
West Coast Catchments Committee
OPEN MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the West Coast Catchments Committee held in the Council Chamber, Waikato Regional Council, 401 Grey Street, Hamilton East on Wednesday, 7 November 2018 at 10.00am.

The meeting was opened with a karakia by Ray Wi

	Present:	
Waikato Regional Council	Cr Fred Lichtwark	
Waikato District Council	Cr Lisa Thomson	
Otorohanga District Council	Cr Deborah Pilkington	
Waitomo District Council	Cr Sue Smith	
Department of Conservation		
Local Community Representatives	Mark Brough (Deputy Chair)	Catherine Holland
	Tom Mandeno	John Reeves
	Mike Moss	Kristel van Houte
Te Tokanganui-a-noho	Weo Maag (Chair)	
Maniapoto Maori Trust Board	Ray Wi	
Waikato-Tainui		
Co-Chairman Integrated	Cr Stu Kneebone	
Catchment Management		
Committee		
Chairman of Council, <u>or</u>		
Deputy Chairman of Council		

	In Attendance
Waikato Regional Council	Jolene Francis (Zone Manager, West Coast and Central Waikato)
	B Toohey (Manager, Lower Waikato/Waipā/West Coast Catchments)
	D Embling (Team Leader Biosecurity (Pest Plants))
	B Bailey (Team Leader, Animal Pests)
	 M Poole - Meeting Secretary

Apologies

M Moss moved/Cr S Kneebone seconded

WCC18/28 **THAT the apologies from Cr Alan Livingston (on Council business), Stephen Reid (community representative) and Natasha Hayward (Department of Conservation) be accepted.**

The motion was put and carried (WCC18/28)

Confirmation of Agenda

(Agenda Item 2)

Cr L Thomson moved/T Mandeno seconded.

WCC18/29 **RESOLVED**
THAT the agenda of the meeting of the West Coast Catchments Committee of 7 November 2018, as circulated, be confirmed as the business for the meeting with a change to the order of items to take No. 6 -Issues and Action Report and No. 7 - Chair's Report immediately following No. 4 - Confirmation of Minutes.

The motion was put and carried (WCC18/29)

Disclosures of Interest

(Agenda Item 3)

There were no disclosures of interest. Noted that conflicts of interest are not limited to financial interests and could also arise as a result of "other hats" that members wear.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

File: * (Agenda Item 4) Doc #12994356

With respect to Item 8 - West Coast Zone Status Report (page 8/9) M Brough had requested a map showing what areas have been planted to date and what areas are planned to be planted. To be included in the Issues and Actions Schedule.

With respect to Item 8 - West Coast Zone Status Report (page 9) D Pilkington had asked several questions about the Hauturu-Honikiwi Possum Control Scheme. Proposed to cover those matters as part of Item 5 - Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan Annual Report & Operational Plan later in the meeting

Cr F Litchwark moved/T Mandeno seconded.

WCC18/30 **RESOLVED**
THAT the Minutes of the West Coast Catchments Committee meeting of 5 September 2018 be received and approved as a true and correct record, noting the Item 8 - West Coast Zone Status Report matters outlined above.

The motion was put and carried (WCC18/30)

Issues and Actions Report

(Agenda Item 6) Doc #13224123

Presented by Zone Manager, West Coast and Central Waikato Catchments (J Francis). The report was taken as read, noting the queries raised in Item 4 - Confirmation of Previous Minutes.

Arising out of questions, responses and discussion the following points were noted:

- requested that the Zone Status reporting include 'scorecard' information on catchment work programmes/activities to show timelines and progress towards completing the priority work plans/achieving the goals set.
- Google/satellite/aerial mapping can assist by providing an overview of the landscape including streams, vegetation cover, fencing, etc right down to an individual property scale. This would provide a visual overview of both Council catchment works and property owner initiated works.
- having knowledge of the different land uses by area/percentage in any given location will assist all concerned with future catchment management planning/prioritising. The current issues around forestry versus pastoral farming and the pending water quality rules and expectations via Healthy Rivers can be factored in.

W Maag moved/Cr S Smith seconded.

WCC18/31

RESOLVED

THAT the "Issues and Actions Report" (Doc #13224123 dated 24 October 2018) be received for information.

The motion was put and carried (wcc18/31)

Chair's Report

(Agenda Item 7) Doc #13223323

The Chair (W Maag) gave a verbal update, focussing on the initiatives and changes coming from Wellington/the Government, particularly around freshwater quality and forestry; and the opportunities and implications within the West Coast Catchments. To date there has been a catchment management focus, with the Council and landowners working together to identify priority projects, develop work programmes/farm plans and associated funding. There are also individual landowners and community groups involved in a range of environmental initiatives and projects; forestry blocks and Maori land blocks.

The Committee and community need to be kept informed of the impacts of legislative and policy, plan and rule changes around freshwater. What will the implications for farming activities be and what funding will be available for individuals and community groups to respond to/comply with the changes?

What opportunities does the One Billion Trees Programme provide for landowners in the West Coast Catchments? This initiative may provide economic and environmental benefits for Maori land blocks that are currently under-developed. Important for parties to work collaboratively together to get the greatest gains and most value from what is on offer.

Cr S Smith moved/M Brough seconded.

WCC18/32

RESOLVED

THAT the “Chairperson’s Report” (Doc #13223323 dated 1 November 2018) and verbal updates be received for information.

The motion was put and carried (wcc18/32)

West Coast Zone Status Report

(Agenda Item 9) Doc #13224715

Presented by Zone Manager, West Coast and Central Waikato Catchments (J Francis). The report covers the period 1 July to 30 September 2018 including the Financial Summary (by activity), key project updates and the non-financial (Long-Term Plan and Zone based) measures status. The Zone Manager highlighted the key activities, levels of service, performance measures and provide a progress to date commentary to expand on the information contained in the Status report.

J Reeve gave a verbal presentation on the King Country River Care Group. The aims include promoting sustainable farming practices and ensuring that the farming community has a voice in the development of policy. They are currently holding a series of community meetings around the ‘coverage’ area to get farmers ‘on-board’ and build membership. The Group will be working with farmers, the Regional Council and potential funder organisations. The response to date (two of five meetings held) has been positive. The Group seeks to work with/across all landowners, including for undeveloped Maori blocks.

Committee members expressed support for the initiative and asked questions and offered feedback, ideas and options for the Group to consider (e.g. setting up a nursery and involving local schools in water quality testing). Requested that Committee members be emailed the dates/locations of the community meetings coming up, so that they could attend and offer support.

Cr S Smith moved/M Moss seconded.

WCC18/33

RESOLVED

THAT the “West Coast Zone Status Report to 30 September 2018” (Doc #13224715 dated 26 October 2018) be received for information.

The motion was put and carried (wcc18/33)

Waikato Regional Pest Management Annual Report 2017/18 and Operational Plan 2018/19

(Agenda Item 5) Doc #13223139

Team Leader Biosecurity (Pest Plants) (D Embling) and Team Leader Animal Pests (B Bailey) presented an overview of the WRC Regional Pest Management Plan Annual Report for 2017/18 and the Operational Plan for 2018/19, noting that the documents respectively provide:

- a comprehensive report on the progress made by WRC in 2017/18 in implementing the 2014/2024 Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan (as a reporting requirement of the Biosecurity Act 1993); and
- an outline of the nature and scope of activities WRC intends to undertake in implementing the Regional Pest Management Plan in the 2018/19 year.

Pest management involves managing threats to the economy, biodiversity and the environment and human health; and the impacts of climate change.

Cr F Litchwark depart from meeting 11.15am

The Biosecurity Act 1993 requires that Regional Councils have a Regional Pest Management Plan to manage pests in the region. An early review of the Waikato RPMP has been triggered because the Plan must not be inconsistent with the National Policy Direction. The review is currently at the information gathering stage.

How does WRC 'manage' pests? By direct control and monitoring, inspections and surveys. The team go where the pests and issues are to support community-based initiatives; provide advice by phone, on the web and face to face; via bio-control releases and through RPMP rules.

The presentation provided information on a range of existing and emerging plant and animal pests found in the region including:

- Velvetleaf which is spread through crops, in particular maize. Anyone buying-in maize or maize silage should do 'due diligence'/ask questions.
- Alligator weed which impacts agriculture and waterways. It is a significant plant pest in the Waikato region and there are a limited number of tools that can be used in waterways. The impacts on west coast harbours would be significant and it is difficult to control its spread due to third party actions (people, equipment, stock movements).
- Kauri dieback. There is no cure for this disease and to date it has not been found on the West Coast.

Arising out of questions, responses and discussion the following points were noted:

- Pampas has been a total control plant pest, but it is widespread within the region and in surrounding regions. The forestry industry has not been able to manage it and the status will be considered in the review process. What about pampas control in quarries and on private land - will control rules still apply?
- Riparian fencing and planting form a key part of the catchment management programme to protect waterways from sediment and improve water quality. However, these areas provide an ideal growing environment for plant pests.
- there was a status change for Canada Geese in 2011. Nationally they are quite widespread, and numbers are increasing.
- the West Coast Catchments Priority Possum Control areas (PPCAs) achieve good success. They cover some 470,000 hectares and involve over 5,600 landowners. The focus has moved from Tb to high biodiversity values.
- the anti-1080 tactics have changed, with misinformation and targeting/threatening individuals. Can Regional Councils and other partners/agencies do more to support DoC? Need to get the 'good news'/success stories out. Risk loss of a valuable tool for possum control. Can the Predator Free 2050 initiative provide any new ideas and/or options?
- the Hauturu-Honikiwi PPCA is in the 2018/19 Operational Plan and work is scheduled to be carried out shortly. Concern that if DoC does not fund/carry out work on conservation land in that area, there will be a significant 'gap'/risk.
- goat control is a regionally focused programme for high value biodiversity gains. Council is collaborating with DoC. Achieve real gains if target both possums and goats.
- the K5 virus was released in autumn 2018. However, another strain RHDV2 has been found in the rabbit population. This strain is aggressive and has the potential to result in complete immunity to all strains over time.
- an emerging pest is the red-eared Slider Turtle due to the impacts of climate change. There are now confirmed cases of the turtles successfully breeding in the Waikato region

(on the Coromandel Peninsula) and as temperatures rise, eggs will eventually result in both male and female offspring being produced.

- work has resumed on identifying options and viable solutions for Koi carp control. This is a joint effort between Council and DoC. Potentially promising research is being done in Australia on a virus, however even if successful it will be several years before it could be imported/used here.
- given the significance of the biosecurity and biodiversity issues in the region, it was queried whether there was sufficient expertise and knowledge available at the governance level, in particular at the Catchment Committees and ICM Committee.
- advocacy and lobbying are tools available across all the issues that Catchment (Zone) Committees have in their Terms of Reference. It is important to identify and build relationships and partnerships with other groups and organisations, and to collaborate to achieve greater gains/make the funding available go further.

M Moss moved/Cr L Thomson seconded.

WCC18/34

RESOLVED

THAT:

1. **The report “Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan Annual Report 2017/18 and Operational Report 2018/19” (Doc #13223139 dated 26 October 2018) be received.**
2. **The Waikato Regional Pest Management Annual Report 2017/18 (Doc #12653506) be received.**
3. **The Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan 2018/19 Operational Plan (Doc #12654183) be received.**

The motion was put and carried (WCC18/34)

West Coast Catchments – Hill Country Erosion Fund (HCEF) Application

(Agenda Item 8) Doc #13282903

The Zone Manager, West Coast and Central Waikato Catchments (J Francis) gave a presentation on the MPI HCEF funding covering a summary of the 2015-19 application and the outcomes to date; and the application lodged for the 2019-23 funding round.

The purpose/focus of the MPI Erosion programme funding is soil conservation and erosion risk/control issues in hill country catchments. Photos of the Awakino and Mokau Rivers entering the Tasman Sea following severe weather events clearly showed the resulting sediment plume and impact on the marine environment.

Only Councils are eligible to make applications to the HCEF, and using the West Coast Zone as a ‘pilot’, Waikato RC was granted \$630,000 spread over the four-year period 2015-2019 in a shared/co-funding arrangement with WRC 35%/MPI 35% and the landowner contribution at 30%.

The programme targeted the most erodible land and Council staff worked with landowners to develop full farm plans. The issues to be addressed through the programme included the impacts of hill country erosion, the loss of soils, productivity and economic capacity, water quality impacts, habitats and river biodiversity, protection of infrastructure and more.

The MPI funding enabled Council to focus the catchment new works budget for the West Coast Zone on implementing harbour projects. In the three years of the HCEF programme completed to date: 21 farm plans have been prepared, 264ha of land and 48 kilometres of stream banks fenced, 271ha of land planted and field days held. The HCEF funding for 2018/19 is already fully allocated with 26 projects planned. A community engagement day was held in Awakino in August, and a recent (late October) field day had 160 attendees. Demand has now outstripped the availability of funding. The positive results of the works undertaken to date can be seen on the ground, there has been good community engagement/involvement and a positive relationship with and support from the Councils/Council staff.

MPI made some changes for the 2019-23 funding round to include coastal, alpine and riparian areas and has increased the national funding from \$14M to \$34M. WRC has lodged one application covering five Zones (West Coast, Central Waikato, Lower Waikato and Coromandel) for a total of \$5.2M. MPI has advised that the fund is \$20M oversubscribed.

The proposed West Coast HCEF programme for 2019-23 is:

- to continue work in hill country catchments in the southern part of the Zone;
- to expand the southern catchments to include all of the Mokau and Marokopa catchments for hill country works;
- to include the coastal harbour catchments of Aotea, Kawhia and Whaingaroa to provide additional funding for implementation of HCMPs over the next four years;
- that no additional co-funding is required from WRC for the coastal catchments; leveraging LTP increase in funding; and two funding options for the southern hill country.

Southern Catchments: Option One – status quo being:

- four years \$225,000 (from WRC) per year, no increases;
- the same co-funding agreement as the current 2018/19 financial year being \$225,000 MPI and \$225,000 WRC;
- no rate increase required; and
- no MPI funding increase over the current programme.

Southern Catchments: Option Two - increase in funding being:

- 2019/20, no increase (same as 2018/19 budget)
- 2020/21, increase of \$40,000 (Annual Plan process)
- 2021/22, increase of \$40,000 (LTP process)
- 2022/23, increase of \$40,000

with an associated small rating increase.

A third option would be to do something other than any funding application approval, however this option would not attract matching funding from MPI.

Arising out of questions, responses and discussion the following points were noted:

- concern raised by one member that the Committee had not received information, nor had any opportunity to discuss options prior to the HCEF application being lodged.
- subject to the amount of funding granted, there may be a need for resource allocation decisions to be made on the priorities/'on the ground' works within and between the northern and southern parts of the Zone. More advice about the proposed programmes is needed so that information decisions about the priorities, and any 'trade-offs' can be made.
- acknowledged that the 2015-19 HCEF grant has given the works programme a significant boost and the zone/community has been able to deliver, which is a positive for the Government/Council/this initiative.

- Option 2 will give another funding boost to the programme, subject to MPIs decisions and the rates increase is still two years away. There will need to be good communication with landowners about the funding grant outcomes and associated rates increases.
- the King Country River Care Group can also assist in the communication and engagement processes with landowners about the benefits of getting on-board with the programme, particularly with the level of subsidised funding currently available.
- support that an application has been lodged. Once the funding decision is known, the Committee needs to have a Workshop/planning session to review Zone plan priorities and ensure they are still relevant and take account of other environmental factors like biodiversity and biosecurity. Proposed that this be arranged for early 2019.
- the application has been lodged on the basis of the Option 2 proposal, being an increase in funding, with an associated targeted rate increase.

T Mandeno moved/J Reeve seconded.

WCC18/35

RESOLVED THAT

- 1. the "Hill Country Erosion Fund 19-23 Application" report (Doc #13282903 dated 28 October 2018) and presentation be received.**
- 2. the Committee endorse, in principle, the application lodged with MPI/the HCEF for the West Coast Zone for Option 2 - being an increase in funding with an associated targeted rate increase.**
- 3. the Committee have a Workshop/planning session in early 2019, once the MPI funding decision is known, to review and agree work priorities as outlined in the zone plan.**

**The motion was put and carried (WCC18/35)
K van Houte recorded her vote against the motion**

Closing karakia - Ray Wi
Meeting closed at 1.10pm

Doc #9808795