

Biodiversity Advisory Group

AGENDA

Notice of Meeting:

A meeting of the Biodiversity Advisory Group will be held on:

Date: Monday 13 November 2023

Time: 1.00pm

Venue: Council Chamber, 137 Havelock Street, Ashburton

Membership:

Ashburton District Council

Cr Leen Braam (Chair)
Cr Lynette Lovett
Cr Richard Wilson
Mayor Neil Brown (ex officio)
Neil McCann (Group Manager, Infrastructure & Open Spaces)
Ian Soper (Open Spaces Manager)
Christian Chukwuka (Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor)
Bert Hofmans (Open Spaces Planner)

QEII Trust

Alice Shanks

Ashburton Water Zone Committee

Adi Avnit

Environment Canterbury

Donna Field

Forest & Bird, ACCT

Val Clemens, Edith Smith, Mary Ralston

Awa Awa Rata Reserve

Mary Ralston

Foothills Landcare Group

Gen de Spa

Department of Conservation

Ian Fraser, Brad Edwards

Kanuka Trust

Kim Wall

Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective

Angela Cushnie, Janine Holland, Willy Leferink

Fonterra

Lisa Adams

Synlait

Nick Vernon

Fish & Game

Nikki Dellaway

Federated Farmers

Mike Salvesen

Mt Somers Walkway Society &

Lake Heron Conservation Society

Barry Austin

Biodiversity Advisory Group

Timetable	
Time	Item
1:00pm	Meeting commences (<i>Cr Lynette Lovett is Acting Chairperson</i>)

ORDER OF BUSINESS		Page
1	Apologies - Cr Leen Braam, Janine Holland & Val Clemens	
2	Extraordinary Business	
3	Declarations of Interest	
4	Confirmation of minutes – 7 August 2023	3
5	Plantation Road proposal (<i>Val Clemens & Alice Shanks</i>)	5
6	Update on Biodiversity Strategy - Powerpoint slides (<i>Femke & Christian</i>)	
7	Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor's Report	7
8	Group Updates - ECan projects (Donna Field) - Harris Scientific Reserve and Wakanui plants (Edith Smith)	10

8 November 2023

Biodiversity Advisory Group

7 August 2023



4. ***Biodiversity Advisory Group Minutes***

Minutes of a meeting of the Biodiversity Advisory Group held on Monday 7 August 2023, in the Council Chamber, 137 Havelock Street, Ashburton, commencing at 1.00pm.

Present

Councillors Leen Braam (Chair), Lynette Lovett and Richard Wilson; Adi Avnit, Edith Smith, Val Clemens, Angela Cushnie, Willy Leferink, Donna Field and Barry Austin.

MS Teams: Alice Shanks and Lisa Peers-Adams

In attendance

Neil McCann (GM Infrastructure & Open Spaces), Dr Christian Chukwuka (Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor), Bert Hofmans (Open Spaces Planner) and Carol McAtamney (Governance Support).

1 Apologies

That apologies are received from Mayor Neil Brown, Mary Ralston, Kim Wall, Nick Vernon, Mike Salvesen and Janine Holland.

Wilson/Austin

Carried

2 Extraordinary Business

Nil.

3 Declarations of Interest

Nil.

4 Previous Minutes

That the minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Group meeting held on 8 May 2023 be taken as read and confirmed.

Avnit/Smith

Carried

5 Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisors Report

A query was made as to whether the block of private land next to the coal mine at the back of Mt Somers is categorised as Rural C – Officers will check the boundaries and advise members.

That the Biodiversity Advisory Group receive the report from the Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor

Braam/Clemens

Carried

6 Wilding Management in ADC Rural C Zone

Recommendation to Council

1. **That** the Biodiversity Advisory Group advocates that Environment Canterbury develop a management strategy to deal with existing shelterbelts that pose wilding risk potential in ADC Rural C Zone.

Cont'd

2. **That** the Biodiversity Advisory Group invites the ADC Planning Manager to make a presentation about plantation forestry, shelterbelt and amenity planting rules to control wilding trees and explain the widespread green shelterbelt areas in Rural C area.

Smith/Clemens

Carried

7 Update of the Predator Free 2050 Project (2.04pm – 2.25pm)

Tim Exton and Ian Fraser from DOC joined the meeting and gave an update of the Predator Free 2050 project.

- Programme is community driven
- Target is the eradication of possums, rats and mustards (stoats, ferrets and weasels)
- Also looking at stray cats/hedgehogs
- Looking to work further with Ashburton District Council to get programme up and running in Ashburton

Angela Cushnie departed the meeting at 2.19pm

8 Update on the National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity

A request was made for a report to be bought to the next meeting outlining how the group can assist with the implementation processes of the NPS.

A copy of presentation from today's meeting is to be circulated to members.

Barry Austin departed the meeting at 2.42pm

That the Biodiversity Advisory Group receive the update/presentation on the National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity.

Smith/Lovett

Carried

9 Environment Canterbury update

A copy of the Ashburton Rivermouth Hapua bird monitoring report by ornithologist Andrew Crossland that was referred to in the report is to be circulated to members.

10 Forest and Bird

• 100th Anniversary

Forest and Bird are celebrating their 100th anniversary this year. To celebrate a photo exhibition is to be held at the Ashburton Art Gallery from 3 September 2023.

Next Meeting

Monday 6 November 2023, 1.30pm.

The meeting concluded at 3.12pm.

5. *Plantation Road proposal*

Val Clemens (ACCT/Forest and Bird) & Alice Shanks (QEII)

Recommendation

- 1. That** Ashburton District Council investigates making the eastern end of Plantation Road an insurance site.

What's an ex-situ insurance site?

While conserving local indigenous plants in the wild remains our top priority, an ex-situ insurance site provides a valuable insurance policy should destruction occur of wild habitats and of native plant populations. Such an “insurance site” can help retain the local forms and genetics. It is a strategy to make sure all the “eggs” are not in the same “basket”. It is prudent to plan for more ex-situ insurance sites.

The rapid loss of plants from roadside SNA sites, despite roadside ADC markers, indicates that naturally-occurring local roadside plants are unlikely to persist in the long-term. Their loss may result in the local extinction of plant species on the Ashburton Plains, along with any adaptations to the local environment.

For a decade Forests and Bird have been propagating and growing local plants and planting them into the Ashburton District Council Harris Scientific Reserve, a site with the highest level of legal protection under the Reserves Act.

Even then, this dryland reserve is vulnerable to extreme drought, fire, extreme wind, grass growth from irrigation, and herbicide spray -drift, that could result in a catastrophic loss of all or part of the Harris reserve trees, invertebrates, skinks, and the rare Wakanui craspedia.

Designate Plantation Road a Plains dryland plant conservation site

- Close to Ashburton with easy access from Maronan Road.
- Currently a paper road, so administered by ADC. (The designation may need to be changed.)
- Assessed as an ADC Significant Biodiversity site (Harding, 2014).
- 10 indigenous species record in 2012 ADC Roadside survey., including 4 *Clematis marata* (both colour forms), about 120 matagouri, 10 native broom (*Carmichaelia australis*), and numerous creeping pohuehue (*Muehlenbeckia axillaris*) host to the native southern blue butterfly. Onion orchid and danthonia grasses have been recorded in the recent past.
- Similar dryland soil to the Harris Reserve.
- Less than 1 km from Harris Reserve.
- Currently being used by a neighbouring farmer as a ram paddock holding 4 sheep.

Disadvantages:

- Narrow shape vulnerable to impact of adjacent land use
- Pine hedge on the northern edge.
- Irrigator in paddock on north side, inducing edge effects and encouraging weed growth.

Botanic Garden Conservation International: <https://www.bgci.org/>

J.L. Silcock, C.L. Simmons, L. Monks, R. Dillon, N. Reiter, M. Jusaitis, P.A. Vesk, M. Byrne, D.J. Coates,

Threatened plant translocation in Australia: A review, Biological Conservation, Volume 236,2019,Pages 211-222,

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0006320718317713>



Plantation Road is unformed legal road 2610 metres long and 20 metre wide



Patch of native broom.

7. *Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor report*

Author *Christian Chukwuka, Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor*
GM responsible *Neil McCann, GM Infrastructure & Open Spaces*

Recommendation

- 1. That** the Biodiversity Advisory Group receives the report from the Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor.

Summary

- The purpose of this report is to provide the Biodiversity Advisory Group with an update on activities since the last meeting held on 8 August 2023.
- The report brings about the opportunity for members to ask questions and seek clarification on any items mentioned.

Report

1. Biodiversity Strategy Development

We completed the elected councillors' workshop and have used all the information to develop a draft strategy for the district. Community consultation is now ongoing to close on November 25, 2023. Please, we encourage all ADBAG members and their organisations to make a submission and advise the Council further on what needs to be done for the district.

The public hearing is scheduled for 14 December (tentatively), with the final strategy expected to be finalised by early 2024.

2. National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity Implementation

Council's responsibility under NPS-IB has been captured in the draft biodiversity strategy. Work programme on NSP-IB implementation under development. This includes planning for tangata whenua partnership and community/landowners' education and engagement on ecological values. Community awareness and education will take off as soon as the biodiversity strategy is adopted.

3. Completed Projects (Planting and Pest Management)

a. Native Shelterbelt Planting Proposal at Lake Clearwater Campground.

The first batch of native shelterbelt planting at the Lake Clearwater Campground has been completed. We planted 450 beech trees on two separate sites: Lake Clearwater Campground and Lake Cam's west end. This is a pilot project to trial replacing the exotic shelterbelts with native trees.

b. Community Volunteering Events

Two volunteer days were held in the reporting period: Lake Camp Clearwater and Taylors Stream. The events were to put mulch on to mulch all new native plants at the reserves.

3. Planned Biodiversity Projects (Planting and Pest Management)

a. Pudding Hill Stream weed Control (collaboration with Donna Field, ECan)

Control of willows, sycamore trees, larches, Douglas fir, Himalayan honeysuckle, alders, poplars and monkey musk along the Pudding Hill stream is planned for September 2023. The project was initiated by the Ashburton District Biodiversity Advisory Group and managed by the Council Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor and ECan's Biodiversity and Land Management Advisor. We have received \$8,000 in funding from the Water Zone Committee towards the project.

b. Planned Annual Weed Control on Council Lands

Ashton Beach, Lake Camp/Clearwater and Rakaia Gorge sites to be completed in November 2023, before the summer holidays.

4. Council Biodiversity Grant

Council received five applications that fall within our priority and all the projects were approved. These include Riparian planting at lake Camp/Clearwater, Staveley native forest weed control, Staveley wetland restoration planting, existing native planting maintenance at Rakaia Hut and Rare and threatened plant propagation and protection at Harris Scientific Reserves. Over \$30,000 was disbursed to the recipients.

A new round of grant applications will open early in 2024 and projects that align with our funding priorities and with legal protection are strongly encouraged. Please, contact the Council Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor if you need to discuss your project or advice on applying for the grant.

5. Awa awa rata Reserve Forest Pest Control

Animal pest control continues at the Awa awa rata Reserve Forest in collaboration with the Department of Conservation. This is following Mike Harding's vegetation report and trail camera monitoring by the Council Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor.

The project would now be undertaken every quarter using an ADC pest control contractor. A significant number of pest animals were dispatched in the last activity ending 31 October 2023. Trail camera pest monitoring would be undertaken after one year to assess what's remaining in the forest.

6. Training

Chemical Handler Training completed on 30 October for Open Space staff and some volunteers undertaking weed control in Council reserves. It's mandatory to hold appropriate training for any task undertaken for the Council. Please get in touch to discuss if you're unsure of required training needed for any particular task.

7. Community service work with the Department of Corrections

The Department of Correction is undertaking several biodiversity projects around the district as part of the Community service work. They completed part of the mulching at the Lake Camp and are now undertaking a similar activity at Taylors Stream Reserve. We put in place necessary Health and Safety conditions while working at the reserves.

8. 2024 meeting dates

The proposed dates for the Biodiversity Advisory Group meetings in 2024 are –
Monday 12 February, Monday 13 May, Monday 12 August and Monday 11 November.
Meetings will continue to start at 1pm. Meetings will be held at the new Council offices, Te Whare Whakitere, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton.
Members will undertake one field trip activity to any of the significant sites or projects in 2024, but the date would be determined later.

8. *Group activity updates*

8.1 **ECan update – Donna Field**

This is a busy time in the field and for organising contractors for ECan staff. As a reminder of the staff in the biodiversity and land management Ashburton Team, we have:

- Nikki Jenkins- Zone lead
- Donna Field- Senior land management and biodiversity advisor.
- Billy Bartrum-Senior land management and biodiversity advisor.
- Jess Cochrane- land management and biodiversity advisor.
- Michelle Ingham- land management and biodiversity advisor.

Project Updates

➤ **Rakaia River**-Billy Bartrum Lead.

The Upper Rakaia is a focus catchment for us this year with funding from the Me Uru Rākau programme (from ECan) which is a catchment-based protection, planting and restoration programme designed to support communities to enhance biodiversity in their area.

Much of this budget is used in conjunction with other agencies such as DOC and LINZ.

It includes the

1. Upper Rakaia Weed Control – 12-year project managing braided river weeds in the Upper Rakaia Catchment . DOC /LINZ ECAN
2. Rakaia Predator control – 6-year project trapping to ensure protection of Wrybill and black fronted terns. DOC/LINZ/ECAN
3. Rakaia Gorge weed control – 3-year project managing terrestrial weeds in the Rakaia Gorge. DOC/LINZ/ECAN/Private landowners

Several other smaller projects looking at native fish populations, community projects for wilding control and a plant refugia on Coleridge Island are also part of the funding distribution.

➤ **Ashburton River**- Donna Field project lead. Jess Cochrane and Michelle Ingham.

The Ashburton River is a significant bird habitat for Canterbury's Wading and braided river bird population and there are various projects along its length.

1. Hapua- Signs and track have been upgraded and flax planted around the platform. Access track into mid river redone and diversion arrows put in.

2. Trapping workshops for volunteer trapping held at Lake Hood and an Ashburton wide trapping workshop to be held. Contact Jess Cochrane or Michelle Ingham for details.
3. Liaison with Forest and Bird and Hakatere hut holders on trappers
4. Trapping audit done on upper Ashburton with additional traps put in for tern colony and to fill in gaps.
5. Comms updates for media on Ashburton River.
6. Bird surveys commencing in conjunction with Forest and Bird.
7. Russel lupin control at Buicks bridge.

➤ **Carters Creek-** Michelle Ingham lead.

Stream walk and plan for water quality.

➤ **Hinds Plains Lower-** Michelle Ingham ,Kimberley Dynes

Final write up on land use completed

➤ **Foothills project.** Lead- Jess Cochrane

Working in conjunction with ADC on education on biodiversity and land management in the foothills area.

➤ **Mt Potts – homestead weed control-** Donna Field

Control of homestead weeds in selected areas on the property. Implemented by Boffa Miskell

We continue to work with landowners on improving audit grades and with best practice for on farm.

8.2 Harris Scientific Reserve – *Edith Smith*

- 8.2.1 An update from Harris Scientific Reserve, in particular Clematis marata where the thirteen plants identified at the reserve and Plantation Road are male. They are difficult to find and apart from one specimen they all exist in a small area of the original kanuka which surrounds the lambing paddock boundary.

Because we have only male plants we would have to rely on cuttings to increase these vulnerable plants and secure their population.

The male and female plant are easily identified. However, by chance, a small plant I have in my garden has four female flowers! We have another story about saving a species. I will have a few slides to go with this report.

- 8.2.2 *Verbal update on the craspedia and other Wakanui plants area, as well as an update on our shingly dry riverbed species site at the Reserve.*

8.3 Lake Heron Conservation Society – *Barry Austin*

Over the last two months trapping has continued whenever weather has permitted. Catch numbers have been consistent; out of the 120 traps checked each month, around 30% are successful. Stoats, weasels, hedgehogs and rats are the main targets, with the odd cat and opossum. A noticeable increase in the number lizards observed while walking would tend to indicate that some degree of success is being achieved.

Trap numbers around the Mt Somers tracks at the Staveley end have been increased to about 30, with a catch rate of about 15% each month. It must be noted, two students travel down from Christchurch each month to help, they really enjoy the scenery and helping nature, plus the debrief at the Staveley café.

Biodiversity Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the advisory group is to:

- Facilitate the implementation of the Ashburton District Biodiversity Action Plan
- Maintain partnerships between local and regional organisations with an interest in the management of indigenous biodiversity
- Provide a forum for discussion and community-wide promotion of biodiversity
- Be a conduit for the Council relationship building with the landowner and general public where appropriately
- Provide advice to Council on biodiversity related matters e.g. ADC Natural and Built Environments grant applications

Membership

Representatives on the working group were invited based on their organisation's participation in developing the Canterbury Regional Biodiversity Strategy, and/or their ability to contribute to the implementation of the Ashburton District Biodiversity Action Plan.

Ashburton District Council

Mayor, Neil Brown (ex officio)
Cr Leen Braam (Chair)
Cr Lynette Lovett
Cr Richard Wilson
Neil McCann (GM Infrastructure & Open Spaces)
Ian Soper (Open Spaces Manager)
Dr Christian Chukwuka (Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor)

Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective

Angela Cushnie, Janine Holland, Willy Leferink

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Alice Shanks

Environment Canterbury

Donna Field, Henry Winchester

Ashburton Water Zone Committee

Adi Avnit

Forest & Bird

Edith Smith, Val Clemens, Mary Ralston

Foothills Landcare Group

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Ashburton Community Conservation Trust

Edith Smith, Val Clemens

Federated Farmers

Mike Salvesen

Awa Awa Rata Reserve

Mary Ralston

Department of Conservation

Ian Fraser, Brad Edwards

Fish & Game

Nikki Dellaway

Fonterra

Marcelo Wibmer

Synlait

Nick Vernon

Kanuka Trust

Kim Wall

Mt Somers Walkway Society & Lake Heron Conservation Society

Barry Austin

Speaking rights will be granted to one member of each of the advisory group member organisations at each meeting.

Membership of the group may be amended to include representatives from other organisations. This will be at the discretion of the Ashburton District Council.

To form a quorum, the attendance of representatives from at least 6 of the advisory group member organisations, in addition to at least two ADC local representatives, is required.

Representatives from other organisations may be invited to attend advisory group meetings as the need arises.

Members may send alternates in their place or nominate another person from their organisation if they are unable to attend a meeting.

Names and organisations above may change over time as requested by the members without going through formal term of reference review.

Meeting Frequency

Meet four times a year, with the option for one additional meeting if required.

Delegations

The representatives on the working group are expected to:

- Meet to facilitate the implementation of the Ashburton District Biodiversity Action Plan
- Form project groups where appropriate to work towards specific actions in the Biodiversity Action Plan
- Share information, both on organisational initiatives and collaborative initiatives, to support better decisions and knowledge of biodiversity
- Communicate and consult with one another in a flexible and open way
- Maintain confidentiality where appropriate
- Represent their organisations' policies
- Respect other organisations' governance and policy approaches and priorities in the district / region, and seek a consensus approach to work with these

Ashburton District Council Biodiversity Funding

The Ashburton District Council has an annual fund of \$15,000 available for biodiversity projects. Funding applications are accepted twice annually, in February and August, however if the total fund is distributed in February another funding round will not be held.

Applications for a biodiversity grant are to be referred to the Biodiversity Advisory Group for comment, before going to Council for their decision on the funding applications.

Reporting

The Ashburton District Biodiversity Advisory Group will report to Council.

Costs & Expenses

It is acknowledged that being a member of the advisory group will involve a commitment of members' time and energy, and will involve travel to Ashburton District Council to attend meetings. These costs will be met by the organisation(s) or group(s) that members represent. Costs of meetings and associated catering will be met by Ashburton District Council.

Meetings will generally be held in the Council meeting rooms, and may be held in other venues throughout the district as appropriate.

Adopted

9 April 2020 (*Reviewed 02/23*)