

# FACTS SHEET No. 8

## A Coastal Wetlands Park

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Facts Sheet 7 mentioned briefly the work of the Coastal Wetlands Park Support Group whose aim is "to seek the long term security of the coastal wetlands and dunes, tributaries and buffer zones as part of a complex interconnection of remnant natural areas of state and possibly international significance, complementing the already recognized estuarine and salt marsh wetlands on the Hunter River at Newcastle." (**Coastal Wetlands Park pamphlet**)

The Facts Sheet 7 article also went on to list a number of Threatened Species (both flora and fauna), and the idea of Endangered Ecological Communities.

The concept of an Endangered Ecological Community (while flora based) is recognition of the fact that species do not exist in isolation, but as part of a complex assemblage of other species which may be crucial to the survival of each other in ways we yet don't fully understand. To use a local example; *Syzygium paniculatum* Magenta Lillipilly is a Threatened Species surviving locally in rainforest pockets at Cams Wharf, Nesca Park, Salts Bay, Green Point, Floraville and Bangalay Reserve. The best way to save the Lillipilly as a species is to protect the littoral rainforest and gully rainforest communities in which it is surviving; hence the NSW Scientific Committee's preliminary finding that littoral rainforest in the Sydney Bio-region is an Endangered Ecological Community. This flags to environmental planners and the wider community that it is not sufficient to protect individual plants but that the total assemblage of native plants in these reserves must be protected, and yet locally only one of the above rainforest pockets has a SEPP (State Environmental Protection Policy) 26 Littoral Rainforest listing protecting it (Green Point Foreshore Reserve).

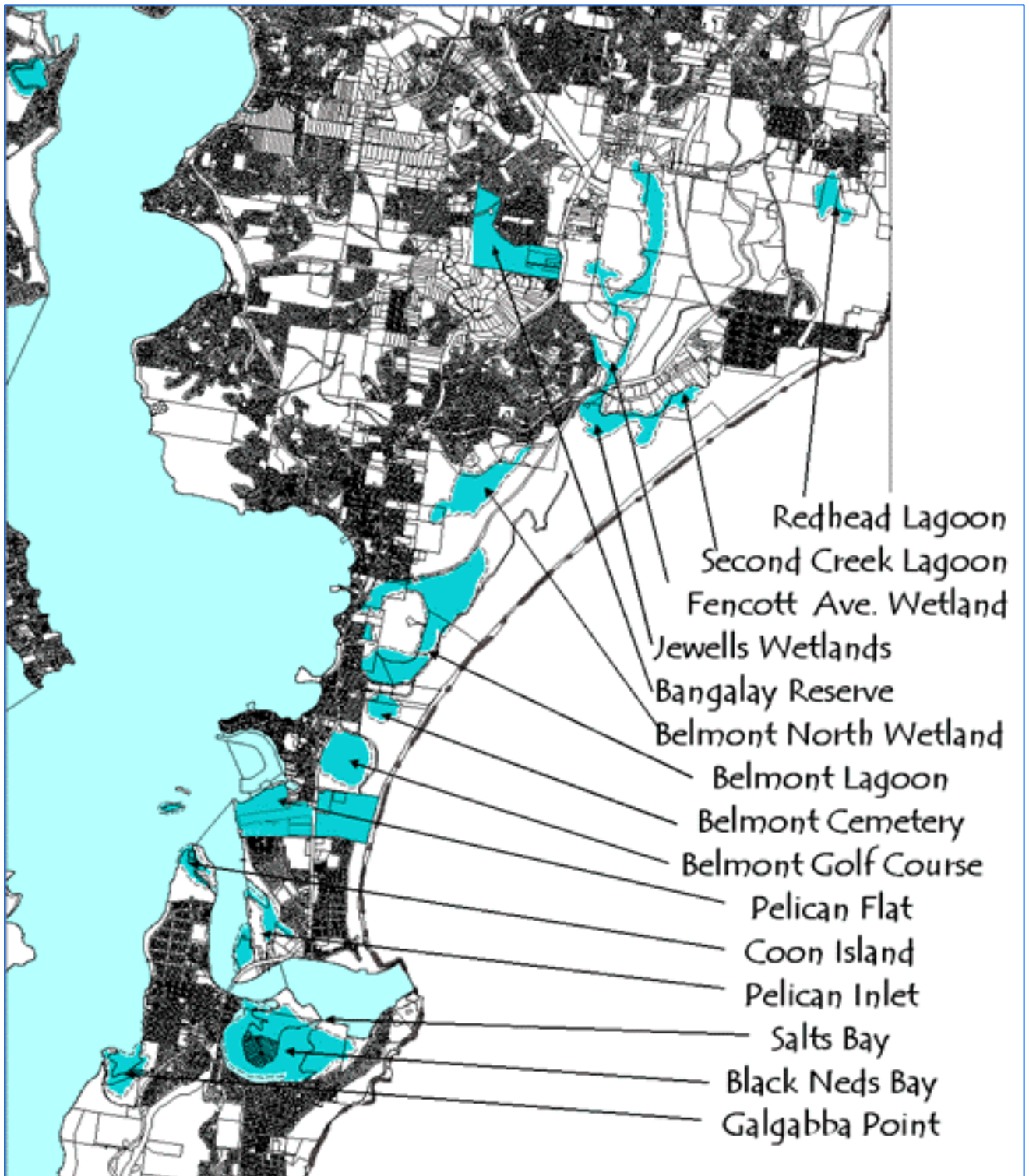
This brings us back to the concept of a Lake Macquarie Coastal Wetlands Park extending from Awabakal Nature Reserve in the north to the newly created Wallarah National Park in the south, and west to the Lake. This is an extrapolation of the philosophy illustrated above by the example of an individual Threatened Species and the theory behind Endangered Ecological Communities. It also recognizes the importance of the connectivity of remnant native vegetation and the dangers of further fragmentation through piecemeal decision making. It is also saying "Let's look at managing the fragile Lake Macquarie barrier dune ecosystem as a whole rather than as individual reserves."

Redhead



This approach to natural resource management would group together the complex of SEPP 14 Wetlands, Endangered Ecological Communities (Sydney Freshwater Wetland, Sydney Coastal Estuary Swamp Forest Complex, Salt Marsh, and Littoral Rainforest), and the Threatened Species these remnants support, together with the surrounding buffer zones, as one large management unit. Not only does this appear as the most logical way to strategize environmental recovery initiatives, but also it gives us the best chance of protecting the whole ecosystem long term.

# PROPOSED COASTAL WETLAND PARK



The view to the north



The view to the south

