Department of Environment and Conservation

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.:	1397/1
Permit type:	Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name:	Owner Judeen Nominees Pty Ltd

1.3. Property details

Property:	LOT 10850 ON PLAN 210795 (House No. 1433 GARIBALDI WILLIS WARRADARGE 6518)
Local Government Area:	Shire Of Coorow
Colloquial name:	

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
	170	Mechanical Removal	Cropping

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 49: Shrublands; mixed heath. Beard vegetation association 379: Shrublands; scrub-heath on lateritic sandplain in the central Geraldton Sandplain Region. (Hopkins et al. 2001, Shepherd et al. 2001)	The vegetation under application consists of Eucalyptus todtiana (coastal blackbutt) isolated paddock trees, which occur within agricultural paddocks, and thus are the only native vegetation remaining. In some of the paddocks good sections of remnant vegetation have been retained, indicating the nature of the original vegetation. Compared with these remnants, the paddock trees that are under application are considered to represent a degraded form of the original vegetation.	Degraded: Structure severely disturbed; regeneration to good condition requires intensive management (Keighery 1994)	The condition of the vegetation was assessed during a site visit conducted on the 8th September 2006. (Site Visit DEC Officer, 8 September 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 proposed clearing consists of 170 Eucalyptus todtiana (coastal blackbutt) isolated paddock trees. The blackbutt trees occur within agricultural paddocks, and are the only native vegetation remaining. In some of the paddocks good sections of remnant vegetation have been retained, indicating the nature of the original vegetation. Compared with these remnants, the paddock trees that are under application are considered to represent a degraded form of the original vegetation. (Site visit DEC Officer, 2006)

The level of disturbance, previous agricultural use of the area under application and limited diversity of native species suggests that the original biodiversity has been significantly compromised. It is therefore unlikely that 170 paddock trees are representative of an area of outstanding biodiversity in the Bioregion or local area.

Methodology

Site visit, DEC Officer 2006.
GIS Databases:
- CALM Managed Lands & Waters - CALM 01/07/05
- Register of National Estate - EA 28/01/03

(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 proposed clearing consists of 170 Eucalyptus todtiana (coastal blackbutt) isolated paddock trees. The blackbutt trees occur within agricultural paddocks, and are the only native vegetation remaining. In some of the paddocks good sections of remnant vegetation have been retained, indicating the nature of the original vegetation. Compared with these remnants, the paddock trees that are under application are considered to represent a degraded form of the original vegetation. (Site visit DEC Officer, 2006)

The level of disturbance, previous agricultural use of the area under application and limited diversity of native species suggests that the original biodiversity and habitat value has been significantly compromised. It is therefore unlikely that the area under application will provide a significant habitat for indigenous fauna.

Methodology Site visit DEC Officer, 2006.

(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 six records of Declared Rare Flora and two records of Priority Flora species occurring within 10km of the area under application, with the closest occurring within 9km. The proposed clearing consists of 170 Eucalyptus todtiana (coastal blackbutt) isolated paddock trees. The blackbutt trees occur within agricultural paddocks, and are the only native vegetation remaining (Site visit DEC Officer, 2006). It is therefore unlikely that this proposal includes or is necessary for the continued existence of rare flora.

Methodology Site visit DEC Officer, 2006.
GIS Databases:
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 proposed clearing (the nearest approximately 20 km away). Therefore, it is unlikely that the proposed clearing is at variance with this principle.

Methodology GIS Databases:
Threatened Ecological Communities - CALM 12/04/05

(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 area under application falls within the Geraldton Sandplains Bioregion, which has 42.2% of native vegetation remaining (Shepherd et al, 2001), making it depleted by conservation status standards (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002). In addition, the Shire of Coorow and Beard Vegetation Association type 49 has 38.8% and 45.3% of native vegetation remaining respectively (Shepherd et al, 2001). Beard vegetation association type 379 has only 20.7% of native vegetation remaining, making it vulnerable by conservation status standards (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002).

The Geraldton Sandplains, Shire of Coorow and Beard Vegetation Association type 49 all have greater than 30% of their original extent remaining. Beard Vegetation Association type is below the 30% threshold recommended for conservation (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002), however is well represented on conservation estate with 22.4% in secure tenure. In addition the vegetation under application comprises of 170 paddock trees in a degraded condition (Site visit DEC Officer, 8 September 2006).

The area under application falls within the Intensive Landuse Zone and therefore EPA Position Statement No 2 applies. However as the condition of the vegetation is degraded and the isolated paddocks trees are no longer representative of the original vegetation association it is unlikely that this proposal is at variance with this Principle.

	Pre-European area (ha)*	Current extent (ha)*	Remaining %	Conservation status**	Reserves/CALM-managed land, %
IBRA Bioregion - Geraldton Sandplains	3,316,277***	1,324,440***	42.2	Depleted	35.6
Shire ý Coorow	424,583***	164,895***	38.8	Depleted	Not available
Beard veg type ý 49	52,494	23,802	45.3	Depleted	40.4

Beard veg type ý 379	547,767	113,427	20.7	Vulnerable	22.4

* (Shepherd et al. 2001)
** (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002)
***Area within the Intensive Landuse Zone

Methodology Site visit DEC Officer, 8 September 2006.
Shepherd et al, 2001.
Keighery 1994
Department of Natural Resources and Environment, 2002
GIS Databases:
- Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia - EA 18/10/00
- Pre-European Vegetation - DA 01/01
- Local Government Authorities - DLI 08/07/04
- EPA Position Statement No 2 Agriculture Region - DEP 12/00

(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 at variance to this Principle**
The area under application does not contain any features representative of a watercourse or wetland (Site visit DEC Officer, 2006). Therefore this proposal is not at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Site visit, DEC Officer 2006.
GIS Databases:
Hydrography, linear - DoE 01/02/04

(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**
DAFWA (2006) advised that 'The clearing of these scattered trees is unlikely to cause land degradation in terms of salinity, wind and water erosion, waterlogging or flooding. In the sandy soil type present on the property there is a wind erosion hazard and degradation can occur if not managed properly. However, the selective amount of vegetation in each area to be removed is unlikely to enhance the risk of wind erosion on this property. Therefore, this clearing is unlikely to be at variance with principle (g).'

This proposal is therefore unlikely to be at variance with this principle.

Methodology DAFWA, 2006.
Site visit DEC Officer, 2006.

(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 Alexander Morrison National Park occurs within 7.5km of the area under application. In addition the Tathra National Park and South Eneabba Nature Reserve both occur within 20km of the area under application.

The proposed clearing consists of 170 Eucalyptus todtiana (coastal blackbutt) isolated paddock trees. The blackbutt trees occur within agricultural paddocks, and are the only native vegetation remaining. Due to the distance to any conservation reserve and as the trees are isolated within paddocks this proposal is therefore not likely to be at variance with this Principle.

Methodology Site visit, DEC Officer 2006.
GIS Databases:
- CALM Regional Parks - CALM 12/04/02
- CALM Managed Lands & Waters - CALM 01/07/05
- Proposed National Parks FMP-CALM 19/03/03
- Register of National Estate - EA 28/01/03

(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**
DAFWA (2006) advise that 'It is unlikely that the clearing of up to 170 trees will contribute to groundwater rise and salinity at this site. There is little evidence of salinity in the catchment and the few trees that are to be cleared are unlikely to impact on groundwater hydrology.' DAFWA (2006) further advised that 'The clearing of

trees for cropping on this property is unlikely to cause eutrophication of any waterways.'

It is therefore unlikely that this proposal will cause deterioration in the quality or surface or underground water.

Methodology DAFWA (2006).
GIS Databases:
- Public Drinking Water Sources (PDWSAs) - 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

DAFWA (2006) advise that 'It is unlikely that the proposed clearing will contribute to waterlogging and flooding. The Co 8 sub-system degradation analysis indicates a minimal risk of waterlogging and flooding. The high infiltration rates of the sandy soils as well as the remaining stands of vegetation reduce the likelihood of waterlogging or flooding in this area.'

This proposal is therefore not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology DAFWA (2006).
GIS Databases :
- Hydrography, linear - DoE 01/02/04
- Soils, Statewide - DA 11/99

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

Comments

The Shire of Coorow has not advised the Department of any planning approvals or requirements needed.

A regional DoE team consultation was undertaken and there is no other RIWI Act Licence, Works Approval or EP Act Licence that will affect the area under application.

The EPA received the Shire of Coorow TPS 2, District Zoning Scheme that included the area under application. The scheme amendment was not assessed (no appeals) and no significant environmental factors were identified. The level of assessment was set in November 1996.

There is a Native Title claim over the area under application, however as the property is freehold land Native Title is extinguished.

The area falls within the Intensive Landuse Zone and therefore the EPA Position Statement No. 2 applies.

Methodology

4. Assessor's comments

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Comment
Cropping	Mechanical Removal	170	The assessable criteria have been addressed and no objections were raised. The assessing officer therefore recommends that the permit should be granted.

5. References

DAFWA (2006) Land degradation assessment report. Office of the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation, Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia. DEC TRIM Ref DOC6681.

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.

Hopkins, A.J.M., Beeston, G.R. and Harvey J.M. (2001) A database on the vegetation of Western Australia. Stage 1. CALMScience after J. S. Beard, late 1960's to early 1980's Vegetation Survey of Western Australia, UWA Press.

Hussey, B.M.J., Keighery, G.J., Cousens R.D., Dodd, J. and Lloyd, S.G. (1997) Western Weeds. A guide to the weeds of Western Australia. The Plant Protection Society of Western Australia (Inc). Victoria Park, Western Australia.

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.

Site Visit Report (2006) Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), Western Australia. DEC TRIM ref DOC16790.

6. Glossary

Term	Meaning
BCS	Biodiversity Coordination Section of DEC
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management (now BCS)
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation
DEP	Department of Environmental Protection (now DEC)
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 DEC)