

Branch / Group: Waterways – River Health Group

Issue / Topic: **Western Treatment Plant Biodiversity Conservation Advisory Committee**

Meeting Date: 8 August 2008

Location: Western Treatment Plant, Discovery Centre

Meeting Room: Conference Room

Present: John Barkla, Marc Cassenet, Cr Bob Fairclough, Maarten Hulzebosch, Richard Loyn, Bernie McCarrick, Colleen Miller (CM), Clive Minton (CDTM), William Steele

Apologies: Chris Lester, Brad Mclean, Peter Menkhorst, Tom Fletcher

Guests: Bob Swindley (RJS), Eddie Walker, Suelin Haynes

Absent: Aaron Organ

Item No.	Details / Issues	Responsibility	Due Date
1	Welcome		
1.1	Carried over: WKS to arrange formal letter of invitation for TF.	WKS	ASAP
2	Previous minutes		
2.1	JB emphasised that the Committee's comments were always intended to be constructive rather than critical and the minutes should reflect this.		
3	Matters arising		
3.1	MH suggested Committee should meet beforehand at wetlands to talk on site. WKS to arrange for next meeting.	WKS	5 Nov 08
3.2	MH reiterated his concern over herbicide use and run-off into drains and wetlands. Suggested grazing could be used to reduce herbicide use.		
3.3	WKS to arrange external review of Committee at first meeting of 2009.	WKS	2009
4	Conservation pond management		

4.1	Committee generally satisfied with vegetation clearance and 're-setting' of 35E Pond 9. WKS asked if this pond could now be flooded to take advantage of works before drawing down for summer.	WKS	ASAP
5	EPBC Act Compliance		
5.1	<p>WKS reported DEWHA had not yet responded to annual report.</p> <p>DEWHA has asked Melbourne Water to prepare new management plan to include all existing plans, strategies, protocols, etc.</p> <p>CDTM reported DEWHA was holding workshops to review effectiveness of EPBC Act as a result of widespread impression that Act had no teeth. Offsets were supposed to be last resort but were all too often the basis of all management.</p>		
5.2	CM reported that Wyndham City Council was working with Growth Area Authority to assess grasslands in area. Intent was to find and preserve best grasslands left; possibly through Environmental Significance Overlay under Planning Scheme.		
5.3	<p>CDTM asked about the Werribee River Park. He is concerned about the area and wants to develop relationship with new managers. MH agreed and stressed that Parks Victoria should use the expertise of the long-standing Committee members.</p> <p>CM added that things can be missed in assessing flora and fauna reports and that Committee could ask for environmental plan and for briefing from Parks Victoria. Agreed.</p>	WKS	5 Nov 08
5.4	MC reported EPA had asked WAG for a WTP Irrigation Management Plan and were now working through this. Irrigation flows would have implications for birds and the EPBC Act referral. Asked to tag along on DEWHA tour of WTP. WKS would refer to Philippa Charlton.	WKS	ASAP
5.5	<p>CDTM asked about the Multiple Outlets Study. What was the effect on shorebird; this should be monitored. WKS replied that intent was to study link between effluent flows and invertebrates. ARI study was addressing invertebrate to birds link.</p> <p>MH suggested there were fewer birds between Lake Borrie Outfall and Little River, but this might be due to the attractiveness of the managed conservation ponds.</p> <p>WKS reported there was to be a workshop on 13 Aug</p>		

	<p>08 to get all scientists working on the intertidal together.</p> <p>RHL pointed out we assume it is N that is important but it could well be Particulate Organic Carbon (POC).</p> <p>MH suggested looking at results of past studies to identify changes in vertebrate community correlating with changes in flows. This was done in 2003 by Morris and Metcalf. MH reported great changes in mollusc community over 15 years, with a newly arrived species now common.</p> <p>RHL pointed out the need to know what birds fed on and described Danny Rogers' technique of photographing prey as it was caught.</p>		
5.6	MC suggested that low inflows due to drought and water restrictions caused reduced discharges in nutrients and that this was not anything Melbourne Water need worry about in connection with the EPBC Act or referring to Canberra.		
6	Remote Monitoring of Livestock		
6.1	CM reported on remote monitoring using webcam and the usefulness of this. RHL suggested monitoring the ibis roost might be one use.		
7	2008/09 Works Program		
7.1	CDTM wished to see proper study on optimal management of shorebird ponds.		
7.2	CDTM wished to see shorebird study continued.		
7.3	MC suggested 'piggy-backing' the proposed stable isotope study, which could not be funded this year, with Mixing Zone Study underway.		
8	Other Business		
8.1	RJS asked what plans were for 115E Borrow Pit. WKS replied that water was now stagnant since it was not possible to exchange water readily in pond. Water was being pumped out prior to flooding in October to create suitable conditions for breeding Growling Grass Frogs.		
8.2	EW thanked Melbourne Water for grant to assist with his nest-box study.		
8.3	MC reported that EPA had amended license, site plan and boundary in light of recent developments such as the Werribee River Park.		

8.4	MC asked for Melbourne Water to have staff member report to WTP Community Liaison Committee on biodiversity issues once a year. Agreed.		
-----	---	--	--

File Path: I:\MEL\Strategic Planning & Biodiversity\Biodiversity Conservation\4 WTP Biod Conserv Program\43 Communication\WTP BCAC\2008\WTP BCAC mnts 20080507.doc

Next Meetings:

- Wednesday, 5 Nov 2008 NB meeting at 15h00 for drive to ponds.

Venue: Conference Room, Western Treatment Plant Discovery Centre