



DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT

8th May 2007

DSDS1	DRAFT GILLS BRIDGE CREEK REHABILITATION PLAN
FILE: 863 NDH	{Folio No. *}

SUMMARY:

Reporting that the draft Gills Bridge Creek Rehabilitation Plan has been prepared for Council's endorsement for the purposes of public exhibition.

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BACKGROUND:

Council has been investigating the potential contamination and degradation of Gills Bridge Creek, South Kempsey, with the aim to develop a rehabilitation plan for the Creek.

The visual appearance of Gills Bridge Creek has been declining for a number of years, while basic water quality monitoring has indicated some impacts from the surrounding urban, commercial and industrial environment. Council and the community have recognised the declining health of the Creek and the need for a Rehabilitation Plan to be developed.

Draft Rehabilitation Plan

The rehabilitation plan for Gills Bridge Creek was developed in accordance the Project Brief reported to Council in April 2006, which was based on the guidelines from the technical guide, *A Rehabilitation Manual for Australia Streams*, produced by the Cooperative Research Centre for Catchment Hydrology and Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation (2000).

The Gills Bridge Creek Rehabilitation Plan aims to set a framework for preserving and enhancing existing assets of the creek, such as remaining segments of riparian vegetation and native habitat, and to rehabilitate degraded assets, such as water quality and the extent of weed coverage. In doing so, the project aims to improve the ecological condition of the creek, while encouraging a Total Catchment Management (TCM) aware, involved and practising community.

The project objectives that underpin the rehabilitation plan are:

1. To improve water quality and flow regimes;
2. To protect and where possible regenerate riparian vegetation;
3. To increase bank stability and decrease erosion;
4. To manage, control and where possible reduce the area and extent of weed species; and
5. To raise community awareness of Total Catchment Management (TCM) principles.

Funding

In order to implement all of the recommended actions, funding resources, additional to those currently estimated in Council's long term budget, will be required. Council has applied for grant funding through the Department of Environment and Conservation's (DEC) Urban Sustainability Program. The opportunity also exists to seek corporate sponsorship from business within the catchment of the creek. Council will continue to pursue future opportunities for grant funding to assist in the implementation of the recommended actions of this Plan.

Cost estimations for the strategies and actions recommended in the Rehabilitation Plan are shown in [Appendix A – Page G1](#)

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

The implementation of a Rehabilitation Plan for Gills Bridge Creek will improve the ecological condition of the Creek. Specifically, the Plan will aim to improve the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff, eradicate (where possible) and control the spread of weeds, conserve riparian vegetation and important fauna habitats, enhance flow and connectivity and improve water quality within the Creek.

- ***Social***

The Rehabilitation Plan for Gills Bridge Creek encourages involvement from the local community, industry and business groups. An important part of the rehabilitation plan will be to educate the public and encourage a Total Catchment Management (TCM) aware, involved and practising community. Rehabilitation of Gills Bridge Creek will help to create a sense of pride and improved community cooperation, encouraging people to live more harmoniously and sustainably within their Catchment.

- ***Economic (Financial)***

Council will need to provide funding resources to implement at least some of the key actions outlined in the rehabilitation plan as reflected in the Draft ESD Strategy. In order to implement the balance of the recommended actions Council has applied for grant funding through the Department of Environment and Conservation's

(DEC) Urban Sustainability Program, a sub program of the Environmental Trust - NSW City and Country Environmental Restoration Program.

- *Policy or Statutory*

Nil

- *General Manager's or Director's Review*

The total estimated cost of the rehabilitation program is \$217,600. Public exhibition and subsequent approval of the plan would not oblige Council to commit any funding to implement the plan.

The plan would form the basis of future approaches to private businesses and government agencies for the funding.

At this stage it is proposed to commence the plan with an allocation of \$2700, including a revote of \$7,000 with the funds derived from the Environmental Lev. If Council is successful in having the Levy extended implementation of the plan could be derived from this source.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the draft Gills Bridge Creek Rehabilitation Plan be endorsed for the purposes of public exhibition.

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R B Pitt

DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES