



**Recreational
Fishing Trusts**

*Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust
Expenditure Committee*

Minutes

23rd RFFTEC MEETING
6 December, 2005

CRONULLA FISHERIES CENTRE
202 Nicholson Parade, Cronulla

**Twenty Third Meeting of the NSW
Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee
Draft Minutes
6.12.05, 9:30am to 3:30
NSW Department of Primary Industries, Cronulla Fisheries Centre, 202 Nicholson
Parade, Cronulla**

Attendance

Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee Members

Bruce Schumacher	Chair
Max Graham	Region 1
Karl Schaerf	Region 2
Robert Bell	Region 3
Ian Ward	Region 4
Debbie Lennon	Region 6
Kevin McKinnon	Region 8
Brian Hale	AFTA

NSW Department of Primary Industries (observers)

Mr John Diplock, Principal Manager, Recreational Fisheries
Mr Bryan van der Walt, Senior Fisheries Manager, Recreational Fishing Trusts
Mr Cameron Westaway, Senior Fisheries Manager (Inland)
Mr Alistair McBurnie, A/Fisheries Manager Recreational Fisheries
Glenn Tritton, Manager Fisheries Compliance
Dee McElligott, State Coordinator, Community Programs
Tammie Breneger, Education Officer
Dr Matthew Broadhurst Scientist In Charge Coffs Harbour
Sharon Malloy, Senior Conservation Manager

Apologies

Rodney Tonkin	Region 5
Dr Steve Kennelly	Chief Scientist, NSW DPI
Richard Ping Kee	Region 7

Business

- Chair's introduction.
- Confirmation of minutes from previous meeting (24 August, 2005)
- Action Items from previous minutes

Agenda Items

1. Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust financial report (Bryan van der Walt / Cameron Westaway)
2. Review of Habitat Restoration Programs – Sharon Molloy
3. Compliance Report – Glenn Tritton
4. Hook Mortality Report Matt Broadhurst
5. Community Programs Dee McElligott/Tammie Breneger
6. 2005-2006 Fish stocking programs (Cameron Westaway / Alistair McBurnie)
7. Report on the review of NSW Recreational Freshwater and Saltwater Rules (Discussion paper) - (Cameron Westaway / John Diplock)
8. New trust fund project proposals and proposals for funding through the existing Small Grants Program (Cameron Westaway / A McBurnie)
9. Action Items from Previous Meeting

Other business

- Project milestones reports (A McBurnie)
- Next meeting
- Date and location

Meeting close

Chair's welcoming

The Chair welcomed members to the 23rd meeting of the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFFTEC). The Chair noted a full agenda for the meeting and read the apologies; the chair noted that Richard Ping Kee and Rodney Tonkin had provided an apology and a memo of issues for presentation to the committee for consideration.

Apologies

Rodney Tonkin
Dr Steve Kennelly
Richard Ping Kee

Region 5
Chief Scientist, NSW DPI
Region 7

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were yet to be signed by the Director for release. The Minutes were provided to the Committee in draft form for their consideration out of session.

<p>Recommendation: The Minutes of Meeting 22 be held until the next committee meeting. Before they are accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>
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Action item: Follow up on minutes

Business arising

Mr Schaerf wished to advise that the spelling of his name on the agenda was incorrect. He would prefer is his name was correctly spelled as Schaerf and not Scharf. He noted that his email also had this incorrect spelling but would not be changed.

Action item: Ensure that the correct spelling is maintained for Mr Schaerf on all correspondence.

Action items of the previous meeting

Action items arising from the previous meeting are detailed in the action status table, included with the draft minutes.

Issue

Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust financial report.

Background

The Committee was advised that total income received in the Saltwater Trust up until 30 June 2005 was \$10.03 million which was over \$1 million more compared to last financial year (\$8.999 million in 2003/04). Currently the funding level to the Freshwater Trust is \$2.5 million in 2005/06. The freshwater expenditure committee allocated a total of \$2.4 million to a range of compliance, research, management and education programs to improve recreational fishing in 2004/05 leaving a balance of \$814,000 (as of 30 June 2005).

At the recent budget meeting in April 2005, the Freshwater committee supported a total budget of over \$3.05 million in 2005/06. Allocations to meet this budget based on predicted carryovers from 2004/05 will be confirmed at the meeting. On 1 July 2005, the cost of a 3-year licence increased from \$70 to \$75, a one-year from \$25 to \$30, a one-month licence from \$10 to \$12 and a three-day licence from \$5 to \$6. The increase in the licence is expected boost total income levels, however, the exact level of increase will only become apparent when licence sales figures for at least 6 months become available. Other studies in the US have shown, for example, that a ten percent price increase does not always translate into a ten percent revenue boost. Currently, the Freshwater Trust allocation is set at \$2.5 million in 2005/06. This allocation will be increased once licence sales data for the current year become available Freshwater priorities for funding

A freshwater priorities list is being compiled to assist applicants when applying for funds from the Freshwater Trust. The list will be attached to the annual expression of interest for Trust applications and the Trust application package to ensure priorities are addressed. A draft list has been compiled and will be provided at the meeting for discussion.

Outcomes: Current Trust Fund Position

Mr Bryan van der Walt outlined the financial position of the Freshwater Trust, which was considered to be in a healthy financial state. Indicators since the last financial year show an increase of the trusts to be just over \$10 million. This figure may grow further when the affects of the recent license fee increase become evident.

License sales are expected to increase in the coming months due to seasonal changes over the summer period. January and December are the dominant times when most anglers purchase licenses. To predict revenue at this time of year is difficult due to seasonal factors including the ongoing drought that may have been a factor in sales.

The status of the Freshwater Trust is at follows:

Summary of current Trust Fund position

Balance at end of 2004/05	\$814,000
Predicted income 2005/06	\$2,500,000
Approved allocations 2005/06	\$2,400,000
Predicted balance at end of 2005/06	To be assessed in the new year

Mr Van Der Walt advised that an increase in funds for the trust would become available over the coming months. He also stated that sales have increased between 5-10% each year while compliance rates have increased from 80% to 92%.

The Chair noted that the Saltwater Trust spends all funding each year making assessment on up to 12 trust grant applications each meeting. It was noted that while Trust monies are not being spent it is hard to argue for an increase in fees. Mr Diplock advised that while the fee has now been increased to match the Consumer Price Index (CPI), it was not previously and the trust is now in a better position to increase project funding.

The Chair advised that the trust should now become pro active with respect to applications and possibly it should look at a tender style process for applications where the trust nominates projects that it would like to see developed.

Mr Schaefer noted that this was a good idea that such projects such as the recovery of Macquarie perch through stocking and other programs should be considered.

Mrs. Lennon requested that a project to improve the current Status of Trout Cod as a sports fish should be investigated as a proposal.

The Chair noted that funding should also be invested in research projects.

Mr Graham stated that public education is required in some areas and in particular the status of Easter Cod as a threatened species.

Mr Westaway stated that in addition signage and access projects should be considered as well as an expansion in all areas nominated.

Mr Van der Walt gave an update on the fishing fee agent tender process. He indicated that they had received three tenders and an evaluation team has been set up with the Department of Commerce to evaluate the applications. They have made recommendations to the steering committee.

The aim is to have a pilot program in place with 30 agents for statewide system testing by the middle of this year.

The Machines download data to the DPI each night and uploads any data changes at the same time. This process saves the proprietor of the store time.

The card is thermal and waterproof and allows the possibility for advertising.

Outcomes

For information.

Issues

1. Update on Habitat Grant Program
2. Review of Conservation Action Unit Activities

Background**1. Freshwater Habitat Grant Program**

The Fish Habitat Grant Program (Freshwater combined with Saltwater) was advertised in August and closed on the 28th October 2005. 46 applications were received; 24 freshwater and 22 saltwater. The applications represented a good distribution from all over the State. Applications are currently being assessed and recommendations will be presented to the committee at this meeting for review and comment. A number of good quality applications have been received this year from both saltwater and freshwater areas. An update on projects funded from Round 3 will also be presented.

2. DPI Conservation Action Unit Activities

To protect and restore the fisheries of NSW it is essential that the habitats essential for spawning, breeding, feeding and growth to maturity are protected and restored. The past few years have seen a notable increase in the awareness, both by the community in general, of the fact that good quality aquatic habitat is one of the most important components for the management of native fish stocks in NSW waterways and estuaries.

The DPI CAU team is currently managing a number of aquatic habitat rehabilitation initiatives and programs. This includes a range of projects aimed at restoring fish habitat and passage through:

Wetland rehabilitation:

Weir Removal Program;

Floodgate Management Program;

State Water Memorandum Of Understanding;

Fishway Construction;

Environmental Trust Projects;

Catchment Management Authority (Natural Heritage Trust) Projects;

Living Murray Initiative

Development and upkeep of an Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation Database

An update will also be provided on the activities undertaken by the Conservation Action Unit.

Outcomes

The milestone summary reports for projects sponsored in rounds 2 and 3 of the habitat grant program were distributed for the information of committee members. Ms Sharon Malloy advised that nine of the thirteen round 2 projects are now complete and six of the 14 round 3 projects are complete. NSW DPI will inform RFFTEC on the continued progress of the remaining projects. Mrs Molloy also mentioned that there were several amendments to be made on three separate projects. Extensions on these were granted at the 22nd RFFTEC Meeting.

Round 4 of the fish habitat grant program was announced with the closing date for applications set for 28th October 2005. The EOI reflects the wishes of the Committee, in particular benefits to recreational anglers, public access areas, dollar for dollar value, technical expertise, the inclusion of a map and photos and a prerequisite for the applicants to contact the local Conservation Manager (Department of Primary Industries) prior to submitting an application.

There were 46 applications made in total including 24 freshwater and 22 saltwater proposals. A list of the recommendations (see below table1) and proposal descriptions were distributed to committee members. These projects were ranked by conservation staff according to the criteria set criteria.

A total request for funds of \$389,260 was made and 14 applications were recommended totalling \$200,260 with in kind funding of \$353,414.

It was noted that though extensive advertising was committed in western areas some gaps still arose similarly to previous years.

Mr Westaway noted than many of the applications were from the eastern drainage and efforts may be required to encourage applications from the west of the state.

Mr Schaerf stated that the trust should look into ways to encourage its members to make applications.

Mrs Molloy gave an overview of each trust application and a brief description of each application was made.

Mrs Molloy gave an overview of programs currently being run by the Rehabilitation Unit that are funded by the NSW DPI and other agencies, such as Catchment management authorities (CMA). In many cases the CMA uses project manage through DPI to contribute to their aquatic Targets.

Table 1: Projects recommended for funding – Habitat Grants Program (Round 4)

Project ID number	Applicant	Title	Location	Proposal Summary	Funds Sought (\$)	Applicant Contribution (\$ + in-kind)	Comments	Recommended to RFFTEC Committee	funded \$\$	In-kind
1	NSW Council of Freshwater Anglers	Research project to improve habitat rehabilitation methods	Yanco Weir, Murrumbidgee catchment	Field testing of a fish pump Fishway (new design) at Yanco weir on the Murrumbidgee River	18800.00	19000.00	Good project. Has potential to assist with other fish passage projects in the future. Recommend part funding	YES	10800	19000
2	David and Alison Trowbridge	Revegetation and fencing	Molong Creek (Macquarie Catchment)	Revegetation of 600m of the creek bank and provision of stock proof fencing	2100.00	2100.00	Good value project for the small amount of money. Landholders very keen to undertake works in this area	YES	2100	2100
4	Orara Valley Rivercare Groups Management Committee	Fish Passage enhancement- road crossing upgrade	Orara River (Richmond catchment)	Construction of a fishway at the causeway site to open up an additional 20km of fish passage	30000.00	95000.00	Excellent project.	YES	30000	95000
7	Wentworth Shire Council	Thegoa Lagoon fish passage project	Junction of the Murray and Darling river catchments	Replace existing blockbank and pipe with 3 box culvert	26600.00	68000.00	Good project.	YES	26600	68000
9	Shoalhaven City Council	Rehabilitation of Broughton Mill and Broughton Creek	Broughton Creek and Broughton Mill Creek (Shoalhaven Catchment)	Rehabilitation of 4.7km of the riparian zone by weed removal, replanting with native vegetation	27378.00	39954.00	Excellent project	YES	27378	39954
10	G&M Fleming	Rehabilitation of Maquires Creek riparian zone	Maguires Creek (Richmond catchment)	Weed control and replanting with native vegetation 450m	4000.00	4000.00	Good project for small amount of money to be expended	YES	4000	4000
12	Sam and Penny Deshon	Restoration of the riparian zone	Macquarie River 15km west of Wellington	8ha. Activities will include, weed removal. Replanting with natives, fencing to exclude stock . Assessment of the site will follow on ground works	6500.00	9000.00	Good project for small amount of money to be expended	YES	6500	9000
16	Richmond Valley Council	Improve fish passage in the Richmond catchment	Richmond River at Casino	Improve fish passage by removal of Norco weir. Other activities are mentioned such as Resnagging etc	25000.00	25000.00	Good fish passage project	YES	25000	25000

Table 1: Projects recommended for funding – Habitat Grants Program (Round 4)

19	Boggabri Landcare/Rivercare Group Inc	Riparian rehabilitation of the Namoi River	Namoi River at Boggabri	3km. Removal of willows and revegetation with native plants	5682.00	5700.00	Good project for the small amount of funds to be expended	YES	5682	5700
20	Gloucester Shire Council	Improve fish passage in the Gloucester River	Gloucester River (Manning catchment)	Construction of a partial width rock ramp Fishway	8450.00	8450.00	Excellent project with good outcomes for fish passage	YES	8450	8450
21	Eurobodella Shire Council	Improve fish passage by replacement of a causeway	Buckenbowra River (Clyde Catchment)	Removal of a causeway on Quart Pot Road. Replacement with a box culvert. Will open up 18kms of fish passage	30000.00	40000.00	Excellent project.	YES	30000	40000
22	Khancoban Station	Swampy plains Creek Rehabilitation	Swampy Plains Creek (Murray catchment)	200m. Activities include replacement of a road crossing with a box culvert, removal of willow species, replanting with natives and fencing	11684.00	17300.00	Good project - however recommend part funding for willow removal section of the project	YES	4400	17300
23	Alandale Farm	Rehabilitation of the riparian zone- Wilson River	Wilson River (Richmond catchment)	200m. Activities include removal of weed species, replanting with natives.	9350.00	9910.00	Good project	YES	9350	9910
24	Tamworth Regional Council	Fish Passage on the Manilla River	Manilla River (Namoi catchment)	Modification of Barraba weir and removal of willow species	10000.00	10000.00	Good project	YES	10000	10000
6	Greening Australia	Rehabilitation of south Creek	South Creek Catchment near St. Clair	Weed removal and revegetation of the banks of South Creek. Resnagging of the creek and removal of instream weeds; carpbuster fishing day. 4000m2	32516.00	44300.00	Good project However not enough funds to allocate to this project. Have funded this project in previous years	NO		

Table 1: Projects recommended for funding – Habitat Grants Program (Round 4)

3	Bathurst Regional Council	Rehabilitation of a section of the Macquarie River	Upper Macquarie catchment (near Bathurst)	1.3km of works to include: 350m of new fencing; repairs to 300m of existing fencing; 100m of vehicle control barriers; remove willows and other weeds from 550m of riverbank; plant 1000 native trees and shrubs; establish 1ha of native grasses on the floodplain; install 1km of temporary fencing to establish rabbit proof land on floodplain; install 4 educational signs; deliver a 1 day training event ; undertake a two day water monitoring survey.	18250.00	19250.00	Good project- however a lot of money required for labour. Not enough funds to allocate to this project	NO		
15	Conservation Volunteers Australian	Protection of the riparian zone by prevention of stock access	Old Man Creek (Murrumbidgee Catchment)	1km of stock fencing on both sides of the creek; weed removal and replanting with natives	29605.00	55825.00	Good project - however lot of money requested is for labour and supervision. Could part fund but funds already overallocated	NO		
8	Craigie Landcare Group	Rehabilitation of the Little Plains River	Little Plains River (Snowy Catchment)	Removal of weeds (willows) from the riparian zone and subsequent replanting with native species. 1.7km	32450.00	33677.00	Not considered good value for money. Could part fund but funds already overallocated	NO		
11	Narrandera Aquatic Sports Club	Removal of weed species and resnagging	Lake Talbot near Narrandera (Murrumbidgee catchment)	Activities include removal of willow species, replanting with natives and resnagging	30 000	30400.00	Not considered good value for money	NO		
14	Upper Gwydir Landcare Association	Protection and enhancement of the creek bank and riparian zone	Halls Creek (Gwydir catchment)	Activities will include 100m of rock revegetation; 2km of weed control and revegetation; carp muster; monitor and evaluate the project outcomes	29850.00	33160.00	A lot of money to protect one landholders property- project not good value for money with respect to the aquatic environment	NO		
17	Misty View Homefarm	Rehabilitation of the riparian zone	Bobs Creek (Shoalhaven Catchment)	800m. Activities include weed removal and replanting with native vegetation	4000.00	?	Project outcomes are not in line with good aquatic habitat rehab principles - mention snags as a problem	NO		

Table 1: Projects recommended for funding – Habitat Grants Program (Round 4)

5	City of Botany Bay Council	Rehabilitation of freshwater ponds - Sir Joseph Banks Park	Botany Bay catchment	Installation of an aerator, replanting, removal of carp	25112.00	30732.00	Project not relevant for HGP. Not good value for money	NO		
18	Tamworth Regional Council	Rehabilitation of the riparian zone	Peel river (Namoi Catchment)	Activities will include 200m of weed removal and replanting with native vegetation;	4000.00	4000.00	Unwilling to fund as previous projects funded have been managed inadequately	NO		
13	David and Melanie Pitman	Creation of an off river stock watering point	Myrtle Creek, Richmond catchment	1.5km. Activities include building an off stream watering point and purchase of a misting machine for weeds?	5,000.00	7000?	Project will not provide good outcomes for the environment - desnagging	NO		
					396327.00	604758.00			200260	353414
					total requested	total in-kind			total recommended for funding	total in-kind of recommended projects

Recommendation

The recommended projects listed in table 1 are funded for the fourth round of the habitat grants program.

Motioned: Mr Schaerf **Seconded:** By All. **Carried.**

Issue
Compliance Update.

Background

Glenn Tritton will provide RFFTEC with a report on compliance outcomes for the year 04/05 covering a number of issues including:

- Number of compliance checks,
- Compliance rates,
- Major apprehensions and Court outcome,
- Advisory and education activities and
- Some details on conservation related issues

Outcomes

Mr Tritton gave an overview of the rolls of compliance staff. This includes performing an advisory function while on patrol, helping in the successful running of fishing clinics in conjunction with Fishcare staff and volunteers and conduct compliance operations and conservation compliance.

Compliance officers have investigated 93 offences and regularly work with local government and run catchment audits.

Mr Tritton stated that many recreational anglers are checked each year for compliance with regulations. A large proportion of these inspections include further investigation into compliance other than license attainment.

Mr Tritton gave a breakdown of compliance rates for both freshwater and saltwater. Over the past year 17,275 freshwater anglers were checked and of those 92% complied. In the saltwater 46,571 anglers were checked and a compliance rate of 86% was recorded.

Mr Tritton broke the freshwater compliance figures down further in the below table.

Freshwater	Caution	Infringment	Prosecution	Total
03/04	387	320	73	780
04/05	665	588	42	1245

Mr Tritton advised that throughout the state the DPI compliance unit had seized 5 vehicles, 26 vessels, 2943 illegal nets, over 3000 fish weighing 1800kg, 1,744 traps, 1895 setlines.

Outcomes continued

The Chair on behalf of Richard Ping Kee (apology) wished to ask Mr Tritton as to why an officer from the coast attended a recent fishing event in the western part of the state. Mr Tritton advised that often Coastal compliance staff are utilised for inland events and that this liaison is not uncommon. The chair also inquired on Mr Ping Kee's behalf as to the status of compliance staff vacancies Mr Tritton stated that through general workplace reasons such as maternity leave, general leave etc that some vacancies do come up.

Mr McKinnon asked stated that he would like to pass on his congratulations to Fisheries officer Peter Cumming for attending a Camp quality clinic held within Region 8. Kevin was most impressed that Mr Cumming had attended the event while on leave.

Mr Schaerf wised to thank the officers involved with the recent fish stocking programs held thought the state.

Mr Schaerf wished to put in conveyance that consideration should be made with regards to crown road closures and their assessment made by compliance officers. Mr Schaerf asked that the committee consider that consultation on access be made by recreational anglers. He believes that recreational anglers should assess the interests of the future access to rivers. In particular the proposed closure of roads leading to Golden Gulley near Blayney should be delayed until such time as the area can be investigated fully for river access.

Mr Diplock emphasised the need to identify and prioritize areas such as these to ensure that the recreational anglers access is maintained.

Action: DPI Investigate the possibility of postponing a decision until such time as an assessment can be made on the Golden Gully road Closures.

Issue

Matt Broadhurst of the NSW DPI Fisheries Conservation Technology Unit will give a presentation on hook mortality studies done with key saltwater species and will discuss possible options for freshwater species.

Background**Using recreational anglers to estimate and maximise the survival of released line-caught fish**

In 2003, the Saltwater Trust approved funding for a two-year project entitled "Using recreational anglers to estimate and maximise the survival of released line-caught fish". The project involves a series of experiments in the field (as part of recreational fishing events) and aquaria that aim to (i) estimate the post-release survival and main contributing factors for key saltwater species, especially yellowfin bream and mulloway, associated with current hook-and-line methods in NSW, and (ii) where required, develop and test changes to gears or handling practices that maximise survival. So far, both objectives have been addressed during 3 recreational fishing events (held in Botany Bay and the Hawkesbury and Woolli Rivers) and 5 experiments in aquaria. This work has estimated the short-term (< 10 days) post-release survival of snapper (67%), trevally (63 - 98%), mulloway (69 - 92%), sand whiting (93%), and yellowfin bream (72 - 100%) and some of the key contributing factors. Specifically, the time spent in onboard holding tanks is an important predictor of survival for trevally, while anatomical hook location (mouth vs. swallowed) and whether or not the hook is removed after capture were demonstrated to be important predictors of survival for bream and mulloway. These latter two species have also demonstrated considerable differences in their tolerance to air exposure and post-capture handling.

These results have provided important information for improving the survival of these key species. For example, given the relationship between the time spent in onboard holding tanks and the survival of trevally, this species should not be held in tanks for longer than 45 minutes. Further, because several experiments have demonstrated that removing swallowed hooks greatly increases the probability of bream and mulloway dying, the line should be cut and the hook left in released fish. The survival of mulloway can be further improved by cutting the line in the water and not exposing the fish to air. The longer-term benefits of these sorts of release practices were validated for yellowfin bream during an experiment to examine their protracted survival after ingesting hooks. This work showed that the majority (up to 85%) of individuals survived beyond 12 weeks, but more importantly, most (approx. 76%) were able to pass (or shed) their hooks within 1 – 4 weeks of being released into tanks.

Other ongoing work involves determining the extent to which different hook types (including circle and traditional and modified J-hooks) influence the rates of ingestion for bream. It is hoped that these experiments will identify particular hook designs that maintain catching efficiencies, but reduce rates of ingestion, and therefore mortalities. This information, combined with the results already achieved, will provide clear and realistic options for maximising the post-release survival of key saltwater species.

Based on the success of the project so far, we have applied for and received funding from the Saltwater Trust (for an additional three years) to investigate the short- and

long-term post-release survival of a range of other saltwater species, including luderick, dusky flathead, sand mullet, garfish and tailor. It may also be timely and appropriate to consider expanding this sort of research to encompass key freshwater species, like Murray cod and bass. This additional work would be relatively inexpensive and straightforward, since most of the operational requirements (e.g. sea cages, portable aquaria systems, tagging equipment, etc) have already been purchased or developed. We therefore propose to submit an appropriate application for funding to RFFTEC in 2006.

Outcomes

Matt Broadhurst presented the committee with an overview of his findings on the hook mortality by using recreational angling events to estimate the post-release survival rates of species.

A national recreational fishing survey estimated that more than 8.9 million bream and 9 million snapper, flathead and Mulloway (20% of the total released catch) were released from recreational anglers annually. These numbers were of considerable concern, because they have a potential to present high levels of mortalities. Through regulations, fishers release fish due to bag and size limits. It was assumed that the majority of released fish survive but in lieu of information on post release survival made it difficult to estimate the benefits of current management. Indeed, there was a perception that many fish released after capture by some hook-and-line methods may die.

A recent review prioritized several species, including Mulloway and bream, as potentially susceptible to high levels of mortality after release from capture by recreational hook-and-line fisheries. Further, factors such as hook damage and handling such as exposure to air, physical damage, etc were identified as possible causes for mortalities. Despite the above concerns, there was little scientific data available on the post release survival rates for fish caught in NSW.

Mr Broadhurst used recreational anglers to assist in the surveys. The survival rate of the fish caught during the surveys ranged from 63 and 98% and were subjected to a variety of tackle, and handling conditions. Conditions varied from, time out of water, to time out of water with gut hooking. During the survey anglers were using one class of hook and identical holding tanks on their boats the fish were tagged and placed in sea cages then monitored. Control fish were monitored at the same time to determine other mortality factors. No control fish died during the exercise. The experiment was also conducted in the Cronulla hatchery after the in-field survey. Similar results were found in the results gained from the aquaria experiments.

Post-release handling and associated short-term survival rates of mulloway

No Of Fish	Exposure	HookLocation	Removal	% Surviving
20	<1 m in	Gut	Yes	20
45	<1 m in	Gut	yes	68.9
46	<1 m in	Gut	No	78.2
25	<1 m in	Gut	No	84
19	<1 m in	Mouth	No	84.2
42	none	Gut	No	90.5
31	none	Mouth	No	93.5
26	<1 m in	Mouth	Yes	96.2

Post-release handling and associated short-term survival rates of bream

No Of Fish	Exposure	HookLocation	Removal	% Surviving
10	<1 m in	Gut	Yes	10
41	<1 m in	Gut	No	92.7
62	<1 m in	Mouth	Yes	100
22	<2.5 M in	Mouth	Yes	100
22	<5 M in	Mouth	Yes	100
37	<1 m in	Mouth	No	100

Currently hook design is to be scrutinised as part of the research. To date some early indicators show that hook design has little to do with the decrease in fish mortality. Dr Broadhurst stated that some of the fish were x rayed to identify if the hooks used had either corroded, were passed or remained in the fish if gut hooked. To date treble hooks have not been assessed. The type and style used in the experiment were purchased, as they were the main hooks sold within Australia.

Phase two of the project will hopefully see the expansion of the program to other fish species.

Mr Diplock stated that with increasing tournament and tournaments that are becoming catch and release this information is vital for the management of these competitions.

Mr Schaerf noted that in this assessment other freshwater species including trout should be included.

Mrs Lennon stated that catch and release participants would need and would like to know survival rates of freshwater fish returned.

Mr Westerway stated that with this knowledge best practice measure could be put in place for future tournaments.

General species that the trust would like to see researched included Murray Cod, Golden Perch and Australian Bass. The possibility to extend the research would present itself after the success of initial research.

Issue

Community Programs

Background

Dee McElligott will update RFFTEC on the Fish Care Volunteer Program and Fishing Workshops

Fishcare Volunteer Program

Tammie Breneger has been appointed as the new Education Officer and will be at the meeting to meet members. Tammie comes from the Western Region Dept of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (Old DIPNR). Tammie has already attended 5 community events and will continue with reviewing and exiting inactive volunteers from the program. Southern Region Training will be undertaken Feb/March 2006, this will fill gaps created from exiting inactive volunteers from the system.

Fishing Workshops

New fishing workshop program has commenced at Gaden, Ebor and Narrandera. With two regional Community Engagement workshops also completed. The new kit was well received by both participants and staff involved, however we will need to continually assess and review gear suitability and value of contracts in order to provide the best value for money for the Trust. Media profile will be reviewed over the next 3months, and Trust contribution/suggestions will be discussed at the meeting.

Outcomes

Mrs McElligott introduced the committee to Tammy Breneger the newly appointed Education Officer for the western region. Tammy will work out of the Bathurst office commuting from Wellington to conduct fish care duties for the western region. Tammy was formally a police officer and chef and has worked extensively with the communities of the western region. Tammy stated that she wishes to strengthen the Fishcare network in the Albury and Wagga areas.

Mrs McElligott stated that Tammy will be conducting up to 6 Fishcare clinics a year and has over 100 Fishcare volunteers to supervise.

Mrs McElligott advised the committee that the new advisory trailer funded by the trust is working very well attending many recreational events since its purchase. The trailer has drawn great attention at the events where it was displayed.

Mr McKinnon had concerns that the location of the Narrandera hatchery meant that people in western regions had to travel long distances to attend. He noted that some alternative sites had been located including Burrendong dam. Mrs McElligott stated that each site would need to be assessed as part of a risk assessment process before they would be considered.

My Diplock wished to ensure that all Clinics are full and that public relations need to be increased to maintain interest in the events.

Mr McKinnon wished to thank Fishcare for helping at a clinic held near Tocumwal.

Mr Schaerf requested that Fishcare look at utilising the Roulston Cando's Fishing club as a possible Fishcare facility.

Mr Tonkin on behalf of the chair wished to reinstate the use of the fish tank Trailer. Mrs McElligott stated that the fish tank trailer had maintenance and structural issues. The trailer takes a long time to set up at each event and would require funding of \$12,000 to repair.

It was moved by the chair to discontinue the use of the trailer and that it should now be decommissioned.

Mr McBurnie noted that the shirts that were worn by Fishcare volunteers should be made available to Committee members so that they could be clearly identified as members of the trust. Mrs McElligott stated that this would be considered upon the next order but the shirts would need to have the DPI logo omitted.

Issue

2005-2006 Fish stocking programs

Background

Enhanced government stocking provides for the supply of high priority freshwater recreational species including Trout, Salmon, Australian Bass, Murray Cod, Golden Perch and Silver Perch. Many of the impoundments do not support adequate levels of native fish breeding, thus the stocking of fish in these impoundments supports significant recreational fishing activity.

The Dollar for Dollar Native Fish Stocking Program involves stocking of native fish into rivers and dams in NSW on a dollar-for-dollar basis, with fish sourced from private industry. Typically, 80% of funds are used to stock inland native fish (Murray Cod and Golden Perch) with the other 20% used to stock Australian bass. During 04/05 Dollar for Dollar program, 530,000 golden perch, 250,000 Murray cod and 100,000 bass were stocked. Currently there are over 290 sites approved for the 05/06 Dollar for Dollar program totalling approximately \$233,000. This is an increase with approximately 25 new applications (pending permit Approval) and an increase of \$35,000 on last year. Note up to \$5,000 for Noda virus testing has also been committed from the \$4\$ program.

Final assessments have been made for \$4\$ applications and approval letters have been sent. The approvals process has been delayed due to assessment under the FMS.

Despite some areas of continuing drought conditions on the inland, we will continue to see good numbers of fish stocked. The number of fish stocked in 2004/05 (*both Government and dollar for dollar) totalled 7.98 million comprising 3.73 million native fish and 4.25 million salmonids. Currently there are over 860 sites approved for stocking. Of those through the government stocking program the DPI aims to release a total of 6.1 million fish.

To date the \$4\$ stocking process has commenced with the start of the Australian Bass stocking season in early November. Approximately 85,000 Australian Bass have been Stocked by \$4\$ stocking participants.

DPI has commenced its salmonid stocking program with fish releases conducted in conjunction with acclimatisation societies. The below table indicated the current level of stocking by the DPI, \$4\$ groups and Acclimatisation societies as at 28 November 2005.

Organisation	Brown Trout	Rainbow Trout	Atlantic Salmon	Brook Trout	Comment
NETAS	242,000	1,390,000			
CAS	121,000	190,000			Including Oberon Branch
OTAS	6,000	14,000			
CSDAC	67,000	205,800			
MAS	20,000	10,000			25,000 1+ Brown Trout
DPI			380,000	40,000	2600ex brood stock 4+ (Dutton)
Total	456,000	1,809,800	380,000	40,000	Overall Total 2,713,400
	Australian Bass				
\$4\$	84,000				To be confirmed
DPI	281,521				Central Zone
Total	365,521				

Current Stocking Figures

Outcomes

Stocking for the 2005/2006 has commenced with the approval process in accordance with the new Fisheries Management Strategy (FMS). With the success of the program since its implementation and good angler catch results, community participation in the program has also increased and groups are now increasing the amount of revenue they allocate to the program.

Mr McBurnie gave an update on the stocking so far, Murray Cod and Golden perch fingerlings are yet to be stocked to date over 3 million fish have been stocked so far by both trout acclimatisation societies and the DPI. Of the 860 stocking sites only very few have been rejected due to FMS constraints.

The chair asked if the funding should be increased in the future. Mr McBurnie replied that in lieu of the success of stocking research it might be unwise to increase funding for stocking until such time as a better understanding of progress is gained.

Mr Westaway advised that the Gaden Trout Hatchery re-development has had some minor delays it is expected that the final construction of the hatching shed was to commence on the conclusion of this season's production, this will allow full-scale production with a new shed and fingerling production facilities for the next season. Some alterations may be required to reduce the cost of the hatchery shed.

Issue

Report on the review of NSW Recreational Freshwater and Saltwater Rules (Discussion paper)

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.

Approximately 3000 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

Mr Westaway outlined the review of the submissions, as been lengthy due to the nature of the survey and staff are continuing to analyse submissions. Mr Ward stated that his constituents would argue that there are great benefits to retaining large fish over 110cm. Mrs Lennon stated that upon release there is a chance that the fish will die. Mr Westaway noted that timing may be a factor but in lieu of research these question may be difficult to answer.

Issue

New trust fund project pre-proposals and proposals for funding through the existing Small Grants Program

Background

An expression of interest inviting submissions for projects funded by the small grants program was conducted in early 2005. The small grants program enables fishing clubs, councils and other community members to submit freshwater and saltwater proposals for small, local or regional projects to enhance recreational fishing.

Funding proposals are broken into two categories, Small grants for projects limited to a maximum of \$5,000 and Large Grants for projects that exceed \$5,000

Small grant funding proposals are limited to \$5,000 and encouraged that they are matched by funds or in-kind support from the applicant or other sources. Small grant applications can be submitted at any time during the year. Requests for funding up to \$10,000 will be considered in special circumstances throughout the year.

Applications for large grants are will be considered at the annual budget meeting of The Expenditure Committee (generally held in April each year). The Expenditure Committees will consider pre-proposals throughout the year and will provide advise to the applicant before submission of a detailed application.

One large grant application pre-proposal was received for an extension of the TSR/Access program to employ the project officer for a further 6 months at a cost of \$62,000. Pre- proposal is attached.

The small grants program allocation has been set at \$30,000 per annum.

To date one submission has been received since that last meeting for the Alma Jean Sullivan's (Paroo Queen) Fishing Tips Calendar 2006 and \$2,000 in funding was assessed out of session. The Proposal was approved and contracts sent to the proponent. Some interest has been generated since the last meeting but proposals have not been forthcoming. Need to discuss better avenues for attracting applications i.e. identifying projects such as access fence styles, which should generate applications.

Outcomes

Mr Westaway Outlined the sole application submitted by NSW DPI for the need to extend the TSR/Access program to include all GIS related databases that will be used to manage works, stocking, trust projects and public access issues. In addition the management of the fishery could be better served by use of the database. It was noted that the task at hand was massive and the current timeframes demanding.

Mr Schaerf noted that while the task is very important to recreational anglers the identification of all crown reserves in particular Crown Roads be included in the project. The assessment of these roads is important to the recreational angler with many road closures imminent due to a change in lands policy.

Recommendation

1. RFFTEC recommended that the TSR/Access project be funded at \$62,000 with current funds to be used from the existiong TSR/Access project. The additional funding will commence in the next financial year.

2. The existing brief the project will now incorporate all crown estate including crown roads.

Moved: Karl Schaerf. **Seconded** Kevin McKinnon. **Carried.**

Table: Current grant applications for funding from the Freshwater Trust

General grants – Programs				
	Extension of TSR/Access Program	Proponent	Freshwater funding request	Recommendation
1	Identification of Travelling Stock and other reserves of importance to recreational anglers, Extension to include GIS Database management and Crown Roads	NSW DPI Fisheries	\$62,000	Supported

9. Action Items from meeting 22

Action items arising from the previous meeting are detailed in the action status table, included at the back of the agenda.

Issue Website Evaluation

Outcome Mr McKinnon has reviewed the website and found that it was relatively easy to negotiate. It was noted that no committee member's contact numbers were available to anglers. Mr McKinnon believed that the numbers should be made available to constituents. Mr Van Der Walt Advised that this topic was vetted by the saltwater trust and the consensus was that the DPI is in a better position to manage incoming calls on behalf of trust members. This would say the trust undue pressure form constituents.

Action: Change the website to include DPI contact details for calls and include a map of trust management boundaries.

Issue Camping on TSR's and Liability

Outcome Mr McBurnie outlined the investigation into camping on TSR's. It is the policy of the Pastoral protection Board that no camping is allowed from dusk to dawn on a TSR. Insurance precluded the use of the TSR by recreational users during these times. The exception is that a permit may be applied for to allow camping and is at the discretion of the Pastoral Protection Board. Mr McKinnon advised that the Tocumwal TSR has been granted a permit for camping.

Other business

Issue Eastern Cod Genetics Report

Outcome Mr Westaway presented the committee with the trust-funded report Wit noting that the report is to be held in confidence.

Issue Final Fish Stocking FMS

Outcomes Mr Westaway Presented the committee with copies of the trust funded Fisheries Management Strategy.

Issue Message of Congratulation

Outcome Mr McKinnon Wished to congratulate the trust and its members for the services provided and the work accomplished.

Issue Project milestone reports, August to November – Alistair McBurnie

Background Trust fund project managers have prepared progress reports utilizing the new reporting process incorporating a summary and Gant style progress chart for the Committees information. These reports include details on project objectives and activities since the last meeting and any variations to the project. Project milestone reports will be presented to the Committee at the meeting.

Outcomes Mr McBurnie outlined the progress of the new charting and reporting structure due to the large amounts of reporting milestones will be reported in a condensed form for all other meetings apart from budget meetings. Report and Gannt Chart were presented for the committee's information.

Issue Withdraw of trust funding

Outcome The Chair noted that under a review of funding of a project funded by the saltwater trust, it was apparent that there was a risk of non-delivery. After an independent body reviewed the project the funding was discontinued. The Chair highlighted the importance of project review and assessment and milestone reporting.

Issue Illegal fishing reporting card

Background The Illegal fishing reporting card has been adopted by other fisheries organisations and it was requested by the committee that the DPI look at introducing a similar reporting process in NSW. A proposed design has been put forward for a card and printing quotations obtained.

Outcomes Mr Westaway presented the committee with draft cards, hats, fridge magnets and sundries for the perusal of the committee. The costing of the cards and sundries were outlined along with design specifications. Mr Westaway requested a pre endorsement on the project so that final styles and quotations can be gained. The committee endorsed the card only at this stage and requested that Trust logos were placed on the card. It was noted that the committee approved in principal \$4500 for the production of 2000,000 cards.

Recommendation

RFFTEC recommended that the project receive approval in principal for 200,000 cards or \$4,500.

Moved: Debbie Lennon. **Seconded:** Karl Schaerf. **Carried.**

Issue Upcoming Application

Background Mr Schaerf wished to advise the committee of an upcoming trust application. Mr Schaerf noted that an application for a small grant for signage from one of his constituents would be forthcoming in the near future.

Outcomes For information

Issue Trust Award for contributions for recreational fishing.

Outcome Mr Van Der Walt advised that an expression of Interest form has been drafted for the certificate. He stated that there might be the possibility of a presentation regarding the recognition of services provided to recreational angling in NSW for co

Next meeting

6-7 April 2006 at the Cronulla Fisheries Centre (with an overlapping session with the Saltwater Expenditure Committee to discuss jointly funded programs). It was noted by Mr McBurnie that accommodation would be booked well in advance for the meeting to ensure that members are staying in suitable accommodation within close proximity of each other.

Action Book accommodation in advance of the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 2.00pm

