

## WILSON INLET MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 20 DECEMBER 2006 AT THE SHIRE OF DENMARK RECEPTION ROOM AT 1.00PM

**PRESENT:** George Ebbett, Brad Kneebone, John Jamieson, Geoff Findlay, Diane Harwood, Zak Launay, Jason Froud, Helen Heydenrych, John Xanthis, Dave Rushton, Basil Schur  
Danny Burkett (arrived 2:30pm)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chris Gunby, Jean Brenton (Parry's Beach Voluntary Management Group)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 1.10pm

#### 1. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Open forum session was not required.

#### 2. APOLOGIES

All members attended the meeting.

#### 3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2006 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

#### 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES AND CORRESPONDENCE

4.1 Correspondence from Shire of Denmark regarding Crown Reserve 23579 (Hay Rivermouth) management issues. Letter advised that Council supports WIMAG recommendations 1, 3 and 4 as follows:

1. Camping to be disallowed in the part of the Reserve south of the highway. Formal removal of 'Camping' from the reserve's purpose would be required to legally support any on-site notice disallowing camping.

3. Appropriate signage to be installed at the track entrance to provide information regarding the Reserve's conservation value, in particular as important habitat for migratory shorebirds.

4. Track entrance off South Coast Highway to have gates and bollards with the gate to be locked during periods of water inundation.

The existing track will also be upgraded to Fire Access Route standard.

4.2 Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) possibly interested in taking over vesting of inlet foreshore areas currently classified unallocated crown land (UCL). **Action:** WIMAG to send letter to the Shire of Denmark and DEC to facilitate meeting to clarify UCL boundaries and discuss the matter of future vesting.

4.3 On the 31<sup>st</sup> October George and Chris met with the Minister for Water Resources, John Kobelke, to discuss issues surrounding this year's bar opening. Further discussion will take place with the Water Corporation in an attempt to identify alternative approaches to management of the drainage district (Danny Burkett to elaborate at future meeting/s). John Xanthis added that without spring tidal flushes due to poor channel development this year the inlet is experiencing early record algae growth and suggested that the WIRG channel dredging proposal be revisited. There is further concern that lower inlet levels will occur more frequently in the future due to drying climate trends and decreased flows in the Denmark River in the event it becomes a public water source.

4.4 Correspondence was received from the following stakeholders in support of the proposal to establish a Denmark Estuaries Advisory Group: South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team (SCRIPT), Department of Environment and Conservation, Water Corporation, Department for Planning & Infrastructure and the Peaceful Bay Progress Association Inc.

## **5. DENMARK ESTUARIES ADVISORY GROUP**

Discussion focused on the outcome of the Council vote on 28<sup>th</sup> November regarding the proposal to establish an advisory group for the Wilson, Parry and Irwin Inlets. The proposal was not supported with a close against vote. Council minutes recorded that the reason for this resolution is that management of the Irwin and Parry Inlet under the current control of the Shire of Denmark is satisfactory at this point.

Jean Brenton further endorsed the concept indicating its potential to accommodate a historical context to management decisions. The group agreed that there should be another attempt to gain Council endorsement for this initiative at the Council meeting in January 2007. Jean was requested to consult with the Parry's Beach Voluntary Management Group in the coming weeks and hopefully provide a letter of endorsement on behalf of the group to the Shire of Denmark prior to the Council meeting.

## **6. DENMARK RIVERMOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Helen Heydenrych provided an update regarding the inlet foreshore reclamation project at the Denmark Rivermouth. A site meeting was undertaken recently by relevant parties to initiate the indigenous consultation process. The Shire of Denmark is also awaiting response from the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) in relation to any environmental considerations.

The project (reclamation), if managed correctly, is not likely to be hindered based on environmental constraints however indigenous concerns raised at initial site meeting will need to be resolved before commencement of site works. In the meantime, the foreshore revegetation component of the rivermouth development should be allowed to proceed.

It is recommended an alternative plan be looked at whereby some of the existing car park area could be relinquished to service the yacht clubs requirements. This will reduce the reclamation area.

## **7. STRATEGIC BOATING PLAN**

A consultant, Estill & Associates, has been commissioned by the Shire of Denmark to prepare a Strategic Boating Plan for the Denmark River and Wilson Inlet. The Plan will help to ensure that the boating needs of the community and visitors are met in a sustainable way, with due consideration given to land use implications and potential impacts to the environment, heritage and other values. The Plan will address long-term boating, mooring and access requirements and identify possible boating facilities and associated amenities for the next 15-20 years.

Earlier this month a number of workshops were conducted to determine the aspirations of the community in relation to future boating needs, including commercial operators and recreational fishermen as well as those that derive less direct benefits from the river and inlet environments.

WIMAG should be given an opportunity to provide input prior to finalisation of the plan document.

## **8. SEAGRASS MONITORING**

Dave and George provided an overview of the Wilson Inlet ruppia extent/biomass project, to commence in February 2007.

The primary purpose of this project is to reassess and update seagrass distribution and abundance (ie *Ruppia megacarpa* and its epiphytes) data for Wilson Inlet. This coincides with the recommended actions stated in the Wilson Inlet Nutrient Reduction Action Plan that assessment of seagrass will be carried out along with other indicators of eutrophication to detect change in the condition of Wilson Inlet. This project will also compliment cobbler research being undertaken in the inlet by Department of Fisheries and Murdoch University.

Members wishing to learn more about the project can obtain a copy of the project brief from Dave Rushton or contact Tracy Calvert at the Department of Water on 98410122.

## 9. WILSON INLET NUTRIENT REDUCTION ACTION PLAN

Dave Rushton tabled a WINRAP implementation progress/update report primarily focusing on initiatives throughout the Wilson Inlet catchment area during October, November and December 2006. Copies of the report are available from Steve May at [steve.may@water.wa.gov.au](mailto:steve.may@water.wa.gov.au).

## 10. MEMBERS REPORTS

**Jason Froud** – Nil

**Dave Rushton** – Nil

**John Xanthis** – Poddyshot carpark has been sealed, new fish cleaning bay completed. Raised the possibility of algae harvesting in Wilson Inlet similar to the approach utilised in Peel Harvey (Chris stated that this has not been overly successful as macro-algae accounts for only a small percentage of total nutrients in the system).

**Helen Heydenrych** – Shire of Denmark successful application to host the WA Coastal Conference.

**Basil Schur** – WICC held its Annual General Meeting, during which Mike Lanigan was reappointed as Chairperson, group focus currently on Upper Hay Strategic Catchment project . Biosphere sub-committee meeting, Greenskills wetlands project update.

**Zak Launay** – Oysters have undergone good growth, expect commercial sale in coming months.

**Danny Burkett** – Nil

**Di Harwood** – Weeding activity continues in inlet foreshore areas with success in controlling *asparagus scadens* and *agapanthis*, will be targeting *lantana* soon.

**Geoff Findlay** – Personal water craft (jet skis) signage for strategic locations instructing that free styling activity not permitted in inlet. Also, proposal to install light on Denmark Rivermouth port channel marker. Raised the matter of public questioning at the community forum regarding discharge to the inlet from Denmark WWTP (progress?). Dave advised that he will be attending a meeting with relevant Water Corporation personnel on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2007 regarding disposal options. A previous meeting with Water Corporation to discuss this issue resolved that a presentation to WIMAG could possibly be undertaken at an appropriate time as a means of providing more information.

**John Jamieson** - City of Albany Council meeting, 19/12/06 – new scheme provisions for the Nullaki Conservation Area.

Also at 19/12/06 meeting, off-road vehicle use at Cheyne's Beach.

**Brad Kneebone** – South Coast Management Group have also engaged in discussions with the Dept Local Government & Community Development regarding the Off-Road Vehicle Act/Policy. Currently the Act does not provide adequate control over off-road vehicle use. Expects this issue will be raised during the Coastal Conference.

Preliminary results of recent bird surveys at Morley Beach indicate migratory bird numbers for this year are up to 5 times more than previous years, approximately 2000 swans, 2000 ducks and 2000 migratory waders, and suggests it is a reflection of decreased water levels in surrounding systems. Large numbers of water birds have also been observed at the western end of the inlet.

**Chris Gunby** - Department of Environment has officially split (ie the Dept of Environment & Conservation now dealing with vegetation/clearing issues and pollution matters). Also, management plans currently being prepared for the Stokes and Culham Inlets. Areas (LGAs) including Ravensthorpe, Jerramungup & Albany are looking at the merits of consolidating individual steering groups based on the Denmark Estuaries Advisory Group model.

**George Ebbett** - Nil

## **11. WIMAG MEMBERSHIP**

The community representative positions on the group recently vacated by Colleen Donnelly (resigned), Helen Heydenrych (now occupying Shire of Denmark officer position) and Diane Harwood (term expired) need to be filled. The recruitment process will be instigated following the outcome of the second Council vote regarding Denmark Estuaries Advisory Group proposal in January 2007.

The group wished Diane all the best for her future endeavours and expressed its appreciation for her contribution during her time as a member.

## **12. NEXT MEETING – 21<sup>st</sup> February 2007**