

Meeting Notes of the Sounds Advisory Group, held at Port Underwood on Monday 12 May 2014 commencing at 9.00 am

Present: Councillor Trevor Hook (Chairperson), Monyeen Wedge, Ian Mitchell, David Hayes, Graeme Coates (until 1.00 pm), Rob Schuckard, Tim Greenhough, Linda Booth, Rachel Drake, Judy Hellstrom, Kristen Gerard, Robin Cox, Councillors Graeme Barsanti (until 2.00 pm), Peter Jerram David Oddie.

MDC Staff: Alan Johnson, Steve Urlich, Pere Hawes, Jonathon Underwood and Beate Gregory (Secretary)

Apologies: Poneke Rene, Ron Sutherland, Eric Jorgensen, Victor Koller, Joe Heberley, Ken Roush, Raymond Smith, Lynley Perkins, Councillors Jenny Andrews and Laressa Shenfield.

Actions from Last Meeting

Marine Significant Areas – East Bay Brachiopods be included as a priority -Steve Urlich is reviewing these projects and all has been taken into consideration.

Cemeteries – Some private cemeteries may be placed on the Council database but it is still work in progress.

Wilding Pines on Road Reserve – The Marlborough Roads contractor has been instructed to either remove or poison wilding pines that are over 1 metre tall, this was written into their contract.

Road Markings – Two tarsealed roads will have arrows painted on the road by October this year.

Open Drain - Tarseal has been reinstated on Hakahaka Road.

Dog Fencing – Between the Department of Conservation, Dog Control and Families in Hakahaka Bay it has been decided that the areas in question (dog exercise area and Sounds Foreshore Reserve) all require for dogs to be on the lead.

General Feedback from Last Meeting

Kristen mentioned that the Biosecurity Hygiene Fact Sheet is a great initiative but the message needs to be spread more widely and contractors require further education on what is required of them to prevent pest spread.

Regional Policy Update

Significant Marine Sites

The previous Plan Review Sub Committee put forward a proposal to prohibit bottom trawling and dredging in significant marine areas given the incompatibility between those fishing techniques and the bottom habitat. Pere has had on-going discussions with Ministry for Primary Industries. They have been working together to work out what degree of overlap exists between fishing efforts and those significant marine sites. On paper it appears that there is only a significant overlap in Croisilles and off shore from Ship Cove. The Planning Review Sub Committee had proposed a prohibition, which would be difficult to enforce especially for recreational fishers, so it would be more an educational type prohibition to encourage people not to fish in those areas. Fisheries have offered up an alternative to consider, which is using mechanisms under the Fisheries Act as opposed to the Resource Management Act. These are directly enforceable. Pere is waiting on confirmation from the Ministry for Primary Industries about the level of overlap between those significant marine sites and fishing efforts.

Monyeen suggested for certain areas, like breeding areas, to be always off limits which simplifies the issues for recreational fishers and commercial fisheries.

Landscape

There has been an on-going process with affected landowners in terms of landscape management and also the level of community engagement. As a result of that feedback staff had put to the Regional Planning and Development Committee an amended approach to take that community feedback into account. The other area of debate is on the prohibition on new forestry. Statistics indicate that only one application for a new forestry consent was received in the last five years and none in the previous five years. There are some landowners that want to retain the opportunity to diversify and that diversification may not be with native species.

There were some discussions concerning what the difference is between new consents for establishing forestry or forestry already established (formerly this was called a Permitted Activity). As long as the Permitted Activity was lawfully established the forestry can be replanted providing it does not increase in size.

This Council is a unitary Council and has Regional Council functions. There are some limited circumstances where a Regional Council can impose land use controls that have a retrospective effect and relevant for the Sounds are the Soil and Water Conservation controls.

Judy expressed her concern that in some Tory Channel bays forestry left a mess after the harvesting of trees. Some are left on the foreshore reserve or have fallen into crevices. Blocks seem abandoned with a considerable regrowth of wilding pines. Pere advised that some forestry blocks in the Sounds are only marginally economical to harvest and contractors are trying to get the timber off the block as cheaply as possible.

Kristen considers that some forestry blocks have been planted in the past in very inappropriate locations and forestry workers are trying to do their best in extremely difficult circumstances. There are lessons to be learned for the future.

Trevor pointed out that the best practice industry guidelines have recently been reviewed but it requires industry buy in as well and a shift in attitude and changes to be made for a better way of harvesting. A leadership meeting with the Wood Sector will be held on Wednesday 14 May 2014.

Pere mentioned that Central Government is doing their own work on regulating forestry activities and there is a potential for a National Standard of Forestry. The difficulty that Central Government is facing is the environmental conditions vary dramatically within a region let alone across regions.

Management of Marine Farming

The process was started but was paused during the King Salmon process. Marine farming in Marlborough is a relatively mature industry and Council will go out to the industry in the next months with the draft provisions and kick start the process of community engagement. Possibly the first port of call will be this Group, and if the Group believes it is warranted, a specific workshop could be arranged on marine farming.

The majority of the Group was interested and Pere, with Alan, will coordinate a meeting in July.

King Salmon Decision

Pere advised that the Supreme Court has ruled on the two appeals for NZKS. The Sustain Our Sounds appeal was unsuccessful. The Environmental Defence Society was successful and a fourth site, Papatua/Port Gore was lost as the Supreme Court said the Environmental Protection Agency had not given consideration to the New Zealand Coastal Policy statement and the outstanding natural landscape.

Rob asked for clarification on Papatua, under the treaty there is one area called ASA which is gazetted, what does this mean? Pere responded that three sites were gazetted for salmon settlement - 20% of any future allocation for marine farming is allocated to iwi and to provide for that space the Crown has reserved particular locations throughout the Sounds for oysters, mussels and salmon. The three sites are all in CMZ1, with one of either side of Tuera Point and one in Port Gore. These sites all have significant landscape and natural character. However the Resource Management Act process still applies in these gazetted areas, so if iwi wanted to establish a salmon farm in any of those three locations they would have to go through a plan change process.

Mussel Shell Fertiliser

Kristen handed out samples of the mussel shell fertiliser, a copy of an article on the farmer (Bill Brownlee) producing the fertiliser, a photo of a truck spreading the fertiliser and an analysis of the fertiliser. Kristen pointed out that she is in no way connected to the production.

The mussel shell pile near Havelock is widely known within Marlborough; Bill acquired a new grinder around 6 months ago and has been able since then to grind green shell mussels into a fine powder. This product has been spread on some of Kristen's farm by truck and plane. It is hoped that the product becomes part of the nutrient cycle. It also reduces transport costs as lime previously was sourced from Murchison and Clarence. The product sells for around \$50.00 a tonne.

Council and Bill are working on a new resource consent as the product has great potential.

Sounds Integrated Management

Kristen requested an update on this project. David told the group that he sits in on the meetings but is not part of the Committee so he can only comment from an observer's point of view. The group is coming to the Annual Plan process this year to report on where they are at financially, where they are currently and what they hope to achieve in the future. They are presently looking for a facilitator and require funding for this. The Group is planning to set up a website for information to be inputted.

Rob asked about the objectives for the group to which David responded that the group in the scheme of things is just getting off the ground. David Hayes advised that he would undertake to see whether there are any avenues within the Department of Conservation to provide funding. He felt a facilitator is required. Peter felt it would be an opportune time to approach the Minister for the Environment for funding as the Kaipuka reserve is opening in Kaikoura.

Judy mentioned that a community/industry/iwi governance forum in Horaki Gulf is trialling software called Marine Spatial Planning which is working very well. The Department of Conservation owns the licence for this software and it may be useful for the Sounds Integrated Management Group.

Marine Biosecurity Update

Jono provided an update on the two recent, ongoing marine pest incursions in Marlborough, as well as outlining a possible marine pest surveillance initiative that the Sounds community could assist with.

The first is an invasive sea squirt called *Styela clava* that was found in Picton Marina in June 2013. Because of the good structure set up under the Top of the South Marine Biosecurity Partnership, the response was fast and well-coordinated. Council was the lead agency with support from the Ministry for Primary Industries, Port Marlborough, Marine Farming Association as well as in-kind support from the Department of Conservation. The first dive survey discovered 99 individuals which were all removed by the divers. While the agencies were working through a decision on longer term options, a further two dive surveys were carried out in September 2013 and December 2013 discovering 15 and 3 individuals respectively.

In January 2014 a Long Term Management Plan (LTMP) was signed by the parties mentioned earlier with an objective to suppress the population in Picton Marina by undertaking two dive surveys per year. The first of these was due this month however, a recent find of *Styela* in Waikawa has put this plan on hold while the LTMP leadership makes a decision on how to proceed.

In February 2014 another marine pest Mediterranean fanworm (also known as 'Sabella') was discovered on a vessel moored in Waikawa Bay. Again, a response was initiated between Council and the Ministry for Primary Industries. The vessel owners cooperated fully and voluntarily slipped the vessel for cleaning and anti-fouling. In total 16 fanworm were removed from the vessel's hull. Early indications are that the vessel has been in Waikawa for 2 years. A total of 4 days of diving were carried out in Waikawa Bay and Marina with no further fanworm discovered. However, 6 *Styela* were found and removed and this information handed to the Picton LTMP team.

In both these instances, the discoveries were mostly by chance as there is not the resource currently available for a dedicated surveillance programme, especially in the coves and bays of the wider Sounds. After a discussion with Monyeen Wedge, it was thought there may be room for an initiative where suitable resources, training and/or procedures could be developed to entice enthusiastic recreational divers, dive clubs or commercial operators to feed information back of what they discover during their own underwater activities. For example, doing a check of their own moorings or ones in their bay and then if they find something suspicious, knowing who to get in touch with.

The question was asked whether there would be support for something along these lines to occur?

In general there was support for such a concept. It was also motioned that contact could be made with the Tennyson Inlet Boat Club who can communicate with its members.

A cautionary note was added by Graeme Coates regarding Occupational Health & Safety requirements, especially if 'volunteers' were deemed to be engaged to undertake surveillance.

Jono advised that there would be a clear line drawn in that only procedures, information and education would be provided. The actual surveillance would not be requested but undertaken at the free will of any community members interested in doing it. For example – "if you would like to do something different underwater, try looking for a marine pest that may be in your bay. This is how you go about it...".

Linda mentioned that she would be happy to include this in her newsletter which reaches around 200 members in the Tennyson area.

Biosecurity Fact Sheet

Alan explained that at the last Port Underwood meeting discussions were held regarding biosecurity guidelines. After some more consultation the final version is now available. Kay emailed the link to the members a couple of weeks ago and hard copies are available. Linda requested for 200 hard copies to be mailed out to her.

DOC Update

Staff

Robin advised that the Sounds staff has maintained a high level of moral but are feeling a bit stretched with all the activity underway and proposed projects. Work is underway to improve the staff accommodation on Maud Island, Pelorus Bridge and Momorangi.

In addition to the normal work the following is underway:

- Preparation for the mice eradication project on Maud;
- Possible poisoning in Tennyson;
- Monitoring on Blumine for the possum incursion; and
- Extra vigilant quarantine operation.

None of these were known about when the Department was reorganized last year.

Adverse effects caused by weather, in other parts of the country, has also drawn on local staff. Chainsaw teams have and are going to the West Coast to open popular tracks closed by storm damage.

Weeds

The spartina team completed their work for the year at the end of March with about half the spartina found compared to the previous year.

The weed team spent a 10 day roster on D'Urville undertaking the normal annual old Man's beard control. In the reorganized Department these people now do a wide range of monitoring, including predator monitoring on the pest free islands.

A check of the tradescantia sites on Stephens Island revealed that the weed has not been eradicated. A few plants were found over the bluffs which has delayed the declaration that the island is tradescantia free.

Landowners are still being assisted to poison pines on their freehold land. A land owner in South East Bay embarked on the eradication of pine over a large area over Easter using DOC drills and chemicals. After Easter I was advised that they were intending to purchase their own drill. In Endeavour Inlet another large land owner is poisoning pine using DOC equipment as a major restoration project. Communities are undertaking Old Mans Beard Control at Moetapu and along the Kenepuru Road.

Predator Control

The major conservation concern is the mice invasion on Maud. How it happened is unknown but the quarantining for all the pest free island has increased significantly. The resource consent to allow the aerial application of brodifacoum has been obtained and most details sorted for the winter poison operation.

The Battle for the Birds national program is gearing up as the indications are it will be a major mast year with a massive increase of both rats and stoats. The only area in the Sounds is the 4500 hectare Mt Stanley area. Nationally 23 areas are to be poisoned covering 700,000 hectares, but only if surveys show a significant increase in rat numbers.

For the Tennyson site, information from seed collection trays indicate that up to 200kg of seed may be produced per hectare. Surveys on rat numbers indicate a 0% residual rat catch in November 2013, 4% in March 2014, and a survey in June for the final decision to be made. The control site on Editor Hill had a 36% residual catch rate in November and 24% in March. Major management changes for this year's operation, if it proceeds, will be closing the Nydia Track. This raises the fact that it is legal road and a great set back along the track for the aerially applied toxin, with a later hand applied infill.

Judy mentioned that there is a presentation available on the Able Tasman Project which deals with this pest problem.

Linda said her group has been working with Robin and DOC to undertake the eradication of pests and weeds for the three Tennyson Inlet Islands

The number of possums caught on Blumine has now increased to 3 with the last juvenile being caught on 31 March. DNA testing has shown that the 3 possums were related and the only explanation for them being there was deliberate placement. The closest land, Arapawa, is possum free as far as we know.

Trevor advised Robin of an email received by a D'Urville Island resident. It talked about the proposal of hand distributing 1080 at Kiori, apparently this was decided at their last resident meeting. Another meeting is being held at the end of the month and it is recommended for DOC to attend the meeting as the proposal for using 1080 is causing some unrest in the community. Robin will follow this up.

Endangered Species

It is very pleasing to advise that the Department does not charge for wildlife permits being sought by groups involved in conservation projects. Commercial operations will continue to be invoiced. Yellow Crowned Parakeeks have been transferred from Lochmara Lodge to the Abel Tasman Project Janzoon. More yellow crested Parakeeks have been transferred from Long Island to Tui Nature Reserve with the young produced also going on to Project Janzoon.

The Kiwi Recovery Group has recommended that little spotted kiwi be transferred from Long Island to the private Cape Kidnappers predator fenced area. The approval of the local iwi is required before this can go ahead.

Community Conservation Partnership Fund

The Minister of Conservation introduced this fund several months ago which is a revamp of earlier funding schemes.

The criteria have been widened to include recreation and work on the DOC estate. Applications had to be in Wellington by early May and actual numbers that applied have not been notified to my level. However from conversations it would appear that something like 6 Sounds groups have applied for funding. Organizations like Linked Pathway now qualify to apply, whereas in the past they did not.

Community Assistance

We are very lucky in the Sounds to have a great number of associations with community groups and business. Progress on some of the newer and more major ones follow:

- 1) Outward Bound were involved with the cleaning up of the Whatamongo Campground after the Easter storm event.
- 2) The King Salmon supported viewing platform in Endeavour Inlet has community approval. The plan is being checked by DOC engineers and when their comments are known the materials will be purchased. NMIT students will pre-cut and then build the structure, with hopefully the help of Outward Bound Students to move the material from the coast to the building site.
- 3) OMV, a drilling and exploration company, has agreed to contribute \$55,000 to a DOC and Ngati Koata project to replant the swamp area at Moawhitu, Durville Island. Iwi have a fishing reserve in the area and also a very close interest in the local eel fishery. This company uses Admiralty Bay as a staging area for their large drilling rigs.

Recreation

The storms over Easter resulted in extra work for staff in the Sounds with less staff to cope with, as teams were sent to more highly used sites. Pelorus Valley and the Nydia Track received the most damage, but the Queen Charlotte Track was not unscathed. Nydia and the Queen Charlotte Track have now been cleared, but the Pelorus will have to wait, probably to the end of May.

In addition to the Whatamongo Campground being flooded so was French Pass. Volunteers cleaned up the French Pass site.

The improvements to the Queen Charlotte Track continue between Resolution Bay and the Pines. This year's work is expected to be completed by the end of May.

Judy commented on the damage a 3½ tonne digger has done to the track, which is believed to have been established back in 1890 with benches cut by miners. It has exposed drops on the track and is dangerous especially for bicycle users. Robin will look into this and get back to Bea for the distribution of information.

The recruitment of volunteer camp ground hosts at the main camp grounds and Nydia Lodge is now over. This can only be described as a great success and a model for other organizations to follow. Not only did it increase revenue but the facilities were maintained better and a person with some knowledge was available to answer questions.

General

For the Top of the South the Treaty of Waitangi Settlement was signed just before Easter. This is going to result in some challenging times as the Department tries to meet all the obligations agreed to with more limited resources. It is intended for managers to meet with iwi individually in the near future to chart the way forward. Blue Cod monitoring for the year is complete and the findings were as to be expected, more and larger fish were caught and released outside the marine reserve.

The annual whale survey is being planned and it is believed that Joe Heberley is overseas now, so he can take part.

Robin circulated hand outs on the Battle for our Birds project designed by DOC.

NZKS Best Practice Guidelines

Steve had prepared a Power Point presentation to the group. One of the slides talked about the above.

NZ King Salmon at their initiative and with Council support are developing Best Practice Guidelines for salmon farm management in response to community concerns about environment effects. As part of the process Rob and Eric were invited to sit on two different working groups (Monitoring and Standards, and Farming Operations). The aim is to give the community assurance that salmon farming is done to the best possible standard. Both working groups have almost finished the draft of the Best Practice Guidelines and will present the draft to two international experts, Professor Kenneth Black (for Council and Dr Catriona Macleod (for University of Tasmania). Once the expert comments are received they will be incorporated and the guidelines will then be sent out to members of the wider working group (that met in December 2013) and the public (via the Council and the NZ King Salmon websites). The intention from there is to present the guidelines to the Environment Committee for endorsement or not. If approved, the guidelines will go into implementation phase.

Graeme Coates asked whether these guidelines would apply to all fin fish farms to which Steve responded that at present it will only apply to King Salmon farms.

Rob advised that the water column component of the guidelines has been parked for the time being and will be looked at in the 5 yearly review of the Best Practice Guidelines. He then outlined where he differed about the maximum level of enrichment permitted underneath salmon pens. He said he would put an alternative view forward in the guidelines. He expressed that it was constructive to be involved in such a process to ensure the Sounds environment is being safeguarded.

Trevor thanked Rob for his input and hard work on the project and his approach.

Coastal Strategy Implementation

In 2012 Alan and Fleur Tiernan presented the Coastal Monitoring Strategy to the Environment Committee and it was signed off. This set out the objectives of what the Coastal Monitoring Strategy should look like.

Steve gave a Power Point Presentation on the proposed implementation of the strategy. This comprises a number of projects to better understand the effects of land use and aquaculture on the coastal environment. Steve invited SAG members to discuss any aspects of this with him directly.

Kristen thanked Steve and the Council for the Coastal Strategy Implementation Plan and the ongoing work and hopes it will be accepted. The group endorsed that sentiment.

General Discussions

Muddy Buddy

Graeme Barsanti said that Muddy Buddy was held on the edge of the Havelock Marina on 11 May 2014. It was very popular and people gained a good insight in to what type of plant and insect species are contained in mud.

Cow Droppings

Linda commented on the amount of cow droppings on their road. Farmers in Marlborough are bound by the Marlborough District Council stop crossing and droving bylaws. It appears that some farmers are not complying with this bylaw. Graeme Barsanti is aware of this and has spoken with Marlborough Roads and is following this up.

Moorings and Jetties

Judy had three questions on mooring and jetty renewals. Firstly the length of consents. She is aware of two local identical jetties where one received a 35 year consent and the other 15 years. She questioned the range of consent times and what is the policy that underpins these decisions. Judy will provide the details of the jetties for Alan to look into.

The next question referred to jetty drop off and pickups. Judy wondered why anyone would trouble themselves to be a consent holder, as anyone can use the jetty. Trevor advised that as jetties are located on public land they are required to be available for use by the public.

Lastly, when applying for a new mooring the current mooring drops off Smart Maps. Alan said in legal terms the consent is valid until the expiry date. However on entering the new application into the Council system the current mooring disappears from view, once approved the new mooring consent goes back into Smart Maps.

Linda queried whether bays could apply for new moorings in a bulk application as possible in previous years. Alan commented that bay wide consents can be applied for; however each specific mooring and details must be specified for the bay in the application.

Next Meeting

The next meeting to be held in the Committee Room at Marlborough District Council on Monday 11 August 2014.

The meeting for 10 November 2014 may be held in Mistletoe Bay, confirmation to follow.

The meeting closed at 2.10 pm.

**Agenda items should be sent to
Kay Leach (e-mail Kay.leach@marlborough.govt.nz)
by Friday 18 July 2014.**

Action	Responsibility
Mail out 200 copies of Biosecurity Fact Sheet to Linda	Bea
Distribution of 1080 at Kiora (D'Urville)	Robin
Cow droppings on Duncan Bay Road	Graeme Barsanti
Different length of consents – why?	Alan
Bulk applications of mooring for Bays?	Graeme Barsanti and Alan

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