

DALY RIVER MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING RECORD FOR
MEETING 3: 28 FEBRUARY – 2 MARCH 2007

Katherine

Meeting Room, Knotts Crossing Resort

Present

Committee Member	Committee Role
John Childs	Chair
Dan Thomson	Represent Non-Indigenous landowners and the NT Cattlemen's Association
John Eddy (1-2 March)	Represent Non-Indigenous landowners and the NT Horticultural Association
Gary Higgins	Represent Tourism and the Katherine Region Tourism Association
Mona Liddy	Represent Indigenous Landowners and the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group
William Hewitt	Represent Indigenous Landowners and the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group
Warren de With	Represent Recreation/ Fishing interests and the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT
Joe Martin-Jard	Government Regional Development Planner
Bruce Sawyer	Government Primary Industries
Ian Lancaster	Government Water Manager
John de Koning	Government Conservation and Recreation Manager
Brett Brogan	Government Land Use Planner
Proxy for Mark Meldrum	
Darlene Lion	DRMAC Executive Officer

Apologies

Stuart Blanch Represent Conservation interests and the Environment Centre of the NT

Observers

Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries, Mr Chris Natt MLA, attended Day 1 farm tour.

Ray Clarke, Adviser to Minister Natt, attended Day 1 farm tour.

Kim Hill, Adviser to the Minister for Regional Development, the Hon Kon Vatskalis MLA, attended Day 1 farm tour and the Day 2 presentations.

The Member for Daly, Mr Robert Knight MLA, attended Day 1 farm tour.

Julie Bird, Extension Officer, DPIFM, attended Day 1 farm tour to provide technical expertise

Daniel Connor, Water Resource Planner, DNRETA, attended Day 1 farm tour to provide technical expertise

Presentations

Owen Price and Brooke Rankmore, Biodiversity Conservation, DNRETA, attended the meeting for Agenda Item 6 to provide a presentation.

Rod Illingsworth, Tipperary Station, attended the meeting for Agenda Item 4 to provide a presentation.

Day 1: 28 February 2007

From 10.30am to 4.30pm, DRMAC visited farms and waterways in Katherine and surrounding areas and talked with farmers about land clearing and water management on their properties.

Day 2: 1 March – 2 March 2007

Meeting at the Knotts Crossing Resort

1. Welcome

The Committee thanked the farmers who provided a tour of their properties and gave up their time to talk to the Committee, including:

- Mr Andrew Simons of PCA Farm
- Mr Bill Davey of Eumaralla Farm
- Mr Richard Hamley of Yandilla Park Limited
- Mr Jack Wheeler, Manager of Katherine Research Station

2. Previous Meeting

2.1 Meeting Record

The Meeting Record for Meeting 2 was accepted by Warren de With and seconded by Bruce Sawyer.

2.2 Action Sheet and progress on items

The Action Sheet for Meeting 2 was accepted. An update on Agenda item 5.3 was noted, in relation to the estimates obtained from 2 organisations on the costs of conducting biodiversity surveys. John de Koning asked that it be noted that other organisations also provide biodiversity surveys and possibly for a cheaper price.

3. Closed Discussion

As items discussed under this agenda item are confidential, a record of the Closed Discussion is not included in this Meeting Record.

4. Presentation – Rod Illingsworth from the Tipperary Group

Rod Illingsworth described the activities at Tipperary Station since 2003 to address land management problems, such as weeds (primarily Mimosa) and erosion. Rod stated that Tipperary Station is committed to sustainable land development and conservation and is willing to work with DRMAC. Rod stressed that certainty is required (eg for land clearing) to enable Tipperary Station to develop its business and continue its work, including its conservation program.

5. Presentation – An Indigenous Management Framework for the Daly River Catchment

The presentation on the Indigenous Management Framework for the Daly River Catchment was not provided.

6. Presentation - Balancing Land Clearing and Biodiversity Conservation in the Daly

Owen Price and Brooke Rankmore from Biodiversity Conservation, DNRETA, described the effects of land clearing on biodiversity and other impacts, the landscape design project that is currently underway, the conservation elements that could be included in planning and planning scenarios for the Daly and the potential amount of land that could be cleared with each scenario.

Action

DRMAC requested an enlarged copy of Owen's GIS scenario planning examples.

7. Land Clearing Briefing Issue

7.1 Revised Land Clearing Briefing Paper

A minor correction was noted for amendment on page 9 of the Revised Land Clearing Briefing Paper.

7.2 Greenhouse Considerations for Land Clearing Update

The update paper outlines the current issues in relation to estimating greenhouse gas emissions from land use change and provides a preliminary range for emissions from land clearing in the Daly Region. The paper was provided for DRMAC's information.

7.3 Draft Supplementary Land Clearing Guidelines for the Daly River Catchment 2007

At Meeting No. 2, on 25-27 October 2006, DRMAC reviewed the current NT Government Land Clearing Guidelines with a view to drafting Guidelines with specific reference to the Daly River Catchment.

The Draft Supplementary Land Clearing Guidelines for the Daly River Catchment 2007 were developed using the changes DRMAC suggested and tabled at Meeting No. 3.

Action

DRMAC requested changes to the *The Draft Supplementary Land Clearing Guidelines for the Daly River Catchment 2007*. The revised version of the Supplementary Guidelines will be circulated to DRMAC for further consideration out of session.

7.4 Draft Adaptive Management Framework for Native Vegetation Clearing

The Draft Adaptive Management Framework for Native Vegetation Clearing was developed for DRMAC to consider along with *The Draft Supplementary Land Clearing Guidelines for the Daly River Catchment 2007*.

Action

DRMAC requested changes to *The Draft Adaptive Management Framework for Native Vegetation Clearing*. The revised version of the framework will be circulated to DRMAC for further consideration out of session.

7.5 DRMAC Land Clearing Action Plan

Further action for progressing the land clearing issue was discussed. It was decided that the Chair of DRMAC will present the Minister with *The Draft Supplementary Land Clearing Guidelines for the Daly River Catchment 2007* and *The Draft Adaptive Management Framework for Native Vegetation Clearing* as a basis for considering processing of applications for land clearing.

It was agreed that DRMAC would also recommend to the Minister that:

- DRMAC would review all land clearing applications as they are loaded onto the NRETA website.
- new developments or applications for land clearing are to be considered in a regional planning context that includes the completion of determining proposed reserve areas such as those in the *Draft Conservation Plan for the Daly Basin Bioregion*.

Mona Liddy stated that she would not be able to agree with the final draft of the Supplementary Guidelines and Adaptive Management Framework until the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group (DRARG) representatives on DRMAC have presented the documents for consideration at a DRARG meeting.

Action

The Chair will draft the DRMAC briefing paper for presentation to the Minister with *The Draft Supplementary Land Clearing Guidelines for the Daly River Catchment 2007* and *The Draft Adaptive Management Framework for Native Vegetation Clearing*.

DRMAC requested that advice on the process for declaring the Supplementary Guidelines under the Planning Act, including a timeline, be provided out of session to the Chair.

8. DRMAC Water Use and Management Action Plan

8.1 Presentation - Sustainable Use of Ground Water in the NT

Ian Lancaster provided a presentation on the Sustainable Use of Ground Water in the NT, with special reference to the ground water in the Daly River Catchment.

8.2 Katherine Subregion Water Allocation Planning Update

Ian Lancaster reported on the inaugural KWAC meeting. The meeting went well and the proposed objectives for the Committee and the timelines for the water allocation plan were agreed to. Methods of communicating with stakeholders were discussed.

The next meeting of the KWAC is scheduled for 19 March 2007. The KWAC will be asked to agree to the recommended changes in the boundaries of the Katherine Water Control District.

The process for informing DRMAC of KWAC work and recommendations was discussed. The minutes of all future KWAC meetings and reports will be provided to DRMAC out of session as they become available and comments can be forwarded to the DRMAC Executive Officer. Any further follow up matters can be addressed at the DRMAC meeting.

Action

Ian Lancaster will forward KWAC plans to DRMAC for information.

8.3 Water Management Issues Briefing Paper

At meeting no.2 on 25-27 October, DRMAC requested that information be provided on a range of water management issues. A briefing on the issues was compiled for DRMAC to consider.

Action

DRMAC requested the following changes to the Water Management Issues Briefing paper:

- under the heading 'Sources of the Water' add a paragraph on the Jinduckin Aquifer.
- under 'Salt Water – Distance up Stream' obtain further information on the model NRETA is developing showing salinity under various flow conditions.
- under 'Catchment Water Balances' provide a simplified explanation of the catchment balance in megalitres, rather than mm as shown. (Ian Lancaster can provide examples of what's required for the Tindall and Oolloo). The model should show the minimum, maximum and mean figures.

- under 'Legalities of Ownership of Water', provide information on entitlements, eg if I buy a property with a water licence, what are the issues relating to the licence?
- Under 'Illogical Distribution of Annual Pumping', provide information on the flexibility of allocation through the year, as well as the entitlement should be greater than the water use.
- Under 'Sedimentation and Erosion' provide information on natural erosion, including stating the data that has been collected and whether it is available or not. Also if we know if much of the erosion of banks at the end of the Dry season is natural or caused by boats. Provide a diagram on the change in the banks over the years. Provide a complete summary of what is known and what research is required.
- Under 'Man Made Impacts' provide information on the impact of tourism (eg boats, septic, rubbish etc) and the building of the railway. Also provide a statement of whether Mt Todd and the sewerage treatment plant are being monitored.
- Under 'Conservation Values' ensure the second paragraph indicates few mammal 'species' were recorded.
- 'Cultural Flows' should include information on other cultural uses such as fishing, tourism etc. Refer to work referenced in CRG Report.
- Under 'Water Trading' add a sentence to clarify the status of water trading plans in the NT.
- Under 'Water Pricing' provide information on the implications of water pricing.

8.4 Water Management Action Plan

The Committee discussed further action for progressing water management. Concerns raised included:

- balancing conservation and development, including potential development for indigenous communities
- ensuring partnerships with indigenous people in creating development opportunities
- ensuring partnerships with indigenous people in managing access to land (eg leasing) in order to reduce land degradation and conserve the land.

Action

DRMAC requested:

- an outline of the water allocation plans that are planned for the Daly River Catchment in order of priority.
- an explanation of the information that the current modelling work will provide. An officer from the Water Resources Branch, NRETA, will be invited to provide a presentation on the modelling work on the Tindall, and if possible provide some information on the modelling on the Ooloo.
- Information on recycled water use in the Daly River Catchment.

9. Reports/ Information Papers

9.1 Landscape Design for Maintaining Ecosystems Services in Tropical Agricultural Landscapes – Steering Committee Update

Mona Liddy and John Ety reported that they attended the first meeting of the Steering Committee.

The current fish and flow study was raised as a matter of interest to DRMAC. It was agreed that an update on the study *Water Regime Dependence of Fish in the Wet-Dry Tropics* would be added as a standing item for future DRMAC meetings.

Action

Invite Michael Douglas to provide a presentation at the DRMAC meeting on current and planned research relating to the Daly through the TRACK program.

9.2 Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group Update

The update from the Daly River Aboriginal Reference Group members was provided as part of the Committee's Closed Discussion.

10. Communication

10.1 Community Engagement

Circulation of the recently printed DRMAC brochure and the proposal to convene a researchers forum were discussed.

Action

DRMAC requested the circulation of the DRMAC brochure through:

- Display at the Katherine Research Farm – Farm and Garden Day
- Displaying the brochure in government offices
- Asking relevant organisations to send it out with their mailouts eg NLC News, NT Horticultural Association, North Australia Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance and Amateur Fishermens Association of the NT.

DRMAC requested a proposal for a researchers forum be provided for consideration at the next meeting.

11. New Business

Issues raised in discussion under New Business included:

- Subdivision in the Douglas Daly region
- Clearing of tracts of land alongside roads or verges.

DRMAC will start considering subdivision at the next meeting.

It was suggested that the Department of Planning and Infrastructure could be contacted regarding the road side reserves in the area of concern.

John Childs advised the meeting the Committee that he had received a letter from the Chair of the NT Horticultural Association, Mr Tom Harris, regarding John's response to an issue raised at the Eumaralla Farm. John Childs advised his proposed response to be forwarded in a letter to Mr Tom Harris.

12.Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next DRMAC meeting will be held in May 2007 in The Daly.