Department of Environment
Government of Western Australia

Clearing Permit Decision Report

1. Application details

1.1. Permit application details

Permit application No.: 751/1

Permit type: Purpose Permit

1.2. Proponent details

Proponent's name: **Geoffrey Donald and Marjorie Joan Pearson**

1.3. Property details

Property: LOT 12068 ON PLAN 201728 (WILLIAMS 6391)
LOT 12069 ON PLAN 201728 (CULBIN 6391)
LOT 12073 ON PLAN 201728 (CULBIN 6391)

Local Government Area: Shire Of Williams

Colloquial name:

1.4. Application

Clearing Area (ha)	No. Trees	Method of Clearing	For the purpose of:
	375	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
4 - Medium woodland; marri & wandoo 1006 - Medium Woodland: jarrah, wandoo & powderbark (Shepherd et al, 2001)	Vegetation that is being proposed to be cleared is restricted to 375 paddock trees that are deceased or are showing signs of stress or dieback. These trees are limited to Eucalyptus spp.	Completely Degraded: No longer intact; completely/almost completely without native species (Keighery 1994)	Vegetation description obtained from the site inspection of the property 7 November 2005.

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

Vegetation within Williams Location 12068, 12069 and 12073 has been significantly modified through historic agricultural practises. The trees under application are mainly isolated paddock trees, located within or adjacent to cropping paddocks. Based on the relatively close proximity to large stands of remnant vegetation, it is considered unlikely that the vegetation under application comprises a high level of biological diversity.

Methodology Site visit
GIS Database - Darkan 1m Orthomosaic - DOLA 03/01

(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 area under application is completely degraded with no understorey that would provide any habitat. The Large trees that are under application may provide some habitat for fauna species. However the level of disturbance within the area under application, when compared with the remnants protected on the property, would be considered of limited habitat value.

Methodology Site Visit
GIS Databases:
Darkan 1m Orthomosaic - DOLA 03/01
NLWRA, Current Extent of Native Vegetation - DA 30/01/01

(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

The area under application is completely degraded with no understorey species. The only DRF and Priority species noted in the surrounding area are shrubs and herb with only mature Eucalyptus spp. under application. Given the targeted selective removal of trees restricted to completely degraded areas it is considered unlikely that the proposed clearing is at variance to this principle.

Methodology

Site Visit
GIS Databases:
Declared Rare and Priority Flora List - CALM 01/07/05
NLWRA, Current Extent of Native Vegetation - DA 30/01/01

(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 Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC's) within the area under application or within the local area (10 km radius) surrounding the application.
Given the degraded nature of the areas under application and that there is no TEC's within the local area it is not consider that the removal of vegetation from the area under application would not have any impact on any threatened ecological communities.

Methodology

GIS Database: Threatened Ecological Communities - CALM 12/4/05
Site visit

(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 may be at variance to this Principle

The vegetation under application is part of Beard vegetation associations 4 and 1006 (Hopkins et al. 2001). Vegetation association 4 has a representation below 30% of its previous extent.

The State Government is committed to the National Objective Targets for Biodiversity Conservation, which includes targets that prevent the clearing of ecological communities with an extent below 30% of that present pre-1750 (Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002; EPA 2000). Beyond this value, species extinction is believed to occur at an exponential rate and any further clearing may have irreversible consequences for the conservation of biodiversity.

While these representation figures are below the recommended 30% target, the vegetation on site is in a completely degraded condition, it is unlikely to be representative of these communities.

Methodology

Department of Natural Resources and Environment 2002
EPA 2000
Hopkins et al 2001

(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 approximatley 2300 metres to the east of the Williams River and although there are a number of lower order watercourses that transverse the property the vegetation to be cleared would not be considered growing in or in association with these watercourses.

Methodology

GIS Databases:
Hydrography, linear (hierarchy) - DOE 13/4/05
Darkan 1m Orthomosaic - DOLA 03/01

(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

While the watercourse within William location 12609 is identified as being slightly salt affected, there were no obvious sign of significant salt effected land within the area under application. The property owners at their own expense have undertaken significant revegetation projects and engineering works that have assisted in minimising erosion and salinity issues. Given the ongoing nature of the landcare work within the area under application the removal of 375 trees is not likely to cause appreciable land degradation.

Methodology 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**
No conservation areas were identified near the area under application, with the nearest CALM Nature Reserve located approximately 5.5 kilometres to the south. Due to the degraded nature of the vegetation under application, it is considered unlikely that it would contribute significantly to ecological linkages to stands of remnant vegetation.

Methodology GIS Datatbase: CALM Managed Lands and Waters - CALM 1/07/05
Site Visit

(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**
While the watercourse within William location 12609 is identified as being slightly salt affected, there were no obvious sign of significant salt effected land within the area under application. The property owners at their own expense have undertaken significant revegetation projects and engineering works that have assisted in minimising salinity issues. Given the ongoing nature of the landcare work within the area under application the removal of 375 trees is not likely to impact on the quality of surface of groundwater.

Methodology GIS Database: 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 vegetation under application is not associated with any waterlogged and/or riverine areas, and thus is not considered likely to cause or exacerbate the incidence of flooding.

Methodology Site Visit
GIS Database: Hydrography, linear (hierarchy) - DOE 13/4/05

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

Comments
This proposal is not at variance with any planning instruments.
The area under application is not in a proclaimed groundwater area.
There is no relevant Part V approval for this proposal.

Methodology

4. Assessor's recommendations

Purpose	Method	Applied area (ha)/ trees	Decision	Comment / recommendation
Miscellaneous	Mechanical Removal	375	**Grant**	The assessable criteria have been addressed and the proposal may be at variance to Principle (e). The nature of the vegetation to be cleared has been highly altered through historical impacts, and is not likely to be representative of the original vegetation on site. 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.

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.

Keighery, BJ (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.

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)