

Christchurch Port Hills Fire Recovery Report

Coordination Facility:

Christchurch City Council Recovery Office

Event Name:

(Description of the type and/or name of the event)

Port Hills Fires

Recovery Report No:

2

Recovery Status:

Transition period in place until 29th March 2017

Effective As At:

(Effective date and time of the report)

24 March 2017

1600hrs

Summary of Event:

(Summary of what has happened, and any critical issues/decisions made.)

Overview

The Port Hill fires on the boundary between Selwyn District Council and Christchurch City Council started on 13 February 2017. The Early Valley and Marleys Hill fires merged into one following the significant escalation of the fire during the afternoon and evening of Wednesday 15 February 2017.

The Early Valley Road fire started in the Selwyn District Council area, therefore the management/response for this fire was the responsibility of the Selwyn District Rural Fire Authority. The Marleys Hill fire started within the Department of Conservation fire safety margin, therefore the management/response for this fire was the responsibility of the Department of Conservation. However it was agreed that the fire would be treated as one with the Selwyn District Rural Fire Authority having overall management of the two fires. The cost of the fires will be shared between the Department of Conservation and Selwyn District Council, even though the majority of the fire was within the Christchurch City Council area.

The fires stretched from Early Valley Road in the west through to Victoria Park in the east, including the hill slopes above Governors Bay/Allandale, above Kennedys Bush, Hoon Hay Valley, the urban/rural interface at Westmoreland, Worsleys Road and Cashmere Valley.

The area of the fire is 1,645 hectares with a perimeter of 51 kilometres. The fire is now confirmed as contained and controlled. The land management within the fire boundary has been handed back to landowners.

Primary damage included 9 completely destroyed houses, 2 partially damaged (2 of these destroyed homes were within Selwyn area).

Assets compromised included communication repeaters, electricity infrastructure, residential properties, the Christchurch Adventure Park, significant recreation, forestry and ecological reserves, along with water supply and waste infrastructure.

Around 450 homes were originally evacuated in the affected areas (approximately 1,000 people), although the evacuation of Westmorland area could have increased this number.

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was established at the Christchurch City Council's Civic Office to support the fire response and those residents evacuation from their homes.

A State of Emergency was declared on Tuesday 21 February and went through to Tuesday 1 March 2017.

Immediately on the expiry of the State of Emergency, a notice of a 'Local Transition Period' was put in place which is effective for 28 days, ending on 29 March 2017.

The decision to introduce a transition period under the Act is to provide the Local Recovery Managers with the powers under the CDEM Act for directing, coordinating to require information, direct evacuation, entry on premises and places, closing roads, giving directions.

Recovery Manager's overview

A single Recovery Management Team was established for Christchurch City and Selwyn District Councils. The Recovery Management Team meets twice weekly to ensure that all members are working in an informed, effective and coordinate manner.

Four Task Groups have been established (Social, Natural, Built and Economic Environments). These generally meet once per week to identify recovery issues, meet with various stakeholders and residents affected by the fire.

A key goal of the Recovery Management Team is to develop a Recovery Plan which includes the immediate, medium and long term actions that need to be addressed. The ownership of the Plan will need to transfer into business as usual tasks for those agencies responsible for addressing the particular actions.

The CCC Recovery Management office is set up on the 2nd floor of civic offices. Contact details: 941-8177, email address: Recovery@ccc.govt.nz

Social Environment

Issues:

Most Affected Residents

- Fall into 2 categories - those who lost houses, those who have other psychosocial needs
- Meeting for residents who lost houses was held on Wednesday 22nd February
- 2 personal liaison managers have been appointed as the single point of contact to address concerns raised

Community Recovery Meetings

- Meetings to be held next week with 4 communities (Westmoreland 27/3, Worsleys Road and Marley's Hill 28/3, Kennedys Bush 29/3, and upper section of Dyers Pass Rd 30/3) to enable people to have their questions answered about the fires and to look at moving forward at a community level.

Door Knocking

- To wait until after the meetings.

Agency Support

- Many thanks to the Salvation Army for their consistent and willing support.

Natural Environment

Issues:

- More recreation tracks have reopened, including the popular Harry Ell Track
- On-going liaison with neighbours re issues of recreation access on legal roads
- Met with 10-12 'larger property' owners
- Working with neighbours on repairing CCC / private owners joint boundary fences
- Met with a member of Department of Corrections regarding:
 - Community work - Gangs who may be available to assist with clean up on public land, or for public good. Currently trying to find out what work is needed on public and private land that may be suitable.
 - Plant Propagation Nursery. There are nurseries within prisons that currently supply stock for Trees for Canterbury and community gardens. There is a possibility that stock could be grown and made available for 'public good/erosion control.
- Met with a member of Ministry of Social Development regarding possible use of Enhanced Task Force Green, consisting of individual teams including supervisors, to assist with clean-up work. If this was to be utilised, funding would be provided by MSD with Council having to project manage the work.
- Planning work for sediment and erosion control to protect river quality and flooding prevention
- Liaison with Community groups and ecologists on management of Council owned fire affected reserves

Built Environment

Issues:

Life lines

Roads

- All public roads accessible with the following exception's or conditions
 - Dyers Pass Road speed limit 50kph with no stopping for top part of route
 - To accommodate Le Race event this weekend, Roding team will review extent of road cones along the top of the route to ensure they don't present a hazard
 - Worsley's Road cordon still in place on each side of Port Hills where the sealed road finishes
 - Kennedy's Bush Road cordon at each end restricting access to track
 - Worsleys and Kennedys Bush closures to be ratified under LGA so that they remain valid should Emergency powers terminate on the 29th March

Water and Waste Water Services

- Back to business as usual approach for day to day operational activities
- Engineers reviewing response to the emergency event to identify any longer term measures

Other Services and Installations

- Initial reports from service providers have been received, feedback will be incorporated into Recovery Action Plan

Residential / Life style / Farm Properties

- 7 properties confirmed destroyed by the fires, these families continue to be supported by welfare team, in addition first meeting with the families held on 22nd March
- Rates relief guidelines confirmed for the 7 damaged properties and any others with significant damage
- Skips continue to be provided on Worsley's Road to support clear up
- Meeting held with some of the larger land owners to identify their issues and concerns

- Uninsured losses continues to be a key issue e.g. damage to fencing , gardens etc, advice is that the two Councils are not liable for any remedial costs – down to owner
- Case manager lined up to deal with resource and building consents to support rebuild of properties

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Natural Hazards

- Rock fall hazard report completed for Early Valley, properties in CCC area not thought to be impacted
- Initial rock fall hazard assessments within CCC area do not indicate any immediate risks to private properties however further work required to cover off risks to roads and tracks
- Initial investigations on sedimentation control scoping work on the 5 catchment areas to commence next week

Economic Environment

Issues:

[REDACTED]

- Now know that all seven destroyed houses in City area had current insurance cover, however their insurance is unlikely to cover all of the losses.
- Both the Christchurch Adventure Park and McVicars Forestry have insurance cover and are currently assessing the total impact on their businesses.
- We are currently working through the key economic issues that the fires have created.
- Planning to meet with key landowners and businesses over the coming weeks to gain a greater understanding.
- Overall in the context of the Christchurch economy, the impact of the fires is envisaged to be relatively small.

Report Prepared By:	Next Recovery Report:
Murray Sinclair	31/3/2017 1600 hrs