



Fire Management Strategy for the Meehan Range

Summary of Recommendations and Invitation for Public Review and Comment

Comments will be received until 26 February 2007

The full fire management strategy is available on CD from Clarence City Council, phone 03 62458600

The full text and maps are on display at the following locations:

Clarence City Council offices, 38 Bligh Street, Rosny Park

Clarence City Council Library, Bligh Street, Rosny Park

Tasmania Fire Service Training Centre, Cambridge Road, Cambridge

COMMUNITY FORUMS to discuss the Fire Management Strategy have been organised for the following locations:

Risdon Vale Neighbourhood Centre – 22 January, 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Cambridge Hall – 23 January, 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Clarence Council Chambers – 25 January, 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Richmond Hall – 30 January, 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

Lauderdale Hall – 31 January, 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

All members of the community are invited to attend.

Introduction

Clarence City Council, the Tasmania Fire Service and the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service have engaged consultant AVK Environmental Management to prepare a Fire Management Strategy for the Meehan Ranges. The area covered by the strategy extends from Grasstree Hill Road in the north to South Arm Road in the south.

The Fire Management Strategy has now been completed and is available for public review and comment. The strategy consists of a printed report containing background information, management objectives, and management actions. The appendix to the strategy contains a series of Management Procedures for implementing the strategy.

This brochure provides a very brief summary of some of the key findings and recommendations of the Fire Management Strategy. You are invited to make any comments on the strategy before 26 February 2007. You may list your comments on the comments form attached to this summary, or in any other written format.

No fire management actions recommended in the strategy that are on private property will be carried out without the permission of the landowner.

Aims of the Strategy

To provide recommendations for fire management practices and operational procedures which will minimise the fire threat to:

- life and property
- ecological diversity
- sustainability of natural systems: and
- cultural and aboriginal values.

To be in accordance with the policies of the Tasmania Fire Service, Parks and Wildlife Service and Clarence City Council, and best management practice

To provide a set of procedures to enable awareness and participation of the community, local fire brigade and property owners in the planning and managing of the bushfire threat to life, property and biodiversity.

To compliment other plans of management, and fire management studies.

Fire as a Management Tool

The Fire Management Strategy recognises the potential use of fire as a management tool to:

- reduce fire hazard to protect assets from wildfires
- maintain plant communities and individual species of conservation value that require fire in order to ensure their long-term viability
- assist in the removal of weeds and the regeneration of degraded bushland.

Approach Taken

Preparation of the strategy has involved:

- Review of scientific research, legislation and other relevant literature.

- Extensive fieldwork to identify existing natural and cultural values, condition of bushland, fuel types and threats, assets at risk from fire, vehicle access routes, water supply points, refuge areas etc.
- Consultation with Council officers, Tasmania Fire Service brigades and various landowners in the region.
- Research of fire history, fire weather patterns and bushfire behaviour.
- Development of burning prescriptions for hazard reduction and/or habitat management.
- Identification of the optimal fire frequency thresholds of plant communities within the region.
- Identification and mapping of fire sensitive plant communities.
- Identification of populations of threatened plant species.
- Identification of critical habitat for threatened fauna species
- Identification of areas that require prescribed burning for hazard reduction or habitat management.

Recommended Actions

The Fire Management Strategy recommends 20 fire management objectives for the Meehan Range. These are summarised below along with the actions recommended to achieve each objective.

	Fire Management Objective	Recommended Actions
1	Monitor the impact of fire management activities on the Meehan Range. Adjust practices to achieve relevant objectives, and periodically review the fire management strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Monitor the impacts of fires carried out as outlined in Section 6.10. b) Review this fire management strategy at regular intervals using the procedures in Section 6.10.4. and Table 11. c) Regularly revise burning prescriptions to ensure they incorporate the most recent information on the fire ecology of flora, fauna and plant communities of conservation value on the Meehan Range. d) Carry out further research on the impacts of fire on the flora and fauna on Meehan Range.
2	Minimise the risk of wildfires starting and spreading within the Meehan Range region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Carry out the management burns shown on Figure 13 and scheduled in Table 10. b) Improve compliance with conditions for permit fires to reduce the incidence of escapes. c) Maintain all power line easements on the Meehan Range. d) Implement the community education program in Section 6.2 to request residents on Meehan Range to report any smoke, or persons acting suspiciously, on days of total fire bans. e) Reduce unauthorised vehicle access by improving controls (gates, rocks etc.) and periodic policing, particularly in areas with a high frequency of car dumping.
3	Minimise the risk of fire to residents within the Meehan Range region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Distribute Individual Property Fire Management and Awareness Kits to all residents, and organise field days to explain their use. b) Ensure residents on the Meehan Range are aware of emergency relocation procedures in the event of a bushfire. c) Ensure that resources are available to assist with emergency relocation, including a register of any residents who require special assistance. d) Implement planning controls on new developments in the Meehan Range region to ensure they incorporate adequate fire protection measures.

	Fire Management Objective	Recommended Actions
4	Minimise the risk of wildfire damaging built and cultural heritage assets on the Meehan Range.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Implement the fire protection measures listed in Table 6 for protection of public infrastructure. b) Implement the risk reduction measures for the settlements in and adjoining the Meehan Range in Section 6.1.1. c) Establish and maintain a fire break on the western side of Dulcot as shown in Figure 13. d) Encourage residents on the Meehan Range to use the Individual Property Fire Management and Awareness Kits to reduce the bushfire risk to their homes. e) Ensure properties are inspected at the beginning of the bushfire danger period and hazard abatement notices issued as required. f) Ensure that authorities planning wildfire control operations on the Meehan Range are aware of the location of cultural heritage assets and ensure they are not damaged by machinery movement or other activities. g) Implement planning controls on new developments in the Meehan Range region to ensure they incorporate adequate fire protection measures.
5	Minimise the impact of fire and fire management activities on water quality in streams.	Maintain a minimum unburnt buffer of 5 m along minor (intermittent) watercourses, and 20 m along major (permanent) watercourses during management burning wherever possible.
6	Maintain existing emergency vehicle access routes shown in Figure 10 in a trafficable condition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Subject to landowner agreement, carry out emergency vehicle access route repairs and maintenance listed in Table 7. b) Negotiate with landowners to gain long term access to emergency vehicle access routes on private property for fire management purposes. Ideally enter into formal agreements such as under the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act, 1993. Non emergency access to trails on private property to be subject to the access protocol in MP 12. c) Subject to landowner agreement, and the access protocol in MP 12, ensure all emergency vehicle access routes shown on Figure 10 are inspected and maintained in a trafficable condition at all times according to MP 2. d) Subject to landowner agreement, establish and maintain the staging/ assembly areas shown on Figure 10.
7	Establish additional emergency vehicle access routes to ensure adequate vehicle access for fire control and emergency relocation of residents (subject to landowner agreement).	Subject to landowner agreement, construct new emergency vehicle access routes as shown on Figure 10, and detailed in Section 4.4.
8	Minimise damage to the emergency vehicle access route system by preventing unauthorised vehicle access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Implement a tiered security lock system to control access to emergency vehicle access routes on the Meehan Range (system that allows for master keys to open all locks, group keys to open several locks and individual keys to open a single lock). Issue master keys to Tasmania Fire Service brigades and other emergency services. Each brigade to be provided with a master key for each vehicle likely to be used to respond to a fire on the Meehan Range. Landowners to be provided with either a group or individual key depending on the access requirements for their property. Landowner keys should not provide access to other properties. b) Provide additional gates at the locations given in Section 4.4.1 and shown on Figure 10. c) Minimise usage of emergency vehicle access routes when wet. d) Inspect gates regularly to ensure that locks are in place and functioning. Inspections to be subject to the access protocol in MP 12, or an agreement with the landowner.

	Fire Management Objective	Recommended Actions
9	Signpost all emergency vehicle access routes at their access points, and at trail intersections.	a) Erect appropriate signage at all vehicle access points, and at trail intersections, to guide emergency service vehicles. Signs should include commonly used names and/or codes. Dead end trails should be marked as such on the signs. b) Signs to be reflective and to meet Tasmania Fire Service requirements. c) Erect signs on all emergency vehicle access route gates stating "do not block trail at any time".
10	Ensure an adequate and accessible water supply for fire fighting.	a) Ensure fire hydrants in nearby urban areas are clearly marked and maintained to Australian Standard AS2419.1 - 2005. b) Investigate and construct new waterholes/dams as recommended in Section 4.5, and near any designated staging areas.
11	Ensure all personnel carrying out fire management activities on the Meehan Range are suitably trained, equipped and supervised.	Ensure all personnel engaged in prescribed burning activities on the Meehan Range have the appropriate level of training and equipment as outlined in Section 6.7, and the minimum equipment listed in MP 5.
12	Develop, assist development of, or utilise existing education programs and materials aimed at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing arson • informing residents of fire safety issues, and measures to improve protection of themselves and their property • informing residents of the potential impact of their fuel management activities on environmental and other values. 	a) Provide residents with a regular newsletter as outlined in Section 6.4 to keep them informed of the progress of the strategy. b) Organise periodic field days in different parts of the Meehan Range as outlined in Section 6.2.
13	Maintain up-to-date information on; emergency vehicle access routes and their condition, water supply points, defensible spaces, and areas burnt in prescribed fires and wildfires.	a) Record fire management activities and wildfires using the procedures in MPs 8 and 9. b) Relay any updated information to the TFS.
14	Coordination of fire management activities on the Meehan Range amongst the various stakeholders.	a) Set up an implementation committee to oversee the implementation of the fire management strategy. b) Nominate a person (or persons) to be responsible for convening the implementation committee, and the implementation of the strategy. c) Implement the procedures for coordinating fire management activities in MP 7. d) Prepare pre-fire season map updates and distribute to TFS brigades and District Office, PWS and Clarence City Council. e) Approach all landowners who have works or activities recommended on their land in this fire management strategy and obtain their cooperation in implementing the relevant activities on their land. f) Immediately inform landowners of any damage to gates and fences during fire fighting or fire management operations.
15	Ensure that residents in the Meehan Range region have access to appropriate resources to assist them in recovering from a major bushfire.	Ensure that the resources listed in Section 6.9 can be made available at short notice to help the community recover from a major wildfire.
16	Ensure that all roads, trails and other infrastructure are checked after a fire to ensure they are safe prior to allowing use by the public.	Implement the safety and rehabilitation procedures in MP 11 following fires.

	Fire Management Objective	Recommended Actions
17	Minimise fire risk to fire sensitive vegetation and threatened flora and fauna.	a) Apply the appropriate fire regime to populations of threatened flora and fauna that require periodic fire for their long-term survival. b) Consult with the DPIW Nature Conservation Branch when planning prescribed burns in units containing populations of threatened flora and fauna. c) Avoid burning the whole of any population of a threatened or rare plant species in a single fire. d) Monitor the recovery of any populations of threatened or rare flora and fauna burnt by wildfires or prescribed burns. e) Fire fighting foams should not be used in the vicinity of known populations of threatened plants during management burns without prior consultation with the DPIW Nature Conservation Branch.
18	Exclude fire from wet forest plant communities for the duration of this strategy.	a) Do not prescribe burn wet forest plant communities for the duration of this strategy. b) Exclude wildfire from these plant communities wherever possible.
19	Implement a mosaic burning program in selected dry forest plant communities to maintain and enhance existing habitat diversity, and reduce overall fuel loads in bushland areas.	a) Carry out prescribed burning according to the schedule in Table 10 using the procedure in MP 5. b) Regularly revise burning prescriptions to ensure they incorporate the most recent information on the fire ecology of flora, fauna and plant communities of conservation value on the Meehan Range.
20	Control unwanted plant species through minimising the spread of weeds.	a) Ensure that all vehicles involved in fire management and suppression activities on the Meehan Range are washed to remove any mud, soil or plant material prior to entering the area, particularly vehicle underbodies, in order to control the spread of weeds and plant diseases. b) Encourage landowners to carry out weed control in conjunction with fire management activities (MP 6).

The Fire Management Strategy is intended to cover a 15 year period (2007 to 2021). The accompanying map shows the Fire Management Units proposed for management burning as well as the proposed emergency vehicle access route system. Please note that the vehicle access routes on private property must not be used without the landowner's permission. The proposed burning schedule is shown below.

Proposed Burning Schedule

Unit	Priority	Period of Proposed Burn					Preferred Season
		2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2015	2016-2018	2019-2021	
M1	High	Burn				Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M2	Low		Burn				Autumn, winter, spring
M3	Low			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring
M4	High	Edge burn			Edge burn Ridge burn		Autumn/ early spring
M5	High		Burn				Autumn, winter, spring
M6	Low				Burn		Autumn, winter, spring
M7	Low		Burn				Autumn, winter, spring
M8	Low			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring
M9	High			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring

Unit	Priority	Period of Proposed Burn					Preferred Season
		2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2015	2016-2018	2019-2021	
M10	High	Burn				Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M11	Low				Burn		Autumn, winter, spring
M12	High			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring
M13	High	Do not burn for the duration of this strategy					
M14	High		Burn			Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M15	High			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring
M16	High		Burn			Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M17	High	Burn			Burn		Autumn, winter, spring
M18	High			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring
M19	High		Burn				Autumn, winter, spring
M20	Low	Do not burn for the duration of this strategy					
M21	Low				Burn		Autumn, winter, spring
M22	High	Burnt 2006				Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M23	High	Burnt 2006					Autumn, winter, spring
M24	High	Burnt 2006					Autumn, winter, spring
M25	High	Burnt 2006				Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M26	High		Burn				Autumn, winter, spring
M27	Low	Edge burn			Edge burn		Autumn, early spring
M28	Low					Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M29	Low				Burn		Autumn, winter, spring
M30	High			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring
M31	High		Burn				Autumn, winter, spring
M32	Low			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring
M33	Low		Edge burn			Edge burn	Autumn only
M34	High	Burn					Autumn, winter, spring
M35	High	Burnt 2006				Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M36	High	Burnt 2006					Autumn, winter, spring
M37	High	Burnt 2006					Autumn, winter, spring
M38	High	Burnt 2006					Autumn, winter, spring
M39	High	Burnt 2006					Autumn, winter, spring
M40	Low	Burnt 2006			Edge burn		Autumn, winter, spring
M41	High	Burnt 2006				Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M42	High	Burnt 2006			Burn		Autumn, winter, spring

Unit	Priority	Period of Proposed Burn					Preferred Season
		2007-2009	2010-2012	2013-2015	2016-2018	2019-2021	
M43	High	Burnt 2006, maintain fine fuel loads below 10 tonnes per hectare.					Autumn, winter, spring
M44	High	Maintain fine fuel loads below 10 tonnes per hectare.					Autumn, winter, spring
M45	High	Maintain fine fuel loads below 10 tonnes per hectare.					Autumn, winter, spring
M46	High	Maintain fine fuel loads below 10 tonnes per hectare.					Autumn, winter, spring
M47	High	Maintain fine fuel loads below 10 tonnes per hectare.					Autumn, winter, spring
M48	High	Maintain fine fuel loads below 10 tonnes per hectare.					Autumn, winter, spring
M49	High	Burnt 2006, maintain fine fuel loads below 10 tonnes per hectare.					Autumn, winter, spring
M50	High	Burnt 2006, maintain fine fuel loads below 10 tonnes per hectare.					Autumn, winter, spring
M51	High	Burnt 2006					Autumn, winter, spring
M52	High			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring
M53	High		Burn			Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M54	High	Burn					Autumn, winter, spring
M55	High	Do not burn for the duration of this strategy.					
M56	High			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring
M57	High	Burn					Autumn, winter, spring
M58	Low	Burnt 2006				Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M59	High			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring
M60	Low		Burn				Autumn only
M61	Low	Burn					Autumn, winter, spring
M62	Low	Do not burn for the duration of this strategy.					
M63	High	Maintain fine fuel loads below 10 tonnes per hectare.					Autumn, winter, spring
M64	Low					Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M65	High	Burnt 2006			Burn		Autumn, winter, spring
M66	High	Maintain fine fuel loads below 10 tonnes per hectare.					Autumn, winter, spring
M67	Low				Burn		Autumn, winter, spring
M68	Low	Do not burn for the duration of this strategy.					
M69	Low	Do not burn for the duration of this strategy.					
M70	High			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring
M71	High				Burn		Autumn, winter, spring
M72	High					Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M73	Low	Do not burn for the duration of this strategy.					
M74	High					Burn	Autumn, winter, spring
M75	Low			Burn			Autumn, winter, spring
M76	Low	Do not burn for the duration of this strategy.					

Burning units assigned a high priority should be burnt when scheduled if at all possible.

Community Fire Awareness

Part of this project involves preparation of an Individual Property Fire Management and Awareness Kit. This will help resident determine the bushfire risk to their homes, and provide guidance on how to effectively reduce the risk. It will also include information on sources of assistance with bushfire risk reduction, and what to do in the event of a bushfire. The kit is currently being prepared and will be appended to the Fire Management Strategy. When complete it will be sent to all residents on the Meehan Range.

Comment on the Strategy

Please forward any comments you have on the Fire Management Strategy to Mr Malcolm McWilliams at Clarence City Council by:

- using the attached comment form
- letter addressed to Malcolm McWilliams, Clarence City Council, PO Box 96, Rosny Park TAS 7018
- fax to Malcolm McWilliams 03) 6245 8700
- email to <mailto:mmcwilliams@ccc.tas.gov.au>

To be considered your comments must be received by 26 February 2007.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Phone Number :.....

by 26 February 2007