

# BORENORE CAVES: A CASE STUDY of MANAGEMENT by SIGNAGE

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In January 2018, I found myself in Orange, New South Wales, for a few days on business, and thus I paid a visit to the nearby Borenore Karst Reserve (as you do!). I have been there "more than a few times" over the last 30 years; I think the first time was with Ernie Holland, then Manager at Jenolan, and Mick Chalker, then Manager at Wombeyan - so that is almost Precambrian!

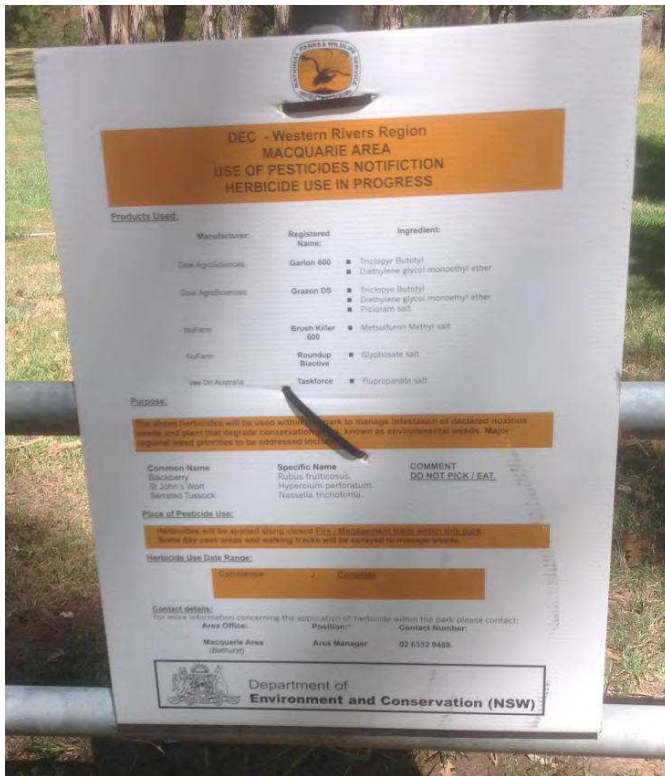
Back in those days, as I recall, the management of Borenore was not good. One of the main problems was that the Reserve was to a substantial extent overrun with blackberries. That matter has long since been resolved by what is by now an ongoing spraying program over many years. Certainly, not a blackberry to found at Borenore today.

On the highway is the following:



Aside from the obvious function of the sign, it immediately introduces the word 'karst' to the visitor, and the concept of conservation...

Upon driving onto the short road into Borenore, one next sees a series of three signs:



The first thing to appreciate is that Borenore is totally unmanned and is open until 7.00pm daily. And obviously while rangers of the managing agency, the New South Wales National Parks & Wildlife Service, regularly attend the Reserve, the lack of a 'visible presence' creates ongoing management challenges in many ways different from a show cave location.

This has been addressed by what I consider to be the best example of 'Management by Signage' I have seen.

These signs are all self-explanatory; but clearly set out the management parameters to be observed by visitors. The management instructions continue:



Once you reach the car park, prior to the path to Arch Cave, an excellent three panel interpretative sign awaits the visitor:



It is one the best of its type I have seen, covering all relevant areas of cave and karst conservation, and imparting quite thorough karst education.

Thereafter follows excellent directional signage:



And well maintained tracking:



The 'self guided' cave experience involves passing through the (dark) section of Arch Cave (a short traverse), ascending to the front of the river section, and a final cave traverse up the stream. The entirety is really is a very pleasant cave and karst experience.

There are two other caves described to the public; Verandah Cave and Tunnel Cave. From a management perspective both are a long walk from the car park and thus much less visited than the convenient Arch Cave. Tunnel Cave is a long, dark passage, about 110 metres long, which emerges from the base of a large hill. It is closed from May to October each year so that its colony of Eastern Bentwing Bats *Miniopterus shreibersii*, which hibernate there, is left undisturbed.

Overall, Borenore is wonderful example of excellent 'sign driven' management that could usefully be emulated in more than a few other locations, even at some show cave sites, it could be suggested.



*Above. The entrance to Arch Cave, Borenore  
Below. Inside the River Section of Arch Cave, Borenore*

