



Western Murray Land Improvement Group

Striking a Balance

POLLACK / KP COMMUNITY
SURVEY RESPONSE SUMMARY

Introduction

On 4th February 2021, a community survey was circulated via the WMLIG contact database and The Bridge Newspaper. This survey was distributed in conjunction with a media release regarding the Pollack Wetland Tour carried out on 31st January 2021.

This media release can be found [here](#). This article is one part of a broader web presence for the Pollack Wetland Project, the landing page for which can be found [here](#).

The survey was described as open to all community members, with the survey link published online for community circulation. In The Bridge Newspaper, the survey was introduced as follows:

“As a result of community interest and a desire to provide input into the future projects of the KP Forest, a community meeting is planned for late February [2021]. This session will provide community members with an opportunity to be part of local decision making and form social connections. To preliminarily scope out a community vision and objectives for the forest as well as topics of interest for seminars in the future, a short survey will be available via the WMLIG website and Facebook page. Hard copies of the survey will also be available for pick up from 27 Thule Street Barham. All community members are welcomed to participate in this anonymous survey. Further details of February’s community meeting will be provided in due course.”

For the benefit of authenticity, responses within this summary document have not been altered, spell-checked, or edited in any other way. This has resulted in punctuation, spelling, and formatting inconsistencies. By making zero corrections to survey responses, this summary will be sure not to misrepresent, misunderstand, or speak on behalf of survey respondents. This is important for genuine representation of community input, as it prevents the impact of blurred lines when it comes to editing responses.

As at 26th February 2021, the survey received 42 responses.

The survey began by asking respondents if they had attended a tour of the Pollack Wetland. This was included to indicate the reach of publications, potential avenues for future tours, and to distinguish responses of event attendees from those who had not been present for conversations held during tours. 21 (50.00%) respondents indicated that they had attended a tour of the Pollack Wetland, and 21 (50.00%) indicated that they had not.



Respondents who had attended a tour of the Pollack Wetland were asked:

What did you learn?

This question received 19 responses. Each dot point indicates an individual response.

- “Impact on the environment and what can be achieved”
- “What can be achieved when water is added to an important site”
- “what and old system it is”
- “There is support for a community led approach”
- “How community with a vision can deliver mutually beneficial environmental and social outcomes”
- “The need for environmental watering to replicate nature. The sue of the area by first inhabitants, Local bush tucker plants.”
- “Beauty of the area”
- “Long running program producing good results”
- “K_P forest is under extreme water stress. If something is not done in the short term this wetland will be lost forever. Pollack watering indicates a way that may save K-P.”
- “What the forest used to be like a few decades ago, and how much people enjoyed spending time there (yabbing, etc.)”
- “How a little bit of water can help the environment”
- “Broad scale environmental flooding of forests is a thing of the past. Smaller environmental water directed to sustainable wetlands rich in cultural hot spots like the Pollack achieves better environmental and positive outcomes if managed well The state of the Koondrook Perricoota forest is a mess A shared bottom up community approach is the way forward”
- “That unless there is a concerted community thrust to actually “do something”, very little will change, and the environment will continue to degrade.”
- “Targeted watering can achieve great outcomes. Wetlands are important refuges.”
- “That native fish can outcompete exotic species if management / adaptive management is done correctly”
- “Birds nest in the Pollack”
- “ Suckers need clearing out, the incredible way in which the fish repopulated so quickly especially the little ones. What a fantastic person, speaker, passionate and entertainer Doctor Conallin is. The importance of both sites for Cultural Heritage and fish refuge sites. The passion of Roger, Dan and Colin and their professionalism is commendable.”
- “Wildlife can return when landscapes are managed to provide the habit they need to flourish.”
- “Given time, appropriate management that improvements to the environment, especially nativeness can improve immensely, as well as water quality. The key is collaboration and working together to achieve a shared vision and ensuring the local community has buy in and involvement.”

Of the responses to “What did you learn?”, 7 referred to environmental watering, the impact of watering in the Pollack, or the need for water in the Koondrook-Perricoota forest. 5 responses indicated specific support for a community-led approach to achieve environmental or social outcomes. 9 responses made reference to achievement, delivery of positive environmental outcomes, and the positive results of targeted watering and environmental intervention.



All respondents were asked:

What would you like to learn more about?

This question was a multiple-select list of potential topics for future programming, with the inclusion of an 'Other (please specify)' field. 35 people provided responses to this question, with most selecting several options.

- 24 (70.59%) respondents selected Environmental Watering.
- 20 (58.82%) respondents selected Revegetation.
- 22 (64.71%) respondents selected Cultural Heritage.
- 17 (50.00%) respondents selected Birds.
- 13 (38.24%) respondents selected Frogs.
- 15 (44.12%) respondents selected Monitoring and Data Collection.
- 16 (47.06%) respondents selected Bush Tucker.

Responses to 'Other (please specify)' were as follows:

- "is it going to be an economic and environmental disasters like the Koondrook Perricoota"
- "How local people want to be involved"
- "History and pat management of he Foret"
- "The argument against environmental watering so that issues can be addressed and mediated"
- "Small bodied fish and other biota in the Pollack"
- "potential for development for tourism"
- "bats"
- "Forest Maagement"
- "Cultural burns"
- "Bats, fire risk is a major concern, local bush tucker and medicinal plants"
- "Alignment of subject matter to the Australian School Curriculum and developing educational material as a tool for school teachers"

The final question of the survey was:

What is your vision for the Koondrook-Perricoota Forest?

This question received 27 responses. 15 respondents skipped the question or did not complete the survey. Each dot point represents an individual response.

- "The K-P Forest is just like any other piece of the environment, public or private, it should be managed in a sustainable way for generations to come. Management should reflect on historical practices for guidance."
- "Re vegetate creat a wetland ad look at tourism opportunities"
- "Easy to access showpiece that reflects what can be achieved in multiple sites within KP Forest as well as on private land,"
- "It is an absolute mess , miss managed by those from above . An absolute WHITE ELEPHANT"
- "That the forest receives more localised watering events/sites such as the Pollack with the input from local community members in order to make better use of the sparce resources. When a natural flood is allowed to occur it is hoped that the forest still gets flooded and not disrupted by the flood enhancement works."
- "Recovery led by local people"
- "A healthy vibrant forest brimming with native flora and fauna"
- "To be kept as a Nature Reserve. No shooting or hunting of any sort except feral pests. Allow natural revegetation of previously cleared sites. Protect Heritage sites of Aboriginal occupation. Establish a Heritage part to be accessed by students and Archaeologists to study Aboriginal lifestyle. Annual firewood removal would reduce fire risks and be a source of income to pay for upkeep."
- "To be continued to be a multiuse forest which includes the harvesting of timer resources. With the proposed closure of logging in Vic forests this will be the only remaining local area from which timber and particularly domestic firewood can be sourced"
- "All of the above" [perhaps referring to the list of topics listed in the previous question]
- "To get watered more regularly and get better environmental results for the red gum wetlands."



- “Permanent wetland that can be a model for other sites. Potential for education, research, and tourism.”
- “To bring as much of it as possible back to health (e.g. pre-settlement) for the sake of people and nature. I think we should aim high and restore more than a few hotspots, because so much has already been lost. (To me, the 6 TLM Icon sites are the few remaining hotspots.)”
- “Not sure, but a balanced management plan”
- “A area that has small wetlands through it, and still harvest timber.”
- “Bottom up Community Group working towards revitalising the forest with the establishment of projects similar to the Pollack”
- “I would like to see more ephemeral wetlands provided with environmental water to encourage the growth of vegetation and act as a reservoir for aquatic wildlife”
- “Improve biodiversity by targeting specific wetlands with water and on ground works.”
- “a place where the community visits for social and cultural (recreational) pursuits again, such as family outings to catch yabbys”
- “I see KPForest as being part of a connected system Not that long ago water could be found in water holes in creek runners that eventually become the Barber Ck. Properties downstream of the Moulamein Road had water holes in the Barber Ck that had never been dry I see the potential of the ability of being able to regularly put water into the Barber creek so there is connectivity between water holes in the forest and water holes in downstream properties. This connectivity would be beneficial for the flora and fauna that previously inhabited the forest and the downstream properties”
- “Allow cattle through the bush to reduce fire hazard and the overgrowth of noxious weeds”
- “That it is better managed by Government.”
- “A healthy forest”
- “Renewed biodiversity. An enriched environment that is a joy to visit - a site to see diverse plants, supported bird and plant life. An environment that is sustained, supported, and lovingly maintained by an invested community. A site recognised for its cultural significance, new and old.”
- “An increasing diversity of species flourishing in the landscape.”
- “Fish refuge. Target watering monitored by people who know what they are doing. Trial thinning of the Pollock. Trial cool burn, bring back understory.”
- “To have permanent refuge areas, waterholes that increase in nativeness, similar to Pollack Lagoon, so that native fish can spread through the forest in a drought and compete with alien species. Improvement in overall flora and fauna and have community utilise natural assets of the forest. Success will be achieved when there are family outings for yabbing and fishing again in the forest.”

17 responses to this question indicated a desire for the K-P to have permanent wetland sites, and to be managed in the interests of flora, fauna, and environmental regeneration.

2 responses referred directly to tourism, with 3 other responses citing recreational use. 3 responses indicated a desire for timber harvesting to remain a permitted activity in the forest. 24 responses indicated a need for change directly or by citing a vision for activities not presently possible in the Koondrook-Perricoota forest.