

Lake MOKOAN

Lake Mokoan Community Information Bulletin

No. 6 September 2006

Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Strategy – Progress Report

The Vision

"The restoration of the Winton Wetlands will be a project of national scientific, cultural, and environmental significance with a focus on education, research, tourism, recreation and community development. The project will be known for its wide local, regional, national and international support."

Introduction

The Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Steering Committee (LMFLUSC) has been working with the community to develop a vision, strategy and plan for the future land use of the reclaimed site following the decommissioning of Lake Mokoan.

Information Bulletin No. 5 (June 2006) described the community response to preliminary land use options, identified further ecological and archaeological fieldwork and outlined key issues in relation to the primary, secondary and tertiary land uses. A more detailed set of land use options was developed and discussed at community information sessions on 11 April 2006 and focus group meetings on 11 July 2006. All work to date on this Strategy, including supporting studies, are available on the website at www.lakemokoan.com.

Draft Land Use Strategy Released

The LMFLUSC has released the preferred Future Land Use Strategy (FLUS) for public comment. The FLUS can be viewed on the Lake Mokoan website and at the following public venues:

- Benalla Rural City Office
- Rural City of Wangaratta Office/DSE – Wangaratta
- DSE - Benalla Office

FLUS Overview

The FLUS has been prepared following extensive investigation and consultation and a thorough assessment of land use options.

The Strategy describes:

- the steps involved in the preparation of the FLUS
- the FLUS vision, short and long-term goals, land use outcomes and land use hierarchy
- an overall implementation strategy and detailed strategies dealing with the following issues
 - Environmental and Cultural
 - Economic and Land Use
 - Social and Community
- cost estimates and contingencies

Main Elements of the FLUS

The main element of the FLUS is the 'world-scale' restoration of the 'Winton Wetlands', consisting of a number of wetlands and a significant area of surrounding dryland ecosystems, which complement the wetlands. The other main land use identified for the study area, is referred to as the Primary Industry Precinct. This area was assessed as having lower ecological and cultural values and is recommended as being suitable for primary production,

- **Restoration of the Winton Wetlands** - an area of around 6,800 hectares with significant ecological and cultural values, including wetlands, wetland margins and dryland areas.
- **Primary Industry Precinct** - surrounding the Winton Wetlands, an area of around 2,100 hectares, will be sold and made available for agriculture (predominantly broadacre grazing). The sale of land will be subject to appropriate land management controls. Other compatible land uses such as forestry will be subject to specific environmental land management standards.

Main Infrastructure Elements

(Refer to Infrastructure map attached)

- **Cycle/walkways and boardwalks** – will provide loop trails around the wetland area. These trails will also provide regional connections to Benalla, Glenrowan, Wangaratta and natural areas such as the Warby Range State Park. Interpretive facilities and signage will enhance the visiting and touring experience.
- **Tourism, recreation, education and scientific research facilities** – are proposed to be developed at a major node, known as the Winton Wetlands Tourism and Education Complex. The preferred location is on the northern shore of the wetland (identified as Node 3).
- **Wetland Discovery Centre** - would provide focal point for locals, visitors and tourists. The Wetland Discovery Centre would be complemented by picnic facilities and interpretive signage and would be a major portal to the wetland boardwalk and trail system. This would also provide focal point for research organisations interested in wetland rehabilitation.
- **Eco-tourism accommodation** is planned to complement these facilities.

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Phases of the FLUS Strategy

FLUS Phase	Time Frame	Details
Decommissioning (Years 1-3)	2006-2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Winton Wetlands will generally be restored naturally through the managed drawdown of the existing lake and the regeneration of the existing native seed bank.• Active wetland, grassland and woodland revegetation will commence to assist in the restoration program and to extend the diversity of flora and fauna species.• Identification and protection of indigenous and historic cultural values will be important during this period• Changes to key elements of infrastructure, such as the dam wall, inlet channel and other structures previously used to manage water levels and flows in the Lake Mokoan system.• This phase will also involve a number of planning projects and the commencement of a detailed monitoring program.
Establishment (Years 4-8)	2010 - 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focused on the establishment of the wetland and dryland ecosystems including active rehabilitation programs, the aggressive management of weeds and pest animals, fencing to manage grazing and monitoring the level of recovery.• Investment in management and visitor infrastructure including a significant number of tracks, trails and interpretative facilities.• Areas of surplus land will be subdivided, fenced and sold for primary industry purposes.• Development of a business case, planning and possibly construction of tourism and education facilities is likely to commence in this stage.
Enhancement (Years 9-15)	2015 - 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The establishment of major tourism facilities, should the business case for this investment be favourable, including the Wetland Discovery Centre and eco tourism accommodation• Integration with Regional tourism attractions as a significant local destination• Consolidation and improvement of access and interpretation for visitors• Ongoing maintenance, such as weed and pest management, will continue to be an important activity in this phase.

Achieving the Vision

The Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Strategy sets out a vision for the study area, which aims to capture the imagination, interest and commitment of a range of people with a stake in the future of this area.

Most critical to achieving the vision will be government and community commitment to the outcomes, and a continued partnership approach between stakeholders. These partnerships must do two things. Firstly, they must provide a high level of support for achieving the vision. Secondly, acknowledging that every stakeholder has a role to play, and must show commitment over a period of time. This recognises that the vision could have a range of potential benefits to many stakeholders over time. This includes all levels of government (Federal, State and Local), non-government organisations, educational & research organisations, local & regional communities, and all potential visitors to the area.

Community Information Sessions

Meet with Meet with the members of the consultant team and members of LMFLUSC to discuss the Preferred FLUS. There will be two sessions on the same day:

Monday 25th September 2006
5pm - 6pm or
7pm - 8pm
DSE Offices Benalla

Your Comments

The LMFLUSC invites your comments on the draft Preferred FLUS. We seek your written comments by 4pm Friday 20th October 2006. Please send your comments to:

Lake Mokoan Future Land Use Strategy
C/- Department of Sustainability and Environment
PO Box 124
Benalla Vic 3672

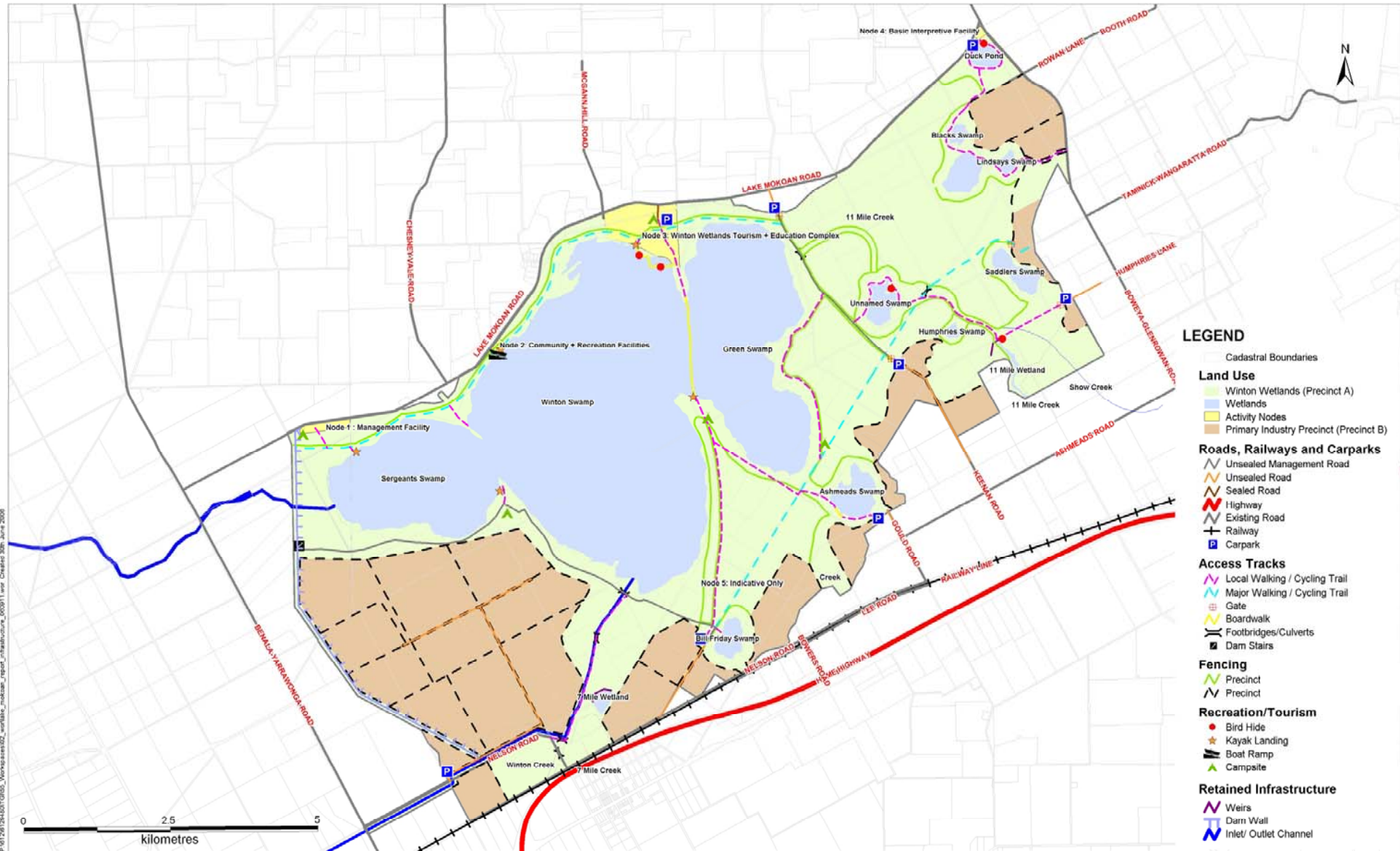
For further information Contact:

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