For further assistance
This and other EEC guidelines are available on the DECC website: at www.environment.nsw.gov.au

The references listed below also provide further information on EECs.

Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest

Introduction
These guidelines provide background information to assist landholders to identify remnants of Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest. For more detailed information, refer to the NSW Scientific Committee’s Determination Advice at http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/Final+de terminations

What is an Endangered Ecological Community?
An ecological community is a group of trees, shrubs and understorey plants that occur together in a particular area. An Endangered Ecological Community is an ecological community listed under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 as being at risk of extinction unless threats affecting these areas are managed and reduced.

What is Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest?
Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest is a tall forest occurring on coastal floodplains on the north coast of NSW. The most widespread and abundant dominant trees include Forest Red Gum (Eucalyptus tereticornis), Pink Bloodwood (Corindus intermedia) and, north of the Macleay floodplain, Swamp Turpentine (Lophozonum sucrosum). A layer of small trees may be present, including Forest Oak (Allocasuarina torulosa) and a range of rainforest species such as Red Ash (Alphitonia excelsa) and Cheese Tree (Glochidion fernandinii). Scattered shrubs and occasional vines may also be present. The groundcover is composed of abundant herbs, scramblers and grasses.

Where is Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest Found?
Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest occurs north from Port Stephens. It has been recorded from all coastal and near-coastal local government areas.

Why is it important?
Only a small area (less than 30%) of the original distribution of Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest remains, and these areas are often highly fragmented and threatened by clearing for cropping and pasture, timber harvesting, drainage works, pollution from urban runoff and weed invasion.

What is the Coastal Floodplain?
Floodplains are level landform patterns on which there may be active erosion and deposition by flooding where the average interval is 100 years or less. Coastal floodplains include coastal river valleys, alluvial flats and drainage lines below the escarpment of the Great Dividing Range. While most floodplains are below 20m in elevation, some may occur on localised river flats up to 25m elevation. Compared with the surrounding landscape, floodplains are generally quite flat. However, there may be local variation associated with river channels, local depressions, natural levees and river terraces. The latter are areas that rarely flood anymore due to deepening or widening of streams.

Potential Occurrence of Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest

Examples of Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest Endangered Ecological Community at Urunga Lagoon

Disclaimer: The Department of Environment and Climate Change has prepared this document as a guide only. The information provided is not intended to be exhaustive. It does not constitute legal advice. Users of this guide should do so at their own risk and should seek their own legal and other expert advice in identifying endangered ecological communities. The Department of Environment and Climate Change accepts no responsibility for errors or omissions in this guide or for any loss or damage arising from its use.

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Description of the community

The tree layer

The tree layer of Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest varies considerably, however, the most widespread and abundant dominant trees include Forest Red Gum, Grey Ironbark, Pink Bloodwood and, north of the Macleay floodplain, Swamp Turpentine.

Other less common trees may also be present, particularly where soil type is influenced from rocks upslope. These include Grey Box (Eucalyptus moluccana), Grey Gum (E. pogoniphila), Narrow-leaved Red Gum (E. eucalyptoides), Broad-leaved Apple (Anghoninella subvelutina), Swamp Mahogany (E. robusta), Red Mahogany (E. resinifera subsp. huemul), White mahogany (E. acmenioides), Angophora woodiana, A. paludosa and rainforest trees such as Figs (Ficus spp.) and Tuckerox (Cupaniopsis spp.). A number of other Eucalypt species may also occasionally occur.

The shrub layer

A layer of small trees may be present, including Forest Oak, Red Ash, Cheese Tree, Bottlebrushes (Callistemon spp.), Paperbarks (Melaleuca spp.) and Swamp Oak (Casuarina glauca).

Scattered shrubs include Coffee Bush (Bremia

oblongifolia), Currajong (Acacia concurrens), (Commersonia spp.), and Native Hibiscus (Hibiscus spp.). Vines such as Wombat Berry (Eucalyptus lanifolia), Scrambling Lily (Ctenoplecton cymosum) and Common Silkpod (Tetramorium stramineum) may occur occasionally.

The ground layer

The ground layer is made up of herbs, scramblers and grasses. These include Blady Grass (Imperata cylindrica), Kangaroo Grass (Themeda australis), Blue Flax Lily (Dianella caerulea), Whitefoot (Pratia purpureascens), Forest Fern (Cheilanthes sieberi subsp. sieberi), and Kidney Weed (Dichondra repta). The composition and structure of the ground layer is influenced by disturbances such as grazing and fire history, and may have a substantial component of weed species.

Species List

Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest is characterised by the species listed in the table below. The species present at any site will be influenced by the size of the site, recent rainfall or drought conditions and by its disturbance (including fire and logging) history. Note that NOT ALL the species listed need to be present at any one site for it to constitute Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest.

How can I identify an area of Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest?

The following is a list of key characteristics to help identify an area of Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest:

- Is the site north of Port Stephens?
- Is the site on the coastal floodplain (see “What is the Coastal Floodplain?” on previous page)?
- Is the tree layer made up of mixed eucalypts?
- Does the tree layer contain any of the following: Forest Red Gum, Grey Ironbark, Pink Bloodwood or, north of the Macleay floodplain, Swamp Turpentine?
- Are rainforest trees or shrubs scattered throughout?
- Are there relatively low numbers of Casuarina species, Melaleuca species and Swamp Mahogany?

As a listed Endangered Ecological Community under the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995, Sub-tropical Coastal Floodplain Forest has significant conservation value and some activities may require consent or approval. Please contact the Department of Environment and Conservation for further information.