



**VICTORIAN MURRAY FLOODPLAIN
RESTORATION PROJECT**
HEALTHY LANDSCAPES, STRONG COMMUNITIES

25 February 2021

Putting the call out for community input into floodplain projects

Expressions of Interest are being sought from community members, forest user groups, Traditional Owners, and industry representatives keen to provide advice and input into two proposed Victorian Murray Floodplain Restoration Project sites in north central Victoria.

The two projects – in Gunbower National Park and Guttrum and Benwell State forests – involve using works such as regulators and pump stations to efficiently and effectively deliver water to the water dependent understorey of the river red gum forests' floodplains and wetlands.

The projects will restore and help build the resilience of the floodplains and wetlands to cope with climate change and low river flows, without water buy backs.

The floodplains and wetlands are home to important plants and animals, including threatened species. They also provide important waterbird breeding habitat and are highly valued by Traditional Owners and local communities.

The VMFRP aims to restore these floodplains and wetlands, so future generations can enjoy and benefit from them as much as the current community does.

The local projects are two of nine high-value floodplains along the Murray River where the VMFRP works aim to return to a more natural inundation regime.

Murray River floodplains and wetlands have been disconnected from the highly regulated river system and these works are critical to protecting the ecological values of these systems.

VMFRP East Project Manager Tim Shanahan said two new Stakeholder Advisory Groups will be set up – one for Gunbower and one for Guttrum and Benwell.

“The groups will enable the community and key stakeholders to have input into each project, and the accompanying complementary works will ensure we can all enjoy the values we have for the forests,” he said.

“The groups will play an important role in shaping these projects, and we welcome all feedback and suggestions as we move into the formal environmental and cultural assessment process.

“We want to ensure local knowledge and experience about a number of issues is considered as the projects are developed further.”

Mr Shanahan said similar to on-farm irrigation approaches, the use of infrastructure on wetlands and floodplain forests can target when, where, and how much water is delivered to achieve the best outcomes possible.

“Rainfall levels are reducing, and the Murray River no longer floods like it used to. These floodplains need more water more often to ensure their survival,” he said.

“Members of these Stakeholder Advisory Groups will be well placed to communicate the project information to the broader community.

“These projects could have big benefits for a broad range of people.

“They can help cement the area as key eco-tourism sites and embed the social and economic benefits water for the environment has for agriculture, the liveability of the area and the wellbeing of the community.

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“That’s why it’s important we have representation from a broad range of forest users and community members, so they can have input into the projects.

“The Murray floodplains are to be enjoyed by communities for generations. We want them to have a say on how best to manage these forests and wetlands, while keeping irrigation water in the community.”

To express interest, community members are requested to download an Expression of Interest Form from www.vmfrp.com.au and email it to Shaun Morgan – VMFRP Senior Engagement Officer at shaun.morgan@vmfrp.vic.gov.au or post it to PO Box 18 Huntly VIC 3551

Expressions of interest close at 5pm on Monday, 8 March 2021. The Expression of Interest Form and further information can be found at www.vmfrp.com.au

“During the early planning stages, feedback has been sought the way the community wanted it, from existing groups and organisations,” Mr Shanahan said.

“These new Stakeholder Advisory Groups will help the community continue that involvement and allow for input from a wider range of forest users as the projects develop.”

There are two existing Stakeholder Advisory Groups covering the remaining seven VMFRP sites. If you’d like to know more about these groups or are interested in being involved, email us at info@vmfrp.com.au.

ENDS —

For further information please contact
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