



Questions and Answers

WATER

Q. What area of the forest will be inundated?

A. Up to approximately 16,000 ha or 52% of the forest can be inundated. Water can be held on over 13,000 ha.

Q. How often will the watering take place?

A. Historically substantial flooding occurred on average every 3-4 years. If the water is available and the condition of the forest demands, a similar pattern of floods will be delivered.

Q. How much water is needed?

A. 466 Gigalitres (GL) is required for a full project inundation, of which 244 GL will be used by the forest with the remainder being returned to the Murray River. However the works have been designed to enable highly flexible operations to make best use of water availability.

Q. Who makes the decision about when the forest gets watered?

A. The allocation of each event and the decisions around timing, duration etc will be made by an Operations Committee. The Operations Committee is made up of representatives from Forests NSW, Dept of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), the NSW Office of Water (NOW) and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA). This will ensure all available information can be fed into the decision making process to achieve the best possible environmental outcomes.

Q. How will blackwater be managed?

A. Blackwater itself is not a major problem; it contains nutrients and organic matter vital to the health of our rivers. Low dissolved oxygen levels within blackwater can be exacerbated as water temperature increases. This situation can lead to deaths in fish and other aquatic fauna species. It is planned to initiate watering events during winter and early spring which will reduce the risk of this occurring. Monitoring of water quality during events will further assist in managing risk.

Q. What happens to the water after it leaves the forest?

A. The water returned to the river is available for re-allocation. This could be for the environment or for consumptive use, ie domestic and irrigation purposes. These allocations are determined by the New South Wales Office of Water (NOW).

CONSTRUCTION

Q. When will construction begin?

A. After all state and commonwealth government environmental approvals have been met and a detailed tender process completed, construction is planned to commence in spring 2010.

Q. Will there be jobs for the local community?

A. Discussions with potential contractors have indicated that some labour and equipment would be sourced from the local area. Studies done as part of the Environmental Assessment suggest that up to 80 jobs could be generated over the construction period.

Q. How long will construction take?

A. A period of 40 weeks has been allowed for the construction of the project. This will be dependant upon weather conditions. Construction is expected to be completed by winter 2011.

Q. How much will the project cost?

A. The Koondrook-Perricoota Flood Enhancement Project has a budget of \$59 million. This money has been set aside by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority for the construction of these works. Access to these funds is dependant upon meeting the relevant environmental approvals.

Q. Where will the dirt for the levee come from?

A. The spoil will be sourced from borrow pits within the forest and along-side the levee. The cost of transporting spoil from the Torrumbarry cutting to the levee location was prohibitive. The disposal of this spoil is currently being negotiated with Forests NSW, local landholders and local government.

Q. Why not use the existing levees?

A. In many cases existing levees on private property incorporate fences and structures that form part of farm channel and drainage systems. To ensure bank integrity, and to avoid the need to take out multiple easements over private land, it was decided to construct a new levee inside the forest boundary. This will also avoid complications that may occur with access or change of property ownership in the future.

Q. Who will maintain the levee?

A. The design and construction of the project as well as the maintenance and operation of the structures will be overseen by NSW State Water.

FIRE

Q. What about the increased fire risk with greater forest growth?

A. An increased flooding regime may increase fuel loads but at the same time lengthen the period the forest is damp. There are no plans to exclude grazing from the forests and current fire management will continue.

Q. What about access to the forest in case of fire?

A. Access points across the new levee have been negotiated with adjoining landholders. These crossings will be suitable for fire trucks. Access within the forest will remain as before with rock crossings at most creeks. Road bridges will be built over the Torrumbarry Cutting and the return channel on the River Road near Barham.

COMMUNITY

Q. Will the public have access to the forest during the construction period?

A. A management plan is currently being developed to best allow public access while still maintaining OH&S standards and appropriate levels of security for the contractors. It is expected that there will be limited public access to some areas of the forest during the construction period. Details of the final access management plan will be widely advertised.

Q. What will happen to commercial timber harvesting operations during the construction period?

A. Forests NSW will work with commercial operators to ensure minimal disruption to harvesting. A focus on harvesting compartments away from project construction sites will ensure minimal disruption to both harvesting and construction operations.

Q. Will there be opportunity for further public comment on the project?

A. Consultation with directly affected parties will be ongoing. Issues raised through this process have been incorporated into the design and management plan of the project. The community will be invited to make comment on the Environmental Assessment Report that will be made public in February 2010. This report is part of the approvals process which requires that appropriate community engagement has taken place. Funding for this project is dependant upon this report being accepted.

For further information about the project please visit kpforest.com.au or contact:

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