

THE FISH CREEK CATCHMENT PROJECT

‘Putting the Fish Back into Fish Creek’

Project Plan

Produced for Fish Creek Landcare Group,
South Gippsland Landcare Network

Abstract:

The Fish Creek Landcare Group have developed this plan to create a blueprint for working with community partners to help restore the health of the Fish Creek Catchment.



1. Contents

2. Introduction	2
3. Project Background.....	3
3.1 The Fish Creek Catchment	3
3.2 Mapping the Fish Creek Catchment	5
3.3 Beyond Revegetation	5
3.4 Traditional Owners	7
4. Key Stakeholders	7
5. Methodology.....	9
6. Aim and Objectives.....	10
7. Action Plan	11
7.1 LANDSCAPE CONNECTIVITY.....	12
7.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	14
8. Literature Review and Projects of Interest.....	16
9. Management Principles	18
10. Recommendations.....	19
11. Appendices.....	20

2. Introduction

The Fish Creek Landcare Group is one of sixteen Landcare groups within the South Gippsland Landcare Network, which was formed in 1995 and aims to promote the vision of Landcare principles by working towards a sustainable environment. The Network area covers 270,000 ha and is bordered by the Strzelecki Ranges to the north and Bass Strait to the south. The goals of the Network are focused on improving the environment, embracing sustainable food and fibre production and caring for land of any size.

The Fish Creek catchment is located within the Shire of South Gippsland, which covers an area of 3,300 square kilometres with substantial coastal frontage. It was formed in 1994 from the amalgamation of four municipalities and at the 2011 Census, had a population of 27,208. It contains a predominantly ageing population, with the largest age group represented between 60-64 years.

Thanks to its high rainfall and productive soils, the South Gippsland area is an important dry-land agricultural region, with strong dairy and beef industries. Both industries have had to respond to many complex and emerging issues over past decades, presenting both enormous challenges but also many new opportunities.

The area also has high environmental value with large patches of coastal park, remnant vegetation and several significant waterways such as the Bass, Tarwin and Franklin Rivers. These rivers contribute to several important wetlands including Anderson Inlet and the RAMSAR protected Westernport Bay and Corner Inlet. The south-western half of the catchment is part of the Gippsland Plains bioregion, characterized by lowland coastal and alluvial plains with gentle undulating terrain which rises to meet the Strzelecki Ranges to the north.

South Gippsland's major towns are Leongatha, Korumburra, Mirboo North and Foster, and other significant townships include Dumbalk, Fish Creek, Loch, Meeniyan, Nyora, Poowong, Port Welshpool, Sandy Point, Tarwin Lower, Toora, Venus Bay and Welshpool and many other small communities.

The Great Southern Rail Trail, along with Wilsons Promontory, is a major South Gippsland tourist attraction. This mostly flat or gently undulating trail passes through lush dairy farmland, areas of remnant bush and lowland scrub, with much of the trail located within the Fish Creek and Tarwin River catchments. It climbs from the foothills of Fish Creek up past Mount Hoddle and then down a steep descent through dense forest out into magnificent views of Wilsons Promontory and Corner Inlet, continuing to Foster.

3. Project Background

The Fish Creek Landcare Group was formed in 1992 and is a vibrant and active Landcare group with a membership of over 60 families. The Fish Creek Landcare Group strives to provide the whole community with leadership and education for an ecologically sustainable environment through coordination, cooperation and communication.

The idea for the Fish Creek Catchment Project came from Landcare members who felt that a more collaborative approach was needed to help improve the health of the entire catchment. It was agreed that a catchment scale project would give the group a focus for years to come and provide an effective framework for future investment in the Fish Creek Catchment. Group members approached the South Gippsland Landcare Network with the idea of developing a project plan.

The purpose of this project plan is to synthesise ideas for the Fish Creek Catchment Project into key elements, guiding principles and strategic steps to be used by stakeholders to translate concepts into action. Members of the Fish Creek Landcare Group and project partners can use this plan as a foundation for seeking funding and support to implement some of the key actions identified.



3.1 The Fish Creek Catchment

In the West Gippsland region, there are three basins; the Latrobe River, South Gippsland and Thomson River basins. The South Gippsland basin contains the South Gippsland catchment.

The major rivers of South Gippsland include the Powlett, Tarwin, Franklin, Agnes, Albert and Tarra rivers. All the rivers in the South Gippsland basin are unregulated; the Tarwin and Powlett catchments have on-stream storages for domestic water supply and both Agnes and Tarra rivers allow water extraction for domestic use. These rivers all flow from the Strzelecki and Hedley ranges through productive agricultural land as well as areas of high conservation, including Wilsons

Promontory and Tarra Bulga National Park. South Gippsland has a significant wetland of national and international importance the Ramsar site of Corner Inlet. Four other wetlands of national importance can also be found in South Gippsland. These are:

- Shallow Inlet
- Anderson Inlet
- Powlett Estuary
- Bald Hills State Wildlife Reserve

The condition of rivers in Victoria are assessed by using the Index of Stream Condition (ISC). This brings together data from many sources giving a detailed overview of river and stream conditions across the state. The last ISC benchmarking for the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority region was in 2010 giving the following results for the South Gippsland basin;

- 74% of stream length in moderate condition
- 10% in good condition
- 10% in poor condition
- 5% in very poor condition.

Fish Creek is approximately 30 km in length. Its source is south of the South Gippsland Highway, north-west of Foster and it flows primarily through farmland until it reaches Fish Creek township. From Fish Creek township, the creek flows mostly westward until Buffalo Waratah Road where it becomes what is referred to locally as 'The Drain', a section of man-made drain that was built to redirect the creek through natural floodplain until it enters the Tarwin Lower River. The catchment consists of highly productive farmland that has been farmed relatively intensively for both dairy and livestock production. There is little remnant vegetation.

Several tributaries enter the Fish creek along its length. Battery Creek is dammed to provide Fish Creek's water supply; Hoddle Creek, Amber Creek and Waratah Creek are the other main tributaries.

Many sections of the Fish Creek and its tributaries have been fenced, revegetated and subject to intensive weed reduction. Much of this work has been undertaken by landholders over a long period of time, some with assistance from Landcare, WGCMA and other organisations; and some simply because many farmers see this as part of managing a healthy and productive property.

One of the primary outcomes of this project is to transform this fragmented approach to land management into one that is collaborative and long-term, encouraging landholders to see their small patch as part of a greater whole that is vital to the health of the overall catchment.



Map of Fish Creek Catchment 1:1:25,000 (Source: NatureKit)

3.2 Mapping the Fish Creek Catchment

In early 2018 the Fish Creek Landcare Group committed to undertaking a retrospective mapping project in order to create a mapping layer incorporating all the known historical project works. The outcome is to build a more complete picture of the state of the Fish creek catchment. Now scheduled for 2019, this project is being undertaken in conjunction with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and the South Gippsland Landcare Network.

It is envisaged that the mapping work will provide an aerial view of revegetation and potentially form the basis of a future bio links strategy for the area, identifying;

- vegetation changes over time
- remaining areas of high value native vegetation
- ownership of land
- sites of historical conservation/revegetation efforts, linked to Landcare and other land manager activity
- a planning tool for landholders/ land managers to identify sites for future work
- a base-line for future landscape level change for the catchment

This mapping is considered a critical element of the Fish Creek Catchment Project and has been identified as a high priority in the Action Plan (Section 7) contained within this plan.

3.3 Beyond Revegetation

The Fish Creek Catchment Project was conceived by members of the Fish Creek Landcare Group, many of whom are current farmers or possess farming backgrounds. While the overall aim of this project is to improve the condition of the Fish Creek catchment, group members understand there is huge potential for outcomes beyond traditional land management practices. There is opportunity within this project for Fish Creek Landcare Group to facilitate conversations around agriculture and

land management that challenge current thinking, stimulate new ideas and create the space for experimentation and innovation.

Inspiration for this project can be partly attributed to the Jack and Albert Rivers Restoration (JARR) project and its valuable contributions to the health of the Corner Inlet Catchment, as well as the important social role it plays in connecting people who live there.

The notion of social licence is not new but there is great awareness in the Fish Creek Landcare Group that agricultural practices, while once below the radar, are increasingly subject to social licence in the way they are being regulated or influenced by market behaviour. Issues including animal agriculture, chemical use, agriculture's perceived contribution to greenhouse emissions and native vegetation management are already, or are likely to be, impacted by significant regulatory change, partly as a result of societal pressure. Many farmers in South Gippsland are already well advanced in understanding and applying these principles to their farms; and have much knowledge to share with those who are yet to embark on this journey.

Similarly, farmers in the area are experimenting with ideas around what has been referred to as 'the third way' by Otway Agroforestry Network's forest scientist Rowan Reid; where growing trees for profit can have a positive environmental impact and waterways can be managed on farms for *both* conservation and profit. Ideas like these can challenge our traditional ideas of conservation and caring for the land and are worthy of exploration.

The Fish Creek Catchment Project presents a great opportunity to facilitate ideas being shared across the community and showcase innovative or integrated agricultural practices, many that are already being implemented across the catchment. The Fish Creek Catchment Project was not conceived as a prescriptive project that landholders sign up to. Rather, it extends an invitation for landholders and community members to contribute individual or collective actions towards a catchment-wide approach.



3.4 Traditional Owners

The Fish Creek Catchment Project will take its lead from the WGCMA, who have established working relationships with the Gunaikurnai Kurnai people, recognised as the traditional owners of this country. The project team will engage with all organisations who represent traditional owners; both in acknowledging history and the current and future role of traditional owners in protecting and educating others about the catchment. This will include consulting WGCMA, Foster Museum, Foster Community House and local historian Cheryl Glowry.

4. Key Stakeholders

The many stakeholders involved in this project are listed in the table below, with details of their proposed role.

Organisation	Role
Traditional owners	Provide advice regarding appropriateness of works in context of cultural history and current practice.
Fish Creek Landcare	Coordination of this project.

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority	Ensure any proposed works within the project catchment is aligned with catchment policy. Funding support. Links to other important projects such as the Corner Inlet Connections Program.
Greening Australia	Potential partners for revegetation work. Access to advice, volunteering. Funding support.
South Gippsland Shire Council	Provide advice to ensure proposed works fit within shire and state planning frameworks. Provide funding assistance and guidance and links to strategy.
South Gippsland Landcare Network	Provide support through technical and resources such as funding and access to expert knowledge and services. Assist with project management and reporting and communication throughout other stakeholders and networks.
Schools (Fish Creek Primary School and Foster Secondary College, also tertiary including TAFE etc)	Participation from students to assist with shared objectives where there is alignment with the Victorian Curriculum.
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	Provide advice to ensure that any works fit within state regulatory framework. Funding.
South Gippsland Water	Provide advice, support and contact with landowners.
Landholders	Opportunity to have input to any proposed projects and benefit from cooperative approaches to land management, such as fencing, weeding and revegetation work.
Community members	Opportunity to provide input to help shape project outcomes. Volunteering for public works and community events.
Gippsdairy	Opportunities for partnership. Funding support for dairy farmers to engage with this project where there are shared outcomes.
Dairy Processors	Discussions around extension programs and market-based incentives.
Meat Processors	Discussions around extension programs and market-based incentives.
DEDJTR	Advice and links to business, agriculture, regional development and trade.

*soon to be known as Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) and the Department of Transport (DoT).

Funding opportunities.

5. Methodology

The following steps were undertaken in developing this project plan;

- The Mach 2 Consulting facilitator met with Joan Liley of Fish Creek Landcare group on 17 October 2018 in Fish Creek. Following the meeting Joan conducted a tour around the Fish Creek area to illustrate some of the issues and challenges, as well as a site visit to the property of local farmer and Fish Creek Landcare member, Dan Bright.
- After this initial meeting, phone interviews were conducted with many stakeholders to gather insights into the objectives of this project and desired outcomes.
- A draft Project Plan was completed and distributed to the steering group, chaired by Joan Liley.
- In early 2019 the South Gippsland Landcare Network will facilitate a workshop to discuss the draft project plan and make amendments.
- The Fish Creek Catchment Project Plan will be adopted by the Fish Creek Landcare Group and distributed for use by members to build community awareness and guide funding submissions.

6. Aim and Objectives

In order to create a more concise way of conceiving this project, the Fish Creek Landcare Group have envisioned the project outcomes around a broad aim that is ambitious and long term.

The overall aim of this project is;

To protect and enhance remnant vegetation and riparian zones in the Fish Creek Catchment.

The objectives are to;

- Preserve and protect remnant vegetation that remains in the Fish Creek catchment.
- Restore the health of land and waterways within the catchment.
- Expand and connect wildlife corridors.
- Identify threatened species and explore strategies to ensure their protection.
- Control pest species, including implementing strategies to identify and address weeds and other pest species.
- Work with local landholders to build knowledge of sustainability and improve land management practices.
- Continue to encourage and facilitate farming focused conversations about current issues and innovations in agriculture and land practices.
- Build community awareness of the landscape values of the Fish Creek catchment, and how the community, including school students, can actively contribute to its protection.
- Build knowledge of the indigenous history of the area and the relationship between the catchment and the traditional owners today.

7. Action Plan

This section contains the list of actions that are integral to this project and forms the basis of an Action Plan. While they are interrelated, the actions are divided into two separate areas; Landscape Connectivity and Community Engagement.

The actions have been included sequentially, with highest priority creating the foundation for further actions.

Briefly, each can be summarised as;

1. Landscape Connectivity

Landscape interventions that serve the primary focus of the Fish Creek Landcare Project ‘to protect and enhance remnant vegetation and riparian zones in the Fish Creek Catchment’. These include actions such as mapping, revegetation, weed and pest management, ecosystem monitoring etc.

2. Community Engagement

Activities that educate and engage the community in understanding and actively working towards protecting and enhancing the Fish Creek catchment.

Priority – Timeframe Scale

The Priority Scale below has been used for the projects based on the complexity of the task, considering factors such as scale, cost and the complexity of land ownership. However, the ultimate decisions will be most likely based on funding opportunities/project fit and the willingness and capacity of stakeholders to engage with each action.



7.1 LANDSCAPE CONNECTIVITY

OUTCOME	ACTIONS	PARTNERS	PRIORITY
<p>1. MAPPING</p>	<p>Meet with WGCMA to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Clarify the process for gaining access to mapping information required. b. Establish how the project will align with the past, current and future work being undertaken by WGCMA. c. Decide the best way of presenting mapping data for the project's use e.g. online maps, large format (physical) maps with overlays etc. 	<p>SGLN WGCMA Council Greening Australia</p>	<p>HIGH</p>
<p>2. A LANDSCAPE BLUEPRINT FOR FISH CREEK CATCHMENT</p>	<p>Engage in a mapping process that creates baseline data that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Existing high value remnant vegetation. e. Identifies property ownership in the Fish Creek catchment. f. Incorporates past flora and fauna survey results. g. Highlights sites of known revegetation/weed eradication work by WGCMA, Greening Australia, Landcare (and others). h. Functions as a planning tool for landholders/ land managers to prioritise sites for future work. <p>Following the mapping process, create a blueprint for the Fish Creek Catchment, which <i>could</i> include features such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Physical maps that could fit together as layers to support a whole of catchment planning approach. 	<p>All partners</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Online mapping that is accessible to all partners. c. Identify key landholders across the catchment to act as instigators of new projects or project champions. <p>Plan a workshop to bring project partners together to use the data to build shared understanding of the status of the catchment and identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Priorities that will form the basis of the Fish Creek Catchment Project. e. Flagship projects that are linked to key landholders. f. Key threatened species within the catchment. 		
<p>3. FUNDING</p>	<p>Source funding streams to support the priority areas identified with project partners.</p>	<p>Landholders WGCMA SGLN Greening Australia Council DELWP Philanthropic organisations</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>
<p>4. INFLUENCE REGIONAL STRATEGIES</p>	<p>Ensure the Fish Creek Catchment Project is identified in all relevant regional strategies. For example, the Regional Catchment Strategy (2013-2017) is scheduled for review in 2019; ensure the Fish Creek Catchment Project is identified as a priority project in the updated RCS.</p>	<p>WGCMA</p>	<p>HIGH</p>

7.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	PARTNERS	PRIORITY
1. PROJECT PROMOTION/ RECOGNITION	Design and produce promotional materials to support and identify the Fish Creek Catchment Project and its priorities.	SGLN WGCMMA	MEDIUM
2. ENGAGING LANDHOLDERS	Distribute information to landholders identified in the mapping, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Information that helps them to understand how they fit within the catchment and can participate in the project. b. Include a process that enables landholders to share their priorities and highlight any work they would like assistance with. 	Landholders WGCMMA	MEDIUM
3. MONITORING	Contact local schools to find opportunities to share mapping with students and identify ways to engage them in catchment monitoring, including citizen science such as Water Watch, Bird Counts etc.	SGLN Local Schools	MEDIUM
4. AGRICULTURE EXTENSION WORK	Explore ideas/ programs to support farmers to minimise their carbon footprint. Meet with meat/dairy processors to identify shared priorities.	SGLN Meat and Dairy Processors SGLN	MEDIUM

<p>5. COMMUNITY EVENTS</p>	<p>Schedule a community planting/ monitoring day each season (in conjunction with community partners) to raise awareness and build connections with the Fish Creek Catchment Project. Showcase progress and achievements.</p>	<p>Local schools WGCGMA Landholders Community</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>
<p>6. CREATE SPACE FOR IDEAS TO GROW</p>	<p>Host workshops or site visits that invite community members to participate in different ways of conceiving land use. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bringing landholders with a special interest together to explore ideas around social license and how farmers can be involved in developing ideas locally. b. Events that help community members see the potential for land to be used in multiple ways, e.g. a community walk along the catchment across private and public land, guided by the landholder and/or land manager, to showcase the different uses of land and how they can coexist. c. Events that bring together people engaged in different types of farming to understand different perspectives and challenges. d. Use the Rail Trail and The Hoddle Mountain trail as opportunities to provide information on Catchment activities via signage. e. Attract speakers on complex issues, such as carbon farming, climate change etc. 	<p>SGLN WGCGMA Council DELWP Ag Vic Others</p>	<p>MEDIUM</p>

8. Literature Review and Projects of Interest

Many projects and strategies have informed the development of this report; several are identified below. Of great importance is the **West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy (2013-2017)**, which is the main strategic framework for land, water and biodiversity management in the region. It is used extensively by government departments, community groups and individuals with an interest in the environment. It identifies what needs to be done to protect and enhance natural resources and the environment. The current RCS is scheduled for review in 2019.

The following Landscape Priority Areas Objectives, Management Measures and Proposed Implementation Partners (Table 10) are particularly relevant to the Fish Creek Project.

No.	Objectives	Measures
15	Improved water quality in the landscape system	Develop and implement a program to reduce nutrients and sediment loads from agricultural, forestry and urban land use into the Corner Inlet Nooramunga system in accordance with the West Gippsland Soil Erosion Management Plan and Corner Inlet Water Quality Improvement Plan
20	Increased native vegetation extent and connectivity across the landscape	Develop a plan and implement a program to protect, increase the extent and build ecological resilience of native vegetation, and create ecologically functional biolinks between patches of high conservation significance native vegetation.
26	Maintained water quality condition in the landscape system	Develop and implement a monitoring program for waterways and estuaries located in high use recreation sites, to identify increased risks posed by invasive plants and animals, inappropriate recreational use, sediment impacts after fire, and soil erosion in accordance with Parks Victoria conservation objectives and the Regional Waterway Management Strategy.
28	Minimised flood damage to the floodplain and its occupants.	Develop and implement guidelines for development in flood prone areas
29	Preservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites	Engage with nominated Indigenous representatives when planning natural resource management works to ensure that they are carried out in accordance with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and the Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2007.

Other strategies and programs identified as part of the development of the Fish Creek Catchment Project included;

Australian Pest Animal Strategy (2007) focuses on addressing the undesirable impacts caused by exotic vertebrate animals (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish) that have become pests in Australia, and to prevent the establishment of new exotic vertebrate pests. This strategy determines principles and the framework for threat abatement plans for species such as feral cats, foxes, rabbits, goats and pigs.

Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (2010-2030) Provides a guiding framework for conserving the nation's biodiversity over the coming decades.

Corner Inlet Connections program highlights Corner Inlet as a wetland of international significance under the Ramsar Convention. The area has significant cultural value to the Traditional Land Owners, the Gunaikurnai, Bunurong and Boon Wurrung people. It is funded by the Australian Government to address the critical threats impacting the site.

The outcomes of the Corner Inlet Connections Project will be:

- maintained health and extent of seagrass communities through improved water quality
- protection of critical wetland habitats – saltmarsh, mangrove and intertidal mudflats
- protection of waterbirds
- increased community awareness and participation in the protection of Corner Inlet and
- enhanced capacity of indigenous communities to protect natural resources

Corner Inlet Water Quality Improvement Plan (2013). The plan guides funding and on-ground actions for eight years to significantly improve the quality of water (sediment and nutrients) entering Corner Inlet from the surrounding catchment. The plan emphasises working with local communities to achieve outcomes.

Dairy Fert\$mart was developed by Dairy Australia to provide dairy farmers with appropriate knowledge and support to make good decisions about fertiliser application and reduce nutrient runoff from their farms while maximising pasture growth.

GrazFert is a program run by Agriculture Victoria, that helps beef and sheep producers understand their soil and nutrient requirements and make better decisions about fertiliser inputs on farm.

Jack and Albert River Restoration (JARR) Project is located near Yarram in South Gippsland and covers some 65,000 hectares of land constituting the Jack and Albert River catchment. The ultimate goal of the Project is to maintain or improve resilience of habitat for migratory wading bird populations, sea grass and marine life within the Corner Inlet and Nooramunga Marine and Coastal Parks. It is coordinated by the Yarram Yarram Landcare Network (YYLN) with funding from the Norman Wettenhall Foundation (NWF) and is an example of a landscape scale project that has engaged a wide range of community stakeholders.

National Landcare Program Five Year Overview (2013–2018) provides a snapshot of the eight key projects funded through the National Landcare Program, including the successes and challenges faced by the CMA and its partners over the past five years.

Nerrena Landcare Group Black Spur Creek Wetland Project (2016) was developed in response to the threat of a South Gippsland Highway bypass through a significant wetland site. The Nerrena

Landcare Group have created a document that contains important information to help revegetate and recover this site when the bypass is built.

Regional Natural Resource Management Climate Change Strategy.(2016) The Strategy is a sub-strategy of the West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS). It is based on the latest climate projections, a literature review, an impact and vulnerability assessment and regional stakeholder consultation. The Strategy aims to support the integration of climate change knowledge into the current RCS implementation program and help inform future regional planning efforts.

Regional Waterway Strategy (2014) plans more specifically for the protection of the ecological character of the Corner Inlet Ramsar site.

Otway Agroforestry Network is a Landcare group that encourages farmers to establish and manage trees on their farms to shelter farm stock and crops; control soil erosion and dryland salinity; enhance their property values; and, if at all possible, generate alternative sources of income. Rowan Reid is a forest scientist and landholder who helped develop the Otway Agroforestry Network and has written 'Heartwood: The art and science of growing trees for conservation and profit. 2018

9. Management Principles

This is a long-term project and one that includes a range of stakeholders representing a wide range of local interests. The following principles are proposed to guide collaboration on this shared project:

- Acknowledge the traditional owners and their continuing role in the development of the project. This includes referencing traditional history and knowledge in any materials produced.
- Maintain a primary focus on protecting and restoring biodiversity and ecological function to the Fish Creek catchment.
- Communicate and liaise with relevant public land managers, adjoining landholders and community members throughout the evolution of the project.
- Seek first to listen in order to understand and then work with diverse perspectives that stakeholders bring to this project.
- Look for opportunities to participate in ongoing research and monitoring to build shared understanding of the catchment.
- Create a space for experimentation and innovation that challenges 'business as usual' models.

10. Recommendations

We have made every effort to collect current and relevant information to inform this project and any omissions or errors are the fault of the authors. However, as this is a dynamic plan that will evolve with the Fish Creek Catchment Project, new understandings can be integrated into the plan as they emerge. With this in mind, we invite all stakeholders to contribute their individual knowledge and skills to ensure this plan reflects those that live in the Fish Creek catchment and appreciate and value its unique beauty.

As already identified by the Fish Creek Landcare Group, mapping of the catchment is the first and most important step in this project plan. It will create a clear picture of the status of the catchment and the priorities for the Fish Creek Catchment Project.

The priorities identified in the preparation of this project plan include;

1. Accurate mapping of the area.
2. Flora and fauna lists including known species of the Fish Creek catchment and their status; including the presence of threatened species.
3. Long term monitoring data, including waterways, flora and fauna etc. from a range of stakeholders.
4. Mapping and management strategies for priority weeds and pests that can be shared with stakeholders.

The Fish Creek Landcare Group believe there are unlimited opportunities for volunteers to be involved and contribute their own unique skills to advancing the outcomes of this project. The Fish Creek Landcare Group are committed to working together with all stakeholders to protect and improve the Fish Creek catchment for future generations.



11. Appendices

Suggested inclusions for final Project Plan:

1. Accurate maps of Fish Creek catchment (WGCMA).
2. Indigenous Plants of South Gippsland Shire (Shire publication).
3. Flora and Fauna survey results, including threatened species.
4. Weed species list and weed management.