

Minutes

Unconfirmed Minutes of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee Meeting held Wednesday 14 August 2024

Venue:

South Sea Islander Room, Tweed Head Administration Office, Tweed Heads

Time:

9.00am

Present:

Rhonda James (chair); Cr Chris Cherry; Cr Nola Firth; Larry Woodland; Dave Cranwell; Robert Quirk; Lindy Smith; Peter Comerford; Joanne Gardner; Jonathan Yantsch (NSW Fisheries); Rod McDonagh and Bret Ryan (NSW Maritime); Tom Alletson; Jordan Vickers; Jane Lofthouse (TSC).

Apologies:

Dan Ware; Graeme McIlveen; Adam Andrewartha.

Guests:

Lesley Diver (NSW Fisheries).

Acknowledgement of Country

Minutes of Previous Meeting 12 June 2024:

Moved: Cr Nola Firth

Seconded: Peter Commerford

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee meeting held Wednesday 12 June 2024 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings of that meeting.

Business Arising:

BA1. Hastings Point Headland Draft Plan of Management – Cudgera Creek boat ramp

Tom tabled an email from Adam Andrewartha regarding the proposal in the preliminary draft Hastings Point Management Plan to remove the concrete slab used as a boat ramp. Adam believes he has seen the ramp being used recently and considers it to be a diminishment of service to the community and a waste of money to remove, with greater priorities for action. Noted that this action will be allocated a low priority and left in draft plan for consultation purposes. Tom will reply directly to Adams email explaining the reasons for proposing removal of the concrete slab.

Agenda Items:

A1. Code of Practice for the Cook Island Aquatic Reserve

Lesley Diver, Senior Manager Marine Planning, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development gave a presentation on the Code of Practice for Cook Island Aquatic Reserve developed in partnership with local tour operators.

The presentation highlighted the purpose and background to gazettal of the aquatic reserve with a primary purpose "To conserve the diversity of marine life". Cook Island has high social, cultural and economic values and there are 10 known snorkel / dive tour operators using the area. Noted that marine reserves have a licencing system for tour operators to regulate conduct, but aquatic reserves do not.

Development of a code of conduct was in response to complaints about harm to the reef. It outlines the need for tour operators to educate clients and peers and encourages reporting illegal activities. There is a high reliance on self-compliance by operators. Also identified is a need for broader education strategy for private boats, particularly about anchoring (8 public and 4 commercial mooring buoys are provided) and landing on Cook Island.

Discussion followed on what actions Council can assist with and included contributing to an overall education campaign and programs to improve water quality in the Tweed River.

It was noted that Green Heroes are applying for some funding for a reef monitoring program and may seek a letter of support. The Committee expressed general agreement with providing a letter of support from Council.

Action: *Tom to follow up with Green Heroes regarding a letter of support for its grant application for a reef monitoring program.*

A2. Options for increased levels of protection for Hastings Point Rocky Shore

Discussion on the previous request by Council to increase the protection of Hastings Point rocky shore. The response received in 2018 from the Minister noted it was considered that the bioregion was sufficiently covered by Cook Island Aquatic Reserve and Byron Bay Marine Park.

Jonathan Yantsch discussed options to increase protection through education and awareness and management options to address non-compliance issues. Noted that there has been increased compliance action by NSW Fisheries leading to a noticeable reduction in complaints and reports of non-compliance from the Hastings Point area.

Jonathan will continue to communicate with committee and council to assist with identifying current concerns and actual issues. Noted that marine areas still need to provide for a range of activities including collecting and fishing to ensure equity of uses. Also noted that nominations for protection requires a scientific evidence base to determine levels of protection. Data from the Marine Science Centre may be useful in identifying actual issues.

Action: *Council to work with NSW Fisheries to develop appropriate management actions to increase protection/decrease unsustainable use of the rocky shore and if warranted put them into the Hastings Point Headland management plan.*

A3. Preliminary Coastal Hazard Mapping results (Coastal CMP)

Jordy provided an update on the data and mapping received under the open coast and coastal estuaries Coastal Management Hazard Study (stage 2). This will be followed by consideration of options and responses over time (stages 3 and 4). Jordy gave a brief overview of immediate and 2120 coastal erosion lines and tidal inundation hazards.

The next 12 months will be focused on increasing awareness and how this information is provided to the community. Suggestion that it be linked in with the work being done through the community-based resilience program.

A4. Canoe launch for Stotts Channel

Update from Matt Bloor on the kayak launch facility for Stotts Channel to encourage passive recreation next to the last significant stand of lowland rainforest in the Tweed. Funded by NSW Boating Now grant.

Concerns expressed on the facility increasing the threat of people accessing Stotts Island Nature Reserve. Signage to be developed in conjunction with NPWS outlining values and need to protect the island.

A5. Update on riverbank rehabilitation works – Tyngalah

Works have commenced on the riverbank opposite Condong Mill including rock work, fish habitat features and revegetation of the upper bank.

A6. Renewal of Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee

Reminder to committee members to submit applications by 26 August 2024.

Outstanding Items:

O11. Fishing debris and sea bird injuries in Tweed waterways

Update on the Council resolution to develop an education campaign on fishing debris. Tom to work on a communication plan and liaise with the incoming committee.

General Business:

GB1. Tweed River vessel speed limit above Murwillumbah Bridge

Peter Comerford tabled a request from Bob Modystack for speed limit reduction between the Bray Park weir and the Murwillumbah Bridge. Tom has discussed this with Bob, who is aware that this is a NSW Maritime matter. Having been a past representative on this committee, Bob is seeking the committee's endorsement of the proposal.

The existing position of the committee and Council is as expressed in the adopted/certified Tweed Estuary Coastal Management Program, Action E1 "Extending the no ski/tow zone within the "Restoration Zone" (Bray Park Weir to Commercial Road Boat Ramp) to reduce the risk of further wake induced bank erosion and increase the likelihood of existing erosion being able to be stabilised with bioengineered works, whilst increasing the areas suitability for tranquil and passive recreational uses." The proposal for which support is requested is for a reduction of speed to 6 knots.

Tom spoke to the matter and advised the committee that it is his opinion the action adopted and justified in the CMP should be maintained as the committee's and Council's position at this time, given the significant amount of work invested in developing and adopting the action.

Brett noted that in reviewing a request to either reduce speed or prevent towing, NSW Maritime would look at current use and ability to manage uses.

There was some discussion on the previous Tweed River Boating Plan and consultation that was initiated to review the plan. The review did not proceed. It was noted that the Tweed River Boating Plan has not been renewed since it was first drafted in 2006.

Action: *Council staff to write to NSW Maritime and request an update on a review of the Tweed River Boating Plan and highlight the actions related to boating and river rehabilitation that relate to wake, in the certified and gazetted Tweed River Estuary Coastal Management Program.*

GB2. Jack Evans Boat Harbour (JEBH) Sea Wall Repairs

There has been a condition assessment of the JEBH by Crown Lands which identified repair and maintenance options and estimated costs. Council to organise a meeting between Council, Crown Lands and Transport for NSW (Maritime Infrastructure Delivery Office).

Noted that there has been a large increase in the maintenance required to Jack Evans foreshore infrastructure due to increased sand movement in harbour.

Minutes

Moved: Robert Quirk

Seconded: Lindy Smith

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council writes to the Member for Tweed, Geoff Provest MP and the Minister for Transport, Jo Haylen MP noting the urgency of repairs required to the Jack Evans Boat Harbour seawall as identified in the condition assessment report and staff continue to liaise with Crown Lands.

GB3. Overview of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Committee history – Robert Quirk

In 1987 a major fish kill occurred in the Tweed River. Fishers blamed cane farmers and serious conflict arose in the community.

The Tweed River Advisory Committee formed and included cane farmers, conservation interests, oyster farmers and commercial fishers. Robert and Rhonda James were part of this first committee.

Wal Murray (NSW Government Minister) arranged for the royalties from sand dredging in the Tweed River to be provided to Council for management initiatives for the river. Expenditure of the incoming funds was managed by the Tweed River Management Plan Advisory Committee. Clive Easton, Council's entomologist at the time, identified that acid sulphate soils were the cause of the fish kills, and this started the commitment to university research and practical management of ASS on cane farms.

Great thanks and acknowledgment was expressed to Robert for his time on this committee and his long history and expertise working on ASS in Tweed, and outcomes for improved agricultural sustainability in cane growing regions across the world.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Tweed Coast and Waterways Advisory Committee will be held following establishment of new Committee in December 2024.

The meeting closed at 12:05pm

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S COMMENTS:

Nil.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

GB2. Jack Evans Boat Harbour (JEBH) Sea Wall Repairs

That Council writes to the Member for Tweed, Geoff Provest MP and the Minister for Transport, Jo Haylen MP noting the urgency of repairs required to the Jack Evans Boat Harbour seawall as identified in the condition assessment report and staff continue to liaise with Crown Lands.