



Southern Metropolitan Region

A Proposal to Establish the Beeliam Wetlands Park

1) The Proposal

The Wetlands Conservation Society proposes that the eastern and western chains of wetlands in the South - Western Corridor be declared a Regional Park to be named the Beeliam Wetlands Park. The wetlands encompassed by this proposal are indicated in section (6) and in the attached map and include all of the conservation and recreation reserves recommended by the EPA in the System Six "Red Book" (1984) within the M 92 and M 93 boundaries. Additional wetlands to the north and south which also form part of this ecosystem are also included.

2) Previous Proposals

The Cockburn Wetlands Study (1976) was commissioned by the City of Cockburn to provide a scientific assessment of the value of these wetlands. That Study recommended that these wetlands become an urban National Park. The name Beeliam was suggested because it was the name used by the Aboriginal people to describe the South - Western Corridor region.

Subsequently the EPA evaluated these wetlands again and recommended in the System Six "Red Book" (1984) that both the eastern and western chains of the Cockburn Wetlands should be managed as a Regional Park (recommendations M 92.1 and M 93.1). The State Government accepted these recommendations in principle in May 1984.

According to the "Red Book", Regional Parks are intended to serve users from a wide area. They may contain a mixture of areas intended for conservation, recreation, education and research respectively. The EPA suggests that they should be managed by the State Government through the National Parks Authority to ensure that adequate technical and financial support is available. A comprehensive management plan is also recommended for each Regional Park to ensure that the quality of the environment is maintained or enhanced where necessary.

Although no Regional Parks have yet been established in W.A., they already exist in other parts of Australia. The N.S.W. Government has established a statewide network of State Recreation Areas with similiar objectives to those listed above. The Queensland Government has established a highly successful Regional Park in Metropolitan Brisbane called the Brisbane Forest Park. It contains a mixture of landholdings and includes conservation, recreation and forestry reserves.

3) The Beelihar Wetlands

The wetlands of the South - Western Corridor form an interdependent ecosystem. There is scientific evidence of underground water flow between the lakes and swamps. Many of the animals and water birds migrate from one lake to another as drying out occurs in the summer. Many waders use the shallow margins of swamps for feeding during the summer months. The North Lake, Thomsons Lake and Kogolup Lake woodlands are important breeding areas for many bush birds which frequent the south metropolitan area. Likewise Lake Booragoon is the major breeding area for cormorants and ibis which use various lakes and swamps and the Swan River for feeding.

In the late summer only a few of the lakes remain as suitable habitats for water birds. In the drought years of 1977 - 1978 all of the eastern chain lakes dried out except North Lake and two smaller lakes which were artificially filled by pumping (Blue Gum Swamp and Lake Booragoon). In those years these three lakes were a vital life-support system for many thousands of water birds from the coastal plain and the interior.

In 1976 the Cockburn Wetlands Study proposed, on a scientific basis, that both chains of wetlands should be reserved for conservation and recreation. Within each chain some lakes were designated as suitable for conservation while others were recommended for various types of recreational activities.

In the decade since the Cockburn Wetlands Study was completed there has been progress towards these objectives in some of these areas and considerable damage and degradation in several others.

Two of the lakes have been developed for recreation by the Cockburn Council. These are Bibra Lake and Manning Lake which are now popular picnic locations. Thomsons Lake and Lake Banganup are well-managed, conservation areas and are also used for scientific research. However, several of the most valuable lakes in the system are not yet reserved and are suffering pollution and degradation from a variety of inappropriate uses.

4) Features of the Beeliar Wetlands Park

The Beeliar Wetlands Park would provide a major recreational and conservation reserve for the State of Western Australia. It would help to ensure the survival of one of the best wetland areas in the State (which is consistent with Australia's international obligations under the Ramsar Convention and the Australia - Japan Migratory Bird Treaty). It would also provide areas for recreation, education and research. Many of the special features of the Regional Park could become significant tourist attractions which could provide employment and stimulate economic activity in the South - Western Corridor.

Unlike most National Parks, Beeliar would be readily accessible to a large proportion of the population of W.A., being situated within an area of rapid urban development. With adequate reservation of surrounding woodlands it could become the major recreational feature of the South - Western Corridor. Its diverse range of vegetation, wetlands, fauna and landforms would ensure that it became one of the State's major tourist attractions.

The main features of the proposed Beeliar Wetlands Park are:

a) Thomsons Lake conservation reserve

The area from Kogolup Lake to Wattleup Lake is a high quality conservation area which the EPA recommended for reservation (M: 93.2) in the System Six "Red Book". If the Thomsons Lake Regional Structure Study is adopted it will ensure that this concept is realized. We believe that this reserve should be carefully managed for conservation of wildlife as it is one of the most important bird breeding and feeding areas in the State.

b) Brownman Lakes education centre

The Brownman swamps and Lake Mt. Brown are ideally suited for development into a wetland education centre. They contain a wide range of wetland habitats and a considerable variety of native fauna. They are ideally situated to become a major tourist attraction like Herdsman Lake where people can observe wetland habitats and wildlife from walking trails and bird observatories. A visitor centre for the Regional Park could be established there to support the education programme.

c) North Lake conservation reserve

The North Lake woodlands and wetlands support about 80 different species of birds. There are also a wide range of plant communities and a rich and varied population of native animals. Because of its proximity to Murdoch University this reserve is important for conservation, teaching and research and the University has now become involved in drawing up a management plan

for the area. This conservation reserve would include North Lake and the woodlands to the East including Roe Swamp, the Murdoch Swamps and Hospital Swamp.

d) Picnic and recreation areas at Bibra Lake, Manning Lake, Lake Coogee and Lake Yangebup. These wetlands would provide facilities for picnic groups plus walking and cycling paths and playgrounds and lookouts for children.

e) Piney Lake Arboretum

Melville Council has announced its intention to develop an arboretum at Piney Lake reserve. This development will involve retention and rehabilitation of the existing lake and wetland area plus the planting of hundreds of different species of native trees.

Many of the other smaller lakes and swamps have outstanding conservation potential.

The most noteworthy are:

f) Lake Booragoon which is a nesting area for cormorants and ibis.

g) South Lake and Little Rush Lake which are popular feeding areas for wetland and forest birds.

h) Market Garden Swamp No.2 which is a beautiful example of a saltwater wetland containing impressive stands of the saltwater paperbark.

5) Management of the Regional Park

The EPA has set out some ideas on the management of Regional Parks in its System Six "Red Book" Volume I. The establishment of Regional Parks is also covered by General Recommendations 15 and 16 of the System Six Report. The existing models in N.S.W. and Queensland can also be used for guidance.

Our view is that this Regional Park should consist of a variety of landholdings including MRPA reserves, Land Act reserves, private freehold land, drainage reserves and other areas vested in various government authorities.

The Beelihar Wetlands Park should be administered by CALM through a Committee composed of representatives of community groups, relevant government departments and statutory authorities, local authorities, conservation groups and the two Universities. The Management Committee should develop an integrated management plan for the whole Park. It should also consider proposals for appropriate developments within the Park. Such developments could include picnic areas, fencing, sign-posting, walking trails, public facilities, educational facilities, cyclepaths, etc. Some revenue could be collected from franchises and entry fees.

The daily management of the Regional Park would require a small staff including a Park Manager, Information Officer and one or two Rangers. A considerable proportion of the salary and maintenance costs could be offset from funds collected for use of the facilities.

6) Recommendation

We recommend that the following wetlands be included in the Beeliar Wetlands Park. The proposed role of each of these wetlands is listed in the right hand column.

Wetland

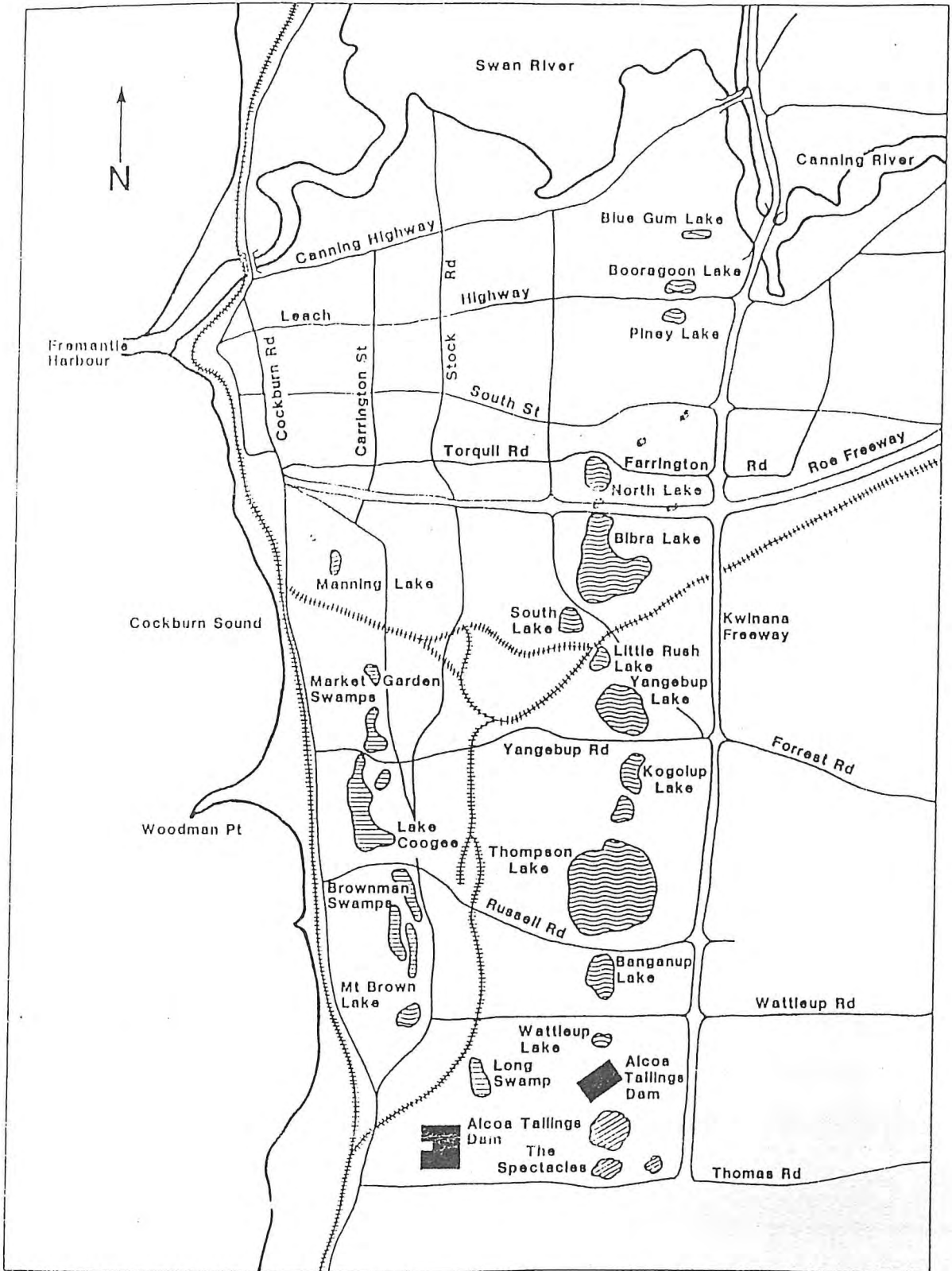
Eastern Chain

Role in the Regional Park

Blue Gum Lake	Recreation
Lake Booragoon	Conservation
Piney Lake	Conservation and Recreation
Hospital Swamp	Conservation and Education
Murdoch Swamp	Conservation, Research and Education
Roe Swamp	Conservation, Research and Education
North Lake	Conservation and Recreation
Hope Road Swamp	Conservation
Bibra Lake	Conservation and Recreation
South Lake	Conservation
Little Rush Lake	Conservation
Yangebup Lake	Conservation and Recreation
Kogolup Lake	Conservation
Thomsons Lake	Conservation
Banganup Lake	Conservation
Wattleup Lake	Conservation
The Spectacles	Conservation

Western Chain

Manning Lake	Recreation and Conservation
Market Garden Swamps	Recreation and Conservation
Lake Coogee	Recreation and Conservation
Brownman Swamps	Conservation and Education
Lake Mt. Brown	Conservation, Recreation and Education
Long Swamp	Conservation





118/80
Department of
CONSERVATION and ENVIRONMENT

Department of Conservation
and Land Management
28 AUG 1985
COMO, W.A.

Executive Director
Conservation and Land Management

your ref:
our ref: 118/80 RW:fh
enquiries:

COCKBURN WETLANDS

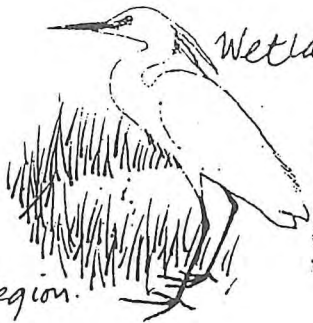
The Environmental Protection Authority is considering the attached letter from the Wetlands Conservation Society, and seeks comments from your Authority on the issues addressed therein. In addition, the Environmental Protection Authority would like your Authority to consider what can be achieved co-operatively with the Environmental Protection Authority or other government agencies on these matters.

Your early response would be appreciated.

C.F. Porter
C F PORTER
DIRECTOR *p.d.*

27 August 1985

Enc



Wetlands Conservation Society

112/66.

Southern Metropolitan Region.

14 Stone Court
Karrinya 6163
23/7/85

Chairman
Environmental Protection Authority
1 Mount Street
Perth 6000

Cockburn Wetlands
Attention: Ray Wallis

Dear Sir,

In accordance with Section 56 of the Environmental Protection Act we wish to draw the EPA's attention to serious pollution problems which are affecting the Cockburn Wetlands. These wetlands are of high value for conservation and recreation and they were recommended for inclusion in a National Park by the Cockburn Wetlands Study of 1976. In the System Six "Red Book" the EPA recommended (M 92.1 and M 93.1) that these wetlands be included in a proposed Regional Park.

Although the Government has accepted the "Red Book" recommendations in principle, it seems to be experiencing some difficulty in implementing them. In the nine years since the original recommendations of the Cockburn Wetlands Study, these wetlands have suffered considerable damage in the absence of any guidance for landholders. We are now proposing a joint community - Government programme to assist in the implementation of the System Six recommendations M 92 and M 93.

The specific cases of pollution which we wish to report under Section 56 are:

- 1) Ongoing serious damage to the fringing vegetation of North Lake, South Lake, Yangebup Lake and Kogolup Lake by horses grazing on MRPA and other leases around these lakes. The horses have devastated the undergrowth and have ring-barked many of the trees. There is also evidence that these grazing activities add to nutrient and fecal coliform levels in these lakes (see Cockburn Wetlands Study).
- 2) The midge management strategies adopted by the City of Cockburn have been very unsatisfactory. Their baiting programme has been spasmodic and on one occasion an overapplication of organophosphate larvicide caused eutrophication of North Lake during January of this year.
- 3) The Woolscourers plant adjacent to Lake Yangebup uses highly saline water from a deep aquifer. This water is disposed of by pumping into settling ponds adjacent to the lake. Over the years this has caused the fringing vegetation around Lake Yangebup to die off. Grazing horses have also prevented regeneration. Rehabilitation schemes for the lake have been proposed by local residents but they cannot proceed until the future use of this lake is determined.

Am
3-1 RW noted in
EPA book

- 4) A drain from polluted wetlands to the east of Lake Kogolup has led to severe eutrophication of the southern part of this lake. Better control of this effluent is impossible unless the management of this lake is clarified. The Cockburn Wetlands Study (1976) identified Kogolup Lake as the most significant conservation area in the entire system (i.e. M 92 and M 93) and the EPA recommended that the whole area from Kogolup Lake to Wattleup Lake should be reserved for Parks and recreation (System Six "Red Book" M 93.2). This lake is also threatened by plans to clear and subdivide land to the west (see Thomsons Lake Urban Structure Study) and by the proposed realignment of Yangebup Road.
- 5) The System Six "Red Book" also recommended reserving the Market Garden Swamps in Spearwood because of their valuable saline wetland vegetation (M 92.2). However, uncoordinated urban development in this region is threatening the survival of these swamps. In particular we wish to mention filling operations in Market Garden Swamps 2 and 3 and the proposed water ski complex adjacent to Market Garden Swamp 2. All Three swamps have been badly polluted in recent years by landfill, rubbish and abandoned motor vehicles. They will continue to deteriorate unless proper environmental management practices are implemented.
- 6) South Lake is also threatened by the proposed realignment of Forrest Road. This is contrary to the EPA's recommendations in the System Six Report (M 93) where it is stated that it is important to establish "adequate buffer zones around the wetlands, particularly around South Lake so as to protect it from industrial and major road developments."
- 7) North Lake and its surrounding wetlands, including Hope Road Swamp and the Roe Swamp, are threatened by plans to construct the Roe Freeway between North Lake and Bibra Lake. This proposal is a serious threat to the ecology of North Lake and could lead to noise pollution, air and water pollution and possible eutrophication of the North Lake wetlands. We believe that the Roe Freeway should not be constructed between North Lake and Bibra Lake without an ERMP and period for public review of the proposal.
- 8) Due to inadequate fencing around North Lake there have been recurring incursions by woodcutters, trail-bike riders and horses. This fencing problem applies particularly to the areas leased by the MRPA for grazing purposes. The MRPA rangers are overextended and they are unable to adequately supervise the large areas of land under their control.
- 9) The Piney Lake area is undergoing rapid development for suburban housing. We are concerned that drainage from the roads which are being laid in this area may be fed directly into the lake thus causing pollution and flooding. This lake contains a large area of virgin wetlands which are a haven for birds. However,

these wetlands are being gradually destroyed by trail bikes and four-wheel drive vehicles because of the lack of fencing and the absence of any management authority at the present time.

- 10) Horse riding activities connected with several horse rental premises adjacent to Kogolup Lake are severely damaging the margins of this lake. Many horse-riders use this area on weekends and they are gradually cutting new trails through the woodlands and wetlands because the old trails are now sandy wasteland.

The Cockburn Wetlands are a major environmental resource. They provide a wide range of habitats which support a diverse fauna including many migratory water birds which are protected by international treaties such as the Ramsar Convention and the Australia - Japan Migratory Bird Treaty. Article four of the Ramsar Convention (and Article five of the Australia - Japan Migratory Bird Treaty) specifically commits Australia to the establishment and management of wetland reserves. The present and continuing pollution of these valuable wetlands is inconsistent with the spirit of these international treaties and with the views of the EPA expressed in the System Six "Red Book".

We are aware that under Section 28 of the Environmental Protection Act (1971-1980) "it is the duty of the Authority to use its best endeavours to enhance the quality of the environment and to control and wherever practicable to prevent any act or omission which causes or is capable of causing pollution".

We note also that under Section 29 of the Act the Authority may "initiate the means of enhancing the quality of the environment and the means of preventing, controlling, abating or mitigating pollution". We wish to respectfully submit that the Authority may wish to establish a Committee in accordance with Section 30 (4) (a), (b), (h) to investigate the problems enumerated above. This Committee could also develop a plan for the proposed Regional Park in the Cockburn wetlands (as recommended in the "Red Book" , recommendations M 92.1 and M 93.1). This Society fully supports the "Red Book" recommendations and the proposal for a Regional Park in the Cockburn Wetlands. I have enclosed for your information an outline of our Society's proposal for a Beeliar Wetlands Park based on the "Red Book" recommendations.

We are aware that Regional Parks similar to the one we propose are already in operation in N.S.W. and Queensland. We would be willing to assist the Government wherever possible in the management, administration and rehabilitation of these wetlands. We envisage a joint community - Government initiative which will provide an opportunity to implement the System Six recommendations and to define the Regional Park concept.

In summary we recommend to the EPA that it

- a) investigate the ten instances of pollution which we have reported in the Cockburn Wetlands in accordance with Section 56 of the Act.
- b) establish a planning Committee under Section 30 (4) (a) of the Act to develop a management plan to control pollution in the Cockburn Wetlands.
- c) initiate moves to establish a Regional Park in the Cockburn Wetlands under Section 29 of the Act.

If our Society can assist the EPA with any of these tasks we would be pleased to do so.

Yours sincerely,



Philip Jennings

President