

CRC Flora, Fauna & Beachscape Work Group

12.00 – 2.00pm, Friday 3 June

Meeting 1# Minutes

COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE

Attendees: Joanne Tyler (Chair); Sibylle Noras; Yvonne Sheppard; Erin Letovsky, DELWP; Juliet Le Feuvres; Clare Malone, COS

1 Introductions and Terms of Reference

Joanne Tyler welcomed Work Group members and invited them to introduce themselves.

Joanne gave an overview of the Terms of Reference for the Work Group advising that the Groups will report through the Chair to the CRC. Further, that the Group will agree and define priorities consistent with the Resettlement Plan. She also highlighted the importance of the Work Groups representing the views of the whole community.

Joanne also advised that there will potentially be two additional members of the Work Group which need to be ratified the Community Resilience Committee.

2 Approaches to Revegetation following township wide tree removal

The Work Group discussed the community concern around the removal of trees and that land stabilization is an emerging issue. They agreed that it is important to log people's concerns and provide to the relevant agency.

There was discussion in relation to landscaping and what advice is available about new vegetation coming up and what people should plant. Yvonne Sheppard advised that Colac Otway Shire is developing a booklet for residents in coastal communities to help landholders reduce their bushfire risk through appropriate property design, development and maintenance. Both the booklet and a CFA publication include information on what to plant to reduce bushfire risk.

The Work Group discussed the APZ project. Erin Letovsky advised that this will be discussed at the Planning, Building and Fire Work Group noting however, that this group has responsibility for the issue vegetation management. Erin advised that it is a complex technical review as there are two key issues, the BAL regulations and whether the APZ will do anything to manage risk. She advised that it is still underway with no definitive timeframe as it needs to be discussed with the community to get their views on issues, impacts and options. Erin advised that at this point in time she can provide information on the principles.

The Group noted that vegetation will be an important part of the APZ cluster conversations and that relevant DEWLP staff will be involved in these. It was also noted that it is important to include in these discussions people whose homes were not damaged given the compliance issues. The Group noted the complexities of the issues involved with an APZ.

The issue of what replanting is planned for Harrington Park and what funding is available was discussed.

Action/Outcome

Erin Letovsky to liaise with Justin Leonard to ensure vegetation is part of the APZ cluster conversations.

Clare Malone (COS) to find out about funding available for replanting in Harrington Park.

3. What should be our priority activity and how will we evaluate success?

The Work Group discussed priorities but agreed this would require further consideration and discussion. It was noted that some projects will have specific milestones, that there will be new projects and that there are broader more complex issues that are longer term. With regard to consultation, Joanne noted that the Group needs to be mindful of opportunities going forward.

There was discussion around community consultation and engagement and that this should be considered in the context that DEWLP have already undertaken significant consultation with the broader community.

The Work Group agreed that it is important to engage everyone, not just those who lost their properties. Further, that long term campers make an important contribution to the community.

The Group discussed communication and who receives the Community Resilience Newsletter. Clare advised that this is emailed to people who have registered with the COS Bushfire Information Centre and that the Community Connection and Wellbeing Group is considering how we can most effectively communicate with the Wye River Separation Creek community.

4. Weed Management

Yvonne Sheppard advised that the Weeds Workshop, scheduled for 11am on Sunday 12 June has been organised by Wye Weed Warriors and Wye to Wongarra Landcare, with support from COS and DEWLP. The workshop will be hands on and will provide the opportunity to learn about caring for birds and the use of bird boxes, understanding weeds and how they can be killed and which local plants and vegetation is best for the town and wildlife. The workshop will also cover the WyeSep Weed Strategy, the feral cat threat and details of local suppliers.

5. Background on Water Watch

Yvonne Sheppard informed the Group that EPA have been monitoring two sample sites in the river monthly with the data being recorded on a database. This provided benchmark data which has been used by the EPA when they commenced readings following the fire. She further advised that there is discussion in relation to Water Watch taking over the EPA monitoring role.

6. Report from Playground Workshop (Joanne)

Joanne and Yvonne advised that they both attended the workshop and that it was a very successful event. Joanne explained that there is information on the workshop on WyeSep Connect and that the project is expected to be complete before Christmas.

7. Wye River Extraction Pipe – Impact on River

The Work Group raised the issue of whether more water would be extracted from the river as a part of this work.

Action/Outcome

Erin Letovsky to report back at next meeting on whether more water would be extracted from the river as a part of this work.

8. Other Business

The date of the next meeting to be determined following the 11 June Determining Our Future Community Workshop.