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RANGE TO SCRUB

VEGETATION CORRIDOORS FOR THE ALDINGA PLAIN

In putting forward the ideas in this pamphlet Friends of Willunga Basin is aiming to set the scene for the Aldinga Scrub Conservation Park to recover and thrive not to watch it continue a dignified decline. It is a beautiful and inspiring natural feature and we are lucky to have it. We are grateful to the very forward thinking citizens who acted decisively to save it almost half a century ago. Hopefully the people of this district are up to the task.

In considering how to maintain and enhance our natural (biodiversity) assets, we make the following observations:

1. Our most outstanding native vegetation asset, Aldinga Scrub is isolated from other remnant vegetation and deprived of some of its original water sources. So in order to reduce its vulnerability to the above and the effects of climate change, we need to re-establish good vegetation and habitat links between the scrub and the hills. Its health depends on this. At the same time water from the most northerly channel needs to be redirected to the NE corner near Hart Rd.
2. It would be very beneficial from a conservation point of view, to detain more runoff in wetlands higher up in the catchments, including improvements to nearby gulf ecosystems, ie reefs and sea grasses.
3. The tendency to vine, olive and almond monocultures is depleting even the small remaining stocks of native grasses on the Aldinga Plains. These monocultures make us vulnerable to world gluts or loss of markets for particular products. It has happened before.
4. The increasing environmental un-viability of fossil fuels suggests we need to develop biofuels as an important element in our economy. Annual crops have little potential for producing reasonable net yields and their diversion from food production extremely socially disruptive, but there is strong potential using mallee coppice forestry.
5. We need to be doing more to extract carbon from the atmosphere to reduce disruption from global warming. Storing carbon in the root mass of mallee trees whilst gaining an ongoing greenhouse neutral energy yield makes a lot of sense to us.
6. There is a lack of off road corridors and trails for walking, cycling and horse riding . A system of such trails would tap into the market for eco conscious activities for visitors to our district.

WHAT IS THE SYNTHESIS FROM ALL OF THIS

We believe a fuel wood industry focused mainly on drainage lines, could provide the economic base for the habitat corridors needed for sustaining natural ecosystems.
Such a plan if properly thought out, could catch the imagination of local people and provide a outstanding model for and by the City of Onkaparinga in moving towards a sustainable economy, whilst enhancing natural systems. We emphasize that such a plan would have a 30 – 50 year time scale to implement fully, but would bring some economic returns within 5 – 10 years. We envisage the whole scheme would be achieved by legislatively backed incentives, not by compulsory acquisition and lots of direct public investment. The five

flow-lines to which the scheme might apply are as shown on the map supplied, starting with Port Willunga Creek and finishing with Sellicks Creek.

ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF BOIODIVERSITY/BIOFUEL ZONES UNDER NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (NRM) PROCESSES AND JOINT ACTION BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT AND CITY OF ONKAPARINGA TO AMEND THE DISTRICT PLAN.
2. City of Onkaparinga to invite landowners to participate and provide rate relief for 20 years for landowners willing to enter into Biodiversity/Biofuel agreements

DESCRIPTION OF ZONES

1. Zone to be up to 150 meters from centre of drainage line or channel.
2. Local native plants only to be in both conservation core and cropped outer part.
3. First 25 meters from center of drainage line to be available for public to walk along and to be maintained as woodland or native grassland.
4. Woodlots for production to be 5 to 10 year rotation coppice plantings of local tuber forming mallees, eg Eucalyptus Porosa, to achieve long term extraction of carbon from the atmosphere. Only 25% of a woodlot to be cut in any one year.
5. Native Grasses and small understory plants to be encouraged in woodlots.
6. B & B enterprises to be encouraged near corridors.

SOURCES OF INCOME FOR WOODLOT OPERATORS

1. Sales and processing of stem wood and leaf material via pyrolysis to produce electricity and charcoal/biochar. Eucalyptus Porosa yields 6 tons / ha / yr.
2. Sales of & value adding to a range of other compatible products, e.g. wattle seed, native fruits, honey, eucalyptus oil, ti tree oil, free range chook forage
3. Renewable energy certificates can be earned by establishing woodlots. Carbon is held in both in the mallee root mass and standing stems. Fossil fuel intensive industries are keen to buy them.
4. Income via biodiversity trading certificates, perhaps under NRM Board processes.
5. Tourist trails and trade developed in and around biodiversity corridors.