

WILSON INLET MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 27 August 2008 AT THE SHIRE OF DENMARK RECEPTION ROOM AT 1.00PM

PRESENT: George Ebbett, Mark Parre, Craig Carter (WICC), John Xanthis, Melinda Lyons (Green Skills), Kim Stanton (CoA), Geoff Findlay (DPI), Basil Schur, Ian Osborne, Maria Sain (proxy for John Dibble WC), Murray Gangell (DoW).

1. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

Zak Launay

Requested an official survey of the WI sandbar dimensions as it was done in 1990, 1991 and 1995 by Denmark Survey and Mapping to be a recorded as proof of supposedly ideal conditions for an opening ending in "an absolute failure".

Kirsty Alexander meet with Zak 2nd Oct and advised him that surveys of the Wilson bar and channel will now be carried out annually using Neville Boughton's methodology. Methods used by PWD and John Jamieson are far more expensive and are warranted periodically but could not be financed annually.

Zak also asked where WIMAG stands with the non-opening of the sandbar. The chairman's response was the group collectively doesn't have an opinion and any comments from the members would be an individual position.

Gerry Hughes

Asked if members of the public were able to be present throughout the entire meeting. George explained that this had been trialled in the past but ceased due to the public disrupting the meeting. This is to be an item to be discussed at the next WIMAG meeting.

Diane Harwood

Green Skills & Denmark Weed Action Group (DWAG) presented a slide show of questions related to issues associated Foreshore Reserves in Denmark. The Group was asked to provide information which will feed into the Wilson Inlet Foreshore Reserves Management Plan, by 5 September.

Case Koning

Case has a series of questions.

- *This meeting was not advertised in the bulletin, what is the reason for this?*
DoW; Meetings haven't been advertised by the DoW in the Denmark bulletin this year and won't be in the future. Instead, a 2008 WIMAG meeting dates notice has been placed on the notice boards of the Denmark Shire Office and the Denmark Environment Centre.
- *The WINRAP program has run its course (April 2003). Has a new draft report for the next 5 years been initiated, and when will it come out? Will it seek public comment?*
DoW; There will be a review of the Management Plan expected to commence soon after the finalisation of the Drainage Review. Public input will be sought throughout the Management Plan review process.
- *There has been one public information meeting that was in 2006. As you are aware annual reports will be reported to the community and the Shire of Denmark. Why has this group shirked it's responsibility to the community? Will there be a final report to the community for the 5 year program some time in the year?*
Craig Carter; WINRAP has been extended to 31/12/08 and a report to the community will take place in the form of a WINRAP forum similar to last time. It will be held before the end of the year, most probably in November.
- *I believe there are automated recording stations, how many are there, what are their locations and what is the recording interval?*
DoW; Two hydrolab loggers have recently been redeployed (after initially experiencing technical difficulties and human interference) in the Inlet (see attached map). These loggers record oxygen levels in the bottom waters of the Inlet at 30min intervals.
The reason for doing this is
The data will be used to better understand the processes within the inlet and the impact of sandbar openings and closures.
Understanding dissolved oxygen levels is important to measure the health of
the inlet. A dramatic drop of oxygen in the water, called de-oxygenation, is not only an issue for fish and other organisms but can cause the release of nutrients from the inlets sediments. These

nutrients can cause the excessive growth of algae.

The oxygen study will be important in understanding how changes in the inlets salinity effects dissolved oxygen and thus nutrient release.

The study will be on going to determine if there are any differences in oxygen levels between day and night and following bar openings.

Case was also given an image of the Wilson Inlet showing logger locations.

Case also made the following comment.

- *This was the worst bar opening I have seen since my arrival in Denmark in 2000. I strongly suggest that WINRAP sections 6.2.3 and 6.2.4 are reassessed and that significant funding is sought. Your procrastination on this issue is an indictment on this Group.*

DoW; The review of the Wilson Inlet nutrient action plan is expected to begin next year, following completion of the drainage review presently being undertaken.

The DoW has previously advised it has no objection to small scale excavation at the mouth of the inlet, but will not be funding such a dredging operation in light of the fact water exchange is influenced by many variables, particularly rainfall and river inputs, any dredging operation would only have limited impact and the community is so divided on the location of any such dredging.

AI. Murray to reply to Case directly.

2. DRAFT WILSON INLET FORESHORE PLAN

Due to the interest from members of the public attending open forum, agenda item 8 was brought forward so they could listen to this presentation. Basil asked Murray if the contour data for Wilson inlet was available yet. Murray replied saying that the information had been archived in the DoW Perth office and is taking a while to retrieve it. Basil gave some background on this project and proceeded by asking the members for input from a couple of questions concerning the management and development of Poison Point and Crusoe Beach. Discussion highlighted suitable and non suitable uses for each site.

The Yacht Club site was mentioned as a possible area to develop. Basil will use this information to feed into this plan.

AI- Murray to work on getting WI contour data to Basil ASAP.

3. APOLOGIES

Ben Chuwen, John Dibble, Yvette Caruso, Phil Shaw

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

A wording error was noted in Item 5.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES AND CORRESPONDENCE

Item 11 'Living Lakes Network' was also requested to be brought forward due to Melinda needing to leave the meeting early.

6. LIVING LAKES NETWORK

Melinda and Basil will be attending the 12th Living Lakes Conference at Lake Trasimeno, Italy in September. This conference is an opportunity for Basil and Melanie to meet with other non-Government organisations doing similar work and exchange a wealth of knowledge and experiences. Basil will be presenting a paper on Wilson Inlet while Melanie will be presenting a bid to the Global Nature Fund to hold the 13th National Conference in Denmark. There is a huge financial cost associated to running a Conference like this so discussing possible funding will be priority.

AI. WIMAG to write letter of support for Melanie to help support the bid to hold this Conference.

7. WILSON INLET NUTRIENT REDUCTION ACTION PLAN

Craig Carter reported to WIMAG the achievements of WICC to date on the implementation of WINRAP. Craig advised that the WINRAP funding had been extended until December 31 2008. A well attended meeting was held at Scotsdale Hall in August to provide an update to farmers on the WINRAP project with the main purpose being to get farmers input into the future management of the catchment.

8. DENMARK WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATIONS

Maria Sain gave an informative presentation on the Denmark Waste Water Treatment Plant's operations.

9. UPDATE ON SANDBAR NON-OPENING SURVEYS, WATER ALLOCATION STUDIES, W. I. DRAINAGE REVIEW STEERING AND STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Surveys: Murray reported there were 213 householder surveys returned. The DoW will be summarising these replies which will feed into the Drainage Review process. A similar survey was electronically distributed to 300 tourist operators in the Denmark Region and surrounds. Closing date for these is 12 September. The DoW will conduct a similar process with summarising these surveys.

Drainage Review Report was tabled:

Membership

The stakeholder group has two new members – Zak Launay (aquaculture operator in inlet – mussels and oysters) and Wayne Webb (representing Traditional Custodians of the Inlet).

Review Status

Progress on answers to questions posed in the scoping document was discussed. The review is still very much in the phase of gathering relevant information for consideration by the stakeholder and steering group. Many members of the stakeholder group flagged existing information that they were aware of and would be providing to assist in the review process eg. Info from visitor centre. Papers were provided by many members of the stakeholder group. Information gathered to date includes:

- information on impacts of existing land uses on the inlet
- impact of climate change, both on the catchment and the specific assets in the inlet such as *Ruppia*, fish, birds
- economic value of grazing and annual horticulture (particularly potatoes) in the catchment
- economic value of commercial and recreational fishing in the inlet
- information on bird populations using the inlet
- existing legislation covering the inlet

Department of Water also provided an analysis of water quality conditions in the inlet in high, low and non-opening years, and has commissioned a bathymetry map of the inlet.

13 submissions were received from the public in response to the request for input into the drainage review, and some useful comment and offers of information was received. Some respondents have not addressed the points in the terms of reference or have presented opinions and information outside the terms of reference.

Report on bar opening

Graham Wright reported that the Bar was opened on 17 July, water height 1.15m. Water levels have dropped approximately 1m since then.

Graphs were presented that showed water level heights over last 15 years. It was suggested that this information shows that the inlet reaches the same level in summer regardless of opening level. However, summer levels in the inlet are also influenced by factors such as catchment runoff and length of time the bar remains open.

Presentations were given on the following topics

- How the inlet functions and ecological aspects – Kirsty Alexander (DoW)
- Land use and economic considerations of agriculture in the catchment – Miriam Lang (DAFWA)
- Shellfish aquaculture on Wilson Inlet – Zak Launay
- Bird Populations – Brad Kneebone

Steering group meets in 2 weeks to consider existing information and how to plug

10. ACID SULPHATE SOILS BOOKLET AND PROPOSED SOUTH COAST WORKSHOP

Basil tabled a recently published booklet “ Acid Sulphate Soils - Implications for Rural Landholders” produced for South Coast NRM by Green Skills, and advise of a proposed South Coast Workshop on this topic.

11. MANAGEMENT OF WILSON INLET (IN PARTICULAR MORLEY BEACH) AS HABITAT FOR MIGRATORY SHORE BIRDS.

Basil tabled a report from Ann Bondin, of the Albany Bird Group, providing a recent bird assessment of the western Wilson Inlet foreshore, including information on shorebirds that inhabit the mouth of the Hay River and Morley Beach which are particularly important habitat areas.

Basil asked to propose a recommendation for consideration by WIMAG, that could develop a policy recommendations for management of Wilson Inlet (particularly in relation to Morley Beach) aimed at promoting the conservation of migratory shore birds that utilize Wilson Inlet. If adopted by WIMAG, it would result in policy recommendations that would be forwarded to Federal, State and Local Government agencies for their consideration. Chairman suggested that Basil formulate some policy recommendations and bring back to the next meeting for WIMAG to consider and possibly endorse.

AI: Basil to formulate policy recommendations and bring back to the next meeting for WIMAG to consider and possibly endorse.

12. MEMBERS REPORTS

Geoff; The Regional Transport Officer working in the Denmark area will be returning from leave shortly.

John; Asked if anyone knew of any complaints of flooding just prior to the 1.15m opening.

Kim; Commented on behalf of the City of Albany there was only minor flooding of the roads prior to the bar opening.

First week of August, 3 City of Albany personnel went with Graeme Robertson (developer) to visit the Nullaki Peninsula to monitor the rehabilitation of the areas adjacent to the strategic firebreak and found the site is going well, but requires more 'growing' time before a full assessment can be made. Diversity and density of native plant species is good. There are weeds throughout the area but weed control will only be done when native veg' is established properly and if there is a need. Very little erosion was observed in the areas adjacent to the firebreak. The area will be reviewed in 6 months time.

Mark; Acknowledged receipt of the Lake Saide Revegetation Plan and gave his approval. Foreshore revegetation project is progressing well.

Ian; After Phil Barns criticised DVC support for the Denmark 10,000 fishing comp, I did some informal checking and it seems that large quantities of fish were buried. In light of this, DVC will reconsider its support of the comp.

Last year DVC applied to GSDC for RDS funding for a Tourism Indicators Project (based on TOMM in Kangaroo Island SA). The aim is to establish economic, social and environmental parameters for sustainable tourism growth. We missed out last year, however, this year the application has been taken on by South Coast NRM, which will give it more horsepower and thus greater chance of success.

George; Gave a report on the Coastal Conference he recently attended.

Murray, advised that the Denmark Environmental Officer's position has been filled and the successful applicant, Daniel Endacott will be commencing work with the DoW on 8 September 2008. Murray will be accompanying Daniel at the October meeting.

13. NEXT MEETING

Next WIMAG meeting will be held Wed 22 October 2008.

Meeting closed 3:20pm.

ACTION ITEMS FROM WIMAG MEETING (27/08):

1.AI- Murray to reply to Case Koning's open forum questions directly

2.AI- Murray organise WI contour data for Basil ASAP.

3.AI - Letter of support to Melanie

4.AI - Basil to formulate policy recommendations and bring back to the next meeting.