



ACT Bushfire Council Meeting

3 Oct 2012
16:00 to 18:00
Black Mountain 1 & 2
Meeting Rooms
ACTESA Headquarters

Chair:	Kevin Jeffery (KJ)	Secretariat:	Brioni Young (BY)
Attendees:	Christine Goonrey (CG), Member Michael Lonergan (ML), Member Cathy Parsons (CP), Member Peter Beutel (PB), Member Marion Leiba (MLe), Member		Andrew Stark (AS), CO ACT RFS Michael Joyce (MJ), DCO ACTRFS Neil Cooper (NC), Mgr Fire Forest & roads, PCS
Meeting commencement:	16.00	Meeting concluded:	18:15

Minutes

Agenda item:	1.0 – Apologies	Presenter:	Chair
	Tony Bartlett, Simon Katz, Natalie Hile, Sarah Sharp, Paul Swain		
Agenda item:	2.0 – Acceptance of minutes of 5 Sept 2012 meeting	Presenter:	Chair
Discussion:	The minutes from the previous meeting held on 5 Sept 2012 were accepted as a true and accurate record.		
Agenda item:	3.0 – Guest Speaker from Auditor General’s Department	Presenter:	Maxine Cooper
Discussion:	The meeting commenced with a visit from the Auditor General Maxine Cooper. She discussed how the audit process works on a particular issue. It was explained that each issue has a background paper that scopes the audit and the criteria that must be followed. The members had an opportunity to ask questions and get guidance.		
Action:	As part of the reports KJ will seek endorsement from the Minister for passing the ‘2012 Preparedness report’ and the ‘10 year report’ for the audit.		
Agenda item:	4.0 – Update on action items arising from previous meetings	Presenter:	Chair
Discussion:	Refer to implementation of action items report (attached to end of minutes).		
Agenda item:	5.0 – Correspondence	Presenter:	CO ACTRFS
Discussion:	Nil		
Agenda item:	6.0 – Chief Officers Report	Presenter:	Andrew Stark

Discussion: The Fuel state within the ACT was discussed. There has been significant rainfall in the elevated areas with over 50ml at Mt Ginini over the weekend so the forests in elevated areas are very wet. The grass is at an 'interesting' stage as we are experiencing warmer conditions than last year and we are about to get a lot of grass growth as the temperature goes back into the ground. The forecast for summer is for dryer conditions but we could also have storms.

Over the past 2 seasons curing has not gone above 70% so it is likely to be a more patchy result this year – though if there is low rainfall all grass areas could be cured.

The ACTRFS held their pre-season brief last week and received good feedback from attendees. The Operational handbook and Contact directory manuals were handed out.

All Sheds have now completed their AGM's and some changes in leadership have taken place. The most significant was at the Southern Brigade where Val Jeffery has stepped down from Captain after 38 years to Deputy Captain. The new Captain is Steve Angus. Matthew Bolton has taken over Captaincy from Steve Harding at Hall. Chris Deal has taken over from Andrew Joyce at Jerrabomberra and Simon Butt has taken over Captaincy from Paul Murphy at Gungahlin.

RFS has done a lot of training including Advance Fire fighter training. Another group of new recruits have completed their basic training and AS took a group of 14 through 4 different modules recently.

The ACTRFS staff completed an IMX at Cooma recently and next week many staff plan to participate in 3 other mini exercises in NSW in order to increase our liaison with NSW RFS.

We are still working towards the Field day which is to be held at the end of October in Hume.

Action:

Andrew to redistribute the final IMT list to all members

Agenda item:	7.0 – Tenth Anniversary Report to the Minister	Presenter:	Members
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Discussion: Discussed under the Action Items.
Format of report is still under review. It was decided that if everyone were to include a paragraph regarding the McLeod's and Bob Smiths recommendations the report would be too long so a table will be added as an additional column.

Action

Marion to email the details of the format required for this report to members.

Agenda item:	8.0 – 2012 Annual Report	Presenter:	All members
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Discussion: Many members have submitted their part of the report but there are still some parts that need to be done urgently. Send completed work to Marion and Cathy for collation.

PB summaries the changes made to this years PCS BOP after a presentation by

PCS staff on the 2/10/2012. Fay Steward repeated several times that the changes to the BOP presented to BFC in July was as a result of a revised risk assessment process and not as a result of budget cuts. However, PB noted the budget was 24% less than the 2011-12 BOP but the same as the 2010-11 BOP. The total area to be burned this year has increased. But many other activities have decreased.

NC advised that all activities that were proposed in the initial BOP were looked at in detail and only those issues deemed to be low on the risk assessment were dropped (for example the grading of certain roads which were still in an acceptable condition) These items were not deleted just postponed to a later year.

It was noted that the final draft of the BOP only arrived at the RFS last week which is too close to the start of the fire season. It was noted by the BFC members that the process of completing the BOP is taking far too long due to the amount of consultation required. It suggested that in the future it should be organised that all stakeholders should meet at one time to save delays in completing the BOP.

Agenda item: 9.0 – *Support for the ACT Bushfire Museum* **Presenter:** Kevin Jeffery

Discussion: KJ advised members that a letter had been sent off in regard to this matter.

Agenda item: 10.0 – *Coombs Site inspection report* **Presenter:** Christine Goonrey

Discussion: CJ reported to the group on the report of the Coombs inspection.

Coombs Stakeholder Meeting, 20 September 2012

Representatives of TAMS, CPR, LDA, Molonglo Catchment Group, Conservation Council ACT Region, ACT Bushfire Council attended.

Presentations:

1. Progress and overview of the development and structure of the Statutory Plan of Management for the Molonglo River Corridor was presented. Key dates and papers are: Ecological Management Guidelines: draft prepared, final due Dec 2012; Operational Plan preparation commenced, final due Dec 2013; Land management – Coombs commenced, due Sept 2012. The Statutory Plan of Management that incorporates all the issues papers is due for completion after that (i.e. 2014).
2. Coombs Outer Asset Protection Zone Works Plan was provided and a PowerPoint presentation given.
 - Coombs Interface zone was said to have the highest priority in terms of estate development. Further public comment will be invited once final revision of plan is completed.
 - Plans include stock piling of rocks for future enhancement of Pink Tailed Worm Lizard (PTWL) habit potential.
 - The aim of the works plan is to reduce the fire fuel, but in terms of PTWL adjacent to Coombs, no additional works are planned . Areas with high and moderate potential PTWL habitat and associated 20-metre buffer zone have been indicated on the plan.
 - The key to success of the work plan hinges on there being a suite of activities and options being applied to seven differentiated zones.
3. Stakeholders outlined their issues:
 - a. Conservation Council: to ensure the PTWL habitat was outside the outer asset zone as per the agreement earlier in the year and to clarify compliance with the EPBC approval conditions.
 - b. Bushfire Council: ensure that the Inner and Outer APZ were outside high conservation areas and treatment ensured protection of lives (including fire-fighters in a potential wildfire), property and the environment.
 - c. Molonglo Catchment Group: ensure that:
 - recreation pressure in the corridor is being addressed

- protection of PTWL habitat
- Appropriate number of access points, and types of fencing and plantings are being considered.

Site visits were undertaken to four locations in Coombs.

Major planning and management points:

1. The development boundary on which all planning is based is that determined through the ACAT decision, which resulted in blocks BK, BL and BM being taken out of the DA. This means that the majority of the area within the river corridor on the western side of Coombs is outside the Outer Asset Zone (OAPZ), but that some of the eastern side (and over onto the northern side of the river) is within the OAPZ. The ACAT decision allows for the potential to put in a DA in for this area but only after the Statutory River Corridor Plan of Management is concluded. If development occurs in Blocks BK, BL and BM the OAPZ will need to be moved to include PTWL habitat.
2. No works are required within the PTWL habitat to reduce fuel levels, although ecological management, in the form of weed control, fencing and provision of access tracks, will be required. These and other management strategies are required under the EPBC approval for Coombs.
3. Works in other areas have been planned around access, erosion potential, other identified ecological values and existing fire fuel. Works include removal of pine wildings, some Acacias, other weeds, 'track rolling' and slashing, retention of isolated clumps of Casuarina and native shrubs, a patch of Hairy Anchor Plant and an area of Poa grassland. It is likely that most bird habitat will be impacted on in designated areas on the southern banks of the river. Bird habitat will be restored across the river in areas to be cleared of pine trees and other invasive plants and revegetated with habitat specific species.
4. Ground stabilisation, rather than habitat creation, would be a priority in some areas. Mulching works may improve existing exposed soil areas and form new microhabitats for insects, birds and plants. Monitoring of such areas will be necessary.
5. It is envisaged that there will be no need to fight wildfires within the area of PTWL habitat, as there is adequate space and better access above the habitat area.
6. In other parts of Stage 2 Molonglo there is PTWL habitat and other areas of ecological value within the proposed OAPZ. Current erosion of exposed subsoil, following contract works in the trunk sewer treatment zone, is highlighting the highly erodible soils and need to protect them in future works.

Agenda item: *11.0 – Other items*

Presenter: **Chair**

Discussion:

It was noted that Bob Moore a former member of the Bushfire Council passed away a few days ago. He was a member of the Council until 2005. He first joined as a Deputy member in the 90's and was President at Williamsdale for some time. He was also the Guises Creek President for some time as well as holding many other positions over the years.

12.0 – Next meeting

Presenter: **Secretariat**

The meeting was closed at 6:10pm. The next meeting is scheduled for 7th November 2012.



ACT BUSHFIRE COUNCIL IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION ITEMS

~Principles~

- The register will include all action items that have yet to be implemented or where implementation is in progress. The status of implementation should be reviewed at each Bushfire Council meeting.
- The status update information is the only information that will be regularly updated in the relevant column. The only exception to this is if a revised completion date is suggested, the status must clearly detail rationale for this change.
- Status of implementation will continue to be regularly updated until action item is fully implemented.
- Action items will only be indicated as “Complete” after due consideration by the Bushfire Council.

Action Item / Issue ¹	Originating Meeting date	Responsibility	Proposed / Revised completion date	General Comment	Status Update
1. Training needs analysis to be tabled at the next Bushfire Council Meeting.	7/3/2012	ACTRFS	Nov12	AS noted that the list of qualified Machinery Operators etc (for example) was tabled at the Captains Meetings.	AS to organize out of session and send email to members.
2. Strategic priorities for BFC meetings	9/2/2012	Neil Cooper			Ongoing
3. TAMS quarterly report on the Bushfire Operational Plan (BOP)	9/2/2012	Neil Cooper			Ongoing

4. Request that Jason Sharples be approached to present the research relating to bushfire behaviour to the Committee	9/2/2012	Kevin Jeffery		To remain on Agenda	Ongoing
5. The ACT Bushfire Council 10 year review Management Inquires Recommendations into the 2003 Canberra Bushfires — Revision of Fire Fighting Equipment and System report. 1) Provide Bushfire Council with the trial of fire retardant report conducted by Bushfire CRC.	7/3/2012	1) Bushfire Council Andrew Stark	Oct 12	Authors are reminded to do their reports and to get them circulated soon. Electronic copy of report to be circulated out of session.	Ongoing Ongoing
6. Include the next topic 'Fire fighting relationships.	4/4/2012	Simon Katz Natalie Hile			Ongoing
7. Arrange the Manager ESA Media and Community Information to provide a calendar of upcoming ACTRFS public awareness campaigns and provide further briefings for long term strategies Action: Provide the two calendars (RFS and the ESA Public Education) to members	2/5/2012	Andrew Stark			November meeting

8. Meeting between the BFC and ED of Conservation Council to be organised in relation to Coombs development issues 5 Sept update: Also need to include TAMS, LDA, ESA and RFS	4/7/ 2012	Kevin Jeffery		Concern that there was an agreement between LDA/ TAMS/ Cons council that they didn't need to do the work that had first been planned, as the houses were no longer there – yet they were still in the BOP. Also there are many management plans that need to be cleared up.	Ongoing
9. LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) presentation to be organised	2/8/12	Neil Cooper	February 2013		
10. Discussion regarding the Fuel assessment report and at what stage it is at	2/8/12	Kevin Jeffery/ Andrew Stark and Nick Lheude	Oct 12		Complete
11. Obtain a report from Andrew Stark and discuss opportunity to meet with NSW NPWS regarding coordination of burns	2/8/12	Kevin Jeffery Andrew Stark	Oct 12		NC met with NSW NPWS and no further action is required here. Complete
12. Discuss the inclusion of leased land and Federal property in a comprehensive ACT Fire Management Plan.	2/8/12	Kevin Jeffery Andrew Stark	Oct 12		.
13. Get in contact with Auditor Generals department to discuss the outcome of their 10 year report (to ensure consistencies with the BFC's report)	2/8/12	Kevin Jeffery	Oct 12		Complete
14. 10 th Anniversary Report; Everyone to send their	5/9/12	Members	Ongoing		

draft papers to Marion and Cathy to collate. They will send these back to BY for distribution					
15. 2012 Annual report documents to be sent to Marion and Cathy for editing and collation They will then send it to the Secretariat to circulate.	5/9/12	Members	Ongoing		
16. Provide any comment to Andrew Stark in regard to the IMT position list	5/9/12	Members	Oct 12		
17. Discuss the Councils budget allocation in relation to Council members attending AFAC next year	5/9/12	Kevin Jeffery Andrew Stark	Oct 12		