8. Off-Road Trails

8.1 Strategic Context

BACK ON TRACK: WA STATE TRAIL BIKE STRATEGY 2008

This strategy states that *'Recreational trail bike riding is an outdoor physical activity that families can engage together which is exhilarating, challenging and delivers social, economic and health benefits.'*

The objectives of the State Trail Bike Strategy are:

1. *To identify suitable locations for the managed use of trail bikes in order to provide an attractive alternative to areas where trail bike use should be discouraged.*
2. *To balance the reasonable demand for all lawful types of trail bike riding with the need to protect the environment and the amenity of the community and other recreationalists.*
3. *To develop a continuous process that reflects the dynamics of changing land use and patterns of trail bike use.*

The Trail Bike Strategy also identified areas around Dwellingup, Collie, Capel and Greenbushes have potential for development into managed facilities, and an extensive trails network could be developed in the region.

Because of the confusion around the legality of trail bike riding, the State Trail Bike Strategy also specifies the areas in which trail bikes are legal as per the below table. This table is equally applicable for 4WDs.

Type of Place	Registered / Licensed	Unregistered / Unlicensed
Purpose-built circuits under Club control	Legal	Legal
Designated Off Road Vehicle Areas (some areas are Trail Bike ORV areas only, 4WDs are not legal in these areas)	Legal	Legal (if ORV registered)
Commercial Riding Parks	Legal	Legal
Public roads network	Legal	Not legal
National Parks: gazetted roads and tracks	Legal	Not legal
National Parks: management tracks	Not legal	Not legal
National Parks: user-created tracks	Not legal	Not legal
State Forests: gazetted roads and tracks	Legal	Not legal
State Forests: user-created tracks	Not legal	Not legal
State Forests: temporary user-created tracks where specifically permitted for and only while competing in Enduro events	Legal (legal for B Class registered bikes)	Not legal
Parks and Reserves (excluding public roads)	Not legal	Not legal
Trails designated for non-motorised activities	Not legal	Not legal
Water Catchment Areas (excluding Reservoir Protection Zones) - gravel, graded or sealed roads that are open to the public	Legal	Not legal

Water Catchment Areas - off road driving	Not legal	Not legal
Private Property (with consent of owner)	Legal	Legal

This table demonstrates that there is a requirement for recognised trail bike trails as many of the areas available to other trail users do not permit trail bike riders.

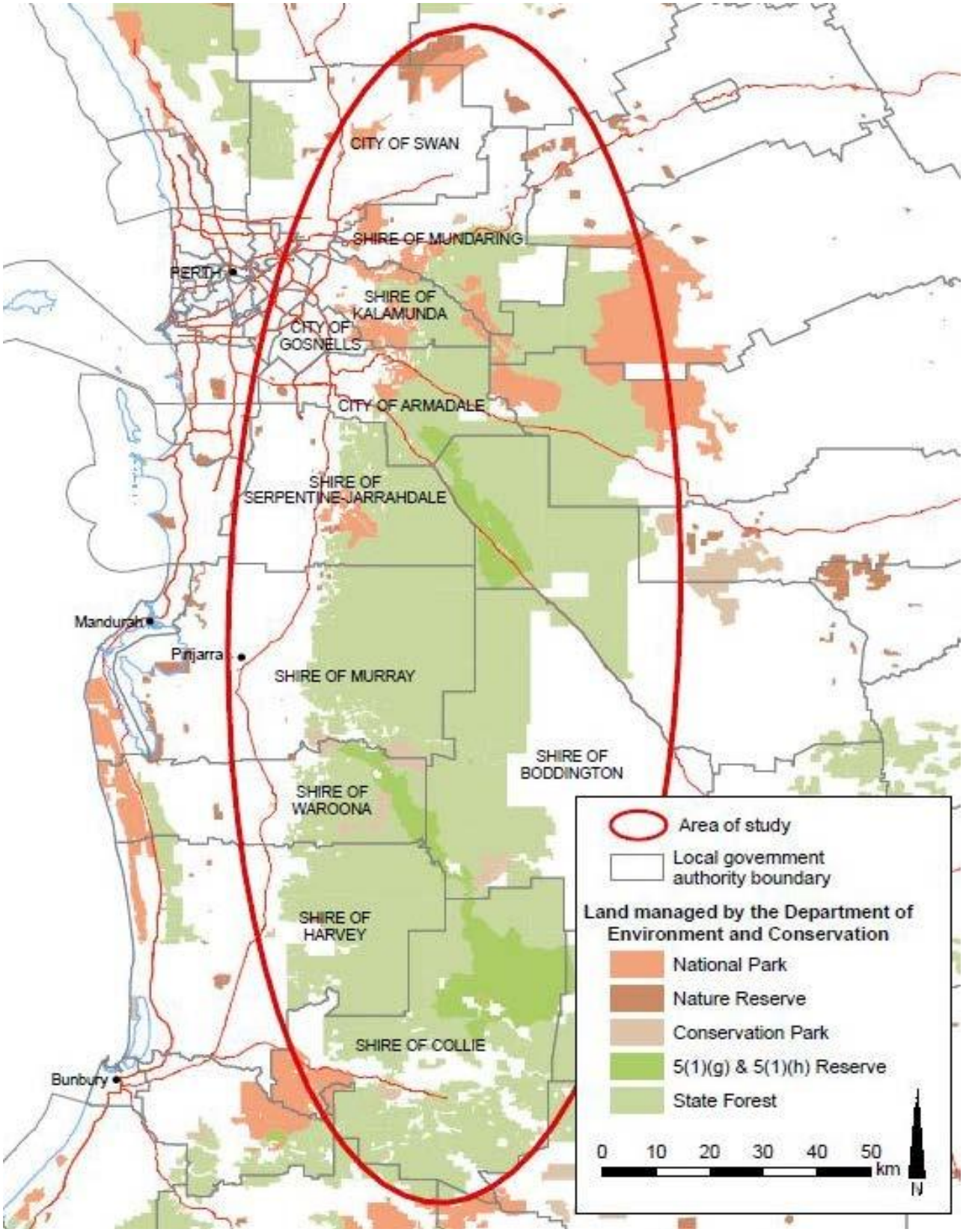

Fig. 64 – Off-Road Vehicle Regional Study Area (Source: Regional Land Use Planning Study)

4WD (FOUR WHEEL DRIVE) STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Nil, there is no Strategic Plan at either the State or National level for the development of 4WD Trails.

8.2 Background

Collie has a long and successful history with motorsport. The Collie Motorplex, Collie Speedway and Collie Motorcross are large well used facilities which demonstrate both the local demand for motorised sport, but also the willingness of people to travel from Perth and beyond to participate, spectate and support these motorsports. Both facilities hold events which attract thousands of visitors to each event. The Hon Mick Murray MLA, Seniors and Ageing; Volunteering; Sport and Recreation stated: *"Already last month, the Gazzanats event was held at the Collie Motorplex and attracted 3000 people, including entrants, buddies and spectators"* (Collie Mail 19/03/18).

8.3 Trail Categories (Trail Bike Trails)

LENGTH

Short	Up to 15km
Medium	Between 15km and 30km
Long	Between 30km and 50km
Short Endurance	50km - 80km
Medium Endurance	80km – 100km
Long Endurance	More than 100km

TRAIL TYPE*

Destination Riding / Touring	Destination riding is most closely aligned with the experiences sought by bushwalkers and mountain bike riders. A destination ride is a ride to somewhere and back again. It can range from a couple of kilometres of single loop or up to many hundreds of kilometres covered over several days. Short destination rides can be undertaken solely within forest areas and on forest trails, while the longer rides will almost certainly require an element of on-road riding to connect sequences of trails.
Cross Country	Cross-country riding is commonly associated with deserts and wide open spaces that are devoid of formed roads. Prevalent in the United States, cross-country riding in Western Australia is typically confined to private farms or beach and dune areas.
Family Trails	Research indicates an increasing demand for destination trail facilities that are accessible by family groups. Families report that trail riding enables the family to spend time together outdoors. Current vehicle registration and driver's license legislation precludes this activity from occurring on public land other than designated off road vehicle areas.
Freestyle	Freestyle riding is usually an extension of cross-country riding and typically refers to the discovery or building of obstacles such as jumps or other challenges. There is a parallel between the skate park and skiing terrain park culture and freestyle dirt bike riding, with proponents typically being younger and riding motocross bikes.
Circuit Riding	Motocross-style circuits can be formal or informal and provide a high-adrenalin experience in a relatively confined space. Motocross circuits typically have tight banked corners and jumps connected by short

straights and provide the rider with racing practice or riding challenge. The circuits can vary in technical challenge from a simple flat loop for young riders up to international level super cross circuits requiring a special permit to access.

*State Trail Bike Strategy. This is equally applicable for 4WD, except that these vehicles are more frequently registered and if registered can be driven on gazetted roads.

8.4 Off-Road Trail Audit

There are no designated trails or areas for Trail Bikes within the Collie River Valley or wider region with the closest Trail Bike Park at Kirup, 66km away. There are currently only 6 listed trails or areas which accept Trails Bikes within the State as follows:

- Gnangara, Department of Parks and Wildlife;
- Pinjar, Department of Parks and Wildlife;
- Lancelin and Ledge Point, Shire of Gingin;
- Kwinana, City of Kwinana;
- York, Shire of York; and
- Karratha, City of Karratha.

There is one 4WD network within Collie River Valley which includes the following trails - Lennard Track, Sailors Gully and the Jump Ups. This is not heavily promoted due the environmental sensitivity of the National Park and the seasonality of the trail. The trail is closed during the winter months to reduce environmental damage. This trail is of medium difficulty, increasing in difficulty depending on the weather conditions. This trail is well used mainly due to the lack of other dedicated 4WD facilities. It is not intended to increase the use of this trail due to the environmental damage that would be created.

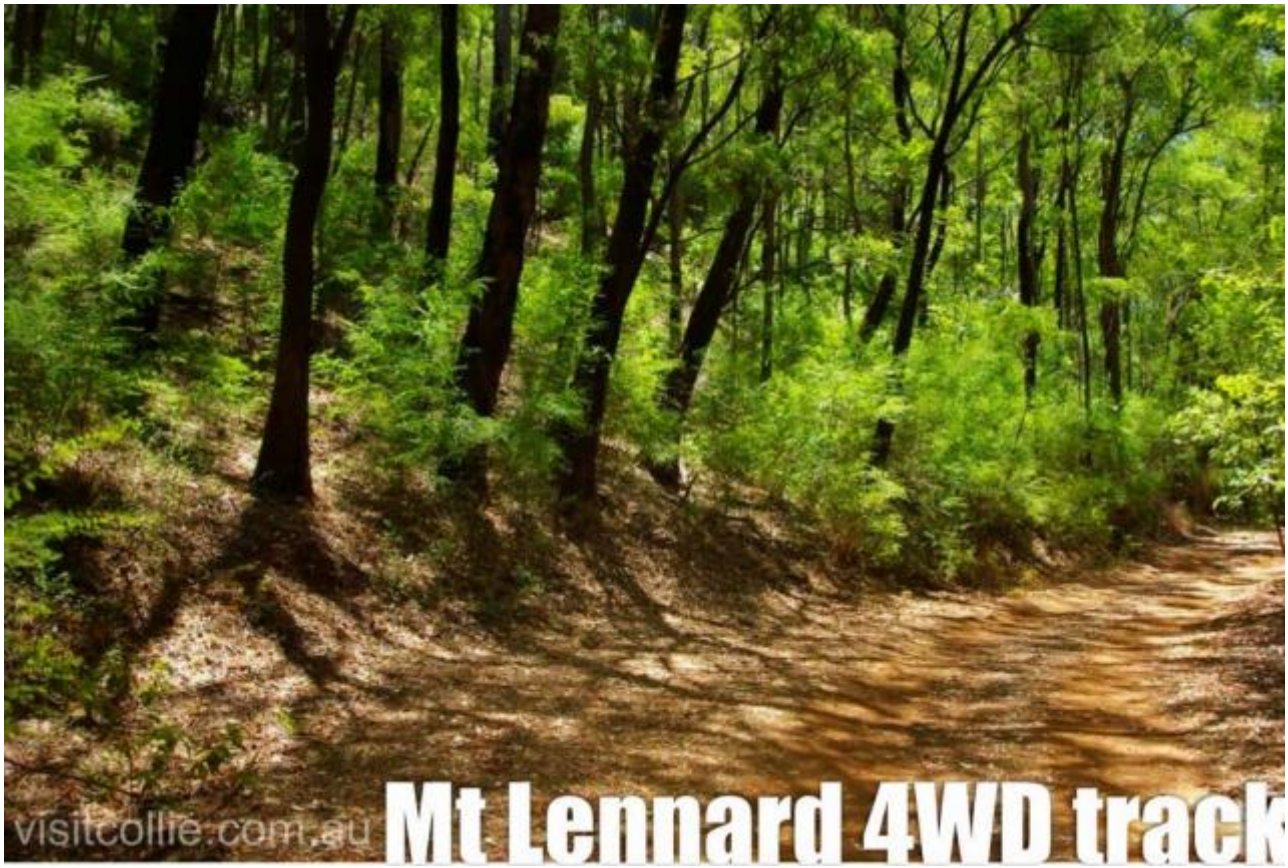

Fig. 65 – Lennard 4WD Track, Collie (Source: visitcollie.com.au)

8.5 Off-Road Trail Opportunities

As there are no designated trails or areas for Trail Bikes and one 4WD trail which is not intended to be further developed, the need exists for all types of Trail Bike and 4WD Trails to be designed and developed within Collie River Valley.

PERTH – ALBANY 4WD TRAIL (4WD Association)

This trail commences on the outskirts of Perth and uses gravel roads to reach Albany through Collie and a number of other tourist and historical towns. The exact route is flexible depending on weather and road conditions with the route provided through a mobile phone application which will be frequently updated according to these conditions.

Fig. 66 – Perth-Albany 4WD Trail (Source: 4WD Association WA)

OT01 Design and maintain the Perth to Albany Off-Road Trail including its route through Collie and the development of a mobile phone application to provide guidance about the route, local tourist attractions, accommodation and services.

POTENTIAL OFF-ROAD PARK, MUJA (Private)

This area includes the inactive Muja Pit (Yancoal) and Premier Coal Mine 3 as well as mine rehabilitated areas adjacent to Lake Kepwari and the Collie Motorplex, connecting between and with these facilities. The proximity of these facilities as well as their presence within Collie will give the Off-Road Park a competitive advantage and enhance Collie's reputation for adventure sport. This Off-Road Park will cater for both 4WD and Trail Bike users on the same site with a common Trail Centre, management and facilities, but following different trails designed for their particular needs.

The Off-Road Park will include land currently gazetted for mining (but inactive) from both Premier Coal and Yancoal (Griffin Coal) as well as State Forest managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. This mix of tenures will allow the development of the other portions of land independently and in stages should inordinate delays or insurmountable obstacles occur with one of these land holdings. There is opportunity for a private investor to develop this land on a commercial basis. This will provide the optimal management solution to repair any damage to the trails through their constant use. These areas are particularly attractive to Off-Road Trail users as they have a mix of bushland, open cut mining, slopes and soil types as well as large areas to negotiate. Muja Pit in particular is very scenic with a lake in the mine void (which is a unique selling point for Collie and this location) and has a grandstand shape which will enable the vehicles to be observed through binoculars or cameras for the majority of the trails. This will be attractive for competitive events.

Fig. 67 - Muja Open Cut Mine

There is a significant amount of work and a number of hurdles to degazette these mine voids, however this rehabilitation process is underway following the completion of active mining in these areas. This process requires the land to be rehabilitated to an end use (e.g. State Forest or Recreation) to the satisfaction of the State. To develop an Off-Road Park at this location, a feasibility study will be developed to ensure that it is a financially viable option for a private investor and to attract that investor. A concept plan will be drafted in conjunction with the feasibility study and rehabilitation work completed by the respective mining companies toward the end use of the mine as an Off-Road Park. Finally a framework will be developed to guide the process to open the Off-Road Trails Park.

OT02 Prepare a concept plan, feasibility study and framework for the development of an Off-Road Trails Park at Muja Pit, Mine 3 and rehabilitated land adjacent to Lake Kepwari and the Collie Motorplex on a commercial basis.

OFF-ROAD CHALLENGE TRAIL

These trails (separate Trail Bike and 4WD Trails) will include technical loops and challenge courses which can be completed as a course or as individual challenges at or near the Collie Motorplex. These trails and challenges will provide additional value to the Motorplex while making use of the existing facilities. These challenges and technical loop may be used for training purposes and potentially could be developed as Stage 1 of an overall project which would include the Off-Road Park at Muja nearby. This development will provide a value add component to the Perth – Albany 4WD Trail and provide an alternative for Trail Bike users to riding in areas that are not permitted including on other trail types planned in this document.

OT03 Design and develop separate Off-Road Challenge Trails at or near the Collie Motorplex for Trail Bikes and 4WDs.

8.6 Off-Road Events

These events are dependent on a gazetted Off-Road Vehicle Area being created under the Control of Vehicles (Off-Road Areas) Act.

Trail Bike Events

The State Trail Bike Strategy has listed the types of Trail Bike events over various distances and trail categories. All of these events can be accommodated within the Off-Road Park in the long term. In the short term, smaller events should be developed at the Speedway, Motorplex or Motorcross.

4WD Events

There are two main event types, technical and destination events. Destination events are further divided by distance from 5km to 100km. The Off-Road Park will be developed (subject to the feasibility study) with a wide variety of trails difficulties and distances including technical trails, a challenge course and opportunity to complete a 100km loop.

OT04 Investigate and develop a gazetted Off-Road Vehicle Area to allow Trail Bike and 4WD events at the Speedway, Motorplex or Motorcross facilities in the short term in conjunction with the Motorcycle Club.

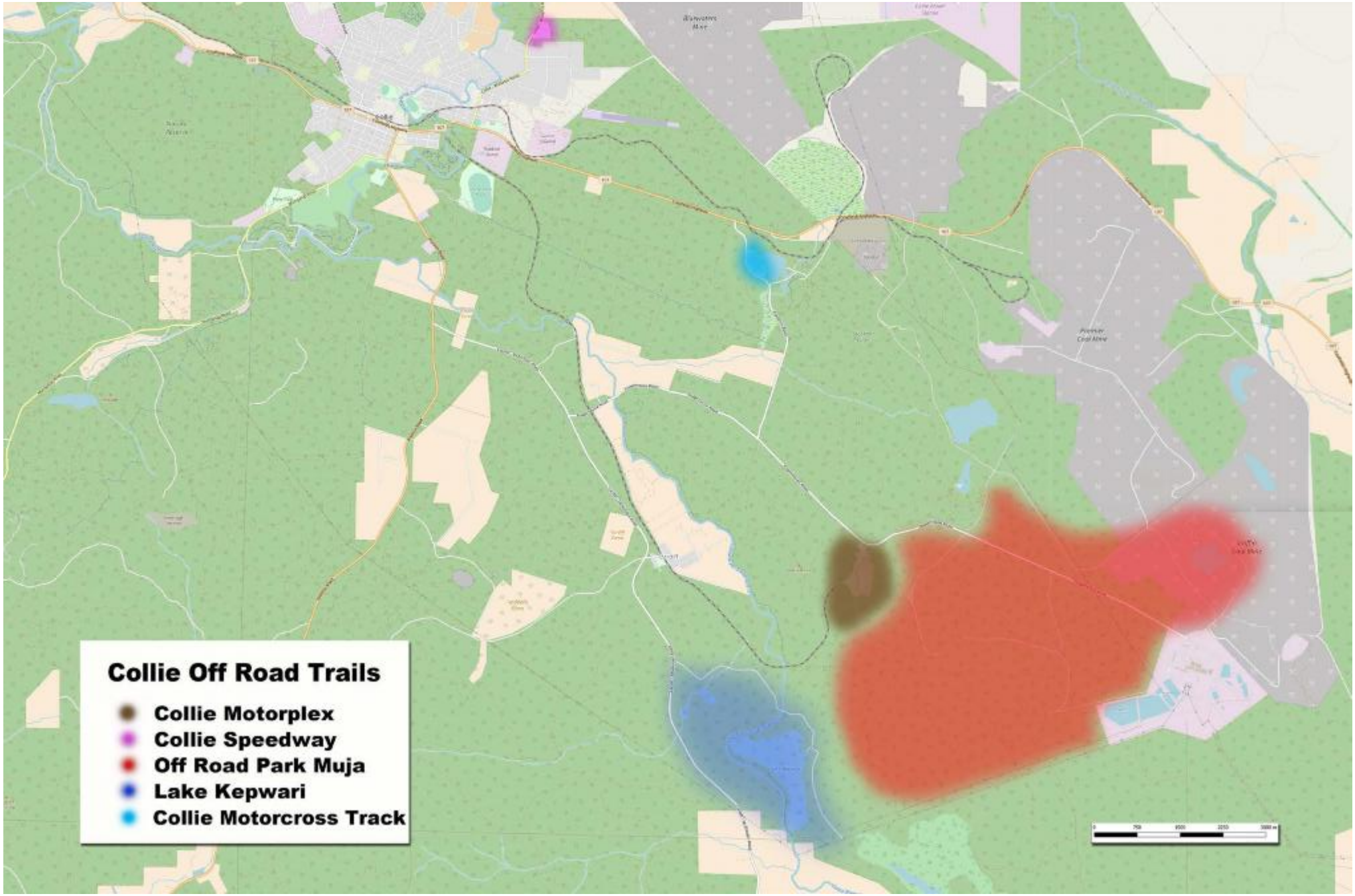

Fig. 68 – Collie River Valley Off Road Trails (Source: Erik Mellegers)