

# **Parks Outdoor Recreation Forum**

## **Cairns – 11 August 2010**

### **Overview of issues raised**

#### **Forest transfers to national park tenure**

- Tim Forsyth (FNQuad riders) Traditionally accessed State Forests - ongoing access to NP's is very unclear.
- Mike Hansen (Sport & Rec Services) Horse riding groups have less areas to access.
- Ivan Searston (TiMBA) Wet Tropics already has over 10% under National Park tenure. Following forest transfers to NP, towns like Herberton will be surrounded by NP placing further restrictions on outdoor recreation.
- Sheila Tait (NQ horse riders club) – Access should be preserved for all current users, from the equestrian view in particular; trail, pleasure, recreational and endurance horse riders, who preserve the region's historical connection to heritage horse trails, and pioneering heritage in the area.

#### **Visitor Infrastructure planning and funding**

- Tim Trehearn (Sport & Rec Services) Propose the installation of toilets and a picnic shelter at the Causeway on the Goldfields Track for growing demand for overnight trips by school groups and others. Previous attempts to address this need have failed.
- Peter Tuck (Tableland Adventure Guides) Are visitor numbers measured to determine visitor infrastructure investment? Recommend funding is diverted from low use trails such as Misty Mountains to higher use trails such as Bartle Frere trail. Basic signage and composting toilet required at the summit of Mt Bartle Frere due to increasing level of use. Significant excrement and toilet waste at a number of sites immediately adjoining the camping platform. Similar situation at the small Western summit camp which lies immediately adjacent to the headwaters of the Russell River.
- Mike Hansen (Sport & Rec Services) Lack of facilities/open space for motorized activities such as trail bikes, quad bikes and 4WDs. Lack of infrastructure for MTB activities and road cyclists; also lack of awareness by motorists of needs of road cyclists.

#### **QPWS management presence**

- Tim Trehearn (Sport & Rec Services) – there is a lack of Rangers on the ground; encounters with Rangers on Park are very rare.

#### **Visitor information and communication**

- Tim Trehearn (Sport & Rec Services) Closure of the QPWS visitor information centre on the ground floor 5B Sheridan Street is a big loss. New DERM customer services centre on level three are unsatisfactory.
- Ivan Searston (TiMBA) Difficult to contact relevant QPWS officer with new DERM 1300 number.

## **QPWS regulations - Permit system – MoU's**

- Tim Forsyth (FNQuad riders) Permit system and application process is onerous, needs to be simplified. Public liability insurance of \$10M is excessive for quad bikers. Conditional registration requirements too onerous for quadbikers. Signage - conditionally registered vehicles not permitted - why?
- Ivan Searston (TiMBA) Getting a QPWS permit is too onerous. There needs to be better information on QPWS website about permit requirements and process; needs to be more user friendly. . What about self registration for outdoor rec activities? MoU's may be required with well credentialed groups to conduct their activities without a permit within parks and forests subject to QPWS scrutiny.

## **Lake Tinaroo management**

- Mike Hansen (Sport & Rec Services) – Numerous user groups and aquatic activities on Lake Tinaroo resulting in increasing conflict between groups e.g. No single responsible management body.

## **Mountain Bike infrastructure and facilities**

- Ivan Searston (TiMBA) - There is a range of 'underground' / non-permitted use on the tablelands e.g. mountain bike down hill courses. Due to lack of formal mountain bike tracks and trails. No tracks and trails in parks and forests are mountain bike friendly. There are no dedicated single track mountain bike trails in the entire Wet Tropics despite the demand. Outdoor recreation participation in TNQ is double the state average. There are about 20 bike shops in the Cairns region selling 2-3 bicycles per week, about half are mountain bikes but riders have few legitimate places to ride; where are they going?

## **Access to Parks and Forests**

- Peter Tuck (Tableland Adventure Guides) The western approach of Bartle Frere requires significant cleaning up. There are numerous branches blocking the track and it looks unkempt which deters visitors. Road into Cairns Mailman's track is seriously eroded. Boom gates/signage and policing would help. Recommend a register/booking system adopted on the western approach of Bartle Frere and at the head of other major day walks in the region.
- Mike Hansen (Sport & Recreation Services) Lack of incorporation and tenure over land makes accessing SRS funds difficult for outdoor recreation groups.
- Ivan Searston (TiMBA) Perhaps closer linkages between QPWS and Visitor Information Centres is needed to help manage access to parks and forests.

## **Visitor use monitoring**

- Peter Tuck (Tableland Adventure Guides) It is highly likely that there are significantly more users on Bartle Frere track than QPWS estimates. Are visitor numbers monitored.

## **QPWS marketing and promotion**

- Peter Blakey - Are Parks and forests promoted for activities e.g. mountain biking and white water kayaking, to attract tourists (passive) and events.

## **Volunteering**

- Christine Doan (Malanda North) – there is more interest these days by people wanting to volunteer their time in their area of interest. E.g. horse riders and mountain bikers are keen to volunteer their time on projects that benefit their interest group. There is less interest in volunteer programs run by other organisations.

### **General comments**

- Ivan Searston (TiMBA) Clear distinction needs to be made between commercial activities and FIT outdoor recreation activities. There is a perception the QPWS does not understanding the difference between commercial and FIT user groups.

## **Where to from here**

QPWS will be scoping options to address the issues raised. In some cases this will involve discussing issues in more detail with forum members.