

# Biodiversity Advisory Group

## AGENDA

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### Notice of Meeting:

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

**Date:** Monday 7 August 2023  
**Time:** 1:00pm  
**Venue:** Council Chamber, 137 Havelock Street, Ashburton

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### 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
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies</b> Marcelo Wibmer (Fonterra) – will be represented by Lisa Peer-Adams	
<b>2</b>	<b>Extraordinary Business</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Confirmation of minutes</b> Biodiversity Advisory Group meeting minutes – 8 May 2023	<b>3</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisors Report</b> Report from Dr Christian Chukwuka	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Wilding Management in ADC Rural C Zone</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Update on National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Environment Canterbury Update</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Agency Updates</b> A verbal update from each individual agency that has something new to share.	

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

#### **Biodiversity Advisory Group Minutes**

##### **Present**

Councillors Leen Braam (Chair), Lynette Lovett and Richard Wilson; Alice Shanks, Adi Avnit, Edith Smith, Mary Ralston, Kim Wall, Angela Cushnie, Marcelo Wibmer, Nikki Dellaway, Mile Salvesen and Barry Austin.

MS Teams: Kim Whitwell and Shaun Thomason (ECan)

##### **In attendance**

Dave Moore (ECan); Neil McCann (GM Infrastructure & Open Spaces), Ian Soper (Open Spaces Manager), Christian Chukwuka (Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor), Bert Hofmans (Open Spaces Planner) and Carol McAtamney (Governance Support).

#### **1 Apologies**

**That** apologies be received from Mayor Neil Brown, Gen de Spa, Val Clemens, Brad Edwards, Donna Field, Nick Vernon and Janine Holland

Wilson/Lovett

Carried

#### **2 Extraordinary Business**

Nil

#### **3 Declarations of Interest**

Nil

#### **4 Previous Minutes**

Minutes from the 7 February 2023 meeting were presented to the meeting, previously confirmed by Council.

#### **5 Rakitata Revival Programme**

Kim Whitwell and Shaun Thomason from Ecan, provided an update on the Rakitata Revival Programme. A copy of the presentation will be circulated to members following the meeting.

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

A report seeking clarification on the Council's position of road reserve planting within the district rural zones and requesting the group's support to:

- 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.
- Request the Council to permit the roadside vegetation on Storriers Road.

The Biodiversity Advisory Group declined to support these requests.

## 7 **Wilding Pine in a Sensitive Eco-environment**

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

Requesting a recommendation to Council for a review of the rules for Rural B zone plantings to be consistent with the rules for the Rural C Zone.

The recommendation was not supported, as written with meeting agreement that Council officers will discuss the matter further with Forest and Bird representatives and prepare a fit for purpose recommendation, for consideration at the next meeting.

## 8 **Report from the Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor**

The second workshop for stakeholders is scheduled to be held on 1 June, 10.00am not 25 May as stated in the report.

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

Braam / Smith

Carried

### • **Bowyers Stream planting**

Planting suggestions were forthcoming from the meeting to enhance local birdlife and decrease the mowing requirement at the Bowyers Stream picnic area. One species mentioned was *Amelanchier canadensis* which is valued for its flowers and Autumn tones. Native species were also mentioned as additional possibilities to vary and enhance any planting.

The Open Spaces Manager will take this back to staff for consideration.

### • **Wakanui Beach**

Planting held pre Covid appears to have had less than a 50% success rate.

### • **Trapping**

Barry Austin reported that the predator control project is continuing to work well.

## **Next Meeting**

Monday 7 August 2023, 1.30pm.

The meeting concluded at 3:08pm.

## 5. *Report from the Council Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor*

Author *Dr. 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 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023.
- The report brings about the opportunity for members to ask questions and seek clarification on any items mentioned.

### Report

#### 1. Biodiversity Strategy Development

The project team and timeline have already been established. Councillors workshop is scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> August 2023 and would follow by community consultation on a later date. The final strategy is expected to be finalized by late 2023. Council Biodiversity Strategy would align with the NPS-IB and will help to implement the NPS-IB at the Territorial Authority level.

#### 2. National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB)

NPS-IB was gazetted on July 7, 2023, and to come into effect on August 4, 2023. A key objective is to maintain indigenous biodiversity and ensure no overall loss of indigenous biodiversity. The Policy Statement mandates all territorial authorities to undertake all local council significant natural area (SNA) surveys in the next 5 years. Discussion is ongoing on the implementation of the NPS-IB and district-wide SNA survey.

#### 3. Completed Projects (Planting and Pest Management)

##### a. Pest Control at Awa Awa Rata Reserve

Quarterly animal pest control using night shooting completed at Awa Awa Rata Reserve. The Council Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor is currently working with the Department of Conservation and neighbouring farmers to extend project coverage into DOC land and the Alford Forest area. The next project phase would be September/October 2023.

**b. Bowyers’ Stream Reserve Enhancement Planting**

Replanting of the reserve section adjoining the riverbank with native has been completed. 850 native plants were planted within the reserve.

**c. Taylor Stream Reserve Restoration Project**

Removal of sycamores around the reserve and replanting with natives completed. We planted over 3,900 native trees, shrubs and grasses.

**4. 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 Water Zone Committee towards the project.

**b. Native Shelterbelt Planting Proposal at Lake Clearwater Campground.**

The first batch of native shelterbelt planting at the Lake Clearwater Campground is planned for September 2023. This project is to replace the exotic pines, *Pinus contorta*, with native trees such as beech trees. Initial beech trees planted around the lake area are thriving at the same height as exotic radiata pines.

**5. Council Biodiversity Grant (2023 Round 2)**

A new round of Council biodiversity grant has opened and will close on 31st August 2023. Projects that align with our funding priorities are strongly encouraged. Please, contact the Council Ecologist/Biodiversity Advisor if you need to discuss your project or advice on applying for the grant.

**6. Update on Wilding Management in Rural C Zone within the legislation – matters from last ADBAG meeting**

Three pieces of legislation are put together when considering Plantation Forestry activity in the Rural C Zone. These include the Ashburton District Plan, National Policy Statement on Indigenous Vegetation and National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry.

With the **Ashburton District Plan rules**, all tree Planting in the Rural C Zone is limited to shelterbelts within the “Shelterbelt Areas” as shown on the ADC Planning Maps. The following trees with high wilding risk potentials below are not permitted to be planted.

Lodgepole pine	<i>Pinus contorta</i>
Scots Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
Corsican Pine	<i>Pinus nigra</i>
Dwarf mountain pine	<i>Pinus uncinata</i>
Mountain Pine	<i>Pinus mugo</i>
Douglas fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>

All poplars clones)	<i>Salicaceae</i> species (except Lombardy Poplars: male)
All larches	<i>Larix</i> species
All alders	<i>Alnus</i> species
All willows	<i>Salix</i> species
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> ( <i>Ilex aquifolium</i> )

While Plantation Forestry in Rural A and B zones are permitted activities [DP 3.8.2(d)], Plantation Forestry in Rural C zone is a discretionary activity requiring resource consent [DP 3.8.5(a)]. The Council considers applications for this activity on a case-by-case basis using effect management hierarchy (avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects). Points to consider when considering plantation forestry activity in the Rural C zone include the wilding risk potential of the tree species, setbacks from public conservation lands, roads and areas of significant value and adverse effects on the landscape value.

Plantation forestry activities can continue within the National Policy Statement on Indigenous Vegetation provided that the adverse effects are managed in a manner that maintains the long-term population of any Threatened or At Risk (declining) species present in the area using effect management hierarchy (avoid, remedy, mitigate, offset or compensate). These include existing forestry plantations, new planting proposals or replanting. But where plantation forestry is allowed to take place would depend on the District Plan rural zoning rules.

Within the **(National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry) Regulations 2017**, “Afforestation must not occur within a significant natural area or an outstanding natural feature or landscape (NES-PF Part 2(12)”. Also, Afforestation must not occur within 10 m of an SNA, a perennial river with a bank full channel width of 3 m or more, a lake larger than 0.25 ha, an outstanding freshwater body, a water body subject to a water conservation order; 5 m of the perennial river and wetland larger than 0.25ha; and within 30 m of the coastal marine area. Recall that most of the Rural C zone in the ADC district plan are an outstanding natural landscape or an SNA and no plantation forestry is allowed within these areas.

“In relation to existing shelterbelts and planting and effects from them, the responsibility for pest management primarily sits with the Regional Council through the [Regional Pest Management Plan](#). Environment Canterbury are the primary administrators of pest control for existing situations and a practical example of this are the shelterbelts at Lake Camp/Clearwater”.

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## **6 Wilding Management in ADC Rural C Zone**

**Edith Smith**

**Ashburton Forest and Bird/ Ashburton Community Conservation Trust**

### **Recommendation**

1. That ADBAG advocates that Environment Canterbury develop a management strategy to deal with existing shelterbelts that pose wilding risk potential in ADC Rural C Zone.
2. That ADBAG invites 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.

### **Summary**

Wilding reinfestation from established shelterbelts and plantation forestry is a problem, and its spread is continuing despite all efforts to curtail the risk.

### **Background**

1. ADBAG members understand the implications of Rural C rules especially relating to preventing the spread of wildings from Rural C properties to adjoining land.
2. We are very concerned about the future of this weeding project given the extreme number of wildings removed this time and compared to two years ago (Appendix 1).
3. How the existing shelterbelt with wilding potentials is managed would need to be established to reduce the ongoing wilding infestation from those seed sources.
4. ADBAG also requires an explanation of Rural C maps identifying sites where current permitted land use limits or allows conifer plantations which may have a wilding impact on adjoining Conservation land, protection and identification of indigenous biodiversity, geoconservation sites and legal status in relation to the National Indigenous Biodiversity Policy.
5. This will enable the Advisory Group to contribute informed advice to ADC.



## Discussion

**Inform ADBAG about** Rural C rules and land use guidelines in particular in relation to Climate Change NZ ETS Plantation planting which may impact on regenerating native ecosystems and natural glacial landscapes.

**What certainty do the Rural C Rules** give to protecting remnant, regenerating and potential, (eg gullies) sites of indigenous vegetation, ecosystems and landscapes that are identified in Rural C?

**Discuss Rural C Rules adequacy in limiting conifer plantations** eg shelter belts, amenity planting and plantations to prevent the long term impacts of wilding seedlings on public and private land.

**Explain situations where noncomplying activities rules** might permit plantation planting.

**ADBAG support a survey of indigenous vegetation and ecosystems in Rural C** and the yet to be surveyed areas of Rural B to ensure there is no further loss of indigenous biodiversity due to extensive plantation planting.

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## ***7. Update on National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity***

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

### **Recommendation**

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

### **Summary**

1. This report is to initiate conversation on National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB) implementation at the district level.
2. NPS-IB was gazetted on 7th July 2023 and is to commence on 4th August 2023.
3. The Policy seeks to maintain indigenous biodiversity to ensure “no overall loss in indigenous biodiversity in New Zealand.
4. It also mandates all local councils to undertake a district-wide significant natural area assessment including crown and private lands within 5 years from the commencement date and notify plan changes to that effect within 8 years.
5. The presentation summarised the local council’s responsibilities under the NPS-IB and implications for managing the adverse effect of subdivision, land use and development on indigenous biodiversity within and outside the SNA.

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## ***8. Environment Canterbury update – 7 August 2023***

### **Donna Field Environment Canterbury**

#### Staff

Ashburton ECan has 2 new staff join the biodiversity and land management team.

Michelle Ingham (previously worked for ADC)

Jess Cochrane

This makes the Biodiversity and Land Management team 4 people in total. Donna Field, Billy Bartrum Jess and Michelle.

Our manager Henry Winchester is leaving Ashburton as he is taking a secondment to the consenting team in Christchurch.

#### Rakaia River

We have funding to do work in the Upper Rakaia which will predominantly be weed and pest control in conjunction with other agencies in the Upper Catchment and with assistance from Manawa Energy in the Rakaia Gorge.

Part of the funding will also go towards fish identification in the springs and main stem of the river.

DOC will be completing a bird survey on the Rakaia River this year.

#### Foothills and Upper Plains

Investigating a project focusing on education for waterways and biodiversity, fresh water farm plans in the foothills area. We would like to work with other agencies on this.

#### Winter Grazing

2 flights have been conducted over the upper plains, foothills, and O tu Wharekai. Results are being collated and landowners contacted.

We have had a moderate number of winter grazing consent applications come in and 4 large consents covering multiple properties.

#### Ashburton River.

Working in conjunction with Forest and Bird to organise dates to survey the Ashburton River for birds.

Bird viewing platform survived flood and we are putting up signage on the southern side with some emphasis on the shags. The number of birds in the area is nationally significant.

The final report by ornithologist Andrew Crossland is attached.

#### Berm Transition Project

A large number of areas along the Ashburton River have had native planting interspaced along the river berm to encourage native spread and to introduce natives back into the landscape.

### Carters Creek

Time has been allocated to assist with Carters Creek and Michelle will be the main contact for that work.

### Wetlands

Looking at wetlands and changing flows and water composition.

### Regional Plan Policy Statement

The opportunity is open for the community to comment on the regional policy statement with the key focus areas being.

Water/Wai,

Land/ Whenua,

Climate Change /Te huringa āhuarangi.

Air/Hau takiwa

Coast/Takutai

Built Environment/ He taiao kua hangahanga whare

<https://haveyoursay.ecan.govt.nz/about-our-future-canterbury>

# 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.

#### Membership of the Advisory Group is:

##### **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

##### **QEII Trust**

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**

Gen de Spa

##### **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** (Amended 8/12/20, 1/2/22 and 7/9/22)