

PRESENT:

Adrian Button
Alison Kennedy
Bob Jolly
Jack Jones
Alan MacIntyre
Laurie Lardner
Paul Hyde

Matt Rogers - PMHC
Tim Molloy – PMHC
Gordon Cameron – PMHC
Thor Aaso – PMHC

Robert Birse - Dept of Primary Industries (Lands)

Consultants:
Dan Messiter – SMEC

01 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Acknowledgement of Country was delivered.

02 APOLOGIES

Consensus:

That the apologies from, Patrick McEntee, Tony Troup, Office of Environment and Heritage – Robert Kasmarik, National Parks and Wildlife – Peter Clark and Dept Primary Industries (Fisheries) – Lee Burdett be accepted.

03 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Consensus:

That the Minutes of the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA Coast & Estuaries Management Sub-Committee Meeting held on 7 July 2011 be confirmed.

04 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest presented.

05 COUNCIL'S DETERMINATION OF COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Consensus:

That the report on Council's Determination of the Coast and Estuaries Sub-Committee Recommendations of the Meeting held on 27 July 2011 be noted.

06 LAKE CATHIE COASTLINE MANAGEMENT STUDY - STAGE 2

Dan Messiter of SMEC provided an overview of the report and the options assessment.

- Groyne: due to seasonal changes in sand transportation there is considerable uncertainty about the ability of a Groyne to act as a mitigation measure.
- Beach Nourishment: There are not sufficient volumes of sand available to mitigate the erosion risk.
- Revetment: A technically feasible option to mitigate risk however there is not sufficient volumes of sand to overcome all adverse impacts.
- Planned Retreat: This is the preferred option being recommended by the consultants however the funding mechanism still needs to be resolved.

Bob Jolly was of the option that an exhibition of 12 weeks would be appropriate. Matt Rogers advised that the Committee needed to consider what length of time would be needed to review the report and make submissions. Jack Jones advised that residents may wish to have consultants or other bodies review the report.

Laurie Lardner asked if there was a deadline for completion of the study. Matt Rogers confirmed that Council had been given until the end of June 2012 to complete the management plan and that Council would need to seek an extension to complete the plan.

Jack Jones noted an issue with the report on page 6. Jack noted that each time the lagoon is opened a channel will form that cuts in front of Illaroo Road. The report does not appear to give any consideration to this occurrence.

Dan Messiter advised that while not specific in the report the impact of a groin to manage this channel from forming was problematic because a groin may in fact exacerbate the erosion risk at Illaroo Road due to changes in sand drift. Groins should only be used where there is a single long shore direction in sand movement.

Bob Jolly questioned whether a small groin similar to the extent of Middle Rock could be used to stop the channel in front of Illaroo Road. Dan Messiter noted that aerial photos of Middle Rock showed that sand accumulation and erosion could occur on either side of Middle Rock. A groin may therefore exacerbate problems with erosion in a major storm event.

Jack Jones stated that the effects on the estuary of each of the options is not clear and noted what he considered as an anomaly with the report which states that Cathie Creek is 40m wide and 2m deep. Jack notes that it is possible to walk across the creek at low tide.

Jack Jones noted that a revetment was the only option that benefits and gives certainty to residents. Dan Messiter noted that there will be edge effects from a revetment.

Paul Hyde queried what height will ocean levels reach. Paul stated that he had not observed any increase in sea levels. Dan Messiter advised that Council is required to

follow State Government Guidelines on sea level rise and also noted that recession at Lake Cathie is also being caused by other factors.

John Schmidt noted that State Policy is based on sea level rise planning projections for risk assessment and are not sea level rise predictions.

Laurie Lardner questioned if owners extended their dwellings would they be waiving their rights to compensation. Matt Rogers advised that this is a legal question but it is likely that this would be the case given that the risk of coastal erosion is now documented..

Laurie Lardner stated that he considered that there was no exact science for any of the options. Matt Rogers explained that there was reasonable science on planned retreat and revetments because of actual experience.

In relation to Recommendation 7 of the report relating to dredged sand from the lake Cathie Entrance being placed on the beach adjacent to Illaroo Road, Alison Kennedy stated that there was no guarantee this would work and that Council should not be locked into a location. Matt Rogers confirmed that the Management Plan would be subject to review.

Bob Jolly noted that during the last drought period there was limited sand on the beach however following the recent large rain period there was more sand. Dan Messiter stated that the main reason for this is wave direction. In La Nina or wet periods wave direction will push sand north to south.

Paul Hyde queried what the study included on currents. Dan Messiter advised that the modelling in the study was primarily concerned with wave direction.

Tim Molloy read the following comments from Patrick McEntee who was an apology for the meeting:

My ongoing concern for the coastal areas, and Lake Cathie in particular is that a retreat strategy is the only long-term option for those areas subjected to high coastal erosion. There will be no economic long-term gain resulting from investing money into infrastructure that attempts to keep the sea back.

Alison Kennedy referred to page 7 of the report and noted that there was a 9m beach recession projected and with sea level rise this would be 17m. Therefore there is a need for action irrespective of sea level rise. The committee agreed that this should be clarified in the report. Alison also raised concerns that the report did not include enough information on the problems with Groins. It was noted that a public information session will be part of the exhibition period and that Dan Messiter will be available at the meeting to answer technical questions.

Consensus:

That it be recommended to Council:

1. That the Draft Lake Cathie Coastline Management Study - Stage 2 (2012) be placed on public exhibition for ten (10) weeks.
2. That the Draft Lake Cathie Emergency Action Plan (2012) be placed on public exhibition

concurrently with the Draft Lake Cathie Coastline Management Study - Stage 2 report.

3. That an information session be held during the exhibition period.

07 GENERAL BUSINESS

07.01 TBT:

Tim Molloy read the following comments from Patrick McEntee who was an apology for the meeting.

At the last two meetings that I have attended there has been discussion of the TBT pollution of the Hastings River and foreshore upstream and downstream of the Birdon Slipway. Some members of the committee have requested that we are kept informed of the attempts to clean up this mess but there has been an obsequience to the State Government as it is postulated that it is their responsibility. I am on the Coast and Estuaries Committee. If the Port Macquarie Hastings Council is to operate this committee in accordance with the charter of this committee then it is the responsibility of the Council to keep the committee members fully informed of issues relating to the management of these systems. I formally request that at the next meeting that the issue of the pollution caused by the Birdon Group is on the Meeting Agenda and the Council endeavours to have a representative of the EPA at the meeting to give an up-to-date report including information relating to any downstream monitoring of any TBT mobility in the waterway.

Matt Rogers advised that Council was not able to provide detailed information on the issue because the EPA were the body responsible and had issued clean up notices to Birdon. Matt however provided advice on the current state of the clean up. Stage 1 has commenced which is focused on the River and public land. The second stage will focus on the Mangroves and the final stage on the Birdon Land. The majority of the clean up required is on public land.

The Committee noted that Mark Bulley represents the Oyster Growers at Stake Holders Meetings for the clean up.

Matt Rogers advised that PMHC resolved in Feb 2010 to accept the TBT spoil subject to EPA approval and Birdon entering into a Memorandum of Agreement. The EPA will require an independent cell at Cairncross Waste Management Facility to dispose of the spoil. The spoil is currently being stockpiled in accordance with EPA requirements in a bunded site on the Birdon property pending disposal.

Laurie Lardner specifically requested that a report be presented to the committee on the issued discussed about the TBT disposal at Birdon and expressed concern that the EPA had not handled the matter appropriately. Matt Rogers agreed for a report to be brought back to the committee.

07.02 The Hatch Properties:

Laurie Lardner expressed his concern at reports that sewerage waste was being spread as a fertiliser on properties at the Hatch and the possible adverse impacts of runoff from these properties into the River. Matt Rogers advised that Council staff had been involved because of odour problems. Matt noted that the EPA had carried out an audit and the activity is not illegal. A report on the EPA audit will be provided to the Committee.

07.03 Committee Charter:

Laurie Lardner expressed his concern that the committee was not being kept fully informed and that the committee was not meeting its charter. Laurie suggested that the charter should be reviewed. Matt Rogers advised that meetings were called when issues arise rather than a constant schedule of meetings. It was agreed that information on the Hatch and TBT issues will be emailed to the Committee prior to the next meeting, should a scheduled meeting not occur in the next two months or so.

07.04 Acid Sulfate Soil:

Laurie Lardner queried the status of Acid Sulfate Soil remediation at Partridge Creek. Thor Aaso advised that levels were above pH 5.5 which is a good outcome, however there was still a need to monitor the situation because organic material growing in the new water body would present a potential new source of acid. There was also an issue with iron oxide floc that requires management.

07.05 Laurieton Slipway:

Allison Kennedy asked if there were any potential problems with the small slipway at Laurieton. Paul Hyde advised that work at the slipway was limited to pressure cleaning. No anti-fouling work is carried out at the site. Matt Rogers confirmed that the site had previously been inspected, some time ago, by Council and no issues were identified.

07.06 Black Fish:

Laurie Lardner asked why there was a lack of Black fish in the system. Paul Hyde stated that he considered that the stopping of commercial fishing may have contributed to the change in fish behaviour. Black fish have potentially eaten out all the weed food source and had moved to the headlands where there is a food source. The lack of prawns being caught off the coast also indicated a change within the food chain.

07.07 Eco Health Monitoring:

Thor Aaso advised that the Eco Health Monitoring project had commenced. The project is being carried out in partnership with the University of New England, University of NSW and the Office of Environment and Heritage and involves undertaking a wide range of sampling to determine the biological health of river systems. A report card on river health will be reported to the Committee and the general community. The information will feed into the State of the Environment Report which is now being produced on a regional basis every 4 years.

07.08 Oyster Information Portal:

Thor Aaso advised that the University of Wollongong is trialling a Web-based system for accessing government data. The system was in proof of concept stage and included a trial for the Camden Haven.

This concluded the business and the meeting closed at 11.43am.