

MINUTES OF THE KAIKOURA ZONE WATER COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT 1.02PM ON WEDNESDAY 25 MAY 2016 AT MEMORIAL HALL SUPPER ROOM, ESPLANADE, KAIKOURA.

PRESENT: T Howard (Chair), Commissioner D Bedford, A Boyd, M Hoggard, N McArthur, G Solomon, J Harnett, Mayor W Gray, J Murray.

IN ATTENDANCE: M Griffin (Zone Facilitator), K Heays, J Hill, S Palmer, C Mischler, C Armour, S Bragg, G Raymond, B Taylor (Committee Secretary).

APOLOGIES: T Blunt, T Sonal.
Moved by G Solomon, seconded by Commissioner Bedford and resolved that apologies be accepted.

1. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 20/04/2016

Moved by M Hoggard, seconded by Commissioner Bedford and resolved that the minutes of the Kaikoura Zone Water Committee meeting held on 20 April 2016 be confirmed a true and accurate record.

2. IMMEDIATE STEPS BLACK FRONTED TERN PROJECT BRIEFING

The Black Fronted Tern was endemic to New Zealand and was classified as nationally endangered. The tern bred only in braided rivers of the eastern South Island in loose colonies. The nests were highly camouflaged, 1-3 eggs were laid and the chicks were highly mobile and left the nest when they were three days old. A national review had been undertaken on the Black Fronted Tern and their population was in serious decline. The highest decline was in smaller rivers and extinction was likely if there was no urgent management undertaken. A significant population, approximately 700 birds, was in the Upper Clarence catchment, including the Acheron, Saxton and Severn areas.

Breeding of Black Fronted Terns in the Upper Clarence yielded low success rates, primarily due to predation. There was a five year project to increase the tern population. This would be done by predator control, traps being installed around three colonies, and enhancing their habitat, by forming weed free islands. A trapping network with a radius of 500m was established in August 2015 and operated until mid-January. The traps were 100m apart and were checked and re-baited fortnightly.

Predator control - results

	Swimming Hole colony	Mitchell's Cutting colony	Bush Gully colony	Total
Cat	5	5	4	14
Ferret	21	7	8	36
Hedgehog	27	13	22	62
Stoat	18	7	8	33
Weasel	11	4	1	16

Habitat enhancement was carried out in late March 2016. Resource consent conditions prevented it being done before the 2015 breeding season. River

sediment was moved to form islands and allowed the water to flow more freely. The islands chosen in the Clarence were naturally formed and should have a better chance of lasting. The water would prevent possums reaching and destroying tern nests. It was suggested more co-operation from Fish and Game was required to look at the 'bigger picture' and not concentrate on individual interests.

The 2015 breeding season had poor success due in part to project delays and very low river levels. The traps had been successful at catching predators. Habitat restoration had been completed and was ready for the coming season. There would be some design changes to the traps to improve capture rates. Traps would be opened in the first week of July and islands would be maintained weed-free. Breeding success would continue to be monitored over the next four years to quantify the programme's success.

3. IMMEDIATE STEPS BLACK BILLED GULL PROJECT BRIEFING

There was a management programme in the Clarence River area for the Black Billed Gull. There were three types of gulls which bred at the mouth of the Clarence River. The Black Backed Gull, which was not endangered, the Red Bill Gull which was native to New Zealand and was classified as nationally vulnerable. The third was the Black Billed Gull which was endemic and had a 'nationally critical' status, this was the last status before extinction. Threats to the gull were predators (including the Black Backed Gull), industrial and recreational uses (water and gravel extraction), weeds, pollutants and flooding. The Black Billed Gulls had been banded since 2012 which was when the colony was found.

C Mischler was studying the breeding success of the black-billed gulls. She had installed two day cameras and two night cameras which were set to timers and took photos at regular intervals. Harrier birds attacked the nesting black-bills from the air and the black-backed gulls carried out land-based attacks. The black-backed gulls were the biggest threat to nesting gulls and C Mischler recommended culling them. She suggested poisoning them would be the most effective method which would be done by putting laced bread next to the nests. The bread needed to be put out swiftly as the poison took effect quickly and the last birds needed to eat the bait before the first birds died. The poisoning would need to take place for a few years. There were eleven known black-billed gull colonies in Canterbury and they were considered equally as endangered as the kiwi and kakapo.

4. IMMEDIATE STEPS UPDATE

The Smiths Lyell Creek project completion report had been received. The drain which flows into Lyell Creek had been fenced. The Swan Creek project had also been completed and before and after photos supplied. A fresh water fish had been found in the waterway.

There were three new Immediate Steps projects up for consideration and there was close to \$100,000 to be allocated by the end of June.

1. Swan Creek – Hawthorne Trust requested \$5691 for 180m of stock proof fencing, 485 eco-sourced plants planted and ongoing maintenance. This would restore the native riparian buffer along Swan Creek.
2. The Clarence River black billed gull project requested \$58,800 to monitor the breeding success of the black billed gull and to quantify the black backed gulls' disturbance on them. It would then be followed by an adaptive management plan and actions.
3. The Lyell Creek MainPower Trust Restoration project requested \$10,120 to restore the riparian margins and ecological function of Lyell Creek.

It was moved by T Howard and seconded by J Murray and resolved that Immediate Steps Funding be granted to applicants as follows:

- ***Swan Creek Restoration (Hawthorne Trust) - \$5691,***
- ***Clarence River Black-Billed Gull Management Project - \$58,800***
- ***Lyell Creek MainPower Trust Restoration project - \$12,970****

* The application submitted by the Lyell Creek MainPower Trust Restoration Project had requested \$10,970 however the earthworks which needed to be done before the project began had increased in cost from \$1000 to \$3000.

There was \$23,090 left in the fund.

The parameters of Immediate Steps were discussed as it had been a struggle at times to find projects eligible for funding. M Hoggard advised it had also been discussed at the Regional Committee and a review of the Immediate Steps had occurred. The draft of the review would be presented at the next Regional Committee meeting. Commissioner Bedford suggested the Regional Committee's Biodiversity Working Group present what they had been doing to the Zone Committee. N McArthur suggested the Immediate Steps fund could be included with the farm plans to incentivise farmers to take part and see the potential benefits.

5. CLARENCE WAI AU-TOA WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN

The draft Weed Management Plan had been distributed and feedback was sought on it. If the concepts were agreed with then the management plan would be adopted.

Discussion on the draft plan noted there was plenty of scientific evidence which showed the wilding pines had a big effect on water levels. It was suggested it would be beneficial if the Department of Conservation was forthcoming with which areas contained protected species of animals. It was generally felt good communication between the Department of Conservation and the farm owners was critical to the ongoing success of the weed management plan.

Chilean Needle Grass was discussed. As the grass was only found north of the Ure River, special care needed to be taken to minimise the risk of the grass spreading. If contractors came in to the District from Seddon we needed to have a plan in place to ensure clean and dry vehicles, to mitigate the spread.

It was moved by T Howard and seconded by Mayor W Gray that up to \$50,000 funding be approved for the Clarence weed management plan each year. This would equate to one third of the total spend per annum in accord with Immediate Steps funding criteria.

6. GENERAL BUSINESS

M Griffin was drafting a letter to NZTA which noted the committee's priorities with regard to the transport corridor. The Zone Delivery Team proposed an inspection of the waterways and drains along the highway, to be undertaken later in the year. There would be \$12 million of funding available for public toilets for the next three years nationally. A proposal would be drafted for a toilet at Ohau Point. G Solomon suggested it would be useful to have a 'dropbox' as a place to store and access information and photos. Any centralised information storage portals would need to be well controlled and monitored. A new ECan website was being developed and this would include a photo page.

G Solomon requested that 'Earthcheck' information be presented to the Zone Committee. There should be a short briefing of what 'Earthcheck' was and which parts of the programme Kaikoura District Council subscribed to.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 4.45pm.