



Minutes of Meeting held Wednesday 11th November 2015

Lawson Bowling Club, Lawson

Apologies:

Vera Hong, Craig Bender, Erst Carmichael, Peter Ardill, Neil McGlashan; Rob Agars.

Attendees:

Ray Richardson (North Lawson; Popes Glen Steering Committee); Paul Vale (Convenor; Popes Glen, Centenary Reserve, Chairperson); Mike Purtell (Else Mitchell and Deanei Forest); Susan Jalaluddin (Vale St); Margaret & Warwick Tafe; Lachlan Garland (Jamieson Ck); Anne Fitzgerald (Korowal School and Gibbergunyah); Steve Barratt (Cross St, Long Angle); Warwick Tafe, Margaret Tafe (Winmalee); Jenny Hill (Leura Falls Ck); Joan Lawson (Blaxland); Elizabeth Mitchell (Birdwood Gully); Alison Towerton (Local Land Service [LLS] + Redgum Park), Bill Dixon (LLS), Vanessa Keyser LLS + Redgum Pk) Monica Nugent (Bushcare Team Leader, minute taker).

1 Confirmation of last minutes

Minutes of meeting held 12th August 2015 were confirmed by Marg Tafe and Jenny Hill.

2 Actions arising from August meeting:

- i. Monica to discuss First Aid Training with managers - Carry over.
- ii. BMCS Plant study group - Monica will relay the offer from BMCS to the Bushcare team. Susan will discuss with Meredith. Carry over.
- iii. Turning Page Sponsorship - actioned by Mike 04/09/15. Mike will also draft a thank you letter to sponsors.
- iv. Invoice for Network Conference contribution - actioned by Mike and Monica.
- v. Urban sanctuary charter - Carry over.
- vi. Seniors week subcommittee - actioned.

3 Report on Conference 2015

Jenny gave a summary of the post conference debrief meeting held by the organising committee which fairly closely examined the conference. A list of areas of improvement has been developed, the most common criticism was of the venue (poor acoustics, lighting,

heating) but overwhelmingly the feedback was positive and the conference generated a lot of ideas for future development.

Mike reported that the conference raffle raised \$420 and that the current balance of the Network's funds is \$969.91.

4 BCN connectivity with LLS / information exchange

5 Rapid Assessment Tool / Citizen Science

Items 4 and 5 were dealt with simultaneously. Jenny introduced the discussion in the hope that we could develop ideas for monitoring projects and developing the Network's connections with LLS. This follows on from Bill Dixon's mention at the BCN Conference that Bushcare volunteers could be the "eyes and ears on the ground" that will be essential to effective climate change monitoring.

Bill Dixon talked about climate change modelling and the improvements in accuracy of models but pointed out that although they are improving and there is good mapping available (eg, changes in connectivity values 2050), they are still projections based on computer modelling, not actual observed changes. Bill believes the only way to effectively monitor climate change trends is through people who really know a particular area and can record observed changes.

Bushcare volunteers are ideally placed to provide these records if the appropriate data collection methods and tools are developed.

Discussion followed regarding developing smartphone based apps, the mapping currently available through BMCC and the preference to utilize Map Info based GIS mapping and how field based IT tools would be of benefit.

The next step is to establish a sub-group to develop the guidelines for data collection and resourcing Bushcare groups with the necessary tools.

6 Conference Grant-funded Workshops

Jenny proposed that a "post-fire, on-ground" workshop presented jointly with Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) be prioritised. The location is to be determined. Paul moved that the BCN form a working group to develop this idea further, seconded by Marg Tafe. Jenny Hill, Paul Vale, Lachlan Garland, Monica Nugent nominated to be on the working group.

7 Seniors Week

Ray, Jenny, Erin Hall and Ruth Ley have met and are planning a Seniors Week Bushcare event for Wednesday 6th April. It will involve the Network, Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre, Wildplant Rescue with a maximum of 20 participants. Aiming to encourage increased seniors involvement in Bushcare, it will be a workshop at Wildplant Rescue, then minibus transport to Vale St Bushcare site where an Occupational Therapist will demonstrate the health and social benefits of Bushcare and ways of working and moving safely and comfortably on site.

Bushcare is providing bus and presentation, KNC will provide the Occupational Therapist. The Seniors week working group requested a financial contribution from the BCN towards morning tea of approximately \$300. Paul put the motion that the BCN approve a contribution of up to \$300, which fund it is to be drawn from (General account or BCN Conference) is to be confirmed. Motion seconded by Margaret.

8 Noxious Weed Spraying - South Lawson

Paul relayed a report emailed to him by Erst Carmichael on behalf of the South Lawson Bushcare Group where a significant area of native vegetation was reportedly killed by off-target spraying by Council's Urban Weeds Team. This raises the questions of:

- i. whether there were any more similar instances reported, and
- ii. if there has been an unacceptable increase in the use of chemical spraying across the mountains;
- iii. whether the BCN should take some action.

Paul reported that he had been advised that this particular incident is being investigated and responded to internally at Council, which Monica confirmed.

Cumberland Walkway reported that they had observed a number of *Blechnum nudum*s killed, however it is unlikely that this was the result of BMCC spraying, more likely a neighbor.

The level of chemical spraying of playing fields and road verges was queried, eg Blackheath Oval.

Action: Given that the incident at South Lawson is being responded to internally, no action was deemed necessary at this stage, but all present agreed ongoing monitoring is needed and that any further similar examples be brought back to the Network.

Monica advised the meeting that Eric Mahony has been appointed the new Bushland Operations Co-ordinator, with oversight of the Bushcare, Bush Regeneration, Urban (including noxious) Weeds and Walking Tracks Teams at BMCC. Bushland Operations has been moved from City Services to the "Environment and Culture" Branch in the "City and

Community Outcomes” Directorate. Nick Rigby is the Manager of Environment and Culture which includes Natural Areas and the newly branded “Healthy Waterways” teams, led by Matthew Chambers and Geoffrey Smith respectively.

9 Bushcare as Community Development Proposal

Anne Fitzgerald tabled a suggestion that Bushcare develop a proposal for a “Bushcare as Community Development” project to increase the opportunities for Bushcare in areas where there doesn’t seem to be a natural take up by the community, eg Hazelbrook. Anne was inspired by hearing about the number of groups working in the Leura area and questions why some areas struggle to recruit Bushcare volunteers where others don’t.

That is, to source funding which could undertake social action research to determine what the social and environmental needs of areas like Hazelbrook are and customize the response accordingly so that for example, isolated singles may be encouraged to participate in Bushcare.

Paul suggested that this project is probably beyond the scope of the Network but both Jenny (in her capacity as environmental educator at BMCC) and Monica expressed interest and requested Anne to keep in contact to further discuss it.

10 Other Items

i. Inspiring Not Retiring

Jenny tabled a copy of “Inspiring Not Retiring”, an Australian Department of Health and Ageing publication of stories celebrating older Australians. It has inspired Jenny to think of a project involving school students interviewing Bushcare celebrities / places. Concept very favorably received - another grant to pursue.

ii. Seniors Week

Ray announced his impending move away from the mountains to Albury which will create a vacancy on this working group and also the Popes Glen Restoration Project Steering Committee.

On behalf of the Network, Paul expressed our gratitude to Ray for his immense contribution to Blue Mountains Bushcare, not only to Bushcare and the Network, but also acknowledged Ray’s work in the Bushcare office and on the Popes Glen Committee.

Lachlan Garland was nominated as the Bushcare Network representative on the Popes Glen Steering Committee. Lachlan accepted the nomination.

A replacement on the Seniors Week Committee is yet to be confirmed. Please contact Erin at the Bushcare Office if you’re interested.

iii. Badgerys Creek Airport

Margaret and Warwick circulated some information about the impacts of the proposed Badgerys Creek Airport on the Blue Mountains and encouraged us to make submissions to the EIS. Paul suggested waiting until further recommendations are produced by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society (BMCS). The deadline for submissions is 18/12/15.

Margaret and Warwick tabled a draft note of congratulations and thanks to BMCC commending the Council on its strong stance. Mike expressed thanks to BMCS for raising the issue early and asked Paul to pass on thanks from the BCN, and proposed that the BCN write to BMCC. Seconded by Margaret.

Action: Paul to finalise the draft begun by Marg and Warwick and send on behalf of the Network.

iv. Town-based promotional flyers

Elizabeth and Joan expressed their opinion that Bushcare needs a poster /flyer of high quality graphic design which sets out Bushcare opportunities on a town by town basis. She tabled the "Springwood's Blue Gum Forest" brochure as a good example. All agreed but recognized that such material requires grant funding such as the LLS mini-grants which are too small to justify the administration they require.

Monica showed the template insert for the generic Bushcare flyer Erin is currently developing and informed the group that this is the extent of the current resourcing we have for promotional material. It is also important that all groups populate the basic information on the website regarding their group's preferred information.

Jenny talked about the mini-grant she's just successfully applied for on behalf of the Leura Falls Ck Catchment group and which Linda has agreed to administer. The grant will pay for graphic design of templates and some printing costs. Monica suggested that we look at how we might pool together to apply for similar education grants which deliver more.

Jenny offered to make the templates developed for Leura falls Ck available for the use of other groups.

v. Jamison Creek Catchment Group:

Lachlan reported that Jamison Creek Catchment group has commenced with support from Linda Thomas. 10 people attended the first meeting. A \$194,000 WaterNSW Stormwater improvement was successfully applied for by BMCC Healthy Waterways Team so it will be a focal point for them in the immediate future. It was noted that this highly urbanized catchment is unique in the Blue Mountains LGA as it is the only one which is divided by the transport corridor.

BCN congratulates Lachlan and the Catchment Group on becoming the 4th Catchment group to form. The others are Katoomba/Govetts; Leura Falls and Fitzgeralds Creeks.

Meeting Closed 8:35 pm.

Next meeting - February 10th 2016 at 6pm

Agenda items: pooling groups to get bigger grants; incorporation.

Actions Summary Table:

item	action	who
Carried over	Liaise with Blue Mountains Conservation society Plant Study Group	Monica and Susan
Carried over	Review and adapt the urban sanctuary charter for Network's use	Jenny
2 iii.	Draft thank you letter to sponsors	Mike
10 Badgerys Ck Airport	Write to BMCC commending Councillors' stance opposing the airport	Paul
10 ii. Seniors Week rep	Seek replacement for Ray	?
4-5 Citizen Science	Convene subgroup to develop data collection project	?