

*Barking Owl
Photograph by Teale Britstra*



Biodiversity Conservation Strategic Plan 2016-25

PRESERVING AND CONSERVING OUR REGIONAL BIODIVERSITY
VALUES ON BEHALF OF THE COMMUNITY



Biodiversity Conservation Mission

"Biodiversity is the variety of all life forms on earth-the different plants, animals and micro-organisms; their genes; and the terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems of which they are a part."

Gladstone Regional Council (GRC) has prepared the Biodiversity Conservation Strategic Plan 2016-2025 for the future conservation, use and management of the region's natural resources, and particularly its biodiversity. The Strategy recognises the economic development objectives of the community and in no way aims to act as a barrier to sustainable industrial development in the region. However, sustainable development should be managed in such a way to prevent impacts on the biodiversity values of the Gladstone Region.

It should also be noted that GRC cannot undertake all the initiatives contained in this strategy, and nor should it be expected to, as a majority of initiatives are the domain of other levels of government. What GRC can do though is partner, co-ordinate, advocate and press for change and improvements where necessary.

The biodiversity conservation mission of GRC is to deliver the following aims and objectives:

1. Preserve and protect the existing biodiversity values of the Gladstone region by identifying and mitigating threats to those values.
2. Conserve and improve regional biodiversity values by:

- undertaking weed and pest animal control;
 - encouraging all levels of government to acquire land with high conservation values especially where critical to wildlife corridors, waterways and coastal areas;
 - encouraging biodiversity beneficial voluntary land management practices by rural landholders;
 - rehabilitating degraded areas;
 - conserving rare and threatened species; and
 - enforcing penalties for poor environmental behaviour.
3. Research, compile and disseminate knowledge and information on regional biodiversity values.
 4. Educate and inform the community on regional biodiversity values, their importance and relevant behaviours to enhance preservation and conservation.
 5. Partner with environment focussed groups to maximise knowledge and activity to preserve and conserve regional biodiversity values across the region.
 6. Work with and advocate to other levels of government regarding the need to preserve and conserve regional biodiversity values.
 7. Balance development with environmental protection at both local and regional levels.



Biodiversity Conservation Strategies

Strategic Goal	Measure/Target
1.1 Preserve the biodiversity value of Council owned/ managed conservation reserves and natural areas	Number of preservation projects on council owned/ managed conservation reserves and natural areas
1.2 Protect the biodiversity value of beach protection zoned land	Number of protection actions on beach protection zoned land Area restored/revegetated
1.3 Preserve the biodiversity value of state owned land	Refer Strategic Goal 5.1
1.4 No net loss of protected land use areas (conservation, forestry and parkland) from 2016 levels	2016 protected land use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation 80,546ha (7.7%) • Forestry 54,729ha (5.2%) • Parkland 30,711ha (3.2%)
1.5 Ensure appropriate biodiversity management regimes are in place for protected areas	Weed and pest animal management actions Develop a fire management plan for Council managed lands Council owned habitats assessed in good condition
1.6 Minimise impacts of urban and industrial development and activity on biodiversity	Relevant parts of Planning Scheme reviewed Seasonal plant and/or animal activity protected Significant trees protected Better managed stormwater runoff Illegal activities identified and notified/prosecuted

Preserve & Protect

Preserve and protect existing regional biodiversity values

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Strategic Goal	Measure/Target
2.1 Assist rural landowners that adjoin protected areas to adopt management practices that positively impact biodiversity values	Weed and pest animal campaigns Management practices adopted
2.2 Improve degraded habitat areas in riparian zones, waterways, wetlands and coastal areas to enhance biodiversity values	Areas identified Number of rehabilitation projects
2.3 Improve existing protected area access and management infrastructure	Identified infrastructure for improvement
2.4 Minimise roadside clearing (as part of roadside maintenance works)	Guidelines/policy developed Zero non-compliance with guidelines/policy roadside clearing
2.5 Conserve rare and endangered species	Increase in population sizes

Conserve & Improve

Conserve and improve existing regional biodiversity values



	Strategic Goal	Measure/Target
3.1	Create a repository of regional biodiversity knowledge	Knowledge-base compiled Annual updates
3.2	Employ and maintain suitably qualified staff	Conservation staff qualifications, knowledge and experience Council staff awareness of biodiversity issues
3.3	Identify knowledge gaps and develop future areas of research	Number of research projects per annum
3.4	Monitor environmental conditions on development approvals	Development compliance with environmental conditions from a Council perspective

Knowledge & Research

Enhance knowledge of regional biodiversity values

Ciara and Olivia taking part in tree planting activities at Tannum Sands



Strategic Goal	Measure/Target
4.1 Provide access to and promote Council's biodiversity knowledgebase, expertise and services	Availability, breadth and currency of information
4.2 Provide learning opportunities to the community	Information package Annual program of learning activities Number of active participants per annum
4.3 Regular promotion and communication to residents and visitors	Communications per annum (4-6)
4.4 Onsite promotion of Council activity/biodiversity information	Signage formats Annual distribution of signs

Educate & Inform

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Educate and inform the community and government on regional biodiversity issues



Strategic Goal	Measure/Target
5.1 Advocate biodiversity preservation and conservation issues to higher levels of government	Up to date register Issues raised and outcomes
5.2 Advocate biodiversity issues to appropriate regional decision makers	Up to date register Issues raised and outcomes
5.3 Undertake close co-operation with NRM, catchment and local environment groups	Up to date register Number of joint activities

Partner & Advocate

Partner and advocate on regional biodiversity issues

Biodiversity Conservation Projects

Theme 1: Preserve & Protect

- Develop a fire management plan for Council managed lands
- Install interpretive signage to educate dog owners about nesting turtles and shorebirds
- Significant tree and vegetation register and map layer on Council's GIS system
- Significant trees and vegetation informing the Planning Scheme
- Workshop to identify key threats to specific protected areas and appropriate management responses
- Signage and restricting beach access for nesting turtle and shorebird sites
- Degraded vegetation & habitat identification

Theme 2: Conserve & Improve

- Work with Green Army and volunteer organisations to restore habitats
- Map weeds in Council managed natural areas
- Develop a register of native trees that are removed by Council to inform a re-planting schedule. Including a matrix using tree size to determine how many trees need to be replanted
- Upgrade the directional signage on Round Gladstone Trail to improve public access to Police Creek
- Investigate creation of hollows in suitable trees
- Coastal dune revegetation projects
- Support community rehabilitation projects
- Control pedestrian access to beaches where relevant
- Undertake regular assessments of pedestrian beach access pathways
- Undertake assessments of vegetated stormwater waterways
- Roadside clearing guidelines/policy

Theme 3: Knowledge & Research

- Compile biodiversity knowledge base
- Compile biodiversity expert database
- Workshop to identify areas for protection/rehabilitation
- Develop professional development program for Conservation staff including conferences, workshops and training to increase knowledge

Theme 4: Educate & Inform

- Interpretive signage at Canoe Point Botanic Reserve and other relevant locations
- Interpretive signage formats and annual distribution
- Present Strategic Plan and annual Action Plan to stakeholder/conservation groups
- Develop council staff training program on biodiversity and conservation to educate GRC staff about biodiversity and impacts of their works

Theme 5: Partner & Advocate

- Identify issues to be raised with state and commonwealth government organisations
- Explore joint project and funding opportunities with Natural Resource Management (NRM) groups and industry
- Explore joint activities with local environment groups

Implementation

The implementation of the *Biodiversity Conservation Strategic Plan 2016-25* will occur through rolling three year action plans. Council will report progress towards strategic goals regularly to demonstrate collective stakeholder commitment towards achieving the Council's vision.

The Strategy should be subject to a minor review and adjustment every 2-3 years and a major review every 5 years to ensure it remains relevant to changing circumstances.

Note: The full Strategy is available from Gladstone Regional Council.