

Biodiversity Advisory Group

6 October 2020



Biodiversity Advisory Group

Minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Group held on Tuesday 6 October 2020, commencing at 1.00pm at the Council Chamber, 137 Havelock Street, Ashburton.

Present: Councillors Lynette Lovett (Chair) Bert Hofmans (ADC); Steve Fabish (GM Community Services); Mary Ralston (Forest and Bird and Awa Awa Rata Reserve); Val Clemens (Forest & Bird and ACCT), Jane Riach (Kanuka Trust), Donna Field (ECan and Whitcombe Landcare Group); Alice Shanks (QEII Trust); Ian Fraser (DOC); Edith Smith (Forest & Bird and ACCT), Jayde Couper (Fish & Game); Mike Salvesen (Federated Farmers); and Barry Austin (Mt Somers Walkway Soc. & Lake Heron Conservation Soc.).

In attendance: Aisling O'Reilly (Governance Support - minutes); Lisa Adams (Fonterra) and Marcelo Wibmer (Fonterra).

1 Apologies

Mayor Neil Brown, Cr Diane Rawlinson, Janine Holland, Bill Thomas and Gen de Spa.
Austin/Field Carried

2 Extraordinary Business

Nil

3 Declarations of Interest

Nil

4 Confirmation of Minutes – 4/08/20

That the minutes of the Biodiversity Advisory Group meeting held on 4 August 2020 be taken as read and confirmed.

Smith/Field Carried

5 Reports and Presentations

5.1 Fonterra update – Marcelo Wibmer presented:

- Updated on what Fonterra are doing in the Ashburton District.
- Biodiversity is not at top of list as Fonterra has other items that are high risk on farms right now.
- Reports to have seen a mind-set change with farmers in the last 5 years and they want to contribute to the biodiversity.
- Some are planting biodiversity on their boundaries around Canterbury.

5.2 Craspedia “Wakanui” – Val Clemens presented:

- This plant has only 2 individuals left in the wild and one at Landcare Research/Manaaki Whenua, meaning it is one of most endangered plants in the country.

- Pollen was carried between Lincoln and Wakanui, resulting in 104 seedlings from the Landcare plants and about 20 from the Wakanui plants.
- Plan to repeat the pollination this summer to continue to build up numbers.
- Landcare are doing DNA testing on the 104 seedlings to see if they are true “Wakanui” plants as there is a risk they may have been pollinated by other species in Landcare’s glasshouse. Each one is individually labelled and they have been planted at the Harris Reserve, Christchurch Botanic Gardens, Ashburton Domain and a QEII covenant.
- Highlights the care that needs to be taken with these and other small dryland plants. An example of how precarious our local biodiversity really is.

Edith Smith presented on dryland vegetation:

- Looked at native vegetation at Ashton Beach as a result of ADC looking to find a safer option for motorbike riders in this area.
- Potentially the dryland biodiversity hotspot of Ashburton District.
- There are a large amount of exotic grasses growing here which is a threat to the native vegetation.
- Explained how NZ fescue is growing in this area.

6 General Matters

Nil

7 Agency Updates

Donna Field, Whitcombe Landcare Group

- Working with LINZ, Boffa Miskill and DOC on weed management programme. \$300,000 Pete Caldwell from Boffa Miskill has taken over the management of the programme from DOC Liz Gunning due to increase in budget funding from LINZ.
- There is also another funding round with an unknown amount of money from LINZ. A meeting is planned for early October to discuss what it will look like.
- Trapping project is up and running for the 2021 season.
- We are waiting to hear from the Trust Powers Rakaia River Biodiversity Enhancement Fund on project funding for the Rakaia Gorge Guardians project. This is a joint project between land owners, ECAN, Selwyn District Council. At this stage ADC is offering moral support for the project via Bert Hofmans.
- Pigs increasing in area exponentially.

Donna Field, Environment Canterbury

- Work in the Ashburton River is in full swing with spraying being done, trapping starting and birds to be found.
- There will be a survey of the Ashburton River on the 21st November.
- Work is continuing to be done at river mouth with walking tack being put in by D and E. There has been some vandalism and we will continue to monitor how to manage it.
- Looking at nest stages for improving the instream habitat for the spring system, continued signage and bird viewing platform developed.
- The surface water team combined with fish and game are going to do a hapua monitoring project looking at water quality and fish species.
- On the land management front we are going to start a campaign on making sure people with winter grazing have consent to farm.

Kānuka Trust

- Since our last meeting we provided our planting equipment for 17 volunteers from the Hinds community to plant 120 plants at Hinds domain.
- Our Hinds School mudfish project has continued with 350 plants being planted by the Piwaka class and some Hinds and district Lions volunteers at the property of Bob Ellis.
- We have rescheduled the Beneficial Bugs field day to Thursday 22nd October, please email kanukatrust@outlook.com for details.

Bert Hofmans, ADC

Ashton Beach

- Met with ECan, DOC and Forest & Bird regarding motorcycle park at Ashton Beach;
- Report taken to Council 24 Sept 2020 to provide feedback on preliminary consultation;
- Council approved additional funding of \$27k for the project;
- Weed control work expected to be undertaken in the next couple of weeks in fenced biodiversity areas.

Wakanui Beach

- Planting day 3 September 2020. Planted approximately 250 plants in areas 'a' and 'b'. School unable to participate. Assisted by volunteers, ECan staff, Forest & Bird members, and Wakanui Beach Crew.

Lake Camp

- 2020/21 work programme has been prepared and circulated;
- Planting day proposed this Friday;
- Pest control organised for the following week (14 October 2020).

Other

- Billion Trees media release completed 30 Sept 2020 – ADC website, social media, District Diary and Councils e-newsletter + Mid-Canterbury Federated Farmers newsletter (TBC);
- Met with SDC staff regarding stock water race and biodiversity.

Ian Fraser, DOC

- Rangitata and Rakaia trapping and outcome monitoring programmes in full swing. 36 cats, 112 mustelids, 175 hedgehogs caught since traps opened in July in the Rangitata. 8 cats, 17 mustelids, 36 hedgehogs in Rakaia.
- Outcome monitoring for wrybills and black-fronted terns in the South Branch of the Hakatere River is underway to support ECan's trapping programme.
- Management of the Braided River Flagship Programme in the Upper Rangitata and Rakaia has passed from DOC to Boffa Miskell Ltd on behalf of LINZ. This is a result of LINZ's 4-5 fold increase in funding of that programme.
- Restoration planting at two sites in O Tu Wharekai (Ashburton Basin) has continued, with 110 plants at Lake Heron with Ara institute and further planting planned at that site with Mt Somers schools and at Lambies Stream site next month.
- The Governance Group for the Rangitata Restoration Project (part of DOC's Nga Awa project funded through Budget 2018) has been established. The group

includes Te Runanga o Arowhenua, ECan, LINZ and DOC. A stakeholder forum, including representatives from territorial authorities, Fish and Game, recreational user groups etc. will be established in the next few months. DOC is working with our key delivery partners – Te Runanga o Arowhenua and the Upper Rangitata Gorge Landcare Group – to support the fencing and restoration bid submitted under the governments' Jobs for Nature programme.

- DOC are in early discussions with ADC forester Terry O'Neil regarding the larch plantation within the Awa Awa Rata Reserve with a view to harvesting the trees and allowing the area to revert to native vegetation.
- Continued and increasing issue with off-road vehicle incursions in O Tu Wharekai which negatively impact on biodiversity and other park users. We are developing a plan to try manage the issue, and are likely to approach ADC for their help with specific issues in the next couple of months.
- As part of DOC's predator-free 2050 project, we are keen to get in touch with volunteer trapping groups in the ADC area to offer our support and help track the efforts of volunteers in this space.

8 Next Meeting

Tuesday 8 December at 1pm.

The meeting concluded at 2:49pm