

**Report from Community Consultation Workshop as part of the Beacon River
Catchment Salinity Management Project Feasibility Study,
February 23 2001**

Introduction

The workshop was held in order to gain community input into the feasibility stage of this project. It commenced with a tour of the catchment area and discussion of the potential avenues to deal with current salinity and waterlogging problems.

Presentations were also made in relation to hydrological work being performed in the catchment to provide an overview of catchment health. An overview of the Feasibility Study process was also presented.

Workshop participants divided into small groups to identify and prioritise the key risks associated with the project. Each group also identified the major opportunities presented by the scheme.

Workshop outcomes.

Section 1: Risks associated with the project

Results from each group have been categorised (A-G) and ranked according to the number of votes received in each category. This has been presented in an accumulated format as well as on the original basis developed by the small groups. Whilst an attempt was made to divide risks into 'Social', 'Environmental' and 'Economic', there was some difference of interpretation of these areas. However, this did not have a major impact on the final rankings.

Table 1.1: Accumulated votes for key risks

| Votes | ID | Issue |
|--------------|-----------|--|
| 59 | A | Downstream effects- legal implications, damage to remnants, increased salt loads in middle & lower catchment |
| 41 | B | Engineering issues- leakage from drain, soil stability, ability to handle large flows, proper design, handling surface water |
| 35 | C | Gaining agreement – type of system used, allowing drain to pass through, maintaining community unity, information available |
| 21 | D | Economic impacts- cost of construction, effects on land value |
| 20 | E | Do Nothing Scenario- Costs of not taking any remedial action |
| 16 | F | Maintenance – identifying responsibilities and costs |
| 6 | G | Lake Mc Dermott- effects on capacity |

Table 1.2: Group 1 priorities

| Social | Environmental | Economic |
|---|---|--|
| (A) Passing on the problem downstream (29) | Damage to downstream remnants using water | Legal action from downstream landowners |
| (C) Lack of information available to make decisions (5) | | |
| (E) Do Nothing- Failing to take any action & risk further degradation (5) | | |
| | | (D) Value of land decreasing through construction of drain (4) |
| | | (E) Responsibility for funding & maintenance (2) |
| | (B) Water held back by banks of drain (2) | |
| | (G) Capacity of Lake McDermott (2) | |

Table 1.3: Group 2 Priorities

| Social | Environmental | Economic |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| | (A) Drainage may damage middle catchment (12) | |
| | (A) Increase levels of salt and water in lower catchment (10) | |
| | (B) Management of large flows & effects on structures (7) | |
| | | (F) Maintenance costs, ownership and liability (6) |
| | (E) Do Nothing- Failing to take any action & risk further degradation (4) | |
| | (B) Soil stability- drains may not work (3) | |
| (C) Community separation (3) | | |
| | | (D) Affordability of works (2) |
| | (B) Engineering capabilities & flood control (2) | |
| | | (D) Costs of structures (1) |

Table 1.4: Group 3 Priorities

| Social | Environmental | Economic |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| | (B) Leakage from deep drains (9) | |
| | | (F) Who pays for upkeep (5) |
| | (E) Do Nothing – increase of salt affected area (4) | |
| (C) What happens if landowner refuses to have drain through their property (4) | | |
| | | (D) Construction costs (3) |
| (F) Ownership of drain (3) | | |

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|----------------------------|---|--|
| (A) Legal implications (2) | | |
| | (A) Increase of salt load in lower catchment (2) | |
| | (A) Increased flood risk in lower Beacon and Avon Rivers (1) | |
| | (A) Surges of salt from Lake Mc Dermott (1) | |
| | (G) Increased hydraulic pressure in Lake McDermott from higher water levels (1) | |

Table 1.5: Group 4 Priorities

| Social | Environmental | Economic |
|---|--|---|
| | | (E) Do Nothing – if we don't do something we're bugged! (7) |
| (C) Convincing down-stream landowners (6) | | |
| | (B) Poor design resulting in environmental damage (4) | |
| (C) Difficult to get a system that suits everyone (4) | | |
| | (G) Flow on effect of water stored in Lake McDermott (3) | |
| (C) Acceptance of salt (2) | | |
| (C) Social unity required to get funding (1) | | |
| | (B) Preventing surface water from entering drain (2) | |
| | (A) Nutrient and chemical transfer (2) | |
| | (B) Access (2) | |
| | | (D) Limited return on investment in some areas (2) |
| | (B) Interference with Infrastructure (1) | |

Table 1.6: Group 5 Priorities

| Social | Environmental | Economic |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| | (B) Leakage from drains (6) | |
| | | (D) Partial completion of drain –dead end (5) |
| (C) Community division (5) | | |
| | | (D) Cost of solution (4) |
| | (A) Nutrient transport downstream (4) | |
| (C) Management Board (3) | | |
| | (B) Extent of study, needs to pick up all of catchment (2) | |
| | (B) Route of paeleochannel is unknown (1) | |
| (C) Community equity (1) | | |
| (C) Drainage by stealth (1) | | |

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Section 2: Opportunities presented by the project

The opportunities were also divided into the 'Social', 'Environmental' and 'Economic' categories, however groups were not required to prioritise these issues.

2.1 Social Opportunities identified by workshop participants

- More united community if scheme works
- Ability to retain people in community
- Use Lake Mc Dermott for skiing
- Involvement of shire in drainage and flood management
- Long term survival of community
- Stabilise population decline
- Rearrange land tenure for community benefit

2.2 Environmental Opportunities identified by workshop participants

- May reduce area of salt-affected land
- Clean out the creek to move more salt water
- Harvest fresh water from Jobs Lake
- Create pipeline to remove salt water
- More water for birdlife
- Improve remnant vegetation and revegetation by reducing inundation and waterlogging
- Integrated Approach- best-practice on a catchment scale, incorporating revegetation, surface water management, remnant protection, high water use cropping and pastures
- Fencing off of remnant bush
- Return of native species, flora and fauna
- Increase depth of lakes to increase water storage
- Lower watertable
- Large storage dams to hold big winter flows

2.3 Economic Opportunities identified by workshop participants

- Make use of salt water
- Desalination of water for salt production and irrigation
- Generate greater income through recovered land
- Aquaculture
- Employment opportunities for construction, maintenance, tourism
- Improved crops through reduced waterlogging
- 'First' planned/integrated system in WA, giving better chances for funding
- Improved land values
- Link on-farm drainage into large drainage system
- Improve land in upper catchment
- Protection of infrastructure
- New industry development- irrigated winery, market gardening, tree crops
- More money into local economy
- Salt tolerant pastures & shrubs
- Seed collection
- Focused research based on enhanced resource inventory
- Rate relief for undeveloped bush- memorial on title

2.4 Alternative options

- Pump water to west of Jobs Lake (to salt pans)

- Take water to other areas eg Lake Moore