

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WAIPARA RIVER WORKING PARTY HELD ON MONDAY 17 AUGUST 2009 AT 7.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 66 CARTERS ROAD, AMBERLEY.

PRESENT

Rob Gerard (Chair), Fred Murray, Ross Little, Leigh Love, Ross Williams, Gareth Renowden, Mark Forrester, Mark Jones, Sarah Hughes-Games, Douschka Saunders, Greg Bennett, Bryan Jensen, Paul Williams

APOLOGIES

Garry Jackson, David Beer, Norton Hiller, Julie Coster, Laurence Smith, Te Marino Lenihan

IN ATTENDANCE

Amelia Dalley (Minutes), Helga Rigg, Andrew Parrish, Chris Rhodes, Terry Charles, Jeff Scholes

MINUTES

THAT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2009 AS CIRCULATED, ARE TAKEN AS READ AND NOW CONFIRMED.

Murray/Williams

CARRIED

MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

Mr Bennett advised that he has not contacted the Army. His recommendation is that the Council write a letter on behalf of the Working Party. The Working Party agreed that the letter should express concern about the way in which the Army uses the river bed for training activities and that they be invited to attend the meetings. It was also suggested that the Minister for Defence be sent a copy.

Action Point - Ms Rigg to send a letter to Army and the Minister for Defence

Fire

Mr Jensen confirmed that the Department of Conservation (DOC) could put up signs notifying the public that fires are by permit only if the Working Party wishes to adopt this strategy. The Working Party could also choose to allow small fires in the river beds. It is hard for the Department to apply different strategies to different areas of the river and as such Mr Jensen advised a single approach to the management of fires.

It was noted that fires are currently being policed by some of the local residents, particularly around the State Highway 1 (SH1) bridge area. Concerns were raised about the workability of a permit only strategy if people want to light small fires. The Working Party agreed that the motion passed at the previous meeting was not appropriate and decided to amend it.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT THE WORKING PARTY SUPPORT CURRENT FIRE REGULATIONS WITH THE PROVISION APPROPRIATE SIGNAGE BE MADE AVAILABLE AT ALL PUBLIC ACCESS POINTS TO THE RIVER.

Camping

Mr Jensen commented on the motion passed at the previous meeting from the perspective of the Department of Conservation. Mr P Williams disagreed with restricting camping to certain areas.

Rubbish

It was suggested that one of the reasons that rubbish is dumped is that the charges for dumping rubbish at transfer stations is too high. It was generally agreed that the cost associated with rubbish disposal is outside the scope of the Working Party.

WORKING PAPER FIVE

Plant and Animal Pests

Mr Charles from Environment Canterbury (Ecan) gave a power-point presentation on the Canterbury Pest Management Strategy. Mr Charles noted that Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) is currently controlling nassella tussock in the river bed on unoccupied crown land. He advised that rabbits, gorse, broom and old mans beard are the responsibility of the land occupier but that Ecan will get involved if required.

It is the opinion of Environment Canterbury that 1080 poison is the only effective poison for killing rabbits as other poisons and shooting aren't as effective. Mr Charles noted that there have been very few cases of dogs being affected. The Working Party expressed mixed views on this matter.

With respect to Old Man's Beard, Mr Charles advised that an ongoing control programme was required to eradicate this pest plant. He noted that it is fairly easy to control but requires ongoing eradication to prevent it re-establishing.

There was a general discussion around other pests within the river and it was noted that Biosecurity New Zealand policy relies on DOC.

The Working Party considered a number of policy options available and generally agreed that community initiated programmes would work best as the land occupiers would be more likely to support it.

It was queried why LINZ isn't involved in the Working Party process. Mr Parrish clarified that when setting up the Working Party attempts to involve LINZ were made but they choose not to get involved.

MOTION

THAT LAND INFORMATION NEW ZEALAND BE INVOLVED AND THAT THE HURUNUI DISTRICT COUNCIL WRITE A LETTER ON BEHALF OF THE WORKING PARTY.

Assistance and funding can be sought by community groups. It was suggested that the Working Party may want to initiate the set up of a trust or society to support community work on the Waipara River.

RECOMMENDATION ONE

THAT THE WORKING PARTY RECOMMEND TO ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY, THE HURUNUI DISTRICT COUNCIL AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION THAT THEY WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH PRIVATE LANDOWNERS AND GAIN THE COOPERATION OF LINZ TO DEVELOP PEST CONTROL STRATEGIES.

Murray/Saunders

CARRIED

RECOMMENDATION TWO

THAT THE WORKING PARTY RECOMMEND TO ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY, THE HURUNUI DISTRICT COUNCIL AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION THAT THEY WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH PRIVATE LANDOWNERS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY INITIATED CONTROL OF PESTS.

Little/Murray

CARRIED

Willows

Ms Rigg introduced the topic of willows. Mr Scholes from Environment Canterbury discussed willows in terms of river engineering. He advised that willows need to be cleared through the middle of the river but need to remain on the banks for stability.

There was some discussion on the creation of a river rating district to fund the removal of willows. The process of creating and the implications of a river rating district were outlined by ECan. It was noted that there is currently a high level of demand from local communities for river rating districts and that these can only be formed by agreement from all parties.

The Working Party discussed a number of options for removing willows. It was noted that aerial spraying with Roundup could be quite cost effective and that there shouldn't be too many consent issues around the removal of the willows from the fairway although there is a need to retain willows along the banks for stabilisation. There is also a need to consider the impact that the removal of willow may have on the stabilisation of the riverbed around the SH1 Bridge.

Next meeting confirmed for 21 September

Meeting closed 9:22pm