

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WAIPARA RIVER WORKING PARTY  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2009 AT 7.00PM IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBERS, 66 CARTERS ROAD, AMBERLEY.**

**PRESENT**

Rob Gerard (Chair), Tony Fitzsimmonds, Bryan Jensen, Paul Williams, Douschka Saunders, Fred Murray, Ross Little, Mark Jones, Greg Bennett, Leigh Love, Ross Williams, Gareth Renowden, Brent Maguire

**APOLOGIES**

Sarah Hughes-Games, Garry Jackson, Sharleen James, Norton Hiller, David Beer, Julie Coster

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Amelia Dalley (Minutes), Helga Rigg, Jane Demeter, Andrew Parrish

**MINUTES**

*The following correction was asked to be made to the minutes of the meeting held 8 December 2008:*

***Page 4, Waipara Mouth to SH1 Bridge:*** *It was noted that there is no such bird as a grey fronted tern and it is likely to be a white fronted tern that was being referred to.*

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2008 AS CIRCULATED, ARE TAKEN AS READ AND NOW CONFIRMED WITH THE AMENDMENTS AS REQUESTED.

Saunders/Renowden

CARRIED

*The following correction was asked to be made to the minutes of the meeting held 29 April 2009:*

***Page 1, In attendance:*** *It should be noted that Richard Goord participated in the meeting on behalf of Gareth Renowden as a representative of the Waipara River Protection Group.*

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 APRIL 2009 AS CIRCULATED, ARE TAKEN AS READ AND NOW CONFIRMED WITH THE AMENDMENTS AS REQUESTED.

Murray/Saunders

CARRIED

## **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES 8 DECEMBER 2008**

Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga have been contacted by letter and email. As yet no one has attended as a representative. Ngāi Tahu has also been contacted about the Nohoanga sites.

## **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES 29 APRIL 2009**

Ms James is to approach the Christchurch Off-road Motocross Club committee to find someone to replace her on the Working Party.

Mr Fitzsimmonds to approach the owners of Teviotdale to discuss the vehicle access track to the Rocks and the land at Horseshoe Bend.

*Action Point - Hurunui District Council to contact the New Zealand Army with respect to their activities in the river.*

## **WORKING PAPER THREE**

### **Vehicle Access**

The Working Party considered the three options proposed to extend the vehicle prohibited area at the Waipara River mouth. Mr Jensen from the Department of Conservation considered that Option C would be the most desirable in terms of providing protection for bird habitats. This was supported by Mr Murray the Forest and Bird representative.

There was some discussion regarding enforcement of drivers using the existing vehicle access tracks through the area contained in Option C. There was concern that drivers of vehicles travelling downstream from Greenwoods Bridge may not be aware of the proposed designated vehicle access track located on the south side of the river. Some Working Party members were of the view that there should also be a vehicle access track located on the north side of the river. There was some discussion centred on the potential location for a northern track. The Working Party generally agreed that it was necessary to provide vehicular access to the Rocks although there was some concern over the security of the track given that part of it is located on private property.

The Working Party went on to discuss how any proposed vehicle ban area might be implemented. There was general agreement that Option C would need to be phased in over a period of time and that education would be an important component. The Working Party generally agreed that the majority of vehicle drivers would abide directions to stay to a marked track.

There was some discussion centred on the time of year that a vehicle ban would need to be in place. The majority of the Working Party considered that a vehicle ban would need to be in place all year round as birds need protection throughout the year.

Mr Gerard highlighted the current plans for a bylaw to include the vehicle prohibited area under the Northern Pegasus Bay Coastal Management Plan. This

could potentially include an extended area from the Waipara River Working Party to provide enforcement tools for those breaching the restrictions.

It was noted that the overall strategy will see a move from the current casual use of the Waipara River to managed use and that it will take a number of years for behaviours to change.

THAT THE WORKING PARTY ADOPT OPTION C AS A RECOMMENDATION

Renowden/Murray

CARRIED

The Working Party next considered the importance of education and raised suggestions on how this might be implemented and provided examples from other places. The Working Party accepted that people will enter the prohibited area and that the enforcement mechanisms should become firmer as people adjust their behaviours.

The Working Party noted that the strategy for implementation needs to be phased in over time and as such it would be premature to discuss any strategies at this time as the rest of the river has yet to be considered. It was also advised that the strategy for implementation is often the role of Council staff and the Working Party may get stuck discussing details at the expense of the recommendations.

After further discussions the Working Party agreed that a track should be provided for down the north side of the river, and that this would be particularly important during the first few years of implementation.

RECOMMENDATION FIVE

THAT MOTOR VEHICLES ARE BANNED AT THE WAIPARA RIVER MOUTH IN THE AREA INDICATED IN BLUE, SUBJECT TO A DESIGNATED MOTOR VEHICLE TRACK FOR ACCESS TO THE NOHOANGA SITE AND A TRACK ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE RIVER TO BE PHASED OUT WITHIN THREE YEARS FROM THE ADOPTION OF THE PLAN. TRACKS ARE TO BE SITED TO MINIMISE IMPACT ON WILDLIFE.

Renowden/Murray

CARRIED

There was a brief discussion regarding the District Plan provisions with respect to vehicle access to the rocks and the implications of the rules in the Plan.

RECOMMENDATION SIX

THAT A PLAN CHANGE BE PROMOTED SO THAT THE USE OF MOTORISED VEHICLES IS A PERMITTED ACTIVITY ON THE DESIGNATED TRACK TO THE ROCKS SUBJECT TO LANDOWNERS PERMISSION.

Maguire/Jones

CARRIED

## **Fauna**

Fauna was then discussed by the Working Party. Three options for wildlife protection were presented in the working paper. It was agreed that a wildlife sanctuary would not be appropriate as there are a number of game birds and pests which are hunted in the river.

Mr Jensen noted that the Department of Conservation would like to see the value of birds in the area recognised without heavy handed policy tools and that formal protection of wildlife is something that can be considered some time in the future. The Working Party generally agreed that formal wildlife protection is something that may be desirable long term but that education of the public should be encouraged in the first instance.

### **RECOMMENDATION SEVEN**

**THAT THE PUBLIC BE EDUCATED ON THE NATURAL VALUE OF THE WILDLIFE VALUES OF THE ESTUARY**

Jensen/Williams

CARRIED

## **Flora**

The Working Party next considered plant life at the Waipara River mouth and in particular the value of restoring designated areas at the mouth. The organisations in the recommendation were questioned, particularly with respect to the resources that the Department of Conservation could reasonably be expected to contribute. The Working Party generally agreed that all relevant agencies should be included as they may be able to provide support other than financial support.

There was some discussion about the area included within the recommendation. It was agreed that the recommendation to only include those areas within the vehicle banned areas would be limited. As such there was a motion to amend the recommendation to include the whole Waipara River mouth area.

Motion to amend recommendation nine to include whole river mouth area.

Bennet/Little

### **RECOMMENDATION NINE**

**THAT THE WORKING PARTY RECOMMEND TO ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY, THE HURUNUI DISTRICT COUNCIL AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION THAT THEY WORK COLLABORATIVELY ON A RESTORATION PROJECT AT THE WAIPARA RIVER MOUTH**

Little/Maguire

CARRIED

## RECOMMENDATION TEN

THAT THE WORKING PARTY RECOMMEND THAT ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY, THE HURUNUI DISTRICT COUNCIL AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH LOCAL GROUPS TO ASSIST IN CARRYING OUT THE WORK

Renowden/Fitzsimmonds

CARRIED

## RECOMMENDATION ELEVEN

THAT THE WORKING PARTY RECOMMEND ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY AND THE HURUNUI DISTRICT COUNCIL DEDICATE SET FUNDING FOR THE RESTORATION PROJECT

Bennett/Love

CARRIED

## WORKING PAPER FOUR

### Fire Risk

The Working Party reviewed Working Paper 4 with respect to fire risk. Mr Jensen clarified the two Department of Conservation fire seasons and that these move into different seasons in coordination with territorial authorities.

There were some questions raised over the definition of '*small cooking and comfort fire*'. Mr Jensen noted that this exception in the law can create problems particularly with respect to the definition of '*a small fire*'. Mr Jensen noted that any person lighting a fire is taking a large risk as they may be liable for costs if the Department of Conservation considers that the fire needs to be extinguished. People are not generally aware of this provision in the legislation.

The Working Party noted that landowners are particularly concerned with the lighting of fires in the riverbed as it puts the landowner's property and assets at risk. Some members of the Working Party suggested that a bylaw be put in place to ban fires completely as it is felt that the current regulations do not provide adequate protection. It was questioned whether Council would be able to do this.

*Action Point – Council Officers to look into the possibility of a by-law banning the lighting of all fires in the Waipara River.*

The Working Party queried if it was possible for the Department of Conservation to put in place a prohibited fire season to provide this protection. Mr Jensen clarified that the Department of Conservation monitors the fire risk very carefully and only puts in place a prohibited fire season when it is felt necessary. A prohibited fire season is not put in place lightly.

Some members of the Working Party questioned whether there is a need to ban all fires. Groups staying at the Boys Brigade camp are often taught to light fires for cooking in the riverbed. This has not been a problem in the past as it is done in a controlled and safe environment. The Working Party agreed that more information be provided on the potential powers the Council may have to adjust fire restrictions in the riverbed. If there is little the Council is able to do then there is no point in discussing other options.

#### RECOMMENDATION FIVE

THAT THE WORKING PARTY RECOMMENDS THAT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ON FIRE RESTRICTIONS AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INDIVIDUAL THROUGH SIGNAGE ALONG THE WAIPARA RIVER.

Bennett/Murray

CARRIED

There was some further discussion regarding whether signage would be an effective mechanism or not. There was also some concern expressed regarding the possibility that landowners could be charged for fires that are lit on their property. The Working Party suggested that this matter needs to be looked into further.

*Action point – Further information to be sought on the process of billing for costs of fire extinguishing.*

It was noted that the next meeting date is in the middle of the school holidays. Few members have an issue with this.

*Action point – Ms Rigg to confirm the date of the next meeting.*

Meeting Closed 9.25pm