

TOURISM, TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS
AND THE NEW SOUTH WALES
NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

A Report Prepared for NSW NPWS

by

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SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATIONS

This report outlines a study of tourism and tourism developments in the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service's (the Service) Northern Region. The coastal zone and immediate hinterland of this Region is experiencing rapid growth in resident and tourist populations and many millions of dollars worth of developments are proposed for the Region. Service lands are generally considered to be, or potentially be, major attractions in the Region and the Service is faced with a large change in visitation not only in terms of numbers of visitors, but also possibly in the types of visitors. The potential opportunities and impacts associated with changing visitation have been considered in this report. In addition, the way in which the Service should respond to development proposals has been examined.

A major purpose of the study is to provide ideas and information for the development of the Service's Recreation Management Strategy for the Northern Region. As a model for this strategy two adjacent local government areas have been considered in detail and the process of mapping and analysing recreation opportunity settings has been initiated.

The recreation and planning issues discussed in this report involve the responsibilities of a number of State Government agencies and those of Local Government. Historically, the Service's interaction with these various bodies has not been regular nor particularly effective. Consequently, the possibility of improved liaison has been examined by interviews with a wide cross-section of people.

The recommendations, and the Sections of this report that develop them, are:

1. District OIC's should develop and maintain regular liaison with local government about development proposals, and tourism and recreation planning.(Sections 2 & 3)
2. District OIC's should adopt an active advisory role to proposers of developments, which seem likely to proceed, and thereby attempt to eliminate environmental problems during the early stages of the planning process.(Section 2)
3. District OIC's should also provide formal written comment about proposals whenever they consider it is necessary during the approval process.(Section 2)

4. An "appraisals" officer should be appointed to the Northern Region to assist District OIC's in liaison, initiation of attempts to change environmentally unsound aspects of development proposals and in preparing formal responses to development proposals.(Section 2)

5. The Service should be formally represented on the "Conservation and Development Liaison Group of the North Coast".(Section 2)

6. The Service should negotiate to obtain access to the Department of Planning's register of "top priority matters" (developments worth more than \$5 million).(Section 2)

7. The Service should act immediately to establish regular liaison with the Tourism Commission's Head Office and Regional Office in Cofts Harbour.(Section 3)

8. The Service should develop good liaison at regional level with the Department of Planning.(Sections 2 & 3)

9. The Service should give high priority to the completion of the "Handbook for Developers and Planners".(Section 2)

10. In responding to development proposals the Service should give more attention to amenity value of areas adjacent to Service lands (particularly if Service lands overlook the areas and/or residential development is involved) and to likely increases in visitor numbers resulting from tourism developments.(Section 2)

11. The Service should establish and coordinate a joint-agency working party (the Service, Forestry Commission, Department of Lands and Local Government) should be established to plan for recreation in the study area.(Section 4)

12. The working party should consider the supply of different recreation opportunities (particularly the lack of "semi-primitive non-motorised" settings), the adequacy of present levels of management and the supply of facilities and services in different settings.(Section 4)

13. An overall management strategy needs to be developed for beaches in the study area with the aim of providing a variety of managerial settings on different beaches (determined by the type and extent of facilities and the type of management practised).(Section 4)

14. Within the study area there is an urgent need to obtain freehold land for public recreation in the coastal strip and thereby broaden the spectrum of recreation settings. (Bonville Beach is identified as a key

area.) (Section 4)

15. The Service should adopt sound marketing procedures and provide better facilities and services to capitalise on predicted growth in nature-based tourism and thereby improve support and revenue for the Service.(Section 5)

16. The Regional Recreation Management Strategy should take account of a predicted rapid increase in nature-based tourism and include in its planning means of alleviating the associated impacts.(Section 5)

17. The Service should give serious consideration to siting accommodation in some parks and to allowing commercial operators to provide some facilities and services.(Section 5)

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Abbreviations Used in The Report

CLR	- crown land reserve
DA	- development application
EIS	- environmental impact statement
EPA Act	- Environmental Protection and Assessment Act.
LEP	- local environmental plan
LES	- local environmental study
NP	- national park
NR	- nature reserve
REP	- regional environmental plan
ROS	- recreation opportunity spectrum
SEPP	- state environmental planning policy
SRA	- state recreation area

. Section 1

BACKGROUND TO REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

New South Wales is experiencing rapid growth in tourism and because the north coast region of the State is one of the major focuses for tourism the region is receiving particular attention from developers and planners. Many developments are proposed for the north coast to take advantage of predicted tourism growth, but not all visitors will wish to stay in resorts in semi-urban and urban areas. There appears to be a strong trend towards "nature-based" tourism, i.e. tourism that provides firsthand experience and adventure in natural areas.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (the Service) has many important parks in the north coast region, both on the coast and in the hinterland, and therefore, potentially, has an important stake in tourism growth in the region. The Service can be affected in two major ways:

1. more and different types, of visitors may wish to visit parks seeking, in some cases, different experiences than have been traditionally available; and
2. Service land, and proposed Service lands, may be affected by proposed tourism developments.

The purpose of this report is to consider the ways in which the Service should respond to increasing tourism and development proposals. It identifies the potential opportunities and impacts created by increasing tourism and discusses some of the actions the Service could take in catering for increased tourism. The process of planning to provide for a variety of recreational experiences is initiated for a small study area. The value of liaison between the Service and other government agencies in planning for tourism is examined. The way the Service should respond to tourism development proposals, and the type of liaison needed with outside agencies to provide effective responses, are also discussed.

Many of the issues raised in this report are contentious and it is a major purpose of the report to initiate debate about them and thereby contribute to regional recreation planning and policy development. Environmental groups have already provided more general input (i.e. not just relating to Service interests) about tourism and two publications (Corkill 1987a and 1987b) will prove invaluable to the Service as it develops a strategy on tourism. Although a specific area was chosen for this study, many of the issues discussed have regional and state-wide

significance.

2. PROCEDURES

2.1 Choice of Study Area

Initially the coastal strip and adjacent hinterland of the Service's Northern Region was chosen for the study but it soon became obvious that time constraints would dictate the selection of a small study area within the Region. First hand experience of each of the four coastal Districts gained by touring them with the District OIC's and discussions with Regional Staff greatly assisted the selection of the study area. Factors, such as amount and location of Service land, number of development proposals, existing development, attitudes of local Councils, attractions of the areas and presence of contentious issues, were considered in making a choice.

2.2 Interviews

The purposes of the interviews were to gather opinion about how the Service acted, was perceived to act and should act, in tourism matters and in responding to development proposals. Opinions were also sought about the types of recreational opportunities the Service should provide and the value of improved liaison. No set format was used - questions varied depending on the organisation the person represented.

Interviews were conducted with managers and other staff of State Government agencies and local government, officers of environmental groups, developers and planners and other people involved with the tourist industry. Appendix 1 lists people interviewed and indicates their positions and organisations. The opinions expressed in interviews did not necessarily pertain to the study area only, and in fact in some cases may not be relevant to the study area. The type of organisation and the position of the person within the organisation tended to dictate whether opinions encompassed a State-wide, regional or more local perspective.

2.3 Recreation Management Strategy

In order to initiate a recreation management strategy for the study area information was collected about population (resident and visitor) sizes and growth rates, available tourist accommodation, scenic attractions (drives, look-outs, etc), recreational facilities, tours and other attractions of the area. Some of this information has been mapped onto a 1:100,000 base map which has been used to do a preliminary mapping of recreational opportunity categories (see Section 4 for more

detail). Appendix 2 contains population data. Attempts were also made to locate visitor use data for recreational areas but little was obtained. (The Forestry Commission's Regional Office has some data but was unable to summarise it in the time available.)

3. THE STUDY AREA

The study area is the combined local government areas of Coffs Harbour City and Bellingen Shire (see Figure 1). The two Councils which control these areas are generally considered to have quite opposite views about development. Coffs Harbour City Council favours development and is usually supportive of development proposals. In contrast, Bellingen Shire Council has not encouraged major developments; an attitude which seems to be reflective of that of the rate-payers who in recent referenda have rejected by large majorities the notions of canal developments and high-rise construction.

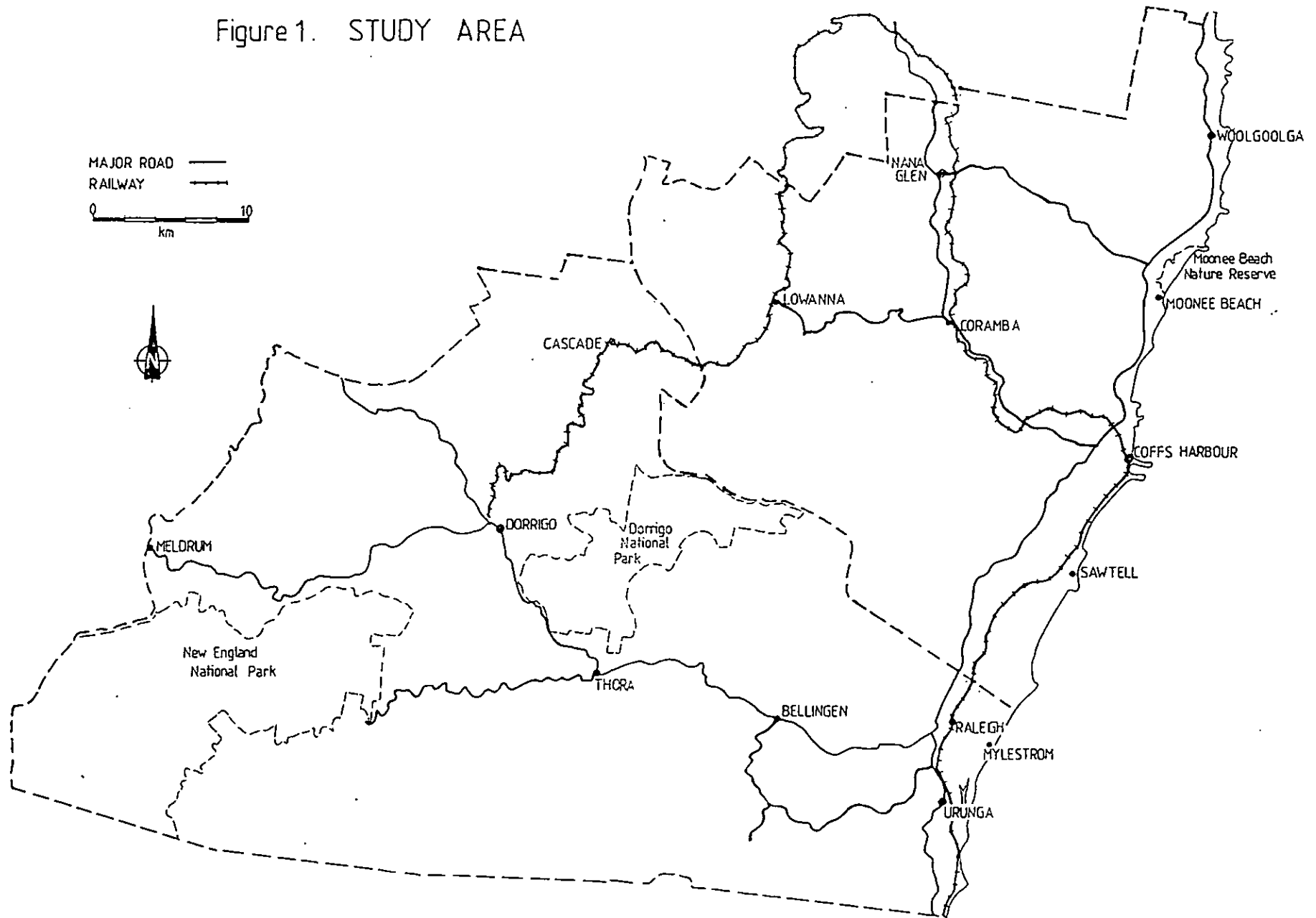
The study area contains, besides Coffs Harbour, the major coastal settlements of Urunga, Sawtell and Woolgoolga and two major inland towns- Dorriggo and Bellingen. Considering what has been said above it is not surprising to find that Coffs Harbour is the focus for development and tourism and that residential and tourism developments are spreading north and south from the city along the coast to Woolgoolga and Sawtell, respectively. Conversely, Bellingen Shire has few major tourist developments and offers different holiday opportunities than does Coffs Harbour City. Two major highways cross the study area (see Figure 1) and a major railway line runs up the coast. A disused branch-line runs up to Dorriggo from Glenreagh and has considerable tourist potential. There is a major airport at Coffs Harbour.

The study area is characterised by a coastal plain of varying width, which gives way to a steep escarpment rising to a high plateau. The southern part of the area contains a moderately sized river system, the Bellinger-Kalang and its associated valleys. The coastal plain and valleys have been extensively cleared for agriculture or urban development, as has much of the plateau. The coast itself consists of sandy beaches separated by headlands. Urban development backs some beaches but little, or no, development is associated with others.

Large areas of rainforest are contained within Dorriggo and New England NP's (only part of the latter is within the study area), and extensive areas of eucalypt forests lie within State Forests. Bellingen Shire is much less urbanised than Coffs Harbour City, e.g. 57% of the former is state forest or national park.

Most land along the coast is freehold apart from very narrow CLR's containing beaches and foredunes. The only significant exceptions to

Figure 1. STUDY AREA



this are Moonee Beach NR and Rine Creek State Forest.

Caravan parks and motels are well supplied along the length of the coastal strip with a concentration around Coffs Harbour, where a number of major resorts are also located. Away from the coast much less of this type of accommodation is available - one caravan park and three motels in or near Dorriggo and a motel near Bellingen.

Of natural features, the beaches, rainforests of Dorriggo NP and a number of state forests (particularly Bruxner Park) are major attractions. The river system is also a major attraction for water-based activities.

4. DATA BASE ABOUT TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS

If the Service is to respond effectively to tourism development proposals it must have an accurate and current data base. One of the tasks of the study was to determine what data bases existed, where they were located and whether or not the Service could have access to them.

The Department of Planning has a register of developments that are considered "top priority matters" (must be worth at least \$5 million) but the NSW Tourism Commission has a more comprehensive list. The list is compiled from various sources, e.g. official applications for planning approval and media coverage, and indicates in three broad categories (conceptual, firmly committed and under construction) the status of the development, its location, size, etc. The list is computer up-dated almost daily and is published every 3 months (approx). as a Tourism Development Register. The Service should ensure that it is on the mailing list for the register. It should be received by the Senior Resources Officer, Environmental Projects (SROEP), who should then pass on the relevant listings to each District OIC. Ideally the SROEP should maintain a watching brief to ensure that Districts consider the development, initiate discussion with local government and, if thought necessary, respond formally to it. However, with the resources available this seems impossible.

Once the District has been alerted to a development it will be necessary to approach local government for more detail. Small developments, worth less than \$1 million, are unlikely to be on Tourism Commission's register and it appears that regular contact with local government will be necessary if the Service wants to be aware of such developments.

Section 2

RESPONDING TO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

1. SUMMARY GUIDELINES

Figure 2 presents in diagrammatic form the series of decisions a District OIC should proceed through in deciding whether or not to take some form of action about a proposed development. Not included in the diagram, but important for the OIC to consider in making a decision, is an assessment of how contentious the proposal is likely to be and the attitudes of other branches of government. Answers to questions such as:

- Is local government supportive of the proposal?
- Are other government agencies involved?
- What are the attitudes of environmental groups?
- Is the development being "fast-tracked" by the government?

will help to determine the political importance of the proposed development

In an ideal situation the OIC would, if necessary, proceed sequentially through the steps to the bottom of the diagram. If resources are limited the process could be cut-off at any step. For example, resources might be so limited that a "No" answer to the first question precludes any further consideration of the proposal.

If action is required, the types of action to be taken are summarised in Table 1. The Table is not necessarily followed sequentially since some stages may be skipped. "Action" may be as limited as a request for information or, at the other extreme, be continuous up to and including the appeal process.

2. INTRODUCTION

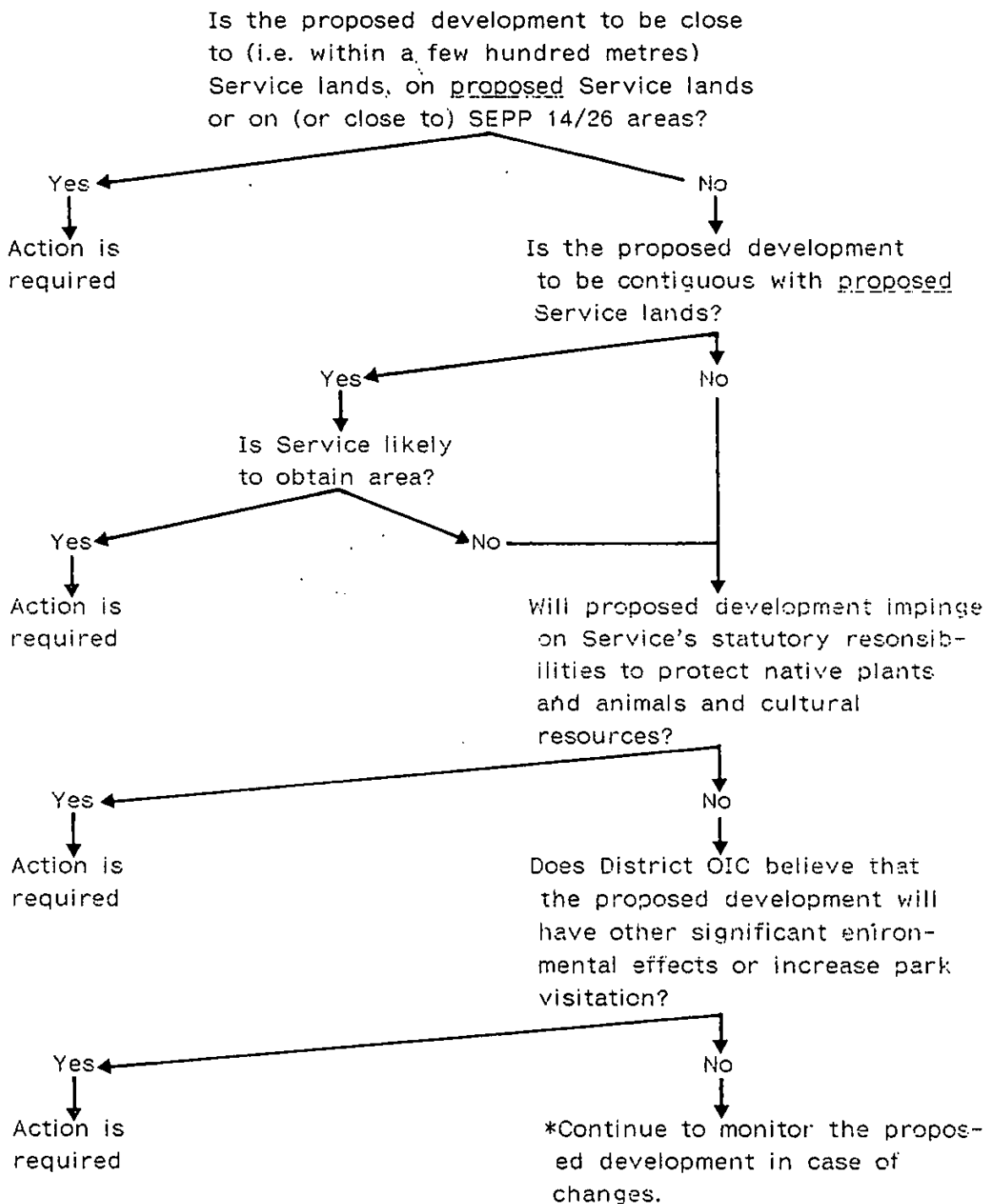
This Section is designed to assist in the preparation of the "Manual for Environmental Planning and Assessment" and to act as a catalyst for policy development. It does not attempt to explain fully the planning process under the EPA Act; such explanation will be included in the Manual.

Since 1980 the Service has operated under draft Environmental Appraisal Policy and Procedures. Initially the Service appears to have devoted considerable effort to comment and procedures under the EPA Act, but after 1985 responses to development proposals were given lower priority unless they were likely to affect Service lands or proposed Service lands. The draft policy of 1980 provided roles for Districts, Regional Environmental Appraisals Officers and Head Office staff but indicated that initiation and co-ordination of responses might occur at

any level. The Service is now in the final stages of developing a new policy which makes it obvious that the District OIC is the person largely responsible for co-ordinating the Service's input into development proposals.

FIGURE 2

Decision Diagram about Proposed Developments



* Many developers change plans or sell their properties to other developers who may make significant changes.

Table 1

Type of Action Required

Concept stage	- District OIC liaises with Council. If project is likely to proceed, should attempt to develop close liaison with developer to produce changes in undesirable aspects of the proposed development.
LES or EIS required	- Regional Office liaises with Regional Office of Planning to effect scope of study.
Draft LEP	- District OIC makes written comment even if only to express approval.
EIS	- District OIC makes written comment
Display of DA	- District OIC makes written objection if previous input has failed to change proposed development appropriately.
Appeal against Council decision	- If District OIC wishes to make an appeal, Director's approval must be obtained. OIC then follows appeal procedure.
"Major" proposal	- Head Office co-ordinates input to Dept. of State Development.
"Top priority matter"	- Regional Office liaises with Regional Office of Planning to keep current with proposed development.

Time constraints have made it impossible to investigate how effectively the Service has responded to development proposals in the past but conversations with people inside and outside the Service have provided a guide. Comments have revealed both positive and negative aspects. The Service's advice is needed and valued, particularly during the early stages of development proposals. However, a number of people feel that the Service is not active enough and should have input into a broader range of proposals, i.e. not just those directly affecting Service interests. During the more formal stages of the planning process the Service needs to improve its input by making consistent responses, through the correct channels and within specified time limits. The new policy should stress this need for improved input. The Service's "Manual for Environmental Planning and Assessment" should also help to improve the existing situation.

3. TO RESPOND OR NOT:

If the Service is to make consistent and appropriately placed and timed responses a number of questions must be considered:

- Which developments require a response?
- At what stage should a response be made?
- To whom and by whom should a response be made?
- What aspects should the response focus on?

Unfortunately there are no simple answers.

3.1. Which Developments?

The location (relative to Service interests) and the type of the development are both important. The location in order of decreasing concern to the Service, can be described as:

- contiguous with, or near, Service lands;
- on proposed Service lands;
- on, or contiguous with, SEPP14 wetlands or SEPP26 littoral rainforests;
- contiguous with proposed Service lands; or
- other locations.

For the protection of the Service's interests it should make responses to all proposals in the first three groups of locations. The need for responses to proposals in the fourth group will depend on the likelihood of Service success in achieving land dedication, on the stage in the acquisition process and on available resources. Available resources will be the main determinant for decisions about proposals in the fifth group. However, the Service should be aware that a number of people, and not just those from environmental groups, feel that the Service is not active enough about proposals in the last group and that it should adopt a higher profile. Depending on how this is done, it may be seen as the Service interfering too much and political fallout may result. The chances of this will be minimised by adopting an active advisory role early in the planning process rather than an adversary role in the later and formal stages.

With regard to type of development, I do not believe it is possible

to be prescriptive about which types will require a response. Other government agencies track developments that are valued at more than some minimum amount, but a small budget does not preclude environmental damage - in fact it may do quite the opposite. The size of the area affected, the number of rooms, the visitor density, the presence of special facilities (e.g. golf courses) and the number of storeys are all factors which may be important in specific instances but in others may be irrelevant. The same can be said of most, if not all, characteristics that might be used as criteria for determining whether a response is necessary or not.

However, having said that, I believe that there are some characteristics of developments which will make the development much more likely to have adverse environmental effects. These are listed in Table 2. In addition, sections of two reports from the North Coast

Table 2

Characteristics of Developments Most Likely to Create Impacts
on Service Interests

Site Modification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large size - Clearance of native vegetation - Major earthworks - Drainage of area - Re-channelling of watercourses
Site Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uphill from Service interests (erosion and siltation) - Upstream in catchment from Service interests - Adjacent to waterbodies and watercourses - Disruption of a corridor between two natural areas
Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disrupts natural views from Service lands - Noise will be apparent on Service lands*
Relationship to Service Lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No buffer between development and Service lands - Significant increase in visitors to Service lands - Access needed through Service lands, e.g. to beach
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extensive planting of exotic species* - Increase in feral animals* - Increased fire hazard* - Special facilities, e.g. pesticide and fertiliser use on golf courses

* Particularly important when a residential development is associated with the tourism proposal (this is often the case).

Environment Council (Corkill 1987a and b) provide considerable information and discussion about tourism developments and should greatly assist District OIC's in deciding whether or not to respond to development proposals.

Another important consideration in deciding whether to make a response, is how contentious the development is likely to be. If a development becomes a political issue, Head Office is likely to be involved in which case good and rapid communication between Head Office and District are essential. There appear to be instances where this has not been so and different opinions have been provided by different levels of the Service. Factors to be considered in attempting to determine contentiousness are:

- what other State Government agencies are involved e.g. is the development to be "fast-tracked"?
- what is local government's attitude towards the development - is there division of opinion?,
- what are the attitudes of local environmental groups?, and
- what is the weight of public opinion and editorial and other media comment?.

If a development appears likely to be contentious, the District should alert the Senior Resources Officer Environmental Projects, Head Office or vice versa.

I conclude that local knowledge will be the essential factor in making a decision about the need for a response. However, leaving decisions in local hands immediately raises the danger of inconsistency between Districts - use of the Service's Manual should minimise this. In addition, I suggest that District OIC's exchange ideas and examples on a regular basis to further minimise this danger. The appointment of an appraisals officer (see 3.3, below) should also reduce inconsistency.

3.2 At What Stage?

Other things being equal, early responses are best. Certainly there should be input before the formal DA stage is reached. At the early stage proposals are more flexible because money and time have not been committed to a particular concept. By discussions with developers and/or local government, beneficial changes may be instituted before the formal review stages are reached.

The trouble with "getting in early" is that only a small percentage of developments that are "floated" ever reach completion (the proportion may be less than 10%; pers comm D. Hume, Regional Manager Dept. of Planning). Large amounts of time will therefore be invested in advising on projects that will never be completed. However, I believe that the greater effectiveness of advice at early stages and the improvement in

the Service's image when it is seen to be acting in a co-operative and advisory role, rather than a reactionary one, will offset the time wasted.

I conclude that an early response is best and that the inevitable waste of time resulting from early responses can be minimised by maintaining close contact with local government officials who seem to have a shrewd idea of the likelihood of progress on a project.

Of course, responses will still usually be required at the later stages particularly if earlier input has been unsuccessful. If the tourism proposal does not require rezoning the Service's only opportunity for formal input may be when the DA is displayed by Council. However, nearly all tourism proposals require rezoning and consequent preparation of a draft LEP. Council must refer to the Director of Planning who may decide that an LES is necessary in order to complete the draft LEP. The Director would determine the scope of the LES. According to Paul Weiner (pers. comm) who has worked for the Dept of Planning for a number of years, the Service should through better liaison be able to have effective input through the Director of Planning to influence the scope of the LES. Information that the Service thinks important in making a decision about the draft LEP can then be provided by the LES.

Designated developments and proposals on SEPP 14 and 26 areas require EIS's. Again, the Director of Planning decides on the scope of the EIS and again the Service should have input. (How this input should be made is discussed later.)

Whether or not an LES or EIS is required, the Service will still be able to respond to the draft LEP. (Copies of EIS's associated with SEPP 14 and 26 areas must be sent to the Service by Councils and comment can obviously be made on these). Hopefully, the nature of the response will be made simpler by earlier advisory input.

If the District OIC is dissatisfied with the LEP (as finalised) there is still opportunity to comment on the DA and since the Service is already "on the record" as wanting to alter some aspect(s) of the proposal the developer has no grounds for complaint about such comment.

In summary, comment should begin early and be advisory but continuing response of a more formal and perhaps negative nature may be necessary as the planning process proceeds. I believe that these types of input will be more effective in producing modifications to developments and will create a more positive image for the Service as a participant in the planning process.

3.3 To Whom and By Whom?

I have already stated that local knowledge is vital in making responses and that the District OIC should play a pivotal role. This is important in another way because local government is usually the key agency in the planning process and the District OIC is the appropriate person to liaise with them.

Conversations with people inside and outside the Service confirm the importance of District liaison with local government. This is the correct and most effective level at which to have input, but it will place a greater burden on District OIC's. To be effective the liaison must be regular, consistent and develop mutual understanding and appreciation for respective roles. Inconsistency is likely to result in an unsympathetic council.

If the District OIC is critical of aspects of a proposal, early attempts should be made to contact the developer if the project seems likely to go ahead (good liaison with council will help here). My discussions indicate that developers are anxious to generate a good public image and can be convinced to alter their plans in order to minimise environmental problems. Even if they are not prepared to alter plans they may well be prepared to take steps to mitigate the impacts their development will cause. There is another positive aspect to this contact with the developer. The experience of the Department of Lands and my discussions indicate that developers may well be willing, on an informal basis, to contribute to management costs or provide facilities for Service lands when their potential guests will be likely to use those Service lands. Developers may even be willing to reserve some of their land for conservation purposes, or to create buffers adjacent to Service lands. The early establishment of a co-operative atmosphere will be conducive to such arrangements.

I believe that improved liaison with both local government and developers is essential. On the basis of my interviews, the Service does not enjoy a good reputation in handling planning matters. The Service is sometimes perceived to be a reactionary force rather blindly opposing tourism developments. Tourism is seen by State Government to be an important growth industry and revenue generator for the State, consequently the Service can ill-afford to be perceived in this negative way. This is not to say that the Service should forgo its responsibilities to nature conservation and environmental protection, rather I believe that good liaison with Councils and developers can lead to changes on their part, before the DA stage is reached, which will alleviate environmental problems.

How can more time be devoted to maintaining good liaison and responding to proposals given existing workloads? Ideally the Regional Office (and presumably other Regional Officers) should have an

"appraisals" officer. Obviously the work of such a person would involve more than just tourism developments, but with regard to these the person would, for each specific proposal, act as an assistant to the District OIC to:

- assist liaison with councils and developers.
- assist liaison with environmental groups,
- gather background information about proposals,
- draft responses for approval and dispatch by District OIC, and
- liaise with the Dept. of Planning Regional office to assist in establishing the scope of LES's and EIS's.

The District OIC would still be the key liaison person but would be released from much of the other work associated with responding to development proposals.

Unfortunately, it seems unlikely that extra staff will be available and it then becomes a matter of re-ordering priorities (assuming that responses to tourism developments are accepted to be of considerable importance) and using time as effectively as possible. Good liaison is effective use of time because it ultimately creates understanding amongst developers and councils of the Service's role and philosophy. This should circumvent many of the environmental problems associated with development proposals. To this end the formation of the "Conservation and Development Liaison Group of the North Coast" is an important initiative. This mixed group of conservationists, developers, representatives of local councils and government departments is attempting to establish principles of development that are environmentally sympathetic. The group has had informal contact with the District OIC - Dorrigio but the Service has no formal place in this group - I believe it must. Contacts for this group are Marianne Ginter (066) 57-3262 and Bob Johnson (066) 52-4355.

Another effective initiative will be distribution of a brief and easily understood "Handbook for Developers and Planners". This Handbook is in the early stages of development by the Service and priority should be given to its completion. The Handbook will outline environmental aspects that developers should consider in plan development and indicate where, and at what stage, they should seek advice. If the Handbook is widely distributed and accepted, it should preclude the need for much of the Service's input.

District OIC's may save a great deal of time and effort by using information from local environmental groups, who are usually well informed about local issues. There may also be a role for Advisory

Committees in liaison and input into responses, however I have not had opportunity to investigate this possibility.

Although the most important contact is the District OIC - Council - Developer level, other levels of contact will be necessary. As mentioned earlier, when rezoning is necessary the matter is referred by Council to the Director of Planning via the Regional Planning Office. Liaison between this office and the Service's Regional Office will not only keep the Service up-to-date on rezoning applications but should also allow Service input into the scope of LES's and EIS's. The Department of Planning also maintains a register of "top priority matters" (TPM) which are developments worth more than \$5 million and the Service's Regional Office should be able to gain access to this information. TPM's are "fast-tracked" and it is therefore even more important that the Service is up-to-date on these.

The Department of State Development under the direction of cabinet takes on a co-ordination and facilitator role for "major" developments (i.e. projects which have considerable capital value, employment potential and overall value to the State). Occasionally, major developments will be tourism proposals and in these situations it may be appropriate for the Service's Head Office to have direct input through State Development - one of the Directors (Rosemary Howard) is the appropriate contact.

3.4 What Aspects?

The aspects which require particular attention will vary from proposal to proposal and Service staff seem to be familiar with the possible range, and if not can consult a comprehensive checklist in the Manual. Therefore there seems to be little point in this report discussing each aspect in detail, however two issues need to be emphasised.

It appears that insufficient emphasis is being placed on the amenity value of areas near parks. Amongst other things, the vistas from parks, especially in the foreground, should be kept as natural as possible and noise should be kept to a minimum. This is extremely important in coastal parks where land is becoming increasingly developed and parks are often too narrow to provide a core area relatively free of the sights and sounds of humans.

Although outside the study area, the northern part of Bundjalung NP provides a good example of a development proposal which will severely affect the amenity value of the park. The northern portion of the Gumma Garra Walk provides views up and across an unspoilt river and over rolling heavily vegetated hills beyond. Only in one small section of this portion of the walk is a man-made structure visible. The Irongates proposal will produce dramatic change. Intensive residential

development and tourism and recreation facilities immediately across Evans River from the park will, together with noise of people, dogs, motor mowers, etc, dramatically alter the recreational experience of the Gumma Garra Walk. Apparently the Service has made no comment on the Irongates proposal which, incidentally, may also block the possibility of joining Bundjalung and Broadwater NP's.

Within the study area the Marlin Golf Resort Concept Proposal, adjacent to the northern part of Moonee Beach NR has been responded to but not on the grounds of loss of amenity value.

The other issue involves the less direct effects of tourism developments, in particular the effects of increasing visitor numbers on Service lands. Although it seems highly unlikely that the Service would want to object to a proposal on the grounds of increased visitor pressure alone, the Service does have a legitimate planning need to know how many extra visitors there are likely to be, of what type and in pursuit of what types of activities. Such information could be requested informally from the developer or, failing that, be obtained through LES's or EIS's. Within the study area, the development of the Dorrigo Steam Railway and Museum provide an excellent example of the effect that a development can have on a park visitor population. If the project proceeds it will greatly increase the number of visitors to Dorrigo, change the type of visitor and increase average length of stay. This will have a significant effect on the Dorrigo NP visitor population and will probably affect New England NP also.

4. SUMMARY

The following points have been made:

1. The Service needs to improve the way it handles planning matters.
2. The local knowledge of District OIC's will be essential in determining which types of developments require Service input.
3. The location of developments relative to Service interests has been used to create categories of decreasing importance to the Service and therefore decreasing need to respond to proposals.
4. The Service should make early input to proposals by adopting an advisory role to developers and Councils.
5. Formal responses to planning instruments will still be necessary on occasions but should be less complicated and negative because of earlier input.
6. Liaison between District OIC's and Councils and District OIC's and Developers are the correct and most effective way for the Service to

have input.

7. Ideally a position of "appraisals" officer should be created in the Northern Region (and presumably in other regions) to enable District OIC's to pursue the liaison role identified in 6.
8. The Service should have direct input into the "Conservation and Development Liaison Group of the North Coast".
9. Priority should be given to completing the "Handbook for Developers and Planners".
10. In responding to proposals the Service should give more consideration to the amenity value of areas near Service lands and to larger visitor numbers generated by tourism resorts.

Section 3

LIAISON WITH OTHER AGENCIES

1. INTERVIEWS

One of the reasons for the Service initiating this study was the perceived need for more liaison with other government agencies. Consequently, during interviews officers of government agencies were asked about the nature of existing liaison, if improved liaison would be of benefit to them and, if so, at what level the liaison should occur. The outcome is summarised below for each agency. It should be noted that perceived benefit sometimes covered topics unrelated to tourism and tourism developments.

Tourism Commission of NSW

People interviewed - Jenny Calkin Director, Planning and Development
- Bruce Korn, North Coast Regional Manager

Previous/Existing liaison - Quite extensive with respect to the Western Region: Including contact between Head Offices. None in the North Coast Region at present.

Perceived benefit of improved liaison - Seen to be of definite benefit, at Head Office and Regional levels, for promotion of "nature-based" tourism. Liaison in coastal areas is particularly important.

Preferred level &/ or type of liaison - Regular liaison desired at both Head Office (manager to manager) and Regional levels.

Department of Planning

People interviewed - Charles Hill, Acting Head Heritage, Assessments and Resources Division.
- David Hume, Manager Grafton Regional Office

Previous/Existing liaison - Adequate liaison at Head Office level exists on SEPP wetlands and littoral rainforests, but there is only sporadic liaison at Regional level.

Perceived benefit of improved liaison - At Head Office level none, since existing liaison is adequate. There could be some benefit at the Regional level in better access to Service expertise and understanding of Service philosophy.

Preferred level &/ or type of liaison - Continue existing sporadic liaison at Head Office level. Liaison between Regional Managers but not on a regular basis, i.e. only when there is an established agenda.

Department of Lands

People interviewed - Derek Sinclair Asst. Director, Land Management Division
- Ivan Johnson, Grafton Regional Office

Previous/Existing liaison - Specific issue liaison at Head Office level has occurred in the past but there is none at the moment. Only irregular liaison occurs at the Regional level.

Perceived benefit of improved liaison - Of definite benefit at Head Office level to obtain advice on assessment and plans of management. At the Regional level liaison will be useful to stop duplication of effort and intrusion of the Service into areas traditionally the concern of the Department.

Preferred level &/ or type of liaison - Between Assistant Directors at Head Office level on a regular basis. Formal and regular liaison at the Regional level.

Forestry Commission of NSW

Person interviewed - John Bruce, Coffs Harbour Regional Forester.

Previous/Existing liaison - Irregular and informal mainly through joint committee memberships or attendance at workshops.

Perceived benefit of improved liaison - None

Preferred level &/ or type of liaison - None

Coffs Harbour City

People interviewed - Phillip Harvey, Town Clerk
- Paul Bennie, Town Planner
- Paul Sullivan, Tourism Manager
- John Shaw, Parks and Recreation Department

- Previous/Existing liaison - Generally there seems to be little direct liaison at the present time and what exists relates to statutory obligations under the EPA Act.
- Perceived benefit of improved liaison - Without exception, there was desire for improved liaison. The Service can provide a regional perspective to planning in the use of natural areas and in the provision of recreational opportunities. The Service has expertise which gives it a valuable advisory role. The Tourism Manager is particularly keen to promote "nature-based" tourism in the Dorriggo - New England area.
- Preferred level &/ or type liaison - Regular and with District and Regional Offices

Bellingen Shire

Person interviewed - Peter Doyle, Shire Clerk

Previous/Existing liaison - No regular liaison

Perceived benefit of improved liaison - Very little benefit

Preferred level &/ or type of liaison - Liaison between District Office and elected Councillors was tentatively suggested.

2. CONCLUSIONS FROM INTERVIEWS

1. There is little regular liaison between the Service and other agencies at Head Office, North Coast Region or Dorriggo District levels.
2. The Tourism Commission and Coffs Harbour City perceive considerable benefit to themselves from improved liaison and therefore desire to establish formal and regular liaison.
3. The Department of Lands also perceives benefit to themselves in improved liaison but this has relatively little to do with tourism and tourism developments.
4. The Department of Planning and Bellingen Shire have relatively little interest in improved liaison.

5. The Regional Office of the Forestry Commission sees no benefit to themselves in greater liaison.

3. POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR THE SERVICE

The Service may derive a considerable range of benefits from improved liaison; these are summarised in Table 3. More detail is provided below for each agency.

Tourism Commission: Access through their Head Office to the largest data base on tourism developments (see Section 1,4). Information on tourism growth, tourist characteristics and needs, etc. which is essential for development of recreation strategies. Advice from Head Office on developing leases for certain types of commercial operations (see Section 5,4.4).

Advice on marketing the recreational opportunities the Service provides. Advice and, possibly, direct assistance in training tour operators.

Department of Planning: Input into the consultancy that the Department has established to provide for resorts adjacent to natural areas (see Section 5,4.3.6). Input at Regional level to determine the scope of LES's and EIS's (see Section 2,3.2). Input through Head Office into SEPP's. Comment through Head Office and/or Regional Office about local governments' handling of development proposals. (The Department of Planning has a watching brief over local governments and a duty to report their findings to Cabinet).

Department of Lands: The possibility exists of taking a regional approach to providing recreational opportunities and involving the Head Office and the Regional Office because of their control over CLR's (particularly beaches). Head Office has experience in obtaining finances and facilities from developers whose proposals are close to CLR's and whose guests will require access to, or through, these reserves.

Department of State Development: The Service can provide input into planning for the few tourism developments that are classified as "major" and co-ordinated by State Development (see Section 2,3.3).

Forestry Commission: Similarly to the Department of Lands, the holdings that the Commission has make it imperative that the Commission be involved in any attempt at regional recreation planning. There is real need for this because Section 4,4.2 of this report suggests that a number of recreational opportunities, in short supply in the study area, might best be supplied on Forestry lands.

Table 3

Potential Benefits to Service from Liaison with Selected Agencies

Agency*		Access to current in- formation about devel- opments.	Informal input about tourism developments	Formal input about tourism developments	Input into Service's rec. management strategies.	Joint rec. management strategies.	Advice on commerical operations in & near parks.	Assist. with marketing facilities & services.	Training and licensing of tour operators
Tourism	HO	X			X		X	X	X
Commission	RO				X			X	X
Planning	HO		X	X					
	RO		X	X					
Lands	HO						X	X	
	RO					X			
State De- velopment		X	X						
Forestry	RO					X			
Coffs Harbour		X	X	X		X		X	X
Bellingen Shire		X	X	X		X			

* HO - Head Office

RO - Regional Office

Coffs Harbour City and Bellingen Shire: The Service can gain access to current information about development proposals and provide informal input about proposals at the concept stage. The Service has an established policy (see No. 1.3.4, Field Management Policies) to contribute to Council development of initial LEP's. This will occur more effectively if good liaison is established, as will input into DA's and LEP's required for spot rezoning. These last aspects are discussed fully in Section 2. As with the Department of Lands and the Forestry Commission, local governments' control of reserves means that they should be involved in regional recreation planning.

Coffs Harbour City has an information centre and two others planned which can directly market Service areas. The Tourism Manager and his staff might also become involved in training tour operators.

4. CONCLUSIONS ABOUT BENEFITS

The Service stands to gain considerable benefit from formal and regular liaison with a number of agencies. Liaison with the Tourism Commission and Coffs Harbour City seem likely to yield the greatest benefits (see Table 3) and should be most easily achieved since these agencies are the most willing to develop liaison.

There are also benefits to be gained from better liaison with the Department of Planning and Bellingen Shire but this may be more difficult to achieve since neither agency perceives much benefit in it for themselves.

Liaison with the Forestry Commission and Department of Lands will mainly be of benefit if attempts are made at regional recreation planning which of necessity would involve all recreation land management agencies.

Liaison associated with tourism developments (columns 1,2 and 3 in Table 3) have been discussed fully in Section 2 and will not be considered further.

If the Service decides to develop liaison with some or all of these agencies, the burden will fall heavily on the Districts (this has already been discussed in Section 2,3.3) and, to a lesser extent, Head Office.

Section 4TOWARDS A RECREATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Service has already recognised the need for Regional Recreation Management Strategies and the Central and Northern Regions have initiated development of their strategies. An important component of strategy development is to identify the recreational resources of the area in question, determine who manages them and the types of recreational opportunities they provide. Only in this way can the Service's potential contributions be placed in correct perspective. The compilation of this type of inventory will enable the Service to make decisions about the types of opportunities it should provide and in which of its areas.

Time constraints made it impossible to fully develop a strategy for the study area, however it has been possible to do preliminary groundwork which the District can refine and develop into a comprehensive strategy. Recreational facilities and attractions have been identified and, in some cases, mapped. Relevant population and tourism data is summarised in Appendix 2. However, undoubtedly the most important contribution to the strategy development has been the mapping of recreational opportunity categories following the process developed by Clark and Stankey(1979). Although refinement of the map will be needed as local knowledge is supplied by District staff and even though the settings for categories (see Table 4) have not been rigorously defined by provision of standards, the use of the ROS process has revealed a number of important points (outlined below) with relatively little effort, i.e. it has been a very cost effective exercise.

2. RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM

A modified version of the USDA Forest Service ROS settings (USDA n.d.) has been used in this study.

The categories and criteria developed by the Service's Visitor Use Data Steering Committee (NPWS 1984) were not considered appropriate for this study because they are limited to use on Service land rather than use in the broader context appropriate for this study. However, the footnotes associated with this system are valuable because they highlight the flexibility and local knowledge which needs to be applied in determining categories and their criteria.

2.1 The Categories

The categories and their criteria are shown in Table 4 and are

mapped in Figure 3. This figure is intended only as a rough guide, a mapping on a 1:100,000 scale is available for use by the District.

2.2 The ROS Map

The importance of local knowledge has already been pointed out. Time constraints have prevented such detailed input being made to this map. This does not reduce the validity of broad statements that have resulted from examination of the map (see below). However, it does mean that if the map is to be used for more detailed planning of specific areas, local knowledge will be vital and mapping at a more appropriate scale may also be necessary.

One other general point can be made. Freehold land has not been categorised (except in urban areas) because it is generally not considered to provide recreational opportunities to the general public.

Various points can be made about the categories and their mapping.

2.2.1 Primitive: The restriction that such areas be at least 1 km from public roads has been waived along much of the northern boundary of New England NP because the escarpment is considered to prevent public roads to the north impinging on this type of opportunity. Exercising discretion of this type in the application of restrictions is perfectly permissible - flexibility based on experience is an important characteristic of ROS.

It should be pointed out that the 3km. restriction suggested in NPWS (1984) appears to be unrealistic and would apply to very few areas in non-arid Australia. For example, within the study area it would only apply to an area of New England NP so small that its size would preclude it from the "primitive" category anyway. The perception of being in a wilderness area is the important thing and in many cases, if not all, a distance much less than 3km. will create that perception.

2.2.2 Semi-primitive non-motorised: Some areas (e.g. a number of nature reserves) which on the basis of other criteria fit into this category, have been excluded because of their small size and placed in the "roaded natural" category.

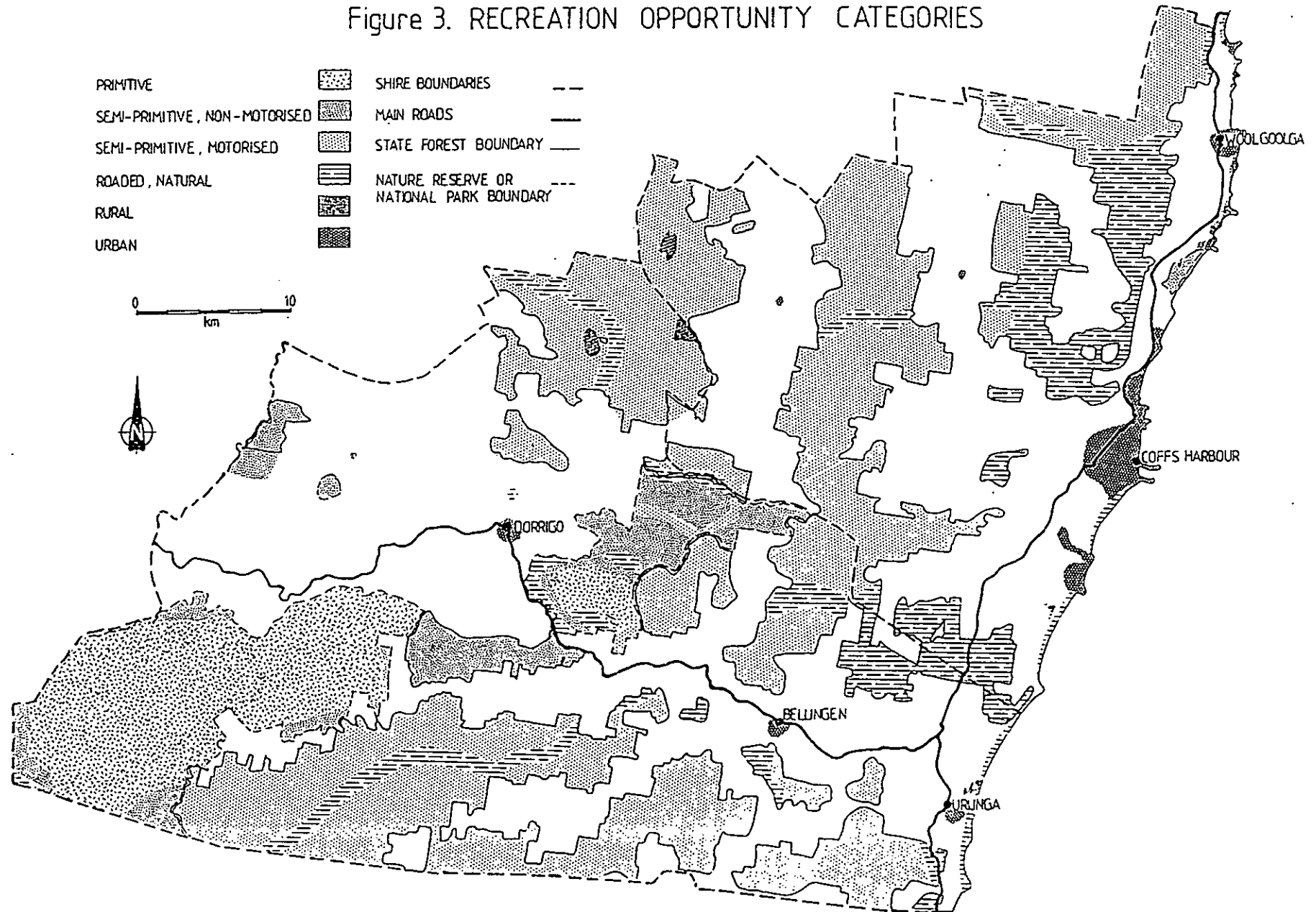
2.2.3 Semi-primitive motorised and roaded natural: Most State Forest land has been placed in these two categories. Where there appears to be considerable use of forest roads, e.g. major public roads, designated forest drives and close to the coast, the "roaded natural" category has been used. Otherwise the "semi-primitive motorised" category has usually been assigned.

Table 4

RECREATION OPPORTUNITY CATEGORIES

	Primitive	Semi-primitive Non-motorised	Semi-primitive Motorised	Roaded Natural	Rural	Urban
Physical Setting						
1.Description	Essentially unmodified natural environments.	Predominantly natural or natural appearing environments.	Predominantly natural or natural appearing environments.	Predominantly natural appearing environments.	Substantially modified natural environments.	Substantially urbanised environments although background may have natural appearing elements.
2.Size	Fairly large.	Moderate to large.	Moderate to large.	No minimum.	No minimum.	No minimum.
3.Distance from roads.	At least 1km.unless a topographical feature acts as a barrier.	No minimum from minor public roads, 1/2km.from others.	No minimum from minor public roads 1/2km.from others.	No minimum.	No minimum.	No minimum.
4.Human-induced changes.	Essentially none (would be unnoticed by most users).	Relatively few and of small scale.	Relatively few and of small scale.	More common and of larger scale but must harmonise with natural environment.	Predominant.Effort must be made to maintain/recreate natural settings.	Complete replacement of natural settings.
5.Other restrictions.	No fire tracks or formed walking tracks.	None.	None.	None.	None.	None.
Social Setting						
1.Interaction between users.	Very low.	Low.	Low.	Low to moderate.	Moderate to high.	High.
2.Evidence of other users.	Minimal.	Occasional.	Occasional.	Common.	Very frequent.	Very frequent.
Managerial Setting						
1.Use of motor vehicles.	Not permitted.	Not permitted.	Permitted.	Permitted.	Permitted.	Permitted.
2.Regulation of behaviour.	Any regulation is achieved off-site not on-site.	Minimal and subtle on-site controls and restrictions.	Minimal and subtle on-site controls and restrictions.	Noticeable but not frequent controls.	Regulation is frequent and obvious.	Regulation is very frequent and obvious.
3.Provision of facilities and services.	None.	Minimal but including formed walking tracks and signs.	Minimal but including formed walking tracks and signs.	Common but unsophisticated.Roads constructed to 2WD standard.	Common. May be sophisticated and cater for 1ge.nos.& special activities.	A wide range of sophisticated facilities and services are available.

Figure 3. RECREATION OPPORTUNITY CATEGORIES



However, traffic volume is not the only distinguishing criterion. Forestry operations will have a great effect on the recreational opportunities. Depending on its intensity and extent, timber harvesting may mean re-categorisation of a "semi-primitive motorised" area to the rural category. Similarly creation of plantations will result in change of category. Local knowledge is obviously essential in assigning categories in these instances and the map indicates little more than the maximum potential of an area rather than its actual situation. Where the location of pine plantations is known these areas have been categorised as "rural".

2.2.4 Rural: A number of coastal CLR's have been placed in this category because many have been highly modified by sand mining, are weed-infested, receive considerable use and often have 4WD traffic. Local knowledge would be needed to know if this is true of all reserves. Some may need to be re-categorised.

3. THE AVAILABILITY OF RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 Primitive Recreation Opportunities:

These appear to be well catered for in the study area with a large area in New England NP and a considerably smaller one in Corrigio NP.

3.2 Semi-primitive Non-motorised:

Apart from areas in and near Dorrigio and New England NP's this category is not well represented. Furthermore the Social and Managerial Settings (see Table 4) of these areas satisfy the "primitive" category and it is only their Physical Settings that place them in this category. This means that the opportunity to go on overnight walks (with associated bush camping) using formed or at least well-established unformed walking tracks, and free from the sights and sounds of motor vehicles, is extremely limited.

In part this lack is related to choice of study area. The section of New England NP excluded from the study area does have some large areas which would probably be classified as "semi-primitive non-motorised" and do have some recognised walking tracks. The lack of opportunity could also be alleviated to some extent by changing existing use. For example, in Dorrigio NP it may be possible to close 4WD access along Wild Cattle Creek to Lanes Lookout and beyond but keep the track available for walkers. Thus the strip of land in northern Dorrigio NP currently shown as "semi-primitive motorised" would be converted to "semi-primitive non-motorised" in keeping with the area surrounding it. Apart from this change, there is little scope for providing this type of opportunity on Service lands in the study area unless there is to be alteration to existing "primitive" areas. Such alteration seems highly

undesirable on the grounds that primitive opportunities are already limited but, more importantly, because of the conservation value of these "primitive" areas.

A better perspective on provision of "semi-primitive non-motorised" opportunities should result during the development of the Northern Region Recreation Management Strategy. However, it must be remembered that the Service is the only likely supplier of "primitive" opportunities in the region and must give some priority to this category. Also walking is only one type of legitimate use of "semi-primitive non-motorised" areas. Cycling and horseriding have legitimate claims on such areas; the latter is already popular and the rapidly increasing sales of "mountain" bikes indicates that there will be far more people looking for places to ride bikes in natural areas. However, compatibility between different types of use must be considered together with problems of track erosion and weed dispersal. In addition, these areas are well removed from the potential users from urban areas, it would not be sufficient for the Service to merely supply the appropriate tracks, parking for vehicles and trailers, yards and other facilities may also be needed.

I conclude that it is unlikely that the Service can cater for each of these activities in "semi-primitive non-motorised" settings, whilst maintaining "primitive" opportunities, and this seems to be true even if areas adjacent to the study area are considered. This conclusion highlights the need for a regional approach to recreation planning and the importance of involving other agencies, who control land with recreational potential, in the planning process (see 5, below).

The opportunity for semi-primitive non-motorised recreation on and near the coast is limited to Moonee Beach NR and therefore highlights its importance and the potential conflict with its role in conservation. Regardless, many may argue that the Nature Reserve is really too small to provide the feeling of isolation which should be associated with this type of opportunity.

3.3 Semi-primitive Motorised:

This type of recreation opportunity is well supplied in the study area. It is almost entirely limited to Forestry Commission lands and is usually away from the coast.

3.4 Roaded Natural:

This category occurs commonly on Forestry Commission lands near the coast and along major and scenic roads further inland. Most of these areas are categorised as such because of their Physical and Social Settings (see Table 4) rather than their Managerial ones. Thus, there

are few of the facilities and services that might normally be expected with this category, such as picnic areas, camping areas and interpretive facilities. New England and Dorrigo NP's and several State Forests have picnic areas. The two National Parks also have interpretive facilities and there are pamphlets for some State Forests. Nowhere is there a camping ground in a roaded natural area, although the Forestry Commission maintains a small one at Platypus Flat (to the north of Dorrigo just outside the study area). This is a major deficiency and the number of picnic areas in State Forests also seems inadequate.

3.5 Rural:

This category is mainly represented by coastal CLR's and pine plantations in State Forests. As mentioned earlier some of the former may be mis-categorised and there are likely to be other areas in State Forests so modified that they would be placed in this category.

Generally, areas have been placed in this category because of their Physical and Social Settings but their Managerial Settings are more appropriate to categories towards the "primitive" end of the spectrum.

3.6 Urban:

With this category in particular it is important to map areas that provide urban recreation opportunities and not just urban areas. This category is well represented along the coast but not inland which is consistent with low population away from the coast. No inadequacy in the types of activities available has been identified.

4. THE COASTAL STRIP

The NSW Tourism Commission (1987) identifies beaches as major attractions for tourists to the north coast. Chapman et al (1989) suggest that beaches are visited regularly by a large proportion of the population, and that visits are not confined to summertime and/or weekends. The obvious importance of beaches to the region demands that they receive special attention in any recreation management strategy. However, the ROS mapping in this Section is at a scale that prevents little differentiation between beaches; ideally a smaller scale mapping should be done as a first step in strategy development.

Chapman et al (1989) maintain that there has been a tendency in Australia for managers to treat all beaches as being the same and therefore provide similar managerial settings in all locations or, at least, work towards that goal. However, their major study (approximately 5,000 interviews in the Hunter Region) shows that this sameness in approach to beach management must be seriously questioned. By examining the types of experiences beach users seek, rather than the

activities they engage in, the authors have identified five broad groups of beach users who do not distribute themselves randomly along the coast. Rather, they seek different experiences and will therefore seek out beaches that are most likely to satisfy their expectations. The authors were able to classify beaches according to the types of users that go to them. This strongly suggests that different beaches require different managerial settings.

Within my study area there is no indication of an overall beach management strategy - current differences in managerial settings arise largely from indirect factors (particularly type of access) and absence of management rather than any deliberate decisions to create different settings. The need for an overall strategy is urgent otherwise management by a series of incremental decisions, as the population in the area increases, is likely to give rise to a set of beaches offering very similar experiences. In this context the question of motor vehicle access along beaches is one of the most important issues which must be addressed. Chapman et al (1989) have found that most users are strongly opposed to vehicle use on beaches. One can only assume that the single management decision to allow, or not to allow, vehicle use will have a marked effect on user experience and significantly alter the profile of beach users.

In planning for beach management, it will not be sufficient to only consider the immediate beach environment. The backdrop to the beach can have a significant effect on user experience. Nor should recreation opportunities in the coastal strip be limited to water-based and beach-based ones. But just such a limitation is a likely prognosis for the study area as ribbon development spreads along the coast. Non-freehold land on the coastal strip is confined to very narrow CLR's; Pine Creek State Forest and Moonee Beach NR are the only significant exceptions. Opportunities to walk, cycle, horse-ride and camp in natural areas close to the coast are very limited.

In my opinion steps must be taken to rectify this situation before spreading development eliminates the possibility of setting aside suitable recreation areas. Within the study area the land behind Bonville Beach seems an ideal area for these purposes because it:

- is large and undeveloped,
- provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities, and
- links to the Pine Creek State Forest.

In addition, parts of it have considerable conservation significance. There appear to be few, if any, other areas along the coast that match these advantages.

The current proposal by Bonville Beach Hardwoods Pty. Ltd. for a major tourism development has scope to provide certain types of recreational opportunities for the general public. The developers appear to have taken some care to plan for preservation of areas important for conservation and recreation. These efforts should be commended but I feel that the scale of the development is such that their preservation zones will not be sustainable under the pressure of proposed visitor numbers (up to 10,000 visitors at any time). An appropriately sited and smaller scale development, whilst still commercially viable, would not jeopardise the conservation and recreational values of the area. However, the over-riding concern should be to obtain the area (or large parts of it) for recreational use and conservation and the blending in of a commercial development should be a secondary consideration.

Moonee Beach NR provides some of the same advantages as the Bonville Beach area, however it has a very important conservation role and as such is only suitable for low intensity recreation to provide opportunities near the "primitive" end of ROS. More intensive use could be catered for in the area between the nature reserve and the main highway. Purchase of freehold land would be necessary.

Additional (or alternative) areas to Bonville and Moonee which are worthy of investigation lie to the north of Woolgoolga and to the south of Urunga.

5. INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER AGENCIES

It is obvious from the preceding parts of this Section that the development of a comprehensive recreation management strategy must involve other agencies which control land with recreational potential. Section 3 discusses liaison with other agencies, and I believe the Service should move to establish mutual recreational planning with the Forestry Commission, Department of Lands and Local Government.

The Forestry Commission controls large areas of State Forest and has an established recreation policy that encourages use. Importantly, they aim to complement, rather than duplicate, the opportunities provided by the Service. In 3.2, above, I concluded that the Service would find it difficult, if not impossible, to cater for a range of activities in "semi-primitive non-motorised" settings. On the other hand the Forestry Commission has very large areas providing "semi-primitive motorised" and "roaded natural" opportunities and may well be able to close some of these areas to motor vehicles and thereby create opportunities which the Service is unable to. If necessary, closure to vehicles could be on a rotational basis so that forests can still be harvested. A multi-agency working group would be able to consider possibilities such as this. Other issues also need to be considered, for example the Forestry

Commission should be aware of the fact that it has the power to change recreational settings very easily. Advertising a particular road network as a scenic drive and providing a pamphlet is potentially all that is needed to change areas along that road network from "semi-primitive motorised" to "roaded natural".

The Department of Lands (1986) has a stated intention to assess its reserves for their recreation potential, and other potentials, and retain them for recreational use if that is considered to be most appropriate. The same publication also contains terms of reference for recreation management. Although the policies of the present State Government have made it more difficult for the Department to retain its reserves, it seems likely that CLR's will continue to have an important role in recreation provision and the Department should therefore be involved in regional recreation planning.

Local Government should also be involved because they have a major role in provision of recreation opportunities through their own reserves and through Crown Land Reserves placed under their management by the Department of Lands.

6. CONCLUSIONS

1. Recreation opportunities in "primitive" settings appear to be well supplied in the study area.

2. However, opportunities in "semi-primitive non-motorised" settings are limited, especially when one considers the resident and visitor populations of the study area. It seems unlikely that the Service, as the current main supplier of this type of setting, will be able to cater for a full range of activities free from motor vehicles.

3. "Semi-primitive motorised" settings cover a large proportion of the study area although they tend not to occur near the coast. It may be possible to rectify the inadequate supply of "semi-primitive non-motorised" by closing some of the "semi-primitive motorised" areas to motor vehicles.

4. "Roaded natural" areas are well supplied but tend to be concentrated near the coast. There are no camp grounds in "roaded natural" areas and the number of picnic areas is inadequate.

5. Generally it is the Physical and/or Social Setting of an area that is tending to move it towards the "urban" end of the spectrum. The associated Managerial Setting of the area is usually more appropriate for a less "urban" category. This implies that for many areas and associated activities, the level of management is inadequate. If true, the lack of adequate management has serious implications for the future.

Increasing use and associated change tends to move areas progressively towards the "urban" end of the spectrum. This almost automatic progression can only be halted by management actions intended to maintain the existing situation. Inadequate management will lead, by default, to less and less area being available towards the "primitive" end of the spectrum.

6. Beaches are very important attractions in the region but there does not appear to be a regional strategy for beach management to supply a variety of beach settings. The need for an overall management strategy is urgent and would need to consider such things as: types of beach management settings needed; where and how they can be implemented; who will be responsible for implementing them; and how they can be maintained in the long-term.

7. Recreation opportunities in the coastal strip are confined to water-based and beach-based activities. There is an urgent need to obtain freehold land to broaden the spectrum of recreation settings near the coast - Bonville Beach is identified as a key area.

8. The Service, the Forestry Commission, the Department of Lands and Local Government should establish a joint-agency working party to plan for recreation in the study area (and beyond).

Section 5

RESPONDING TO INCREASING TOURISM

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a general confidence, inside and outside of government, that growth in tourism will continue in the Coffs Harbour area for the immediate future. This is despite the fact that the latest figures available showed that mid-north coast tourism declined by 6.5% from 1985/6 to 1986/7 after a growth of 3.7% in the previous year. Accompanying the expected growth is an expected change in the types of experiences tourists are seeking.

According to the Tourism Commission, people are increasingly seeking experience-orientated holidays involving more adventure. In 1980 the OECD identified this as an international trend (OECD 1980) with so-called "nature-based" tourism being one of the most rapidly expanding types of tourism. Research contracted by the Tourism Commission of NSW, which is soon to be made public, tested the attractiveness of various types of areas and features to the public. Natural areas and activities associated with them rated very highly. The Tourist Information Centre of Coffs Harbour is also experiencing rapid growth in number of enquiries about natural areas and associated activities. One is led to the conclusion that "nature-based" tourism is a rapidly expanding sector of a market which itself is expanding.

This growth has serious implications for the Service. The Tourism Commission's strategy for the North Coast (see Tourism Commission 1987) considers Service lands to be under-utilised. They wish to cater for this growth in nature-based tourism by provision of more facilities and services in natural areas. More specifically, within the study area the Coffs Harbour Tourist Information Centre has a large budget for tourism promotion and intends to spend a considerable portion of this on promoting the Dorriggo/Bellingen area. This promotion of the hinterland area is a recent change in emphasis which should lead to greater use of Dorriggo and New England NPs.

There seems little doubt that Service lands will be a prime focus for increasing tourism. The annual growth rates of visitation to parks in the Northern Region of 8-12% are alarming enough but it appears that they may well be exceeded in the near future. Visitor numbers might well be doubling every 5-6 years.

This Section will consider the potential opportunities and impacts created by increasing tourism on the Service and its lands. It will then go on to discuss ways in which the Service might cater for increasing tourism.

2. OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY INCREASING TOURISM

The potential opportunities include:

1. greater support for the Service in the community.
2. greater chance for involvement of commercial operators in providing services and facilities on Service lands.
3. more money for the Service to provide better visitor services and improved management.

Each of these is discussed below.

2.1 Greater Support:

Depending on what types of services and facilities the Service allows on its lands, there is potential to have increased numbers of visitors and, perhaps more importantly, a broader cross-section of the community represented amongst visitors. Will this necessarily lead to greater community support for the Service?

The concept that people who visit national parks and have an enjoyable experience will, because of that experience, become more supportive of the national parks system is fairly widely accepted (see, for example, McKechnie 1984) despite the fact that there is practically no direct evidence to confirm or reject it. The high levels of repeat visitation and satisfaction with parks that have been found in visitor surveys can be taken as indirect evidence. The New England-Bonnie study (Kuring-gai CAE 1988) has produced a more direct piece of evidence in its community survey. Of residents who had visited a rainforest, 67% thought they were a "major tourist attraction" compared to 39% of those who had not visited a rainforest. The firsthand experience appears to have induced a fairly substantial change in attitude.

In the absence of evidence to the contrary it is prudent to assume that greater visitation to parks, provided visits are enjoyable, will lead to greater support for the Service and its goals. This will be especially true if the Service grasps the opportunity of increasing tourism to not only increase the number of visitors, but also broaden the range of visitor types so that they are more representative of the community as a whole. I stress this because visitor surveys in North America, e.g. Bultena and Field(1978 & 1980), and similar surveys in Australia, e.g. Clay, Hingston & Aslin(1989), indicate that park visitors differ markedly from the general population with respect to sex ratio, age structure, educational level and occupation.

We must also assume that the more satisfying the visitors' experiences the more supportive they are likely to be, in which case the Service must give careful consideration to the current experiences visitors get, and the types of experiences they should be getting in the future.

2.2 Commercial Operators:

In its Northern Region the Service's lands are not adequately supplied with the services and facilities that will necessarily give a broad range of visitor types highly satisfying experiences. Nor does the Service have the resources to effect a rapid expansion of facilities and services, particularly in non-rainforest parks.

In the absence of the necessary resources the Service must consider involving private enterprise in provision of facilities and services. The advantage of increasing tourism is that the growth in park visitation will increase the viability of commercial enterprises and should therefore increase the willingness of operators to become involved. Thus increasing tourism provides a valuable opportunity to the Service, however not all people will look on it in this light. Many, but not all, environmental groups, some existing users and some Service staff consider the involvement of commercial operators to be undesirable.

2.3 More Money:

The implementation of commercial leases will provide greater revenue to the Service. Provided this is not met by a commensurate reduction in the Service's appropriation from the State Government, this will give badly needed resources for park management. Lessees may also pay for development and maintenance costs of facilities. If the Service decides against use of commercial operators, alternative revenue must be found if the Service is to have any hope of increasing its management and services to appropriately cater for increasing tourism. The most obvious alternatives are entry fees and user fees for specific services. Although the majority of visitors may be willing to pay entry fees (see for example Clay, Hingston and Aslin 1987), there will be opposition and some loss of traditional users. Once again tourism growth provides an advantage by more than off-setting this partial loss of traditional users. Thus the Service should be able to introduce entry fees confident that there will not be a decline in user numbers and support.

Similarly, the concept of paying for services seems to becoming more widely accepted. For example, charges made for guided walks by a seasonal ranger in Coorong NP, South Australia (a park with no previous history of such services) covered 85% of the ranger's wages packet in the first year of operation. The Service should not shy away from the

user-pays principle. Certainly the Director of Planning and Development of the Tourism Commission feels that user fees will be widely accepted.

3. IMPACTS CREATED BY INCREASING TOURISM

The potential impacts include:

1. over-use of Service lands.
2. over-development of visitor facilities and services.
3. neglect of other aspects of management whilst attempting to cater for visitors.
4. greater conflict between different user types, and
5. displacement of traditional users.

Each of these is discussed below.

3.1 Over-use:

The dilemma of catering for visitor use and maintaining conservation objectives is widely recognised. There is no doubt that over-use by visitors threatens these objectives but there is also no doubt that impacts associated with over-use will be most severe when there has been inadequate planning and management. The development of a Regional Strategy (occurring at the moment) to deal with increasing visitor use should mean that changes induced by visitors will be kept at acceptable levels provided the appropriate level of management is also available.

3.2 Over-development:

There is always a danger that increasing visitor numbers will become the dictating force that leads to more and more development. Clark and Stankey (1979) provide an excellent example of this type of situation and indicate that proper planning and associated management will most effectively prevent the types of development which alienate existing users and are incompatible with the park environment. Once again implementation of the Regional Strategy will have a vital role in preventing over-development, by establishing the types of settings that are desired and their locations. Monitoring will ensure that these settings are maintained and that over-development does not occur by a series of incremental changes.

3.3 Neglect of Management:

If visitor numbers increase but resources do not, it seems

inevitable that other areas of management will become increasingly neglected. Considering that many people already regard aspects of management to be inadequate, the conclusion is inescapable that the Service must gain additional resources if it is to cater for increasing tourism. Commercial enterprises and user fees have already been discussed in this context.

3.4 Greater Conflict Between Users:

It is almost certain that increasing use without increase in facilities and services will lead to greater conflict between users and between users and the Service. Recognition of the desires and needs of different user-groups during the development of the Regional Strategy means that different types of experiences can be provided on different parts of Service lands. This will tend to separate user-groups and thereby minimise conflict.

3.5 Displacement of Traditional Users:

Increasing visitor densities and/or the provision of new facilities and services are likely to cause traditional users to go elsewhere. This may result in increased impacts on other Service areas or complete loss of these users and whatever support they may have lent the Service. Again the Regional Strategy, which will provide a range of recreational settings, should minimise this type of displacement. However, it must be said that in some cases the loss of traditional users may be an advantage in itself. There are probably current users who have utilised areas before they were incorporated into parks and therefore continue to return to a picnic area or a camping area with little appreciation for the fact that it is now part of a park. They may not be interested in the park or the Service's objectives and, if anything, may feel quite negatively towards the Service because of new controls imposed by transfer of the area to the Service. The displacement of unsympathetic users by sympathetic ones must be considered an advantage.

4. CATERING FOR INCREASING TOURISM

The earlier parts of this Section have argued that visitor numbers are likely to increase rapidly in the Northern Region and that this increase will produce opportunities and impacts. How should the Service react to increasing tourism? There are a number of aspects that will have to be debated.

1. Does the Service wish to attract new types of users?
2. What are the appropriate uses for Service lands?

3. What types of facilities and services should be supplied?

4. Where will the Service get the necessary extra resources?

4.1 New Types of User?:

There seems little doubt that the number of visitors to parks will increase, far less certain is the constituency of these extra visitors relative to the community as a whole. It can be argued that, if the Service continues to provide its traditional recreational settings, although numbers will increase the constituency of the visitors will remain fairly static. In other words recreational settings at some locations probably need to be changed if new types of visitors are to be attracted in significant numbers.

There appear to be two main reasons for the Service to attract new types of visitors. First, the Service has a charter under the National Parks and Wildlife Act to provide for public recreation and education - it will fulfil this charter more completely if it reaches a broader range of visitors. Second, it will enlarge the Service's base of community support (a stated objective of its Corporate Strategy) which is important since the existing level and representativeness of community support seem to be incapable of adequately influencing some important political decisions, e.g. closure of 4WD access and creation of new Service areas in the south east forests.

If the Service decides to attract new types of users, community surveys which identify non-user groups and their reasons for not visiting parks should give better understanding of the types of facilities and services needed to attract them. However, there are one or two factors that can be predicted to have an influence even before results of such surveys are known. Type of access can be very influential - for many drivers unsealed roads are an effective barrier to further travel. According to the North Coast Regional Manager of the Tourism Commission, parks are often perceived to be "closed" as far as the travelling public is concerned because the roads are not sealed. Improvement of road surfaces is likely to affect visitor types as well as visitor numbers. Provision of permanent accommodation in some parks is also likely to attract new types of visitors (this is discussed in 4.3.6, below).

The wish to attract new types of visitors must be followed by good marketing. Robertson(1989) has provided an excellent summary of the marketing process and is also very critical of the Service as an inadequate marketer of its lands and services. The New England - Dorrigo tourism study report (Kuring-gai CAE 1988) provides a number of good ideas on marketing which, although addressed directly at rainforests in the area, can easily be adapted to other attractions and

locations.

Pre-visit information is an important component of marketing and is an area where I feel the Service needs to do much better. It is important not to create false expectations, but an attractive regional guide can whet the appetite of potential visitors and inform them of the types of services available to them. (The Northern Region's publication "Signatures" succeeds in the former role but fails in the latter.) The potential visitor can match their desires to the available settings, be appropriately prepared for their visit and, hopefully, maximise their enjoyment. I recommend "Wild Places Quiet Places" (CALM 1988) as an excellent example of an attractive and informative pre-visit booklet. The Service must be prepared to fund production of such booklets if it wishes to reap the benefits of new visitor types. (Incidentally, at \$15 each, CALM seems to have no difficulty selling their booklets and will make a substantial profit.)

Obviously, information and education do not stop at the pre-visit stage. The Service also needs to make much more effort at on-site interpretation. Too often we may be deluded by visitor use data into thinking a park is being well used, when in reality most of the visitors may cling around the periphery, congregate in picnic areas or in visitor centres, or pass through the park to a beach. Visitors must be enticed into the park "proper" so that they can experience it and appreciate what a marvellous resource they have a share in. Provision of interpretive services is discussed further in 4.3.1, below.

4.2 Appropriate Use:

A regional planning perspective is required to place existing and potential opportunities on Service lands in context. This will enable the Service to provide the appropriate range of opportunities. This process has been initiated for the study area and is discussed in Section 4. However, one of the fundamental questions basic to this planning process is deciding what is "appropriate". The Service's Central Region is currently developing a statement on "appropriate use" and only general comments will be made here as background for other sections of this report. Views expressed in various interviews are also given.

Appropriate use cannot be rigidly defined. The Service's Field Management Policies rightly indicate that appropriateness depends on the type of Service area and the recreation opportunities available outside the area. The distance of the park from towns or cities must also be considered and traditional uses may have an influence.

Generally, appropriate use should rely on the natural attributes and attractions of parks. Use should generally involve small groups, be

non-mechanised (apart from access to specific points) and cause impact on the environment and other users that does not exceed predetermined acceptable levels. Acceptable impact should be consistent with management objectives for an area and may vary considerably from site to site or activity to activity.

Appropriate use should often have an informative component which subtly and entertainingly teaches people about natural systems and/or park management philosophy, so that user understanding is fostered and suitable user ethics developed. Appropriate use is thus encouraged by this subtle means of control.

Despite the wide variety of backgrounds of people interviewed for this study, the uses considered appropriate were not greatly different. They fit the general descriptions given above in that they are generally passive in nature and rely on natural attributes. Horse-riding was an activity that produced more divided opinion, although even the advocates said it should be subject to environmental assessment of the proposed area. One person suggested bike-riding. Nobody suggested off-road recreational vehicle use away from established roads and tracks. Generally, environmental groups favour traditional opportunities (and associated facilities and services) whereas other interviewees were more likely to suggest a broadening of the range of opportunities. Again it should be emphasised that differences were not large except with respect to provision of accommodation in parks (this is discussed in 4.3.6. below).

4.3 Facilities and Services:

It has already been argued that the Service needs to provide new types of facilities and services and expand existing ones if it is to broaden the range of visitor types it hopes to attract. Such changes will also improve the experiences of many existing users. However, it should be stressed from the outset that the variety of managerial settings must be maintained consistent with different recreation opportunity categories. All parks or sectors of parks should not be managed in the same way - recreational variety is essential. In some cases expansion of existing services/facilities or provision of new types will not be controversial but in others it will be.

4.3.1 Interpretive services: There will be little argument about the need to make interpretive services more widely available. Interpretive methods of delivery should cover a complete range with preference given to face-to-face delivery through guided walks, evening talks and other staff-led activities. Provided they are well done, staff-led activities have great potential to enhance visitor experience and make them more supportive of the Service. The interpretive methods chosen will, of course, vary depending on visitor numbers, type of visitor, features to

be interpreted, etc. In some cases visitor centres may be appropriate but should never be an end in themselves; one of the important roles of visitor centres is to allay fears* and encourage visitors to experience the park for themselves.

Interpretation can have the advantage of being both informative and furthering management objectives. As visitor numbers increase it becomes more important that a set of visitor ethics becomes well-known and established amongst visitors, in this way they become partially self-regulating and the need for more overt regulation is reduced.

4.3.2 Other services: Other services which might be provided include guided walks, bicycle tours, horse-riding tours, 4WD tours on existing roads, canoeing and rafting. In the study area only the first of these can be provided on Service lands at the moment, but in the Northern Region there may be places where some, or all, others can be supplied on Service lands without user conflict and alteration to recreational opportunity categories. Provision of horseriding and 4WD tours is likely to provoke opposition from some people and will require careful consideration.

4.3.3 Picnic areas: Picnic areas are probably the least controversial type of facility to supply. They have been identified as inadequately supplied in the study area in certain types of settings (see Section 4.3.4) but this may not be true of the whole Northern Region. They need to be provided in a variety of locations and with different types of access. Picnic areas, as with other facilities, should never be ends in themselves; the areas should provide information that encourages visitors to visit the more natural areas of parks.

4.3.4 Campgrounds: There are no campgrounds in natural areas in the study area and, in general, hinterland parks in the Northern Region do not provide these unless they are well away from the coast. On the other hand coastal parks usually have one or more camping areas, however most of these offer only basic facilities, with a low degree of regulation, and relatively similar experiences. The Service is likely to attract a different type of visitor by providing more camping areas and some more sophisticated and regulated areas, e.g. with showers and caravan sites.

*This is particularly important in rainforest parks where some people are scared to go for a walk. Explanations about such things as leaches and stinging plants and what to do about them should be given in visitor centres.

Field Management Policies allow the possibility of more sophisticated camping areas pointing out that such areas will give different recreational opportunities than those available off-park. Some private camping areas do give opportunities to camp in natural areas but are in small minority and many people have to resort to "camping" in highly developed caravan parks. In general the opportunity to camp in natural areas, but with reasonably sophisticated facilities, is only likely to be found on Service lands and State Forests.

4.3.5 Kiosks: The provision of kiosks will be opposed by some groups, but in areas where visitor centres are considered inappropriate, they do provide an outlet for Service publications, promotional items and park information. They should also make the park more of a destination and encourage longer stays by the type of visitor who might otherwise have only had a quick look and then go.

4.3.6 Accommodation: Most controversial will be the provision of permanent accommodation (i.e. fixed structures such as cabins or lodges) In parks, however I believe the Service should give serious consideration to this possibility, especially as the Tourism Commission considers that there is a general demand amongst the travelling public for better accommodation.

There are two main advantages to providing permanent accommodation in parks. The first has already been mentioned, i.e. attraction of a different type of visitor and broadening of community support: the second is the generation of additional revenue for conservation management in parks.

The Service's Field Management Policies do suggest the possibility of permanent accommodation "in areas where a particular recreational opportunity exists which is not available outside Service areas". Opportunities to stay in permanent accommodation in natural areas are extremely limited and it could be argued that the condition quoted above nearly always applies. Opportunities to stay in natural areas are needed especially with the predicted growth in nature-based tourism.

Other government agencies see an urgent need for accommodation in natural areas (see Tourism Commission 1987) and the Department of Planning's Grafton office has established a six-month consultancy to draw-up a regional plan for the provision of tourism facilities adjacent to natural areas. This fits with the Service's existing policy to encourage provision of accommodation outside, but in some cases adjacent to, Service areas. I strongly believe that this policy needs to be reconsidered.

The likely outcome of the Department of Planning's consultancy will be plans to build permanent accommodation adjacent to some Service

lands. Assuming that the adjacent park is a major reason for visiting the area, the Service will gain the advantage of more and different types of visitors with the associated improvement in support. The disadvantages are that the Service will have to rely on procedures under the EPA Act and the developer's goodwill to have influence on the nature of the adjacent development. Also the park will receive increased impact without off-setting resources to alleviate the impact, unless the developer is prepared to supply them as a goodwill gesture. Increased visitation may make it a priority for the Service to supply new facilities and services to enhance visitors' experiences. For example, Kyogle Shire Council has proposed a tourist village adjacent to Border Ranges NP, but an essential component of their proposal is that an associated walking track system be provided in the park.

The alternative is to provide accommodation on Service areas where the Service has complete control over the nature of the development and will receive revenue from the operation that can be used to offset impacts from increased visitation and provide new services for visitors. Many parks have degraded areas where such accommodation could be built and revegetation/rehabilitation could be a condition of the development. Placing accommodation in parks will give a clear signal to potential guests about the type of attraction and associated activities. Accommodation adjacent to parks will not provide such a clear message and may attract guests whose intentions and behaviour are not appropriate for parks.

One of the major disadvantages of having accommodation in parks appears to be potential alienation of some existing supporters of the Service who believe that such facilities are absolutely inappropriate in parks (for example, see Corkill, 1987a). Another disadvantage is associated with the potential involvement of private enterprise. I believe that private enterprise should be involved with the development and running of such facilities (see 4.4, below) but there is a danger that commercial forces will begin to dictate to park management. The way the lease is written will reduce this possibility but the combination of commercial and political pressure affecting management decisions cannot be ruled out. Dawson (1987) from ONPWS and Watson (n.d.) from CALM have both indicated the lessons to be learnt from the concessionaire experience in the USA and have suggested guidelines for the establishment of concessions in Australia. CONCOM (1985) has also published detailed guidelines for concessions in Australia.

If accommodation is to be provided in parks, what style should it be? Those people interviewed who approve of accommodation in parks (this was all except some environmental groups) mainly suggested basic, unsophisticated accommodation, such as self-contained cabins or cabins associated with a lodge where people could eat, socialise, etc. Even on-site tents with en suites (in use in Carnarvon NP and other areas in

Queensland) may suffice. The general impression is that many people do not want the inconvenience of carrying and erecting tents or towing caravans nor do they want to share bathroom facilities. On the other hand they do not want elaborate accommodation - cabins with showers and toilets will be perfectly acceptable.

4.4 Extra Resources:

The Service must have extra resources to manage the predicted growth in tourism. Assuming this will not come in the form of increased budget allocation, revenue must be generated from activities on Service lands in the form of entry fees, sale of promotional materials, charges for services and/or facilities. This can be done by the Service itself or leased to commercial operators. Either way it should be obvious that the operation must be commercially viable. For example, there is no point in the Service collecting fees if the costs of collection and processing exceed the total fees collected. Similarly, there is no point in the Service providing a few* cabins in a particular area, because the associated costs of maintenance will almost certainly exceed the fees collected.

The operation must be of a scale* that will be self-supporting and the Service must have full cost recovery or, preferably, receive a profit that can be used for other types of management, e.g. conservation. A clearly identified goal of any commercial operation should be resource protection so that attractions are not degraded and the operation will be self-sustaining. Effective management and marketing will be essential. Considering these requirements it may well be best for the Service to lease a variety of operations to private enterprise, e.g. tours**, campgrounds and other accommodation. If lack

*The Tourism Commission has suggested that 30-40 units may be needed to create an economically viable operation.

**Some commercial tour operators are already using Service lands in the study area and presumably this is occurring elsewhere. At the moment this use is not formalised and there must be concern about the impression that tour users receive when in parks. One tour operator interviewed expressed a desire for training about natural systems and park management philosophy and obviously feels inadequate in these areas. Macartney-Snape (1989), who is a successful tour operator, has expressed concern about operators not operating at least to minimum acceptable standards. If such commercial operations are to expand in number and scope, training and licensing of operators is essential, otherwise tour users may not receive appropriate experiences. The Tourism Commission may be able to assist the Service with training (see Section 3,3).

of resources dictate, it may even be necessary to lease interpretive services to private enterprise. Although I consider this undesirable (a better alternative would be for the Service to supply interpretive services and charge visitors for them), and others will consider any involvement of private enterprise to be undesirable, the advantages of enhanced visitor experience and/or attraction of new types of visitors must be weighed against the disadvantages. The Service must decide if it has the expertise to run commercial operations and, if not, whether it will do without certain types of services and facilities or allow private enterprise to provide them.

Another way for the Service to gain extra resources is through commercial sponsorship. Interpretive signs could carry company logos, or a self-guided walk a sign acknowledging sponsorship. A call to one advertising agency revealed that, the possibility of such subtle advertising in locations where normal advertising signs are not allowed or tolerated, would be very attractive. In addition, it should not be objectionable to most park users.

5. CONCLUSIONS

1. Tourism and in particular nature-based tourism are growing rapidly. Parks are an obvious focus for many of these visitors and the Service may experience a doubling of visitor numbers in the Northern Region in as little as 5-6 years.

2. By using a combination of good marketing and improved facilities and services (particularly information/interpretive services), the Service should be able to gain greater support and revenue from increasing tourism.

3. Impacts associated with increasing use of parks should largely be avoided by the development of a comprehensive recreation management strategy.

4. The Service should give serious consideration to siting accommodation in some parks and to allowing commercial operators to provide some facilities and services.

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APPENDIX 1

List of People Interviewed

Paul Bennie	Town Planner, Coffs Harbour
Craig Bowen	Managing Director, Nautilus-on-the-Beach. Coffs Harbour
John Bruce	Regional Forester, Coffs Harbour, Forestry Commission of NSW
*Judith Cahill	Dept. of State Development
Jenny Calkin	Director, Planning and Development, Tourism Commission of NSW
Peter Doyle	Shire Clerk, Bellingen Shire
Peter Giller	President Ulitarra Association, Coffs Harbour
*Marianne Grinter	Member Conservation and Development Liaison Group of North Coast.
Phillip Harvey	Town Clerk, Coffs Harbour
Charles Hill	Acting Head, Heritage, Assessments and Resources Division, Dept. of Planning
David Hume	Manager Grafton Regional Office, Dept. of Planning
Bob Johnson	Bonville Beach Hardwoods Pty Ltd and Horticultural World Ltd.
Ivan Johnson	Grafton Regional Office, Dept. of Lands
Bruce Korn	North Coast Regional Manager, NSW Tourism Commission
Graham Lockett and Jack Palmer	Lockett and Montgomerie. Consulting Surveyors and Planners, Coffs Harbour.
**Terry Parkhouse and John Corkill	President and Vice-President, North Coast Environment Council
Trevor Pike	Hon. Secretary, Three Valleys National Parks Association

John Shaw
and Jan Yardy

Parks and Recreation Dept., Coffs Harbour

Derek Sinclair

Assistant Director, Land Management Division Dept.
of Lands

Geoff Sinnett

4WD Adventure Safaris, Coffs Harbour

Paul Sullivan

Tourism Manager, Coffs Harbour

* Telephone interview

** Written response to questions

APPENDIX 2

Resident Population Data: (From: North Coast Population and Development Monitor No.8 July 1988, Dept. of Planning.)

Coffs Harbour

Estimated No. 1986 Census	42,200
Estimated No. 1988	43,390
Average Annual Growth Rate 1981-1986	4.4%
Estimated Annual Growth Rate 1986-1988	1.4%

Bellingen

Estimated No. 1986 Census	10,250
Estimated No. 1988	10,500
Average Annual Growth Rate 1981-1986	2.5%
Estimated Annual Growth Rate 1986-1988	1.2%

Tourist Data*: (Unless otherwise indicated from: North Coast Region Tourism Development Strategy, Tourism Commission NSW 1987)

Coffs Harbour Destination Area 1985/86 Estimated Numbers

Visits	541,200
Visitor Nights	2,605,336

Mid-North Coast 1985/86 Estimated Numbers (From: Tourism Trends in NSW 1987)

Visits	823,000
Visitor Nights	3,962,000

1984/85 to 1986/87 Growth Rate

Visits	-3.0%
Visitor Nights	-4.9%

1986/87 Origin of Visitors(%)

Sydney	29
NSW Country	45
Queensland	17
Other Interstate	9

1986/87 Main Purpose of Visit(%)

Pleasure/Holiday	58
Visiting Friends/Relatives	17
Business	12
Other	11

*Data about visitors to National Parks is available from: New England-Dorrigo Tourism Study, Kuring-gai CAE 1988.

Mid-North Coast(cont.)

1986/87 Accommodation(%)	
Friends/Relatives	30
Caravan Park/Campground	30
Hotel/Motel	19
Rented House/Flat	11
Other	9

1986/87 Mode of Transport(%)*	
Private Motor Vehicle	84
Bus	8
Rail	11
Air	5
Other	8

*This data is obviously incorrect as published
since it adds to >110%.

Accommodation:(From:North Coast Population and Development Monitor No.8
July 1988, Dept. of Planning.)

Coffs Harbour

Hotels/Motels 31/12/87	
Number of Establishments	49
Number of Rooms	1158
Number of Beds	3516
Number of Guest Arrivals	486,550

Caravan Parks 31/12/87	
Number of Establishments	12
Number of Sites,Cabins,etc.	2,653
Average Occupancy Rate	33%
Peak Month(Jan.) Occupancy Rate	54%

Holiday Flats/Units(NRMA Guide 1988/89)	
Number	403
Estimated Maximum Capacity	2,460.

Bellingen

Caravan Parks 31/12/87	
Number of Establishments	5
Number of Sites,Cabins,etc.	687
Peak Month(Jan.) Occupancy Rate	52%

Holiday Flats/Units(NRMA Guide 1988/89)	
Number	55
Estimated Maximum Capacity	310