

Meeting Notes of the Sounds Advisory Group, held at Mistletoe Bay on Monday 16 February 2015 commencing at 9.00 am

- Present:** Councillor Trevor Hook (Chairperson), Councillor David Oddie, Councillor Peter Jerram, David Hayes, Robin Cox, Joe Heberley, Victor Koller, Graeme Coates, Rob Schuckard, Raymond Smith, Tim Greenhough, Rachel Drake, Eric Jorgensen, Linda Booth, Poneke Rene, Ross Withell and Kristen Gerard
- MDC Staff:** Alan Johnson, Steve Ulrich, Gina Ferguson, Emma Cowan and Sue Bulfield-Johnston
- Apologies:** Councillor Trevor Hook and Kristen Gerard (for lateness), Monyeen Wedge, Judy Hellstrom, Ken Roush, Ian Mitchell, Councillors Graeme Barsanti and Jenny Andrews

1. Apologies

Councillor Hook and Kristen Gerard apologised prior to the meeting for their delayed arrival at the meeting. Councillor Oddie stepped into the role of meeting Chairman until Councillor Hook arrived at 10.00 am.

2. Action Points from Previous Meeting

- **Advise Policy team of Andrew King's objection to a potential policy condition that requires an inspection by a registered mooring inspector every two years.** Alan Johnson
- **Advise Policy team of concerns expressed by Andrew King in respect of outstanding landscape classifications in the Sounds.** Alan Johnson

Alan advised the Environmental Policy team have met with Andrew King regarding the above action points and Andrew King has lodged some draft submissions to the draft policy document.

- **Advise Harbour Master of concern of the excessive use of water/jet skis.** Alan Johnson

Alan discussed this matter with the Harbour Master prior to Christmas. Alex Van Wijngaarden reported to the last Environment Committee that there had been increased patrolling of the Sounds by Harbours staff over the Christmas period. In general the Community was well behaved in terms of vessel speed and compliance with the requirement to carry/wear lifejackets.

Joe Heberley commented there have recently been two persons recklessly taking jet skis through the ferry wash in Tory Channel on a daily basis. He surmised they must be staying in a bach nearby. Alan suggested if Joe could identify which bach the two persons were staying in then he should lodge a complaint with Council. Staff from the Harbours office could then follow up on the matter with the jet skiers.

- **Arrange for a new lifebuoy to be supplied for Torea Wharf.** Graeme Barsanti

In Graeme's absence, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

- **Advise Compliance of concern regarding boats moored in Picton Harbour which are permanently inhabited and may be discharging effluent to sea.** Alan Johnson

Gina Ferguson reminded the group that she had provided a presentation on discharges from boats at a previous meeting. She offered to bring the presentation back to the group at the next meeting.

- **Advise Harbour Master of continued concern with the log in Moetapu Bay.** Graeme Barsanti

Victor Koller said the log in Moetapu Bay had been an issue for approximately two years. He was concerned that it was now more expensive to remove the log than it had been at the time the need was identified. Victor confirmed that either end of the log has been marked for safety reasons, however, there have been a couple of incidents where vessels have impacted with the middle of it.

Alan Johnson reported that the Harbour Master has confirmed it will be an expensive exercise to remove the log from Moetapu Bay. The group discussed various methods to achieve this objective. Councillor Oddie agreed to follow up with Councillor Barsanti on his efforts to get the log removed from this bay.

- **Investigate the possibility of bacteria risks in Cowshed Bay as a potential impact from portage.** Alan Johnson

Alan reported there has been no sampling taken from this bay due to funding constraints. He was unclear of the extent of this issue and noted there had been no reports of contamination over this summer period. Councillor Jerram explained the issue related to the fact the Portage Bay has signage warning people not to swim due to the discharge into the coastal environment. There was no similar signage erected in Cowshed Bay which is equal distance to the outfall point.

- **Investigate if building control code compliance has been issued for the Furneaux wastewater system to enable Department of Conservation final approval.** Alan Johnson

This item was covered under item 3 below.

- **Letter of thanks to Mistletoe Bay Trust for use of meeting facilities.** Alan Johnson

This letter was sent 3 December 2014. Trim Reference 14258773.

3. Membership

Alan Johnson reminded the group that Ron Sutherland has resigned from the group as part of his transition into retirement. A letter from Councillor Hook was sent to Ron acknowledging his resignation and the contribution he has made to the group. Trim Reference 14258781. Copy attached - refer Appendix 1 below.

Ron undertook to arrange for a representative from the forestry sector to step into the Sounds Advisory Group membership vacancy created by his resignation. Alan said he would contact Ron to gauge his progress in this respect.

4. Compliance Monitoring Programmes

Emma Cowan provided a presentation on the consented high volume wastewater discharges she monitors in the Marlborough Sounds. Copy of presentation attached - refer Appendix 2.

Emma provided an overview of the total number of current resource consents to discharge effluent either to sea or to land in the Sounds. She reported the following key points from her 2014/2015 monitoring season:

- There are two historical discharges to sea that Emma monitors in the Sounds. These are Furneaux Lodge and Portage Resort.

Furneaux Lodge no longer discharges wastewater to sea. A new system has been established to discharge to an irrigation field behind the lodge. Emma inspected this system August 2014 and at that time it was still waiting on final sign-off from an engineer.

Historically, Portage Resort and fourteen nearby residential properties have been serviced by one wastewater treatment system authorised by coastal permit to discharge to sea. A new consenting arrangement is now underway with the residents and the resort each operating under two separate resource consents. The residents will operate a wastewater treatment plant which should be fully operational late March 2015. To that end the installation of a dripper pipe and irrigation field will commence this week. The resort still has some issues with its irrigation field to be resolved before the transition to the new system is complete.

- Emma showed examples of compliant and non-compliant dripper pipe installations and some instances where there have been failures in effluent discharge systems.
- Consideration is being given to adding the burning of waste material in the Marlborough Sounds to the monitoring programme. The remoteness of some locations creates difficulties when managing waste material that should be transported to appropriate authorised landfills. Some property owners have resorted to burning unauthorised waste material on site. Emma showed photos of instances where burn piles clearly include items such as aerosol cans, domestic and building waste materials, etc.

Gina Ferguson clarified the ability to burn material on site is permitted provided the material is authorised and there is no fire ban in place. Monitoring will encompass the disposal of a waste material to ensure the means of disposal is appropriate.

Linda Booth suggested the photos be made available to community groups to assist them when informing residents about the appropriate disposal of waste materials. The photos and highlight the monitoring undertaken by Council.

Gina added Council has produced a burning guide which sets out materials that are authorised and otherwise. This is available as a pamphlet and on Council's website.

<http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/Environment/Air-Quality/Good-Burning-Practices.aspx>

The group acknowledged the importance of educating property owners in the first instance before conveying a stronger message to those who are non-compliant with good burning practice. Gina provided hard copies of the pamphlet to the group members.

Robin Cox added that fire permits clearly state the types of material authorised to be burnt under the authorisation.

Gina then provided an overview of the activities of the Compliance team. Copy of her presentation attached - refer Appendix 3. She explained the team has developed a monitoring programme with a focus on the pro-active monitoring of consents. This approach differs from the reactive response methodology previously followed by the team.

The new methodology includes an analysis of the number and types of complaints to identify opportunities to educate the general public and industries on good practice, etc. The objective is to reduce the number of complaints/incidences of non-compliance.

The categories with the highest number of complaints are land use, discharge to air and activity. The activity category relates to instances where the permitted activity standards have been exceeded. The discharge to air category includes complaints received relating to the burning of waste material. Not every complaint received resulted in identifying non-compliant activity. Complaints predominantly relate to activities in the Rural zones.

The team has been structured into two operational functions - to respond to complaints received and to proactively monitor current resource consents. There are over 30,000 active resource consents in Marlborough.

The monitoring programmes are designed around:

- the scale and intensity of consented activities;
- the potential environmental effect; and
- public interest.

As an example, a monitoring programme has been developed around coastal discharges because of the potential effect on the environment of the related activities.

The team structure includes duty complaints officer and duty monitoring officer functions.

Gina showed photos of examples of the types of non-compliance identified by the team.

Alan Johnson added that Council's environmental scientists also have environmental monitoring functions which are aligned to compliance activities.

Joe Heberley spoke of the post-harvest debris left on a forestry site on Arapawa Island. Gina confirmed the Compliance team functions include an active and on-going forestry monitoring programme. The team has identified where harvesting is occurring throughout the region and an inspection of the related sites is scheduled when the harvesting is due to finish. Any issues identified by the public to Council will be followed up by the Compliance team. Robin noted there were many instances of good practice as well as instances of poor practice. It was important not to assume that poor practice is prevalent across the industry.

Gina tabled Council's pamphlet on environmental guidelines for forestry harvesting.

<http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/Environment/Land/Forest-Harvesting.aspx>

Victor Koller asked if Council was developing policies around how harvested logs are removed from Marlborough Sounds locations. He spoke of the effect on residents arising from the presence of large logging trucks on the narrow and winding Marlborough Sounds roading network. The attendees discussed potential means to address this issue acknowledging the inherent difficulties associated with it, e.g. a bylaw restricting trucks above a specified size using these roads. Councillor Jerram suggested Council, through the Regional Planning and Development Committee, investigate ways to manage the effects of logging trucks, e.g. restricting the size. Councillor Hook agreed with this approach.

Gina explained that with the move to proactive rather than reactive monitoring and the prioritising of the order in which issues will be addressed (see above), there may be a longer response time recorded against some minor issues than has previously been the case. A standardised response may be addressed for some categories of complaints/non-compliance in the first instance, i.e. send a letter supporting information to educate the person undertaking the activity incorrectly.

Gina said the team currently consisted of five Environmental Protection Officers and two vacancies about to be filled. Council receives between 200-300 complaints, not including noise, annually. Some require an intensive response in terms of time, human resources and cost.

She added the team also undertakes permitted activity monitoring and responds to any issues identified through Council's environmental monitoring activities. Further, the Compliance team engages with the Environmental Policy section of Council identifying any aspects of the Resource Management Plan that may require more consideration.

5. Policy Update

Pere provided an update on the review process and associated timeframes. The Regional Planning and Development Committee has set a timeframe for notification of between July and September 2015. The Environmental Policy team is on course to achieve this target having only three chapters remaining for the Regional Planning and Development Committee to make decisions on, i.e. Marine Farming, Marlborough Townships and Small Settlements (which will apply to Picton and Havelock) and Water Allocation and Use. The team has made good progress on rule drafting. In the new Plan the rules will serve as triggers for resource consent and the Regional Policy Statement will provide guidance on matters for consideration.

In terms of what has effect at notification, land use rules have effect only once Council has made decisions on submissions. Regional function rules will have effect on notification. There could be confusion during the transition to the new Plan, e.g. for activities that have a different status in the new Plan. During the transition both plans will need to be consulted until the new Plan becomes fully operative.

There are some substantive changes in the new Plan resulting from community involvement in the process through focus groups.

When the Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan was notified the most frequent submission point related to requests from private landowners to rezone their land to facilitate residential development. This time, Council is not proposing to provide for further residential zoning in the Marlborough Sounds in the Proposed Plan as there is currently a stock of 900 undeveloped properties in the Sounds Residential zone.

Notification will utilise both electronic and hardcopy formats. Pere welcomed any input in terms of ways peoples can access this information.

Pere clarified that the scientific modelling currently in development will not influence the Plan review process given that the modelling process is in its early stages and the Plan review is reaching its conclusion. However, the scientific modelling will be used as an evaluative tool going forwards. Alan Johnson added that the modelling data will better inform Council and will enable an environmental baseline to be established. Steve Ulrich added that the modelling and technical information will be available to the public, although some thought will be required in terms of how this will occur.

Victor Koller said he would like to be informed of any provisions relating to Havelock.

Pere spoke of his intention to make a recommendation to the Regional Planning and Development Committee that it extends the primary submission period from 30 days to 3 months. This is due to the complexity of the Proposed Plan. This is followed by a period of further submissions and then the hearing phase. Pere anticipated that the extensive consultation undertaken to date will reduce the number of submissions. The intention is to complete the process within this electoral cycle. He reminded the Sounds Advisory Group members that it should also submit on aspects of the Plan they support as well as anything they oppose. It is only by lodging a submission that individual parties establish a role for themselves in the process.

While the hearing panel has not been delegated at this early stage, all decision makers must be certified under the MfE Making Good Decisions Programme. Raymond Smith suggested that the MfE certification should be a minimum educational requirement and that there are iwi representatives and EPA commissioners suitably qualified to be considered for the panel.

Conscious that the group had thus far only seen extracts from the Proposed Plan, Pere offered to bring the document in its entirety to the group to better inform them of the connectivity within the document. The group agreed to a workshop for this purpose additional to the Sounds Advisory Group meeting schedule. Additionally it stressed the importance of Council involvement in the community meeting when introducing the Proposed Plan.

Rob Schuckard suggested a summary document would more easily inform the public of the basic principles of the Plan. Pere said such a document would have no legal status, further the challenge would lie in selecting which key messages to include in the summary. Council is looking at producing a "how to use" guide for the Plan.

Rob asked about the integration of the Proposed Plan and the Department of Conservation's CMS. David Hayes explained that the CMS process for the top of the south region will re-commence in approximately two months and will likely run for two years.

6. Integrated Management Programme

Eric Jorgensen spoke to the following report:

Marlborough Marine Futures

Update of progress towards the creation of the Marlborough Marine Futures Stakeholders Working Group.

Introduction:

1. Marlborough Sounds Integrated Management Trust (MSIMT) formed with the objective to create a collaborative and community led process which would drive an integrated management approach the future management of the Marlborough Sounds Marine Area; including terrestrial areas that had an impact on the marine environment.
2. The Trust has provided background information and updates to previous Sounds Advisory Group (SAG) meetings. This update will focus on activities and developments since the last update (November 10 2014).

Current Status:

3. Progress has continued on track with the plan outlined at the last meeting with the following main actions occurring:
 - a. Meetings with:
 - i. Minister MfE
 - ii. Deputy Directors General DoC and MPI
 - iii. Senior Advisor to Minister Conservation
 - iv. Various formal and informal contacts with DoC, MfE, MPI, MDC, NIWA and Cawthron staff.
 - b. Well publicised and received (according to feedback!) launch at Kaipupu Point in December.
 - c. Website launched (<http://www.marlmarinefutures.co.nz/>).
 - d. Published first newsletter.
 - e. Invitations publicised for the formation Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) workshops (8th March and 22nd March).
 - f. Planning and logistic arrangements for the SWG workshops progressing very well with 50 registrations received to date.
 - g. A series of meetings being planned for late February early March with:
 - i. Central Government Agencies, and
 - ii. Minister, or Associate Minister, of Conservation.
4. The work of the Trust and the upcoming SWG workshops are out in the public domain and being discussed with a lot of contacts and questions being asked.
5. \$20 000 funding grant received from the Canterbury Community Trust.

6. Trust is racing the clock to achieve Charitable Status prior to closing of the current round of Lotteries Commission funding; unlikely to achieve status in time for a significant application to be made.
7. DoC Community Conversation Partnerships Fund; first round of applications for 2015 opening soon; the Trust will be submitting an Expression of Interest.
8. Central government agencies are continuing to work on how they intend to drive the processes around Recreational Fishing Parks and introduction of MPA's across the wider Sounds and Cook areas. Until those matters are further resolved we are not, practicably, able to confirm how the relationships with those agencies will evolve.

Activities next period:

9. Work will continue for the two SWG workshops in March including finalising speakers, arranging logistics and ensuring all potential relevant participants are aware of the opportunity to participate.
10. Workshops will be held and SWG selected. Initiate first SWG meeting.
11. Discussion with tangata whenua iwi on best ways to engage Maori.

Eric added there will be some positions on the SWG set aside for iwi representation, although it has yet to be determined how this will occur.

Raymond Smith spoke of the need to achieve engagement from all nine top of the south iwi recognised within the Marlborough Sounds and the desire to see iwi involved in environmental protection, the community development plan and development in general. He affirmed the entire Marlborough marine area needs to be protected.

Joe Heberley anticipated support from the commercial fishing sector provided the outside boundaries were maintained. For example, a contraction of rock lobster fishery boundaries would have significant effect for the sector and have implications for the viability of the industry.

Eric confirmed he had received similar messages from the paua fishery sector.

12. Complete Expression of Interest for DoC Community Conservation Partnerships Funds and follow-up work.
13. Continue to work with central and local government agencies on how the different projects and teams can work together to identify synergies and create efficiencies and more durable outcomes.

FAQ's:

14. A number of common themes are emerging in questions received about the process we are undertaking, among them:

Q: Who elected the Trustees?

A: Well, we elected ourselves by being the ones prepared to stand up and take responsibility for the future of our marine environment. Now we are inviting everyone else to join us.

Q: What are you trying to achieve?

A: Ecological sustainability, citizen leadership, equity and the rights of future generations to enjoy the abundance we have seen depleted in our own life times.

Q: Who is paying for this?

A: So far we and others have done the work for free. Now we have engaged professional help to avoid the pitfalls we have seen with past initiatives. This has been possible thanks to the generosity of the Marlborough District Council and the Canterbury Community Trust. We would be very happy to have more funding partners from within our community to spread the load.

Q: What is the Stakeholder Working Group and how does it relate to the Trust?

A: The Stakeholder Working Group leads the community in understanding the issues and developing solutions that protect the future of the marine environment while giving everyone more of what they need and value. The Trust governs the process and takes responsibility for obtaining the resources needed for the Stakeholder Working Group to do its job. This includes raising money, liaising with agencies and brokering political support for the solutions agreed by stakeholders.

Q: Why have two workshops?

A: The first workshop brings everyone to a common understanding of the process and what is being offered. It helps begin the process of bringing common interests into sector clusters to allow the members of the Stakeholder Working Group to be chosen. The second workshop enables stakeholders to identify and select the best possible membership for its Stakeholder Working Group. It will also identify candidates to work in a governance role as new trustees and network leaders who will be outside these two groups but will come together periodically to help guide the work.

Next steps

We need you to help ensure that the right people are at the workshops on 8 and 22 March. What we need are the highly connected individuals who are committed to the future of the Marlborough marine environment and who will have the trust of diverse interests to develop wise solutions to wicked problems.

Victor Koller spoke of the efforts of an individual who through the Moetapu Residents Association has been engaging with MPI on the subject of over-fishing in Mahau Sound. Victor queries whether this effort should continue or whether the association should rely on the new format promoted by Eric.

Eric advised that the Association will need to demonstrate that over-fishing exists in terms of location, species, extent and effect. He suggested in the interim that the Association establish a non-regulatory response by setting lower fish catch limits for the Mahau Sound and self-regulate to meet this new standard. This may in turn put pressure on others using this fishery to also self-regulate to the voluntary limit.

Councillor Hook and Eric acknowledged the importance of individuals/associations developing knowledge at a local fishery level to then better inform the Central Government process and improve the flow of information between Central and Local Government.

7. Coastal Science and Monitoring Update

Steve Ulrich provided a presentation on Council's coastal science monitoring programme. Copy of presentation attached - Appendix 4.

The key points of his presentation were:

- an update on Havelock estuary plan research and monitoring;
- an overview of changes in Pelorus Sound since European settlement (seabed and fisheries);
- an update on the Pelorus Sound hydro-dynamic model; and
- advice on the progress of the significant marine site survey and monitoring project.

Steve then re-presented the presentation given by NIWA to the Environment Committee on Thursday 12 February 2015. Copy attached - Appendix 5. The presentation was on a review of written and oral history of seabed (benthic) change in Pelorus Sound. He also circulated a copy of the NIWA report - The history of benthic change in Pelorus Sound (Te Hoiere), Marlborough, prepared for Council February 2015 (Trim Reference 1520297).

The NIWA presentation to the Environment Committee covered the following points:

- What seafloor habitats occurred in Pelorus Sound prior to major human impacts?

- How ecologically important and widespread would biogenic (made from living organisms) habitats have been, such as green-lipped mussel reefs?
- How were these habitats impacted, and what prevents them from re-establishment?
- Do mussel farms and associated shell deposits play a broadly equivalent ecological role as benthic habitats to historical green-lipped mussel beds?
- If harvested shells were returned to the seabed, what research should occur to monitor the effects on ecological values?

Since the settlement of Havelock in 1860, land uses in the Pelorus Sound and river catchments have included native forest harvesting and clearance for farmland, farming, pine forestry, gold mining, fishing, dredging and the widespread hand picking of shellfish.

The environmental effects of these activities on seabed habitats included: sedimentation, loss of biodiversity from over-fishing and depletion of fishing stocks, and the destruction and modification of living reefs from bottom trawling, dredging and illegal fishing methods such as dynamiting.

The earliest records of shellfish harvesting appear in the anthropological record, with green-lipped, blue, fan and horse mussels an important component of Maori diets.

Oyster bars in Blenheim and Nelson were all the rage from the late 1850s to the early 1900s, when over-harvesting of the native oyster depleted the resource. Oyster farming (using rock oysters from the North Island) was attempted in the Pelorus in the late 1890s and early 1900s without success.

Harvesting of naturally occurring green-lipped mussels occurred in earnest in the 1960s and 1970s. The collapse of the Hauraki Gulf mussel reefs from over exploitation led to the attention of industry turning to the Marlborough Sounds and Tasman Bay.

By the time a comprehensive survey of remaining mussel reefs was done in 1969, only approximately 350 hectares of mussel beds remained. These were mainly in Kenepuru Sound, Hikapu Reach and in side bays in the inner Pelorus.

The collapse of the mussel beds in the Pelorus led to the development of the mussel farming industry in the 1970s to over 2500 hectares of production today.

The ecological consequences of the loss of the mussel beds have been profound. Extensive areas provided complex three-dimensional habitats for algae and invertebrates, which in turn provided food for fish species. A recent study in the North Island found 10- times the number of fish around green-lipped mussel beds than in bare sediments.

Mussel beds provided ecosystem services by filtering, binding and stabilising sediments. Other benefits likely included nitrogen and carbon sequestration and recycling. The loss of these areas meant that fine sediments from the Kaituna and Pelorus rivers, and from farming and forest harvesting around the Sound, likely smothered the seabed preventing re-establishment of the mussel reefs.

The ecological significance of these changes is only now starting to be widely understood. Loss of fish diversity and abundance was noted by a number of people interviewed for the study. Long-term research in Duncan Bay from 1973-2006 found that fish declined in diversity, abundance, length and weight. This was caused by the unregulated plundering of the fishery in the 1960s and 1970s, and the degradation of seabed habitats by dredging.

Because these changes have not been widely appreciated, it may have led to the concept of 'shifting baselines'. This can lead to a belief that what is there now should be protected as it is perceived as being unchanged from the past and of high ecological value, rather than being ecologically simplified, less resilient and abundant, and therefore needing restoration and protection.

To understand how baselines have shifted, a project is shortly to get underway to drill the seabed back down in time to pre-European days. Council has partnered with the Marine Farming Association and the Ministry for Primary Industries to contract NIWA to take sediment cores in the Kenepuru Sound and Beatrix Bay. Sediment cores will be taken to determine exactly what types and where seabed communities and habitats occurred, and how human activities affected their ecological functions. Results are expected in 2016.

It is also proposed to investigate what can be done to restore mussel beds and protect remaining habitats. One option is to examine the feasibility, and ecological implications, of returning mussel shells to the seabed in Pelorus Sound, and seeding live mussels on top of these 'artificial reefs'. This would potentially turn a waste product into a resource to sustain and enhance biodiversity, upon which recreation and economic benefits depend.

This will need to be supported by research to examine the equivalence between the ecological role provided by extinct mussel reefs as compared to the environment effects of mussel farms. Council will continue to work collaboratively with the Marine Farm Association and Ministry for Primary Industries to gather good information to support the sustainable management of Pelorus Sound.

Anyone who wants to know more can contact Steve on 520 7560 or steve.urlich@marlborough.govt.nz.

8. DOC Update

Robin Cox presented a Department of Conservation update:

Department of Conservation Update - February 2015

Staff

Roy Grose continues as an acting Service Manager in Hokitika and indications are that he will continue in this role until at least the end of March.

The Conservation Service Manager's position in Picton will continue to be filled by Jo Gould.

Chris Birmingham has transferred from Maud Island back to Te Anau and the Maud position has been filled temporarily by Frank Higgott and Sue Caldwell, a couple who each work 50% of the time. This couple worked on Takapourewa for almost two years before settling in North West Bay.

Five staff have been employed to undertake spartina work for two months.

The Sounds staff are a positive group of people, more so after the Christmas break which is fast becoming a distant memory.

Weeds

Five newly employed staff will be involved in the annual spartina program. Spartina finds are less than previous years, but as the aim is eradication, monitoring is essential. A spartina find was made in Okiwi Bay, the first in many years. The funding for this work is provided by both DOC and the Council.

Removal of weeds on the Brothers Island was recently undertaken. The main weed is mallow and eradication is the desired aim.

The annual joint venture with Council to control boneseed has been undertaken. Both DOC and Council staff were involved in this project.

Council and DOC staff jointly undertook a week long trip to control evergreen box thorn in the Manaroa area. Not a simple task when the weed is found in gorse on the coastal faces.

Predators

Indications are that the mice eradication project on Maud has been successful. A monitoring and trapping program continues and no mice have been caught since late September. Four visits by predator finding dogs have also been undertaken without any finds.

The Battle for Our Birds poison operation in the Tennyson finally took place on 23 November after lots of discussion with Pelorus Protection Inc. Apart from a reported poisoning of a donkey well away from the poison area, things have been very quiet. The latest results show a residual rat population of 12% and a residual mice population of 19%. Although it is not as high as desired, it is higher than many other areas and will protect the native species this year, but the bounce back time will be shorter. Because of higher wind speeds in the day, a small area around Mount Stanley was poisoned by hand after the main helicopter operation.

Predator monitoring has been undertaken on Blumine Island after it was reported a mouse was observed. Predator dog checks, monitoring and trapping have failed to confirm the report.

Trapping continues to catch the rats on Pickersgill Island. At this point no other form of control is planned.

The Durville Island community has set up trap lines along the public road and have 26 traps yet to establish. The February check resulted in 24 stoats and 1 rat being caught. It seems that the community has funds to continue this trapping for 12 months. There seems to be a lot of interest in reestablishing a local desire to remove all stoats from the island and, with the rediscovery of bats on the island, the value of doing this becomes higher.

Forest and Bird undertakes trapping at Pelorus Bridge to protect the bat population there. For the months of July, August, September and October 2013, 113 rats were caught. For the same months in 2014 829 were caught. This is independent information to support the Departments concern of increased predator numbers as a result of the beech mast year.

The national office project at Bottle Rock continues. The aim is to provide protection to an area without the need of predator fences, a very expensive capital item.

A whole range of traps and poisons are being trialed to test the idea. With the Queen Charlotte Track passing through a corner of the protected area, the start of the Queen Charlotte Track looks like a busy highway intersection with all the legally required toxin signs in place.

The quarantining of volunteers, researchers and staff has become a major role in the protection of the islands from predator incursions. Being open islands complicate the management and advocacy is relied on for concessionaires and the public.

Endangered Species

Takahe and kakapo have not yet been returned to Maud after their removal as a precaution for the mice eradication program.

Blue penguin research has been undertaken based on the Queen Charlotte Islands. Normally Rowi kiwi are transferred to Motuara until they obtain a weight of approximately 1kg has continued when they are returned to the West Coast.

The program to reintroduce fairy prions to Maud continues. Brian Bell checked the breeding in the artificial burrows and reported limited success. The hope is that a full colony of breeding birds will develop and call the Maud Peninsula home.

100 fairy prions were transferred from Takapouwera to Mana Island in the second phase of an attempt to establish another colony.

Community Involvement

The major local wine producer, Yealands, has decided to enter into a three year sponsorship with DOC for the interpretation of the Queen Charlotte Track. The idea is great but it will not be a simple task as iwi, community groups, concessionaires, land owners and operators will need to be consulted. A start has been made by seeking expressions of interest from providers.

Link Pathway was successful in gaining a grant of over \$70,000 from the Canterbury Community Trust. The resource consent has been obtained for the whole track and they now have an authority from Heritage NZ to modify two sections of the pre 1900 pack track between the Kaituna River and Cullens Point, and between Ngakuta Bay and Wedge Point.

Formation has started on the former section and above Belvue Bay. It is intended to start on the latter section in the near future.

Other Sounds groups who received grants from Canterbury Community Trust were; Durville Island Residents for pest control, Ngakuta Bay for foot paths and bridges and Sounds Restoration Trust for pine control around Ngakuta.

The new caretaker's house at Mistletoe Bay is now complete and occupied. The army did provide two men for two weeks to assist with the building, but local volunteers also helped. The location looks a picture but, like many Sounds locations, is suffering from low water levels.

Individuals and groups have been poisoning pines in numerous parts of the Sounds. Kaiuma, Erie, South East and North West Bays are the locations that have either taken chemical or the DOC drill to do this work. Sounds Restoration Trust has been active in the Endeavour Bay area, but it must be appreciated it is a big area and lots of pines.

The annual Untouched World Foundation trip to Blumine Island took place in late November early December 2014. The students are fully immersed in conservation on this very special island for a week. It is a mind changing experience to the students who are selected from Canterbury and Marlborough secondary schools. This year 17 students and 10 supervisory people were involved with DOC staff involved in the quarantining and three days on the island.

Air NZ have been active in two matters in the Sounds. Air NZ contributed toward the cost of a wellness survey of the Long Island Marine Reserve. In time this survey will be carried out in all marine reserves nationally. The Coastal Gem proposal highlighting marine reserves is also gaining momentum. Locally the scene is being set as including the islands and Ship Cove to give it additional significance. It is hoped that the Coastal Gem proposal will be as successful as Air NZ support for the Great Walks. Good for them for getting more people on the great walks and appreciating the outdoors.

Marine Mammals

Following on from the four training provided to commercial operators and DOC staff, three training sessions were offered to private boaties, one at each of Havelock, Picton and Kaikoura. Sadly the numbers attending these opportunities were low, so other methods of advocacy will be used. As a result of these training sessions, all the regular DOC boat operators have received this marine mammal training.

The 2015 whale survey dates have been signaled as commencing on 13 June and finishing on 11 July.

Recreation

The upgrade at Momorangi was largely completed just before the busy summer season started. This involved to replacement of the two toilet blocks on the water front, undergrounding the power supply, resurfacing the access roads and landscaping. The work that was not completed was the landscaping.

The Kathmandu sponsorship at Momorangi is progressing, but not as fast as first intended. Interpretation is rather tricky when several parties are involved. What has been achieved is; planting using Marlborough Boys' College students, activity booklets produced for younger campers and a short walk formed with unique tree label signs installed. NMIT grew some of the seedlings, among them the rather rare swamp maire.

The track at the end of Karaka Point has been closed for several months because of the fall hazard. Engineers are preparing plans for a structure to rectify the problem.

The 2015 upgrade of the Queen Charlotte Track has started. Machinery and staff have been on site since the beginning of February. The start was made south of the Pines settlement and continues toward Furneaux. In an attempt to avoid damage to services not known about, key people in the Pines community were contacted advising them of the work.

Mitigating human use takes a lot of time and cost. Be it servicing public camp sites and picnic sites almost daily in the holiday periods to providing the facilities to handle it. A new wastewater system has been installed at Whatamanga Bay to handle the increasing volumes of sewage being produced. At School House Bay and Bay of Many Coves, shelter replacement toilets have been installed for the Queen Charlotte Track walkers.

To reduce the fire hazard, the Queen Charlotte Track was mown before Christmas. Gorse spraying is a continuing operation on many tracks when time allows.

The camp ground host program has worked very well this summer. Four sites; Nydia Lodge, Camp Bay, Cow Shed Bay and Kenepuru Heads, have had almost continuous host presence. By the end of April it is anticipated that 48 people will have spent 440 days being camp ground hosts. A few stay for a week or two, but some also stay for a month or two. In addition to these folks, local residents act as hosts as well and there are four sites where this happens; French Pass, Elaine Bay, Whatamanga and Waimaru. Without these people the level of service would be lower, as would the fees collected.

David Hayes provided a brief explanation of the on-going re-structuring process now underway at the DOC - Renwick Office. The latest round is in response to feedback following the previous re-structure approximately 17 months ago and was intended to resolve issues that have arisen from that process. The pilot programme is confined to the Renwick office and will focus on processes and organizational structure. The pilot will occur over a period of three months. Once the new structure has been deemed to be effective it will be rolled out to the rest of the organization.

David explained that for the duration of the re-structure his role will cease to exist and he will be assuming another function within the partnerships team. This meant that Jo Gould will likely be attending the Sounds Advisory Group meeting as his replacement. Robin Cox's role in the department is unchanged.

David said a benefit of the re-structure will be clarity for external parties in terms of who they should engage with.

David advised that the timeframes for the next round of funding under the Community Conservation Partnership Fund will now be announced in the very near future. He advised the group to keep an eye on the DOC website if they were interested in applying for funding.

9. General Discussion

Victor Koller spoke of the poor level of broadband service in Mahau Sound. There has been a significant decline in broadband speed over the previous six months. The group members also described the poor levels of service they have also experienced.

Robin Cox referred to the support given at the previous meeting for resident associations to propose community led wilding pine removal programmes for road reserve. He said he had informally spoken to Steve at Marlborough Roads on this matter. He also spoke to the Department of Corrections in the hope this might be a means of getting the work done. Alan Johnson and Councillor Hook said they would follow up with Steve.

Poneke Rene referred to the previous amendment to the Local Government Act, specifically the section on the significance of engagement. He queried if there was any response to the amendment from Marlborough District Council. Alan explained that Council was about to commence the consultation phase on the Annual Plan and Long Term Plan.

Kristen Gerard noted that the water shortage in the Marlborough Sounds was becoming a significant issue with waterways receding rapidly and water supplies drying up.

Alan added that approximately 200 out of the 1500 water permits are affected by the dry summer and the Minister has declared a medium scale drought in Marlborough. Renwick and Picton were both facing water restrictions.

Eric Jorgensen advised the Blue Cod Management Group were going to run a couple of drop-in centres to provide the public an opportunity to discuss fishery management options. The two events are scheduled for 18 March in Nelson (venue to be advised) and 19 March at the Endeavour Park Pavilion.

10. Positive Feedback

Kristen Gerard commended the Marlborough Kaikoura Rural Fire Authority for the way it has managed the fire season thus far. Specifically, the effort required to bring the Northbank fire under control and the input from fire crews from around Marlborough and New Zealand.

She added the messages broadcasted over the Marlborough Marine Radio regarding the total fire ban have been very effective.

Councillor Hook added it was important to extend any fire ban over South Marlborough to North Marlborough to avoid confusion amongst tourists to the region who may not be able to recognise area boundaries.

Kristen noted the road into Te Mahia had been resealed.

Councillor Hook commended the new owners of Raetihi Lodge who have invested in significant improvements to the resort. He added the restaurant provided excellent food and service.

Kristen commended the installation of the new navigational sign in Havelock Marina.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting to be held in the Committee Room at Marlborough District Council on Monday 11 May 2015.

The meeting closed at 2.00 pm

**Agenda items should be sent to
Kay Leach (e-mail Kay.Leach@marlborough.govt.nz)
by Friday 24 April 2015**

Action	Responsibility
Follow up with Steve at Marlborough Roads regarding a wilding pines removal programme for road reserves. This follows the previous action point: That resident associations propose community led wilding pine programmes for road reserve through the Assets and Services Committee and seek Marlborough Roads support to facilitate permissions by providing a road management plan, safety processes and equipment and whatever signs are required.	Alan Johnson and Councillor Hook
Advisement to Council planners that there is concern in the community when people seek relief from the 8 metre setback, and for the planners to have forethought of the implications a structure right on the foreshore might have. Public notified resource consent as opposed to limited notification.	Alan Johnson
Advise group if Marine Protected Areas discussion paper is received by Council.	Alan Johnson
Follow up with Councillor Barsanti on efforts to arrange the removal of the log in Moetapu Bay.	Councillor Oddie
Follow up with Ron Sutherland regarding his replacement from the forestry sector to step into the Sounds Advisory Group vacancy created by his resignation.	Alan Johnson
Gina to provide a presentation on discharges from boats at the next meeting.	Gina Ferguson
Councillor Hook to discuss with Pere Hawes the issue of how to manage the effects of logging truck on the Marlborough Sounds roading network.	Councillor Hook

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