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# WAIPA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL

## MINUTES 16 AUGUST 2007

*Minutes of a meeting of the Waipa Biodiversity Council held in Committee Room 2, Waipa District Council Offices, 101 Bank Street, Te Awamutu on 18 August 2007 commencing at 10.00am.*

### **1 PRESENT**

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Roy Dench (Chairperson)

Alan Livingston – until 12.28pm, Alan Hall, Laurie Hoverd, Pieter van Dongen, David Findlay – from 10.15m, Hazel Barnes – from 10.13am, Kevin Christie – from 10.12am.

#### **In Attendance**

Project Manager Heritage Development & Reserves Planning (T Roxburgh), Secretary (C Plowright)

**Public** – Nil

### **2 APOLOGIES**

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#### **RESOLVED**

*That apologies for absence be received from Ted Tauroa, Dr Bruce Burns, Cr Diane Sharpe, Martin Watson and Bill Garland and for lateness from Cr Hazel Barnes and Kevin Christie.*

L Hoverd/P van Dongen

### **3 LATE ITEMS**

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Nil

### **4 CONFIRMATION OF ORDER OF MEETING**

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#### **RESOLVED**

*That the order of the meeting be confirmed.*

P van Dongen/A Hall

### **5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

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**Minutes of meeting held on 21 June 2007 were included in the agenda.**

#### **RESOLVED**

*That the minutes of the meeting of the Waipa Biodiversity Council held on 21 June 2007 be received.*

R Dench/A Hall

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### Matters Arising -

#### 5.1 River Walkways and Conservation Corridors

Members were reminded that, at the last meeting, a map had been provided showing all Waipa administered land, including river margins, and they had been asked to bring any comments back to the next meeting.

The Chairperson suggested that if a piece of Council administered land lies adjacent to DOC land it might be amalgamated into the DOC land if it is of no use to Council but Mr Roxburgh said it would be more likely that DOC would seek to offload some of its smaller sites onto Council. He said DOC prefers to concentrate on sites of national/regional significance with smaller sites being administered by local authorities. Alan Livingston said it would provide more effective management for sites to be administered by one organisation rather than a shared arrangement, such as in the case of Kakepuku.

Alan Livingston said it could be useful to identify historic sites on the map so they can be considered along with possibility of walkways to link various pieces of Council administered land. He said the Biodiversity Council could also identify areas that might warrant classification as "Special Landscape Areas" through the District Plan review process. He said Rangioawhia Ridge, State Highway 3 (towards Ohaupo) and Paterangi Ridge might be worthy candidates because of their aesthetic heritage. Alan Hall said the areas of the District considered to be most at risk over the next 20 years should be given priority. It was explained that the existing Special Landscape Areas are identified on the District Plan maps.

Hazel Barnes asked if Council controls the planting of trees along the State Highway 3 viewing corridor. Mr Roxburgh said it might be worth asking Council's planning staff to remind landowners about this requirement.

Laurie Hoverd said, if possible, members should try to read through the existing District Plan as it would provide them with background information and would be good preparation for having an input it to the District Plan review process.

Mr Roxburgh suggested that the issue of landscape protection could be added to the list of potential projects for the Biodiversity Council.

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### 5.2 Exhibition – Horahora Power Station

Alan Hall said he has spoken with the Waipa Heritage Council about the idea of holding a local exhibition of this art work, as mentioned by Ted Tauroa at the last Biodiversity Council meeting, and they are very interested. However, it is a very sophisticated display and showing it locally would depend on whether there is a venue capable of displaying it. He said it is likely the exhibition will be overseas for a while yet and he will raise the issue again at the next meeting.

### 5.3 Guidelines for Managing Natural Features on Steep Land

Referring to the discussion at the previous meeting, the Chairperson drew members' attention to a new publication "Farming with Native Trees" which promotes areas that are hard to farm being planted in natives.

### 5.4 Annual Projects Programme 2007/08

With respect to the suggestion, made at the last meeting, that one of the Biodiversity Council's objectives should be to identify and protect all significant bush and wetland areas the Chairperson said it would be useful to have an aerial view of Waipa District showing those areas with protected and non-protected sites overlaid. Alan Livingston said it would also be useful if sites considered worthy of protection could also be identified on the map. Mr Roxburgh said he would arrange for members to receive maps with that information identified.

## 6 MEMBERS REPORTS

### 6.1 Councillor Hazel Barnes

Hazel provided an update on the project to restore the old Police House in Kihikihi and the local community's desire to recognise Kihikihi as a heritage precinct.

### 6.2 Mayor Alan Livingston

No report.

### 6.3 Laurie Hoverd

Laurie spoke about the work of the Kakepuku Conservation Society and how it has become a valuable education resource for school children.

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### 6.4 Ted Tauroa

No report.

### 6.5 Bill Garland

On behalf of Bill Garland, David said the pest proof fence around Maungatautari is blending into the surrounding land and quickly being enclosed by bush. He spoke about the effect recent bad weather has had on the fence and the research work identifying the speed at which predators would gain access through breaches in the fence.

### 6.6 David Findlay

David said the issue of bush protection had come up at a recent Te Miro field day and he asked how to go about advising landowners on the various methods of protection. Mr Roxburgh said there are a range of mechanisms for securing land and he offered to discuss them with the landowners in question. He said Te Miro is of particular interest as a future conservation corridor, linking larger areas of bush with smaller remnants, and drawing bird life into Cambridge. The Chairperson said there are other organisations that can also provide advice on the protection of bush and to let him know if there are queries from landowners in other parts of the District.

### 6.7 Martin Watson

No report.

### 6.8 Pieter van Dongen

Pieter said the adverse possession claim for Lake Mangahia is proceeding very slowly. He mentioned two recent newspaper articles that mentioned the paucity of birdlife in the Waikato and Laurie Hoverd explained how that statement had eventuated.

### 6.9 Roy Dench

The Chairperson asked how Council determines whether an area of wetland is classed as "significant". Mr Roxburgh said a definition is provided in the Regional Policy Statement together with a range of criteria. He said once an area goes below 10% of what was originally wetland, it is classed as significant, and because Waipa's wetland area represents 0.2% of what was originally there it is all deemed to be significant.

Mr Roxburgh said retaining natural features for ecological purposes, and land use activities, is being encouraged.

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### 6.10 Alan Hall

Alan said a report on the development of the wider Matakītaki Pa area is expected September/October 2007 and it would be of interest to the Biodiversity Council because there is the potential for wetland development there.

Referring to the recent field trip to Lake Ngaroto, Alan said it is a classic example of where heritage and biodiversity issues come together and there is a strong case for interpretive material about heritage and biodiversity issues in the general area. The Chairperson said the area that was subject to an archaeological investigation, and shows the various soil layers, would be an ideal site for some interpretation. Mr Roxburgh said that suggestion has already been made to Nga Iwi Toopu o Waipa and they are very supportive of it. Alan said he would be raising the issue with the Waipa Heritage Council.

Alan said it would be better if the area of reserve land surrounding one of the island pa, currently being grazed, was planted with species suitable to that environment. Mr Roxburgh said the Management Plan for Lake Ngaroto is currently being rewritten and those suggestions will be included in it.

### 7.11 Dr Bruce Burns

No report.

### 7.12 Kevin Christie

Kevin spoke about the significant pest control programme that happened on Mount Pirongia a few weeks' ago. Over one and a half days 17,500 ha was treated and it is estimated 25,000 to 30,000 possums were killed as a result. It is anticipated that this will have an effect on possum numbers for five to six years.

Kevin tabled some information on the Halo Project which is aiming to bring more native birds back into urban areas. He said Old Mountain Road has been proposed as one of the key sites for a pilot study and Environment Waikato will be targeting that area for possum and rat control. Mayor Livingston said Environment Waikato had applied for funding for the project during Council's Annual Plan process but the request had been declined by Council because it is already heavily committed with other environmental issues.

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### RESOLVED

*That the Waipa Biodiversity Council recommend to Waipa District Council that it gives support (not necessarily financial) to the Halo Project in principle.*

R Dench/D Findlay

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## 7 WAIPA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL – OFFICER’S REPORT

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**Report of Project Manger – Heritage Development and Reserves Planning dated 6 August 2007 was included in the agenda.**

### RESOLVED

*That the officer’s report dated 6 August 2007 be received.*

A Livingston/H Barnes

Mr Roxburgh said it would be beneficial to members to visit some of the sites being discussed and it is suggested that future meetings incorporate a site visit on the same day. Some possible locations were suggested and members were encouraged to put forward other sites that can be added to the list. Laurie Hoverd said workshops are often held by other organisations about work in those areas and it might be appropriate for members to attend to gain a better understanding of those sites.

A list of proposed projects for the Biodiversity Council to consider was included in the agenda and Mr Roxburgh suggested that members focus on projects that would obtain the best outcome in the time available. He said maintaining the District’s landscapes and more in-depth planning for sites like Rangioawhia could be added to the list as a result of discussion earlier in the meeting. He suggested that members prioritise the list and pick out one or two projects that they can initiate and see through to completion.

Alan Livingston said that, rather than having a Waipa Biodiversity Trail, it would be better if one comprehensive trail and booklet was developed to cover all aspects of heritage (built, cultural, and environmental). This would provide a complete travel package and explain what can be viewed and enjoyed in Waipa District.

It was suggested that projects a) – d) and h) on the list are “work in progress” and of a more general nature whereas the others are quite specific and would be good projects for the Biodiversity Council to get behind.

Mr Roxburgh provided a brief verbal summary of what each of the suggested projects would involve.

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It was agreed that the restoration of Yarndley's Bush should be a priority project. It has become neglected recently and requires management and a greater profile. With a recent change in ownership of the adjoining land it was felt it was a good time to tackle this project.

With respect to the "preserving landscapes" project, Mr Roxburgh said Biodiversity Council members could advise Council about specific sites that might be worthy of inclusion in the new District Plan as Special Landscape Areas. As the review will take some time members can give this some thought and provide some recommendations to Council within the next year.

Referring to project g), Mr Roxburgh said Biodiversity Council members could take the opportunity to be proactive and talk to landowners about the Waipa section of the Te Araroa Trail to explain the advantages. He said project h) "Landowner attitudes to conserving natural heritage" could be undertaken through field days and by members speaking to landowners about the how to protect natural heritage. Face-to-face approaches could then be followed up with a pamphlet explaining the various options available. The suggestion of a "farm field day" was also felt to have some merit in explaining to landowners the benefits of indigenous and exotic forests working together (project b).

With respect to project g), Alan Livingston said Council has been proactive in identifying and acquiring land from Nukuhau pa through to Mystery Creek and there is an opportunity for a walkway to be established. He said it would be a good project for the Biodiversity Council and it was likely to receive support from Council.

As a result of discussion, Mr Roxburgh was asked to investigate the issues relating to the restoration of Yarndley's Bush and the Mystery Creek walkway and report back to the next Biodiversity Council meeting. Members can then make an informed decision about whether to recommend those two projects to Council for consideration. It was suggested that the next meeting could start with a field trip to Yarndley's Bush – this will be confirmed closer to the meeting.

## **8 GENERAL BUSINESS**

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### **8.1 Biodiversity Projects**

The Chairperson said he had organised the field trip around Lake Ngaroto earlier in the week because he is concerned that the invasive weeds around the Lake are causing the project to go back.

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### **RESOLVED**

*That the Chairperson writes to Waipa District Council, reporting on the recent field trip to Lake Ngaroto, bringing Council's attention to the invasive weed problem there and identifying the specific locations where it needs to be addressed.*

K Christie/P van Dongen

Alan Hall said the Waipa Heritage Council has a "resolutions requiring action" schedule that it reviews each meeting and it was agreed to set one up for the Biodiversity Council.

### **8.2 Peat Lakes Reserves Management Plan**

Mr Roxburgh said Council is preparing a draft Management Plan for the land Council administers around Peat Lakes. He said the draft Plan proposes a fundamental change to land use activities around the lakes because, without change, the lakes are going to deteriorate. He said the key issue is to establish buffers of 50m – 200m around the lakes to slow down the settlement process and this may not be acceptable for some landowners. There are also restrictions being proposed about the use of fertilizers around the lake margins. He asked Biodiversity Council members if they have a view on the best way of approaching these issues with landowners.

Pieter van Dongen said Council should explain the situation to the landowners, because some of them may not know what would be involved, and they may wish to retire some land. There are approximately 20 landowners who would be affected and Pieter said he would be happy to speak to them once he has been provided with information on the economic impacts of the proposal.

### **8.3 Meeting Programme**

Already discussed earlier in the meeting.

### **8.4 Heritage Newsletter**

A copy of the heritage newsletter was tabled. Mr Roxburgh asked for feedback on whether the content of the newsletter has been pitched correctly. It has been suggested that the logo used in the newsletter could be adopted for the Heritage and Biodiversity Councils for use on their letterhead, etc. 10,000 copies of the newsletter have been printed, with 4,500 going to rural properties and the rest shared amongst urban centres.

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A draft of the Biodiversity Council's information booklet was also tabled. A purpose still needs to be included but it provided an idea of how the final booklet will look.

### **9 ITEMS FOR NEXT WAIPA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING**

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Items for the next meeting to be provided to the secretary 14 days before each meeting. This can be done by writing to Waipa District Council (attention Cathy Plowright) or phoning her on 07 872 0030 extension 7511 or emailing her on [cplo@waipadc.govt.nz](mailto:cplo@waipadc.govt.nz)

### **10 NEXT MEETING**

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The next meeting of the Waipa Biodiversity Council will be held on Thursday 18 October 2007 in the Committee Room, Cambridge Service Centre, 23 Wilson Street, Cambridge commencing at 10.00am.

Meeting closed 1.07pm.