

Blue Mountains Bushcare Network
Minutes of Meeting held 6pm Wednesday November 26 2008
Mountains Community Resource Network - Lawson

Present: Barbara Harley, Lachlan Garland (chair), Monica Nugent, , Karen Hising, , Francoise Matther, Ivan Jeray, Neil Stuart, Ruth Ley, Nick Todd, Lyndal Sullivan (minutes, BMCC)

Apologies Mike Purtell, Jim Mattheson, Clive Barker, Allan Murray, Rob Agars

Acceptance of Previous Minutes carried

Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

1. Bushcare Picnic

Lyndal reported on the list of lower and mid mountains venues inspected and that Kihilla at Hazelbrook was still to be inspected. Other suggestions were – Korowal and Camp Fletcher (Hazelbrook). and Santa Maria (Lawson). It was agreed that the Sun Valley venue was very successful except for the lack of covered area in the event of rain.

It was agreed that the venue for the 2009 picnic be Megalong Valley unless one of the mid mountains venues suggested is assessed to be suitable by Bushcare Officers.

2. RTA plant lists

No further action on Hazelbrook landscaping plans.

3. Walking Tracks

Ivan reported that Council licensing of proposed recreational activities was advertised in the council page of the gazette periodically, and that these may be relevant to various bushcare groups.

4. Highway Working Party to deal with Sediment from RTA works

It was noted that the working party had not been reconvened at this stage.

5. Blue Mountains Bushfire Risk Management Plan

Action: Ivan to monitor developments.

6. Archiving Records of Bushcare Network Minutes

Information was received from John Merriman, the Local Studies Librarian at Blue Mountains City Library that the library is not able to provide permanent, free, secure storage for any community or Council archives; and that the Government Records Repository (GRR) provides fee-based storage.

Action: Lachlan to investigate best means of electronic storage of current and future records. Lyndal to contact community organisations to ask how they archive hardcopy records.

7. New Weeds - *Acacia elongate* range

Clive to report on range - defer to next meeting.

8. Blue Mountains Local Weeds Committee

Barbara reported on major issues discussed – weed control in transport corridor (Rail Corp commenced contract), Phytophthora protocols by agencies, BMCC subcatchment approach to noxious weed notices rather than response to complaints.

9. Website

Barbara has organised a separate page for the Bushcare Network page to be set up on the Website by John Penlington. Note May 08 minutes on web incorrectly named 2007.

Action: Lyndal to arrange a notice in the next Gecko to inform readers of the links to bushcare network information.

10. Phytophthora protocols

A basic protocol was outlined in the last Gecko and most groups were already adopting these procedures. It was agreed that when other agencies worked in bushland, they also should adopt Phytophthora hygiene protocols, eg Integral clearing vegetation around power lines.

Action: Ruth to write an article for the Gecko, about Integral's vegetation clearing practices and policies, with contacts that may be used by Bushcare groups affected by power lines.

11. Bushcare Network Bank Account

It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Credit Union with the signatories of the current holders stating they are resigning, and that the following four people be authorized to be the new signatories for the account Mike Purtell, Barbara Harley, Elizabeth Mitchell, and Lachlan Garland.

Action: Lachlan to write letter, and Francoise and Lachlan to arrange signatures and have signatories verified the 100 id points.

12. Bioregionalism/Provenance: Sale of non-local Australian plants as 'native'

Lyndal reported that Bob Makinson (Plant Conservation, Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens) has agreed to present what the current science is on the issue of provenance and recommended best practice for revegetation work, and planting in gardens adjacent bushland. The proposed forum would allow for debate amongst participants.

It was agreed that the forum be held Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday evening in the last 2 weeks of March, in the Mid Mountains. That the objective of the forum be to develop model guidelines to be adopted by the Bushcare Program to cover revegetation work. Also that this forum may develop agreement on good practice for planting in gardens in the Blue Mountains. That in addition to Bushcare volunteers being invited, invitations be sent to all community and commercial nurseries in the Blue Mountains, Garden Clubs and TAFE.

13. Bushcare Program Procedure Manual Review

The attached list of issues were agreed to be included in the review of the Bushcare procedures Manual as a Bushcare Network submission, and that further issues would be discussed at subsequent meetings.

It was agreed that the Procedures Manual included Policy and should be renamed the 'Policy and Procedures Manual'.

14. City of Blue Mountains Bushcare Biodiversity Project update

Deferred

General Business

15. Role of Bushcare Groups

It was agreed that a section in the revised Policy & procedures Manual should outline a protocol to be followed when Council wants to use volunteer hours of Bushcare groups to attract grants. That this protocol ensures adequate consultation with the relevant group/s occurs prior to the application being made.

16. RTA landscaping and the Bushcare Network

Barbara made a submission on behalf of the Network to the RTA concerning the planting list for the Leura to Katoomba Great Western Highway section. It covered the requirements of highway plantings and biodiversity protection issues relevant to all RTA plantings in the Mountains, and also comments on the specific species selection. (submission available on website)

The meeting endorsed the submission and thanked Barbara for her work on this submission.

Action: Lachlan to assess if some people will monitor Landscape Plans for different highway sections to be reconstructed.

17. New Biodiversity Strategy for NSW – Discussion paper

This Strategy is open for public comment until Friday 13 February 2009. It can be obtained by ringing Marion Traynor 9995 6732 or <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/biodiversity/08398biostr.pdf>

18. Integral Clearing in Bushland Reserves

Integral appears to have adopted a practice of clearing up to 5m each side where there are 2 layers of lines (3 on top and 4 under?). The Regulation for Electricity Supplies 2001 requires Tree Management Plans with the requirement that Integral consult the community before commencing work. If contractors are challenged by residents they are required to stop work and report to Integral which is responsible to resolve the problem. The Integral Manager of Vegetation Control Officer is Troy Sazfikerley 4255 4016/ 0402388691. (Contractor Asplundh National Manager Ian Smith 042 817 1474.

19. 2009 Meetings

It was agreed that meetings would be held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month every 3 months - February 18, May 20, August 19, November 18.

And that the venue would be the Mountains Community Resource Network meeting Room in the old Council Chambers/Library Building in Lawson

Next Meeting – February 18 2009

**ISSUES FOR INCLUSION IN REVIEW OF BUSHCARE
PROCEDURES MANUAL OCT 2002**

Compiled from Discussion at Bushcare Network Meeting 26th November 2008

FORMAT / ORGANISATION ISSUES

The document should be called the 'Policy and procedures manual' as it contains policy in addition to procedures.

More consistent wording needed.

Restructure document to avoid repetition and to be shorter.

ADDITIONS

1. Landcare

Landcare program to be included (rather than 2 manuals) identifying differences where relevant, eg;

Introduction (p3)

Aims and Objectives (p4)

Starting a Group (p5)

Expectations of Volunteers and Council (p6)

Consideration to be given to whether Swampcare and event based programs should be included

2. Children

Children below 16 years to be supervised by a parent or an adult nominated by the parent and agreed to by the adult (not a Bushcare Officer).

3. Reduction of Council support and/or Withdrawal of Authority to groups

3.1 Reduction in Support to Groups

In the event of Bushcare Officer support required for new groups, a list of criteria to be used by Council should be in this document, to guide the decision to reduce the level of Bushcare support from another group.

Reduction of support may be from monthly to 2 or 3 monthly; in which case Council will continue to supply tools and be available to assist when required. In some instances it may mean that the group will not be able to continue.

- a. Capacity of the group to continue without a Bushcare Officer
 - level of knowledge of bush regeneration in the group,
 - the willingness of the coordinator to supervise the group in carrying out its site strategy and accept responsibility for OH&S matters
 - the training and experience of the coordinator in Bushregeneration principles and techniques and OH&S,
 - the willingness of the group to continue without monthly Bushcare officer support
 - Attendance levels of volunteers over 6 month period
 - History of the group

- b. Suitability of the site
 - a developed site strategy and workplan
 - the stage in the regeneration process of the site
 - OH&S issues on the site
 - Potential for some works to be undertaken by Bushregeneration team
 - Environmental values of the site

Questions to be addressed during the review –

- Should council only assess reductions because of low attendance?
- Should there be the same level of assessment for Landcare and Bushcare?
- If a group is not able to continue with a reduced level of support, should council close the group – eg if there is only 1 or 2 regular members?

3.2 Withdrawal of authority to work on a Bushland Site

Council may withdraw its authority for the group to work on Council managed land if after going through a formal **mediation** procedure the group continues to act in any of the following ways :

- non compliance with relevant environmental legislation, policies and procedures
- non compliance with bush regeneration principles and techniques as outlined in section ...?... in this manual
- failure to undertake activities in a safe and responsible way and adhere to the OH&S legislation
- (acts) contrary to the Aims & Objectives outlined in this Manual (*could allow too much discretion*)

Disagreement with Council policies, management plans or activities is not a cause for council withdrawing its support to a Bushcare group, or preventing a group to continue working on Council managed land.

A mediation procedure to be outlined.

A code of conduct is recommended for inclusion. (Examples of such Codes from other organisations to be looked at)

NOTE: THE CONTENTS OF THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE INTEGRATED WITH EXPECTATIONS OF VOLS AND COUNCIL SECTION pp 7-10

4. Protocol for Council when applying for grants using volunteer hours

A protocol needs to be included to ensure that when council uses volunteer hours to lever grant funding, that there is adequate consultation with the relevant group/s prior to the application being made.