

Managing beekeeping on EPA managed lands

Operational policies provide a policy direction or set operational standards for day to day management, including a framework for consistent application and interpretation of legislation, by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Operational policies will not be applied inflexibly to all circumstances. Individual circumstances may require an alternative application of policy.

Policy issue

This policy outlines the circumstances and processes required for the Queensland Parks and Wildlife (QPW) Division of the Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA) to issue and manage apiary permits on EPA managed lands. This policy relates to non-native bees, particularly all varieties of *Apis mellifera*.

Desired outcomes

QPW's desired outcomes for managing beekeeping on EPA managed lands include protecting biodiversity and cultural heritage values; minimising environmental impact; ensuring compatibility with other users and management activities; and supporting a sustainable apiary industry.

Background

QPW currently manages beekeeping on conservation parks and resource reserves under the *Nature Conservation (Protected Area Management) Regulations 2006* (NC(PAM) Reg) and *Nature Conservation (Administration) Regulations 2006* (NC(Admin) Reg). QPW also manages beekeeping under s36 of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* on newly declared areas of national park and national park (recovery) where an apiary permit had been current at the time of gazettal. Additionally, apiary permits can be issued on national park or national park (recovery) that were previously specific forest reserves within the South East Queensland Forests Agreement (SEQFA), until 2025. These specific forest reserves, designated "apiary areas," are listed under schedule 5 of NC(PAM)Reg and that schedule detail the number of sites for each apiary area.

Apiary sites on State forests located on non plantation lands are administered by Forest Products, Department of Natural Resources Mines and Water (DNRMW) under s35 (1) *Forestry Act 1959* (FA). Under the same legislation, sites located those on State Plantation Forests are managed by Forestry Plantations Queensland (FPQ). Any Apiary activity on a timber reserve would be authorised by a permit issued under S56 of the FA.

Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries administer the *Apiaries Act 1982*, it applies to beekeeping across all tenures of land. Any beekeeper with a beehive in Queensland is required to become registered under that Act.

Definitions

Apiary permit means a permit to take, use, keep or interfere with cultural or natural resources for the location of an apiary site(s) (*Nature Conservation Act 1992 and Regulations*) and *apiary permit* means a permit for an(a) apiary site(s) (*Forestry Act 1959*).

Policy statement

Where there is no conflict with the management principles and any management plan and suitable access is available, an apiary permit may be issued on a conservation park or a resources reserve.

No apiary sites will be permitted on any category of national park, except under a “previous use authority” or where the area is listed in Schedule 5 of the *Nature Conservation (Protected Area Management) Regulation 2006* (NC(PAM)Reg). Both these exceptions are for limited periods and are further outlined below.

Similarly, an apiary permit may be issued on any forest reserve or State forest under the FA providing suitable access is available and it is compatible with the other uses authorised for the area involved. It should be noted that apiary permits issued under the FA become invalid once a forest reserve is transferred to a class of protected area under the NCA. Similarly, if a State forest is revoked to create USL so that it can be dedicated as protected area, the apiary permits become invalid.

Continuation of previous use

Where land is newly dedicated as a national park or national park (recovery), and where immediately before the dedication the land contained an apiary site, a previous use authority may be granted under s36 of the NCA to allow the apiary site to temporarily remain, either for the unexpired term of a previous apiary permit under the FA (S35(1)(d)) or for three years after the dedication. A previous use authority cannot be renewed.

Forest transfer provisions

Certain forest reserves have been individually defined as areas where beekeeping may temporarily continue until 31 December 2024 as part of the SEQFA. Each of these forest reserves is proposed to become a national park or a national park (recovery) and is listed in schedule 5 of the NC(PAM)Reg. Once such a forest reserve becomes a national park or a national park (recovery), it will be specifically defined as an “apiary area”.

The number of apiary sites allowed in forest reserves listed under Schedule 5 of the NC(PAM)Reg is co-listed in that Schedule and may not increase whilst the area remains forest reserve or once it becomes an “apiary area”.

General management of apiary sites

Permits will clearly state the site/s approved, the length of the permit and the conditions under which the beekeeper can operate.

The environmental management of beekeeping on EPA managed areas is to be undertaken according to the *Guidelines for environmental management of beekeeping on the EPA estate*.

QPW will use its best endeavours to advise the holders of affected apiary permits of its proposed annual planned burning program. Close co-operation between local QPW staff and beekeepers will be encouraged.

If at any time the permit holder fails or neglects to comply with the terms and conditions of the apiary permit, the QPW may cancel the permit and direct the removal of the apiary from the reserve.

Procedures

Legislative provisions – conservation parks and resources reserves

Authority to issue an apiary permit (take, use, keep or interfere with cultural or natural resources) on conservation parks and resources reserves is given under NC(PAM)Reg and NC(Admin)Reg..

Legislative provisions – Previous Use Authorities for national parks

A Previous Use Authority under s36 NCA may be granted for the unexpired portion of a FA apiary permit, or otherwise, for a maximum period of three years after an area is newly gazetted a protected area. The details of the s36 NCA Previous Use Authority are to be kept in a public register pursuant to the NCA.

Legislative provisions – forest reserves (apiary areas) prescribed in Schedule 5 of the NC(PAM) Reg

Apiary permits issued under the FA become invalid once a forest reserve is transferred to a class of protected area under the NCA.

For apiary areas, a Previous Use Authority under s36 NCA will be issued at the time of protected area gazettal for the unexpired portion of the apiary permit issued under the FA. The details of the s36 NCA Previous Use Authority are to be kept in a public register pursuant to the NCA.

When the above Previous Use Authority expires, an apiary permit (take, use, keep or interfere with cultural or natural resources) under the NCA may be issued for a period of up to five years, and apiary permits may be reissued for subsequent periods of up to five years. All such permits must expire on or before 31 December 2024.

Application

The Ecoaccess Customer Service Unit (ECSU – ph 1300 368 326) will process permit applications.

An apiary permit application form should be submitted at least 30 days before the applicant requires the permit to take effect. The prescribed permit fee must be submitted with the application. The intended permit holder must be a suitable person to hold the permit as prescribed in schedule 2 of NC(PAM)Reg.

Permit fees

Apiary permit fees are prescribed in schedule 3 of the NC(Admin)Reg. The fees are subject to annual review, taking into account the ABARE Queensland Honey Price Index.

Application assessment

The Ecoaccess Customer Service Unit (ECSU) processes the application, and issues the permit with standard conditions or forwards a 'Notice of Decision' with a statement of reasons for refusal.

Permit renewal

A renewal notice will be sent to each permit holder from the ECSU. The permit holder should apply for renewal of the permit 30 days before the permit is due to expire.

Permit conditions

The generic apiary permit conditions are set out in Appendix 1. Site-specific conditions or additional requirements may be applied. All protected area regulations (for example, no domestic animals) apply to permit holders and it is not mandatory to list any or all of these as permit conditions, unless it is deemed prudent for the site in question.

Site location

Each site on a permit requires a unique identifier and differential GPS co-ordinates, which will allow for accurate inclusion of the relevant spatial information in Ecomaps and ParkInfo.

Protocol for relocating apiary sites.

The total number of apiary sites in existing forest reserves or "apiary areas" must NOT increase.

Where there is an identified need to relocate an existing site due to unacceptable environmental impacts, user conflicts, lack of access or park management programs, the *QPW protocol for relocating apiary sites* (see appendix 2) is to be applied.

Transfer of permit (apiary areas only)

Apiary permits issued under the NCREg, other than an apiary permit for a "park designated for apiaries", are not transferable.

Transferring a permit issued on a "apiary areas" (s62 NC(Admin)Reg) requires the written consent of the QPW. The transfer process is as follows:

- The existing permit holder and intended permit holder complete a *Transfer of apiary permit form* and lodge with ECSU with the required transfer fee.
- ECSU assesses if the applicant is a suitable person to hold the permit (schedule 2 NC(PAM)Reg).
- ECSU forwards the intended permit holder:

- an amended permit; or
- a "Notice of Decision" with a statement of reasons as to why the transfer was unsuccessful.

Indemnity, release and discharge

See Appendix 1.

Disclaimer

While this document has been prepared with care it contains general information and does not profess to offer legal, professional or commercial advice. The Queensland Government accepts no liability for any external decisions or actions taken on the basis of this document. Persons external to the Environmental Protection Agency should satisfy themselves independently and by consulting their own professional advisors before embarking on any proposed course of action.

Approved By

Alan Feely

Signature

29/06/05

Date

Executive Director, Parks

Enquiries:

Systems and Support Branch

Ph. (07) 3225 1518

Fax. (07) 3227 7676

Appendix 1

Permit conditions

General conditions

Environmental management of beekeeping

All persons involved in beekeeping on the EPA managed lands are required to comply with the *Guideline for environmental management of beekeeping* on the EPA estate.

Apiary site size

Apiary sites authorised under this permit, including firebreaks, must cover an area no larger than 600 square metres.

Number of hives

The number of hives at any one designated site is not to exceed 150 at any time during the term of this permit, and must be contained within the area prescribed above.

Notification requirements

The permit holder must notify the QPW Ranger in Charge of the park or reserve at least 48 hours prior to his/her intention to place beehives on an approved site. In exceptional circumstances, or in the case of an emergency that prevents this timeframe being met, the permit holder must contact the Ranger in Charge at the earliest possible opportunity.

Placing beehives on site

A QPW ranger may wish to be present at the time the hives are placed on site. The permit holder must abide by any lawful instruction issued by a QPW officer regarding placing of hives and any other apiary equipment within the site.

Allowable structures

With the exception of beehive stands, no structures are to be erected on the site by the permit holder.

Permit to be carried

The permit holder must carry a copy of this permit at all times when carrying out authorised activities under this permit. Employees/agents under the direction of the permit holder must carry a copy of the permit endorsed by the permit holder with the person's name and residential address, plus a form of identification displaying a coloured photograph of the permittee, such as a driver's licence.

Access

The permit holder is authorised to use only those roads and access tracks as directed by the QPW. Use of motorised vehicles must be limited to those activities essential to placing and managing hives.

Vegetation may only be cleared to the extent necessary to allow access along existing tracks and must be minimised.

Based on environmental, safety or management concerns, QPW may restrict the permit holder's access to an area at any time.

Identifying hives

The permit holder is required to identify hives as per the *Apiaries Act 1982*.

Gates

Gates on or leading to apiary sites must be left as they are found (either open or closed). Locks may not be placed on gates without the permission of the QPW Regional Manager.

Registered beekeeper

The permit holder must be a registered apiarist under the *Apiaries Act 1982*.

Disease management

All notifiable diseases (including specific bacteria, fungi, protozoa, viruses, parasites and/or pests) of honeybees must be reported to the DPIF Biosecurity in accordance with the *Apiaries Regulation 1998*.

Worker and public safety

Safety

The permit holder must report all incidents or accidents that occur during beekeeping activities on QPW estate to the relevant QPW Office within three days of the incident or accident occurring.

Legislative compliance

All persons involved in beekeeping activities must meet their obligations under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* and other relevant legislation, codes, regulations and standards.

Competency

Persons operating chainsaws and other plant or equipment as part of apiary site management on the QPW estate must have appropriate certificates of competence.

Non-compliance

Non-compliance with safety requirements will be considered grounds for suspension or cancellation of activities or permits by QPW.

Damage

Any damage to QPW property arising out of activities conducted under this permit must be reported to the local QPW Office within seven days of occurrence.

QPW takes no responsibility for the security, loss, damage or otherwise of any machinery, equipment or other goods owned or under the control of the permit holder.

In wet conditions, vehicle movement should be restricted to avoid undue damage to roads. The permit holder must, at their own cost, repair any damage caused by such movement as soon as possible.

Camping

Overnight camping on the EPA estate for the purpose of tending to the apiary site may be permitted under this permit, provided prior approval has been obtained from the relevant QPW Ranger in Charge.

Drainage

Apiary sites must be maintained to prevent ponding and soil erosion. Where they exist, drainage structures must divert water onto stable, vegetated surfaces (for example, apiary sites located on decommissioned landing grounds or quarry sites).

Water

Placing water sources to maintain bees will be permitted at the discretion of the QPW Ranger in Charge from whom prior approval must be obtained. Any such artificial water supply must be provided in a way that prevents access by wildlife. For example, water may be provided in a capillary form via wet gravel or a sand bed.

Plant material

The permit holder must not take upon, or place within, the park or reserve plant material of any kind. Hence an activity such as planting for the purpose of shading or sheltering beehives is not permitted.

The permit holder must ensure that all vehicles and equipment brought into the park or reserve are free from plant seeds and other vegetative material and/or deposits of mud or other debris that may carry plant seeds or vegetative material.

Rubbish/equipment disposal

Apiary sites must be maintained in a neat, tidy and generally non-flammable condition to the satisfaction of the QPW Ranger in Charge. The permit holder must remove all rubbish, including old hive and beekeeping stands, and must dispose of these in an appropriate manner off the park or reserve. Where the site is to be vacated, though the permit for that site remains current, all beekeeping equipment must be removed from the site within seven days of the hives being removed.

All faecal matter and toilet paper must be properly buried (at least 150mm deep) and 50 metres from tracks and watercourses.

Fire management

The permit holder must promptly, at their own expense, do or cause to be done, everything reasonable within their power to prevent or extinguish any unauthorised fire on, or threatening, the park or reserve. QPWS must be notified, at the earliest possible opportunity, of any outbreak of fire.

Beekeepers are to comply with all fire bans placed on areas where they have hives.

Under no circumstances should a fuel reduction burn be conducted by the permit holder, except with the written permission from the QPW Ranger in Charge and under a Permit to Light a Fire in accordance with the *Fire and Rescue Services Act 1990*. The permit holder may be required to participate in co-operative fuel reduction burns.

Fire control lines

The permit holder must install a firebreak with a width not less than two metres within the outer boundary of each apiary site. This break must be maintained free of fuel build-up at all times while the hives are on the site, to the satisfaction of the QPW Ranger in Charge. Such firebreaks must conform to the *Guideline for environmental management of beekeeping on the EPA estate, Schedule 4*.

Equipment

Mechanical equipment, including any apparatus used as a smoker, brought on to the permit area, must be maintained so that it does not constitute a fire threat.

Use of a lit smoker must be contained within the apiary site boundary and smokers must be completely extinguished after use and prior to transporting.

The permit holder must have available on site, and at all times when the smoking of hives is being carried out, a knapsack sprayer in good working order and filled with water.

Indemnity

The permit holder indemnifies the State from and against loss, damage or expense arising from any claim, demand, action suit proceeding that may be made or brought by any person against the State in respect of:

- a) the death of or injury to any person;
- b) the loss of or damage to any property;

where such death, injury, loss or damage arises out of or in connection with the permit holder's activity in an area managed by EPA and is caused by the negligent act or omission of the permit holder or an employee, member, agent, invitee or client of the permit holder.

The permit holder shall not be liable for any liability or loss to the extent that it is the fault of the State. Where negligence is found to be contributory, each party shall bear full responsibility in accordance with the party's fault.

The permit holder must advise the chief executive in writing of any death, injury, loss or damage immediately upon the permit holder becoming aware of such death, injury loss or damage.

Release and discharge

The permit holder releases and discharges the State from any claim, demand, action, suit or proceeding arising from the permit holder's use and enjoyment of the permit which, but for the provisions of this condition, may be brought against or made upon the State by the permit holder.

Transfer of permit

This permit is not transferable unless issued over a "park designated for apiaries".

Relocation

Where there is the need to relocate an existing site due to unacceptable environmental impacts, user conflicts or park management programs, a new location in lieu of the former site may be created in accordance with the *QPW protocol for relocating apiary sites*.

Renewal

Whilst QPW will normally notify apiarists that permit renewals are due, apiarists are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all beekeeping activities are covered by a current permit as required by the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* and the *Nature Conservation Regulation 1994*.

Termination of permit

If at any time the permit holder fails or neglects to comply with the terms and conditions of this apiary permit, the QPW Regional Manager may cancel the permit and direct the removal of the apiary from the park or reserve.

Appendix 2

QPW protocol for relocating apiary sites

This protocol for relocating apiary sites outlines the steps to be followed when there is a need to relocate an existing site due to unacceptable environmental impacts, user conflicts or park management programs.

QPW will examine the need for relocating a site where one or more of the following are involved:

- The use or efficient management of the protected area may require relocating the beehives. Such situations may include, but are not restricted to, relocation to avoid areas of high visitation, or where there is a need to close/alter access route.
- Scientific studies have shown that a particular landscape may be susceptible to adverse impact from foraging European bees.

Site relocation process

1. Identify the need to relocate.
2. If site is currently occupied, permit holder is notified in writing indicating the need for relocation, possible alternatives and contact person (the permit holder may or may not wish to involve the Queensland Beekeepers' Association (QBA) at this time).
3. Alternative site is determined by all relevant parties including the QBA after discussing options (see criteria below).
4. Proposal approved by relevant Operations Manager, QPW,.
5. On approval, if relevant permit holder notified and provided with time frame for change of site location.
6. The existing apiary site number will be used for the relocated site
7. Park staff will arrange for signage for the relocated apiary site using the original apiary site number.
8. Park staff record the spatial information and site details for the relocated site.
9. Park staff forward relevant shape file to Spatial Systems to update the master file.
10. Edited shape file placed on master file with updated version of the Apiary Site theme layer.
11. Spatial Systems advises Ecotrack of relocated apiary site.
12. Spatial Systems advise Ecomaps of relocated apiary site spatial information.

Criteria to be considered in selecting a new site

- Available and suitable access for trucks;
- Potential conflict with other users, such as visitors;
- Cultural considerations;
- Ecological considerations;
- Presence of threatened species, which may be affected by the activities of foraging honey bees or apicultural practices;
- Provisions of the protected area Management plan where one exists;
- Likelihood of management activities in the area, such as fire and pest control activities; and
- Plant species foraged by honeybees at existing site.

Approvals

The relevant Operations Manager QPW must give approval for any relocation.

Any disputes in relation to relocation of a site should be referred to the relevant Regional Manager QPW for resolution. The Regional Manager's decision will be final.