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Damage report of the west coastal wildfire : Nilgen Nature Reserve and adjacent Military Area, North Lancelin 29th-30th May 1985 and its effects on the Western Australian beekeeping industry

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WESTERN AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
INTENSIVE INDUSTRIES BRANCH
APICULTURE SECTION

"Damage Report of the West Coastal Wildfire - Nilgen Nature Reserve and the adjacent Military Area, North Lancelin 29th - 30th May 1985 and its effects on the Western Australian Beekeeping Industry"

Compiled by

R.C. Burking (Technical Officer)

June 1985

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"Damage Report of the West Coastal Wilfire - Nilgen Nature Reserve and the adjacent Military Area North Lancelin 29th - 30th May 1985, and its effects on the Western Australian Beekeeping Industry".

Compiled by R.C. Burking (Technical Officer)
June 1985

1. SUMMARY

During the period 29 - 30th May 1985, minimal damage to coastal flora occurred in the Western Section of the Nilgen Nature Reserve and the adjacent Military Training area - North Lancelin.

Some 90 hectares of coastal dunes and heath were affected ranging from patchy burn to slight scorching. No registered apiary sites were affected by the wildfire.

2. INTRODUCTION

For the second time within a two month period, a wildfire caused damage to the Nilgen Nature Reserve north of the Lancelin township. Fortunately the wildfire occurred after some 3 days of moderate rainfall and little damage occurred.

Following previous requests by the Beekeepers' Section of the Primary Industry Association to survey wildfire damage, it was decided that the Apiculture Section undertake an inspection in conjunction with other section work.

3. SURVEY METHOD

Prior to the survey being undertaken, discussions were held with officers of the Bush Fires Board of W.A. and the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

A ground survey was undertaken on 5th June 1985 by officers of the Apiculture Section during which the wildfire area was plotted and damage to registered apiary sites estimated. The survey route is shown on the map - see appendix.

4. THE WILD FIRE

From observations made during the survey it would appear that the wildfire was deliberately lit and could be the result of vandalism. (Investigations are underway to establish the cause). Smoke was first noticed at 1400 hours on the 29th May by 1600 hours the wildfire had progressed north from the Nilgen Nature Reserve and jumped the firebreak adjacent to the Naval Bombing Range to the north.

By 1200 hours on the 30th May the wildfire had burnt itself out.

During the survey, it was established that three individual fires appear to have been lit. The first, south of the Department of Agriculture Apiary site, the second, within the working area of the site and the third north-west of the site in coastal dunes which eventually crossed the Side Bay track and jumped the fire break and entered the Naval Bombing Range.

5. EFFECTS OF THE WILDFIRE ON THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BEEKEEPING INDUSTRY

By comparison with the North Lancelin wildfire in March-April 1985 (Burking and Kessell 1985), the wildfire described in this report can best be evaluated as minimal.

The only apiary site to be affected was the Department of Agriculture Research area, south of the Dide Bay track and is estimated at 5% affected. Only slight scorching of coastal heath resulted and is best described as a "patchy" burn.

Of the total area of some 90ha, the widest area was calculated at 100 metres ranging to 10-15 metres over the estimated 3km strip.

6. PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the minimal damage which occurred with no substantial loss to the Beekeeping Industry, it is considered that it is not necessary to make recommendations for assistance to affected beekeepers.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Appreciation is expressed to the following who assisted in providing information for this report.

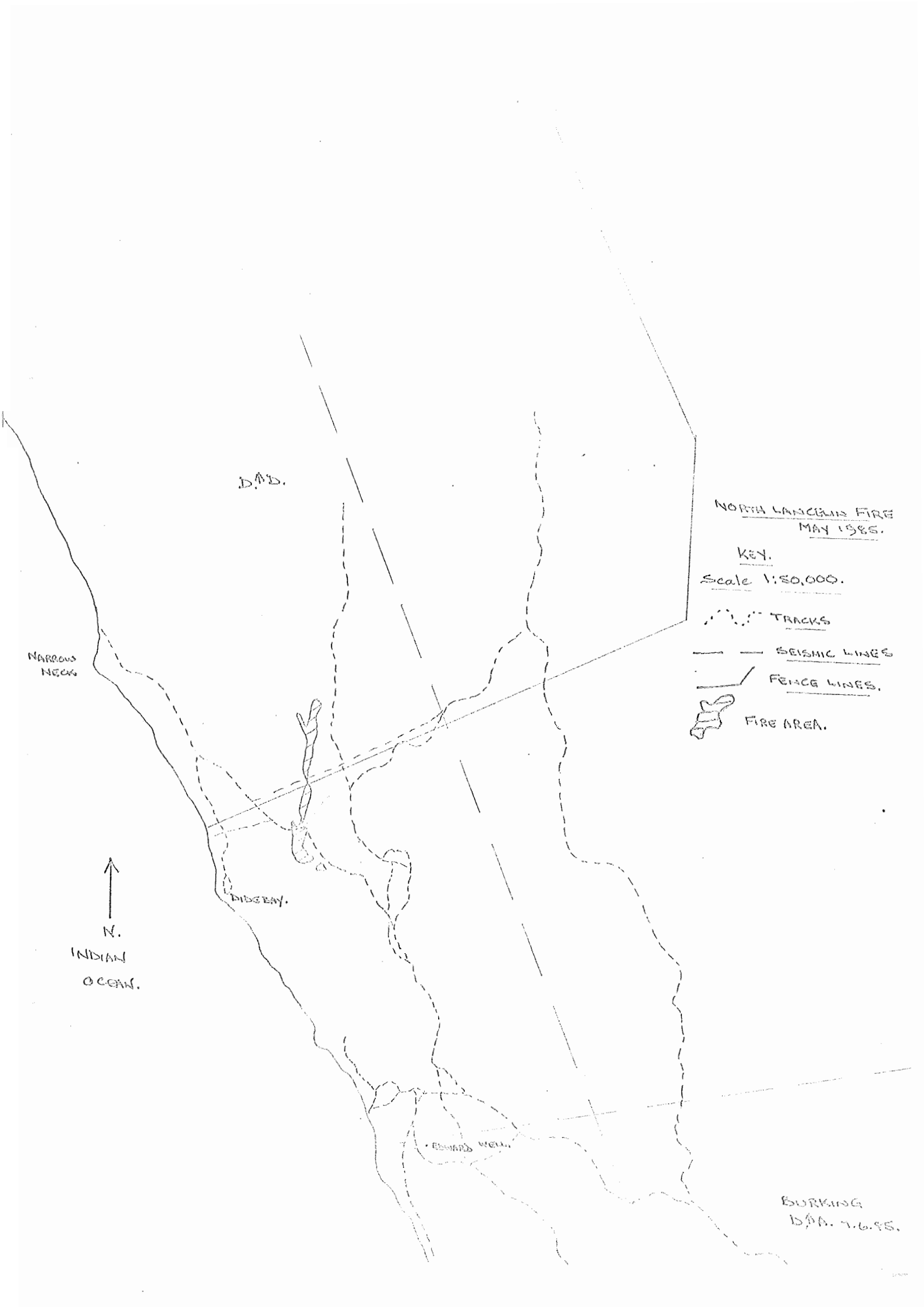
Mr P. Saint - Bush Fires Board of W.A.

Mr A.C. Kessell - Department of Agriculture

Mr R. Gorski - Dept. Conservation and Land Management.

8. REFERENCES

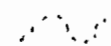

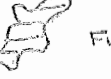
Burking R.C. & Kessell A.C. (1985). "Damage Report of the West Coastal Wildfire, Lancelin Area, March 31 - April 4, 1985 and its effects on the Western Australian Beekeeping Industry.



NORTH LANCELIN FIRE
MAY 1985.

KEY.

Scale 1:50,000.

-  TRACKS
-  SEISMIC LINES
-  FENCE LINES.
-  FIRE AREA.

D.A.D.

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