

Blue Mountains Bushcare Network
Minutes of Meeting Wednesday 18th May 2011 at 6pm
Mountains Community Resource Network Meeting Room Lawson

Present: Elizabeth Mitchell (Birdwood Gully), Margaret & Warwick Tafe (Mt Riverview), Paul Vale (Popes Glen), Clive Heywood Barker (BMCS), Shirley Brown (MHH, Kat Ck, BK, Leura Pk), Susan Jalaluddin (Vale St, Cumberland Walkway, Hazelbrook), Allan Murray (Glenbrook Lagoon), Erst Carmichael (Sth Lawson), Lyndal Sullivan (BMCC)

Apologies: Barbara Harley (Tree Fern Gully, Lindeman Road Leura), Xuela Sledge (NPWS), Rob Agars (Deanei), Annette Coulter (Pitt Park), Karen Hising (Valley of the Waters), Mike Purtell (Else Mitchell & Deanei),

Facilitator: Allan Murray

Acceptance of Previous Minutes (Feb 2011) moved Margaret Tafe

Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

1. Post Fire Weed funding

Paul reported limited information available on the effect of fire on weeds, and was mostly overseas; he will continue a literature search. Ian Baird offered to undertake a journal search of those journals to which he has access, in the near future when he has time.

It was suggested that Groups take photos of areas where HR burns are planned then undertake photographic monitoring after the burns. Glenbrook Lagoon has a planned burned, and Sublime Point may have before and after photos of their burn. Paul will collect any information and photos.

2. Weed tree exemption from Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

The decision of the Council meeting of 15th March was reported, which was primarily that weeds listed in the DCP are currently exempted; also that there are plans for a review of both the exemptions from the TPO and the DCP weeds list.

3. Proposed Amendments to DCP Environmental Weeds list

It was agreed to defer this matter until the council review .

4. Reprint of 'Living Near the Bush'

BCN members were interested in contributing to the review of this publication.

Action: Clive would find out about the process and how contributions could be made.

Lyndal to distribute copies to all participants to assess for suggested changes to the content, to be discussed at next meeting.

5. Network of Bushcare groups working in Shale-base Vegetation Communities

A field day for all groups working in Shale based Vegetation Communities has been organised for Sunday 19th June, and advertised in Gecko. This is an opportunity to learn more about these communities and for groups to meet each other.

6. Sale of Weeds at Local Markets

It was agreed to send the draft letter (attached) to organisers of markets held on all lands (other than Council land); also that an article be written in the next Gecko asking volunteers to report what markets are held and contact numbers and explaining the planned letter.

Action: Shirley to write article and Margaret to be the contact person to collate responses.

7. Treasurers Report

Mike, Paul and Lachlan have commenced the change of signatories for bank account.

8. Site A frame Design

One A frame was displayed and all agreed that they looked effective and were keen to get them out on sites.

9. Bushcare Network 2006 Proposal for the Use of Lawson Golf Course Site

Erst outlined the previous process of consultation and the development of the BCN proposal. More recently, a number of groups have expressed an interest in its use for sporting fields, dog off-leash area, community farm, indigenous centre and housing development. Transition Towns is planning a meeting of those interested in the city farm idea.

It was agreed that Erst represent the Bushcare Network in liaising with Transition Towns to arrange a meeting to discuss possible agreements between the two groups for future options for the Lawson Golf Course site. Erst will notify BCN members of date & venue.

It was agreed that a press release and photo be prepared .on option Allan to organise with Barbara.

GENERAL BUSINESS

10. Meeting with new State Member, Roza Sage 21st April

Elizabeth Mitchell, Mike Purtell, Allan Murray & Margaret Tafe represented the Network in a meeting with Roza Sage and her staffer, Benn Benasick on 21st April.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the election promise of \$10 million statewide for funding of bushcare. Roza clarified that the fund would be one off, but not an annual amount

The group explained how the Bushcare program worked and that it had been operating for 19 years with 70 active groups working on a monthly basis across the mountains. Also that some LGAs had no bushcare or landcare groups. Each area and group has different needs. Also that here Council deals with the finances allowing group members to put in the hours on the ground and not get worn out with the tedious work of management of grant funds. She supported the idea that 'one size' fits all won't work

It was suggested that a figure of \$200,000pa would be a reasonable one to assist the Blue Mountains Bushcare program, although both parties agreed that this figure was quite conservative when looked at in context. She thought that being an area adjacent a World Heritage National Park we should have high priority

Roza agreed take ideas to the Minister Robin Parker, promised to write back with a response to the submission and would consider a follow up meeting.

A copy was left of each of the 2009-2010 Bushcare Annual Report, the current Training Guide for Bushcare & Landcare Volunteers, and the 2 page submission on the NSW funds.

It was agreed that Allan would try to arrange a similar meeting with Stuart Ayre and that Mike follow up with Roza in 1 month as promised.

11. Update of “Instead of Weeds’ list

It was agreed to delete all the acacias known to be weedy from the list as proposed by Clive and to commence using this list, and update as we can.

Actions; Lyndal to amend the “Instead of Weeds list’ by removing identified weedy alternatives from list, and add the alternatives included in the Weeds booklet. Allan to improve the formatting for website use as well as hard copy

12. Bushcare Network Conference

It was agreed that a ‘conference’ or meeting of all groups across the mountains be held. This forum would provide an opportunity to discuss current issues, such as what projects be prioritised for State funds and could include an educational session.

13. Landcare Forum

Margaret & Warwick Tafe reported on the 2011 Regional Landcare Forum attended on 13th May at the Elizabeth Macarther Demonstration site. A diverse range of groups attended with interesting talks on fauna, promotion, Landcare framework etc. A tour was conducted focusing on history of site including human impacts on flora. A surprise was the number of gas extraction well sites and associated fracking (fracturing the shale beds to release gas) across the whole of the Institute, which seems a contradiction when considering so much good work has been carried out to support and nurture the regenerating bushland.

One presentation held was about how to involve young people in Landcare using social media (facebook, twitter). Penrith CMA to planning run sessions on how to use this media and also a session with Les Robinson.

It was useful to attend to understand how we each fit into the bigger picture of over 4000 groups Australia wide

14. Notification of Bushcare Groups of Development Applications on adjacent sites

The Council Minute no 460 part 5 (meeting 12th October 2010) was noted which states that “council’s internal processes be amended to ensure that the Council’s Bushcare Team leader is notified of and involved in all relevant Development Applications adjacent to Bushcare sites.” It was noted that this decision to notify the Bushcare groups had not been implemented.

Action: that Mike as convenor monitor situation over next month and follow up on behalf of the network if required.

15. NPWS BM Regional Volunteer Coordinator – possible cessation of position

Action: Allan to write on behalf of the BCN writes to the BM regional office of NPWS to express concern about the cessation of the position of Regional Volunteer Coordinator, and the importance of this being a permanent position supported from a core budget not just grants.

Next Meeting Wednesday 17th August

ATTACHMENTS

DRAFT LETTER TO MARKET ORGANISERS

BUSHCARE LOGO

C/-Convenor Mike Purtell,

7 Baxter Avenue
Springwood 2777
4751 2143

Dear -----,

Thank you for the important community work you do in organising a local market. The Bushcare Network is seeking your assistance to support the work of community bushcare volunteer groups across the mountains. We need your help to stop the spread of weeds.

The Bushcare Network represents approximately 400 local volunteers engaged in the constant removal of weeds which damage the bush on the urban fringe. Most of these weeds are "garden escapes". To prevent further "garden escapes" invading adjoining bushland and neighbours' yards, the Bushcare Network is requesting that you encourage stallholders not to sell any invasive plant species at your community market (see attached list of environmental weeds).

This will support the efforts of those markets being run on Council land which no longer sell listed weed plants. Last year Blue Mountains City Council introduced a new hiring condition for markets operating on Council land: that no environmental weeds are to be sold.

If your stallholders need assistance to know what alternative species they could sell, we suggest you either ask them to contact us or look up the website www.weedsbluemountains.org.au and click on "Mountains Landscapes" or the document entitled "Instead of Weeds".

Also enclosed is the booklet "Weeds of Blue Mountains Bushland", which gives alternative species which are not invasive. And a wider list of alternatives is included entitled "Instead of Weeds".

Please let us know whether you would be willing to support the efforts of bushcare volunteers in this way and if there are any other ways we could assist you to implement this change. If you would like any additional information please phone Mike Purtell 4751 2143 or Paul Vale 4787 8080.

The Bushcare Network looks forward to your response.

Yours sincerely, for the Network, Shirley Brown, Elizabeth Mitchell and Margaret Tafe.