

FACT SHEET – Fire Management Plan

What does the Winton Wetlands Fire Management Plan do?

The Winton Wetlands Fire Management Plan sets out the prevention, preparedness, response and recovery strategies to be implemented by the Committee and fire management agencies in and around the Winton Wetlands.

What is the aim of the Winton Wetlands Fire Management Plan?

The Plan includes the following information:

- Sets fire management objectives.
- Outlines links to legislation related to fire planning within the Winton Wetlands.
- Describes the key fire management strategies and actions.
- Outline the role and responsibilities of the Committee, fire management agencies and other stakeholder.
- Identifies potential improvements to fire management arrangements for Winton Wetlands.



What are the objectives of the Winton Wetlands Fire Management Plan?

The following are the key objectives of the Plan:

- Protect human life, property and natural resources from and fire and fire management activities.
- Protect the wetland values from the damaging effects of wildfire and inappropriate fire regimes.
- Minimise the undesirable impacts of wildfires originating in the wetlands.
- Co-operate with relevant agencies and land managers in fire management.
- Minimise the risk of fire spreading from within the wetland reserve.
- Use fire effectively and as appropriate to enhance native vegetation.

Who contributed to the development of the Winton Wetlands Fire Management Plan?

The Winton Wetlands Fire Management Plan was developed in collaboration with the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP), the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Goulburn- Murray Water, the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation, the Benalla Rural City Council and the Rural City of Wangaratta.

What activities does the Winton Wetlands Fire Management Plan propose?

The updated Fire Management Plan makes a number of suggestions to improve fire prevention and management, in addition to the activities already in place. These suggestions include:

- Improvements to the administrative procedures for fire management to ensure all infrastructure, such as roads, access tracks, water points and signage, is maintained in good condition.
- The development of an all-hazard emergency management plan in conjunction with the upgrades to community facilities and infrastructure.
- Joint training days will agencies and organisations involved in fire suppression to familiarise themselves with the reserve and run through fire simulation exercises.

Does the Winton Wetlands Fire Management Plan allow for planned burning?

The 2011 Restoration and Monitoring Strategic Plan recommended that planned burning is not an appropriate fire management tool for use on a large scale in the wetlands. Large-scale burns may have a negative impact on wetland vegetation and also have the potential to ignite dead standing trees. Instead, grazing in strategic locations is the preferred method to manage biomass.

The report does, however, suggest that planned burning may be appropriate on a small scale in specific instances to manage fire hazard fuel loads on the Winton Wetlands and in accordance with DELWPS 's annual Fire Operations Plan.

A permanent strategic Fuel Reduction Zone is located along Winton North Road, creating a 10 km long fire break to support control efforts in the event of a fire coming from the railway and Hume Freeway entering the wetland zones.

What are the key actions done by the Winton Wetlands Committee in the Fire Management Plan?

- Construction and maintenance of roads and trails across the reserve to facilitate emergency vehicles movements.
- Management of grazing licenses and permit zones to keep biomass down but still producing environmental benefits
- Mowing, slashing and clearing of roadsides and priority areas
- Keeping operational water tanks full over the summer period.
- Ensuring safe behaviour is known and followed at campgrounds with firepits