Wilderness, Tourism and National Parks

The West

Field Report: regional futures for wilderness & protected areas

6th National Wilderness Conference
Sydney
The Conservative Hegemony

The rise of conservative, anti-conservation politics is a serious threat to existing reserves and remaining wild areas.

- The Liberal-National Party landslide victory in Queensland
- The Country Liberal Party in the Northern Territory
- The Liberal Party Government in WA (with National Party support)
- The prospect of a federal Coalition Government
- The Labor push back in certain places...
The Big Threats to Nature in the North

The North faces an extraordinary array of environmental threats:

• The biggest mining and energy boom in history, with a major focus in Australia
• The legitimate concerns of the Indigenous community about their economic future
• Diffuse threats – grazing, fire, weeds, ferals...
• Climate Change impacts
• The scaling back of Government support and capacity
• The so-called “Northern Food-bowl”

What role can protected areas and tourism play in this context?
The Thin Edge of the Wedge:

The development at James Price Point is designed to open up the Kimberley to full-scale industrialisation.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE KIMBERLEY

Some of the Kimberley industrialisation projects now being considered, assessed or approved by the W.A. and Commonwealth governments:

1. Inpex Co. of Japan: Liquified natural gas (LNG) plant, Maret Islands.
2. Woodside Ltd: LNG 'Hub' development somewhere on Kimberley coast.
7. Ord River stage two expansion for agriculture, incl. GM cotton.
8. Tourism development, mouth of the Berkley River.
9. Northern Australia Land and Water Taskforce (Commonwealth govt.): Irrigated agriculture in the Fitzroy River catchment, & a range of other water intensive projects.
10. New 'open sea' aquaculture projects along Kimberley coast.

Existing conservation areas.
Humpback Whale nursery

The world's largest Humpback whale nursery extends from south of Broome, to north of Camden Sound.
Tourism: a part of the solution?

Relative economic contributions

Income
- Kimberley tourism was worth about $637 million in 2008 and represented 35.8% of the region’s economy.
- Regional economic return on investment is much higher for tourism-related industries in the Kimberley: $1.50–$1.70 return on each dollar invested (based on ‘total output multipliers’) as compared to oil and gas at just $1.18.
- At least 40% of the mining revenue from resource sales generated in the Kimberley ‘leaks out’ of the region according to government estimates.

Employment
- Tourism employs:
  - at least 17% of the total Broome labour force
  - at least 12.5% and up to 27% of the total Kimberley labour force
  - about 20% of the Aboriginal labour force in Broome and the West Kimberley.
Mining threats

EIGHT NEW MINES PLANNED