

Armidale Community Creeklands Project

Initial meeting – July 13, 2002.

Held at Kent House, Faulkner St Armidale

Draft Minutes (prepared by Jim Scott from his notes and those of several others)

This meeting was called by concerned Armidale citizens, Izabel Soliman, Hani Soliman and Jim Scott (both Hani and Jim are community representatives on the Armidale Dumaresq Council's Creeklands Management Catchment Committee) as a follow up to the public meeting held in April, 2002.

Present: There were approximately 18 people in attendance: Kathryn Hogan, Jack Arnold, Stephen Debus, Peter Hess, Cody Tribe, Jim Scott, Izabel Soliman, Hani Soliman, Susan Dunn, Amin Amini, Pat and Rob Robertson-Cunninghame, Kath Wray, Mary Ann Scott, Mary Devine, Bruce Whan, Tom Fisher, Rebekah Watson, Geoff Jones, Jenny McKenzie

Apologies: Garry Slocombe, Barbara Elkins, Phil and Sally Cater, James Hook, Ian Johnstone, Adrian Kiernander

Agenda

1. review developments (website, RiverCare, etc.)
2. present the results of the survey of expressions of interest
3. form project groups
4. discuss the coordination of
 - a. the Community Creeklands Project, and
 - b. the project groups
5. any other items.

Introduction and background

Izabel Soliman gave an introduction to the meeting – stating that it grew from the meeting in April when some 70 people who came to talk about the Creeklands at the Wicklow County Fair. That meeting made several resolutions and those attending expressed a desire to keep in touch with what was happening. They also filled out a survey of attitudes to the creek which sought ideas. This meeting was called in an attempt to keep the broader community involved in the process of improving the creeklands.

Recently a RiverCare committee has been formed under the leadership of Bruce Whan – this group will be undertaking practical, hands-on, work projects to clean up and improve the creeklands and especially to remove noxious woody weeds. This Community Creeklands Project is a complementary approach – aimed at keeping all of the community in touch with what might be possible in the longer term and to work towards major and on-going improvements to the creeklands.

Hani Soliman then presented the results of his analysis of the survey forms filled out following the April community meeting. This indicated the broad interests of the community in issues relating to the improvement of the creeklands - such as education (10 people

interested), water features (22), walkways and improvements, vegetation, fund raising (11), publicity (5), administration (3) and planning (5). Hani pointed out that Development Consent will be needed for dams, weirs, recreation facilities, tourism facilities, markets, etc. Hani and James Hook had been for a walk looking at potential sites.

There is a need to keep the creek clean and well cared for. We could aim to restore the creek near the Teachers College as well. We need to discourage damage to the creeklands by having it used and appreciated by many more people.

Bruce Whan spoke about the formation of RiverCare and its first working bee to be held on July 28th in Ken Jones park where volunteers will remove woody weeds and plant new trees. A number of community groups have offered support for this project (e.g. JobLink Plus, the Armidale School, and Correctional Services). He showed the new Armidale RiverCare logo which incorporates aspects of water, streets, autumn leaves and infrastructure.

Peter Hess spoke of his interest in developing Web pages for the group. He needs text and photos submitted. He sees that there could be a computer in the Tourist Office with our Web Site displayed.

There is considerable contamination of soil around the creeklands as a result of the effects of the old gas works. This may affect what can be done in the creeklands; however, it also may present an opportunity if other sources of funds could be tapped into.

Izabel spoke of a Fairfield City Council initiative which has recently undertaken a project called 'Restoring the Waters' in its Clear Paddock Creek. They have rehabilitated some 550 m of the creek thus far costing \$1.3 m. This experience perhaps is of interest to our group. This project was Council driven – not community driven – and was assisted by the Stormwater Trust. (Since this meeting, Jenny McKenzie sent members of the Vision sub-committee copies of literature about this project).

Mary Devine spoke of the potential to link with the newly formed community development group in Armidale. She spoke of holding 2 round table meetings a year to get all issues onto 1 page – to go through issues – and then decide on solutions. We need to encourage the use of networks. There is considerable common interest between the various groups and they share a grass roots, citizenship model.

Group discussions

The meeting then broke into sub-groups for discussion. Their reports are summarised below:

1. Web site/publicity (Peter Hess, etc.)

Peter Hess presented an outline of the web site structure that the group developed. He will commence design of a web site using these ideas – he wants people to send him ideas and images, etc. There is a need for a link between our Community Creeklands Project web site and that of Armidale Dumaresq Council. There is a need for links to other relevant sites.

Existing Proposals Solutions Future Vision

Accessed via ADC site – cost neutral as existing service is offered to community groups by ADC.

Supporting local businesses – name them.

Existing: Text, facts about creek, etc. History; historical photos; current photos; aerial photos

Proposals: Ponds; skate park; monitoring; progress

Solutions: Planning; Minutes; Publicity; Fund raising

Future Vision: Draft plans; Education – birdlife; vegetation; wildlife; water quality

CALENDAR OF EVENTS LINKS MEMBERSHIP

Links to email access to key people

Key group members need to provide Peter with meaningful to add to site.

People to make constructive comments/ideas as site is developed.

Need for sponsors – businesses in particular

Lots of photos and colour

Links: ADC / UNE / Schools / Local Community Groups / Supporting businesses / RiverCare

2. Finance and fund raising (Cathryn, Hani, Jeff and Cody)

Some ideas of sources of funds include Banks, Credit Union, and Council. A walkway with names on it (maybe \$50 each) or trees with brass name plaques. Contributions from organised activities such as Wool Expo. Walks to raise \$ such as “Up the Creek” or “Go with the Flow”– could be staged start for old/young/athletes - combined with a BBQ/drinks at the finish. Fun days, various clubs could contribute to the Creeklands cause.

Grants from Council; Banks (e.g. National Australia Bank grants); Credit Union sponsorship; State and Federal government grants; National Environment Trust.

Recognise efforts from Work for the Dole, Green Corp and CDEP by putting up a sign with their names on it. School activities.

3. Education (Izabel Soliman and Tom Fisher)

Two strands were suggested:

- 1) Educational institutions. Monitoring by schools. Developing a longer term vision. UNE’s Degrees in Natural Resources, Urban and Regional Planning, Environmental Engineering, etc. We could seek the involvement of these

students in research aimed at monitoring, drawing up plans, etc. TAFE also has an Assoc. Diploma which may have interested students.

- 2) Public education. A web site to get people involved. Pamphlets, radio, television, etc. We need community 'ownership'.

4. Planning and Vision (incorporating ideas for building designs and ponds)

The Vision group (Stephen Debus, Kath Wray, Mary Ann Scott, Bruce Whan, Susan Dunn, Jenny McKenzie and Jim Scott) came up with a number of visions:

- 1) A beautiful water feature with water views, serving a similar function for Armidale as Lake Burley Griffin does for Canberra.
- 2) Native vegetation wildlife corridor with water in off-stream ponds – wildlife can be compatible with water – casuarinas instead of willows
- 3) A rehabilitated functioning creek with waterways maintained and to re-establish pools and riffles for a sustainable future
- 4) Want autumn colour and water as well as some native plants and also with areas for recreational use
- 5) Must recreate a healthy stream with usable amenity with attractive, enhanced aesthetic features
- 6) A healthy wetland south of Donnelly St and a bubbling riffle in place of the down town ditch
- 7) An attractive pond near the Information Centre with a restaurant/café overlooking it.

Future actions

Each of the above groups was encouraged to meet in their own time to develop more ideas and report back to a general meeting in a couple of months.

There was agreement that we need to keep the community informed and involved through this broad community group. Where the aims between this Community group and RiverCare are the same, then there should be coordinated activity. However, it was agreed that the RiverCare group was principally focused on cleaning up the creek as it now stands, whereas this Community Creeklands Project seeks to develop a broader, ambitious plan for the enhancement of the Creeklands on a large scale for the long-term benefit of the entire community. It was recognised that the creation of ponds, lakes or wetlands could well be expensive.

Next meeting

The next General Meeting of the Armidale Community Creeklands Project will be on Saturday September 14, 2002 at 2 pm in Kent House, Faulkner St. Armidale. The purpose will be to discuss the outcomes from the various sub-groups and develop more ideas for involving the community in this project.