

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting
Cleary Bros Gerroa Sand Resource Community Consultative Committee
Held via Zoom videoconference
Thursday 23 July 2020 at 10:37 am

Present:

Chairperson	Brian Weir (BW)
Kiama Municipal Council Representative	Cr Andrew Sloan (AS)
Community Representative	Stephen Brazier (SB)
GEPS Representative	Warren Holder (WH)
Cleary Bros Environmental Officer	Mark Hammond (MH)
Cleary Bros Representative	Todd Kalajzich (TK)

Welcome

BW welcomed all members and acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land and paid his respects to Elders past and present.

BW thanked everyone for making the effort to meet in a different format in these unusual times impacted by Covid, and that while a site visit is not possible at this time, this will be held at the earliest opportunity.

Item 1: Apologies

Community Representative Kel Sekulic

Item 2: Declaration of pecuniary or other interests

Brian Weir indicated that he received a small sitting fee to chair the meeting.

Mark Hammond and Todd Kalajzich indicated they are employees of Cleary Bros.

Item 3: Business arising from previous minutes

Minutes accepted as an accurate record of meeting held 5/12/2019.

Item 4: Correspondence

SB stated that he requested MH provide photos of certain planting zones before the meeting in lieu of a site visit, which is the preferred option, and thanked MH for providing these.

Photos are included as Attachment 1 to the minutes.

Item 5: Cleary Bros reports and overview of activities

The following report was provided to all members as an attachment to the agenda, and read out by MH:

i) Progress of the project

Total sand transport from the Gerroa resource for FY20 was 54,178t. Cleary Bros continue to supplement the Gerroa sand supply with alternative sources including manufactured sand and sand sourced from 3rd parties. Production rates are expected to remain at similar levels in the short to medium term, dependent on the availability of suitable 3rd party supplies.

ii) Issues arising from site visits

The site visit previously planned for this CCC meeting has been postponed to the next meeting, pending government restrictions associated with the covid-19 pandemic outbreak.

iii) Monitoring and environmental performance

Meteorology

Automatic weather station (AWS) is currently operating well. The rainfall sensor failed in February 2020 and has since been replaced. Rainfall for FY20, calculated from a combination of AWS data and backup rain gauge readings was 682mm, which remains significantly below average. Of this total, 480mm has fallen in the first half of 2020.

Dust

Dust levels in two of the three gauges have increased slightly since the last report in December 2019, with the third gauge decreasing slightly. Dust gauges 1A, 2A, and 3A are averaging (as at 1 July 2020) 2.1g/m²/month, 2.5g/m²/month, and 1.7g/m²/month for the previous 12 month period. All dust gauges reported elevated readings from December 2019 to February 2020 associated with elevated regional dust levels.

Dredge Pond

Dredge pond water quality is generally stable and consistent with historical level results. It has remained at a relatively low level over the past year, consistent with the rainfall pattern. Total Oxidisable Sulphur of sand extracted has remained low in the range of <0.02-0.03%.

Boreholes

Borehole water levels continue to remain at low levels in the first half of 2020, with variations across the monitoring network closely following rainfall patterns. Despite the generally low groundwater water levels, water quality of the bores has remained largely stable with all measurements generally within the historical range of recorded measurements for each bore. Bore MW1 continues to exhibit a brackish influence which is consistent with historical results.

Revegetation and Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation works are now in the maintenance phase. Infill planting since the last CCC meeting has been undertaken in Zone 2C.1, Zone 2D, and Zone 4 since the last CCC meeting. Weed control in the past quarter has focused on

continued suppression of lantana in the existing forest as well as some identified areas of bitou bush. Ongoing management of these areas continues based on the advice provided in the quarterly internal inspections and annual inspections by an ecologist.

iv) Community complaints and response to these complaints

No community complaints have been received since the last CCC meeting.

v) Information provided to the community and any feedback

The Cleary Bros website is regularly updated to ensure all required information is current, including approvals, management plans, and environmental monitoring data.

Recommend: Cleary Bros recommends the above report is received & noted by the CCC

Supplementary information provided via email on 22/7/2020

At the request of a CCC member prior to the meeting, and with a site visit not possible at this time due to the outbreak of Covid-19, photos have been provided to show the current environment in requested zones of the planting and conservation areas. These photos are included as an annexure to these minutes.

Discussion

SB queried whether the daily inspections stated in the Mills plan (Landscape and Rehabilitation Management Plan) were occurring.

MH was unsure what exactly this referred to and would need to get back to SB.

BW explained that previous issues with grazing of plantings by wallabies would often mean loss of seedlings overnight, which meant inspections did need to be very regular in the past to combat these effects.

SB noted that the LRMP only mentions the maintenance of the areas up to the 15 year mark, and questioned what happens beyond this period.

MH responded that the planting and conservation areas will be registered on the property title under a Planning Agreement, which would likely contain requirements around maintenance of the area.

SB noted that there had been a change in ecologists from last year to this year, and suggested that it would be better to keep the same company involved from year to year.

MH agreed that it was preferred to keep the same ecologist from year to year for consistency. MH elaborated that when Kevin Mills retired 2 years ago, Kevin recommended Goodbush as a suitable replacement. For the 2019 survey, Goodbush unfortunately weren't available due to other commitments, and as such Niche Environment and Heritage, who were familiar with the site as part of their field work and assessments for the modification, were engaged on this occasion. It is intended to keep using Goodbush for annual surveys going forward to ensure consistency.

Item 6: Other Agenda Items

i) Proposed Modification to the Gerroa Sand Quarry

MH verbally advised that Cleary Bros have provided all documentation requested to the Department of Planning, Industry and the Environment. Cleary Bros understand that no further submissions are likely nor information from Cleary Bros are required and that the project is currently with the Department for assessment.

Discussion

No matters arising.

ii) FY20 Gerroa Annual Environmental Management Report

MH verbally asked whether all members had received a copy of the report, and that they were happy receiving an electronic copy.

All members present acknowledged they had received with the exception of AS, who did not receive a copy due to Council IT restrictions.

MH stated that a copy could be accessed from the Cleary Bros website (see later in General Business).

MH asked whether there were any objections to distributing a digital copy rather than a hard copy. All members present acknowledged a digital copy is acceptable. MH noted that a hard copy will still be distributed to KS via post as MH does not have KS's email address.

Discussion

SB questioned why the Report states that it only covers the current year's monitoring.

MH explained that previous year's monitoring has been examined in detail in previous years reports, and it is only included to show historical changes where relevant focusing on surface and ground water

SB queried whether timber debris was used in zone 2C.1 as described in the Landscape and Rehabilitation Management Plan.

SB suggested timber debris be brought in from offsite.

TK replied that moving timber debris would disturb those site habitats.

MH explained that generally timber debris is only used when available, and that given planting of this area commenced several years ago, MH does not know the methodologies used when it was initially planted, but that this is likely described in the previous reports. MH also explained that the Department of Planning, Industry, and Environment had undertaken an inspection of the planting areas several months ago and were happy with the current approach taken in this area.

SB asked if Zone 2C1 was included as part of the Northern Corridor.

MH responded that he believed the Northern Corridor was made up of the planted zones 2C1 and 2A1 as well as the remnant vegetation between these areas.

SB stated that as the Northern Corridor includes Zone 2C.1, it is difficult to accept that the Northern Corridor meets the requirements.

MH explained that this refers to Zones 2A.1 and 1.1 as the Northern Corridor, which is now largely self sufficient.

SB asked whether fencing had been installed in all areas and it is maintained.

MH stated that fencing is established in all revegetation areas where required to prevent cattle entering. The condition of fencing is reviewed as part of the quarterly inspections.

SB mentioned that the Annual Environmental Management Report reflects Kevin Mills' previous reports which stated that the success of plantings has been high, whereas Goodbush rates the condition of the zones as "fair" and requires replanting or extra planting – a lot of work to be done. SB asked if there was a work plan and can we have a copy.

MH responded that he was unsure what was referred to in each case without these references in front of him. However, he explained that there will be differences in opinion between ecologists, especially where an ecologist is new to the site and hasn't observed the success of certain areas over the years. MH explained that Cleary Bros were focused on the recommendations made by the ecologist, which would be used to set priorities and work to be undertaken for the year ahead.

MH replied that CB would not provide internal work programs to the CCC, however will continue to update the CCC with the progress of revegetation strategies at future CCC meetings.

SB and WH requested that a site visit be permitted at the northern end if it can be done before the next meeting, even if the members drove their own vehicles.

TK explained that due to the real risk posed by Covid-19 and in line with industry guidelines and OHS and company requirements, non-essential persons are not permitted on Cleary Bros sites, and this includes Cleary Bros staff. Cleary Bros welcome a site visit when conditions surrounding Covid-19 permit.

iii) Chairperson's Annual Report on the operation of the CCC

BW will compile an independent Chairperson's report which will be provided to the Department of Planning. The report will summarise the happenings of this meeting and last meeting and be circulated to all members once prepared, in a similar manner to last year's report.

Item 7: General Business

AS was subsequently able to access a copy of the Annual Environmental Management Report during the meeting.

Following a quick read of the key issues eg. water, AS stated that he was satisfied with the information briefly examined. AS noted the rising electrical conductivity in bore MW1.

MH explained that this had been extensively investigated in the past year, and has been attributed to the influence of groundwater from the Berry Siltstone aquifer. This bore is on the boundary between the underlying Berry Siltstone unit and overlying alluvial sands. Previous results from this borehole stretching back to 1993 show high conductivity readings in the past, and a nearby groundwater bore screened in the Berry Siltstone on the Coomonderry Ridge shows similarly high salinity levels.

There being no further General Business, the Chairperson closed the meeting.

Meeting Closed 11:20 am

Next meeting planned for Thursday 3 December 2020 at 10:30am, commencing with a site visit if possible.