

15/11/2019

Section 36

Wild Drake P/L, Lake Malbena Proposal

Commercial-In-Confidence

To: Mr Jacobi (Dep. Sec., PAWS Tasmania) and Mr Starrs (Dep. Director Vic/Tas Assessments, DOEE)

Re: Wilderness Society protest action within the TWWHA, 7/8 December 2019.

Hello Jason and **Sect**,

I write in relation to the planned protest action by the Wilderness Society Tasmania, scheduled for December 7th and 8th, at Lake Malbena & Halls Island. I write as the entity (Wild Drake P/L) responsible for the environmental conditions of the Leased and Licensed areas on Halls Island, the area immediately around the heli-landing site, and the walking route from the heli-site to the lake edge.

I believe that Matters of National Environmental Significance are at high risk from these proposed actions. We do not endorse, facilitate or permit any of the proposed protest actions relating to the land we are responsible for. This position is founded on the very real environmental risk posed by the Wilderness Society actions.

The Wilderness Society Tas Campaign Manager (Tom Allen) has stated on ABC North Tas radio (12th November 2019) that '*hundreds*' are expected for the action, which involves walking into Lake Malbena, and camping on the proposed heli-landing site. A second component of the action is a protest action involving the occupying of Halls Island by an unknown number of protesters, for an unknown period. More details can be found in the radio interview here (just past half-way) <https://www.abc.net.au/radio/northtas/programs/drive/rowena-fry-asia-pacific-continental-enduro/11675490>, as well as within the attached screenshots.

The proposed protest actions are clearly a significant intensification of the existing use of the area, which currently sees as little as 20-30 walkers per annum (estimate based on materials presented during EPBC assessment). The proposed action puts Matters of National Environmental Significance at risk, may be in breach of several aspects of the TWWHA Management Plan, is in breach of PWS track strategies and recommended groups sizes, and does not meet the criteria of the Minimal Impact Bushwalking policy.

I am in the unique position of having surveyed the entire walking route with several Flora and Fauna specialists, and surveyed the general area with Aboriginal Heritage Officers. I am also the person responsible for the preparation, collation and submission of EPBC referrals relating to Halls Island and the surrounding area. My concerns come from an objective, evidence-based perspective.

Potential medium and high risk impacts resulting from the high-volume use of the un-formed walking route from Olive Lagoon to Lake Malbena/Halls Island include:

1. Impacts from trampling to ~900metre alpine bog and fen habitat on Layatinah Hill, from GDA94 446503E, 5355443N westwards to 445820E, 5355202N. This is also a recorded habitat of one of Australia's most threatened fish, the Federally listed Clarence Galaxia *Galaxias johnstoni*.

2. The unavoidable trampling of the southern *sphagnum* plain on Halls Island, when occupying the island. Our project has mitigated/avoided this risk by the proposed installation and use of perforated boardwalks across this habitat, however these have not yet been installed, and any intensification of use on the island prior to this installation will result in erosion (high risk).

3. Impacts from trampling to the large (250m) *sphagnum* plain immediately adjacent to the east of Malbena (which was also the subject location of the Malbena assessment). This habitat has already been subject to obvious trampling from smaller groups of Wilderness Society activists and others who have undertaken smaller protests to date, and evidence includes new pad formation since our monitoring began in ~2016.

4. Impacts from trampling to other smaller sections of *sphagnum* bog, included extremely rare striated *sphagnum* marshes along Olive Lagoon, east of Mary Tarn, and in the north-west corner of Lake Loretta.

5. Risk to cultural-criteria OUV's relating to recorded Aboriginal relics (tools scatters) along Section 42, a larger tool scatter Section 42.

Section 42 and a stone tool Section 42.

6. There are broader risks to other federally listed species and OUV's that need quantifying further, including biosecurity risks, erosion risks from trampling, sewage and greywater impacts, fire, and risks to federally listed Tasmanian devils, spotted-tail quoll, Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles (including nests along the little-used access road), along with federally listed migratory species, and numerous plant species and communities.

According to their own social media (see screenshots), the 'Event Organisers' are The *Wilderness Society Tasmania*, and the *Fishers and Walkers Against Helicopter Access* groups. The action was first announced by Wilderness Society associate Section 36 at a W.S. meeting on October 30th (I have audio). Tom Allen acknowledged that the Wilderness Society 'were definitely involved' when pressed on the 12th November ABC radio interview, and that the protest involved 'a few hundred protesters' walking to and camping at Lake Malbena. Under questioning from the radio host, Tom Allen went further to acknowledge that 'the protest will have (environmental) impacts, it definitely will' but deemed them as an acceptable trade-off for their cause. It is clear that this planned action by the Wilderness Society may be the most significant deliberate threat to the World Heritage Area in the past two decades.

I await your response to my concerns.

Kindest regards, Section 36

Wild Drake P/L, Lake Malbena proponent.

20/11/2019



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To: Mr Jacobi (Dep. Sec., PAWS Tasmania) and Mr Starrs (Dep. Director Vic/Tas Assessments, DOEE)

Re: Wilderness Society protest action within the TWWHA, 7/8 December 2019.

Hello Jason and **Sect**,

I write to update you of my significant concerns relating to the above planned Wilderness Society process. This update is *in addition* to the objective concerns raised in my letter of 15 November 2019.

Since my last correspondence, further details have been released via social media, including via the 'events' page co-hosted by The Wilderness Society. According to the updated event details, the locked and private access road that leads through private land (at trawtha makuminya), to the TWWHA boundary, will be unlocked and managed to specifically facilitate access to the TWWHA for the sole purpose of this event. This access has been arranged by the event organisers.

The further information also outlines that there will be at least two camping sites nominated for protesters to use in the TWWHA: One at Olive Lagoon, and one at Lake Malbena.

From my own surveys of the route at Lake Olive (a route that extends from a pre-1984 four-wheel drive track at trawtha makuminya), the open spaces suitable for camping are predominantly alpine bog and fen (sphagnum plains and wet areas). In addition, there is at least one Aboriginal artefact recorded [REDACTED]. Both the alpine bogs and fens, and the cultural artefacts are MNES.

The second proposed protest site is identified as the 'Lake Malbena heli-landing site'. Beyond the risks associated with accessing Lake Malbena from the TWWHA boundary (identified in my November 15 correspondence), this action represents significant site-specific risks to MNES. The heli landing site itself is an area of exposed sheet rock, adjacent to a larger area of alpine sphagnum plain. With an absence of anchor points for tents on the sheet rock, and an absence of actual surface area (space), there is a high likelihood that tents will be set up on the sphagnum plain, and/or general activities will necessarily occur on the sphagnum due to site area (size) constraints. This would lead to risks of trampling, track formation and/or erosion. Alarminglly, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This Aboriginal cultural artefact [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

With more than 80 people self-identifying as attending the action, and more than 400 self-identifying as 'interested' in attending, this is a very real, quantifiable, and immediate risk to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage and MNES.

I await your response to my concerns.

Kindest regards, Section 36

Wild Drake P/L, Lake Malbena proponent.

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