

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:

4

Recovery Status:

Transition period ended 29th March 2017

Effective As At:

(Effective date and time of the report)

7 April 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, and 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 was effective for 28 days, which expired on 29 March 2017. The decision to introduce a transition period under the Act was 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

This week has been dominated by a series of meetings where opportunities for the community to raise questions on a variety of issues was given. Relevant agency representatives at the meetings were able to answer the majority of the questions raised.

A full summary of questions and answers is currently being finalised and will be uploaded to the Port Hills website: ccc.govt.nz/porthillfire

Key issue for the week has been monitoring and managing the extreme weather events. In general the fire damaged area has held up well, with no significant slips or rockfall. Engineers continue to monitor high risk locations.

Social Environment

Issues:

Community Recovery Meetings

- Feedback from the community meetings held the previous week are currently being analysed to enable us to respond to issues and concerns raised.
- Ongoing liaison with people who lost their homes or with special circumstances.
- We are continuing to collate the data collected at the community meetings to feed into the Recovery Plan.
- Individual meetings with those property owners requiring particular help and support are ongoing.

Natural Environment

Issues:

- Council contractors monitoring fire site over forecast heavy rain period
- Ongoing liaison with Conservation Volunteers
- Meeting with DOC and RATA on direct native seeding and potential of forest bonds
- Monitoring and assessment of geotechnical threats

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.
 - Worsleys Road fenced cordon in place on each side of Port Hills where the sealed road finishes.
 - Additional signage to restrict access to residents only to be located near 323 Worsleys Road.
 - Kennedy's Bush Road fenced cordon at each end restricting access to track, plan for the future opening of track or part of track to be established.

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, first meeting with the families held on 22nd March, continuing support provided.
- Community meetings held last week summary of questions, comments and answers to be uploaded onto Port Hills Fire website.
- 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 of green waste.
- Work continues to be undertaken to identify help and support for property owners to help with general clearing of sites, damage to fencing, gardens etc.
- Case manager lined up to deal with resource and building consents to support rebuild of properties.

Commercial / Business Properties

Christchurch Adventure Park

- Work continues to be undertaken by the Park operators and the land owner to assess extent of damage to Park area.
- Meeting held this week with Adventure Park representative to understand any further support needed.

McVicars Forestry

- Support continues to be provided, Company is currently undertaking survey of forest areas to establish extent of damage and begin to plan remedial activities. Initial estimate that in excess of 200 hectares of forest has been destroyed which will require clearing and replanting.

- Company currently considering options for long term replanting regime and expect some clearing of damaged areas around the Adventure Park to commence late April / early May, support through consenting processes underway.
- McVicars have made a request to keep Worsleys Track closed as they anticipate using part of this as the access and egress for logging vehicles.

Other Forestry Blocks

- Request from logging contractor has been received to harvest some of the damaged forest areas, council will work with the contractor to identify best possible solutions on access, truck movements etc and also check the situation with regard to any consents required.

Natural Hazards

- Rock fall hazard report completed for Early Valley, properties in CCC area not thought to be impacted.
- Further rock fall hazard assessments have identified some additional risks within Victoria Park above Dyers Pass Road, mitigation measures identified and remedial works are being planned.
- Investigations on the options for the management of sedimentation control within the 5 catchment areas continues.
- Severe weather this week has taken up resources to monitor and react to the rainfall events and close monitoring of high risk areas will continue.

Economic Environment

Issues:

- 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.
- One property lost its garage, which is believed not to be covered by a current insurance policy.
- Both the Christchurch Adventure Park and McVicars Forestry have insurance cover and continue to assess the total impact on their businesses, but as in the case of the residential properties, the insurance will not cover all losses.
- We continue to work through the key economic issues as they occur.
- Overall in the context of the Christchurch economy, the impact of the fires is envisaged to be relatively small.
- A review of the issues impacting on the Economic Environment are currently being documented.

Report Prepared By:	Next Recovery Report:
Terry Howes	14/04/2017 1600 hrs