

Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

**Making world heritage matter
– the value of quality
interpretation in sustainable
tourism development**

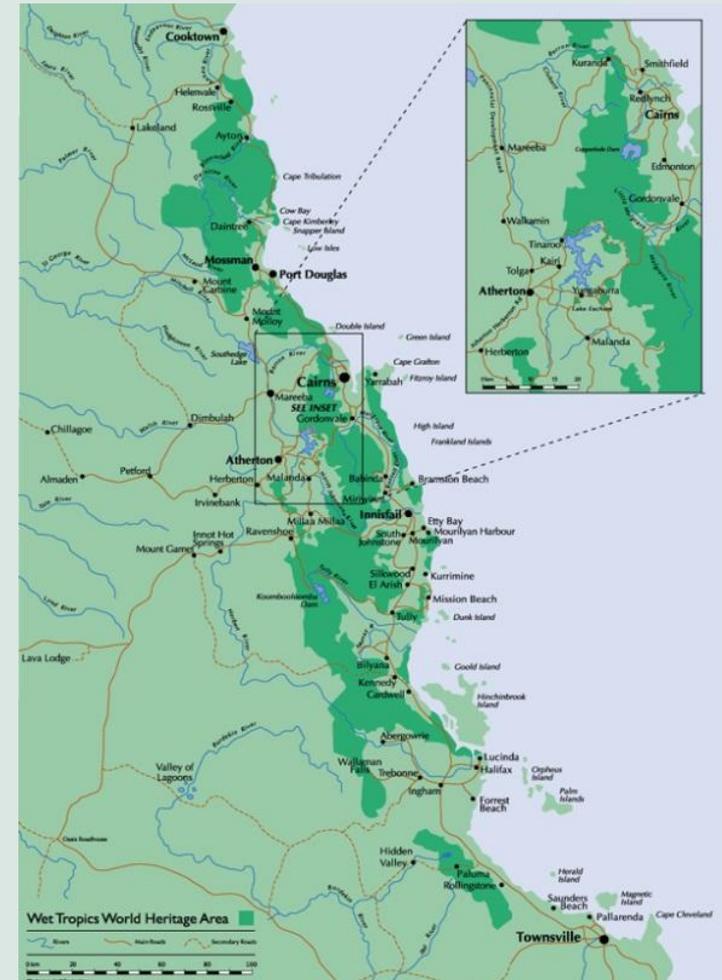


Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area

New research highlights the importance and values of nature of the Wet Tropics for visitors and residents (Esparon and Stoeckl, 2014-15).

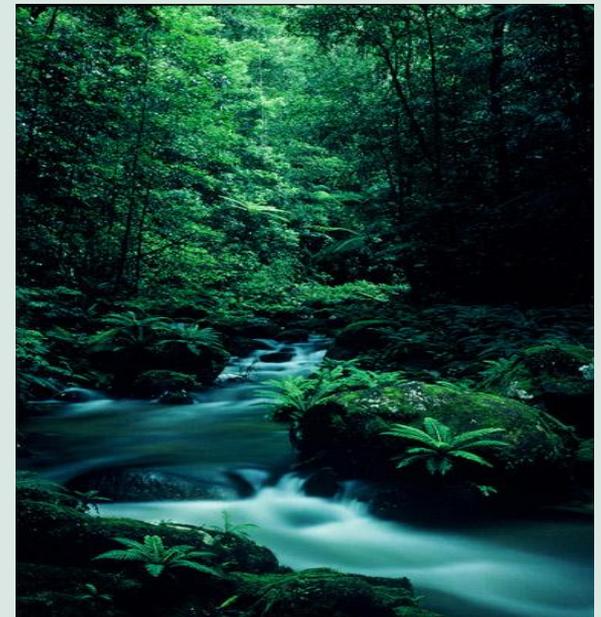
It's not simply a matter of the economics of tourism, determined as income and profit from visitor numbers or money spent but more in the recognition that motivations for people to visit the Wet Tropics track back to its intrinsic landscape values and natural amenity.

2.6 Billion in earning but untold benefit and value in amenity, lifestyle and natural beauty



Outstanding Universal Value

The Wet Tropics of Queensland is listed for all four natural World Heritage criteria - Second most irreplaceable natural World Heritage site on earth (IUCN)





Criterion 7:

Contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

Criterion 8:

Be an outstanding example representing the major stages of Earth's history,

Criterion 9:

Be an outstanding example representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial,

Criterion 10:

Contain the most important significant habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened

Outstanding Universal Value

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- **Outstanding**: Properties should be exceptional or superlative – they should be the most remarkable places on earth.

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- **Universal**: Properties need to be outstanding from a global perspective - not just remarkable from a national or regional perspective.

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- **Value**: What makes a property outstanding and universal is its “value”, or the natural worth of a property. This value is determined based on standards and processes established under the World Heritage Convention’s Operational Guidelines.

Outstanding Universal Value

New directions in ecotourism policy – education and interpretation

International Society for Ecotourism (TIES).
The approach and rethinking , effective
January 1, 2015, includes a revised **Definition
and Principles of Ecotourism** adding a third
pillar of education/interpretation as a
cornerstone.

TIES revised definition is *"responsible travel to
natural areas that conserves the environment,
sustains the well-being of the local people and
involves interpretation and education"* with
the specification that education is to staff and
guests.



New focus activities

- Address Shortages in infrastructure and work skills and training need
- Tourism Excellence Program combining digital and enhanced capacity to engage with visitors
- Supporting Aboriginal tourism, Placing priority on world heritage
- Providing marketing and promotional rewards for certified (eco-accredited) operators and the use of preferential and exclusive permitting and access benefits in national parks/world heritage sites.



Where to start? Tour guide training, education and quality interpretation

- In the Wet Tropics, partnership with Savannah Guides, to develop a tour guide training program.
- We have had about 70 guides graduate from the online school and participate in workshops securing their recognition as certified Wet Tropics guides.
- Ongoing field activities strengthen their network as a group committed to excellence in World Heritage presentation and interpretation.



Benefits of tour guide programs

- Russell Boswell as the manager of Savannah Guides identifies commercial outcomes for operators:
- Operators often secure distribution partners based on perceived higher quality and professionalism
- Accreditation drives internal awareness and a lift in quality. That results in improved word of mouth which is acknowledged as a strong element in consumer choice including through digital channels.
- World heritage standards established and maintained



Link with National Landscapes Mentoring Plus

- Guiding, visitor presentation and experience delivery standards are fragmented - and presentation standards and programs that need meaningful linkage
- Tour Guiding, interpretation and tourism presentation remains an industry with unnecessary limitations on career opportunities
- World Heritage properties (and related National Landscapes), are Australia's premium range of offerings for Experience Seekers, should be at the forefront of solutions to these issues.

Working with community



WET TROPICS Tour Guide Program

Phil Rooney

is hereby acknowledged as a

Certified Wet Tropics Tour Guide
a leading interpreter of our World Heritage listed region

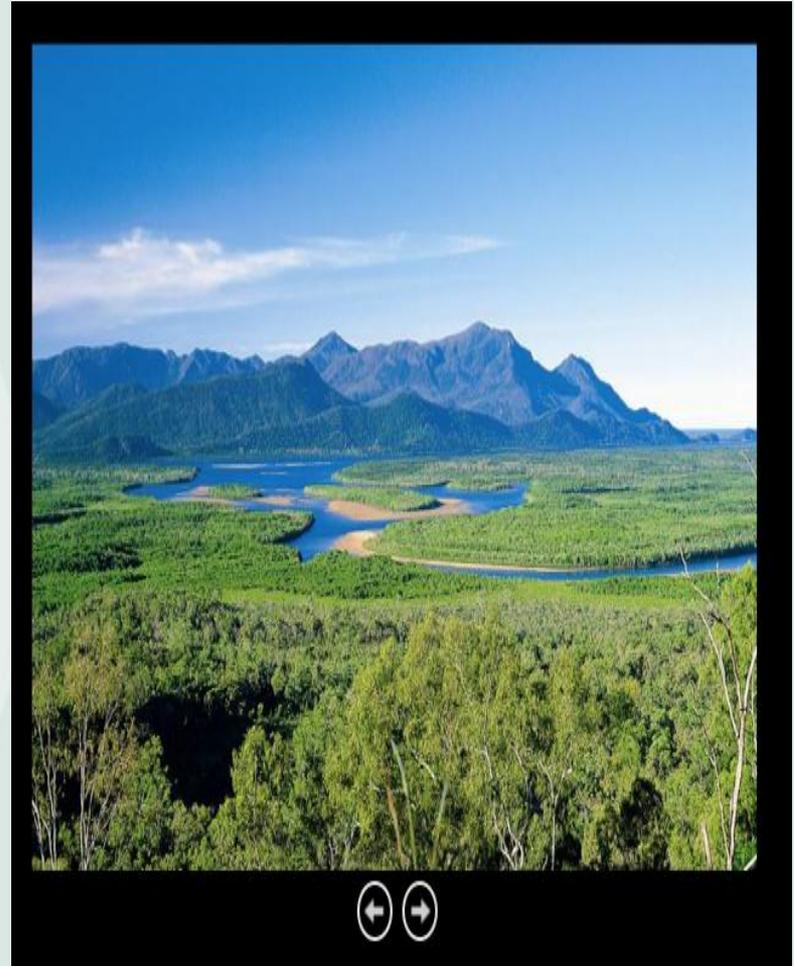


Andrew Maclean
Executive Director, Wet Tropics Management Authority
June 2014



A growing national initiative

- The need to build resilience and productivity in our changing visitor market through higher quality we cannot compete regionally and internationally on price.
- The need to build career pathways through networking, education and increased participation in the broader tourism industry.
- The need for an approach that builds on the strength of an Ecotourism accreditation program but focuses specifically around the quality of the nature based experience.



Wider Initiative in Interpretation

- *To create a visually rich and engaging digital applications which also consolidates and enhances our collection of contemporary and digital resources and content (photo, digital art, video and multi-media) to use across our rainforest interpretation and World Heritage presentation projects*
- *World Heritage area and values are supported and presented through the Digital E-books and Apps are used to convey the online application conveys world heritage values in the most accessible format available for the World Heritage area through online, offline and multi device utilisation.*

Kirrama Range Road Project

- The natural and cultural values of the World Heritage area are promoted as much as possible without encompassing on the drive experience.
- Showcase outstanding nature and wildlife
- Presents unique Montane and heath forests occur at altitudes above 1,000m. Six bird species listed in international agreements are noted in Table 3.
- Present Aboriginal culture, tracks and history
- Describe community connections to the landscape through forestry, settlements and use and uses for recreation
- Provide access to outstanding experiences: the Wet Tropics Great Walk and Blencoe Falls to the west and the Captain Cook Highway to the east.

New focus in Ecotourism Policies

- Address Shortages in infrastructure and work skills and training need
- Tourism Excellence Program combining digital and enhanced capacity to engage with visitors
- Supporting Aboriginal tourism, Placing priority on world heritage
- Providing marketing and promotional rewards for certified (eco-accredited) operators and the use of preferential and exclusive permitting and access benefits in national parks/world heritage sites.



You are now entering the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, a landscape unlike anywhere else on Earth

“The Girramay Aboriginal peoples are the Traditional Owners of the land around you. As you traverse the range you will also pass through Warungnu and Jirrbal country. This area and its landscape features are of spiritual and cultural importance to our people. We welcome you and ask you to respect this special place.”

The Kirrama Range Road begins here. This steep and winding road traverses through various forest types from lowland eucalypt and tangled vine forests to towering rainforest. In wetter months waterfalls cascade in mountain streams along and across the road as it climbs. Much of the Kirrama Range is remote and inaccessible.

At the crest of the range the road passes through the site of the old logging settlement of Society Flats. At this point you will have almost crossed the Great Escarpment. After passing through Society Flats and mountain forests you will emerge into open grassland savannah as you approach Blencoe Falls. The falls are a segmented waterfall that cascade 320metres, thundering to the floor of the river gorge.

The Timber Years

The Kirrama Range Road was built between 1935 and 1941 by the Queensland Public Estates Improvement Scheme. After European settlement, the Aboriginal tracks were used as pack tracks for miners heading to the Etheridge and Gilbert goldfields in the 1870s. The Kirrama Range Road was designed to provide access to the rich timber resources of the Cardwell State.

Timber extraction in these years was not the mechanised, industrial process of today's commercial clear fell logging but a challenging selective logging process. Many Aboriginal men in the area contributed to this labour intensive industry. Timber extraction continued until the declaration of World Heritage in 1988.

Since time immemorial

This is the traditional country of Girramay, Warungnu and Jirrbal Rainforest Aboriginal groups, each with their own language.

Long before European settlement, Rainforest Aboriginal people managed and cared for the wet tropics region that is their home.

Although the Kirrama Range Road is the first European road to link Cardwell to the Atherton Tableland, Aboriginal people had long established tracks to cross the range to enable cultural and trading exchanges between the coast and the tablelands.

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area has enormous significance as a living cultural landscape to the Traditional Owners of this country. Their strong and enduring connection to this area gives them a wealth of knowledge about its plants, animals, landscape and resources. The Aboriginal cultural significance of the Wet Tropics is recognised through inclusion on the National Heritage List in 2012.



You are here

Blencoe falls to Kennedy 62 Kilometres

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Macleay's Fig-parrot

Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher

Emerald Dove

Golden Bowerbird

Brush turkey

Unique Environment

Kirrama National Park boasts an exceptional array of plants and animals. It has important Aboriginal culture and heritage values. The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area was declared in 1988. It stretches along the northeast coast of Australia for about 450 kilometres. Encompassing 894,420 hectares, this stunningly beautiful area is extremely important for its rich and unique biodiversity. These rainforests present an unparalleled record of the ecological and evolutionary processes that have shaped the flora and fauna of Australia.

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is home to nearly half of Australia's bird species. The Kirrama Range is a bird watcher's paradise: the shimmering green of the Emerald Dove can often be seen along the road or you may catch a glimpse of the brilliant blue and orange of the Buff-Breasted Paradise Kingfisher, trailing their long white breeding plume. Brush turkeys are a common sight along the road too and you might see tiny Macleay's Fig-parrot feeding on seasonal rainforest fruit.

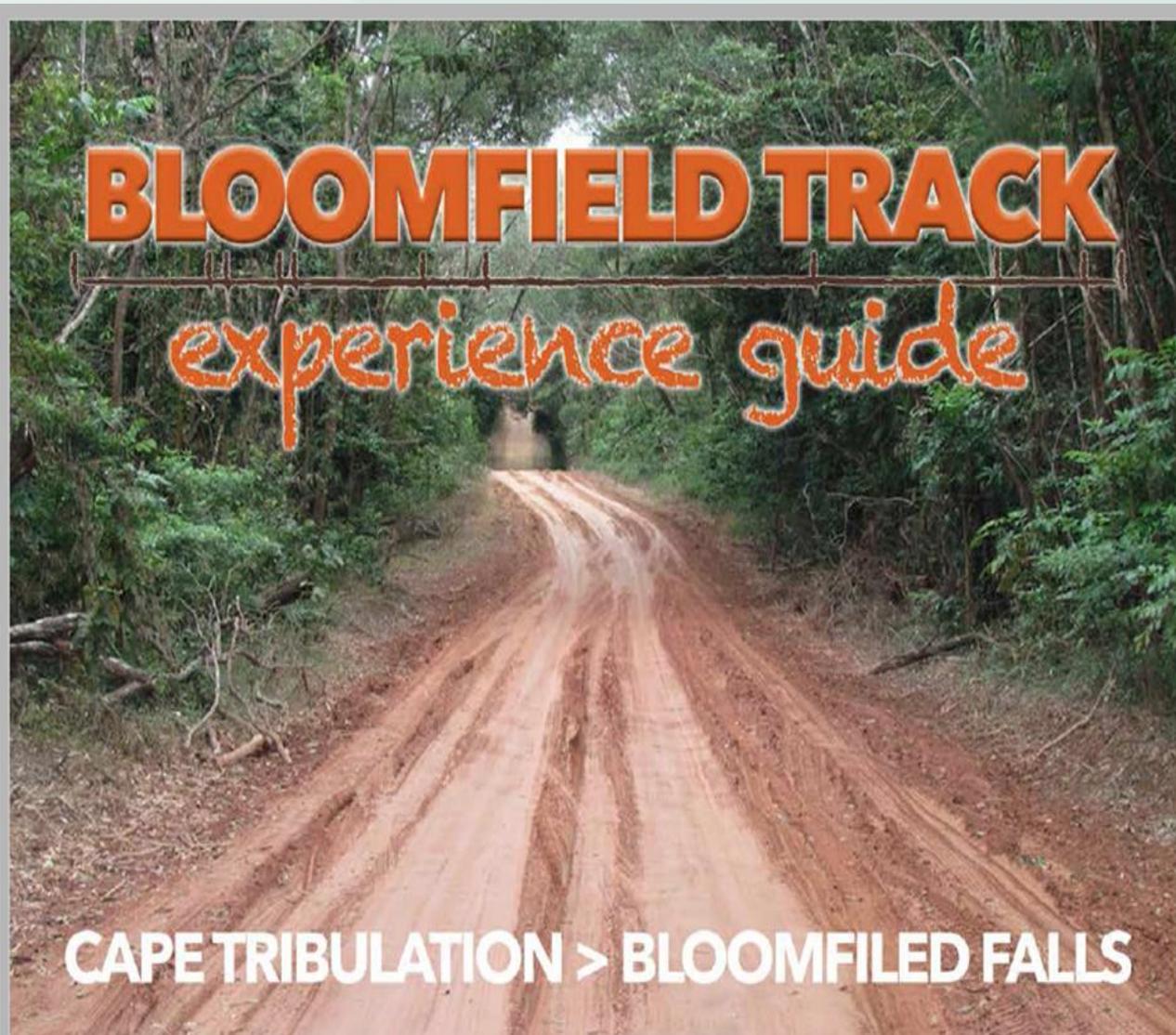
Home to 35% of Australia's mammal species, the Wet Tropics World Heritage area provides essential habitat for many rare and threatened species. Keep an eye out for the Lumholtz's tree kangaroo. Most mammals in this area are nocturnal but tree kangaroos can sometimes be seen in the treetops resting or occasionally crossing the road during the day.

Winds of Change

Evidence of cyclones can be seen in these forests, particularly on the eastern side of the range where impact is often the greatest. Cyclonic winds strip leaves and cause tree fall and torrential rains that accompany these events cause landslides, and flooding. Tropical cyclones are a natural and frequent weather event in this part of Australia and many plant species have adapted to rapidly recover following storm damage.

The Kirrama Range Road was damaged by severe tropical cyclones Larry and Yasi in 2006 and 2011 respectively. The road was closed for seven years and reopened in November 2014.

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CAPE TRIBULATION > BLOOMFILED FALLS

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Birdseye view of your journey

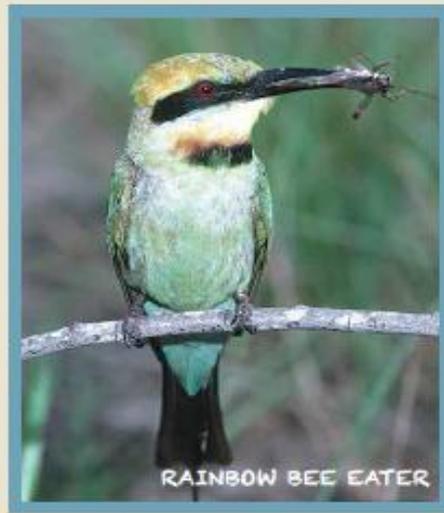
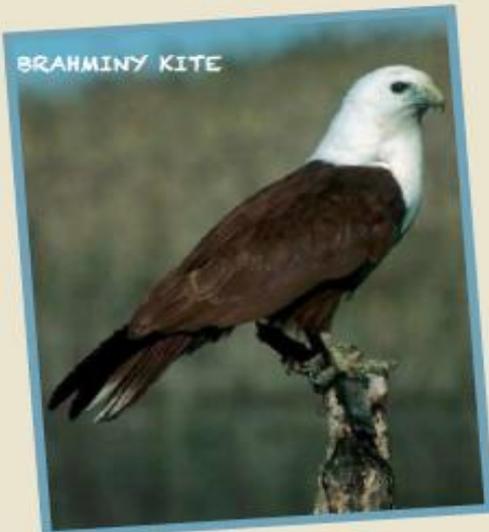


Elevation Profile of Bloomfield Track



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What birds can you see today?



40% of Australia's birds are found in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

The Wet Tropics of Queensland is listed for all four natural World Heritage criteria...

Criterion 7:
Contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.

Criterion 8:
Be an outstanding example representing the major stages of Earth's history, including the record of life, and significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features.

Criterion 9:
Be an outstanding example representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals

Criterion 10:
Contain the most important significant habitats for in situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation



Working with community

Living Cultural Landscape

EASTERN KURU YALANJI FREEHOLD LAND TO WOODABBA CREEK



SECTION 4
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Description



Shared Cultural Landscape

STOP 9 : BLOOMFIELD RIVER LOOKOUT

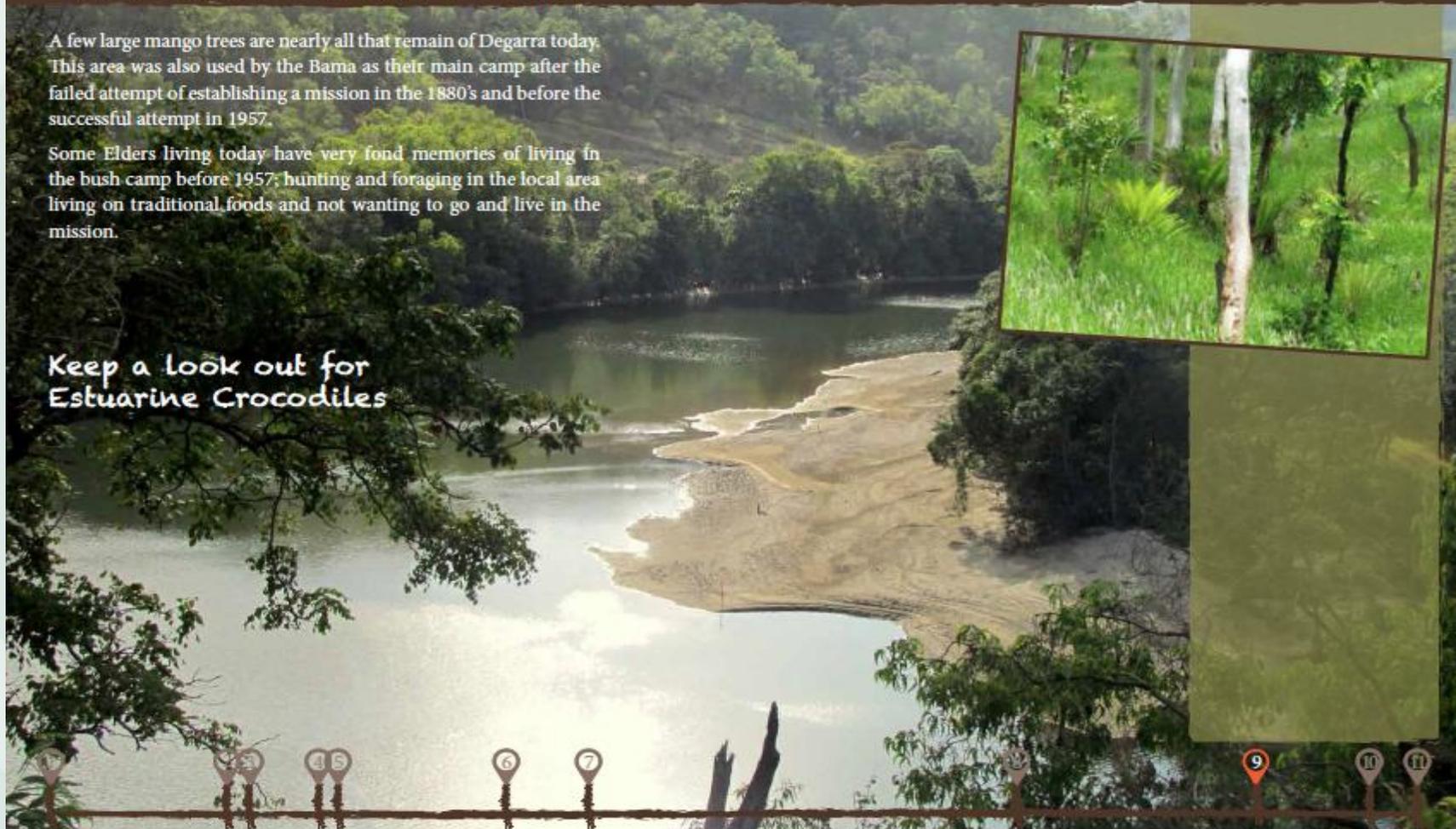
A few large mango trees are nearly all that remain of Degarra today. This area was also used by the Bama as their main camp after the failed attempt of establishing a mission in the 1880's and before the successful attempt in 1957.

Some Elders living today have very fond memories of living in the bush camp before 1957; hunting and foraging in the local area living on traditional foods and not wanting to go and live in the mission.

Keep a look out for
Estuarine Crocodiles



SECTION 4
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- This approach gives us a basis for advancing sustainable tourism goals for improving the quality of interpretation within and our best “Best of Nature” experiences within our key protected areas. It is an agenda common to all protected areas managers who seek to have estates best managed, protected and presented. It also enables to deliver tangible benefits for our stakeholders by offering a portfolio of best of the best iconic experiences within Australia’s outstanding nature and culture destinations.
 - It contributes to the conservation of the natural/cultural values of the nature tourism through either physical, financial or in-kind assistance and provides experiences of nature and/or culture that informs, educates and grows awareness, appreciation and enjoyment of the natural/cultural values of the sites and the need to conserve these values (i.e. promote and appreciate). It is clearly consistent with the conservation of natural and cultural values in our Ecotourism certification framework and makes ETA an essential partner working alongside protected areas managers and industry operators and guides.