

## **Hawksbury Lagoon update March**

Managing the water level of the Lagoon sounds straightforward, but there is a process that needs to be gone through to ensure the desired effect is achieved. For years Ken Still efficiently managed the culverts for the committee. But after he died in 2014 management of the culverts fell to us. The work on Water Management carried out by Dougal McTavish in 2013 provided useful information for considering how best to achieve effective water management. When the lagoon level is high, usually during a high rainfall event, we must wait until the outlet is open. The outlet can open naturally, as it did last week, or else it is mechanically opened, which can only be done at low tide. Post Office Creek empties rapidly, but at high tide seawater often flows into the channel often past the bridge at the causeway intersection.

Once the Post Office Creek level has dropped below the culvert we can lift the culvert cover, again on an outgoing tide to ensure that water flows out of the main lagoon. If the water level doesn't drop quickly enough because of ongoing high rainfall, then the other culvert (near Inverary Street) is opened as well. The lagoon level can drop quite rapidly, as much as a metre in 48 hours. But high tides can alter the direction of the flow into the lagoon for several hours before the direction changes once more.

In most circumstances the process has the desired result i.e. the lagoon level drops even if it continues to rain. However a complicating factor is if a high rainfall event coincides with king tides (higher than normal tides), because we then have the situation of high volumes of seawater entering the main lagoon and raising the level, as happened in July last year.

It is our intention to consult with DOC and the ORC to discuss the possibility of replacing the Stewart St culvert with a weir. Which will enable management of the water levels with less need for manual intervention, in addition it should allow fish to move more easily between Post Office Creek and the main lagoon. Of course we don't yet know the effect that predicted sea level rise will have in the future on the total wetland environment.

If you are interested to learn more about the Hawksbury Lagoon we invite you to attend our

**AGM on March 27<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm in the St Johns church hall.**

Shirley McKewen  
Chair