



**Recreational
Fishing Trusts**

***Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust
Expenditure Committee***

MINUTES

**19TH RFSTEC MEETING
1 December 2005**

**CRONULLA FISHERIES CENTRE
202 NICHOLSON PARADE CRONULLA 2230
02 9527 8411**

**Nineteenth Meeting of the
Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee
AGENDA
1 December 2005
9:30am- 3:30pm
CRONULLA FISHERIES CENTRE
202 NICHOLSON PARADE CRONULLA 2230
02 9527 8411**

Attendance

Chair

Bruce Schumacher

Committee Members

Donald Disson

Lisa Terry

John Drew

Graham Harrison

Lionel Jones

Amanda Hill

William Heaton

Ann Garard

Greg Liddell

Region 1 – Qld border to Evans Head

Region 2 – Evans Head to Woolgoolga

Region 3 – Woolgoolga to Port Macquarie

Region 4 – Port Macquarie to Seal Rocks

Region 5 – Seal Rocks to The Entrance

Region 6 – The Entrance to Wollongong

Region 6 – The Entrance to Wollongong

Region 7 - Wollongong to Narooma

Region 8 – Narooma to Vic border

Malcolm Poole

John Millyard

Anthony Moore

David Jones

John Burgess

Recreational Fishing Alliance

Australian Fishing Tackle Association

Nature Conservation Council

NSW Game Fishing Association

Australian National Sportfishing Association

Observers - NSW DPI

John Diplock, Program Manager, Recreational Fisheries

Bryan van der Walt, Senior Manager, Recreational Fisheries

Phil Bolton, Manager, Recreational Fisheries

RFSTEC Agenda 1 December 2005

Business

Chair's introduction

Apologies

Confirmation of minutes from previous RFSTEC meeting

Agenda Items

1. Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust status report.
2. Outcomes from SIAC and ACoRF working group
3. Update on review of NSW Recreational Freshwater and Saltwater Fishing Rules.
4. Review of applications

New programs

1. All access fishing platform Iluka
 2. Provision of water to the fish cleaning tables at Broadwater boat ramp, South Pambula
 3. Catch N Cook (Indigenous Youth Fishing Program)
 4. Merimbula fish cleaning pontoon/ table
 5. Botany Bay Game Fishing Club pontoon, fish weighing, measuring and cleaning table
 6. Mullet education tanks
 7. Biology and Fishery of Estuary Perch (*Macquaria colonorum*) in Coastal Catchments in NSW
 8. Biological links between NSW coastal habitats for Yellowfin Bream
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5. Project updates
 1. FADS and artificial reefs research program.
 2. Gamefish tagging program
 3. Tournament monitoring
 4. Mullet tagging and stocking
 5. Assessment of Recreational Fishing Havens in northern NSW
 6. Fish habitat restoration projects
 7. Summaries of all programs funded by Saltwater Trusts
 6. Action Items from previous meeting
 7. General Business / Correspondence Received
 8. Next Meeting

Welcome by Chair

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed new members Donald Disson, Amanda Hill, Ann Garard and John Burgess. Newly appointed DPI Fisheries Manager, Phil Bolton was also welcomed.

Business arising from minutes of RFSTEC meeting 18 held 8 September 2005

It was requested that the minutes be amended to add:

Agenda item 7. Action Item - Chairperson, on behalf of the Saltwater Expenditure Committee, to write to the State Co-ordinator, Community Programs to acknowledge the excellent work of the Fishcare volunteer program.

Agenda item 7 The Committee recommended Bruce Mahony to sit on the Project Steering Committee.

It was advised that Graham Harrison has been appointed to the SCU Project Steering Committee due to Mr. Mahony's expiring term on RFSTEC.

The draft minutes of the 18th RFSTEC meeting were accepted (with amendments) as a true and accurate record of the meeting. **Moved:** Graham Harrison. **Seconded:** Anthony Moore. **Carried.**

Agenda Item 1

Bryan van der Walt

Issue

Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust report

Background

Status of the Saltwater Trust

The total income from licence sales in 2004-05 was \$10 million. At previous meetings, the Committee has supported budgets totalling \$10.5 million for a range of compliance, research, management and education programs to improve recreational fishing in 2005/06. The balance in the Saltwater Trust as at 30 June 2005 was \$4 million. This balance includes the remaining funding from the buyout loan and committed funding of \$600,000 for the Recreational Fishing Fisheries Management Strategy.

The Saltwater Trust financial tables have been updated detailing the breakdown of program budgets into salary, operating and cost recovery (if any). The financial tables are attached for the Committee's information.

Allocation to the Freshwater Trust

The allocation of funding to the Freshwater Trust for the years 2000/01 to 2004/05 was \$2.5 million with the remaining funds allocated to the Saltwater Trust. Following the increase in licence fees on 1 July 2005, the Freshwater Expenditure Committee has requested an increase in the annual \$2.5 million allocation.

Outcomes

An update was provided on the progress of the tender for an automated electronic licence administration system. The Committee was advised that contract negotiations are currently underway.

The Department advised that it is proposed to advertise an expression of interest (EOI) in January 2006 calling for applications for funding from the Recreational Fishing Trusts. The annual expenditure committee budget meetings are scheduled for early April 2006 and applications for programs in 2006/07 and beyond will be reviewed at this meeting. Methods to encourage relevant and high quality applications for Trust funded projects were discussed. To encourage regional consultation, it was agreed to include the names of committee members in the EOI. The EOI will be sent to fishing clubs, major recreational fishing organisations, local councils, advertised on the DPI website, Newscast (monthly recreational fishing newsletter) and distributed by Fishcare volunteers. A media release will also be put out by the Department. The Committee supported this extensive media campaign using previously approved funds.

Action Item: The Department to advertise an EOI calling for applications for funding from the Recreational Fishing Trusts.

Action Item: The Department to include the names of local committee members in the EOI.

Action Item: The Department to provide a final report on the RFH buy out process at the next Committee meeting.

Agenda Item 2**NSW DPI****Issue**

Outcomes from SIAC and ACoRF working group

Background

The Minister has established the SIAC and ACORF working group to discuss matters of mutual interest between the commercial and recreational sectors. Any outcomes from this working group will remain subject to consideration by ACoRF and SIAC. The Group plans to meet quarterly.

The first working group meeting was held on 7 October 2005. Issues raised at the meeting included the development of a joint voluntary buyout process of commercial fishing entitlements using funding contributions from both sectors. Outcomes from this meeting will be presented to the Committee at the meeting.

Outcomes

The Committee was advised of the following outcomes from the first meeting of the SIAC and ACoRF working group in October 2005:

- Development of a joint voluntary buy-out of commercial fishing entitlements using funds from both sectors (and other sources where available).
- Development of a broad policy framework for the buyout process for review by ACoRF and SIAC.
- Action to determine the level of interest for buy-outs among commercial fishermen.
- Commercial representatives to develop an effective approach to deal with latent capacity as part of the structural adjustment process.
- Development of conditions on voluntary buy-out contracts to prevent fishers re-entering the fishery

For information.

Agenda Item 3**NSW DPI****Issue**

Update on review of NSW Recreational Freshwater and Saltwater Fishing Rules.

Background

On 29 July 2005 the Department released the Review of NSW Recreational Freshwater and Saltwater Fishing Rules Discussion paper. Recreational fishers in NSW were invited to have their say on proposals to change some recreational fishing rules, including modifications to size limits, bag limits, fishing methods and proposals for fishing competitions. Due to extensive community interest, the cut-off date for submissions was extended to 21 October 2005.

Over 3,000 submissions were received. The Department has developed a database to collate all submissions and staff are currently reviewing and entering the submissions into the database.

Outcomes

The Committee was informed that the submissions are being analysed. Many of the submissions had responses to the proposals in the Discussion Paper, as well as additional informative comments relating to the management of recreational and commercial fisheries in NSW. It is expected that the submission analysis will take at least three months to complete. The outcomes will be presented to ACoRF for final consultation prior to any changes in bag and size limits being made.

The Department will keep RFSTEC updated on outcomes from the bag and size limit review process.

For information.

Issue

Review of applications

BackgroundNew programs1. All access fishing platform Iluka

Clarence Valley Council has proposed to build an open access fishing platform to provide fishers with safe direct access to the Clarence River. The design has been prepared by the Council and will include a fish measuring station with educational signage. The applicant has provided 2 letters of support for the project.

2. Provision of water to the fish cleaning tables at Broadwater boat ramp, South Pambula

Pambula Fishing Club has applied for funding to provide water to two fish cleaning tables. It is proposed to capture roof water in a specially constructed concrete tank which will be used as a water supply for the tables. This will provide an environmentally sound source of water, result in better fishing facilities, increased safety for users and will have zero running costs. The Club will provide free labour during installation and any on-going routine maintenance. The applicant has provided 3 letters of support for the project.

3. Catch N Cook (Indigenous Youth Fishing Program)

Koori Communications have applied for funding to lead a “positive hands-on fun fishing experience” for Indigenous youths and youths at risk. The project will be run from La Perouse on Friday afternoons throughout the summer and/or daily during school holidays. The aim is to educate youths in life skills, teach fishing techniques, and promote environmental issues. It is anticipated that this will help to promote responsible fishing and preserve cultural heritage of the area. The program also aims to set up a fishing club to enable the youths to continue fishing in a social environment after the project has finished.

4. Merimbula fish cleaning pontoon/ table

Merimbula Big Game and Lakes Angling Club Inc have requested “**in principle**” support only for the installation of a pontoon/ fish-cleaning table inside the bar entrance to Merimbula Lake. This project support is sought prior to the club undertaking engineering consultation, costing and preparation of a formal Development Application for the local Council. Free labour for installation and fabrication will be provided by club members and Trust funds are sought for capital expenditure. The applicant has provided letters of support from Airport Agencies, DPI Far South Coast Fisheries Office, Waterways and Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol, Merimbula.

5. Botany Bay Game Fishing Club pontoon, fish weighing, measuring and cleaning table

Botany Bay Game Fishing Club have recently erected a pontoon and weigh station and request funding from the Trust for a fish cleaning and measuring station at the site. Club members will provide free labour for installation. The facilities provided will be available for use by all recreational anglers.

6. Mulloway education tanks

St Josephs Vocational College have applied for funding to convert their fish display tanks from freshwater to saltwater. The College has arranged for appropriate permits to enable them to keep mulloway fingerlings in the college fish tanks. The aim of the project is to educate students on the habits of mulloway, promote conservation of the marine environment and increase interest in recreational fishing. Laurieton United Services Club Fishing Club is a major supporter of the proposed program.

7. Biology and Fishery of Estuary Perch (*Macquaria colonorum*) in Coastal Catchments in NSW

This study proposes to study the biology and fishery of the estuary perch in detail in a coastal river in the Sydney region, and obtain baseline data from other estuaries. This information will be used to advise managers and recreational fishers on the future management of the species. This 3-year study will provide a scholarship to a PhD student at the University of Wollongong (UOW) who will be jointly supervised by Professor Ron West at UOW and Dr Gray at NSW DPI.

8. Biological links between NSW coastal habitats for Yellowfin Bream

This study by the University of Technology, Sydney proposes to develop, test and refine techniques that will be important in investigating linkages among different life history stages of bream in south-eastern Australia, ultimately providing greater understanding of dynamics of the species in the region. The study proposes to use Laser ablation ICPMS of fish otoliths to closely study the relatedness of cohorts of yellowfin bream settling in various locations along the coast. The results of this study will allow the development of larger efforts to fully characterise the connectivity patterns of bream all along the coast of NSW. Such information will allow for management of this coastal stock in a manner not currently available for any other species.

Outcomes

The Committee discussed the benefits of each program to recreational fishing.

3. Catch N Cook (Indigenous Youth Fishing Program)

The Committee noted that the program had already been provided with fishing tackle by the Australian Fishing Tackle Association (AFTA) and that there were facilities in the project area for BBQs. It was decided to support funding for \$5,000 for managing the program (administration and coordination), sponsorship and marketing, public liability insurance and food and drink. The Committee requested the Department to monitor the progress of the program and report back to the Committee.

4. Merimbula fish cleaning pontoon/ table

The Committee considered that this project was likely to receive high priority for funding during the second round of the Federal Community Grants program. The Committee was therefore supportive of providing \$10,000 from the NSW Saltwater Recreational Fishing Trust for the program proponents to initiate the project and to provide contributing funding to secure Federal funding. The Department advised that it can provide assistance with the Federal application, if required.

7. Biology and Fishery of Estuary Perch (Macquaria colonorum) in Coastal Catchments in NSW

The Committee recognised the benefits of this research study on this recreational species, which is increasing in iconic importance. It was noted that very little was known about estuary perch. The Committee supported the seed funding requested for 3 years on the proviso that contributing funding for an ARC linkage grant be sought for the 2nd and 3rd year of the program. If funding were gained, then the funding grants from the Saltwater Trust would be reduced accordingly.

Recommendations

1. All access fishing platform Iluka

Funding of \$15,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the project "All access fishing platform Iluka" **is supported. Moved:** Greg Lidell. Seconded: Lionel Jones. **Carried.**

2. Provision of water to the fish cleaning tables at Broadwater boat ramp, South Pambula

Funding of \$7,660 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the project "Provision of water to the fish cleaning tables at Broadwater boat ramp, South Pambula" **is supported. Moved:** Malcolm Poole. Seconded: Anthony Moore. **Carried.**

3. Catch N Cook (Indigenous Youth Fishing Program)

Funding of \$5,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the project "Catch N Cook (Indigenous Youth Fishing Program)" **is supported. Moved:** John Burgess. Seconded: Ann Garard. **Carried.**

4. Merimbula fish cleaning pontoon/ table

Funding of \$10,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the project "Merimbula fish cleaning pontoon/ table" **is supported. Moved:** Greg Lidell. Seconded: Lisa Terry. **Carried.**

5. Botany Bay Game Fishing Club pontoon, fish weighing, measuring and cleaning table

Funding of \$5,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the project "Botany Bay Game Fishing Club pontoon, fish weighing, measuring and cleaning table" **is supported. Moved:** John Drew. Seconded: David Jones. **Carried.**

6. Mulloway education tanks

Funding of \$1,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the project "Mulloway education tanks" **is supported. Moved:** Graham Harrison. Seconded: Bill Heaton. **Carried.**

7. Biology and Fishery of Estuary Perch (Macquaria colonorum) in Coastal Catchments in NSW

Funding of \$55,510 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the project "Biology and Fishery of Estuary Perch (Macquaria colonorum) in Coastal Catchments in NSW" **is supported. Moved:** Amanda Hill. Seconded: Anthony Moore. **Carried.**

8. Biological links between NSW coastal habitats for Yellowfin Bream

Funding of \$10,000 in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the project "Biological links between NSW coastal habitats for Yellowfin Bream" **is supported. Moved:** Graham Harrison. Seconded: John Drew. **Carried.**

Program	Applicant	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
1. All access fishing platform Iluka	Clarence Valley Council	\$15,000		
2. Provision of water to the fish cleaning tables at Broadwater boat ramp, South Pambula (<i>small grant</i>)	Pambula Fishing Club	\$7,660		
3. Catch N Cook (Indigenous Youth Fishing Program) (<i>small grant</i>)	Koori Communications	\$5,000		
4. Merimbula fish cleaning pontoon/ table	Merimbula Big Game and Lakes Angling Club Inc.	\$10,000		
5. Botany Bay Game Fishing Club pontoon, fish cleaning table and weigh station (<i>small grant</i>)	Botany Bay Game Fishing Club	\$5,000		
6. Mulloway education tanks (<i>small grant</i>)	St Josephs Vocational College	\$1,000		
7. Biology and Fishery of Estuary Perch (Macquaria colonorum) in Coastal Catchments in NSW	NSW DPI	\$55,510	\$59,515	\$35,315
8. Biological links between NSW coastal habitats for Yellowfin Bream (<i>small grant</i>)	University of Technology, Sydney	\$10,000		

Issue
Project Updates**Background****1. FADS and artificial reefs management program**

NSW DPI deploys a series of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) each year along the NSW coast between the months of September and June. The FADs are installed to provide better fishing for recreational sport and game anglers by creating an alternative to traditional fishing grounds. The FADs have become a popular target fishing location for many recreational fishers, possibly relieving fishing pressure on popular demersal fish species and locations by drawing seasonal pelagic fish from warm water delivered to the NSW coast by the East Australian Current (EAC).

The three-year pilot Artificial Reefs program involves the deployment of artificial reefs in identified barren areas in three Recreational Fishing Havens (RFH's). The reefs will provide enhanced recreational fishing opportunities, while scientific assessment of the structures will assess their use as a fisheries enhancement tool. A Development Application (DA) submitted by the Department seeking consent to deploy the artificial structures in Lake Macquarie has been approved. Deployment in Lake Macquarie is scheduled to commence in December 2005. Approval for the installation of artificial reefs in Botany Bay is expected in December 2005, with deployment of the reefs scheduled for early 2006. An application to deploy the final series of reefs in St Georges Basin will be lodged in December 2005.

Heath Folpp of NSW DPI will provide an update on both of these programs.

2. Gamefish tagging program

The Gamefish Tagging Program has been in operation since 1973 and is recognised as one of the largest programs of its type in the world. The objectives of this program are to gather information on the biology (distribution, movement, growth, exploitation) of billfish, tunas, sharks and sportfish and to encourage gamefish anglers to participate in fisheries management and research. This program is valuable in assisting anglers share the resource, it is helping change the emphasis from exploitation to conservation and provides an improved link between the Department and the angling public. A presentation on outcomes from the 4th International Billfish Symposium will be provided at the meeting.

3. Mulloway tagging and stocking

Fish stocking supports some of the most important inland fisheries enhancing the recreational catch of anglers in Australia. A small marine trial of mulloway fingerlings stocking undertaken in 1997 proved successful. However, there is little information on the environmental aspects of marine stocking, such as predatory impact on small forage fish and prawns and the growth and survival of the stocked fish. These aspects are being investigated through experimental stockings of mulloway into Botany Bay, Georges River and Smiths Lake, prior to any large-scale marine stocking being considered. Matt Taylor from the University of New South Wales will present an update on the final results of the study.

The final report on the Mulloway tagging program is attached for the Committee's information.

4. Assessment of Recreational Fishing Havens (RFHs) in northern NSW

Southern Cross University (SCU) is undertaking a project to determine the effectiveness of Recreational Fishing Havens in improving recreational angling in northern NSW. Its objective is to answer questions like:

1. Are there more fish species of recreational importance within the RFH by comparison to areas adjacent to RFHs;
2. Are there higher recreational catches within RFH compared to areas adjacent to RFHs; and
3. Do anglers have a better angling experience in systems that contain RFHs.

At the previous meeting, the Committee was advised that Dr Ron West, Associate Professor, University of Wollongong, had undertaken a review of the above program, which made a number of recommendations, including the formation of a Project Steering Committee with a mutually-agreed chair. It was also recommended that the Steering Committee prepare a detailed mid-term Project Report outlining:

- The revised title, study objectives and methodologies;
- The current data and preliminary data analyses.
- The expected “outputs” from the project under the revised protocols.
- The revised project timetable and a schedule of milestone reports.
- The research tasks to be undertaken by each of the partners (SCU and NSW DPI), to achieve those outputs.
- A staffing and budget report.

The Steering Committee consisting of Professor Baverstock (SCU), Graham Harrison (RFSTEC) and Dennis Reid (Biometrician, NSW DPI) has met twice to review the above program. A report has been prepared by SCU in consultation with the Steering Committee with summary information of completed work and a revised sampling regime for the remainder of the program. Funding from the Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust for this program has been suspended until the Project Report has been presented and reviewed by the Committee and NSW DPI. Anthony Moore of SCU will provide a presentation on this program.

5. Fish habitat restoration projects

The Saltwater Trust has provided \$200,000 for grants for statewide, coastal fish habitat restoration projects. Previous grants administered under the Clarence pilot program included rehabilitation of fish habitats, removal of barriers to native fish movement, planting of native trees and removal of exotic vegetation along waterways. NSW DPI recently advertised an EOI for grants under the statewide program. The EOI closed on 28 October. Sharon Molloy of NSW DPI will provide an update on the program.

6. Summary of all programs funded by Saltwater Trusts

Status tables for NSW DPI programs and external large and small grants have been updated and are provided for the Committee's information.

Outcomes

1. FADS and artificial reefs management program

To date, DPI has deployed 17 of the 21 FADS along the east coast for the summer fishing season. The Jervis Bay and Wollongong FADS will be installed within the next 4 weeks. The Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) have recently approved the installation of 2 new FADS at Eden and Kiama.

DPI advised that the Artificial Reefs program was progressing well and that Baited Underwater Video (BUV) methods were being used to monitor fish populations in control and experimental sites at Lake Macquarie. The Committee was advised that the "before" survey had been completed prior to deployment of the reefs later this month.

2. Gamefish tagging program

The Committee was updated on outcomes of the 4th International Billfish Symposium. The main aim of the symposium was to strengthen linkages between marine science and fisheries management. The latest billfish research was currently focussed on Pop-up Satellite tag (PSAT) technology rather than conventional tags. These tags cost approximately US \$3-4,000 each. PSATs are attached to fish like a normal tag and are able to provide continuous movement data. They electronically record position, water temperature and depth at frequent intervals (e.g. every 30 min). The tag detaches from the fish after a designated period, pops up to the surface, and transmits stored data to a satellite. Actual tag retrieval (by beachcombers on the shore) allows more detailed archival data to be downloaded from the tag. Approximately 80% of tags deployed in the U.S. are retrieved from beaches and sent back to the program operators. Water temperature was reported to be the primary factor affecting billfish movement.

A number of studies have investigated survival of billfish caught on J hooks compared with circle hooks. A major study involved the tagging of 40 white marlin off the Atlantic coast of the U.S. 20 white marlin were caught by trolling dead baits using J hooks and 20 using circle hooks. 7 out of 40 marlin died within 10 days of capture and all of these fish were captured on J hooks. All fish captured on circle hooks survived for 10 days or more after tagging. Generally it was found that J hooks had a higher incidence of deep hooking and bleeding resulting in death (although not all fish that were bleeding when released died). Zero or reduced deep hooking was recorded in studies with circle hook captures and equal or improved hook-up rates were noted. The use of circle hooks is now fully embraced by anglers in the U.S. and they are being used successfully with an increasing range of species.

3. Mulloway tagging and stocking

The aim of the project was to measure the predatory impact of hatchery-reared mulloway fingerlings in NSW estuaries and to determine appropriate stocking rates for any future extensive stocking campaigns.

Approximately 80,000 mulloway were released into the Georges River in 2003 and 2004. Following sampling of fish and analysis, the fish were found to achieve high growth rates and reached an increase in body length of up to 1mm per day. A Predatory Impact Model has been developed to measure the environmental impacts of stocking. The model required estimates of habitat and production and a 15km stretch of the Georges River was mapped and sampled. This allowed estimation of a maximum daily rate of consumption of a single mulloway (within a range of size

classes) which was used to estimate the number of stocked fish of a certain size that the habitat can support, keeping within the bounds of production estimates.

The next phase of the program will involve restocking the Georges River with reduced numbers of large fingerlings. The Tweed, Richmond and Manning estuaries will also be stocked. It is envisaged that refined stocking techniques developed in the initial study will result in a better survival rate than earlier stockings.

4. Assessment of Recreational Fishing Havens (RFHs) in northern NSW

Anthony Moore of SCU gave a presentation of the results of the program to date. The significance of these results were discussed by the Committee. A member of the Review Steering Committee advised that the inferences, which could be drawn from the results were based on a very narrow basis. Issues identified with the survey included the use of only 2 boat ramps in the Tweed and Richmond, no randomisation of interview days or schedules of days for headcounts and insufficient interview numbers to allow real differences (in and outside the havens) to be picked up. The Expenditure Committee considered the Report and concluded that even with revised sampling methodology, the project would still not meet its objectives and recommended that the project be terminated. **Motion:** Funding for the SCU program, 'Assessment of Recreational Fishing Havens (RFHs) in northern NSW' be discontinued. **Moved:** Graham Harrison **Seconded:** Malcolm Poole. **Carried.** The Committee also requested that Trust funded assets from the program be returned to the Department.

5. Fish habitat restoration projects

Round 1 of the Coastal Saltwater Habitat Grant Program (HGP) resulted in 22 applications being received with a total requested funding amount of \$412,000. All applications were assessed and ranked according to their benefits to improve and restore fish habitat to enhance fish populations. 8 projects were recommended for funding which are summarised in the table below. This represents total funding of \$160,828 with an in-kind contribution of \$301,680.

To encourage increased habitat restoration proposals from fishing clubs, it was agreed that in-kind support should be promoted as a way of demonstrating match funding.

Motion: Funding in 2005/06 from the Saltwater Trust for the 8 recommended habitat restoration projects in the table below **is supported.** **Moved:** John Drew **Seconded:** Malcolm Poole **Carried.**

Applicant	Project Title	Location	Proposal Summary	Amount Requested	In Kind
Bankstown City Council	Estuarine habitat improvement	Little Salt pan Creek (Georges catchment)	An area of 2.5 ha will be rehabilitated. Activities will include rubbish removal, weed removal, replanting, removal of remnants of weir, removal of sediment , erect ion of a raised pathway, and interpretative signage.	\$20,000	\$41,750
Byron Shire Council	Rehabilitation of the Brunswick River	Brunswick River in Mullumbimby	2.4 km of riparian veg; 1.7ha of saltmarsh, 2.85ha of mangrove. A variety of activities will take place; weed removal and replanting of the riparian zone, reintroduction of tidal inundation by the construction of a box culvert, stock restriction by fencing, monitoring of tidal inundation, interpretative signage and education days.	\$30,000	\$36,800
Bega Valley Shire Council	Protection and enhancement of the riparian zone	Pambula Lake	Activities include fencing 350m of foreshore and establishing 1.5ha of riparian vegetation.	\$5,000	\$5,000
Brunswick Valley Landcare Inc	Rehabilitation of the riparian zone	Mullumbimby Creek (Brunswick Catchment)	2km. Activities include weed removal, replanting with native vegetation and community education.	\$8,522	\$10,670
Fred Welsh	Wetland rehabilitation	Micalo Island (Clarence Catchment)	570m. Fencing Oyster Creek bank to prevent cattle access. Removal of weed species to allow natural regeneration.	\$7,306	\$7,280
Duck Unlimited Pty Ltd	Wetland rehabilitation	Little Broadwater wetland – Sportsman Creek (Clarence Catchment)	Incentive payments to landowners to increase amount of habitat reserved for the aquatic environment. Continuation of a DPI initiated project.	\$30,000	\$117,760
Ocean Watch Australia Ltd	Saltmarsh rehabilitation	George Kendall Park (Parramatta River Catchment)	500m ² . Activities will include excavation and removal of fill currently on the site, soil testing, collection of seed and propagation of plants, planting of saltmarsh and erection of signs.	\$30,000	\$51,760
Tweed Shire Council	Rehabilitation of the Tweed River floodplan	Tweed Catchment	Installation of 3 fish friendly tidal floodgates.	\$30,000	\$30,660
Total				\$160,828	\$301,680

Agenda Item 6

NSW DPI

Action Items from previous meeting – see attached tables

Agenda Item 7

NSW DPI

Issue

General Business / Correspondence received

General Business

Award for contribution to recreational fishing in NSW

At previous meetings, the Committee has discussed a proposal for recreational fishing stakeholder committees to recognise an individuals or organisation's contribution to recreational fishing in NSW through annual awards. The Department plans to advertise the attached expression of interest and application form approved by this Committee.

Publicity of RFSTEC trust funded programs - John Drew

Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) Update – John Diplock

Abalone taskforce report

The NSW Minister for Primary Industries has established an independently chaired taskforce to review the factors causing the reductions in abalone catches and to provide recommendations on the future directions of the fishery. The taskforce chairperson, Dr John Keniry, has met with key representatives and other specialists involved in the abalone fishery. Advisors from the commercial, recreational and Indigenous fishing sectors, and the Department of Primary Industries have assisted Dr Keniry. Dr Keniry was due to report to the Minister in October 2005.

Correspondence received

Taree Fishermens Co-op-variation to the Manning River RFH

Outcomes

Publicity of RFSTEC trust funded programs

The Region 3 member expressed concern that there had been no local media coverage of a recent fishing workshop held at Ebor. The Department advised that media releases are issued regularly, however it is up to local press to run the stories. Photos of the workshop are made available to journalists upon request.

Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) Update

The ETBF workshop hosted by Recfish Australia and ACoRF was held on 20 Nov 2005 at Sydney Game Fishing Club. The workshop had good attendance with 29 delegates from all major fishing organisations and other stakeholder representatives from NSW as well as relevant gamefishing representatives from Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland. The Saltwater Trust provided funding for the workshop. Recreational management objectives and principles for resource sharing in the ETBF fishery were developed to establish a position for the NSW recreational sector which could be forwarded to the NSW and Commonwealth Ministers.

Management Objectives

In the next five years the recreational sector operating in the ETBF will develop measurable, cost effective, readily understood and equitable objectives that will deliver:

1. Increased tag and release of all sport fish and reduced numbers of fish harvested by the sector
2. Increased strike rates, numbers of trophy fish caught and species diversity, better bait availability, reduced gear conflict with other sectors and recreational only fishing areas.

These objectives will only be achievable by fair resource allocation, improved education and effective enforcement.

The workshop proposed the following action items to be presented to the State and Commonwealth Ministers.

Action Items

1. Longlining to be banned in all waters of the Australian Fishing Zone.
2. All billfish to be listed as recreational-only species.
3. A ban on taking inshore baitfish species for longlining. (Interim measure as longline fleet is removed.)
4. Any fishers restricted from future access to the fishery must be fairly compensated.

Abalone taskforce report

The Committee was advised that the report will be released soon by the Department and will be made available on request to Committee members.

NSW recreational fishing survey

The Department advised that it was originally proposed to repeat the National Recreational Fishing Survey after 5 years. However, this will not be undertaken on a national basis due to a lack of funding sources (FRDC previously funded a large component of the first survey). However, DPI has recognised the importance of ongoing surveys required for resource assessment and effective management of recreational fisheries. The Department is formulating a framework for a NSW survey which may be presented at the next budget meeting.

Sharing the Fish Conference

The Department advised that this conference was being held in February 2006 in Perth. The concept of allocation issues has become increasingly important in NSW and Australia. The conference will have three main themes:

- allocations across jurisdictions - including governmental, regional and multi-lateral issues;
- allocations within sectors; and
- allocations between sectors

The Committee was advised that John Diplock and Bryan van der Walt are planning to attend the conference (using previously approved management trust funds for travel and registration fees).

Correspondence received

Taree Fishermens Co-op-variation to the Manning River Recreational Fishing Haven (RFH)

The Region 4 representative presented a proposal in a letter from the Taree Fishermen's Co-Op for changes in the boundary of the Manning River recreational fishing haven. The proposals included shifting the upstream boundary of the RFH to 3.2 km downstream of Ghinni Ghinni creek in exchange for extending the haven from Cedar Party Creek to 3 km downstream. Letters of support for the proposal had been provided from Taree RSL and Golf Club Fishing Club (provided the new area is not opened up for meshing of fish) and Wingham Anglers Club.

The Region 4 representative advised that he had received letters against the proposal from Manning River Sustainable Fishing and Tourism Inc, Taree West Bowling Club and Fishing Club, Coopernook Hotel Fishing Club, Old Bar Beach Bowling Club Fishing Club and Riverside Caravan Park, Croki. Concerns for the proposal included the potential for an increase in illegal activity in the varied recreational fishing haven. Also, the proposal would involve trading a relatively popular recreational fishing area for a less used recreational area. The prawns digs currently in the haven were also considered to be important for production in the surrounding ecosystem. It was noted that the proposal could result in increased catches of bass as the species are occasionally meshed in the spawning season throughout the system to Ghinni Ghinni Creek.

The Committee discussed the proposal and it was noted that there was clearly no local consensus for the proposal. On that basis, the Committee did not support any variation to the Manning River recreational fishing haven. **Moved:** Graham Harrison **Seconded:** Lionel Jones **Carried.**

Agenda Item 8

Chairperson

Issue

Next combined budget meeting with RFFTEC 6-7 April 2006.

Meeting Ends