
WAIPA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL

MINUTES 19 MARCH 2009

1 PRESENT

Roy Dench – Chairperson

Waipa District Councillor, Bruce Thomas

His Worship the Mayor Alan Livingston - Te Pahu and Karamu District

Alan Hall – Pirongia Historic Visitor Centre/Waipā Heritage Council representative

David Findlay – Whitehall and Te Miro District

Bill Garland – Rotorangi and Karapiro District

Pieter van Dongen - Koromatua and Rukuhia District

Martin Watson – Kaipaki and Cambridge District

Others

Rex Webby – QE II representative

In attendance

Project Manager – Heritage Development & Reserves Planning, T Roxburgh, Committee Secretary, S King.

2 APOLOGIES

AGREED

The apologies for non attendance from J Gumbley, T Tauroa, H Barnes and the apology for early departure from M Watson be received.

3 LATE ITEMS

There were no late items.

4 CONFIRMATION OF ORDER OF MEETING

AGREED

That the order of the meeting be confirmed.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Minutes of meeting held on 16 October 2008 was included in the agenda.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Waipa Biodiversity Council held on 16 October 2008, be received.

Garland / Hall

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Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6 WAIPA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL - OFFICER'S REPORT

6.1 Mangauika Stream, Pirongia

Project Manager – Heritage Development & Reserves Planning outlined the background to the chemical spill and the subsequent reduction in fines on the understanding that funds would be provided to improve the stream.

He said that parts of the stream have been fenced off and planted and that the current project is the installation of a fish pass over the Council road ford. He also said that a by-product of the project is the consideration that staff now give to the environmental consequences of exceeding resource consent limits.

6.2 Peat Lakes

6.2.1 Lake Serpentine (Rotopiko)

He said that Council is seeking to acquire land to increase the buffers around North Lake noting that currently an agreement with one landowner is confirmed and another in progress. He then said that DOC were removing willows around the lake and that a range of agencies were working together on the one site.

6.2.2 Lake Rotomanuka

He said current access to the lake is via a paper road opposite Ryburn's Road and this is not ideal. There is an opportunity to create an alternative access off Ranby Road and sell the paper road.

6.2.3 Lake Mangakaware

The Project Manager said that the willows around the lake margin were sprayed using the same chemical as used at Lake Mangahia. Opportunities to raise the lake level to increase habitat value, using the weir positioned in the lake approximately 18 months ago. He said that this sets the minimum lake level, but could be altered to raise the lake further.

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In response to a question, he said that land would progressively be retired around the lake to increase the buffer. He noted that all Waipa peat lakes have been drained to some extent in the past as this was seen as a permitted activity as little as 5 years ago.

He further said that the Drainage Act written in 1908 was to facilitate drainage. While it included some criteria around what could be accomplished, it allowed the removal of vegetation from existing drains to facilitate the flow of water. He said that the cleaning of vegetation often resulting in spoil being removed and ultimately lowering of the water levels.

He commented on the study of European lakes by a Danish professor Eric Jepperson, where in Denmark the Government tended not to penalise smaller family owned farming operations or hold them accountable for environmental impacts, however this changed when farmed became viewed as a corporate business.

B Garland commented on the similarities of peat lakes and the South Island tussock lands where a generation were paid to clear the land. Mayor Livingston echoed the sentiment, providing the example of the early 1980's where areas of bush that contain kiwi were developed. This would not be contemplated by landowners today.

A Hall spoke on the archaeological significance of the lake and said that the three swamp pa have been well investigated and are considered very early island pa sites in the area. He also said that there remain artefacts in the lake that have not been recovered. Retaining an appropriate water level and acidic water is importance in preserving these artefacts.

6.2.4 Lake Ngaroto

The Project Manager said that the modelling of the lake by the University of Waikato provided indicators to effect change. He said that opportunities exist within the lake itself as control of fish species that graze zoo plankton would increase the grazing pressure on algae and potentially reduce the incidence blooms. He said that this "bio-manipulation" could improve water quality and provide protection to current water users such as sailing and rowing.

He also said that Fonterra are interested in becoming involved and that a land care group exists as well.

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6.3 Environmental Protection Lot (EPL) Provisions

The Project Manager said that staff interpretation of the Council Policy has been incorrect, in that EPL's cannot be used to recognise existing covenanted areas and that wrong information has been provided to the public.

Members discussed the motivation behind a landowners decision to covenant and the process for changing the Policy. The Project Manager said that Waipa does not have many natural areas and it is important to protect the areas that remain.

He also said that transferable development right applications come in to Council in small but steady numbers, however the growth strategy may seek growth to be limited to certain nodes.

RESOLVED

That the information be received.

Hall / Garland

7 MEMBERS REPORTS

This item enables members to bring up issues in relation to the organisation/district they represent on the Biodiversity Council.

7.1 Councillor Bruce Thomas

Councillor Thomas had nothing of interest to report.

7.2 Mayor Alan Livingston

Mayor Livingston commented on the biodiversity field day at Te Pahu and raised the question of how the Biodiversity Council would follow up with the landowners. He queried to what extent support and guidance should be provided to them.

Members considered the matter, noting that other agencies have good information available, but thought that direct personal contact could be provided if attendees indicated this on a registration sheet at a field day.

The Project Manager said that a new department in Council was being created with a marketing and promotions focus which could be helpful in creating a brochure of frequently asked questions and associated answers. Members indicated that a list of appropriate contact numbers could be included in the brochure.

R Webby suggested that information on the internet would allow landowners to follow up those aspects that are of interest to them and that links could be provided to other agencies.

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Action Point:

Project Manager to follow up with Marketing department once established.

7.3 Laurie Hoverd

L Hoverd was not present at the meeting.

7.4 Ted Tauroa

T Tauroa was not present at the meeting.

7.5 Bill Garland

B Garland spoke about the difficulties encountered by landowners throughout the North Island and said that it is very important that when councils offer incentives to covenantors that the incentives do not become negatives. He said that feeling appreciated and that what the landowner is doing is important are crucial.

He said that falcons have been observed in the area and that native birds are moving between the small patches of bush. He noted the importance of corridors in encouraging wildlife to move throughout the District.

7.6 David Findlay

D Findlay said that it was pleasing to see the QE II representative attending the meeting and commented briefly on the Wetlands Tour held earlier this year.

7.7 Martin Watson

M Watson said that there was nothing to report.

7.8 Pieter van Dongen

Mr van Dongen spoke on the helicopter spraying undertaken in January at Lake Mangahia, targeting willows. NIWA were monitoring the effectiveness of the spray and any damage to the under storey. He hoped, subject to Environment Waikato funding, that a scrub cutting gang would attend to willows in the areas not sprayed.

He said that the University of Waikato had made three trips on the lake to undertake a comprehensive survey which showed that gold fish but not koi carp were present. He also said that the Honda Tree Trust grant had been approved and the first portion of setback fencing around the lake frontage would be planted in May/June. He noted that a tractor attachment that punches holes for planting would be used. This is similar to that used during the Lake Cameron Reserve planting.

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7.9 Roy Dench

R Dench commented briefly on a report from the field trip in November 2007 and said that it would be provided to members.

Action Point:

Committee Secretary to send a copy of the report to members.

7.10 Alan Hall

A Hall queried if access at Lake Mangakaware had been investigated and the Project Manager said that on change at present however the management plan completed in 2008 included an review of access issues.

7.11 Kevin Christie

K Christie was not present at the meeting.

8 CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Inwards Correspondence

8.1.1 Shaping Waipa Open Days

A letter was received from Waipa District Council to outline the consultation period for the draft 10-Year Plan and Waipa 2050, including two open days to be held in March.

8.1.2 Shaping Waipa Public Open Days

A flyer was received from Waipa District Council inviting members to attend the open days.

RESOVLED

That the inwards correspondence be received.

Watson / van Dongen

9 GENERAL BUSINESS

9.1 Biodiversity Projects – Yarndley’s Bush

The Project Manager commented on farm developments by the adjoining landowner and urged members, identified as having an interest, to progress the opportunities this project will offer the Biodiversity Council in terms of “profile” and co-ordinating a Land care Group to help plant behind the new fence around the stand.

9.2 Public Open Days

He said that the Biodiversity Council needs to give thought to making a submission on Waipa 2050, the 10-year Plan, Future Proof and the Environment Waikato’s Regional Policy Statement discussion document.

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Action Point:

Project Manager to provide information on the heritage aspects and arrange a meeting to discuss and make submissions.

9.3 Incentives for Landowners to Conserve Heritage Sites & Features of their Land

The Project Manager advised members of the student whom, through a Bayer Boost scholarship, investigated what inducements Council needed to introduce to encourage landowners to protect heritage sites and features on their land. He said that these findings will filter into the District Plan review and that perceived ownership of the land was indicated as of paramount importance to the landowner.

Action Point:

Committee Secretary to send copies of the report to members for comment and feedback.

9.4 Biodiversity Open Days

Members discussed possible locations for the next field day and it was decided that the next field day would be located in Wharepapa with a later field day to be held on a lifestyle block towards Hamilton.

Action Point:

Project Manager to source a location for the next field day.

10 ITEMS FOR NEXT WAIPA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL MEETING

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 Sharyn King) or phoning her on 07 872 0030 or emailing her on sharyn.king@waipadc.govt.nz

11 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2009

The Waipa Biodiversity Council's practise has been to meet at 10.00am on the third Thursday of every second month, except for January, with meetings alternating between Cambridge and Te Awamutu.

RESOLVED

That the Waipa Biodiversity Council adopts the following schedule of meeting dates (generally being the third Thursday of every other month), except for January.

WAIPA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL MINUTES 19 MARCH 2009

19 March – Cambridge

21 May – Te Awamutu

16 July – Cambridge

*20 August - Te Awamutu****

17 September – Cambridge

19 November – Te Awamutu

**** The meeting on 20 August to be a joint meeting with the Waipa Heritage Council.*

Dench / van Dongen

12 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Waipa Biodiversity Council will be held on 21 May 2009 in Committee Room 1, Waipa District Council, 101 Bank Street, Te Awamutu, commencing at 10.00am.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.58am.