Vegetation of Wellington Park

Alpine Heaths, Herbfields and Sphagnum Bogs

This group includes at least 7 communities which occupy the highest parts of the Wellington Range and contains vegetation less than 2m in height. These communities are all considered fire sensitive, with communities on peat being the most vulnerable to damage. A number of fire sensitive species (eg. creeping pine *Microcachrys tetragona*) previously recorded on the Wellington Range no longer exist in the Park. The exception is *Ozothamnus ledifolius* heath which has benefited from an increased frequency of fire and dominates much of the summit plateau.

Sub-alpine Woodlands and Shrublands

This group includes communities dominated by Tasmanian snow gum (*Eucalyptus coccifera*), urn gum (*E. urnigera*) and occasionally myrtle (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*). These communities do not appear to require fire for their long-term survival, although in the total absence of fire there may be reduced regeneration of eucalypts.

Buttongrass Moorland

Buttongrass (*Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus*) is confined to the far western portion of Wellington Park and includes a 17 ha site at Long Marsh beside Jefferys Track.

Wet Heath

There are two facies of this community. One on sandstone in the east of the Park, and the other on dolerite in the far western portion of the Park. The most extensive area (116 ha) of wet heath on sandstone occurs at Snake Plains. There is also a small patch (2.5 ha) of a similar community within Mountain Park.

Snake Plains consists of a 1-2 m high dense shrub layer dominated by *Leptospermum scoparium* with *Oxylobium ellipticum* sub-dominant. These overlay a heathy layer (0.5 m) of *Melaleuca squamea, Epacris lanuginosa* and *Sprengelia incarnata*. Sedges are dominated by *Empodisma minus* with *Gahnia grandis* and *Lepyrodia tasmanica* amongst the coral fern (*Gleichenia dicarpa*).

There are several patches of wet heath on dolerite (15 to 50 ha in size) at the far western end of the Wellington Range. These occur on poorly drained sites where conditions have inhibited eucalypt establishment or regeneration. Typically sites have a shrub layer which includes *Leptospermum lanigerum, Melaleuca squamea, Callistemon viridiflorus,* and *Baeckea gunniana*. Graminoids can be abundant and include *Empodisma minus, Restio australis,* and *Gahnia grandis*. Other species that are locally prominent include *Astelia alpine* and *Gleichenia alpina*. Small patches of sphagnum were also recorded. It is likely that there are several distinct floristic communities within this broad vegetation type that could be related to alpine communities. *Eucalyptus gunnii* is scattered through some of the patches and often forms a dense stand on the margins of the heath.

Rainforest Gully Scrub

Notable for the absence of eucalypts, these are areas of rainforest which have suffered sufficient burning to eliminate many of the rainforest elements, although tiny relicts of rainforest species may be present in deep gullies. Prominent broadleaf shrubs are blanket leaf (*Bedfordia salicina*) and musk (*Olearia argophylla*) with silver wattle (*Acacia dealbata*) sometimes emergent. The rainforest remnants are highly sensitive to fire.

Wet Forest and Mixed Forests

These are dominated by white-top (*Eucalyptus delegatensis*) at higher altitudes, yellow gum (*E.johnstonii*) on moist sandstone sites, swamp gum (*E. regnans*) on wet mid and low altitude sites, and stringybark (*E. obliqua*), blue gum (*E. globulus*) and very occasionally white gum (*E. viminalis*) at lower altitudes.

Rainforest elements are often much reduced or absent from areas where rainfall would typically support them. Many of the examples of these communities within Wellington Park include regrowth with scattered emergent overmature trees showing signs of fire damage.

High Altitude Dry Sclerophyll Forest

This includes forests which grade downslope from the true sub-alpine communities. Dominated by *Eucalyptus delegatensis* they predominantly occur on dry and often shallow soils which accounts for the sclerophyllous nature of the vegetation. Due to the slow regeneration rates at higher altitudes this vegetation type has a longer fire interval than dry sclerophyll forest at lower altitudes. Some of the sites occupied by this community are an artefact of relatively frequent burning, and are likely to revert to wet and possibly mixed forest communities in the extended absence of fire. East of Jefferys Track the community has a grassy ground layer over deeper soils.

Shrubby and Heathy Low Altitude Dry Sclerophyll Forests

These communities include forests dominated by *Eucalyptus obliqua, E. globulus*. and white peppermint (*E. pulchella*) on dolerite, and by *E. obliqua,* silver peppermint (*E. tenuiramis*) and black peppermint (*E. amygdalina*) on sediments. They typically occupy warmer, drier aspects than wet forest.

Heathy communities generally occupy warmer aspects or less fertile soils on sediments, particularly where fire has been regular and frequent. Wetter and less frequently burnt sites tend to have shrubs dominant in the understorey.

Grassy Woodlands and Open Forests

These communities are generally found on relatively fertile soils derived from dolerite, usually on relatively gentle lower slopes. These communities are dominated by *Eucalyptus globulus, E. pulchella* , or occasionally *E. ovata*.

She-oak Forest

This community occupies steep, rocky, north-facing slopes on dolerite. Small patches occur close to the boundary of the Park with one larger area on slopes above Islet Rivulet at Glenorchy. Sheoak forests are maintained by regular fire, although the dominant species *Allocasuarina verticillata* can reproduce without fire.

Sourced from:

- *The Wellington Park Fire Management Strategy*, 2006