



**Minutes of a Meeting of the
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
held in the Council Chambers and via Zoom, 15 Seymour Street, Blenheim
on WEDNESDAY, 15 JUNE 2022 commencing at 9.00 am.**

Present

Councillors G A Hope (Deputy in the Chair), D D Oddie (Deputy), J A Arbuckle, J D N Croad, B A Faulls, T P Sowman, Mayor J C Leggett and Mr E R Beech (Rural representative)

Also Present

Councillors C J Brooks and F D Maher

Also Present via Zoom

Cllrs N P Taylor and B G Dawson

In Attendance

Mr H R Versteegh (Environmental Science and Policy Group Manager) and Ms G Ferguson (Consents and Compliance Group Manager), Mike Porter (Democratic Services Manager/Zoom Management) and Nicole Chauval (Committee Secretary)

Apologies

Cllrs Croad/Faulls:

That the apology for non-attendance from Cllrs J L Andrews and M A Peters be noted.

Carried

Env-0622-346 Declaration of Interests

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Cllr Oddie declared a conflict of interest with Item 11 – New Zealand King Salmon Compliance Monitoring 2020/2021.

Env-0622-347 Resource Hearing Sub-Committee Decisions

Cllrs Arbuckle/Sowman:

That the Resource Hearing Sub-Committee Decision as contained within the report dated 16 February 2022 (U210437) be received and the recommendation adopted.

Carried

Env-0622-348 Resource Hearing Commissioner Decisions

Cllrs Arbuckle/Sowman:

That the Resource Hearing Commissioner Decisions as contained within the reports dated 9 February 2022 (am) (U200673), 9 February 2022 (pm) (U200816), 23 February 2022 (U210362) and 15 March 2022 (U200493) be received and the recommendations adopted.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Brett Cowan, and Rawinia Thomas, Ngāti Kurī, Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura Ltd, were present via Zoom for the following item.

Env-0622-349

Ngāti Kurī, Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura Led Biosecurity programme

C230-001-N02

Members noted that the purpose of the presentation was to provide the Committee with an update on the Jobs for Nature Predator Control Project being delivered by Ngāti Kurī in collaboration with the Marlborough District Council, Kaikōura District Council, Hurunui District Council, Environment Canterbury and the Department of Conservation. To highlight this report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 22122498).

On Behalf of Ngati Kuri Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura Rawinia Thomas passed on their ngā mihi nui to Alan Johnson, Mike Aviss and the Council's Communications Team for their help with supporting the engagement plan.

Members were advised that the project is a three year trapping and bird monitoring project along a large portion of the East Coast of the Ngāti Kurī takiwā. The area is in between the Awatere and Oaro rivers.

The project is aimed at restoring the balance to nature by initiating programmes that focus on invasive species that are causing unbalance to nature and impacting on its values.

To do this the group will set around 1500 traps. To date 1100 have been purpose built by project members.

The traps will be set along 130k of coastline. 40km of the coastline will have intensive trapping in hotspots for feral Cats, hedgehogs, mustelids, rats/mice. So far 700 traps have been sent in Marukaitatea section 1 and Tuteurutira Section 2. It was noted that section 2 is still to be completed due to seasonal/weather challenges.

In response to a query on why possums were not included in the target pest species, Brett advised that possums are located inland and the group is currently focusing on coastal areas. Possum traps are also a completely different design to what is required for the current pest targets. It is intended to tackle possums in the future.

Four trap checks have been completed with 250 predators caught to date.

In respect of bird monitoring project members have worked with ecologist/wildlife specialists to complete monitoring biodiversity hotspots. Training has been completed and are able to continue to carry out Coastal Surveys and Pre-Dawn Bird Monitoring with the next one beginning later in the year.

Raw data has been collected and have started to translate this into graphs, this will be ongoing as more bird monitoring is completed.

It was noted that monitoring of the banded dotterel had been undertaken over the breeding season which at its conclusion identified significant nest failures due nests/chicks being destroyed by vehicles on the beach.

Training has been undertaken in a number of areas and this will continue as the kaupapa continues to ensure all kaimahi have the skills, experience and qualifications to complete all tasks required. All kaimahi have been enrolled into a level 3 Pest Operations Certificate that will be completed by the end of the year.

Members were advised that Te Reo and Tikanga have been imbedded in the Kaupapa and weaved through daily activities and with many culturally significant sites and wāhi tapu along this coast tikanga is used for spiritual safety when conducting activities out in the field and following the whakaaro that all life is precious.

It was noted that work is being undertaken to engage with other JFN projects to plan work exchange visits to learn from each other's Kaupapa and build on relationships.

Members were advised that to celebrate the kaimahi achievements a graduation night will be held to acknowledge their success and the hard work they have put into the project. A hui will also be held to go over the annual report and project milestones.

**The Mayor/Clr Faults:
That the information be received.**

Carried

NB: The following Item 6 in the agenda was heard ahead of Item 5.

ATTENDANCE: Peter Davidson, Council's Environmental Scientist, Groundwater was present for the following item.

**Env-0622-350 2022 MDC Groundwater Quantity State of
the Environment (SoE) Report E345-007-001**

The purpose of the report was to present the annual groundwater quantity state of the environment report entitled: *2022 MDC Groundwater Quantity State of the Environment (SoE) Report* to the Committee. The report was available on Council's website for members' information. To highlight this report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 22122057).

Members were advised that the state and presence of trends varies significantly between aquifer systems reflecting differences in levels of consented abstraction.

It was reported that the western areas of the Wairau Aquifer are low relative to the Wairau River channel which is the main recharge source. Riverlands Aquifer levels are defined as low because they approach MEP sea-level thresholds each summer due to high consented demand. Benmorven Aquifer levels have not recovered to the same extent as other Southern Valley Aquifer from high demand in the 1990s and its current state is low.

In contrast, levels of the Taylor River Fan Aquifer and most deep Southern Valleys Aquifers are high due to the Southern Valleys Irrigation Scheme (SVIS) reducing demand on local groundwater with their state classified as high. The state of all other aquifers systems monitoring by MDC as part of the SoE monitoring programme are rated normal.

It was reported that in terms of aquifer trends, the decline in Wairau Aquifer levels continues across all FMU sectors but is affecting inland areas more than coastal areas. The trend is mimicked in the groundwater fed springs with a significant decline in Spring Creek flow since gauging began in 1996.

Members were advised that the reasons for low Wairau Aquifer levels in the Recharge Sector are more complex with multiple drivers which are currently being investigated by the national Gravel Bed Rivers (GBR) project in conjunction with MDC hydrology staff.

Spring Creek flow at the Motorcamp recorder site has declined significantly since regular gauging started in 1996, mimicking the trend in the associated groundwater levels of the Wairau Aquifer. It was noted that if the trend continues the belt of mid plains groundwater fed springs are predicted to recede as far east as the CBD area of Blenheim by about the year 2100.

Rarangi Shallow Aquifer (RSA) levels are showing a statistically significant increasing trend, but at a higher rate than sea-level rise, implying impeded aquifer drainage processes or higher recharge rates are responsible.

Coastal Riverlands Aquifer levels are declining due to high consented demand and decreasing recharge from the Wairau River. The largest decreasing rate of groundwater level is inland where most abstraction occurs with minor falls closer to the coastal saltwater boundary.

It was noted that the Riverlands Aquifer levels are approaching MEP cut-off elevations in most summer seasons and the aquifer state was rated low. While unexercised consented demand exists, any increase in actual demand is expected to be unsustainable, especially near the coast.

The Riverlands Aquifer was the only FMU where verified, summed actual groundwater use was available in the preparation of this SoE report for comparing with groundwater level change. It was noted that to allow for consents that are unmetered, or the data is not available, summed actual use was increased by a nominal 20%.

Cirs Oddie/Faulls
That the report be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Peter Davidson, Council's Groundwater Scientist, Val Wadsworth, Council's Environmental Scientist – Hydrology, and Scott Wilson, Lincoln Agritech were present for the following item.

Env-0622-351 2022 Progress Update on Gravel Bed Rivers (GBR) Project Research Findings E345-007-001

Members noted that the purpose of the report was to provide an update to the Committee on research results from the national Gravel Bed Rivers project investigating the hydraulic connection between braided gravel rivers and alluvial aquifers.

Council's Environmental Scientist – Hyrdrology Val Wadsworth and Scott Wilson, from Lincoln Agritech spoke to the report. A powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 22122064).

Members were advised that the prime reasons for the ongoing decline in Wairau Aquifer well levels is less Wairau River water available for recharge and a reduction in the capacity of the natural pathways to move water from the river into the aquifer. This is compounded by demand in some drier seasons.

It was noted that these are the only influences that have not become static over time and explain the ongoing, unidirectional declining trend in Wairau Aquifer levels observed since 1974 at the MDC Condors monitoring well.

It was reported that having established a conceptual model of how the river-groundwater system work, the river-groundwater system will be modelled more accurately than previously. A model will be used to test the sensitivity of the river-groundwater water balance to riverbed elevation, scouring, and floodway width. The results will be used as a basis for a cost-benefit analysis to see how changes to current river management would impact the local economy.

Members were advised that the decline in Wairau Aquifer levels is consistent with widespread deepening of wells over the past 35 years at least. Deepening wells improves individuals access to groundwater but will not prevent aquifer fed springs from drying up as they rely on shallow groundwater breaking the surface for their existence.

The next steps identified were to undertake a workshop on specific river management scenarios with Council.

In the Chambers' Public Gallery Budyong Hill and two other members of the Climate Karanga Marlborough group were present. They posed two questions which were answered by Gina Ferguson, Council's Consents and Compliance Group Manager.

Cirs Oddie/Faulls:

- 1. That the report be received.**
- 2. That the river-groundwater model be further developed and tested to enable and inform future water management.**

Carried

**Env-0622-352 Water Allocation Status – Wairau Aquifer
FMU, Riverlands FMU and Wairau River FMU
R450-018-04**

It was reported that the allocation status of these water resources has changed from over-allocated (Wairau Aquifer and Riverlands FMU's) or fully allocated (Wairau River FMU A Class) to under- allocated. This means that water from these resources is now available for the public to apply for.

It was noted that once over-allocation in an FMU is resolved, applications for water takes from these FMU's will be accepted with applications processed on a first in first served basis. Allocated volumes are not static and on any day the allocated volume changes with surrender, expiries, and granted water take permits.

It was noted that to assist applicants Council is developing a webpage to display FMU allocation status at the time of publishing, with regular updates. As a result of applications in processing, expiries and surrenders FMU allocation status will frequently change.

Clrs Hope/Croad:
That the information be received.

ATTENDANCE: Steffi Henkel, Environmental Scientist, Water Quality, was present for the following item.

Env-0622-353 **Recreational Water Quality Report**
2021-2022 E370-007-001

Members were advised that the recreational water quality at eight beaches and eight river swimming spots was monitored during the summer months of 2021/2022. Weekly samples were analysed for indicator bacteria concentrations to assess the health risk to swimmers.

Members were advised that although the Rai River at Rai Falls often had the highest bacteria levels of the sites monitored, an assessment of changes over the last 10 years showed significant reductions in bacteria concentrations. The Te Hoiere Catchment Restoration Project aims to improve water quality further.

Trend analysis also showed a significant reduction in bacteria concentrations in the Taylor River at Riverside, which had been the site with the poorest recreational water quality in the past. The improvements are the results of repairs to sewerage infrastructure damaged by earthquakes.

For Ngakuta Bay and the Waihopai River at Craiglochart #2, comparison with earlier years showed notable increases in bacteria concentrations. Monitoring of additional sites as well as investigation by the compliance department (for Ngakuta Bay) will allow sources of contamination to be identified. Once sources are known targeted actions to improve water quality will be possible.

It was reported that sites will be monitored again in the next summer season (2022/23) with inclusion of Okiwi Bay and Mistletoe Bay, which could not be monitored this season due to access restrictions as a result of road slips.

Cirs Hope/Oddie:
That the report be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Clr Dawson withdrew from the meeting at 11.22 am.

ATTENDANCE: The meeting adjourned at 11.22 am and resumed at 11.35 am.

ATTENDANCE: Clr Taylor withdrew from the meeting at 11.51 am during the following item.

ATTENDANCE: Jono Underwood, Council's Biosecurity Manager, John Hellstrom, Marlborough Sounds Restoration Trust, Ket Bradshaw, South Marlborough Landscape Restoration Trust were present for the following item.

Env-0622-354 Update – Community-Led Biosecurity Programmes C230-001-M07, E315-003-023-03

The purpose of the report was to provide the Committee with an update on the work being delivered by two active community trusts undertaking community-led biosecurity programmes, Marlborough Sounds Restoration Trust (MSRT) and the South Marlborough Landscape Restoration Trust (SMLRT). To highlight these reports two powerpoint presentations were shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. MSRT 22122051 and SMLRT 22122048).

Mr Hellstrom spoke to the presentation and noted that the MSRT was established in 2003. The group's initial project was wilding pine control in Inner Queen Charlotte Sound, Marlborough District Council contributed to the initial project which facilitated lotteries funding also. There was considerable success right from the beginning and the Trust remains strong and well support.

It was reported that in addition to Council funding Trust has received financial contributions from a number of funding agencies, landowners, local business, boating clubs and public donations totalling more than \$3M over the last 14 years.

There continues to be strong community support and clear outcomes with an estimated 60% of the job done. It was noted that the future challenge is in funding maintenance this is to protect areas from the regeneration.

It was noted that in 2022 the MSRT started to facilitate community pest control programmes and in 2022 first major ungulate control ie; deer, goats commenced.

Ket Bradshaw representing the South Marlborough Landscape Restoration Trust also provided a presentation noting their group was established to help stop the invasion of wilding pines and to protect the iconic South Marlborough hill and high country landscapes.

The Trust covers over 870,000 ha from the Wairau River and the foothills of Blenheim to the Clarence/Waiau-toa and Molesworth/Rangitahi. There are over 40 contorta sites in the Awatere Ferny Gair Blackbirch areas.

It was reported that in January DOC funded the Trust's contorta aerial boom spray trial with volunteers camped in the Lost and undertaking ground control in December 2021. The Rātā Foundation has granted the Trust \$450,000 to continue this work along the Raglan Range.

Ms Bradshaw noted that the Trust's efforts benefit Marlborough by restoring natural landscapes and protecting biodiversity, South Marlborough rivers and productive and cultural landscapes. This also reduces the risk and impact of wild fires.

Cirs Croad/Oddie:
That the information be received.

Carried

**Env-0622-355 Significant Marine Site Survey Number 7
and the Expert Panel Review (2020-2021)
E325-002-004-01**

Clr Hope noted that Oliver Wade, Council's Environmental Scientist – Coastal Role, was unable to attend the meeting today to present an update on monitoring of marine ecology in the Marlborough Sounds.

Members agreed to accept the report and noted that Mr Wade will reschedule the presentation to a future Environment Committee meeting.

Cirs Hope/Oddie:
That the information be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Clr Oddie declared a conflict of interest and withdrew for the following item.

**Env-0622-356 New Zealand King Salmon Compliance
Monitoring 2020/2021 U140294, U140295, U140296,
U160675, U150081, U040217, U040412, U021247, MFL456**

Members noted that the purpose of the report was to provide an overview of the compliance levels achieved by the New Zealand King Salmon (NZKS) Marine Farms in the Marlborough Sounds following monitoring conducted by Cawthron Institute and SLR in 2020/2021. To highlight this report a powerpoint presentation was shown (presentation filed in CM Record No. 22122034).

Ms Ferguson noted that nine salmon farms were monitored and were operating during the 2020/21 season, four of the farms were on low flow sites and five on high flow sites. All nine farms have resource consents for their operations, but not all have conditions which require monitoring. NZKS voluntarily monitor resource consents without monitoring conditions.

Members were advised that the overall compliance assessment of all nine farms generated three non-compliant and two technically non-compliant marine farms. These assessments were reviewed by Council's Compliance QA Peer Panel where formal warnings were recommended for all three marine farms which had been assessed as non-compliant.

It was reported that the formal warning has been issued to the New Zealand King Salmon Company and they are working to resolve these matters by reviewing some of their practices.

NZKS have advised that they intend to make application to review their resource consent conditions.

Members were advised that Council will continue to monitor the relevant, applicable conditions and work with New Zealand King Salmon, while taking appropriate levels of enforcement action in response to non-compliance and to mitigate adverse effects.

Cirs Hope/Croad:
That the information be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Sue Bulfield-Johnston, Council's Administrator and Hearing facilitator, Advocacy and Practice Integration, was present for the following item.

Env-0622-357

Resource Consent Hearings Update

R450-004-22

The report to the Committee provided a rolling summary of hearings scheduled and completed for applications for resource consent.

It was noted that 13 hearings have been completed in the year commencing 1 July 2021. Decisions have been issued for all but one of the applications, the remaining decision is pending. A table listing the hearings was attached to the agenda item for members' information.

One hearing has been set down in June and this was detailed in the agenda.

Cls Oddie/Arbuckle:
That the report be received.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Clrs Arbuckle and Oddie declared a conflict of interest in the following three items and withdrew and did not take part in the discussion.

ATTENDANCE: Louise Walker, Council's Strategic Planner was present for the following three items.

Env-0622-358

Variation 2 to the Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan – Ecologically Significant Marine Sites

M100-11-07

Following a brief discussion members agreed to deal with the three variation reports as one.

Ms Walker noted that the reports seek approval to initiate three variations to the Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan. The three variations were Ecologically Significant Marine Sites for new sites and amendments to existing sites; the inclusion of Meretoto/Ships Cove and the Island of Motuara as a Heritage Resource listing and rezoning of sites due to the road stopping process.

Members were advised that for the three variations the next steps will be drafting a Section 32 report which will determine the most appropriate method to achieve the purpose of the RMA for each variation. Engagement and consultation will be undertaken and a final form of the variation will be provided to the Planning, Finance & Community Committee for approval on the content and to commence the next phase which is the Schedule 1 process.

Cls Croad/Fauls:

That Council approve the preparation and consultation on a variation to the ESMS Overlay Maps in Volume 4 and Appendix 27 in Volume 3 of the PMEP, as follows –

- a) **Adjustments to the spatial boundaries of approximately 19 ecologically significant marine sites currently identified in the PMEP;**
- b) **The inclusion of approximately 26 new ecologically significant marine sites and 45 new sub sites;**
- c) **Category changes to 8 ecologically significant marine sites currently identified in the PMEP;**
- d) **Consideration of the inclusion of new sites and amendments to existing sites identified in the 2020-2021 survey and confirmed by the Expert Panel, if they have progressed fully through the ordinary ESMS process.**

Carried

Env-0622-359

**Variation 3 to the Proposed Marlborough
Environment Plan – Meretoto/Ship Cove
Heritage Resource**

M100-11-07

Members noted the report and the recommendation was put.

Cllrs Hope/Sowman:

That Council approve the preparation and consultation on a variation to the proposed Marlborough Environment Plan seeking the inclusion of Meretoto/Ship Cove and the Island of Motuara as a heritage resource.

Carried

ATTENDANCE: Cllr Brooks withdrew from the meeting at 12.34 pm during the following item.

Env-0622-360

**Variation 4 to the Proposed Marlborough
Environment Plan – Road stopping rezoning
of land**

M100-11-11

Members noted the report and the recommendation was put.

Cllrs Sowman/Croad:

That Council approve the preparation and consultation on a variation to the proposed Marlborough Environment Plan proposing the zoning of land where road stopping has left it without a regulatory framework to manage activities at the sites.

Carried

Env-0622-361

Information Package

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Ross Beech sought clarification on whether the 'Hawthorn' noted in the presentation to the Marlborough Landscape Group is the same species or a subspecies of Hawthorn which is a significant pest and distributed widely through South Valleys and much of the Awatere. Staff to provide a response to Mr Beech.

Cllr Maher noted image 5 on page 9 is of his family's property as they are involved in the wetland management programme.

Cllr Croad/Mr R Beech:

That the Regulatory Department Information Package dated 15 June 2022 be received and noted.

Carried

The meeting closed at 12.38 pm.

Record No: 22122590