

Federation of Western Australian Bushwalkers (Inc)

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Planning Coordinator
Fitzgerald River National Park
Department of Environment and Conservation
Locked Bag 104
BENTLY DELIVERY CENTRE

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re Amendment to FRNP Management Plan

The Federation of Western Australian Bushwalkers Inc. welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Fitzgerald River National Park (FRNP) Management Plan 1991-2001 Proposed Amendments 2010.

Our organisation represents the nine organised bushwalking clubs in WA with a total membership of some 1000 people. Many of our clubs have members that have walked through the FRNP along the coastal route that was outlined in the book *Forests and Foot* (Meney and Brown, 1985). The FRNP provides excellent bushwalking conditions with spectacular scenery, wilderness qualities and unique vegetation. Our members strongly support measures to sustain those qualities, and wish to support enhanced responsible access. Hence we also support the ongoing restriction of irresponsible access (e.g. vehicle access to unsealed tracks, without strict hygiene measures).

One of the problems of walking the current FRNP coastal route is the lack of potable water. A consequence of this is that the walk is only open to very few of the fittest bushwalkers that are able to carry sufficient water. Water drops can be done at Quoin Head to alleviate this problem, but motorised access into Quoin head is not always possible, or can be withdrawn at very short notice, increasing the incentive for determined walkers to carry more weight than they are capable of, or attempt the walk with less water than they ought. This is unsafe. The current coastal walk is also essentially unmanaged, with little other than bushwalkers following good practice to avoid the spread of dieback. We therefore welcome changes to the management plan that would allow the construction and maintenance of a purpose built walking trail with overnight stay facilities including the provision of drinking water, and enhancing the potential for walkers to be managed and educated.

Yours sincerely

Ian McDonald
President

30 September 2010