

***Queensland* – Permits and permissions required to access indigenous and other lands, including national parks**

General:

There are no major Land Councils or other such organisations in Queensland where permits to transit or visit aboriginal areas might be generally obtainable. However, if you want some general information regarding aboriginal lands and any general requirements, particularly the liquor laws, contact the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs on (07) 3224 2111. The telephone number for the Cairns Regional Office which has responsibility for the Cape York Region is (07) 4039 8177. There is also a specific Government telephone number you can call in Qld to check on the liquor laws on the whole of Cape York; it is 1300 789 000 and a website for the same purpose can be found at www.alcoholimits.qld.gov.au

Camping near Communities:

From my experience it is simply a matter of contacting the particular community and ascertaining their requirements. Camping fees generally apply at most communities where camping is available. The fees seem to range from about \$5 per vehicle per night up to about \$35 per night. Others charge an entry permit of about \$35 per week. There may also be a small per night camping fee on top of that. Again, the Exploroz website can be very helpful, and the Hema Maps of the area also contain contact details for the various communities. For areas on the west coast north of Weipa, contact the Weipa Caravan Park on (07) 4069 7871.

Cape York:

The only permit currently required to access the tip of Cape York is one from the Injinoo people. This is however included in the cost of the vehicle ferry across the Jardine River as is a Bush Camping Permit and a Fishing Permit. A small information booklet is also normally provided. Currently, (August, 2010), the ferry trip will cost \$88 for your vehicle and an additional \$11 for a trailer. The ferry charges include your return trip, so make sure you keep your ticket. Be warned that the old vehicle crossing is now too deep to cross. The Jardine Ferry shop can be contacted on (07) 4069 1369. Camping at the very nice camping ground adjacent to the ferry and shop on the south bank of the Jardine is available at \$5 per person per night as at August, 2010. All sites are unpowered.

Some contact details for the commercial camping areas at the Tip include: Loyalty Beach (07) 4069 3372; Seisia Camping Ground (07) 4069 3243 and Punsand Bay (07) 4069 1722.

The Cape York Peninsula Development Association maintains a reasonably good website which does have a lot of excellent (if slightly outdated) information available for tourists. The website can be found at www.cypda.com.au

Elim Beach (out of the Hope Vale Community):

If you want to access and/or camp at Elim Beach or visit Cape Bedford, both of which are located within the Hope Vale Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) Lands, contact the Hope Vale Community Council on (07) 4060 9133.

CREB Track and Roaring Meg Falls:

The CREB Track (CREB stands for Cairns Regional Electricity Board although the old electricity wires have long since been removed) and the newer road north (the Bloomfield Track) from Cape Tribulation which follows the coast are well worth traversing.

The CREB Track (which we have only traversed once, and that was back in 1983) had lots of ups and downs, and unless they have done something with the surface, it was very slippery in the wet, as it was primarily a clay based loam. It takes about half a day simply to drive straight through on the CREB. If it has been raining it is also subject to closure. It is always closed for the duration of the wet season.

The newer track from Cape Tribulation (Bloomfield Track) is almost a two wheel drive road; well formed, and with a few places of interest along the road, but it can be 4WD if it gets wet, particularly some of the steeper sections and the water crossings. There are a couple of spots where you can take a short walking track out to the beaches. Well worth doing. No permit is required, but if you wanted to camp anywhere within Daintree National Park then the standard camping fees would apply. (See below under 'Entry and Camping Permits).

On the CREB Track, the major point of interest is Roaring Meg Falls; don't miss them. Whilst the maps say that you need a Permit to drive the CREB Track that is not the case if you simply wish to drive through and NOT visit or stay overnight anywhere. But if you want to visit Roaring Meg Falls, then you MUST have a Permit, issued by the Atherton Office of the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) to traverse the track out to the Falls. If you wish to stay overnight at Roaring Meg Falls, then again, you MUST have a Camping Permit, (which also includes your right to traverse the track to the Falls). The Permits are only issued from the DERM Office at Atherton; the Permit to traverse is free, but the Camping Permit will cost the standard camping fees (see below). Bookings can only be done by post or fax, and as it is a

popular spot, with very limited camp sites available, it would be worth inquiring well in advance if you want to camp there. Atherton Office of DERM can be contacted on (07) 4095 7021 or (07) 4091 1844. Their Fax number is (07) 4091 2844. Their email is customerservicecentre.atherton@derm.qld.gov.au and their street address is 25 Mabel Street, Atherton. And, you will find that there is a ZERO alcohol policy at the camping area at Roaring Meg, (and that includes a day visit), but if you are just driving through the CREB Track only, then the zero alcohol policy at Roaring Meg does not apply to you.

Entry and Camping Permits:

N.B.: Recent changes in Queensland mean that if you want to camp in a national park or State forest, you can be almost certain that a camping permit will be required, and that includes bush camping in the most remote national park or State forest.

General:

As far as I can ascertain, there are no annual or holiday style permits (with the exception of those listed below) generally available from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The Service is a Division of the (now) Qld Department of Environment and Resource Management.

The Department of Environment and Resource Management website is at www.derm.qld.gov.au then click on “national parks, marine parks and forests”. However, by far the best website to use is the little publicised www.qld.gov.au/camping. It’s a much easier site to navigate than the Department’s principal website and has heaps of extremely helpful information. It should be your first point of inquiry for any plans you may have for visiting and/or camping in any Queensland National Park or State Forest. Camp site bookings in most National Parks and State Forests can be made on-line at www.qld.gov.au/camping and Vehicle Entry Permits (only applicable for Fraser, Moreton and Bribie islands – see below) can also be bought on-line.

The Qld Government also now offers a 24/7 telephone facility for many areas of Government services. Camp site bookings and general inquiries in relation to national parks and State forests is one of them. (Yes, you can make camp site bookings by telephone 24/7)! The primary contact number is 13 74 68, and you do get to talk to a real person! Another contact number is 13 13 04, although this number may disappear in the future. If the operator at 13 74 68 can’t help with your inquiry, they can put you through to the Parks and Wildlife Service Customer Service Centre which only operates Monday to Friday. A direct line to the Parks and Wildlife Customer Service Centre is (07) 3330 5004. You will find the operators at 13 74 68 very helpful indeed.

Where else can I book?:

The “/camping” website has a listing of all Parks and Wildlife Service offices and other retail locations where both camping and vehicle entry permits (where applicable) are available “over-the-counter”. Go to www.qld.gov.au/camping then click on “General Information”, then “Fees and Bookings” and then click on the link in the text on “over-the-counter camping and vehicle access permit booking offices” for a complete and comprehensive listing.

What Charges apply?:

Camping charges for all Qld National Parks and State Forests and Recreation Areas, etc., (as at August, 2010, and excluding commercially operated camping grounds) are \$5.15 per person per night, with children under 5 years of age being free. A family rate is available at \$20.60 per night for 2 adults and accompanying children under 18, up to a maximum of eight people. Children under 5 years old are free. Do your homework though before you buy a family permit because for two adults and one child for example, it would be cheaper to buy permits for three people at \$15.75 (3 x \$5.15). The “/camping” website has a great calculator available which spells out all the details.

How far ahead should I book?:

If you are visiting any of the more popular National Parks or State Forests, particularly during any busy season or school holidays, it is generally “first in, best dressed”, so it is highly advisable to book well ahead, otherwise you may not get a camp site. It’s a real pain I know, but you will need to know the exact dates of your visit to do so, and in some areas you might also need to know the number or identifier of the camp site, otherwise you will have to just accept what you are given.

Self registration processes still apply in some of the more remote National Parks and State Forests where staff may not be on-site. You can ascertain from the “/camping” website where self-registration may be in place by virtue of the fact that the particular Park will not be listed as one of those where on-line or telephone camp site bookings can be made.

Pre-paid Camping Credits:

A system of pre-paid Camping Credits is also in operation which could be very useful if you want to visit a number of Parks and don’t wish to carry sums of money with you or use a cheque or credit card to pay for self registration permits. This process also obviates the need to provide personal details on the application forms. Call the Customer Service Centre for further details and to purchase pre-paid Camping Credits.

At the Camping Area:

Please note that no matter whether you book over the phone, on-line or over-the-counter, generally, (although not always when you book over-the-counter), you will simply be

given a “Booking Number” which you will be required to write on a tag which are available at most camping areas or in prominent positions on tracks leading in to National Parks or State Forests. The “Booking Number” and your surname is to be written on the tag and the tag is to be attached to your tent or other camping structure. If you book over-the-counter at the nearest National Park Office to your intended destination, you may well find that you are actually given the appropriate tag for display.

If for some reason, there is no “tag” available and you are at your destination, write your “booking number” and surname on a piece of paper, put it in a clear weatherproof bag, and attach it to your tent or camping structure.

Fraser and Moreton Islands:

Vehicle Entry Permits, which as at August, 2010 cost \$39.35 and are valid for a one month period, (annual permits are also available at \$197.20), are required for Fraser Island and Moreton Island. They can be purchased from most Qld National Parks Office or on-line or by phone (see above). If you book by phone or on-line, you will be given a reference number and you will still need to call in to a National Parks office to actually pick up your Permit.

For Moreton Island, Vehicle Entry Permits can also be purchased from the barge operators, which is probably the simplest method. For Fraser Island there are National Parks Offices located at 46 Quay Street, Bundaberg, (telephone (07) 4131 1600); at Cnr. Lennox and Alice Streets, Maryborough, (telephone (07) 4121 1800; on Rainbow Beach Road, Rainbow Beach, (telephone (07) 5486 3160); and at Tewantin in Moorindil Street (telephone (07) 5449 7792). The Offices however are only open during normal business hours Monday to Friday. Don’t forget to ask for your “Fraser Pack”.

The standard camping fees (see above) of \$5.15 per person per night or \$20.60 per family per night apply and of course ferry charges also apply. Camp sites can be booked on-line or by phone or at most National Parks Office. The normal method (see above) of picking up your tag and putting your camping fee “Booking Number” and name on it and displaying the tag at your camp site applies.

Bribie Island:

On Bribie Island, the standard camping fees and processes (see above) also apply but the Vehicle Entry Permit which is \$37.65 is only valid for a one week period. (Annual permits are also available at \$117.60). Vehicle Entry Permits can be obtained on-line or by phone (see above) which would again require you to call in to a Parks & Wildlife Service office to pick up your permit. They are also available over-the-counter at Parks & Wildlife Service Offices. The previous self registration process for camping fees no longer applies.

Other more remote National Parks:

For the more remote and lesser visited national parks you will either need to call in to the appropriate Ranger Station (to book your camp site and pay your camping fees), or in many of them, for example, Cape Melville, Bathurst Bay, Lakefield, Mungkan Kandju and Alice-Mitchell Rivers, self registration requirements apply, which includes the camping fee of \$5.15 per night per person. Again, check the “/camping” website for those Parks and Reserves where self registration processes apply. If the Park you intend to visit is not listed on the web site as one of those where on-line, telephone or over-the-counter bookings can be made, then it would be reasonable to assume that self registration applies. It would though be worth checking with 13 74 68 or the Parks and Wildlife Customer Service Centre.

Donohue Highway (which becomes the Plenty Highway in the NT)

Travelers using the Donohue Highway to cross from Boulia in Qld to Alice Springs need to be aware that Tobermorey Homestead no longer provides either fuel or camping. Fuel and camping is still available at Jervois Homestead which is 220 kilometres west of Tobermorey. (Tobermorey is located just inside the NT, right on the NT/Qld border).

Savannah Way:

If you intend to travel the Savannah Way between Burketown and Borroloola please note that the Wollgorang Roadhouse is permanently closed, however the Hells Gate Roadhouse (which had been closed for a couple of years) has now been re-opened to camping. Fuel and very limited supplies are also again available from the Hells Gate shop. Fuel and a great supermarket are also available at Doomadgee.

Both the Northern Territory and Queensland Governments have spent an enormous amount of money on the Savannah Way, and it is now touted as a viable alternative way across the Gulf. We traveled the Savannah Way in 2009 and in comparison to previous years it is now well maintained and quite comfortable.

Simpson Desert National Park:

Camping Permits are required and the standard Camping Fees apply (see above) if you wish to camp within the Queensland Simpson Desert National Park. A Camping Tag with your booking number and surname must be displayed on your tent or other camping structure, as per the normal requirements.

If you check the Queensland National Parks website (see above), you will find that the ONLY place where camping is permitted within the Qld Simpson Desert National Park is within 500 metres of the QAA Line. Please note also that “open fires” (i.e., wood fires) are NOT permitted within the Queensland Simpson Desert National Park.

Remember also that the Simpson Desert is now closed to visitation over the period of each summer. The closure period is December 1 to March 15 and covers the Simpson Desert Conservation Park and the Simpson Desert Regional Reserve (both of which are in South Australia) and it includes the Simpson Desert National Park in Queensland. Fines of up to \$1,000 can apply to transgressors. Note though that Witjira National Park and the camping area at Dalhousie Springs in South Australia will remain open during the closure period.

Road Conditions:

Go to the RACQ website at www.racq.com.au/ then click on “Trip Planning” and then “Road Conditions”. Up to date road reports are also available at www.exploroz.com/Roads/Default.aspx

Can I get a Concession?:

Don’t forget, if you are dealing with a National Park Service or any Government Agency, and you have a Seniors Card or a Pension Card of some description; always ask whether a Seniors Discount is available. In most cases the answer is, yes!

Disclaimer:

Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation of this information, no responsibility can be accepted for either the accuracy of the contents or for any errors or omissions.

With your assistance we might also endeavour to maintain this information in an updated form. So if you wish to amend, or add to any of the information contained in this article, please contact the undersigned on (02) 9523 9266 or email john.greig@bigpond.com

John Greig

Researched and compiled by John Greig – Toyota Land Cruiser Club of Australia – Sydney

Please also be sure to read the first part of this site titled “Heading Outback – Do I Need a Permit? – Can I Drive that Track?” in conjunction with the information above.