

## WILDLIFE CORRIDOR MAP – STAKHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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| <b>Stakeholder engagement activity:</b> Biodiversity Advisory Committee, 9 September 2021   |              |
| <b>Attendance:</b>  |              |
| <b>Comment</b>  | <b>Notes</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress with draft corridor map noted by BAC. Keen to see this project progress.</li> </ul> |              |
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| <b>Stakeholder engagement activity:</b> Councillor Strategic Planning Workshop, 7 October 2021  |  |
| <b>Attendance:</b>  |  |
| <b>Comment</b>  | <b>Notes</b>   |
| <p><b>Fire</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern that there might be community concern regarding the impact of planting more trees on increased bushfire hazard.</li> <li>• Need to engage local bushfire mgt committee and indigenous fire managers during expert stakeholder engagement.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RFS, F&amp;R NSW and Arakwal, TBLALC invited to participate in expert stakeholder workshop.</li> <li>• Council advice needs to be clear regarding what to plant where (i.e. planting the right trees in the right habitat), and on the need to incorporate fire breaks and buffers around infrastructure into planting plans.</li> <li>• Increasing trees in our environment helps cool the environment, ultimately reducing risk of future fires.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Stakeholder engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use clickable map with pop ups to show people what to plant where.</li> <li>• Could use 'bang the table' interactive map where people can go on and add what restoration work they've done.</li> <li>• Factsheets</li> <li>• FAQs</li> <li>• Peer review workshop with expert stakeholders.</li> <li>• Naming – do we call them corridors, linkages, bio bridges?</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive map developed with pop ups showing corridor key features as well as what to plant where (based on BVL planting guides).</li> <li>• People can add restorations work to ALA habitat restorations archive.</li> <li>• Expert stakeholder workshop planned for 26 Nov.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Planning Scheme Incentives for Developers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors supportive of incentives. Suggested asking farming community what incentives would work for them, e.g. help with trees or fencing.</li> <li>• Rate rebates – e.g. rate rebate for tree planting that is stopped if people clear the trees. Or DA fee rebate for developing outside the corridor, or restoring corridor as part of a DA.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ag cluster group advised that financial incentives are always welcome. While fencing is good, may not be best use of public money.</li> <li>• Investigate practicality of rate rebates or DA fee reductions with planners.</li> </ul>   |

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| <b>Stakeholder engagement activity:</b> Agriculture Cluster Group, 9 November 2021  |  |
| <b>Attendance:</b> Pete Boyd, Liz Caddick, Andrew Cameron, Cr. Alan Hunter, Mike Shea, Johan Kortenhurst, Lindsay Murray, Liz Gray, (Tony Flick left before start of corridor discussion) |  |

| Comment   | Notes  |
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| The wildlife corridor map will help to support grant applications for restoration and regenerative agriculture projects, fencing creeks etc.  | Noted  |
| Coming from Council, the corridor map looks like a policy planning tool. If we could deliver it in partnership with an environmental group it might get more support as it would look like a conservation tool. | Partnership with Hunks of Mullum local wildlife corridor project presents a good opportunity for wildlife corridor map launch. |
| Need to be clear to landholders what the intent of the map is. i.e. clear that Council does not want to force restoration/replanting of all the areas in the corridors.   | Noted  |
| There is lots of cleared 'agricultural' land in the shire that isn't actually used for agriculture. i.e. land that has been purchased by lifestylers.   | Would be useful to know where this is, as these may be more appropriate sites to target for revegetation.                      |
| Community engagement – on the map presented to the community, it would be great to show what species each corridor was aimed at conserving, as a pop up, as well as what plants to plant.                       | Corridor species included on interactive map.  |

**Stakeholder engagement activity: Expert stakeholder workshop, 26 November 2021**

**Attendance:** Liz Caddick (BSC), Gene Mason (BSC), Annette McKinley (Landmark), Andrew Murray (Landmark), David Milledge (Landmark), Kate Singleton (Planners North), Ross Tregidga (Arakwal), Steve Kelly (Arakwal), Leon Kelly (Arakwal), Zofie Lahodny-Gesco (RFS), Luke Houghton, Jenny Hartigan (BVL), Andy Baker (Southern Cross Uni), Rebecca McNaught (Griffith Uni), Chris Larkin (BSC).

[Others invited: Malcom Scott, Joe Vescio (JV Urban), Karina Vikstrom (NDC), Rochelle Merdith (BVL), Leonie Walsh (Lismore Council), Andy Parks (Lismore Council), Joe Davidson.]

| Comment  | Notes / follow up   |
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| <b>Planning Scheme</b>   |   |
| Incentives, i.e. a carrot not stick approach, may be effective.<br>Incentives need to be clearly outlined in DCP.              | Incentives generally need to be considered on a case by case or site by site basis, to avoid proponents using them as loopholes. There is already some flexibility in Council's planning scheme to enable variations in development controls for good land managers – e.g. reductions in the amount of buffer planting required on sites where a landholder can demonstrate they have already done significant restoration/habitat planting prior to submitting DA. Proponents need to provide this information as part of their application. |
| Incentives, or flexibility within planning scheme, can also be communicated via key groups, eg. Via town planning contractors. | Briefing session for town planners so they can disseminate information clearly to their clients.  |

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| <p>Could incentivise people who avoid impacts. E.g. if development envelope is located away from corridor, people don't have to do further restoration or restore such a large area.</p>  | <p>This can be accommodated within the existing planning scheme, where controls can be adjusted for good land managers.</p>   |
| <p>DCP needs to allow some flexibility, e.g. controls required for a farmer putting in a shed vs. a large development or cabins.<br/>Easier to consider each application on a case by case basis to avoid proponents using incentives in an inappropriate way.</p>  | <p>Current example of site by site incentive is Heritage Conservation clause 5.10, which allows a change in land use type if associated with restoration of heritage buildings – needs to be considered on a case by case basis as each site/building has different constraints.</p>                          |
| <p>Town planning consultants to provide more comments in writing.</p>   |   |
| <p>Reducing development contributions would have knock-on effects as these funds are important in funding roads, parks, gardens and other community infrastructure. Would require changes to contributions plan.</p>  | <p>Noted.</p>   |
| <p><b>Bushfire</b></p>  |   |
| <p>Fire agencies need access, particularly to national parks etc., for fire fighting. Ideally they don't want to clear remnant vegetation to do this, so need to encourage people to maintain/retain existing tracks and trails, and to plan their restoration so that they leave access trails between blocks of vegetation. Trails allow for access, hazard reduction burns and back burns.</p> <p>Planting needs to consider bushfire and how creating an increased risk can be avoided.</p> | <p>Information provided regarding restoration needs to include incorporating fire breaks and buffers around infrastructure into planting plans.<br/>BVL Climate Resilient Landscapes guide also to be promoted as part of this – provides info on garden design and suitable plants for fire prone areas.</p> |
| <p>It would be helpful if Council could quickly and easily advise people on appropriate asset setbacks, e.g. using the formula in the bushfire code.</p>  | <p>Follow up with RFS. Presumably setbacks would be very site specific, dependant on slope, aspect, vegetation, building materials etc.</p>   |
| <p>What to plant where is important. E.g. not planting koala trees in wet/riparian habitat. The interactive planting map could assist with this. Tree spacing can also be important in fire hazard mitigation and control.</p>  | <p>Noted. NSW Trees Near Me app/website also provides useful information including pre-clearing species lists.<br/>BVL Climate Resilient Landscapes guide also to be promoted as part of this – provides info on garden design and suitable plants for fire prone areas.</p>                                  |
| <p>Hazard reduction burns should be supported. However, not likely that many people will be doing this as it is quite an onerous process.</p>   | <p>Noted</p>  |
| <p>Need to disseminate clear, simple fire management information to people from Council and other agencies (e.g. BVL). Could information go out with a rates notice?</p>  | <p>Liaise with RFS regarding information required.</p>  |
| <p>Big developments have access to good advice re planting and fire hazard mitigation, APZs etc because they need to engage an ecological consultant and a fire planner. But people who</p>   | <p>Noted</p>  |

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| might be doing some restoration on their own are less likely to have immediate access to fire management advice. Need to get info out to these people through Council and BVL.   |  |
| Putting corridors predominantly on S facing slopes unlikely to reduce fire risk as the wet sclerophyll eucalyptus communities that develop here are the hardest to manage for fire mitigation. Drier forests on N facing slopes can be burnt in cool, moist ish conditions to reduce fuel loads, however wet sclerophyll won't burn in these conditions, only under dangerous dry conditions, which makes it very hard to manage.  | Need to acknowledge that there are a range of communities that present a fire risk and that this may change as the climate dries. On a domestic scale people need to plant appropriately to ensure adequate buffers around houses and infrastructure, whilst also acknowledging that at a landscape scale more trees in the landscape will cool and moisten the climate, reducing risk of fire.  |
| There are ways to make planted corridors 'fire smart', which can be applied in both wet and drier forest communities, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wider tree spacing so trees crowns are discontinuous to prevent crown fires</li> <li>○ Fire breaks are integrated into corridor plantings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● reduce fire spread</li> <li>● allow suppression, including back burns</li> <li>● application of ecological burns</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Corridors be setback from fire-sensitive assets</li> <li>○ Fuel management – HR burns or slashing</li> </ul> | Need to incorporate this messaging into planting guidance/tips. – Ref BVL Climate Resilient Planting Guide, includes all this info.  |
| <b>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage</b>  |  |
| Arakwal are developing their own mapping of Aboriginal sites, and some of this info is also available to DA planners and RFS etc through AHIMS. This info doesn't need to be on a corridor map and much of it isn't publicly available to protect heritage items.  | Noted  |
| Bush tucker info could also go onto interactive map, but this makes it more complex.   | Cultural heritage info contained withing BVL Climate Resilient Landscapes guide.   |
| Need to keep ridgelines and grassy pathways protected as many culturally significant features and bushfoods are located in these areas. There's a lot of momentum both regionally and nationally to reinvigorate these pathways for renewal of both indigenous cultural practices and biodiversity. By not striving to harness this momentum, this proposal is missing an important opportunity for biodiversity conservation. Andy Baker E2022/1156   | Review of corridors with hillshaded relief mapping shows ridges are covered, but less N facing slopes than S facing, probably because N facing slopes more heavily cleared. E.g. Montecollum to Myocum, Kooyum Range to Mullum, and ridges in the Pocket, Middle Pocket, Yelgun. Corridor coverage has been reviewed in subsequent corridor map revisions.<br>Council working with community groups to support/promote ecological cultural burning and map sites requiring reintroduction of ecological burning. |
| <b>Agriculture</b>   |  |
| Can reach out to farmers through the following:  | Noted  |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Farmers Association (Kim Stefan) – sits on BFMC.</li> <li>- LLS. John Nagle. Have a newsletter.</li> <li>- Mullum farm coop.</li> <li>- Cane growers association.</li> <li>- Byron Farmers Network</li> </ul>  |   |
| <p>Individual letters to rural landholders in corridor areas, with the opportunity to follow up and chat to Council staff, as per the E-zone community engagement process would help.</p> <p>Need to clearly articulate the benefits of wildlife corridors and habitat to agriculture.</p>  | <p>Noted – to be considered depending on level of interest from landholders.</p>  |
| <b>Community Engagement</b>   |   |
| <p>Need to emphasise that the corridors are <b>aspirational!!</b> They are not meant to be restrictive, but something to inspire and aspire to.</p> <p>If people want to use the corridors to help support and direct more habitat restoration and/or creating connectivity on their land, that is great, but if you choose to keep doing what you're doing, that's fine too.</p> | <p>Noted</p>  |
| <p>Short videos can be a really effective engagement tool.</p>  |   |
| <p>Provide an info session for professionals, e.g. town planners and bushfire consultants, so they can spread the word to their clients.</p>  | <p>Noted</p>  |
| <p>Interactive map strongly supported, but also need to engage with non computer savvy people, and those with low literacy – less words, more pictures.</p>   | <p>Noted</p>  |
| <p>Interactive map things to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to provide easy pop up advice on bushfire, or at least where to go to get advice.</li> <li>- Direct people to nurseries where they can get plants.</li> <li>- Direct people to where they can go for more detail, e.g. BVL, Council's online native species planting guide.</li> </ul>   | <p>Can't direct people to specific businesses via Council website.</p> <p>Web links to include links to planting guides.</p> <p>Climate Resilient Landscapes guide also includes bushfire advice.</p> |
| <p>Google Earth program may help to engage people with corridors as a 3d landscape.</p>   | <p>Not used on Council systems</p>  |
| <p>Corridor size:</p> <p>The corridors, even the smaller riparian ones, are all quite wide. This reflects the current science (the theory of wildlife corridors has been around for a long time and is well researched), which emphasises that corridors need to be a particular width to really provide significant ecological function in the landscape.</p>                    | <p>Noted</p>  |

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| <p>These widths mean that a <u>lot</u> of land in the shire is included in the corridors, and it is important to note that these widths are aspirational. If you're looking to restore a riparian corridor to full ecological functionality on your land, then the best course of action is to restore the whole width of the corridor. But not everyone has the will or capacity or space to do that. Even restoring a narrow strip of vegetation along a drainage line, or planting scattered trees in a pasture, has benefits for our fauna and flora. This is also why the riparian corridors are wider than the riparian setbacks in the DCP. The DCP says what you <u>have</u> to do, the corridors show you what it would be good to do.</p> |              |
| <p><b>Rail Corridor</b></p>   |              |
| <p>The entirety of the rail corridor doesn't have any of the features that were used to select locations of corridors.<br/> However parts of the rail corridor do have these significant habitat and connectivity values and do intersect with the corridor network.<br/> The corridors have also been designed specifically to intersect with under/over passes across the rail corridor, highway and other roads in the shire (e.g. using Councils's culvert mapping). The corridors also take into account specific important habitat features provided by the rail corridor, e.g. where tunnels create bat roosts. i.e. essentially the good bits of the rail corridor are already in the wildlife corridor network, e.g SEPP wetlands.</p>     | <p>Noted</p> |
| <p>RFS are concerned that the rail corridor isn't well maintained and could carry a fire through Tyagarah and Byron sections. They are talking with John Holland and NSW state rail about this.</p>   |              |
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**Stakeholder engagement activity: Peer review, April 2022**

Landmark Ecological Services engaged two local ecologists to provide review and feedback on the draft Wildlife Corridor System report, and this feedback was incorporated into the final report.