

## **Manning Estuary Coastline and Catchment Advisory Committee Minutes, Thursday 14 February 2013 at 8am in Council's Administration Centre**

### **Welcome and apologies:**

Richard Pamplin, Martin Angle, Tina Clemens.

(CW/BN)

**Present:** Laura Black (LB), Greg Crisp (GC), Rick Slater (RP), Bill Nelson (BN), Peter Longworth (PL), Elaine Pearce (EP), Chris Wright CW), Cr David Keegan (chair) (CrDK), Mayor Paul Hogan (MPH), Cr Peter Epov (CrPE), Kirsty Hughes (KH), Daintry Gerrand (DG), Adam Nixon (AN), Michael Thomas (MT), Bob Williamson (BW)

### **Previous Minutes**

Endorsed with a change to Estuary Management Plan sub group to include martin Angle and Ric Slater.

(CW/CrPE)

### **Business Arising**

#### **a. Dredging Sub-Committee**

Harrington entrance channel is in the best condition in has been in for sometime. Although centre is not marked and is unlikely to be so RMS advises to apply caution when using.

Since December 2012, the training wall channel has been blocked, but it is not feasible to dredge this area.

There is fishing fleet nor marina inside the entrance to substantiate construction of a second training wall with Crowdy boat ramp available for open water access.

Gantry to be discussed at next sub-committee meeting.

#### **b. Estuary Management Plan Sub-Committee**

Group to reconvene to progress completion of plan review.

Crown Lands and OEH are currently considering notch location.

### **General Business**

#### **a. Committee Membership**

Agreed that an approach should be made to groups with an involvement in the Upper Manning to become involved in the Committee.

### **Action**

LB to contact the following and seek expressions of interest in joining.

Crooked Creek working group - Bill Dennis

Taree Landcare – Helen Hannah

Manning Landcare – Chris Scott

The following positions remain vacant:

MR Sustainable Recreational Fishing and Tourism

Aboriginal Representative – Russell Saunders indicated interest, but has not attended.

When discussing membership it was also agreed that the Constitution should recognise that Membership should be representatives who are stakeholders in the coastal, estuary and catchment management.

### **Action**

LB to draft change for circulation and consideration at the next meeting.

### **b. Harrington Lagoon**

BW advised of an incident in the lagoon over summer involving a kite boarder.

### **Action**

CW to raise the matter at the next State park Trust meeting for consideration of installation of 'swimming area only' signage.

### **c. Federal Election Funding Opportunities**

General discussion had regarding the opportunity to make requests of Federal members for commitment to the funding of local projects post election.

### **Action**

LB to organise a briefing note on the gantry for inclusion in suite of projects being distributed to Federal candidates.

While discussing funding, there was a request that the survey results collated by Council regarding community agreement with an Environmental levy be tabled at the next meeting.

The Committee wished it be noted that the MECCAC supports the implementation of an Environmental Levy.

(DG/CW)

## **Members Report**

### **a. Old Bar Sand Replenishment Group (EP)**

#### **GABION WALL –**

From approx July – October 2012 the sand recovery to the beach and in particular Badger's beach was quite good resulting in the total coverage of the gabion wall at the time of the council and government inspection on October 23. However in just the last two weeks storm period that cover has gone completely and the gabion wall is totally exposed again showing the need for repair. The outcome of the meeting of 23/10 was that a local resident was to contact council when council would again inspect the gabion wall.

#### **OFF-SHORE REEFS**

The Office of Environment and Heritage have stated that they will not request WRL to reply to Shaw Mead's answers to their review, that officers from WRL are having discussions with Shaw relating to this. Speaking with Shaw he has contacted Matt Blacka at WRL several times and Blacka has said he will get back to Shaw. Regarding the study of Efficacy of off-shore reefs for other NSW Beaches similarly affected to Old Bar – several contacts with an officer of OEH has resulted in the information that the study will be received soon. Another comment from Shaw is that Matt Blacka stated that he will send it to Shaw before he releases it as he is using material from Shaw's work and response to the WRL review in his "Efficacy of off-shore etc"

#### **COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS – PROF. TOR HUNDLOE**

Professor Tor Hundloe and undergraduate Craig Page from Bond University have commenced work on the Cost/benefit analysis for the off-shore reefs and they will be visiting Old Bar from February 14 to February 18 (inclusive) and will set up two survey stations – Bi-Lo at Old Bar, Friday February 15 from 2pm to 5pm and at the entry to Old Bar Beach Saturday February 16 from 7am to 10am . Also there will be a community meeting on Sunday, February 17 at Rushby Casino from 2.30 pm for discussion with the community.

#### **STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS CONCERN WITH COASTAL EROSION**

The position remains the same from our contact with both State and Federal representatives. They are very concerned with the erosion of the coastal beaches, but we are told that nothing can be done until there is a Coastal Management Plan in place – Our group has to keep pursuing the necessary studies so that we have the option of off-shore reefs totally prepared for submission when it happens and will appreciate any support we get from MECCAC.

#### **b. Crown Lands**

Chris Wright – NSW Trade & Investment, Crown Lands MECCAC Report Meeting 14 February 2013

#### **Farquhar Park Stage 2 'Batch Compost' Toilets**

The Manning Entrance State Park Trust (jointly managed by Crown Lands and Greater Taree City Council) has accepted a funding offer of \$96,000 from the Public Reserves Management Fund (PRMF) to complete stage two of the Farquhar Park Infrastructure Improvement Project's 'Batch Compost Toilet' component. In accord with tender process for stage one, the selected builder will commence construction after the Easter holidays.

The replacement of the cesspits (pit toilets) with the self-contained 'Batch Compost' system overcomes limited maintenance access constraints and reduces contamination risk to the water table and nearby oyster leases.

The first 'Batch Compost' toilet, completed in June 2012 was funded by successful grant funding applications to both the PRMF (\$50,000) and Hunter Central Rivers CMA (\$50,000).

#### **Restoration of Key Fish Habitat at Luthrie Inlet**

The Manning Entrance State Park Trust (jointly managed by Crown Lands and Greater Taree City Council) has accepted a 50:50 funding offer of \$28,500 from the 2012/13 NSW DPI Recreational Fishing Trusts Habitat Action Grants for the program titled; Restoring Key Fish Habitat at Luthrie Inlet (Northern end of Farquhar Park).

The restoration of Key Fish Habitat at Luthrie Inlet is a cheap, effective project using best management practices to increase fish habitat values of Coastal Saltmarsh (an

Endangered Ecological Community) and Mangrove by excluding stock and managing weeds.

The fragile foreshore area has experienced long term degradation from unrestricted stock grazing and vehicular traffic. Three hectares of Luthrie Inlet foreshore will be restored by redirecting unauthorised (stock and vehicular) access along foreshore area, to the existing sand mining access road.

Restoration of foreshore area will include: fencing, weeding and revegetation of the adjoining 100 foot Reserve on Luthrie Inlet's eastern foreshore i.e. revoke existing Enclosure Permit and add to Manning Entrance State Park.

### **c. NPWS**

#### **Shorebird Season**

The 2012-13 Little Tern breeding season came to a premature close due to a numerous factors; however the main and final factor was predation by Silver Gulls.

While breeding started later than usual, once started the season looked promising with the majority of nests laid on the berm to the east of Charlies Island and some on the dredged Little Tern island south of Charlies and some on the seaward side of Old Bar spit. Only a handful of nests were found on the sand island that developed in the River between Manning point and Harrington. In total only 14 little terns fledged – the worst result on record. Once preyed by the Silver Gulls the Little Tern breeding pairs abandoned any future breeding attempts.

The Pied Oyster Catchers had a patchy year and ascertaining total fledgling numbers has been difficult. Data shows a total of six fledglings were raised this season

The Beach Stone-Curlews failed its first breeding attempt but still has a chick from its second lay that it is actively protecting. The site where this species breeds is becoming slightly more frequented and we look forward to working with land managers/owners and stakeholders to try and minimise human disturbance on this breeding pair.

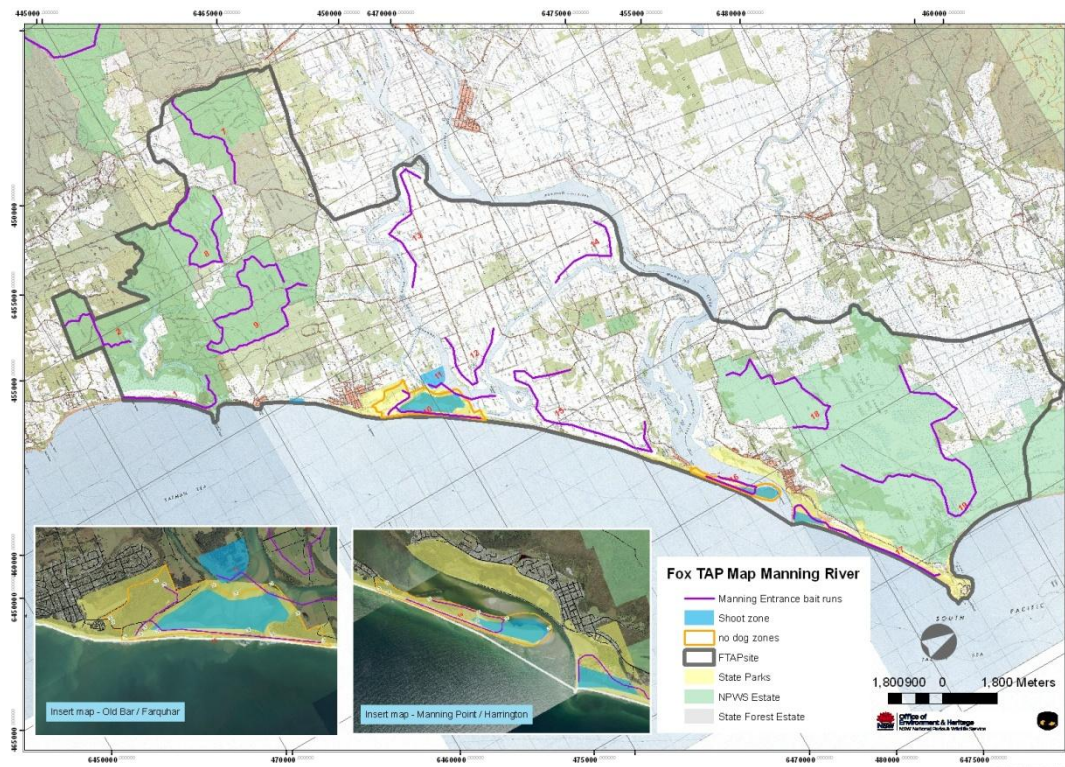
- **National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is investigating other methods of control to alleviate predation by rouge Silver Gulls.**
- **NPWS appreciated the ongoing dialogue on any works that may affect species habitat including dredging proposals or notch development in order to protect these species into the future.**
- **NPWS is looking at working with land owner/managers/stakeholders in order to prevent human disturbance on the Beach Stone –Curlew.**

#### **Fox Control**

This is intimately linked to the shorebirds (as they are litmus to how effective fox control is) and this year included additional funding sourced by Local Land Services (LLS), via a CFoC grant.

The extra funds paid for training on trapping, purchase of traps, additional contractor work, public relations/ engagement in the area affected, and camera operations to determine fox movements. This augments control works funded by NPWS. There is inherent need to try and secure additional funding to ensure that fox's are controlled effectively over the life of this program.

Fox Control was effective this year and data shows that around 120 fox's took baits (including ejectors) and 14 fox's are known to have been eliminated via this control programme. The Area of control is illustrated on the attached map.



- **Further funding sources will be investigated to continue and augment fox control in the area identified in the Fox Threat Abatement Area.**

### **Training Wall at Manning Point**

The local area NPWS is concerned over a possible proposition for a rock wall development to the south of the Manning River at Manning Point. This is likely to impact adversely on endangered species (including the Little Tern colony).

- **Any funding for a southern training wall at the main entrance to the Manning River should seek preliminary advice about the habitat implications on threatened migratory shorebird species.**

### **Meeting Closed**

9.25pm

**2013 Meeting Dates - at 8am in the Flett Room.**

9 May

8 August

14 November