

Kosciuszko Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel



Meeting minutes

Details

Location: National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), 11 Farrer Place, Queanbeyan

Date/time: 10 am – 2 pm
Monday 9 December 2019

Chairperson: [REDACTED]

Deputy Chair: [REDACTED]

People present

1. Chairperson: [REDACTED]
2. Deputy Chair: [REDACTED]
3. Member: [REDACTED]
4. Member: [REDACTED]
5. Member: [REDACTED]
6. Member: [REDACTED]
7. Member: [REDACTED]
8. NPWS representative: [REDACTED] Director Southern Ranges Branch
9. Secretary: [REDACTED] Project Officer- Wild Horses, NPWS

Apologies

1. Member: Ms [REDACTED]

1. Opening and welcome

In the absence of [REDACTED] the Chair offered a Welcome to Country.

As this was his first meeting, [REDACTED] introduced himself to the panel.

2. Apologies

[REDACTED]

3. Declarations of pecuniary or other interest

Nil

4. Correspondence

Nil.

5. Acceptance of previous meeting minutes

Panel members accepted the previous minutes.

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6. Matters arising from minutes of previous meeting

No.	Action	Responsible	Progress
1	NPWS requested that members return their Personal Details and Tax Forms to the Secretary.	All / Secretary	Forms will be supplied at the meeting for members that have not yet submitted their forms.
2	Secretary to resend invitations to the panel's SharePoint page. USBs will be mailed to those members that continue to experience difficulties accessing the page.	Secretary	Prior to this meeting, ██████████ was supplied with a USB containing the background documents. All other members now have access to SharePoint.
3	Panel Terms of Reference and Communications Protocol to be provided electronically to members.	Secretary	Complete.
4	The panel will consider its progress at the next meeting, and then seek an extension to the new plan's deadline if considered necessary.	All	To be discussed as part of the agenda.
5	NPWS to seek approval from the Australian Alps Management Program to release the results of the 2019 Australian Alps wild horse aerial survey at the next meeting.	██████████	To be discussed as part of the agenda.
6	Request the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Group to consider the use of virtual fencing as a management technique.	██████████	To be discussed as part of the agenda.
7	Members to review the <i>2016 draft Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan</i> and consider what do they want to see changed and why?	All	To be discussed as part of the agenda.
8	What assistance do members seek from the Scientific Advisory Panel?	All	To be discussed as part of the agenda.
9	Questions for the Scientific Advisory Panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What methodology can be used for measuring the environmental impact of horses? • Can drones be used in population monitoring or mustering? 	██████████	To be discussed as part of the agenda.

No.	Action	Responsible	Progress
10	Requirement for a site visit to be considered by members.	All	To be discussed as part of the agenda.

[REDACTED] that he considered contains defamatory content directed at a NPWS staff member and himself. Panel members do not support the post's content.

ACTION: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

ACTION: [REDACTED]

7. Australian Alps wild horse aerial survey 2019 results

NPWS advised that the survey results were not yet available from the Australian Alps National Parks Management Program. Review of the draft report by one technical expert was still outstanding but expected today.

[REDACTED] shared a graph on population dynamics and management. The aim of this graph was to demonstrate the results of control. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] shared information on drone-based aerial surveys. The drone discussed can be flown for 10 hours and identify different species. The drone could be used to replace the helicopter in the Australian Alps wild horse aerial surveys. The surveys could be undertaken quarterly, and the results be available to the community in real-time. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] NPWS commented that it also supported making the results of population surveys more readily available to the community.

ACTION: Request the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Group consider the use of drones to be a progressive way of developing evidence-based population monitoring in real time.

8. Feedback on the 2016 draft *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan*

All members identified their perceived shortcomings in the 2016 draft *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan*. Panel members agreed that there were four key areas that in their view would enhance the 2016 draft plan and redress community concerns. These key areas were discussed in detail:

1. The extent of population control should be based on impacts to specific environmental values, rather than overall population numbers.

- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

2. Need to identify heritage areas where populations of horses can be retained.

- There are heritage and/or conservation reasons for removing or reducing horses in specific areas.
- General support amongst panel members for the management area maps from the 2016 draft plan, with minor modifications.
- It was noted that consideration could be given to the significance of wild horses to Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- The panel generally noted that there were a number of areas where horses were not previously present. The panel discussed removing horses from:
 - Above the tree line in alpine areas.
 - Big Boggy
 - Cooleman Plain karst areas
 - Western side of Snowy Mountains Highway in the northern end of the park
 - Areas of new incursions, including Nungar Plain and south of the dam on the Murrumbidgee River
- Suggestions to retain horses at:
 - Long Plain and Currango Plain
 - Snowy Plain
 - Eastern side of Snowy Mountains Highway in the northern end of the park
 - Kiandra
 - Pilot / Cascades and the southern part of the park
 - Old pastoral leases and historical stock routes.

[REDACTED]

3. Methodology for reducing the population.

- a. Some members do not support lethal control, particularly aerial shooting.
- b. Some members would like to test better ways to efficiently passively trap and remove horses.
- c. A concept was tabled that most members generally supported. The proposal for a 'high country muster' to be undertaken by traditional families. The muster would occur two to three times per year by a structured group of people at agreed times of the year. This operation could remove large numbers of horses in a structured manner and could be complemented by incorporating other control methodologies. Mustered horses might:
 - i. receive fertility treatment and released; or
 - ii. be transported to an off-park holding facility for subsequent rehoming. The facility would be initially funded by the NSW Government. Such a facility could hold horses for a few months off-park until they can be moved on.

The use of a large structured muster could be supplemented by ad-hoc mustering, passive trapping, and some brumby running and removal. Control could be

coordinated to a community group, working with NPWS, in order to increase transparency. [REDACTED]

The use of a muster with passive trapping, some brumby running and removal could be used as part of a wider set of control methods once the population was adequately managed through mustering.

Members discussed how, as part of a comprehensive long-term solution, the following may need to be addressed.

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

As part of the discussion the panel discussed how a combination of methodologies (mustering, trapping, and roping), with supplemental interventions such as fertility control, and continual population monitoring could be combined to deliver major immediate reductions and then deliver a more measured population reduction. The panel discussed safety of any operations and other necessary management controls with veterinary oversight.

[REDACTED]

4. Improving trust and transparency amongst the community.

- Ongoing engagement with the community needs to be demonstrated.
- Need for improved ways to keep the community up-to-date and informed [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Address community perception that the Advisory Panels do not take account of community inputs when making new plans.

Other issues identified in the draft plan included:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

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Most members agree:

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

ACTION: [Redacted]

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

ACTION: Secretary to distribute the judgement of the Australian Brumby Alliance v's Parks Victoria federal court case to panel members once available. The reasons for judgement may include references to the impact of horses to the environment.

ACTION: NPWS to prepare a summary of the four key components of the 2016 draft *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan* that need amending. The summary is to be made available to panel members before Christmas so that further discussion can occur with their relevant stakeholders.

9. Consultation with the Scientific Advisory Panel

A joint meeting with the Scientific Advisory Panel was proposed for the Community Advisory Panel's next meeting on 13 January 2020.

ACTION: NPWS to ask the Scientific Advisory Panel to consider a request for a joint meeting with the Community Advisory Panel on 13 January 2020.

10. Next meeting

Monday 13 January 2020 at NPWS office, 11 Farrer Place Queanbeyan. Time to be confirmed.

11. Meeting Close

2 pm

[Redacted]
Chairperson

Actions from this meeting

No.	Action	Responsible	Date Completed
1	[Redacted]	NPWS	

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No.	Action	Responsible	Date Completed
2	[REDACTED]	NPWS	
3	Request the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Group consider the use of drones to be a progressive way of developing evidence-based population monitoring in real time.	NPWS	
4	[REDACTED]	NPWS	
5	NPWS to prepare a summary of the four key components of the 2016 draft <i>Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan</i> that need amending. The summary is to be made available to panel members before Christmas so that further discussion can occur with their relevant stakeholders	NPWS	
6	NPWS to ask the Scientific Advisory Panel to consider a request for a joint meeting with the Community Advisory Panel on 13 January 2020.	NPWS	

Actions from previous meeting

No.	Action	Responsible	Date Completed
1	NPWS requested that members return their Personal Details and Tax Forms to the Secretary.	All / Secretary	
2	Secretary to resend invitations to the panel's SharePoint page. USBs will be mailed to those members that continue to experience difficulties accessing the page.	Secretary	November 2019
3	Panel Terms of Reference and Communications Protocol to be provided electronically to members.	Secretary	26 November 2019

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No.	Action	Responsible	Date Completed
4	The panel will consider its progress at the next meeting, and then seek an extension to the new plan's deadline if considered necessary.	All	
5	NPWS to seek approval from the Australian Alps Management Program to release the results of the 2019 Australian Alps wild horse aerial survey at the next meeting.	██████████	16 December 2019
6	Request the Kosciuszko Wild Horse Scientific Advisory Group to consider the use of virtual fencing as a management technique.	██████████	6 November 2019
7	Members to review the <i>2016 draft Kosciuszko Wild Horse Management Plan</i> and consider what do they want to see changed and why?	All	9 December 2019
8	What assistance do members seek from the Scientific Advisory Panel?	All	
9	Questions for the Scientific Advisory Panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What methodology can be used for measuring the environmental impact of horses? • Can drones be used in population monitoring or mustering? 	██████████	6 November 2019
10	Requirement for a site visit to be considered by members.	All	