Department of Environment and Conservation

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 2519/1
Permit type: Area Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: MR Andrew Macnish CEO Shire of Busselton

1.3. Property details

Property: SUSSEX LOCATION 4532 (ABBEY 6280)
Local Government Area: Shire Of Busselton
Colloquial name:

1.4. Application

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

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 990: Low forest: peppermint (Agonis flexuosa)	The proposal is for the clearing of 0.111ha of native vegetation of degraded condition attributed to vehicle access and weed intrusion. The proposed clearing is for the purpose of infrastructural improvements to the site's boat ramp facilities.	Degraded: Structure severely disturbed; regeneration to good condition requires intensive management (Keighery 1994)	Vegetation condition was determined from site photographs and aerial mapping Busselton 50cm Orthomosaic (DLI 04).

3. Assessment of application against clearing principles

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

Comments
Refer to K.

Methodology

(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
Refer to K.

Methodology

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

Comments
Refer to K.

Methodology

(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
Refer to K.

Methodology

(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

Refer to K.

Methodology

(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

Refer to K.

Methodology

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

Comments

Refer to K.

Methodology

(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

Refer to K.

Methodology

(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

Refer to K.

Methodology

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

Comments

The proposal to clear up to 0.111 hectares for the purpose of boatramp upgrades is unlikely to have any significant environmental impacts.

The area under application is mapped as Beard Vegetation Association 990 (Hopkins et al. 2001), Low forest: peppermint (Agonis flexuosa), in degraded condition (Coastwise 2001). The soil type mapped for the applied area is described as coastal dune formations backed by the low-lying deposits of inlets and estuaries: chief soils are calcareous sands on the dunes. Associated are various and acid peat soils in the swale behind the coastal dunes.

Whilst there are 13 recorded occurrences of declared threatened fauna within the local area (10km radius), only 2 are associated with the vegetation of applied area, namely Phascogale tapoatafa and Pseudocheirus occidentalis. With the degraded state of the applied area, and considering the abundance of similar vegetation complex of better condition, the clearing is not likely to have a impact the habitat for these species.

Within the local area (10km radius), 22 rare flora and 19 priority flora recordings have been made. Of these, the only species within the same soil type and vegetation complex as the applied area is Johnsonia inconspicua (priority 3), which occurs approximately 7.5km East. As this species' preferred habitat is a swampland, it is not likely to occur in the applied area.

There are 19 threatened ecological communities (TEC) within a 10 kilometre radius of the applied area, none of which occur within the same soil or vegetation types as the applied area, and the applied area is not within the buffer for any TEC.

There is approximately 74.2% of the pre-European extent of Beard Vegetation Association 990 remaining (Shepherd, 2006). Clearing of this small area is unlikely to significantly impact the amount of remnant native vegetation.

The application area is located within the Geographe Bay Catchment. The application area includes 3 water courses. The vegetation communities identified as being associated with the water courses do not occur within the proposed clearing site.

The soil type mapped for the application area is predominantly calcareous sands, and therefore is at high risk of wind erosion following clearing. Given the size of the area to be cleared and the current degraded nature of the vegetation, however, any wind erosion is not likely to cause appreciable land degradation.

There are 3 conservation areas within the local area (10km radius), namely Locke Nature Reserve, The Broadwater and an unnamed nature reserve. The proposed clearing does not provide a linkage between these conservation areas, and as such is not likely to impact on their environmental values.

It is considered that the clearing as proposed is not likely to be at variance with any of the clearing principles.

Methodology GIS Database:

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

Comments

No submissions from the public have been received.

No EP Act licences or approvals are required.

There is currently a registered claim of native title over the applied area for the Harris family and the South West Boojarah people. The Department of Environment and Conservation's advertising of the application in the West Australian newspaper constitutes legal notification of the native title representative body for the purpose of the future act procedures under the Native Title Act 1993. No response was received from the representative body.

There are Aboriginal Sites of Significance within the Shire of Busselton, the closest occuring 0.7Km to the southwest of the proposed clearing. The DEC recommends consulting with local indigenous groups about the impact of the proposed clearing on these registered sites.

Methodology GIS Database:
Native Title Claims
Aboriginal Sites of Significance

4. Assessor's comments

Comment

This proposal has been assessed against the clearing principles and has been found to be not likely to be at variance to any of the principles.

5. References

Coastwise (2001). Geographe Bay Foreshore Management Plan. Shire of Busselton and the Geographe Bay Catchment Council, Perth, Western Australia. Available from: http://www.busselton.wa.gov.au/files/geographe_bay_foreshore_management_plan.pdf. Accessed 2008-06-11

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (2008a). Balaenoptera borealis in Species Profile and Threats Database, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Canberra. Available from: http://www.environment.gov.au/sprat. Accessed 2008-06-11

Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (2008b). Dermochelys coriacea in Species Profile and Threats Database, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Canberra. Available from: http://www.environment.gov.au/sprat. Accessed 2008-06-11

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.

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

Natural Heritage Division Environment Australia (2001). National recovery plan for Albatrosses and Giant-petrels. Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

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Rhind, S. G. (1996). Habitat tree requirements and the effects of removal during logging on the marsupial brush-tailed phascogale (Phascogale tapoatafa tapoatafa) in Western Australia. The Western Australian Naturalist 21: 1-22. In http://www.naturebase.net/projects/west_shield.html

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Shepherd, D.P. (2006). Adapted from: Shepherd, D.P., Beeston, G.R., and Hopkins, A.J.M. (2001), Native Vegetation in Western Australia. Technical Report 249. Department of Agriculture Western Australia, South Perth. Includes subsequent updates for 2006 from Vegetation Extent dataset ANZWA1050000124.
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.

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)