

Biodiversity Advisory Group

AGENDA

Notice of Meeting:

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

Date: Monday 8 May 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 (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

Marcelo Wibmer

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS		Page
1	Apologies Val Clemens, Brad Edwards, Donna Field and Janine Holland	
2	Extraordinary Business	
3	Declarations of Interest	
4	Confirmation of minutes Biodiversity Advisory Group meeting minutes – 7 February 2023	3
5	Rangitata Restoration Programme	
6	Planting natives within the ADC's Road reserves	5
7	Wilding pine in a sensitive ecoenvironment	7
8	Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisors Report Report from Dr Christian Chukwuka	8
9	Agency Updates A verbal update from each individual agency that has something new to share.	

4. *Biodiversity Advisory Group Minutes – 7/02/23*

A meeting of the Biodiversity Advisory Group was held on Wednesday 7 February 2023, in the Council Chamber, 137 Havelock Street, Ashburton, commencing at 1:00pm.

Present

Councillors Leen Braam (Chair) and Richard Wilson; Mayor Neil Brown; Ian Soper (ADC, Open Spaces Manager), Christian Chukwuka (ADC, Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor), Bert Hofmans (ADC, Open Spaces Planner); Val Clemens, Edith Smith, Mary Ralston, Donna Field, Janine Holland, Marcelo Wibmer (Fonterra).

MS Teams: Gen de Spa (Staveley Camp, Zone Committee member, Foothills Landcare Group) and Alice Shanks (QEII Trust).

In attendance

Mary Wilson (ADC, EA to CE - minutes), Margo Tercier (ADC, GIS team) and Dave Moore (ECan, Ashburton Zone Committee Facilitator).

Apologies

- 1** **That** apologies are received from Cr Lynette Lovett (ADC), Nick Vernon (Synlait), Ian Fraser (DOC) and Angela Cushnie (Ashburton Zone Committee).

Wilson / Ralston

Carried

2 **Extraordinary Business**

Nil

3 **Declarations of Interest**

Nil

4 **Previous Minutes**

Minutes from the 18 August 2022 meeting were presented to the meeting, previously confirmed by Council.

5 **Report from the Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor**

Christian Chukwuka (Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor) presented his report to the meeting.

It was noted from observations made that the number of visitors to the Lake Camp/Clearwater area over the busy Christmas period would have a possible impact on the biodiversity.

The lake is a recreation reserve with plenty of room for camping. Damage by 4WD's is a priority. Attempts to block off a whole side of the lake have not been completely successful with some work still to be done.

Several species of plants are under pressure from the number of visitors to the area.

That the Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor's report be received.

Braam / Smith

Carried

6 **GIS Mapping**

ADC's GIS Team have created a form to be used to record biodiversity projects throughout the Ashburton district, so their details can be included in the GIS mapping project.

A QR code has also been developed.

7 Pudding Hill

Pudding Hill is a reasonably important stream in the district and there is concern about wildings, coming from above.

Presentation on weed survey undertaking in late 2022 and recommendations for long-term management of the riverbanks within Mt Hut Forest area made to the group by Christian Chukwuka (ADC Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor) and Donna Field (ECan Biodiversity Advisor).

Agreed Action: Christian and Donna to explore further actions to be followed, including funding, to eliminate the weeds.

8 Focus Group proposal

Looking for some recommendations and direction from the group with the intention of creating an action plan that would come back to the group with options, and support future funding applications.

Creating focus groups was discussed as a worthwhile consideration where the members can provide knowledge, advice and enthuse people regarding projects being carried out.

Agreed Action: Cr Leen Braam (Chair) and Christian Chukwuka (Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor) to work with ADC Communications Team to promote the work being carried out by the Biodiversity Advisory Group.

Extraordinary business

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference are to be updated.

Agreed Action: Mary to update TOR and circulate to members.

Agenda reports

The Chair encouraged members to bring reports to the meetings through the agenda, providing structure to the meetings.

Meeting closed: 3:04pm

Next meeting: Monday 8 May 2023

6. *Planting natives within the ADC's Road reserves*

Proposed by member *Marcelo Wibmer, Fonterra Sustainable Dairying Manager*

Recommendation

1. **That** the group request the Council to adopt the same approach to Road Reserve Planting for Rural Zones as their neighbouring Council (Timaru District Council) with a similar vegetation loss rate in the Plain.
2. **That** the group request the Council to permit the roadside vegetation on Storriers Road.

Summary

To seek clarification on the road reserve planting within the district rural zones and direction from the group.

Background

1. Recently, a farmer in the Hinds area planted a row of natives on land between his farmland and the road reserve.
2. Council Roding team approached the farmer and indicated that the planting is within the Council Road reserve and should be removed.
3. Council Roding Manager has asked the farmer to remove the 700 native trees planted on the road reserve by 31st May 2023.
4. Due to low native vegetation cover in Canterbury Plain and the effort of the farmer to undertake this activity, the author is seeking clarification on road reserve planting in Ashburton District Council.
5. Our neighbouring Council, [Timaru District Council](#), allows road reserve planting but with the approval of the Council in writing before the project is undertaken.
6. Can Ashburton District Council adopt the same approach as their neighbouring Council with a similar vegetation loss rate in the Plain?



Figure a. Native Planting on Storriers Road, Hinds

7. *Wilding Pine in a Sensitive Ecosystem*

Proposed by member *Edith Smith, Forest & Bird / Ashburton Community Conservation Trust*

Recommendation

1. **That** the group request the Council to review wilding management in Rural C and the foothills of Rural B areas where the potential expansion of pine plantations and associated seedlings could have the same effect as we see in South Canterbury and Otago.

Summary

Wilding reinfestation is a problem and its spread is continuing despite all efforts to curtail the risk.

Background

1. I would like to share this with ADBAG members given the recent wilding day at Lakes Camp and Clearwater and Forest and Bird's wilding day planned for May 21st.
2. It is an opportunity to hear about ADC plantation amenity planting rules in District Plan which help to control wildings.
3. I am happy to explain our Spider Lakes Management Plan with the Department of Conservation and our experience with ongoing reinfestation from adjoining land.
4. We have recorded the many volunteer hours it has taken to remove thousands of wildings since the inception of the Hakatere Conservation Park in 2008.
5. The ongoing wilding reinfestation is disappointing.
6. This Newsroom article, [Prickly pine problem in iconic landscape](#), refers to management with use of less virile varieties of pine. I would include wilding silver birch and other weed species.
7. The outcome would be a motion to the Council to not only review wilding management in Rural C but also our foothills Rural B areas where potential expansion of pine plantations and associated seedlings could have the same effect as we see in South Canterbury and Otago

8. Report from the Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor

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

Recommendation

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

Summary

- The purpose of this report is to provide the Biodiversity Advisory Group with an update on projects carried out by the Biodiversity Advisor since the last meeting held on 7 February 2023.
- The report brings about the opportunity for members to ask questions and seek clarification on any items mentioned.

Report

1. Biodiversity Strategy Development

Project team and timeline have already been established. A second Workshop for stakeholders is scheduled to be held on 25th May 2023. The workshop would be a follow-up to the retreat held in May 2022. The final strategy would be finalized by October 2023. The changes in timeline are due to staff annual leave, local body elections and the new Council sitting.

2. Reserve Management Plan Review

The Council Reserve Management Plan Review is in progress and Harris Scientific Reserve is part of the Council Reserves. The full consultation document will be sent to members when it's ready for input.

3. Biodiversity protection

a. Lake Camp/Clearwater - Landscape Management Plan

The Lake Camp/Clearwater Landscape Management Plan is under review as part of the 30-year long-term plan implementation. Council is proposing to establish native shelterbelts to replace all the existing exotic shelterbelts over time. In-house discussion is ongoing on the fate of the *Pinus contorta* shelterbelt at Lake Clearwater Campground.

b. Lake Camp/Clearwater – annual animal pest control

Annual animal pest control around Lake Camp/Clearwater was completed; 51 rabbits, 4 hares and 2 possums were dispatched using our approved contractor.

4. Biodiversity Community Engagement and New Biodiversity Plantings

a. Lake Camp/Clearwater Volunteer Day

Wilding Pine Volunteer Day was completed on Saturday 22nd April 2023 at Lake Camp/Clearwater. A mix of Council staff, Hutholders and community members with an interest in biodiversity. Over a thousand regenerating wilding pines, silver birches and other weeds were removed.

b. Wakanui Beach

Restoration planting with natives at the boundary with private farmland completed by a group of volunteers from the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Saints as part of their community project. 678 natives were planted, and planting accessories were installed on the same day.

c. Harris Scientific Reserve Planting

A coronation planting to mark King Charles's Coronation and recognises volunteers' efforts in the district will be held on May 6, 2023. This was a collaborative planting among Volunteer Mid-Canterbury, Ashburton District Council and Ashburton Community Conservation Trust.

d. Rakaia Gorge, Area of Significant Conservation Values (ASCV) site

Replacement planting of eco-sourced native plants to replace the old-man pine trees completed, with around 700 native plants. Reinstating the walking access to the Rakaia Riverbed is ongoing. Historic signage precluding vehicular access to the riverbed will be refreshed to reconfirm to the public the level of access provided.

5. Proposed Projects (Pest control and planting program)

a. Awa awa rata Reserve

Native planting on the wetland around the reserve to improve the wetland ecosystem health is being planned for May 2023 using eco-sourced natives.

b. Bowyers Stream Reserve

Replanting of the reserve section adjoining the riverbank with natives after bank repair work by ECan and the Roding team, planned for May 2023.

c. Taylors Stream Reserve

Removal of sycamores around the reserve and replanting with natives is planned for June 2023.

d. Lake Camp/Clearwater shelter belt

Planning for replacement planting for the removed pines at the Lake Clearwater Campground and West end of Clearwater is underway. The first batch of planting would be completed by September 2023.