
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: Cr Julie Boyd, Lisa Kermode, Stuart Holley, Stuart Fyfe, Bruce Miles, Joan Fitzsimmons

APOLOGIES: Cr Alison Jones, Helen Paulsen, Colin Creighton

1. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES - MATTERS ARISING

1. Plants Distribution Proposal:

A report on the proposed native plant give away/promotional scheme was tabled.

It was decided that the preferred way of promotion would be to have a tear off section in the citywide news, that people can bring along to the MNEC and collect their plants. People could complete their name and address detail on the form, and the plants that they collect could be recorded on the voucher/tear off slip when they hand it in. This would help to keep administrative requirements to a minimum, but still provide a record of who participated and what they collected.

If the demand was too high, an alternative would be to target a particular suburb at a time, or possibly have local nurseries grow additional stock for the project.

The possibility of selling surplus stock or seed to nurseries was raised.

Committee Recommendation: That a trial native plant give away / promotion be conducted early next year, and if successful, the results be presented to Council for consideration of a larger ongoing program.

2. Significant Tree Register Update:

A draft format/contents regarding what a Significant Tree Register would contain was circulated. This was based on similar studies conducted by other Council's. (Refer to attached report)

Committee Recommendation: That the format for the Significant Tree Register document be accepted in principal and that the register relate to trees on Council land at this stage only.

Action: The format report will go to Council with the next NEAC Minutes.

3. McReady's Creek Reserve

SEO has been in contact with the relevant departments and ascertained that McReady's Creek Reserve was gazetted in 2003 as Reserve for Beach Protection and Coastal Management. Trustees are MCC and DNR &M (now DNR &W).

4. Coastal Management Plan

SEO distributed copies of the report that the consultant has produced to date. SEO was seeking comments, which are mentioned below:

- Climate change hasn't been mentioned at all, can it be put in where it is relevant in the report, particularly relating to impacts of sea level rising and future management implications
- Turtle nesting beaches, seagrass meadows and significant habitat areas for migratory species should be included on the maps.
- Definitions should be included
- Maps of sites of indigenous cultural significance - it was outlined that MCC would need to seek advice / permission firstly
- Expected something far more concise, more specific
- Report should be confined and defined to what are our major responsibilities
- An internal working group of people needs to be developed to prioritise what we can realistically achieve, being specific about areas that are a concern to Council, as some of the actions are beyond Council's area of influence. Actions need to be prioritised and monitoring/reporting/review requirements need to be detailed.

SEO outlined that a meeting is being held with Mackay Whitsunday Natural Resource Management Group to discuss the coastal guidelines prepared for Sarina. Sarina's report is a different format, but has excellent guidelines for vegetation management, that are clear and concise. It may be possible to merge the plans to get consistency, or to incorporate Sarina's format into Mackay's plan.

EMIS outlined that Council needs to look at where the gaps are and what we need to do.

Action: SEO to circulate Sarina's coastal guidelines.

5. Small Parcels of Land Owned by Council Containing Endangered Vegetation Communities

SEO provided information on endangered vegetation. Development Applications (DA) are assessed against the planning scheme, regardless of land tenure. The EPA is a referral agency where endangered vegetation communities are involved. EPA make recommendations and Council is bound to consider or follow those.

A general discussion ensued regarding vegetation on Council and privately owned land. It was highlighted that in other Council's a Local Law infringement is issued for vegetation being removed from privately owned land without a permit, but it was also highlighted that Council does not have a policy or local law to protect vegetation on private land.

6. Gooseponds Tidal Plan

The question was raised regarding whether the dogs off leash area recommended in the report had ever been formalised. SEO advised that it hadn't been.

Action: SEO to follow up with Josh Toohey/Adrian Miles about the process for declaring a dog of lead area.

7. Pest Management Plan

The SEO distributed Council's Pest Management Plan. Discussion ensued on the process to be followed to add another weed to the list. MCC is unable to add weeds to the declared list, this can only be done by the State. Council can add a weed (or animal) to the locally significant pest species list. It was noted that the strategy is reviewed on a four yearly basis for the strategic component, and on an annual basis for the action plans. Council can also review the plan at any time on submission from working group members, the public or from Council itself. If people have weeds or pests they would like add to the list of locally significant species, they could write to Council, or NEAC could make a submission.

2. BUDGET UPDATE AND 5 YEAR BUDGET – BUDGETS TO BE TABLED AT MEETING

This item was not discussed due to time constraints.

3. UPDATE ON STORMWATER PROJECTS

An update on stormwater projects was given by Robyn Birkett and Daniel Radovic.

- Application under the Environmental Infrastructure Research Project – *Monitoring & Research for Improved Stormwater Management in Mackay and North Queensland* received official notification mid September - \$80,000 Subsidy.
- Automatic Water Quality Sampler installed.
- Implementing the Waterway Health Monitoring Program (WHMP)
- Gooseponds Creek Catchment Management Plan. MUSIC Modelling being undertaken.
- Nadarmi Drive SQID tendered in August 2007. One tender received – double budget hence not proceeding.
- MUSIC training conducted in Mackay in early October – 12 attendees from local consultants and Council
- More training to come in new year – bioretention basins, constructed wetlands, swales etc.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Reliance Creek

EMIS advised that MCC had received a letter back from DNR&W. General discussion ensued regarding Reliance Creek and joint management/trusteeship.

Action: EMIS to write to QPWS and DNR &W regarding possible joint trusteeship arrangements for the proposed Reliance Creek Reserve.

2. Bringing Back the Beach Scrub Project

SEO informed that MWNRM has employed a Beach Scrub Project Officer on a temporary basis to map the remaining beach scrub vegetation community from Townsville to Rockhampton and undertake vegetation quality assessments. As part of this project, there is funding available to undertake on-ground work aimed at improving the condition, management and protection of beach scrub patches. SEO will be liaising with the Beach

Scrub Project Officer regarding potential submissions (submissions close on 23/11/07). Grant money can be spent on fencing, revegetation, weed control etc.

SEO highlighted the locations where this vegetation community remains in Mackay, including:

- Midge Point
- Shoal Point
- Blacks Beach
- Slade Point Harbour Beach
- Illawong Beach

It was identified that this information should be raised with the East Point developers to make them aware of the funding opportunity. SEO will find out if the grants are available for private property, however it should be noted that certain actions are required to be undertaken on the East Point development site which are requirements of the development approval and assisting with the implementation of these requirements is unlikely to be considered an appropriate use of public funds.

Action: SEO to pass on request to the Beach Scrub Project Officer that divisional Councillors Byers, Jones and Rolls be told about the grants.

3. Pioneer River Improvement Trust

NEO advised that two staff members from PRIT have been given an action list of works to complete in the Gooseponds. MCC have their assistance for six weeks in total.

4. Environmental Infrastructure Program

SEO tabled information relating to Infrastructure Grants available from the Department of Local Government and Planning (DGLP). Grants of up to 50% of project costs are available, with a total grant pool of \$60 million between 2008-11. Applications close June 2008 and the grants are specifically targeted to local government to protect the population from environmental health risks and to protect the sustainability of the natural and built environments.

5. Woody Weed Control at Slade Point Reserve

SEO advised that the Envirofund application to undertake woody weed control in Slade Point Reserve was unsuccessful.

6. Natural Environment Plan

The review of this plan to be considered at the next NEAC meeting.

Action: SEO to email report to members for reading prior to meeting.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting to be held Thursday 13 December 2007 (i.e. one week earlier than scheduled)

RECORDED BY: Lee Phillips and Lisa Kermode