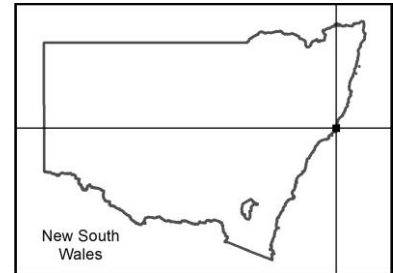




Statement of Management Intent



Bull Island Nature Reserve and Smiths Lake Nature Reserve

1. Introduction

This statement outlines the main values, issues, management directions and priorities of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) for managing Bull Island Nature Reserve and Smiths Lake Nature Reserve. This statement, together with relevant NPWS policies, will guide the management of the reserves until a plan of management has been prepared in accordance with the [National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 \(NPW Act\)](#). The NPWS [Managing Parks Prior to Plan of Management Policy](#) states that parks and reserves without a plan of management are to be managed in a manner consistent with the intent of the NPW Act and the [‘precautionary principle’](#) (see Principle 15).

2. Management principles

Nature reserves are reserved under the NPW Act to protect and conserve areas containing outstanding, unique or representative ecosystems, species, communities or natural phenomena. Under the NPW Act ([section 30J](#)), nature reserves are managed to:

- conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem functions, and protect geological and geomorphological features and natural phenomena
- conserve places, objects, features and landscapes of cultural value
- promote public appreciation, enjoyment and understanding of the reserve’s natural and cultural values
- provide for appropriate research and monitoring.

The primary purpose of nature reserves is to conserve nature. Nature reserves differ from national parks in that they do not have the provision of visitor use as a management purpose or principle.

3. Context

Reservation details: Bull Island Nature Reserve and Smiths Lake Nature Reserve were both reserved on 23 December 2005.

Size: Bull Island Nature Reserve is 1 hectare. Smiths Lake Nature Reserve is 24 hectares.

Bull Island Nature Reserve and Smiths Lake Nature Reserve (also known locally as Big Island) are situated within Smiths Lake, an intermittently closed saline lagoon separated from the ocean by a large sandbar. The reserves are located approximately 23 kilometres south of Forster on the lower north coast of New South Wales. They fall within the NSW North Coast Bioregion and within the

administrative areas of Forster Local Aboriginal Land Council, Hunter Local Land Services and Great Lakes Council.



The area surrounding Smiths Lake comprises semi-rural properties and coastal village communities. These island reserves protect valuable habitat for threatened birds and provide places of refuge for native animals.

4. Values

- The islands provide habitat for the endangered pied oystercatcher (*Haematopus longirostris*) and the vulnerable eastern osprey (*Pandion cristatus*).
- The reserves protect valuable habitat for native fauna, including mangrove stands, intertidal areas (when the lake is open to the ocean) and remnant coastal forest vegetation assemblages with *Themeda triandra* understorey.
- A cultural heritage survey was undertaken but no formal sites were recorded. However, Smiths Lake Nature Reserve does have cultural landscape value for the local Aboriginal people.
- Smiths Lake Nature Reserve was previously used as a teaching and research site by the University of New South Wales for the study of island plants and animals.

5. Issues

- Weed establishment and spread is an ongoing issue for Bull Island and Smiths Lake nature reserves. The major weeds of concern are bitou bush (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera* ssp. *rotundata*), lantana (*Lantana camara*), coastal morning glory (*Ipomoea cairica*), and crofton weed (*Ageratina adenophora*).
- Although the reserves are accessible by boat there is limited evidence of visitor use.
- Both reserves are at risk of being impacted from rising sea levels associated with climate change.

6. Key management directions

- Fire is managed in accordance with the Smiths Lake and Bull Island Nature Reserves [Fire Management Strategy](#).
- Pest management programs will be implemented in accordance with the NPWS [Regional Pest Management Strategy](#): Lower North Coast Region. Priority weeds for control will include bitou bush, lantana and crofton weed.
- Visitor use of the reserves will continue to be monitored to ensure low-key sustainable use.
- All management activities will be preceded by the preparation of an environmental assessment or heritage assessment where this is a requirement of NPWS policy or legislation.
- Environmental repair and threat management programs, such as erosion mitigation measures, pest management, and activities arising from threatened species requirements may be implemented in accordance with NPWS policies and procedures.
- Non-intrusive works may be undertaken where necessary to protect cultural heritage items from further deterioration, to ensure the safety of visitors and wildlife or to prevent damage to park assets.
- A plan of management will be prepared to set out the ongoing management objectives for the reserves. The plan of management is a statutory document under the NPW Act which will be available for public comment. NPWS will also encourage the community to contribute to the ongoing conservation of the reserves by promoting and raising public awareness of their special values.

For additional information or enquiries about any aspect of these reserves or this statement, contact the NPWS Great Lakes (Pacific Palms) Office on (02) 6591 0300 or 'The Ruins' Camping Ground, Booti Booti National Park, The Lakes Way, Pacific Palms NSW 2428.

Disclaimer: This is a statement of intent to guide the management of the reserves prior to the development of a plan of management. Any statements made in this publication are made in good faith and do not render the Office of Environment and Heritage liable for any loss or damage. Provisions in the final plan of management may vary from those identified in this document as a result of new information and community consultation. The maps in this statement are intended to show the reserves' location and basic features only, and are not suitable for use when navigating to or exploring within parks.

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