

Landcare Notes

Landcare Note 2.3
September 2010

Action planning

Having an action plan means you can organise your activities efficiently and effectively. This Landcare Note will help you understand what an action plan usually includes, how to go about setting targets and implementing them.

What is an action plan?

An action plan sets out broad details of the projects and activities you want to tackle.

It is a short term view that is in line with your long-term strategy (see Landcare Note 2.2: *Strategic planning*). It identifies the activities you want to be involved in and the resources you will need (funds, machinery, materials and people) to carry them out.

How to do it

Setting priorities

First you need to identify a period of time for the activity, your priorities, and how it all fits with your longer-term strategic plan.

Setting priorities will help you achieve your goals, identify potential problems and allow planning for seeking funds and resources. It also makes it easier for members to stay committed to the group activities because they know when and where everything is happening.

Identifying the group's priorities could be done through a group workshop or a general discussion of members' concerns. It's also worth considering involving broader community groups and other organisations to discuss the potential for environmental problems impacting on your area.

Your plan need only be simple, but things will run more smoothly if you work out all the important components before starting on any projects.

Group planning

In developing your action plan, involve as many of your members as possible, so everyone has the opportunity to have a say, can take on any tasks identified, and is committed to the activities of the group.

During the process, you may realise there are not enough resources to do everything you would like to do. Planning is a helpful tool to assess the priority actions for your group and how resources can be allocated.

You may like to consider seeking outside help from someone who can help to facilitate your planning meeting – see below for ideas.

The plan should also take into account any past experience from similar projects carried out by you or other groups that will help you to create a better plan.

When creating an action plan, make one member a project officer or coordinator for this activity, or have a project sub-committee that can report to the larger group on progress.

Regardless of the process you choose, the group will benefit from having a plan that is easy to follow and helps with following your group's aims, reporting on outcomes and sets out what your group will do. Refer to Landcare Notes: 5.2 *Project planning*; 5.5 *Monitoring and evaluating group activities* for advice on how to manage specific activities.

What's in the plan?

Your Action Plan should include:

- The group's priorities and how these fit in with the priorities of your local authorities and regional plans
- The type and extent of activities
- The timing/sequence and where they will take place
- What resources (funds, machinery, material and people) you will need

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- Who is involved and who is coordinating the activities
- How you will get the resources needed (including time needed to secure funds)
- Whether your members have the skills or you can source that skill or get training from elsewhere
- What you will do if something doesn't go according to plan
- How the activities, results and benefits will be recorded and reported
- What outcome you seek from the activity – how will you know that you have been successful?

Helpful ideas

Landcare coordinators can provide advice on planning and may have some tools and facilitation skills that they can offer the group.

Neighbouring groups that have an action plan can also help with advice on the process they used, where to focus your attention, and what issues to consider. This is especially important if this is your first action plan.

When planning, you might identify where members could undertake training such as salinity monitoring or seed collection. Ask other members if they can pass on their knowledge, so the group grows a solid skills and knowledge base. Keep a record of any training needs identified by your members so that you can look out for any training opportunities that arise.

Further references

Victorian Landcare Gateway:
www.landcarevic.net.au

Landcare coordinator in your region – contact your CMA or nearest DPI office.

National Landcare Program Evaluation Coordinators (1997) *Setting Up For Success – A Guide for Designing, Managing and Evaluating Projects*.
<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/2713703>

Planning and Managing Your Projects:
www.landcareonline.com/page.asp?sID=18

Related Landcare Notes

This Landcare Note is one of a series. These notes provide an excellent guide for the ongoing operation of your group.

Landcare Note 2.1: *Planning*

Landcare Note 2.2: *Strategic planning*

Landcare Note 5.2: *Project planning*

Landcare Note 5.3: *Developing a Landcare project*

Landcare Note 5.5: *Monitoring and evaluating group activities*

Landcare Note 5.6: *Planning and running events*

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