

Craigieburn Fire Recovery - what's happening?

The Bridge Hill fire has been a catalyst to bring people together to think about recovery and restoration from the fire and the future of the Craigieburn Basin. This note provides a brief overview of work that is underway to develop a coherent community approach. The work was initiated by the newly established Craigieburn Fire Recovery Trust and involves multiple groups, individuals and agencies.

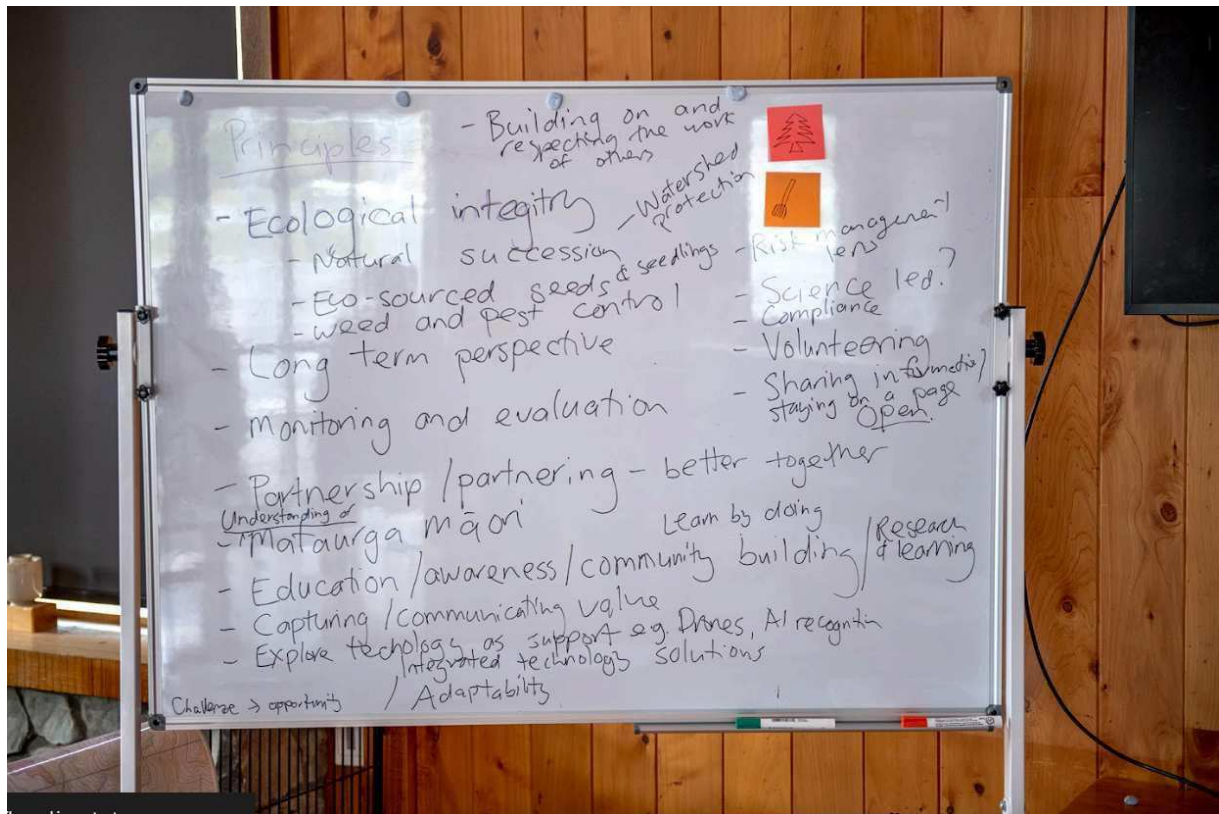
Community workshop, 7 April



- Community initiated stakeholder workshop - local farmers, community groups, conservationists, government agencies, Iwi etc came together to talk about the future of the area and how we might work together to restore the area damaged by the fire.
- We were fortunate to have the Mayor open the meeting - Mayor Sam Broughton set the tone for a good day. The day was an opportunity to share our sadness about the fire and dream about what could be. The Mayor said 'It was inspiring to see the passion and dedication of farmers, community and different agency groups all working together to heal the land after the devastation of the fire last December.'
- Discussions focused on how to develop a coherent way of working across the community, mana whenua, government agencies, existing community groups and local businesses to together create a resilient future for the Craigieburn Basin. The Craigieburn area is a treasured and iconic landscape. As a collective group we are

focused on ensuring that future generations will continue to enjoy this iconic environment.

- The meeting recognised the extent to which we are all beneficiaries of huge work that has gone before. For example, wilding pines are being successfully managed through collective effort. Our goal is to build on the work that has been done over decades ensuring that there is a collaborative and cohesive approach.
- Early in the day it became clear that the fire damaged area couldn't be thought about in isolation - pest and weed control don't respect boundaries - and there was enthusiasm for thinking beyond the immediate fire damaged area. The focus for now is the fire recovery but there is a more expansive vision emerging.



- As a collective group we are focused on actionable steps and outcomes
 - A working group has been established and had its first meeting on 6 May, next meeting 11 June.
 - DOC is actively supporting the work - An agreement has been reached for the community to collect seed on Public Conservation Land.
 - We have worked on ideas for a 100 year vision. At the workshop it was extraordinary to see how aligned we all were in thinking about the future. Extensive beech forests, flocks of kea, kaka and bellbirds living in the valley alongside thriving communities.
 - Site visit - Seed is being eco-sourced to create future planting options. We had a site visit in early May and it was heartening to see the natural regeneration in some fire damaged areas. The site was a great opportunity to discuss practical next steps and we all learnt something from the day.



Post workshop

- We've been busy since the workshop preparing a draft 5 year plan for discussion. Workstreams include:
- Planning - A baseline assessment of the area to help determine what to do and to enable future monitoring and evaluation
- Weed and pest management.
- Revegetation, seeding, seedlings and planting - includes trial plots, direct seeding, nursery planting. We are lucky to have Dr Nick Ledgard and Dr Clare Newell to guide this work.
- Keeping the community informed, engaged and excited about the future of the valley - Developing and sharing the story of this work is a high priority. A website is being developed. We are looking for professional input into the process. Please contact Anna Hill at admin@cragieburntrust.co.nz if you can help!
- Funding - A Give-A-Little page was set up in January and has received \$2910. This money is being used to build up our baseline understanding of the fire damaged area. We are also looking for immediate funding opportunities and are working on a number of grant applications. We would like to establish strategic relationships with long term funding partners.
- Governance - We have created a registered charitable trust. The trust can enter into contracts, open a bank account and employ staff. Anna Hill is the chair. The trust is a legal entity and is good enough for now but it will need to evolve to support the work. We have also established a Community Working Group as a committee of the trust and it is this group that is driving the direction of the work. Catherine Ross has agreed to chair the Working Group for 6 months.

Next community meeting - 11 June

The Community Working Group is meeting at the Darfield Library at 6.30pm, 11 June. The draft 5 year plan will be circulated to current committee members for discussion at the meeting. If you would like a copy please email admin@cragieburntrust.co.nz . Everyone is welcome.