Department of Environment and Conservation

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 1770/1

Permit type: Area Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: Kevin Arthur Wealand

1.3. Property details

Property: LOT 1954 ON PLAN 203002 (KARRIDALE 6288)

Local Government Area: Shire Of Augusta-Margaret River

Colloquial name:

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
2		Mechanical Removal	Fence Line Maintenance
		Mechanical Removal	Grazing & Pasture
		Mechanical Removal	Fence Line Maintenance
		Burning	Grazing & Pasture

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 Associations: -No.1: Tall forest of Karri (Eucalyptus diverscolor). -No:3: Tall woodland of Tuart (Eucalyptus gomphocephala). Mattiske Vegetation Complx: Glenanty Hills (H): Open forests of Eucalyptus marginata subsp. marginata, Corymbia calophylla, Banksia grandis with some Eucalyptus diversicolor on upland and slopes in hyperhumid and perhumid zones. Glenarty Hills (Hw): A mixture of open forests of Eucalyptus diversicolor, Callistachys lanceolata and woodlands of Eucalyptus patens and Corymbia calophylla. Also, woodlands of Eucalyptus rudis and Melaleuca rhaphiophylla on depressions in hyperhumid and perhumid zones.	The vegetation within the application area is considered to be in 'Average' to 'Poor' condition (DAFWA, 2007).	Degraded: Structure severely disturbed; regeneration to good condition requires intensive management (Keighery 1994)	The vegetation condition has been determined from a site visit conducted by DAFWA (2007). The application area appears to have been historically cleared and the vegetation appears to be regrowth with some mature trees still remaining. There appears to be little to no understorey.

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 application area's structure has been modified but still retains basic structure and the ability to regenerate (Keighery 1994)

The application area appears to have been historically cleared and the vegetation appears to be regrowth with some mature trees still remaining. There appears to be little to no understorey (DAFWA, 2007).

Given the relatively small area to be cleared (2.0ha) the modified and degraded condition under application and that there are no known records of any specially protected flora and fauna or Threatened Ecological Communities within the application area it is unlikely the proposed clearing will be at variance to this principle.

Methodology

Keighery (1994)
DAFWA (2007)

(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 may be at variance to this Principle

There are no known records of any specially protected fauna species within the application area.

There are 52 records of 2 'Critically Endangered', 2 records of 1 'Endangered', 19 records of 9 'Vulnerable' and 18 records of 8 'Priority' species occurring within the 10km local area of the application. The closest record, White-Bellied Frog, Geocrinia alba, is located 850m north west of the application area.

It is unlikely that the White-Bellied Frog would be found within the application as the species is found in very dense vegetation (to 4m high) on clay bordering streams and seeps (Western Australian Museum, 2006). This species occurs in swamps along creeklines in broad U-shaped valleys in the Witchcliffe-Karridale area. Most surviving populations of this species occur on private land. The application area general occupies the mid-slope in the landscape and the proposed area has been modified and appears to have little to no understorey (DAFWA, 2007).

The remaining remnants within the application area may be utilised by the Western Ringtail Possum, Pseudocheirus occidentalis. If the large trees are left then the only major threat is to Western Ringtail possum habitat and the possums themselves (Species and Communities, 2007).

The application area appears to have been historically cleared and the vegetation appears to be regrowth with some mature trees still remaining. There appears to be little to no understorey (DAFWA, 2007).

The intented and historical use of the property is for livestock grazing and pasture.

There are extensive areas of remnant vegetation remaining within the 10km local area. It is unlikely that the 2.0 hectares of vegetation within the application area would be considered 'significant' habitat in a local context, however the remaining remnants may be utilised by the Western Ringtail Possum therefore the proposal maybe at variance to this principle.

To ensure this species and any other threatened species are identified and managed accordingly, conditions have been imposed on the permit to ensure an inspection is undertaken by a fauna specialist to identify the presence of any threatened species within the areas proposed for clearing.

Methodology

Western Australian Museum (2006)
Species and Communities (2007)
DAFWA (2007)
SAC Bio Datasets (070807)

(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 records of any Rare or Priority flora species within the application area.

There are 2 records of 1 Declared Rare taxa and 97 records of 17 Priority flora species occurring in the 10km local area (SAC Bio Datasets 070807). The closest record, Acacia subracemosa (Priority 2) is approximately 2.3km south west of the application area (SAC Bio Datasets 070807).

The application area appears to have been historically cleared and the vegetation appears to be regrowth with some mature trees still remaining. There appears to be little to no understorey (DAFWA, 2007).

Given the 'Degarded' condition of the vegetation, the little to no understorey it is not likely that this proposal will be at variance to this principle.

Methodology DAFWA (2007)
SAC Bio Datasets (070807)

(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 known records of any Threatened Ecological Communities within the application area.

There is 1 occurrence of 1 Threatened Ecological Community and 2 records of 1 Priority Ecological Community within the 10km local area. The closest of the records, community type Reedia Swamps - Blackwood Plateau (Reedia spathacea, Empodisma gracillimum and Sporadanthus rivulas dominated floodplains and paluslopes of the Blackwood Plateau), is a 'Priority' community approximately 4.4km north east of the application (SAC Bio Datasets, 070807).

From GIS Database analysis the (PEC) community occurrences are associated with similar vegetation and soil complexes. However, both PEC's are linked to floodplains. The application is not associated with a floodplain and the application generally occupies the mid slope in the landscape (DAFWA, 2007).

The application area appears to have been historically cleared and the vegetation appears to be regrowth with some mature trees still remaining. There appears to be little to no understorey (DAFWA, 2007).

Given, the modified and degraded condition and the differences in hydrology and position in the landscape it is unlikely the clearing will be at variance to this principle.

Methodology Keighery (1994)
DEC (2007)
DAFWA (2007)
SAC Bio Datasets (070807)
GIS Database:
-Soils, Statewide - DA 11/99
-Mattiske Vegetation - CALM 24/3/98
-Pre-European Vegetation - DA 01/01

(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 National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005 (AGPS, 2001) recognises that the retention of 30% or more of the pre-clearing extent of each ecological community is the target.

	Pre-European (ha)	Current extent (ha)	Remaining (%)	Conservation** status	% In reserves DEC Managed Land
IBRA Bioregions****					
Warren^	834,053	657,114	78.8	Least Concern	N/A
Shire*					
Augusta-Margaret River	222,718	159,679	71.7	Least Concern	N/A
Mattiske Vegetation Complex***					
Glenarty Hills (H)	7,710	2,598	33.7	Depleted	N/A
Glenarty Hills (Hw)	2,736	1,002	36.6	Depleted	N/A
Beard Vegetation Complex****					
No. 1	72,413	56,799	78.4	Least Concern	N/A
No. 3	2,661,514	1,863,982	70.0	Least Concern	N/A

* (Shepherd et al. 2001)
** (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002)
*** (Mattiske Consulting 1998)
**** (Shepherd et al. 2006)
^ Area within Intensive Land Use Zone

None of the vegetation complexes associated with this application area are below the National Objective and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001-2005 (AGPS, 2001) biodiversity target of 30%.

There are extensive areas of remnant vegetation remaining within the 10km local area. It is unlikely that the 2.0 hectares of vegetation within the application area would be considered 'significant' as a remnant in a local context.

The application area appears to have been historically cleared and the vegetation appears to be regrowth with some mature trees still remaining. There appears to be little to no understorey (DAFWA, 2007). Due to the 'Degarded' condition of the vegetation under application it is unlikely to be significant as a remaining remnant.

Given the above, it is not likely that this proposal will be at variance to this principle.

Methodology AGPS (2001)
Shepherd et al. (2006)
Shepherd et al. (2001)
Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002)
Mattiske Consulting (1998)
GIS databases:
- Mattiske Vegetation - CALM 24/3/98
- Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia - EM 18/10/00
- Local Government Authorities - DLI 8/07/04
- Pre European Vegetation - DA 01/01

(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 may be at variance to this Principle

The application is associated with two minor tributories.

The closest record is the minor tributary (non-perennial) that transects the northern section of the application area and borders the remainder of the applications northern boundary. There is one ANCA wetland (Blackwood River) approximately 6.6km east of the application area and no Ramsar wetlands within the 10km local area.

The native vegetation within the application has been highly modified. However, a small portion of the application area is associated with one of these tributories.

The vegetation may have some significant value for this tributary but the proposal is unlikely to have any deleterious effect on this water course if cleared as the application has been highly modified. The minor tributary already crosses a fenceline and an access track on the western boundary of the property therefore measures relating to the impacts on the watercourse from the track construction should have been previously addressed.

Given that a minor tributary (non-perennial) transects the northern section of one of the application areas and borders the northern section of another the vegetation within the application is directly associated with this watercourse this proposal may be at variance to this principle.

Methodology GIS Databases:
-Hydrography, linear - DOE 1/2/04
-Geomorphic Wetlands, Augusta to Walpole - DOE 18/6/03
-Geodata, Lakes - GA 28/06/02
-RAMSAR, Wetlands - CALM 14/02/03
-EPP, Wetlands 2004 (DRAFT) - DOE 21/7/04
-EPP, South West Agricultural Zone Wetlands - DEP 10/10/01
-EPP, Lakes - DEP 1/12/92
-ANCA, Wetlands - CALM 08/01

(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 proposed clearing (2.0ha) is unlikely to cause appreciable land degradation (DAFWA, 2007).

The application area was mapped as having a moderate to low acid sulfate soil risk and a groundwater salinity of 1000-3000 mg/L with a small area of the application with a salinity risk.

Given the above, the proposal is not likely to be at variance to this principle.

Methodology DAFWA (2007)

GIS Databases:
-Acid Sulfate Soil Risk Map, Lower South West - DEC
-Groundwater Salinity, Statewide - DOW
-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 nearest conservation area is the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park 2.3 km west of the application area. The application is not joined to the conservation area by any 'significant' remaining remnant vegetation.

The vegetation within the application appears to be in a 'Degarded' condition. The application appears to have been historically cleared and the vegetation appears to be regrowth with some mature trees still remaining.

There appears to be little to no understorey (DAFWA, 2007).

Given the above, it is not likely that the proposed clearing will be at variance to this principle.

Methodology

DAFWA (2007)
GIS Databases:
-Leeuwin 50cm Orthomosaic - Landgate04
-CALM Estate (statewide)

(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 vegetation under this application is within the Hardy Estuary - Blackwood River catchment.

The risk of salinity and eutrophication causing land degradation is low (DAFWA, 2007) the application area was also mapped as having a moderate to low Acid Sulphate Soils risk and a groundwater salinity of 1000-3000 mg/L.

Given the relatively small area to be cleared (2.0ha), the low risk of salinity, eutrophication and the modified and degraded condition under application it is unlikely the proposed clearing will be at variance to this principle.

Methodology

DAFWA (2007)
GIS Databases:
-Hydrographic Catchments - Catchments - DOW
-Acid Sulfate Soil Risk Map, Lower South West - DEC
-Groundwater Salinity, Statewide - DOW
-Salinity Risk LM 25m - DOLA 00

(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 clearing of further vegetation from the area under this application is unlikely to significantly increase surface runoff, which would contribute to stream flows, and the risk of increased flooding causing land degradation is low (DAFWA, 2007).

Given the above, the proposal is not likely to be at variance with this principle.

Methodology

DAFWA (2007)
GIS Database:
-Topographic Contours, Statewide - DOLA 12/09/02_1
-Spot Heights

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

Comments

The property is zoned Rural under the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River Town Planning Scheme No.11.

The area is subject to a native title claim - South West Boojarah - over the area under application. As the property is freehold the granting of the clearing permit would be a secondary approval and does not constitute a future act under the Native Title Act 1993.

No other approvals from the Department of Environment and Conservation or Department of Water are required

for this proposal.

A submission was received in relation to past clearing activities on the property.

Methodology

GIS Databases:
-CAWSA (DOW 2004)
-Aboriginal Sites of Significance (DIA 2007)
-Native Title Claims (DLI 2005)
-NLWRA Land Use DAFWA 2001
-RIWI Act Groundwater & Surface Water Areas (WRC 2002)

4. Assessor's comments

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Comment
Fence Line Maintenance	Mechanical Removal	2	The asessable criteria have been addressed, the proposal was found may be to be at variance to Principle (b) and (f) and not likely to be at variance to all remaining Principles. If the proposal is granted specific conditions should be imposed to address fauna, Dieback, weeds, records and reporting.
Fence Line Maintenance	Mechanical Removal		
Grazing & Pasture	Mechanical Removal		
Grazing & Pasture	Burning		

5. References

AGPS (2001) The national objective and targets for biodiversity conservation 2001-2005. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

DAFWA Land degradation assessment report. Office of the Commissioner of Soil and Land Conservation, Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia. DoE TRIM ref XXXXX.

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.

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

Mattiske Consulting (1998) Mapping of vegetation complexes in the South West forest region of Western Australia, CALM (updated 2003).

Mattiske Consulting (1998) Mapping of vegetation complexes in the South West forest region of Western Australia, CALM.

SAC Bio Datasets (070807) Department of Environment and Conservation, Kensington, 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.

Shepherd, D.P., Beeston, G.R. and Hopkins, A.J.M. (2001a) Native Vegetation in Western Australia, Extent, Type and Status. Resource Management Technical Report 249. Department of Agriculture, Western Australia (updated 2006).

Species and Communities (2007) Department of Environment and Conservation, Kensington, Western Australia.

Western Australian Museum "Alcoa Frog Watch" (2006) <http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/frogwatch/index.asp> (29 October 2007).

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)