

## **Sand Extraction in the Bangalay Sand Forest**

I am opposed to the proposed sand extraction by Boral. My argument is based on the complexity of multiple NSW listed EEC's forming the Minnamurra River and Estuarine Ecosystem. The connectivity is very good all the way to Killalea State Park, via the river to Minnamurra Spit, or, despite the recent highway bypass, a railway line, and Council Tips, through the northern and western extensions of the forested areas. This includes the section immediately confined to the eastern side of the highway, subject to this sand extraction proposal.

The main impacts will be in the southern patch where the extraction adjoins what is a continuous canopied forest – the Bangalay Sand Forest EEC. Clearing of remnant trees within the extraction area may seem acceptable to some viewpoints, even with the promise of offsets. In my view it is extinction by attrition.

The whole area should be conserved and rehabilitated as a priority in the planning process. This would demonstrate that on our watch, with a global extinction agenda, we will stop the attrition of forest cover that leads to loss of local populations, loss of habitat, fragmentation and irreversible modification.

If you are looking at a Google Earth image, you can see the way Littoral Rainforest and Bangalay Sand Forest meets the Mangroves all the way to Minnamurra Spit. The Golf Course with its sand bunkers, and the houses, have replaced these forests in all but the last fringe adjoining the mangroves. The forest west of the Minnamurra River and between it and the new highway Bypass, includes true Littoral Rainforest on sand, but there are also large Southern Mahogany with a rainforest understorey like Seven Mile Beach. This is the Bangalay Sand Forest EEC. The image also shows natural zonation with Swamp forest and wetland swamps.

This complex of ecological communities spread along the Minnamurra River is a great asset to Kiama and Shellharbour Councils and the residents. Indeed the 2 Councils are stewards of one of the most biologically diverse landscapes in the country. It has to become a priority in the regional planning process to preserve and enhance our ecosystems. This Minnamurra River and Estuary should be viewed as a functional ecosystem, and this sand extraction proposal should be seen as degrading that.

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