

BEACHPORT CONSERVATION PARK

South East

SOUTH AUSTRALIA



MANAGEMENT PLAN



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**This plan of management has been prepared and
adopted in pursuance of Section 38 of the
*National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972.***

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Cover Photographs
Top: Five Mile Drift
Bottom: Rocky headland

FOREWORD

This document has been prepared under the provisions of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972*. It relates to Beachport Conservation Park, proclaimed in 1968, encompassing 710 ha of sand dunes and coastal vegetation between Lake George and the Southern Ocean, north of the town of Beachport in the lower South East of South Australia.

The Park fulfils two sometimes conflicting functions; providing for public recreation in an outdoor setting, and conservation of natural habitat. This Management Plan attempts to cater for established, legitimate patterns of use compatible with the long term conservation function of the Park.

The draft Management Plan was placed on public exhibition in February 1985. Thirty two public submissions were received and have been considered in the preparation of this Management Plan. Advice has been received from the Reserves Advisory Committee and some changes to the draft have been made.

The draft Management Plan contained a comprehensive description of the history, natural resources, and visitor use of the Park. This information will be updated and published separately as a handbook which will be a valuable reference for teachers, students and interested visitors.

This Management Plan has been adopted under the provisions of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972*.

Susan M. Lenehan
MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING



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1 INTRODUCTION

Beachport Conservation Park is one of many coastal parks in the south east of South Australia. These parks are separated from each other by grazing land, undeveloped coastal scrub, and dunefields. Beachport Conservation Park forms an important link to facilitate movement of coastal migratory birds such as the orange-bellied parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*) and sharp tailed sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*). Conservation of cultural sites is also important in this Park. The Park receives moderate levels of visitation, mainly for recreation and education purposes.

Proclamation of Beachport National Park took place in 1968. With the passage of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972*, the reserve was rescheduled as Beachport Conservation Park.

2 PARK DESCRIPTION

Beachport Conservation Park encompasses 711 ha of sand dunes and coastal vegetation between Lake George and the Southern Ocean, north of Beachport, in the lower south east of South Australia (Figure 1).

Laut et al. (1977) have classified the bulk of the Park as being in the Beachport Environmental Association, in the South Coast Environmental Region. This Region is described as "coastal dune system with an active foredune and occasional blowouts. Intermittent swales separate the main foredune. Coastal heath with rushes in swales" (Laut et al. 1977). The remainder of the Park is in the Lake George Environmental Association in the same Region. This latter Association comprises coastal plains with lagoons, small areas of calcarenite dunes, and most natural vegetation replaced by pastures.

The vegetation communities found in Beachport Conservation Park are typical of those along the south east coast.

The changes to the landscape that resulted from European settlement have meant that much of this coastal environment has been significantly disturbed. Consequently the Park is of considerable conservation value as it contains representative samples of regional plant associations.

3 MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

3.1 Planning Process

Section 38 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972* states that plans of management are required for all reserves. Plans "set forth proposals" in relation to the management and improvement of reserves and the means by which it is proposed to accomplish the objectives of the Act in relation to reserves.

When a plan has been prepared, it is announced in the *Government Gazette* and placed on public exhibition for at least two months. Any person may make submissions, which are referred to the Reserves Advisory Committee who may make further comments or suggestions. The Minister, after considering all representations, may then adopt the plan of management, with or without alterations. Notice of adoption is published in the *Government Gazette*, and copies of the plan are made available to the public.

A similar process applies for any amendment proposed to a plan of management. Once a plan of management is adopted, its provisions must be carried out in relation to the reserve in question, and no operations undertaken unless they are in accordance with the plan.

Conservation parks are lands that should be protected or preserved to conserve wildlife or natural or historic features. Most conservation parks tend to be subject to lesser visitation than national parks or recreation parks, and consequently have a lower level of development. The *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972*, Section 37, lists nine objectives to be considered in managing conservation parks as:

- . preserving and managing wildlife;
- . preserving historic sites, objects and structures of historic or scientific interest within reserves;
- . preserving features of geographical, natural or scenic interest;
- . destroying dangerous weeds and eradicating or controlling noxious weeds and exotic plants;
- . controlling vermin and exotic animals;
- . controlling and eradicating disease of animals and vegetation;
- . preventing and suppressing bush fires and other hazards;
- . encouraging public use and enjoyment of reserves and education in, and a proper understanding and recognition of, their purpose and significance; and
- . generally promoting the public interest.

These points have been considered in preparing this Management Plan. The Plan outlines proposals to cater for recreational activities as well as providing the protection warranted for a reserve in the south east of the State where natural habitat is particularly scarce.

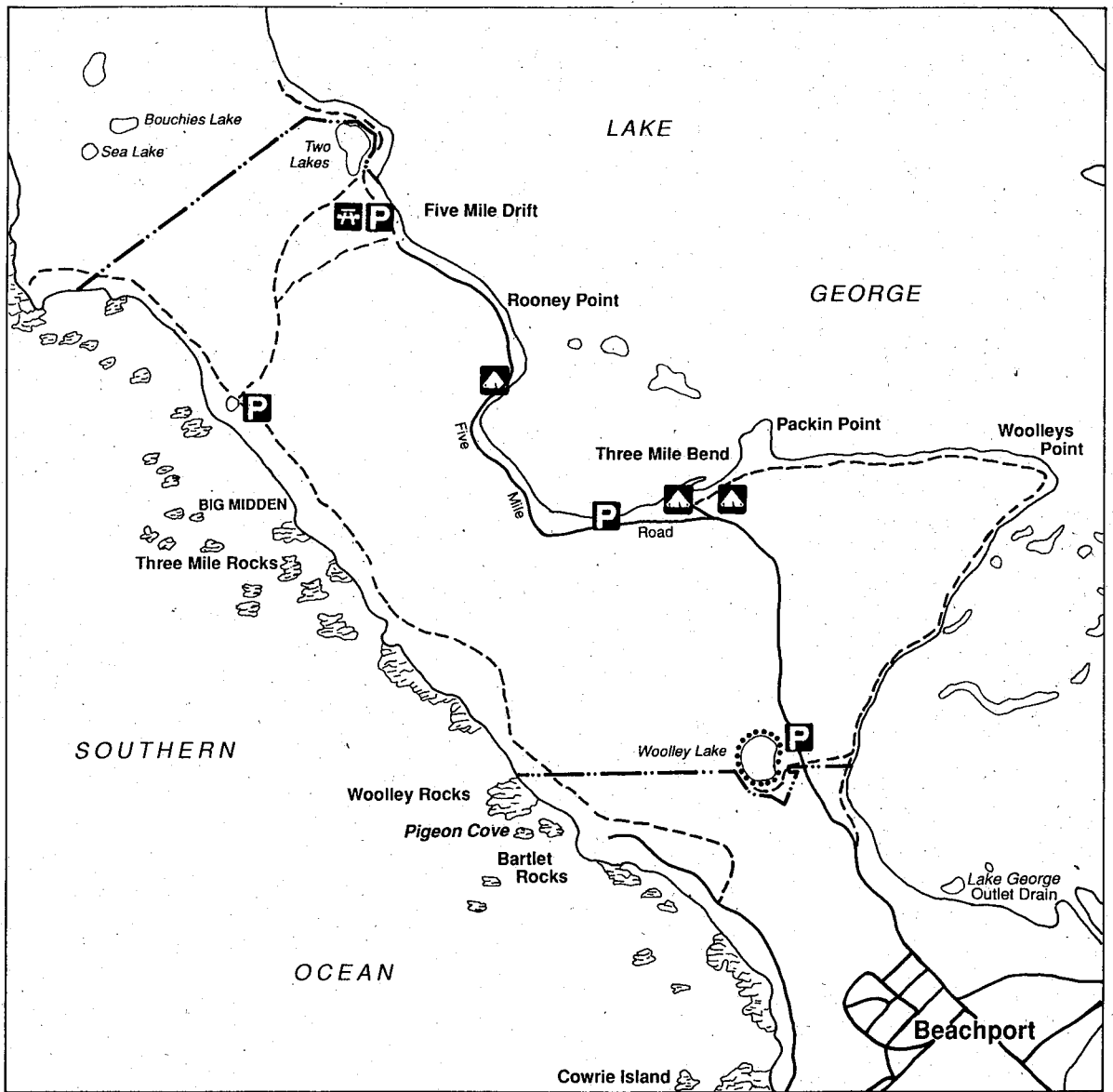
3.2 Philosophy

Beachport Conservation Park has been set aside to preserve and protect a representative sample of the coastal environment of south east South Australia. Management will cater for recreational use, provided it does not conflict with the primary role of conserving the Park's natural and cultural heritage.

3.3 Management Context

Park management operations are derived from objectives developed within the context of:

- . conservation of natural habitat;
- . management of native flora and fauna;
- . control of sand drift;
- . control of weeds and vermin;
- . fire control;
- . cultural values;
- . visitor and management access;
- . provision of facilities for visitors;
- . interpretation;
- . alien tenures;
- . additional land;
- . Park classification; and
- . staffing.



- Camping area
- Parking
- Picnic area
- Walking trail

- Park boundary
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Track
- Rocks

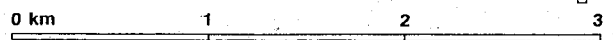
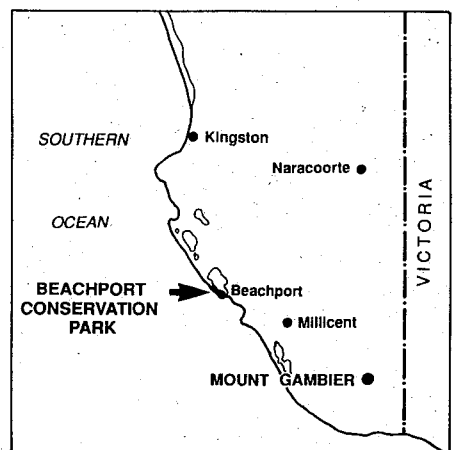


Figure 1

**BEACHPORT CONSERVATION PARK
Access and Park Features**



4 MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTION

4.1 Conservation of Natural Habitat

To take appropriate management steps to ensure the conservation of the natural environment and associated landscape qualities of the Park

Beachport Conservation Park contains a relatively small area of natural habitat. Consequently, steps should be taken in managing the Park to ensure that this is protected, and that the visual amenity of the Park is maintained.

Although technically outside the Park, the future of Lake George is also critical to Park management. In this regard, the South Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service (SANPWS) should liaise with the South East Drainage Board and the District Council of Beachport over the proposed regulation of the Lake George water-level at the outlet.

It is considered especially important that no further landscape degradation takes place along the margins of Lake George and that the off-road impact of vehicles there and in the dunes, be reduced.

To effectively manage the Park, fencing to demarcate boundaries and to regulate the movement of people and vehicles is required. The pine-rail fencing of the Big Midden, undertaken some years ago, has been effective in protecting this archaeological site from vehicular damage; other sensitive areas may need similar treatment. Suitable fencing will be erected along the scrub-line of Section 40 on the landward side of the main access track around the shore of Lake George. This barrier will deter vehicles from entering the paperbark tea-tree vegetation in this locality, thereby ensuring habitat degradation along the Lake margin is kept to a minimum, but will not constrain vehicular access to the shore of the Lake. Freshwater soaks in Sections 62 and 64 will be protected by similar fences.

Car parks and walking tracks will be provided in suitable locations.

Packin Point will be encircled by a suitable fence to eliminate further vegetation damage by vehicles. Explanatory signs will indicate the reasons for this fencing program.

4.2 Native Flora and Fauna

To manage the natural areas of the Park to maintain habitat value, and where necessary, re-establish endemic flora and fauna

The Park is a link in a chain of reserves that conserve representative examples of the natural flora and fauna of the South East coast. As such, management will be directed towards maintaining representative plant and animal communities in keeping with the range of natural habitats that originally occurred in this area.

The Park contains mobile dunes. Marram grass is being sown to stabilise these dunes. However, natural secondary colonisation is slow. It may be desirable to establish secondary colonisers in some areas. One of the natural secondary colonisers of marram grass areas is two-horned sea rocket (*Cakile maritima*) the preferred food of the orange-bellied parrot. The areas planted with marram grass should be monitored to determine the extent to which they are extending

available feeding sites for the species. Beach users will be made aware of the impact of their activities on beach nesting birds, particularly during the months of August to January.

The paperbark tea-tree (*Melaleuca halmaturorum*) around the margins of Lake George will be protected from vehicles and the expansion of camp sites.

The habitat of the olive whistler (*Pachycephala olivacea*), paperbark tea-tree and coastal tea-tree (*Leptospermum lanigerum*) stands, require careful management. Impacts on these habitat types will be kept to a minimum.

The two islands associated with the Park (Cowrie Island and the unnamed island near Pigeon Cove) will be subject to a biological survey. Increasing visitation will require more active management of these islands.

4.3 Sand Drift

To continue the program of stabilising critical areas of mobile sand dunes within the Park by planting suitable species of vegetation

Establishing marram grass has proved to be the most effective means of controlling sand drift in the Park. The program of sand dune stabilisation will continue in areas where significant conservation values are threatened. Once dunes are secured by marram grass, secondary colonisation by native vegetation will be enhanced by seeding or planting programs using material gathered or propagated from local species.

4.4 Pest Plants and Animals

To prepare and implement a pest plant control program for the Park
To prepare and implement a vertebrate pest control program for the Park

A pest plant control plan will be prepared for the Park and will consider:

- the distribution of any problem pest plants in the Park;
- the legal status of pest plant species;
- the vigour of pest plant species and their likelihood of expanding into areas of high conservation value;
- the availability of funds and staffing;
- the effects of pest plant species on adjoining land;
- the effectiveness of known control methods and other relevant factors, such as the feasibility of eradicating some pest plant species; and
- the benefits of co-ordinating with any pest plant control programs being undertaken on adjoining land by the District Council of Beachport.

A vertebrate pest control program will be prepared for the Park.

4.5 Fire

To ensure reasonable measures compatible with the role of the Park are taken to prevent the outbreak and spread of wildfire in the Park
To ensure that wildfire is suppressed as soon as practicable

Fire management in SANPWS reserves is based on guidelines and objectives contained in two documents. The Fire Management and Protection Manual (1989) sets out objectives of fire management and the Service's fire policy and guidelines. The objectives of fire management as stated in the Manual are:

- . to protect human life and the assets of properties adjacent to parks;
- . to foster sound land use planning in relation to fire hazard;
- . to maintain diversity of native plant and animal communities;
- . to protect special features of the reserve including cultural sites and park facilities; and
- . to manage fire, thus protecting the land from degradation by erosion and subsequent invasion by weeds.

The Manual is not the final statement on fire management. Fundamental alterations may be made as research provides more information. The question of acceptable fire regimes and the ecological effects of hazard or fuel reduction burning are areas of particular concern which need more management-directed research to establish sound policies.

In addition to the Manual, fire protection plans are prepared for individual parks in the State. A fire protection plan provides an account of existing and proposed fire protection strategies for the park; it identifies risks both within and outside the park, determines hazard mitigation and fire suppression methods, details access and emergency procedures. Beachport Conservation Park is not particularly fire-prone, and fires occur relatively infrequently. However, the SANPWS has a responsibility to protect neighbouring properties from fire damage. Accordingly, all reasonable measures to prevent the outbreak and spread of wildfires will be taken to minimise the risk of the whole Park being burnt out, and of loss of lives or property.

4.6 Cultural Values

To ensure the preservation of archaeological and historic sites of scientific or cultural value

Beachport Conservation Park contains rich and structurally diverse archaeological deposits which form an invaluable cultural resource. Despite disturbance incurred by natural erosion and artefact collectors, the Aboriginal sites in the Park represent a resource with considerable research potential, and appropriate measures should be taken for site conservation. A number of sites are threatened by natural erosion or recreational use of the area. Appropriate measures, such as additional archaeological investigations, site monitoring, and if necessary, restriction of access, will be undertaken. The report of Rhoads (1982) will be used to guide this work.

Before developments involving earthworks or further marram grass plantings are undertaken, appropriate archaeological investigations will be conducted to identify and describe those sites. Descendants of the Aboriginals inhabiting the Park region at the time of first European contact no longer reside in the area. Therefore, information concerning localities in the Park of importance to these people is not yet known. As it is now evident that sites of traditional significance are not necessarily identifiable by archaeological deposits at specific sites, more inquiries will be made in this matter. Further research into the prehistory and history of the Park will be encouraged, and relevant Aboriginal people will be consulted about the significance of sites in the Park and any requirements they may have for their management.

Sites or material associated with the early European history of the Park area will be protected.

The archaeological and historical record of the Park will be interpreted to Park visitors.

4.7 Access

**To rationalise the system of roads and tracks within the Park
To institute a program of regular maintenance to ensure that all roads and tracks are of adequate standard**

The system of roads and tracks in the Park will be rationalised. Rocky headland terra rossa soils and any associated vegetation and archaeological deposits, as well as frontal dune areas, need to be protected. Access to the coast will be limited to lateral access at discrete points to protect the frontal dune, sand beaches and headlands from vehicle pressure. Tracks that are to be retained for public use are depicted on Figure 1. All non-designated tracks not required for Park management purposes will be closed and rehabilitated. It is important that the use of off-road vehicles in the dunes remains restricted.

The road reserve to Five Mile Drift should be adjusted to conform with the road alignment.

Tracks designated for public vehicle use are depicted in Figure 1. Deviating from designated tracks causes unacceptable impacts and is not permitted. Access tracks to the shoreline of Lake George will be rationalised. The Park track network is used extensively by amateur and commercial fishers to access adjacent beaches and Lake George to launch boats and to fish. Provided that impacts on the natural environment remain within acceptable limits, this use will be permitted to continue.

4.8 Visitor Facilities

To provide appropriate facilities for visitor use and enjoyment of the Park

The Park is a popular venue for a range of recreational activities. The Park will be managed to minimise the impact of visitors on the natural and cultural environment, and to minimise conflict between various recreational uses.

The forms of outdoor recreation that take place in the Park include:

- . picnics;
- . sightseeing;
- . nature study;
- . bushwalking; and
- . camping.

Suitable picnic facilities will be provided at Five Mile Drift (Figure 1). Installation of toilet facilities at this site will be investigated and implemented if feasible, having regard to potential contamination of nearby freshwater soaks.

Nature study activities within the Park will be encouraged. An interpretation plan will assist in making visitors more aware of the natural values of the Park.

The whole of the Park is available for bushwalking, although the more dense stands of coastal vegetation do not lend themselves to this activity. A walking track and small bird observation hide were constructed in 1988 in the Woolleys Lake area to encourage visitors to leave their cars and see the Park on foot.

Camping in the Park will be permitted at designated sites on the Lake margins in Section 40. Appropriate facilities will be provided at these sites.

One of the problems in the past has been the cutting of paperbark tea-trees for firewood and to expand camp sites. Every effort will be made to prevent this practice continuing. Wood fires are banned during the total fire ban period (currently 1 November - 30 April). Visitors will be encouraged to use gas barbecues at all times, and to supply their own wood in non fire ban times. If unacceptable damage continues, wood fires will be banned.

4.9 Interpretation

To interpret the natural and cultural features of Beachport Conservation Park through a well-designed and co-ordinated interpretation program

Beachport is a popular Park in close proximity to several rural population centres, providing an excellent opportunity to present a positive conservation message to the public. In addition, there is a demonstrated need to provide visitors with basic information about the Park.

An interpretive plan for the Park will be prepared, and will have regard to:

- . information on roads and tracks;
- . recreation opportunities;
- . appropriate behaviour;
- . seasonal ranger guided activities;
- . flora and fauna identification brochures; and
- . educational resource kits.

4.10 Alien Tenures

To ensure all alien tenures in the Park are operated in accordance with the management aims of the Park

To ensure no new tenures for additional facilities are permitted except under exceptional circumstances, and only after detailed examination of the impact of such proposals on the Park environment

The major alien tenure in the Park is the road reserve (Figure 2). Road reserves in parks present a variety of barriers to consistent management. The District Council of Beachport will be asked to consider closing the road reserve on condition that public access to the Five Mile Drift is maintained.

Petroleum Exploration Licence 40 includes the Park. Seismic survey work will be restricted to designated tracks.

4.11 Additional Land

To investigate land adjoining the Park for possible addition to the Park
To ensure that all decisions on land acquisition for addition to the Park take into consideration the conservation potential of each area and/or its location with regard to existing and potential problems of access and boundary definition

Several parcels of land adjoining Beachport Conservation Park warrant further consideration of the merit of adding them to the Park (Figure 2). The addition of all or some of these areas of land will enhance the conservation function of the reserve and help develop more manageable boundaries.

Section 30, Hd Lake George is leased to the District Council of Beachport. The future of this land has been debated since the Park was first proposed for proclamation in 1964. Liaison on the management of this land will be maintained with the Department of Lands, as it is desirable to add it to the Park on the expiry of the lease in 1992. The adjoining portions of Coast Reserve, Part Section 75 and part Unnumbered Section (adjacent Lake George, 12 ha) will also be investigated for inclusion in the Park.

Addition of the foreshore (between high and low water marks) adjoining Sections 61, 63 and 75, Hd Lake George (20 ha) to the Park would give SANPWS responsibility to low water mark, enabling regulation of traffic on beaches for the protection of beach breeding birds during breeding seasons, and for the prevention of vehicle damage to frontal dunes. Portion of the Coast Reserve adjacent to Section 81 should be added to the Park. Negotiations with the Department of Lands and Beachport District Council will be initiated.

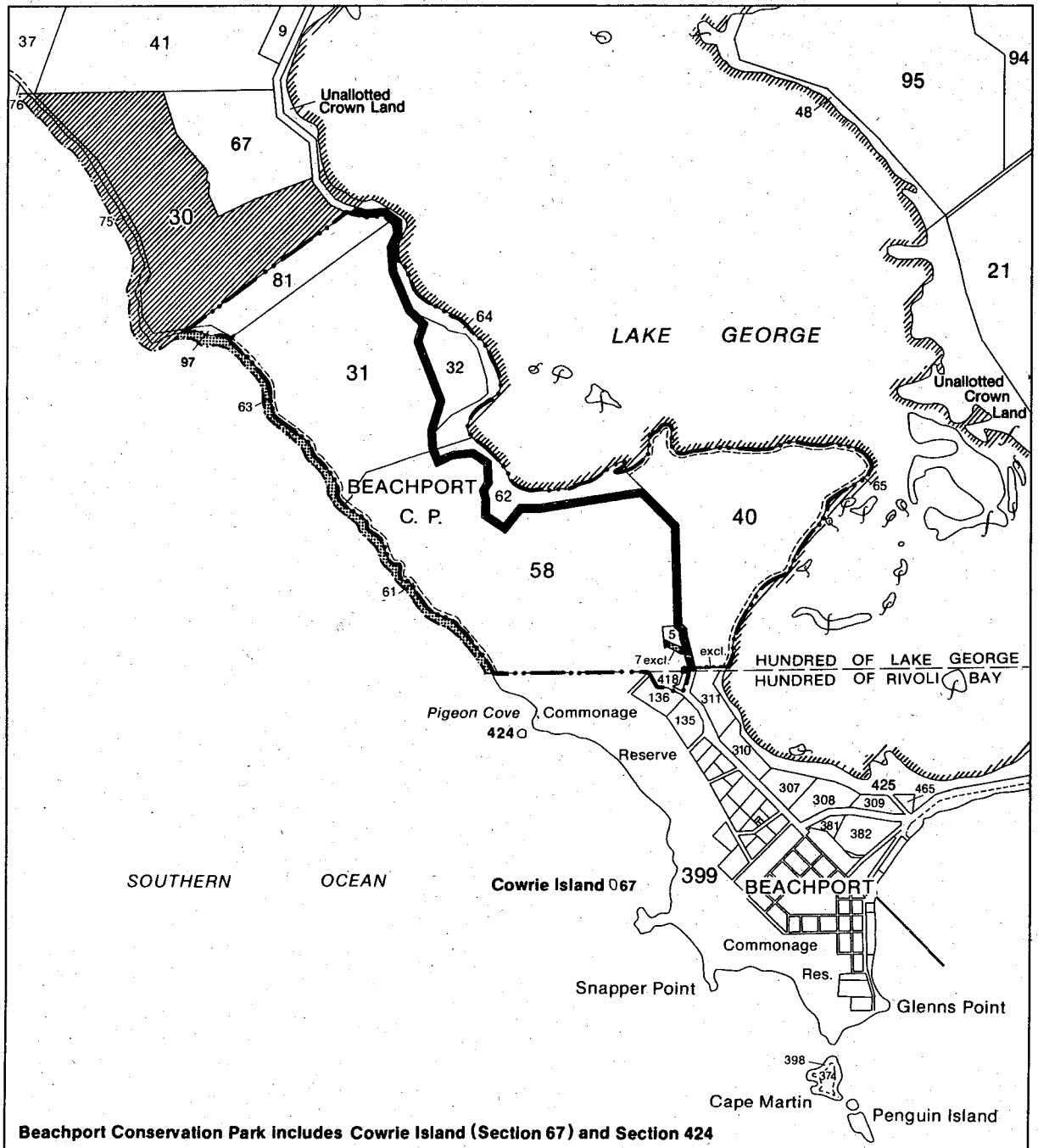
The anomalous boundary situation on the Lake George side of the Park would be resolved by dedicating the whole or part of Lake George as a reserve under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1972*. The Department of Lands is investigating the tenure of the Lake. This will include consideration of the area as a Game Reserve, with a possible non-hunting area at the southern end of the Lake. In the meantime, the Park boundary with Lake George should be properly defined; discussions will be held with the Department of Lands.



Section 7, Hd Lake George (0.2 ha) and an adjacent piece of road (0.1 ha) form an inlier, and hence a logical addition to the Park. Section 7 is scrubland in private ownership and should be investigated for purchase and addition to the Park. The adjoining small area of old road reserve is not used for public access, and should be closed and included in the Park.

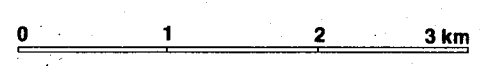
The small (0.2 ha) section of undeveloped road reserve on the southern boundary of the Park between Section 58 Hd Lake George and the Hd Rivoli Bay boundary, west of Five Mile Drift Road, should be closed and added to the Park to rationalise the Park boundary by extending it south to the Hundred line.

4.12 Park Classification

To examine, and change if appropriate, the reserve classification of Beachport Conservation Park



 Acquisition desirable
 Acquisition possible





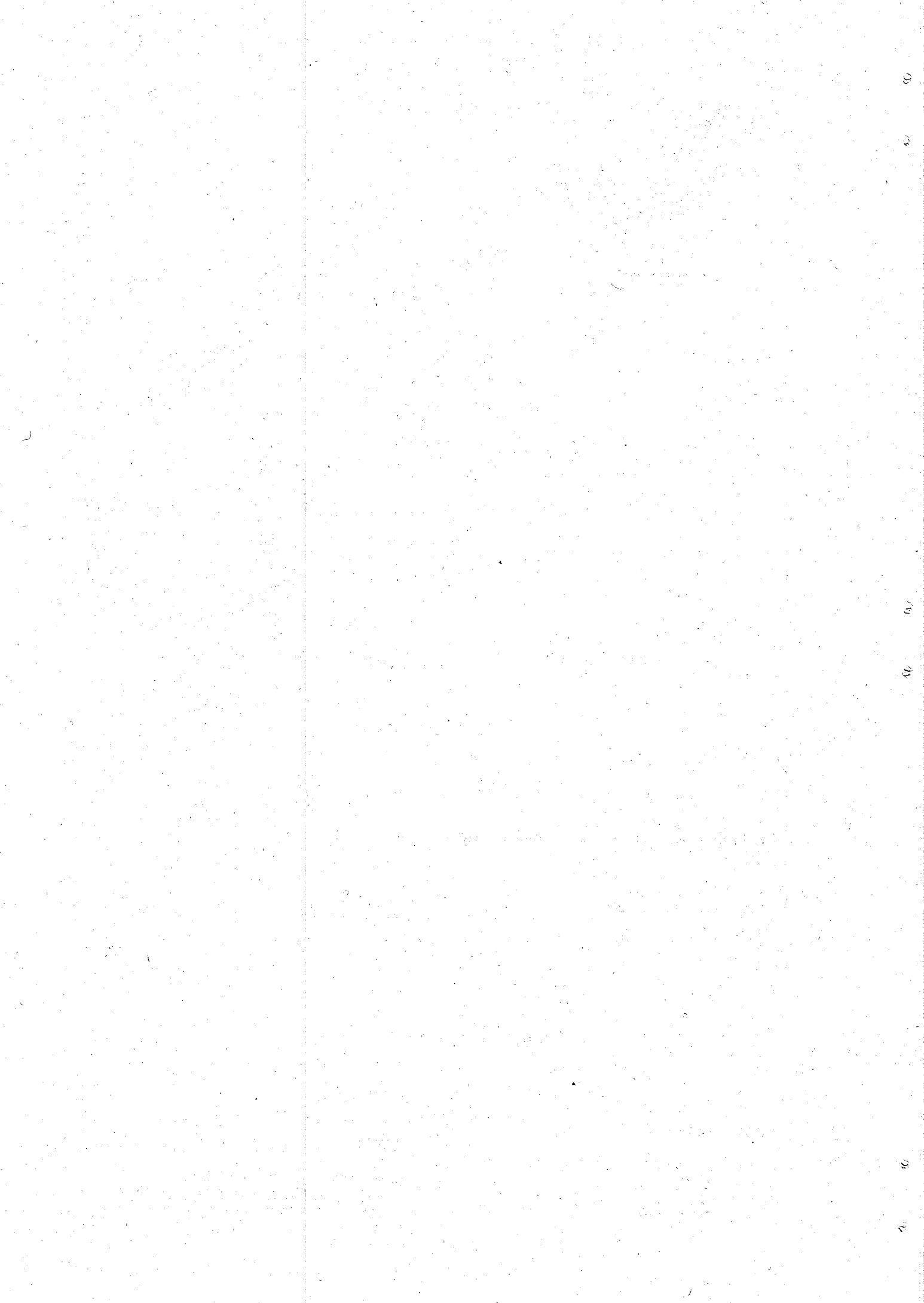
 Road reserve
 Park boundary



Figure 2
BEACHPORT CONSERVATION PARK
Additional Land and Alien Tenures



The present system of nomenclature does not adequately cover those reserves where there is a strong recreation component in addition to a major conservation role; "recreation park" is not an unacceptable term, but "conservation park" reflects only one facet of the Park. If there is any change in the system of reserve nomenclature for South Australia, a rescheduling of the Park will be considered.

4.13 Staffing

To ensure sufficient staff are employed to implement the management prescriptions in this Plan

Beachport Conservation Park is a management unit within the SANPWS South East District. A Ranger, responsible for the management of this and other parks in a defined area, is based at Southend, and is supported by other District management, administrative and works staff. Additional project staff may be employed to supplement staff in the implementation of this Plan.

5 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

As a guide to the orderly application of the provisions of this Plan, the foregoing management proposals are summarised and ranked. This ranking indicates the relative priority of projects and whether they are of a short term, long term or continuing nature.

PROJECT	PRIORITY	DURATION	PAGE
Complete internal fencing	moderate	short	4
Monitor orange-bellied parrot habitat	low	short	4
Provide carparks and walking tracks	high	short	4
Continue marram grass planting program	high	ongoing	5
Prepare and implement pest plant control plan	high	ongoing	5
Investigate secondary colonisation of dunes	high	long	5
Survey offshore islands	low	short	5
Continue archaeological investigation and site monitoring	moderate	ongoing	6
Protect archaeological and historic sites	high	long	6
Prepare and implement vertebrate pest control plan	high	ongoing	6
Prepare and implement fire protection plan	high	short	6
Adjust Five Mile Drift road reserve to align with road	low	short	7
Rehabilitate non-designated tracks	moderate	long	7
Provide visitor facilities at Five Mile Drift	moderate	short	7
Construct campsites in Section 40	moderate	short	8
Regulate campfires and wood collection	high	short	8
Prepare and implement interpretation plan	moderate	short	8
Investigate and negotiate land for addition to Park	moderate	long	9
Review future of road reserve	low	short	9
Investigate Lake George addition to the Park or dedication as a reserve	moderate	short	9
Complete boundary marking	high	short	9
Review Park classification	low	short	11

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