



Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 4757/1
Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: **Robe River Limited**

1.3. Property details

Property: *Iron Ore (Robe River) Agreement Act 1964*, Special Lease for Mining Operations Lease 3116/6347, Lot 63 on Deposited Plan 54651

Local Government Area: Shire of Ashburton

Colloquial name: Deepdale Rail Project

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
1.7		Mechanical Removal	Borrow pits and associated activities

1.5. Decision on application

Decision on Permit Application: Grant
Decision Date: 2 February 2012

2. Site Information

2.1. Existing environment and information

2.1.1. Description of the native vegetation under application

Vegetation Description

Beard vegetation associations have been mapped for the whole of Western Australia and are useful to look at vegetation in a regional context. One Beard vegetation association has been mapped within the application area:

Beard vegetation association 603:

Hummock grasslands, shrub steppe; kanji over soft Spinifex & *Triodia wiseana* on basalt (Shepherd, 2009; GIS Database).

Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2010) conducted a flora survey of the application area and surrounding areas on 20 and 21 August 2010, and described one vegetation community of the application area:

- *Acacia inaequilatera* scattered tall shrubs over *Triodia wiseana* hummock grassland. Associated species include: *Bonamia media* var. *villosa*, *Acacia ancistrocarpa*, *Corchorus laniflorus*, *Senna glutinosa* subsp. *glutinosa*, *Eremophila fraseri* and *Trichodesma zeylanicum*.

Clearing Description

Robe River Ltd is proposing to clear up to 1.7 hectares of native vegetation within a 2 hectare application area for the purpose of borrow pits and associated activities.

The vegetation will be cleared using a dozer, blade down. The vegetation and topsoil will be stockpiled separately for use in rehabilitation.

Vegetation Condition

Degraded: Structure severely disturbed; regeneration to good condition requires intensive management (Keighery, 1994).

To:

Very Good: Vegetation structure altered; obvious signs of disturbance (Keighery, 1994).

Comment

The application area is located in the Chichester subregion of Western Australia and is situated approximately 110 kilometres south of the Karratha town site (GIS Database).

The vegetation condition was derived from a vegetation survey conducted by Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2010).

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 areas occur within the Chichester subregion of the Pilbara Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA) bioregion (GIS Database). This subregion is characterised by undulating Archaean granite and basalt plains which include significant areas of basaltic ranges. Plains support a shrub steppe characterised by *Acacia inaequilatera* over *Triodia wiseana* hummock grasslands, while *Eucalyptus leucophloia* tree steppes occur on ranges (CALM, 2002).

The vegetation within the application area is broadly mapped as Beard vegetation association 603, which has approximately 99% of its pre-European vegetation extent remaining in the bioregion (Shepherd, 2009; GIS Database). Several flora and vegetation surveys have been conducted adjacent to the application area, one by Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2010) between 20 to 21 August 2011 and two by Pilbara Iron (2007a; 2007b). The flora and vegetation represented within the survey area was considered to be characteristic of the Chichester sub-region flora. There were no flora taxa of high conservation values recorded (Rio Tinto Iron ore, 2010; Pilbara Iron 2007a; Pilbara Iron 2007b). A desktop survey conducted by Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2011) over the application area indicated that the vegetation type and flora taxa would be very similar to the area adjacent to the application area previously surveyed by Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2010) and Pilbara Iron (2007a; 2007b). Aerial photography suggests that the condition of the vegetation was determined to be 'good' with few areas which were affected by historic exploration in 'degraded' condition (Keighery, 1994; GIS Database).

A search of the Department of Environment and Conservation Declared Rare and Priority Flora databases revealed that no Declared Rare Flora (DRF) species and two Priority species may potentially occur within a 20 kilometre radius of the application area (DEC, 2011). Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2010) and Pilbara Flora (2007a; 2007b) identified no DRF or Priority flora species within the adjacent survey area. No Threatened Ecological Communities were recorded during the botanical survey or have previously been recorded within the application area (Rio Tinto Iron Ore, 2011; GIS Database). The application area is located with the buffer zone of a Priority Ecological Community "Subterranean invertebrate communities of mesas in the Robe Valley region" (GIS Database). The proposed activity of borrow extraction does not occur on mesic habitat and would not be expected to impact this community.

No introduced flora species were recorded within the application area by the desktop survey (Rio Tinto Iron Ore, 2011) or on available databases (DEC, 2011). Care must be taken to ensure that the proposed clearing activities do not spread or introduce weed species to non-infested areas. Potential impacts to biodiversity as a result of the proposed clearing may be minimised by the implementation of a weed management condition.

One fauna habitat type was identified within the application area and is considered to be common and widespread within the subregion and faunal assemblages are unlikely to be different to that found in similar habitat located elsewhere in the region (Rio Tinto Iron Ore, 2011; GIS Database). There were no unique or significant faunal assemblages found within the application area (Rio Tinto Iron Ore, 2011; GIS Database). The clearing of 1.7 hectares of native vegetation is unlikely to have a significant impact in a regional and local context.

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology DEC (2011)
CALM (2002)
Keighery (1994)
Pilbara Iron (2007a)
Pilbara Iron (2007b)
Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2010)
Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2011)
Shepherd (2009)
GIS Database:
- Elvire 1.4m Orthomosaic - Landgate 2004
- IBRA WA (Regions - Subregions)
- Pre-European vegetation
- Threatened Ecological Sites Buffered

(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**

No targeted fauna surveys have been conducted over the application area. A flora survey conducted by Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2010) adjacent to the application area identified one broad fauna habitat type, which has been inferred through aerial imagery to be similar to the application area (GIS Database);

- Upper tablelands supporting *Acacia inaequilatera* scattered tall shrubs over *Triodia wiseana* hummock grassland (Rio Tinto Iron Ore, 2010).

This habitat condition ranged from 'degraded' to 'very good' with historical clearing reducing the condition within the application area (Rio Tinto Iron Ore, 2010; Keighery, 1994). No significant fauna habitats were identified in aerial photography, the desktop survey or the flora survey (GIS Database; Rio Tinto Iron Ore, 2010; Rio Tinto Iron Ore, 2011), and the habitat present within the application area is considered to be widespread within the region (CALM, 2002).

There were no conservation significant fauna species listed as either a Threatened Species under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* or protected under Western Australian legislation (*Wildlife Conservation Act, 1950*), that may potentially occur within a 20 kilometre radius of the application area (DEC, 2011).

Given the small scale of proposed clearing and the low impact nature of the project, the proposed clearing of 1.7 hectares of native vegetation within a 2 hectare application area is not likely to impact critical feeding or breeding habitat for any conservation significant fauna species as the application area does not contain significant habitat for the potential species.

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology DEC (2011)
Keighery (1994)
Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2010)
Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2011)
Shepherd (2009)
GIS Database:
- Elvire 1.4m Orthomosaic - Landgate 2004
- Pre-European Vegetation
- IBRA WA (regions - subregions)
- Threatened Fauna

(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

According to available databases, there are no records of Declared Rare Flora (DRF) within the application area (GIS Database). A search of the Department of Environment and Conservation Declared Rare and Priority Flora databases identified no DRF species as occurring within a 20 kilometre radius of the application area (DEC, 2011).

Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2010) conducted a vegetation and flora survey of an area adjacent to the application area in 2010. No DRF were recorded within the survey area.

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology DEC (2011)
Rio Tinto (2010)
GIS Database:
- Declared Rare and Priority Flora List

(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

A search of the available databases shows that there are no Threatened Ecological Communities situated within 100 kilometres of the application area (GIS Database).

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology GIS Database:
- Threatened Ecological Sites Buffered

(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 at variance to this Principle

The application area falls within the Pilbara IBRA bioregion (GIS Database). The vegetation within the application area is recorded as:

Beard vegetation association 603: Hummock grasslands, shrub steppe; kanji over soft Spinifex & *Triodia wiseana* on basalt (Shepherd, 2009; GIS Database).

According to Shepherd (2009), Beard vegetation association 603 retains approximately 100% of its pre-European extent. Therefore, the area proposed to be cleared is not a significant remnant of native vegetation in an area that has been extensively cleared.

	Pre-European area (ha)*	Current extent (ha)*	Remaining %*	Conservation Status**	Pre-European % in IUCN Class I-IV Reserves
IBRA Bioregion - Pilbara	17,804,193	17,758,001	~99.89	Least Concern	6.32
Beard vegetation associations - State					
603	388,455	388,455	~100	Least Concern	16.14
Beard vegetation associations - Bioregion					
603	388,455	388,455	~100	Least Concern	16.14

* Shepherd (2009)

** Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002)

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Department of Natural Resources and Environment (2002)
Shepherd (2009)
GIS Database:
- IBRA WA (regions - subregions)
- Pre-European Vegetation

(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

According to available databases there is one minor non-perennial drainage line overlapping the south-west area of the application area (GIS Database). Based on vegetation mapping by Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2010) there were no riparian vegetation associations found within the application area associated with the non-perennial drainage line.

The ephemeral drainage line located within the application area is only likely to flow following significant rainfall, the proposed clearing of 1.7 hectares of native vegetation within a 2 hectare application area is unlikely to result in any significant impact to any watercourse or wetland provided natural surface water flow patterns are not disturbed.

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2010)
GIS Database:
- Geodata, Lakes
- Hydrography, Linear
- Elvire 1.4m Orthomosaic - Landgate 2004

(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

According to available databases, the application area is comprised of the Rocklea land system.

The Rocklea Land System consists of lower slopes of shallow red loams or duplex soils that usually have protective stone mantles; stony plains of shallow red loam, sand or clay soils; and drainage line and drainage floor land units with a range of often shallow soils. The Rocklea Land System is quite resistant to soil erosion in its natural state (Van Vreeswyk et al., 2004).

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology Van Vreeswyk et al. (2004)
GIS Database
- Rangeland Land System Mapping

(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 application area is not located within any conservation area (GIS Database). The nearest conservation area is Millstream Chichester National Park, located approximately 50 kilometres east of the application area (GIS Database).

Given the distance of the application area from the Millstream Chichester National Park, the proposed clearing is not likely to provide a significant ecological linkage or fauna movement corridor and is not likely to impact the environmental values of the conservation area.

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology GIS Database:
- DEC Tenure

(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 application area is not located within a Public Drinking Water Source Area (PDWSA) (GIS Database). The application area is located within the proclaimed Pilbara groundwater area under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1994* (GIS Database). Any groundwater extraction and/or taking or diversion of surface water for the purposes other than domestic and/or stock watering is subject to licence by the Department of Water.

The application areas lies within a low rainfall zone and any surface water within the application area is likely to only remain for short periods following significant rainfall events (BoM, 2011). The proposed clearing is not likely to cause deterioration in the quality of any surface water within or outside of the application areas.

There are no permanent or ephemeral waterbodies located within the application area (GIS Database). Given there is a low average rainfall (224.7 millimetres) and there are no watercourses within the application area, the proposed clearing is not likely to cause sedimentation or deteriorate the quality of surface water in the nearby areas (BoM, 2011; GIS Database).

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology BoM (2011)
GIS Database:
- Geodata, Lakes
- Hydrography, Linear
- Public Drinking Water Source Areas

(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 application area experiences a semi-arid to semi-tropical climate with dry winters and summer rains, with an annual average rainfall of approximately 224.7 millimetres per year (CALM, 2002; BoM, 2011). Based on an average annual evaporation rate of 3,200 - 3,600 millimetres (BoM, 2011), any surface water resulting from rainfall events is likely to be relatively short lived.

Given the size of the area to be cleared (1.7 hectares) compared to the size of the Robe River catchment area (757,138 hectares) (GIS Database) it is not likely that the proposed clearing will lead to an appreciable increase in run off, and subsequently cause or exacerbate the incidence or intensity of flooding.

Based on the above, the proposed clearing is not likely to be at variance to this Principle.

Methodology BoM (2011)
CALM (2002)
GIS Database:
- Hydrographic Catchments - Catchments
- Hydrography, Linear

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

Comments

There is one Native Title claim over the area under application (WC99/12). The mining tenure has been granted in accordance with the future act regime of the *Native Title Act 1993* and the nature of the act (i.e. the proposed clearing activity) has been provided for in that process, therefore the granting of a clearing permit is not a future

act under the *Native Title Act 1993*.

There is no registered Aboriginal Site of Significance within the application area (GIS Database). It is the proponent's responsibility to comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972* and ensure that no Aboriginal sites of significance are damaged through the clearing process.

It is the proponent's responsibility to liaise with the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Water, to determine whether a Works Approval, Water Licence, Bed and Banks Permit, or any other licences or approvals are required for the proposed works.

The clearing permit application was advertised on 26 December 2011 by the Department of Mines and Petroleum inviting submissions from the public. No submissions were received in relation to the proposed clearing.

Methodology GIS Database:
- Aboriginal Sites of Significance
- Native Title Claims - Registered with the NNTT

4. References

- BoM (2011) Climate Statistics for Australian Locations. A Search for Climate Statistics for Mount Philip, Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology, viewed 16 January 2012, <http://reg.bom.gov.au/climate/averages/tables/cw_007058.shtml>.
- CALM (2002) A Biodiversity Audit of Western Australia's 53 Biogeographical Subregions. Pilbara 1 (PIL1 - Chichester subregion) Department of Conservation and Land Management, Western Australia.
- DEC (2011) NatureMap - Mapping Western Australia Biodiversity, Department of Environment and Conservation, viewed 16 January 2012, <<http://naturemap.dec.wa.gov.au>>.
- 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.
- Pilbara Iron (2007a) Botanical Survey Work for Mesa J Recovery Plan. Road Haulage Option (Along Rail Access Track) AR_07_02170. Unpublished internal report.
- Pilbara Iron (2007b) Botanical Survey Work for Deepdale Fibre Optic Communications Cable GD_06_01708 and GD_06_01709. Unpublished internal report.
- Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2010) Botanical Survey of the borrow pits on the Deepdale (Pannawonica to Cape Lambert) rail line. Unpublished internal report.
- Rio Tinto Iron Ore (2011) Statement Addressing the 10 Clearing Principles. Deepdale Rail Line Proposed Borrow Pit Extension. Unpublished internal report, November 2011
- Shepherd, D.P. (2009) 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.
- Van Vreeswyk, A.M.E., Payne, A.L., Hennig, P., and Leighton, K.A. (2004) An Inventory and Condition Survey of the Pilbara Region, Western Australia, Department of Agriculture, Western Australia.

5. Glossary

Acronyms:

BoM	Bureau of Meteorology, Australian Government
CALM	Department of Conservation and Land Management (now DEC), Western Australia
DAFWA	Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia
DEC	Department of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia
DEH	Department of Environment and Heritage (federal based in Canberra) previously Environment Australia
DEP	Department of Environment Protection (now DEC), Western Australia
DIA	Department of Indigenous Affairs
DLI	Department of Land Information, Western Australia
DMP	Department of Mines and Petroleum, Western Australia
DoE	Department of Environment (now DEC), Western Australia
DoIR	Department of Industry and Resources (now DMP), Western Australia
DOLA	Department of Land Administration, Western Australia
DoW	Department of Water
EP Act	Environmental Protection Act 1986, Western Australia
EPBC Act	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Federal Act)
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	Hectare (10,000 square metres)
IBRA	Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation for Australia
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – commonly known as the World Conservation Union

RIWI Act	Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914, Western Australia
s.17	Section 17 of the Environment Protection Act 1986, Western Australia
TEC	Threatened Ecological Community

Definitions:

{Atkins, K (2005). *Declared rare and priority flora list for Western Australia, 22 February 2005. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Como, Western Australia* }:-

- P1** **Priority One - Poorly Known taxa:** taxa which are known from one or a few (generally <5) populations which are under threat, either due to small population size, or being on lands under immediate threat, e.g. road verges, urban areas, farmland, active mineral leases, etc., or the plants are under threat, e.g. from disease, grazing by feral animals, etc. May include taxa with threatened populations on protected lands. Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in urgent need of further survey.
- P2** **Priority Two - Poorly Known taxa:** taxa which are known from one or a few (generally <5) populations, at least some of which are not believed to be under immediate threat (i.e. not currently endangered). Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in urgent need of further survey.
- P3** **Priority Three - Poorly Known taxa:** taxa which are known from several populations, at least some of which are not believed to be under immediate threat (i.e. not currently endangered). Such taxa are under consideration for declaration as 'rare flora', but are in need of further survey.
- P4** **Priority Four – Rare taxa:** taxa which are considered to have been adequately surveyed and which, whilst being rare (in Australia), are not currently threatened by any identifiable factors. These taxa require monitoring every 5–10 years.
- R** **Declared Rare Flora – Extant taxa (= Threatened Flora = Endangered + Vulnerable):** taxa which have been adequately searched for, and are deemed to be in the wild either rare, in danger of extinction, or otherwise in need of special protection, and have been gazetted as such, following approval by the Minister for the Environment, after recommendation by the State's Endangered Flora Consultative Committee.
- X** **Declared Rare Flora - Presumed Extinct taxa:** taxa which have not been collected, or otherwise verified, over the past 50 years despite thorough searching, or of which all known wild populations have been destroyed more recently, and have been gazetted as such, following approval by the Minister for the Environment, after recommendation by the State's Endangered Flora Consultative Committee.

{Wildlife Conservation (Specially Protected Fauna) Notice 2005} [Wildlife Conservation Act 1950] :-

- Schedule 1** **Schedule 1 – Fauna that is rare or likely to become extinct:** being fauna that is rare or likely to become extinct, are declared to be fauna that is need of special protection.
- Schedule 2** **Schedule 2 – Fauna that is presumed to be extinct:** being fauna that is presumed to be extinct, are declared to be fauna that is need of special protection.
- Schedule 3** **Schedule 3 – Birds protected under an international agreement:** being birds that are subject to an agreement between the governments of Australia and Japan relating to the protection of migratory birds and birds in danger of extinction, are declared to be fauna that is need of special protection.
- Schedule 4** **Schedule 4 – Other specially protected fauna:** being fauna that is declared to be fauna that is in need of special protection, otherwise than for the reasons mentioned in Schedules 1, 2 or 3.

{CALM (2005). *Priority Codes for Fauna. Department of Conservation and Land Management, Como, Western Australia* }:-

- P1** **Priority One: Taxa with few, poorly known populations on threatened lands:** Taxa which are known from few specimens or sight records from one or a few localities on lands not managed for conservation, e.g. agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, active mineral leases. The taxon needs urgent survey and evaluation of conservation status before consideration can be given to declaration as threatened fauna.
- P2** **Priority Two: Taxa with few, poorly known populations on conservation lands:** Taxa which are known from few specimens or sight records from one or a few localities on lands not under immediate threat of habitat destruction or degradation, e.g. national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, State forest, vacant Crown land, water reserves, etc. The taxon needs urgent survey and evaluation of conservation status before consideration can be given to declaration as threatened fauna.
- P3** **Priority Three: Taxa with several, poorly known populations, some on conservation lands:** Taxa which are known from few specimens or sight records from several localities, some of which are on lands not under immediate threat of habitat destruction or degradation. The taxon needs urgent survey and evaluation of conservation status before consideration can be given to declaration as threatened fauna.
- P4** **Priority Four: Taxa in need of monitoring:** Taxa which are considered to have been adequately surveyed, or for which sufficient knowledge is available, and which are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection, but could be if present circumstances change. These taxa are usually represented on conservation lands.
- P5** **Priority Five: Taxa in need of monitoring:** Taxa which are not considered threatened but are subject to a specific conservation program, the cessation of which would result in the species becoming threatened within five years.

Categories of threatened species (*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

- EX** **Extinct:** A native species for which there is no reasonable doubt that the last member of the species has died.
- EX(W)** **Extinct in the wild:** A native species which:
(a) is known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalised population well outside its past range; or
(b) has not been recorded in its known and/or expected habitat, at appropriate seasons, anywhere in its past range, despite exhaustive surveys over a time frame appropriate to its life cycle and form.
- CR** **Critically Endangered:** A native species which is facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild in the immediate future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
- EN** **Endangered:** A native species which:
(a) is not critically endangered; and
(b) is facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
- VU** **Vulnerable:** A native species which:
(a) is not critically endangered or endangered; and
(b) is facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium-term future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria.
- CD** **Conservation Dependent:** A native species which is the focus of a specific conservation program, the cessation of which would result in the species becoming vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered within a period of 5 years.