

Lake Morris / Copperlode Falls Dam

A Water Reserve within a Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

The Wet Tropics - World Heritage Area

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area lies between Townsville and Cooktown on the north-east coast of Queensland and covers an area of 894,420 hectares.

The Wet Tropics is renowned for scenic panoramas of rainforest canopy from mountain lookouts, rivers that carve through rugged gorges and cascade into freshwater swimming holes, giant trees and ferns from ancient eras and curiosities from the animal kingdom. It has Australia's greatest diversity of animals and plants within an area of just 0.26% of the continent. Many plant and animal species in the Wet Tropics are found nowhere else in the world. The diverse range of vegetation communities are habitat to numerous rare and threatened species.

The Wet Tropics has the oldest continuously surviving tropical rainforests on earth. They are a living museum of how land plants have evolved since the break up of Gondwana 40 million years ago, from ancient ferns, conifers and cycads to the more highly evolved flowering plants. The Wet Tropics is also a living record of the evolutionary history of animals – being home to some species that have changed little since ancient times such as the musky rat-kangaroo and the chowchilla.

Lake Morris
(No Water Activities Permitted on Lake)

YOU ARE HERE!

Copperlode Falls Dam Statistics

The dam comprises a 45m high zoned earth and rock fill dam 122m in length. The embankment has a crest level of 403.84m AHD and a width of 6.4m and took 3 years to construct.

A brief history

Freshwater Creek was the original source of Cairns' water supply. Population growth led to the need for another water source. In 1935, former Cairns City engineer, Mr. E.R. Morris, discovered what he regarded as a suitable site for a dam to store water. Subsequent surveys confirmed his estimation. Eventually government approval for the construction of an earth and rock fill dam at Copperlode Falls near the headwaters of Freshwater Creek was given. The original construction cost was estimated at \$3,000,000 but by completion on March 25 1976, the actual cost had risen to approximately \$6,400,000.

The total area cleared was 336 hectares. The rock and earth fill dam impounds 37,000 megalitres of water and has a rainforest catchment area of 44km².

The dam was officially named Lake Morris in honour of the man who located the site and had the foresight to see its water storage potential for Cairns. Additional water supply is now provided from Behana Creek with investigations into another water supply for Cairns' increasing population in progress.

