

Waikato Regional Council
West Coast Catchments Committee
OPEN MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 23 May, 2019, 10:00 am

Location: Council Chamber
Waikato Regional Council
401 Grey Street
Hamilton East

Members Present: W Maag - Chair (Maniapoto Maori Trust Board)
M Brough - Deputy Chair (Local Community Representative)
Cr F Lichtwark (Waikato Regional Council)
L Thomson (Waikato District Council)
D Pilkington (Otorohanga District Council)
Cr S Smith (Waitomo District Council)
N Hayward (Department of Conservation)
C Holland (Local Community Representative)
M Moss (Local Community Representative)
J Reeves (Local Community Representative)
S Reid (Local Community Representative)
R Takerei (Maniapoto Maori Trust Board)
M Moana-Tuwhangai (Waikato-Tainui)
Cr S Kneebone (Joint-Chair Integrated Catchment Management Committee South)
A Livingston - ex officio (Waikato Regional Council)
T Mahuta - ex officio (Waikato Regional Council)

Staff Present: Cr B Quayle (Waikato Regional Council)
C Crickett - Director Integrated Catchment Management (Waikato Regional Council)
L Bartley - Democracy Advisor
J Francis – Zone Manager – West Coast Catchments

2. Apologies

The Chair introduced Maniapoto Maori Trust Board representative RonnieTakerei (appointed to replace MMTB representative Ray Wi).

Apologies were received from T Mandeno (local community representative) and K Van Houte (local community representative).

WCC19/10

Moved By W Maag

Seconded By Cr F Lichtwark

THAT the apologies from T Mandeno (local community representative) and K Van Houte (local community representative) for absence were accepted.

The motion was put and carried

3. Confirmation of Agenda

WC19/11

Moved By D Pilkington

Seconded By T Brough

THAT the agenda for the 23 May 2019 meeting of the West Coasts Catchment Committee, as circulated, be confirmed as the business for the meeting.

The motion was put and carried

4. Disclosures of Interest

Any disclosures of interest relating to the business at this meeting.

As previously advised M Brough and J Reeves - membership of King Country River Care; and C Holland and D Pilkington disclosed membership of the Kawhia Harbour and Coast Care Collective.

5. Confirmation of Minutes

5.1 West Coast Catchments Committee Minutes

The minutes from the meeting of the West Coast Catchments Committee dated 19 March 2019.

Matters arising:

Item 8 - Update on Hill Country Erosion Fund and One Billion Tree Funding

With respect to queries about the outcome of funding applications and the amount/s to be allocated to the West Coast Catchments Zone, targeted rating impacts and

landowner contributions, it was advised that an update report covering the issues and detail sought would be included on the next (August 2019) agenda.

WRC19/12

Moved By W Maag

Seconded By M Brough

RESOLVED (SECTION A)

THAT the Minutes of the West Coast Catchments Committee Meeting held on 19 March 2019 be approved as a true and correct record, with the following typographical corrections:

page 4, Item 7, 2nd bullet point, second sentence to read “Staff have been inducting ... to date.”

page 4, Item 7, 3rd bullet point, second sentence - the year to read 2018;

and the deletion of the second/final sentence of Item 8 (page 6).

The motion was put and carried

6. Issues and Actions Report May 2019

Report to update the Committee on any issues and actions from the previous meeting.

The report was presented by the Zone Manager West Coast Catchments (J Francis).

Arising out of questions, responses and related discussion the following points were noted with respect to:

- Red Eared Slider Turtles:
 - there are currently no restrictions on the sale of Red Eared Slider Turtles. The future “pest status” of this species can be reviewed in the upcoming Regional Pest Management Plan review process.
- Several committee members conveyed that there is already sufficient evidence available to know that these reptiles are an issue. Climate change/warmer temperatures will result in successful hatchings of female offspring and geothermal areas are an existing high risk breeding habitat.
- MPI has not taken the lead and/or been proactive and put preventative measures in place. Given this situation, and that regional councils will be responsible for controlling this pest, individual Regional Councils will have to put rules in place via their Regional Pest Management Plans.
- the Regional Pest Management Plan annual report is prepared following the end of the business year (30 June). Presentations made by staff in late 2018 included information on the spread of, and future risks associated with, Red Eared Slider Turtles. It was suggested that this information be circulated to Committee members for their information/to build their knowledge and understanding of the issues.

- Whitebait management
 - N Hayward advised that in 2018 the Department of Conservation (DoC) undertook a six month consultative process on whitebait management, including public meetings, to identify the issues that are important to New Zealanders. The meetings were well attended, and more than 3000 feedback contributions received. A discussion document “New Zealander’s views on whitebait management - April 2019” summarising the findings from this public engagement process has been prepared.
 - three main areas of interest/concern were rules around whitebait habitat, the fishery itself, and the management of the fishery including goals, funding and enforcement. Ninety percent of contributors want change resulting in long term sustainability of the whitebait fishery. Options identified include habitat protection and restoration; more active management via increased enforcement, temporary or permanent closures, rules on the type of equipment used, limits on catches and increased information/knowledge about the status of the fishery.
 - contributor feedback is being used by DoC to develop a “Proposal Document” outlining a range of options that will go back out later this year to the public for comment. The earliest that any changes could be implemented would be for the 2020 season.

M Brough disclosed that he is a member of the DoC Working Group on whitebait management.

- views expressed that this is a high profile issue. Involvement and/or support from regional councils and iwi would greatly assist the process/efforts to achieve change.
- DoC will need to take account of relevant provisions in Treaty Settlements and traditional/customary cultural whitebait practices/uses.
- there are financial and commercial interests involved e.g. whitebait stand registrations, the lease of whitebait stands and the sale of whitebait. Should there be a quota system as exists for the saltwater fishery/species with associated fishery regulations?
- do the current provisions relating to whitebait stands need to be reviewed e.g. stand registration, their location/s, construction/maintenance, health and safety and any discharges/pollution and associated enforcement if/where required?

Arrive Cr T Mahuta 10.40am

- whitebait species are an endangered resource, it is not an option to maintain a ‘status quo’ approach.
- It is important to ensure that traditional/customary cultural whitebait practices/uses are provided for, with value in having a DoC/iwi collaboration to draft the Discussion Document wording around customary rights.

- It is understood that the Lower Waikato (Port Waikato) community has had issues with large numbers of Aucklanders seeking to access the local whitebait fishery. How has that issue been responded to and did it involve all relevant agencies (DoC, Waikato RC, Waikato DC) working with the local community?
- Regional Councils have a responsibility to protect and enhance biodiversity. The “science” has identified that some whitebait species could disappear within the next 2-3 years, so there is a high level of urgency to implement change.
- The committee appreciates the initiative and approach taken by DoC to undertake an extensive public consultative process. Statutory measures, rules and/or regulations and support from iwi and other statutory agencies with relevant responsibilities will be needed to effect the required changes.
- In response to a proposal that consideration be given to a ban on whitebait fishing in the Waikato region (excluding whitebait harvested/used for customary purposes), it was noted that the DoC process is already well advanced with a Discussion Document currently being drafted for release later in 2019. It was proposed that DoC ‘test’ the sale of whitebait issue, including consideration of a ‘ban’ in the Discussion Document.
- It was reiterated that the aims of the whitebait management review are to have a healthy whitebait population, a sustainable whitebait fishery and the restoration of habitat. View expressed that whitebait fishing is an activity that is part of the NZ culture and the approach would be to allow that to continue at a sustainable level in the longer term, noting that there may need to be fishery management ‘tools’ put in place to support/enable that to be achieved.
- general agreement to support the completion of the DoC consultation process and for interested and affected parties to contribute/provide feedback. Requested that the Committee be updated on progress to date with the Action Plan.

WCC19/13

Moved By M Moss

Seconded By Cr F Lichtwark

RECOMMENDED (SECTION B)

THAT Waikato Regional Council review the pest status of the Red Eared Slider Turtle, and consider a ban on the sale of this species within the Waikato region.

The motion was put and carried

WCC19/14

Moved By M Moana-Tuwhangai

Seconded By Cr F Lichtwark

RECOMMENDED (SECTION B)

THAT the work and consultative process to review whitebait management, currently being undertaken by the Department of Conservation with the aims:

- i. to have healthy whitebait populations;**
- ii. to restore whitebait habitat in all areas with declining populations; and**
- iii. to have a long-term sustainable whitebait fishery;**

be supported and promoted by Waikato Regional Council.

The motion was put and carried

WCC19/15

Moved By M Brough

Seconded By Cr S Kneebone

RESOLVED (SECTION A)

That the report Issues and Actions Report May 2019 (West Coast Catchment Committee dated 23 May 2019) be received

The motion was put and carried

7. Chairperson's Report

A verbal report from the Chairperson to update the Committee on the work programme being carried out throughout the Zone.

The Chair (W Maag) advised that he did not have any topics/issues to report and/or update the Committee on at this meeting.

8. West Coast Zone Status Report May 2019

Report by the Zone Manager to update the Committee on West Coast catchment financials, activities and work programmes since the last Committee meeting.

The report was presented by the West Coast Zone Manager (J Francis) and noted:

- 63 percent of budget has now been expended, with the majority of planting works being undertaken in autumn (last quarter of the financial year).
- there is continuing high demand for land management projects/funding support. Landowners are making good progress on planting activities.
- good progress continues to be made on key projects (both harbour and hill country) within the priority catchment areas. Maps provided an overview of completed works and retired areas funded from 2002 to date.
- for the 2018/19 year there are 42 projects within the Northern catchments and 24 projects within the Southern catchments, with staff presenting a series of work in progress and before/after photos on various properties.

- the notes of the March 2019 West Coast Catchment Committee Planning Workshop have been circulated, with four Zone Plan objectives and proposed actions outlined. Input/feedback welcomed from members.

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

- several of the projects undertaken on Maori Trust farms have been collaborative projects between the Trusts and Nga Whenua Rahui. While the Trusts sought advice on the 'best' species to plant and local suppliers, the plants were funded by Nga Whenua Rahui and the landowner, and therefore the decisions on the source and supplier/s of the plants are not WRC's to make. The issues of eco-sourcing and potential for transfer of disease (e.g. myrtle rust) were noted and are understood.
- It was queried if there is a 5-10 year plan of how many plants are likely to be required to meet demand over that period and therefore if there is a potential future supply "gap" that could be identified and addressed.
- in response to a query about the level/frequency of monitoring undertaken by staff to ensure that fences are being maintained in good repair and stock are not grazing excluded areas, advised that staff follow-up with visits to selected locations to check on the overall condition of the site. Farmers have also invested time, effort and funds into the works, so it is in their interests to maintain the fences and plants.
- given the growing demand for new works within the West Coast catchments and the need for follow-up monitoring, queried whether the current level of staff resource will be sufficient to cope. Advised that resource capacity will be kept under review. King Country River Care advised that they may be able to assist/support WRC staff "on the ground".
- the Regional Plan contains rules and standards around a range of 'on farm' activities and works which do not provide flexibility when dealing with different terrain and 'on the ground' conditions. When engaging farmers and working through specific conditions case by case, a degree of flexibility may well be required. What opportunities exist for staff to ensure that the rules and standards are not 'rigid' and/or creating a barrier to achieving good land management outcomes?
- in response to the before and after photos of several river management projects, it was noted that concerns have been raised about Japanese Walnut trees from a suitability and plant pest perspective. The change in best practice approach and practices in the management of willows over the last decade was also noted, with a more sustainable and local focus now being applied.

WCC19/16

Moved By M Moana-Tuwhangai

Seconded By M Moss

RESOLVED (SECTION A)

That the report West Coast Zone Status Report May 2019 (West Coast Catchment Committee 23 May 2019) be received

The motion was put and carried

9. Plan Change One - Healthy Rivers Update

Mark Gasquoine, Team Leader, Land Management Advisory Services, will provide the committee with a verbal update on the Plan Change 1 Healthy Rivers project.

Cr S Smith joined the meeting at 8:25 am.

9.1 Plan Change 1 – Healthy Rivers update

Out of meeting Cr F Lichtwark 11.52am

The Team Leader, Land Management Advisory Services (M Gasquoine) provided an update on the Plan Change 1 - Healthy Rivers project, noting that the West Coast catchments:

- are not part of the Proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 - Healthy Rivers, however the proximity to catchment within the Plan change area has resulted in increased activity to proactively respond to any potential future regulation..
- focus has been based on community demand, with engagement via field days, supporting industry workshops (e.g. Beef & Lamb NZ) and providing landowners with maps and information.

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

- the current timeframe for completion of the Healthy Rivers Plan change hearings, deliberations and the Hearing Commissioners' report and recommendations to WRC is November 2019, with anticipated sign-off by Council in February/March 2020.
- in addition to the King Country River Caregroup, a number of other community groups are in the process of getting established. While they are separate entities, there are opportunities to liaise and share knowledge/information and expertise.
- the focus has been to try and raise awareness, get local people/communities interested and involved, identify work they can do and correct 'misinformation' about Plan Change 1.

Return to meeting Cr F Lichtwark 12 noon

- Cr Livingston complimented the initiatives and actions being taken by people in the West Coast catchments to provide a lead/be proactive. Also observed that there are a number of central Government environmental directions and requirements 'in the pipeline' that may well overtake the Regional Council's Plan change processes. It is understood that some announcements will be made at Fielddays 2019 (mid-June).

WCC19/17

Moved By Cr S Smith

Seconded By M Moss

RESOLVED (SECTION A)

That the report Plan Change 1 – Healthy Rivers update (West Coast Catchment Committee 23 May 2019) be received

The motion was put and carried

10. Kawhia Biodiversity Projects

The Site Restoration Advisor – Natural Heritage (M Nelson-Tunley) provided an overview of current Integrated Catchment Management biodiversity projects in the Kawhia Harbour catchment, noting that:

- there is a strong emphasis on community partnerships and working with the local communities to identify/agree desired environmental outcomes.
- the coast is eroding near the Te Maika baches which are sitting on District Council road reserve land.
- the long term goals are protection of existing wildlife and habitats; restoration of lost or damaged habitats; returning kiwi, tuatara and other wildlife; and maintaining iwi and community connections to nature.
- an initial 'good start' project identified in Te Maika is the restoration of the wetland which is understood to have an existing bittern population.
- on the Kawhia coast (north side) the dunes were stabilised in the 1970s with pines, maram grass and lupins and there is a wide salt marsh on the inner harbour. The forestry plantings are close to the coast/foreshore with erosion occurring over the years.
- community concerns include coastal erosion and vehicles travelling on/along the beach resulting in shellfish beds being destroyed and nesting birds killed. The possibility of a District Council bylaw has been mentioned.
- regional Council staff have been meeting with locals to come up with a plan to address issues including water quality in the lagoon (in the forestry area), coastal erosion via permanent native planting "buffers" and exploring options for the pathway to the beach.
- the Kawhia community's vision is to create a restored landscape with abundant biodiversity and healthy kaimoana.

Out of meeting Cr A Livingston 12.20pm

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

- resources are limited and works undertaken e.g. fencing will be the best that can be achieved within available funding. It may be useful to identify what other funding sources may exist and make applications for specific projects and/or works.
- there used to be a rubbish “tip” in the area. Cr Pilkington advised that the site of the old Kawhia transfer station has been sealed/secured. There is a problem with “fly dumping” in the dunes.
- need to clarify the situation regarding vehicles on the beach - is it a paper road, is it below mean high water springs (MHWS) and therefore is it a DoC, Regional Council or District Council responsibility? What are the regulatory and enforcement options and processes available? May be useful to check with Port Waikato to see what happens there and what information and/or guidance they may have.
- recommended that staff refer to the Shore Futures project reports. Many of the issues and topics being raised were well traversed in that multi agency planning process.
- understood that there have been some external agency research projects undertaken in the Kawhia area (including GNS and the University of Auckland). It was queried whether it is possible to access the data/findings and reports from those projects, and also whether there are any opportunities to approach research agencies with potential projects of interest that would assist to build local knowledge.
- C Holland outlined a coastal erosion issue impacting on Maketu Marae and the exposure of koiwi during high tide events. In general terms, the options identified to date for the Marae building/s are protect or managed retreat, however wider expertise/assistance is needed to address/find a solution for the koiwi ‘unearthing’. Queried whether given the historical significance of Kawhia, if this is a wider iwi/rohe and local/regional government issue.
- observed that these issues will need a multi-party approach to resolve, in consultation with the local community/the Marae. There is a relationship between Waikato-Tainui and Maniapoto; the West Coast harbours treaty claim (yet to be negotiated and settled) and the Maniapoto Treaty Settlement. From the perspectives of natural heritage and coastal erosion, local government (district and regional) has a role/involvement.

WCC19/18

Moved By M Moss

Seconded By Cr S Smith

RESOLVED (SECTION A)

That the report Kawhia Biodiversity Projects (West Coast Catchment Committee 23 May 2019) be received

The motion was put and carried

Lunch adjournment 12.45pm/1.10pm

Out of meeting Cr S Kneebone, Cr F Lichtwark, C Crickett

11. West Coast Harbour Planning Update

Report by West Coast Zone Manager (J Francis) and Harbour Catchment Management Advisor (T Dean-Speirs) to provide an update on the Harbour Catchment Planning process, noting that:

- the West Coast Zone comprises three good quality harbour environments with high value features that encompass a large area, but only has a small population/rating base.
- there have been previous presentations and workshops to clarify the scope and provide information on priorities; and the focus to date has been on building relationships.

Return to meeting Cr A Livingston 1.13pm

- staff have been looking at what is coming in the future, for example the West Coast harbours Treaty settlement and the West Coast Plan change process.
- the Plans will build on previous processes such as Whaingaroa Catchment Plan and Shore Futures; current knowledge on water, soils and biodiversity will be collated and the Plan will be developed in consultation with iwi, landowners and other stakeholders.
- the activity focus will identify current actions and future opportunities; build community awareness of the values; give effect to organisational policies and plans; establish the context for statutory policy and planning processes; provide a platform for future development (including new funding), be easily accessed and updated.

Return to meeting Cr S Kneebone 1.17pm

- the phases include project planning; scoping and information gathering (currently at this stage); preparation of a draft document and consultation/feedback. Will look to utilise experience gained from other completed harbour plans in a way that best fits the West Coast situation.

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

- with reviews of the Regional Plan and Coastal Plan pending, are there opportunities for synergies? It is proposed to co-ordinate processes and actions where possible.
- the current focus is to get feedback on the plan development concept through undertaking targeted consultation with various stakeholders including the Committee, DoC, King Country River Care and iwi to finalise the concept.
- it is likely to be several years before the West Coast harbours Treaty settlement negotiation process is completed. The central Government/Waikato-Tainui climate change discussions may also influence/change harbour planning priorities and requirements in the future. From an iwi perspective, it is important that central

Government ensure that sufficient funding is provided to give effect to any settlement outcomes.

Staff outlined the Story Maps 'tool' and products as used in other locations around New Zealand and how it could be used in the West Coast harbours project. As an online application it has a range of information gathering, updating and sharing advantages with digital e-maps to 'show' all the information relevant to a particular location in one image. It was acknowledged that not everyone has internet services/access, so other communication tools will also be developed.

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

- the phased approach includes the project management plan and products, Communication and Engagement plan; Action Planning; and a strategy to maintain the plan and consider how to go beyond the life of the plan. There will be ongoing communications and engagement throughout all the phases.
- the plan development work streams include building sub-catchment profiles, acknowledging that there are different levels of information available for each harbour; and identifying and addressing information 'gaps'.
- are there any opportunities to identify what relevant information may be held by other agencies e.g. Crown Research Institutes? The online Story Map tool could include links to information held by other agencies.
- staff propose to have one harbour 'mock-up' Story Map ready to present to the next Committee meeting, with the full harbour overview and sub-catchment profiles completed in 18 months.
- it is important to capture the richness and diversity of these places, including the mana whenua stories and knowledge for each location.
- different phases of the project will involve targeted consultation/feedback and wider community engagement/consultation. Suggestions of parties for the targeted consultation included iwi (at hapu level), DoC, King Country River Care, key catchment landowners, community based groups, harbour care groups, commercial and recreational users of the catchments. It was advised that staff should refer to the Shore Futures Report as many groups were identified/listed in that document.
- observed that the information and 'evidence' compiled/in the Plans could provide the 'evidence' to support catchment management projects and work plans through the next LTP process.

WCC19/19

Moved By M Moana-Tuwangai

Seconded By C Holland

RESOLVED (SECTION A)

That the report West Coast Harbour Catchment Planning Update (West Coast Catchment Committee 23 May 2019) be received

The motion was put and carried

WCC19/20

Moved By Cr S Smith

Seconded By Cr S Kneebone

RESOLVED (SECTION A)

THAT the approach presented by staff for the West Coast harbours planning process be endorsed.

The motion was put and carried

12. Approach to the Management of Integrated Catchment Management Reserves

Depart N Hayward 1.55pm

Report by West Coast Zone Manager (J Francis) to provide an overview of the financial reserves that the Integrated Catchment Management activities operate to assist in managing the risks associated with the potential for operational work programme expenditure variances; capital investment/expenditure; and the potential for storm damage to occur/disaster recovery.

The West Coast Zone's operational reserve is currently \$19,855 and is not projected to increase over the term of the present Long Term Plan. A draft Reserves Policy will be prepared and included on the Committee's August 2019 agenda for discussion.

Proposed Items and requested updates for future meetings:

(not already identified during agenda item discussions during the meeting)

- Future coastal development and subdivisions - environmental impacts including runoff and cumulative effects.
- Update on Biodiversity - what plans/proposals to protect native species, and what is being done in the West Coast Zone to ensure healthy populations and encourage biodiversity?

Depart Cr D Pilkington 2.00pm

- Update on the "disappearing" wetland at the Rangitahi subdivision (Raglan). Concern that the 'on the ground' actions may not be consistent with the subdivision proposal

presented to the community. Clarification requested on the roles of the different statutory agencies (WRC, Waikato DC and DoC) at this location/development.

- Invite Fish & Game to attend a future Committee meeting to outline how their activities enhance and/or adversely impact on the biodiversity of native freshwater fish species.
- Keep a 'watching brief' on two proposed mining applications in the Kawhia area with particular interest in the potentially significant impacts. Noted that these applications would be subject to the resource consent/regulatory processes in the RMA.

WCC19/21

Moved By M Moana-Tuwhangai

Seconded By Cr S Smith

RESOLVED (SECTION A)

That the report Approach to the Management of Integrated Catchment Management Reserves (West Coast Catchment Committee 23 May 2019) be received

The motion was put and carried

Closing Karakia - Cr S Kneebone

Meeting closed 2.05pm