



## A Coastal Wetlands Park & Green Corridor Project

TIN Topic 8



**Themeda Grassland**

A previous TIN Topic 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 recognised estuarine and salt marsh wetlands on the Hunter River at Newcastle.' (Coastal Wetlands Park Brochure)

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



**Littoral Rainforest at**

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 Planning Policy) 26 Littoral Rainforest listing protecting it (Green Point Foreshore Reserve).

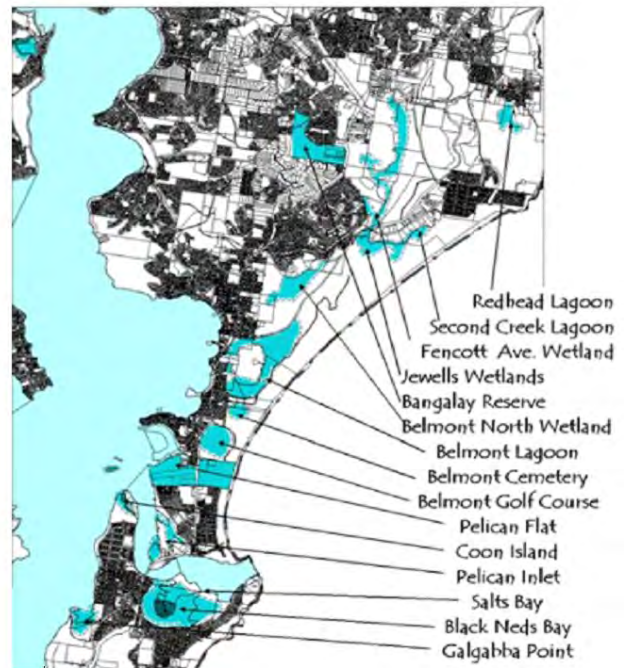


***Syzygium paniculatum***

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 individual Threatened Species and the theory behind Endangered Ecological Communities.

It also recognises 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.'

This approach to natural resource management would group together the complex of SEPP 14 Wetlands, Endangered Ecological Communities (Sydney Freshwater Wetland, Swamp Oak Forest on coastal floodplain, Swamp Sclerophyll Forest on coastal floodplain, 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 strategise environmental recovery initiatives, but also it gives us the best chance of protecting the whole ecosystem long term.



**Coastal Wetland Parks**

Recent developments have seen the securing of the old BHP lands into Belmont Wetlands State Park and the creation of a Trust to oversee the establishment phase. There is a web connection where you can follow the progress of the Park (Google on Belmont Wetlands State Park). Hopefully TIN will be involved in some capacity.

A similar concept is the Green Corridor Project which aims to protect the natural environment in the Lower Hunter by maintaining wildlife corridors encircling the urban areas of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie.



**Protect Our Green Corridors**



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