



**Recreational  
Fishing Trusts**

***Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust  
Expenditure Committee***

**Minutes**

**17<sup>TH</sup> RFFTEC MEETING  
16 October, 2003**

**Gaden Trout Hatchery  
Kosciusko Road, Jindabyne 2627**

**Seventeenth Meeting of the NSW  
Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee  
Draft Minutes  
16.10.03, 9:30am to 1.45pm  
NSW Fisheries Gaden Trout Hatchery, Kosciusko Road, Jindabyne**

**Attendance**

**Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee Members**

Bruce Schumacher	Chair
Doug Joyner	Region 2
Steve Tooley	Region 3
Elizabeth Brodbeck	Region 4
Debbie Lennon	Region 6
Richard Ping Kee	Region 7
Kevin McKinnon	Region 8

**NSW Fisheries (observers)**

Mr John Diplock, Principal Manager Recreational Fisheries Monitoring, Management and Research

Dr Andrew Sanger, Regional Manager Fisheries Services Western

Mr Cameron Westaway, Senior Fisheries Manager (Inland)

Mrs Vera Fiala, Manager, Communications

Mr Sam Crocker, Manager Gaden Trout Hatchery

Mr Craig Watson, Fisheries Manager, Recreational Fisheries

Mr Bob Faragher, Scientific Officer, Recreational Freshwater

Dr Tracey MacDonald, Conservation Manager, Fish Passage

Ms Milly Hobson, A/Conservation Manager, Habitat

Mr Mark James, Fisheries Technician, Anglers Catch Research Program

**Guest presenter**

Rodney Tonkin, Lake Canobolas Fishing Platform

## **Business**

Chair's welcoming

Confirmation of minutes from previous meeting

Action items from previous minutes

## **Agenda Items**

1. Review of Lake Canobolas Fishing Platform (Rodney Tonkin)
2. Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust financial report (Cameron Westaway) and revised budget position
3. Update of communication programs (Vera Fiala)
4. Effectiveness of stocking research update (Bob Faragher)
5. Angling research & Tournament Monitoring update (Mark James)
6. Gaden trout hatchery capital works (Cameron Westaway)
7. Small Grants Program proposals (Craig Watson)
8. Review of Habitat Restoration Programs (Milly Hobson / Dr Tracey MacDonald)

## **General business – note time restrictions**

- a. Recreational fishing licence sales report (Craig Watson)
- b. Project milestone reports, June - September (Craig Watson)
- c. Proposed signage for fish stockings (Cameron Westaway)
- d. Freshwater trust project account reports (Cameron Westaway)
- e. Recreational Fishing Trust Sub Committee meetings (Cameron Westaway)
- f. Review of the General Recreational Fishing Fee (John Diplock)
- g. Modifications to yabby traps (Dr Andrew Sanger)
- h. Threatened species issues (Dr Andrew Sanger)

## **Other business – time permitting**

Next meeting

Date and location

## **Meeting close**

### **Chair's welcoming**

The Chair welcomed members to the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFFTEC) and noted a full agenda for the meeting. The Committee expressed its commiserations on hearing of the news of the recent death of Mr Keith Woolbank (Region 4 representative). RFFTEC acknowledged the contribution that Mr Woolbank had made on behalf of recreational anglers.

### **Minutes of the previous meeting**

#### **Recommendation**

The draft minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> RFFTEC meeting were accepted by RFFTEC as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

### **Action items of the previous meeting**

#### **Recommendation**

Action items arising from the previous meeting were detailed in the action status table, included with the agenda papers. RFFTEC acknowledged the progression of action items from the previous meeting.

### **Agenda Item 1**

**Rodney Tonkin**

#### **Issue**

Review of Lake Canobolas Fishing Platform

#### **Background**

\$4,700 in small grants funding has been put towards the construction of a fishing platform at Lake Canobolas. The project will involve the construction of a pathway, ramp and casting platform at Lake Canobolas Reserve to enable fishing access for disabled fishers and the general public.

The pathway, ramp and deck will be constructed by volunteers from the Orange Trout Acclimatisation Society, the Institute of Freshwater Anglers and the Orange Green Corps. The Orange City Council is overseeing the project to ensure the ramp and deck meet required safety standards.

To date, the Orange Shire Council has drawn plans for the platform. Piles have been driven. Decking and pathway's are yet to be built.

**Outcomes**

Rodney Tonkin advised the Committee that initial design plans for the disabled fishing deck had been prepared and the foundation work for the pathway, extending from the car park to the access ramp, had been put in place. Six timber piles had been driven into the bed of the Lake. Mr Tonkin handed out photographs showing the location of the pilons. The platform structural work would not take place until the dam water level was lowered in the late summer / early autumn period, thus the project would not be completed until early 2004. When completed, the platform would provide an attraction to the Lake and for the districts angling recreation public, and add an additional dimension to the fishing experience.

Mr Tonkin provided a brief history of the Lake Canobolas fishery. Mr Tonkin advised of good fishing outcomes for the Lake, attributed to recent improvements in water quality, habitat restoration (such as willow removal), reduction in the size of the redfin population, native vegetation replanting and the NSW Fisheries ongoing re-stocking program.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**Agenda item 2****Cameron Westaway****Issue**

Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust financial report and revised budget position

**Background**Current Trust Fund Position

Since the decision was made to introduce the general recreational fishing fee, income to the freshwater trust fund has been maintained at \$2.5 million per year. The freshwater trust fund has a program budget of **\$3,257,550** for the financial year ending 30 June 2004. The 03-04 program budget for ongoing programs has been revised to include the communications budget for the printing of fishing guides and licence advertising (as per the out of session agenda item). The revised budget is **\$3,312,550** requiring an allocation of **\$2,669,500** for a balanced budget this year.

**Outcomes**

Cameron Westaway re-iterated that the trust fund position had been amended to incorporate the \$55,000 budget for communications programs (not discussed at the previous RFFTEC meeting, but voted on by members out of session), of which \$40,000 would be spent on the re-printing of freshwater fishing guides, with the remaining \$15,000 to be spent on licence promotions. The revised budget was now \$3,312,550, which required an allocation of \$2,669,500 for a balanced budget this year.

The eastern cod stocking program would not be going ahead this year as initially planned. The Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing had advised the Minister for Fisheries that no additional stocking of eastern cod should be approved until of a review of genetic factors relevant to the stocking practice has been carried out. The recommended funding would instead be utilised for independent research into these genetic factors.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**Agenda Item 3****Vera Fiala****Issue**

Update of communication programs

**Background**

Summer education and information programs are well underway.

We are raising awareness of responsible fishing and fishing rules / closures through ads and editorial in 15 local inland newspapers and fishing magazines at key fishing times.

100,000 Freshwater Fishing Guides are being printed for 2003-04 at the same cost as last year. Fishing rules summaries are being translated into several languages to facilitate communication with multicultural communities.

Over 130 active inland Fishcare Volunteers will be managed by the new Fisheries Education Officer, based in Bathurst. A Fishcare Volunteer Program review is underway to assess ways of strengthening and progressing the program. Feedback from volunteers and committee members is a major part of the review.

An events program is being developed to enhance our profile and effectiveness at community events, education programs and fishing clinics. Last year saw almost 1000 children and families participate in 20 inland fishing clinics - a huge increase over previous years!

## **Outcomes**

Vera Fiala gave an overview of the structure of the communications branch and responsibilities of its team members. The branch was divided into four sections: community programs, information and advisory, publications and media. The team was responsible for communication functions across a range of areas (recreational fishing, commercial fishing, aquaculture, conservation). Responsibilities included face to face communications (e.g. fishing clinics, Fishcare Volunteers, schools program, stakeholder forums), publications production and distribution and media campaigns.

Freshwater fishing guides: Vera noted that 100,000 of the 2003/04 freshwater fishing guides would be delivered by mid November. 20,000 extra copies had been printed this year, for the same cost as the previous year. 100,000 flyers were also being reproduced and would be available in multicultural translations. NSW Fisheries was considering a new design for the sticky measuring rulers to incorporate coloured pictures of fish.

Licence advertising: The licence advertising campaign was designed to raise community awareness of responsible fishing including licence promotion and key recreational fishing dates such as cod opening. The approach was to develop an integrated campaign across a variety of mediums (such as newspaper, magazine, radio and magazine articles) in the lead up to the busy Christmas / New Year period. A list of proposed newspapers for the freshwater awareness campaign was circulated amongst members.

Schools program / fishing clinics: The schools program had been trialed and was presently being evaluated, prior to it's statewide launching. 20 inland childrens' fishing clinics had been held during the previous financial year. 12 of these were run at Government hatcheries at Jindabyne, Ebor, Grafton and Narrandera. Almost 1,000 children had attended these clinics, double the number of children than in previous years.

Fishcare Volunteer program: The status of Fishcare Volunteers in inland NSW was discussed. 131 inland volunteers had been trained and were operating in 14 inland regions. The activity rate was at around 76%. General duties of Fishcare Volunteers were outlined. Average yearly activities attended by volunteers included 5 community events, 320 individual contacts and 120 surveys. Interviews for the new education officer position based at Bathurst had taken place. An appointment to this position was expected to occur in early November. The education officer would be responsible for coordinating the western volunteers.

**Outcomes continued**

A Fishcare Volunteer Program review was underway to assess ways of strengthening and progressing the program. Feedback from volunteers and committee members is a major part of the review. The preliminary recommendations from the Fishcare Volunteer program review were to: expand on and better use the communication potential of volunteers, strengthen links to strategic communications, review induction training, develop short training courses in specialised areas, strengthen volunteer contacts and regional links and formalise volunteer policies. The Fishcare Volunteer program budget report was distributed for the information of members.

**Recommendation**

That the trout cod protection area be clearly identified in the freshwater fishing guide and brochure. That a picture highlighting the physiological differences between Murray cod and trout cod be included on the new sticky rulers.

**Agenda Item 4****Bob Faragher****Issue**

Lakes Eucumbene and Jindabyne and the Snowy Lakes trout strategy

**Background**

The stocking of the Lakes as part of the Strategy began three years ago and rainbow trout marked as fingerlings are now being caught as three year old fish. From the trapping results an estimation of the contribution of the stocked fish can be made. These results will be presented to the meeting.

**Outcomes**

The current trout populations in Lake Jindabyne and Lake Eucumbene were largely derived from riverine populations, established prior to the building of the Jindabyne and Eucumbene dams. Rainbow trout were stocked into Lakes Eucumbene and Jindabyne because they were more heavily exploited than brown trout and lived for a shorter period (brown trout lived up to 9 years whereas very few rainbow trout lived over 3 years).

Bob Faragher showed a graph of percentage rainbow trout in the angling catch from Lake Eucumbene since 1997. The graph showed that high angler catch rates were directly related to a healthy rainbow trout population. The catch per unit of effort dropped when the percentage of rainbow trout was low in the lake. Catch rates in Lakes Jindabyne and Eucumbene were similar at present and at around 0.3 fish an hour, regarded as adequate. Catch rates during the Easter period this year were at 0.4 – 0.5 fish per hour, better than average.



**Outcomes continued**

Over the past 3 years, NSW Fisheries had finclipped samples of rainbow trout stocked into Lakes Eucumbene and Jindabyne. The fish trap at the Gaden trout hatchery allowed for monitoring of the Lake Jindabyne population. A trap installed at Gang Gang Creek, a tributary of Lake Eucumbene, enabled monitoring of finclipped fish from Lake Eucumbene. For the Jindabyne catchment, 13.6% of the rainbow trout at 3 years of age were found to be of hatchery origin. For the Eucumbene catchment, 6.6% of the fish at 3 years of age were found to be of hatchery origin.

As part of the Snowy Lakes Strategy, it was determined that 150,000 rainbow trout and 50,000 rainbow trout would be stocked annually into Lakes Eucumbene and Jindabyne respectively. Prior to the World Flyfishing event in 1999, large stockings of rainbow trout, particularly at Lake Eucumbene, appeared to be counterproductive. The results of this recent study indicated that present stocking rates were now at appropriate levels.

Bob Faragher advised that stocking was not the only factor in the health of a trout population. In general, falling lake levels did not favour the more benthic feeding brown trout. However, brown trout were shown to recover size and condition when Lake levels rose, particularly over revegetated ground.

NSW Fisheries had recently marked rainbow trout fry for stocking into the Guy Fawkes River near Ebor. During November, NSW Fisheries planned to sample some Mid North Coast streams, in response to a request from the New England Trout Acclimatisation Society.

**Recommendation**

- That a copy of effects of stocking presentation be circulated to members.
- That a copy of the Lake Eucumbene trout stocking report to be circulated to members.

**Agenda Item 5****Mark James****Issue**

Angling Research &amp; Tournament Monitoring

**Background**

Angling data is being collected at fishing competitions throughout NSW. Data collected at these events is being used as a measure of the success of Fisheries strategies and their benefits to recreational fishing. To date all data collected has been entered on the database and appropriate reports generated.

### **Background continued**

- The onset of winter and subsequent decrease in the frequency of angling events has given opportunity for the development of a number of initiatives to ensure the projects continuing success.
- Investigation is continuing into the availability of suitable fishing events to be incorporated into the project.
- As suitable events are identified appropriate measures are being undertaken to have them included.

An increasing number of Fishcare Volunteers have now been trained in competition monitoring procedures to facilitate the ongoing expansion of the research.

### **Outcomes**

Mark James noted that 60 freshwater tournaments were being monitored and 16,000 anglers had contributed data to the program. 200,000 hours of fishing effort had been logged and 80,000 fish had been measured. Of these, 43,000 Australian bass, 16,000 golden perch and 8,000 Murray cod had been recorded. A new project logo had been adopted with support from anglers. The logo was being used on relevant project material including shirts, boat and stickers. A new measuring device had been developed for distribution to anglers. Length / weight conversion tables for the both freshwater and saltwater species were incorporated on this device. A question was raised in relation to fish measurements. Mark James advised that at this point, fish captured for tournament monitoring were measured to fork length, in line with other research programs. There was some discussion over the survival rates of golden perch, being returned to the water during catch and release competitions. Anglers had reported that golden perch were not responding particularly well to catch and release fishing. The Chair noted that more research should be done to address this issue, prior to promoting catch and release fishing for this species.

Mark James advised that public liability issues had resulted in a reduction in the number of tournaments being held on the inland over the past 12 months. It appeared that tournament organisers predominantly had now addressed this issue and there was an expectation that the number of tournaments being held on the inland would return to former levels. Despite this, the program overall was continuing to expand and more areas of NSW were being investigated.

In response to an action item from the previous meeting, Mark James advised that fisheries staff attending fishing tournaments already recorded climatic factors. However, in response to RFFTEC's previous query, catch cards could possibly be amended to incorporate angler information relating to weather conditions. Mark James would discuss this issue with the tournament monitoring scientific officer.

### **Recommendation**

Noted.

**Issue**

Gaden trout hatchery capital works

**Background**

The existing Gaden hatchery building is over fifty years old and has been the subject of extensive wood rot and wind damage requiring significant repairs. Given the weather conditions of the area and the age and condition of the building, the medium term soundness of the building is uncertain. The existing building is not adequate for ongoing and increasing demand for fry and fingerlings for stocking and is a limiting factor in increasing the number and size of fingerlings produced. Loading of fry and fingerlings for subsequent stocking is also problematic.

RFFTEC approved a proposal on 29 May for seed funding of \$100,000 (\$50,000 per year for two years) with a view to leveraging further government funding to redevelop the hatchery.

**Outcomes**

Cameron Westaway advised that the existing hatchery building was not large enough to cater for the existing and increasing long term demand for trout fry and fingerlings for stocking. Funding for the administration building would be sought from consolidated revenue sources. Seed funding from the trust (\$50,000 per year for two years, as previously approved) would be used as leverage for alternative funding sources for the hatchery building and fitout. A paper had been developed to determine the best option for redevelopment of the hatchery administration complex. Once this has been determined, NSW Fisheries expected to gain planning approvals and commence redevelopment during this financial year.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**Issue**

Small Grants Program proposals

**Background**

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 limited to \$5,000 and should be matched by funds from the applicant or other sources. The small grants program allocation has been set at \$20,000 per annum.

An expression of interest inviting submissions for projects funded by the small grants program was conducted in early September. The closing date for this round of submissions is 10 October. Proposals received will be presented at the meeting for the Committee's deliberations. Successful applicants will be required to report to the expenditure committees on a regular basis.

**Outcomes**

Six applications for funding had been received and were circulated to members out of session for consideration. The funding proposals were as follows:

- (a) Proposal for funding support for the construction of a concrete boat ramp at Anglers Reach.
- (b) Proposal for funding support of the Bingara Murray Cod Hatchery.
- (c) Proposal for funding support for an imported salmon awareness and education program.
- (d) Proposal for funding support to build a fish cleaning table and measuring station at Lake Keepit State Park.
- (e) Proposal for research and tagging of native fish on the Murray River between Burrinjuck Dam and Hay Weir.
- (f) Proposal to improve a database for angler catch records.

The Committee discussed each application and made one of the following recommendations:

1. Program to be supported by the trust,
2. Program not supported by the trust.

**Outcomes continued:**

The Committee did not support 5 of the 6 programs. These were considered to be either too costly, outside the guidelines of the program, low priority for recreational fisheries management or of minimal benefit to recreational fishing. Mr Richard Ping Kee abstained from voting on the Bingara Hatchery proposal. The one supported program was considered to show direct benefits to recreational fishing. The recommendations of the Committee for each program are summarised in Tables 1 and 2.

**Recommendation**

Table 1: *Program supported by the Committee to be funded from the small grants program, 03/04 financial year*

Project title	Project proponent	Recommended funding level, 03/04 year	Funding conditions
Lake Keepit fish cleaning table / measuring station	Lake Keepit State Park Trust	\$2,600	No funding for salaries.

**Recommendation**

Table 2: *Programs not-supported by the Committee for funding through the small grants program*

Project title	Project proponent	Comments
Anglers Reach Boat Ramp – Lake Eucumbene	Vikings Fishing Club Inc – Alastair Bond	Does not meet guidelines – No funding for construction of boat launching ramps. Project to be re-directed to the foreshore development committee (NSW Waterways) and Council for funding assistance.
Bingara Murray Cod Hatchery	Bingara Anglers Club Murray Cod Hatchery Inc – Ray Neal	Does not meet guidelines – Funding support already provided through the Dollar-for-Dollar Native Fish Stocking Program.
Imported Salmon Awareness and Education Program	National Anglers Lobby – Harvey Taylor	Does not meet guidelines – Does not enhance recreational fishing
Inland Research and Tagging of Native Fish for growth and development between Burrinjuck Dam and Hay Weir	Riverina Aussie Rules Football Club – Bruce Mulqueoney	Does not meet NSW Fisheries Animal Care and Ethics guidelines. Research proposal must be accredited under the Animal Research Act.
Angler Catch Monitoring (research)	Bass Kempsey – Alan Wilcox	Does not meet guidelines – Does not enhance recreational fishing

**Issue**

Freshwater Habitat Grant Program and Weir Removal

**Background**

Successful Freshwater Habitat Grant applicants have received the approved funds as endorsed by RFFTEC. Progress reports have been received by these groups and some projects are well underway. Tracey MacDonald presented the results thus far on behalf of the Wallamundry Water Users group for their willow removal project.

More successful weir removals to report on in the Karuah and Central Coast Catchments. The partnership between NSW Fisheries and the World Wildlife Fund to seek additional funds to complete on ground works across the state is working well.

**Outcomes**

Ms Milly Hobson advised that NSW Fisheries was creating a partnership approach for weir removals with the World Wildlife Fund and had successfully applied for an Environmental Trust Grant to assist with on-ground costs associated with weir removals. NSW Fisheries had completed a review of environmental factors for the removal of Norco weir on the Richmond River at Casino. A crossing and a weir on Bangalow Creek (Central Coast) had also been removed. 3 State Water regulating structures would be decommissioned by State Water (on Carole, Medgum and Grawan creeks), which would open an additional 60km of fish habitat to fish passage. NSW Fisheries was presently investigating the removal of the MacIntyre River weir at Graman on the Gwydir catchment.

A case study on the removal of the Branch River Crossing, Karuah River was presented. The case study would be published for use as a guide for future removals and as a point of reference for councils, DIPNR, State Water and landowners. A draft of the case study publication was distributed for the information of members.

Habitat Restoration Program project milestone reports were circulated. Ms Hobson briefed the Committee on the progress of the Clarence River Wilderness lodge habitat restoration program. The Expression of Interest for the second round of Habitat Restoration Programs was scheduled for release in November. The selection process would begin once all expressions of interest had been received. A recommendation for successful projects would be submitted to RFFTEC early in the New Year out of session, so that expenditure of these funds could take place prior to the end of the 03-04 financial year.

**Outcomes continued**

Dr Tracey MacDonald presented the results to date of the willow removal project for the Wallamundry Water Users Group. Stage 1, constituting the eradication of riparian and instream willow stands within Goobang Creek and Bumbuggan Creek (Lachlan catchment) had been completed. Applications for Stages 2 & 3 of the project would be submitted during the next 2 EOI rounds. Stage 2 of the project would involve the removal of riparian and instream willow stands within Wallamundry Creek and the Little Lachlan River. Eradication of these willows would be followed by riparian vegetation, utilising native and endemic species - Stage 3 of the project. On completion of the project, the areas would be fenced off and stock excluded from the stream portions.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**General business****Issue**

a. Recreational Fishing Licence sales

**Background**

Total licence sales income for the 2002/03 financial year was \$8,393,699. The number of the different types of licences sold during this period are as follows:

Approximately

17,754 three year licences (4%);  
210,459 one year licences (45%);  
73,003 one month licences (16%);  
148,192 three day licences (32%); and  
13,700 prepaid three day licences (3%).

Please note that agent returns are still being collected.

**Outcomes**

A report of monthly licence sales since the implementation of the recreational fishing fee, was distributed to members.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**Issue**

b. Project milestone reports, June - September

**Background**

Trust fund project managers have prepared milestone/progress reports 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**

Project milestone reports for freshwater trust funded programs for the period between June and September were distributed to members.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**Issue**

c. Proposed signage for fish stockings

**Background**

Fisheries Victoria is promoting fish stocking activities through the installation of stocking signs adjacent to stocked public waterways. A hand-out will be presented at the meeting. NSW Fisheries is seeking the Committee's views on the option of developing a similar program within NSW. Signs will be utilised at major stocking sites.

**Outcomes**

A handout of the Fisheries Victoria fish stocking sign was distributed to members.

**Recommendation**

RFFTEC supported the obtaining of quotes plus the development of options for stocking signs in NSW.

**Issue**

d. Freshwater trust project account reports

**Background**

Project cost centre reports outlining expenditure for freshwater trust funded programs during September will be presented for the information of the Committee. The project statements will outline project costs attributed to capital works, operating expenses, salaries and overheads for freshwater programs.



**Outcomes**

Project cost centre reports for freshwater trust funded programs for the month of September were distributed to members.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**Issue**

e. Recreational Fishing Trusts Sub Committee Meeting

**Background**

The first meeting of Recreational Fishing Trusts Sub Committee was held on 19 June 2003. The Committee consists of Freshwater and Saltwater Expenditure Committee representatives and was set up to:

- Ensure Trust Fund program accountability and transparency in reporting;
- Ensure effective operation of ACoRF sub-committees;
- Adopt a strategic approach to consulting with relevant stakeholders about Trust Fund management; and
- Ensure consistency/coordination between Freshwater and Saltwater Trusts.

The draft minutes of the first meeting have been forwarded to members previously and are included with these agenda papers for reference. A new application guide for the Recreational Fishing Trusts was reviewed by the Sub Committee, which includes specific guidelines that are used for evaluating applications. These include:

- Projects must specifically benefit recreational anglers
- Commercial ventures/interests or materials developed for a primarily commercial purpose will generally not be supported.
- The business of organisations/clubs will generally not be supported.

The new guide was sent out to fishing clubs, councils, licence agent's etc.. as part of the EOI for funding proposals during September (see agenda item 7).

The outcomes of the sub-committee review meeting of the Fishcare Volunteer Program will be discussed under agenda item 2.

**Outcomes**

Cameron Westaway advised that the Recreational Fishing Trusts Sub Committee had held it's first meeting in July, to review the statewide fishing clinic's program, the Fishcare Volunteer Program and to develop a consistent reporting mechanism for the recreational fishing trusts. As noted by Vera Fiala earlier, the Fishcare Volunteer Program review was underway to assess ways of strengthening and progressing the program. A consultant was

**Outcomes continued**

preparing a report based on feedback from volunteers and sub-committee members. The sub-committee would be re-convening shortly to review the draft report.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**Issue**

f. Review of the General Recreational Fishing Fee

**Background**

When the general recreational fishing fee was introduced in March 2001 the government committed to implementing a transparent and cost effective administration scheme designed to maximise the benefits to recreational fishers. The government also committed to ensuring that the fees collected went to improving recreational fishing through an approvals system run by grass-roots anglers from around the state. After 2 years of operation it is timely to review the general recreational fishing fee to ensure that the objectives are being met, and to identify opportunities for improved efficiency.

**Outcomes**

John Diplock noted that it was now prudent to explore options to better manage the administration of the fee, and to generally improve service delivery, given the recreational fishing fee had been in place for several years. NSW Fisheries would be developing a discussion paper for community consultation, to be reviewed by the expenditure committees before being widely distributed to allow recreational fishers and other stakeholders to have a say on how the recreational fishing fee should be managed in the future.

To enhance the licence sales agents distribution network, NSW Fisheries was continuing its negotiations with Kmart and BigW as potential sales agents. NSW Fisheries was also in discussions with Shell about the potential to use Shell Service Station eftpos outlets as points of sale for the fishing licence.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**Issue**

g. Modifications to yabby traps

**Background**

Recreational fishers are being encouraged to modify their yabby traps, to reduce the likelihood of bait or catch of yabbies being taken by turtles and platypus and to minimise the impact on these species. A brochure explaining the procedure for fitting these rings is being developed, and will be distributed by Fisheries Officers and Fishcare Volunteers to anglers. Tackle outlets, wholesalers, retailers and manufacturers will also be advised of the forthcoming changes, to enable them to have future stock modified. Changes to yabby trap regulations will come into effect from 1 November 2003. These will include:

- yabby traps to be fitted with a 9cm rigid ring by-catch reduction device to reduce the incidence of capture of adult turtles;
- traps to be legal for use in private waters, such as farm dams, east of the Newell Highway with by-catch reduction devices fitted;
- traps to be prohibited from use in waters where platypus are commonly found, that is public waters east of the Newell Highway, and three designated stretches of river west of the Newell Highway, the Edward (upstream of Stevens Weir), the Murray (upstream of the Echuca / Moama Road Bridge) and the Murrumbidgee (upstream of Darlington Point Road Bridge)

**Outcomes**

Dr Andrew Sanger discussed the new changes to yabby trap regulations (outlined above), that would come into effect from 1 November 2003. The changes were designed to reduce catch of unwanted species and to provide better protection for turtles, platypus, and other air-breathing mammals. The fixed ring inserts could be constructed using stiff wire (such as coat hanger) and a pair of pliers. The method of fitting fixed ring inserts would be outlined within the yabby trap modifications brochure.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**Issue**

h. Threatened Species and Fisheries Scientific Committee Issues

**Background**

A proposal to list the entire fish community in the Darling catchment and its tributaries (excluding the Lachlan and Paroo) was made in September 2002. The Fisheries Scientific Committee considered community submissions and made a final decision in July 2003 to list the range of aquatic species in natural waterbodies in the lower Darling River catchment as an endangered

**Background continued**

ecological community. The listing by the Committee was a decision about the conservation status of the aquatic ecology and not about what activities can or cannot take place. As with the listing of the lower Murray and Murrumbidgee catchments, the Minister has made an interim order to allow recreational fishing to continue while a Species Impact Statement (SIS) is prepared to determine the impacts of recreational fishing.

The Fisheries Scientific Committee has also announced a proposed recommendation to list Hook And Line Fishing In Areas Important For The Survival Of Threatened Fish Species as a Key Threatening Process.

**Outcomes**

Dr Andrew Sanger explained the process for the proposed listing the Darling catchment and its tributaries as an endangered ecological community. Dr Sanger noted that along with the listing of the lower Murray and Murrumbidgee catchments, the Minister had made an interim order to allow recreational fishing to continue in the Darling catchment. A Species Impact Statement (SIS) would be prepared to ascertain the extent of recreational fishing impact in this catchment. Dr Sanger advised the Committee that the Fisheries Scientific Committee had also announced a proposed recommendation to list Hook And Line Fishing In Areas Important For The Survival Of Threatened Fish Species as a Key Threatening Process. The proposed listing had been misinterpreted and had caused a degree of unrest within the angling community. The closing date for submissions on the listing had been extended due to the high level of public interest in this issue.

Dr Sanger advised that there were no plans to ban general hook and line fishing. The proposed listing related to the impact of hook and line fishing on a small number of species that already have high levels of protection. Should the listing proceed, then a threat abatement plan would be prepared. The social and economic impact of any threat abatement measures would be considered in an extensive public consultation process.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**Other business****Issue**

Fish Stocking and Recreational Fishing Environmental Impact Statements

**Outcomes**

NSW Fisheries advised that the draft Fish Stocking Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was due out for public exhibition in November. The Fish Stocking EIS would give greater security for recreational fishers. A Recreational Fishing EIS was also underway. The Recreational Fishing EIS

**Outcomes continued**

was a process in which to assess the Regulations (of the FM Act) as they pertain to recreational fishing and to provides stakeholders with greater certainty about the rules and administrative arrangements applying to recreational fishing. NSW Fisheries would be reviewing recreational fishing bag and size limits and recreational fishing competitions by way of a series of public consultation papers. These would provide input into the recreational fishing EIS and fisheries management strategy.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**Issue**

Impoundments access and saltwater committee funding

**Outcomes**

John Diplock advised that work was continuing on the publication of a book on access to NSW impoundments. The guide would detail basic information on impoundment stocking histories, directions to impoundments and amenities provided at dams. A database with the relevant information was being compiled. Negotiations with the Sydney Catchment Authority, Sydney Water and NSW Health were ongoing with regard to access to Prospect Reservoir.

The Recreational Fishing Saltwater Trust Expenditure Committee (RFSTEC) had funded a Senior Recreational Fisheries Manager position, responsible for the effective management of trust funds. The appointee would work with John Diplock and Cameron Westaway to ensure consistency and coordination in the management and administration of the Freshwater and Saltwater Trusts.

The RFSTEC had recently funded the development of a brochure, advising on the need for proper discard of unwanted fishing line / gear, to reduce the potential for entanglement with birds and animals.

**Recommendation**

Noted.

**Next meeting**

The next RFFTEC meeting was scheduled for the Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> of April, 2004 at the Cronulla Fisheries Centre, Cronulla.

Meeting concluded at 1.40pm.

**17<sup>th</sup> RFFTEC Meeting – 16 October 2003**

<b>Action item</b>	<b>Agenda items</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status / Comments</b>	<b>Team responsible</b>
1	3. Update of communication programs	That the trout cod protection area be clearly identified in the freshwater fishing guide and brochure. That a picture highlighting the physiological differences between Murray cod and trout cod be included on the new sticky rulers.	Reviewed, Communications Branch	Communications Branch
2	4. Effectiveness of stocking research update	That a copy of effects of stocking presentation be circulated to members out of session. That a copy of the Lake Eucumbene trout stocking report to be circulated to members out of session.	Completed	Recreational Mgt
3	7: Invitation to the community to submit proposals funded by the small grants program	Correspondence to unsuccessful applicants on the outcomes of their funding proposals.	Completed	Recreational Management
4	7: Invitation to the community to submit proposals funded by the small grants program	Prepare an agenda item to the Advisory Council on Recreational Fishing re: the successful small grants program funding application	Completed	Recreational Management
General business	c: Proposed signage for fish stockings	Obtain quotes and develop options for the installation of stocking signs in NSW.	Completed	Recreational Management

### 16<sup>th</sup> RFFTEC Meeting – 29 May 2003

Action item	Agenda items	Action	Status / Comments	Team responsible
1	Action items from previous meeting	NSW Fisheries to set up a meeting with Southern Bass fishing club in relation to the time-line for construction of the Tallowa Dam High Fishway	Pending. Office of Conservation to meet with Southern Bass at their next meeting in October	Conservation branch
2	1: (Recreational Fishing Freshwater Trust Fund budget position), 4d (Fishing Fee administration), 4f (Fishcare Volunteers)	That a sub-committee consisting of the Chair, two members of RFSTEC, two members of RFFTEC (Doug Joyner, Elizabeth Brodbeck) be established to look into trust fund strategic issues, the structure of the Fishcare Volunteer program and cost effective options for licensing services	Completed. First meeting held in June. Draft minutes circulated to members out of session. John Diplock to discuss briefly in General Business.	Chair/Rec.Mgt/ Communications branch
3	3: Recreational Fishing Licence sales	That the Chair write to the Minister for Fisheries seeking the abolition of the 3-day fishing licence	Completed. Licence review underway. John Diplock to discuss briefly in General Business.	Chair/Rec.Mgt
4	4c: Freshwater recreational management program	That a new cost centre be established for annual committee expenses. Monies to be transferred across from the existing freshwater recreational management program budget	Completed	Finance/Rec.Mgt
5	4e: Inland Fisheries Officers	NSW Fisheries to reimburse the freshwater trust with the amount payed in higher duties allowances for the Fisheries Officer at Inverell	Completed	Recreational Management
6	4h: Freshwater recreational research	NSW Fisheries to review the information on anglers catch cards with a view to incorporating information relating to weather conditions on these cards	Completed. Mark James to discuss with Scientific Officer, Tournament Monitoring	Recreational Mgt/Recreational Freshwater research

**16<sup>th</sup> RFFTEC Meeting – 29 May 2003 (continued)**

<b>Action item</b>	<b>Agenda items</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Status / Comments</b>	<b>Team responsible</b>
7	4j: Weir review program	NSW Fisheries to ensure that the northern inland conservation manager position remains focused on weir review duties	Completed. Milly Hobson to discuss in presentation.	Conservation branch
8	6: Draft expenditure budget for the Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust fund.	Budget recommendations forwarded to ACoRF for ratification. Ministerial briefing seeking endorsement of the recommendations from ACoRF regarding expenditure of funds from the Recreational Fishing (Freshwater) Trust for the 03/04 year.	Completed	Recreational Management
9	7: Invitation to the community to submit proposals funded by the small grants program	Correspondence to applicants on the outcomes of their funding proposals.	Completed	Recreational Management
10	7: Invitation to the community to submit proposals funded by the small grants program	Correspondence to the Institute of Freshwater Anglers proposing the incorporation of it's angler access proposal into the NSW Fisheries access guide to impoundments ( <i>in prep.</i> ) by way of a formal small grants application	Completed	Recreational Management
11	8: Invitation to the community to submit proposals funded by the fish habitat grants program	Correspondence to applicants on the outcomes of their funding proposals.	Completed	Conservation branch