13/06/00
Public Drinking Water Source Areas (PDWSA's) - DOE 09/08/05

(j) Native vegetation should not be cleared if clearing the vegetation is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.

Comments

Proposal is not likely to be at variance to this Principle

The area under application is located within a multiple use wetland and the nearest watercourse is located 1km to the east.

Due to the limited extent of vegetation under application, and the distance to the nearest watercourse, it is considered that the removal of vegetation from the site is not likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence of flooding.

Methodology

GIS Databases:
Hydrography, linear - DOE 1/2/04
Geomorphic Wetlands (Mgt Categories), Swan Coastal Plain - DOE 15/9/04

Planning instrument, Native Title, Previous EPA decision or other matter.

Comments

No other approval required by either the Department of Environment or Department of Water.

No submissions received.

Methodology

4. Assessor's recommendations

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees		Decision	Comment / recommendation
Road construction or maintenance	Mechanical Removal	0.1	30	**Grant**	Assessable criteria have been addressed and no objections were raised. The assessing officer therefore recommends that the permit should be granted.

5. References

Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002) Biodiversity Action Planning. Action planning for native biodiversity at multiple scales; catchment bioregional, landscape, local. Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria.

EPA (2000) Environmental protection of native vegetation in Western Australia. Clearing of native vegetation, with particular reference to the agricultural area. Position Statement No. 2. December 2000. Environmental Protection Authority.

EPA (2003) Guidance for the Assessment of Environmental Factors -level of assessment of proposals affecting natural areas within the System 6 region and Swan Coastal Plain portion of the System 1 Region. Report by the EPA under the Environmental Protection Act 1986. No 10 WA.

Heddle, E. M., Loneragan, O. W., and Havel, J. J. (1980) Vegetation Complexes of the Darling System, Western Australia. In Department of Conservation and Environment, Atlas of Natural Resources, Darling System, Western Australia.

JANIS Forests Criteria (1997) Nationally agreed criteria for the establishment of a comprehensive, Adequate and Representative reserve System for Forests in Australia. A report by the Joint ANZECC/MCFFA National Forest Policy Statement Implementation Sub-committee. Regional Forests Agreement process. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

Keighery, B.J. (1994) Bushland Plant Survey: A Guide to Plant Community Survey for the Community. Wildflower Society of WA (Inc). Nedlands, Western Australia.

Shepherd, D.P., Beeston, G.R. and Hopkins, A.J.M. (2001) Native Vegetation in Western Australia, Extent, Type and Status. Resource Management Technical Report 249. Department of Agriculture, Western Australia.

State of Western Australia (2005) AgMaps Land Manager CD Rom

6. Glossary

Term	Meaning
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management
DAWA	Department of Agriculture
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection (now DoE)
DoE	Department of Environment
DoIR	Department of Industry and Resources
DRF	Declared Rare Flora
EPP	Environmental Protection Policy
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community
WRC	Water and Rivers Commission (now DoE)