

3. OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PUBLIC TO SPEAK

M Bate – Kaiapoi Resident

Mr Bate raised concerns regarding the use of chemical spraying in riverbeds and suggested that there be no further spraying undertaken until there was more information available on the impacts of chemical spraying and safety for biodiversity. The use of chemical spraying was a significant problem worldwide and it was also estimated to be the cause of many deaths worldwide.

M Bate noted the benefits in the Kaiapoi Lakes where Council had agreed to stop chemical spraying in the water and there was proof of the improved habitat for fish – he had recently observed improvement in the clarity of the water, increase in numbers and size of fish in the lakes and subsequent birdlife feeding on the fish. Mr Bate tabled two articles from 2022 on a report from the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment and Environment Protection Agency (EPA) raising concerns about the regulations around chemical use and the lack of mechanisms to govern this. Dr Tim Davie responded to Mr Bate's concerns. He advised that the EPA was currently supposed to have oversight around chemical use, but there was currently very little by way of legislative requirements, and there was no requirement to report on it. If the EPA had a mandate, there would be standards to respond to and monitor against. The Parliamentary Commissioner's report recommended expanding the EPA's powers to require more data to be collected from chemical importers, manufacturers, and sellers, but more funding was needed, and it was important for these issues to be highlighted to the government.

Dr Davie advised that ECan managed 59 river rating and drainage districts and weed management was essential to keep communities safe from flood risks and to protect biodiversity. Waterways were vulnerable to infestations of exotic pest plant species which choked braided rivers and restricted natural functions. Spraying was required to manage weeds and the spread of gorse around riverbeds, and spraying directly onto water was avoided. Glyphosate was widely used in New Zealand and other countries as a general-purpose herbicide and was considered safe by the EPA. In an ideal world Dr Davie said it would be preferred not to spray. Glyphosate was a spray which was reasonably short lived.

The Waimakariri District Council was preparing a report on spraying practices and chemicals used in the district. This report would be presented at the 6 March Zone Committee meeting. In summary it was advised that herbicide spraying was only used when necessary and, in other instances, mechanical or non-chemical forms of weed control was used. These are a higher priority than spraying. It was planned to provide the Zone Committee with a copy of the Council's programme of the spraying.

The Chairperson thanked M Bate for speaking on this matter.

James Ensor

J Ensor spoke on the unwanted nitrate levels on farm properties and the measuring this. He requested that this matter be followed up by the committee and feedback provided at a future meeting. E Harvie would follow up on the use of dolomite and if there was any way of measuring the levels of nitrates following winter feed. It was common practice to plant crops such as oats after winter feed to take up nitrate. A trial has been undertaken on this matter and Cr McKay suggested information could be made available from ECan on current nitrate levels. Cr McKay believed that over the past five years approximately, farmers would have reduced the amount of nitrate applied to crops. Cr Fulton commented that there had been a response to market regulation, but also that the price of fertiliser had become prohibitive for many farmers. The current readings of nitrate levels pointed out by J Ensor were of a concern, but he also noted that these were a concern back in the early 1980s. There was a long timeframe to be considered with this matter, which may go back several decades.

Following discussion at a recent ECan Sefton Town-Sefton Ashley Rating District meeting

held in Sefton late in 2022, C Latham had asked at the drainage meeting when spray programmes were undertaken, and what the triggers were for these. Though there was no definitive response provided to this question, it had been noted that there were risks to ECan staff members undertaking the spraying that needed to be taken in to account when making information public, as not all members of the community supported the use of chemical spraying as a means to control weeds.

4. **REPORTS**

4.1 **Waimakariri Biodiversity Trust – Update – Murray Griffin (CWMS Facilitator, ECan) and Dr Judith Roper-Lindsay (Chair, Waimakariri Biodiversity Trust)**

J Roper-Lindsay provided an update on the Trust activities and future plans.

The Trust worked with Waimakariri District Council ecologists to hold a winter series of public talks on biodiversity topics in Rangiora. These workshops were well attended, and it was planned to repeat these in 2023 across the district. This would again be a series of meetings, but in different locations. These could focus on the biodiversity in these particular areas – for instance, Ohoka and Loburn.

A part-time coordinator was appointed during 2022, Andrew Thompson. This appointment was for a six-month contract for the establishment phase. A Thompson, an accountant, instigated the Visioning Workshop held in November 2022, aided with a grant from the Zone Committee. There were 18 invited ecologists and environmental staff, plus the Trustees and others in the communication area. From this workshop, approximately 40 ideas were developed on activities that the Trust could undertake. Following a further workshop the Trust held, with a smaller number of participants, this list was reduced to seven.

J Roper-Lindsay spoke on the future actions of the Trust, the first being the appointment of a new coordinator, as A Thompson could not be renewing his contract due to other commitments.

Another priority for the Trust is to establish a website, to be the public face for the organisation. A meeting is planned to develop this website and graphics.

The Trust needs to establish a standard practice for how it operates and wants to undertake pilot biodiversity restoration projects and document process and outcomes. It was planned to hold discussions with different groups on what their projects would be and how much it was anticipated they would cost, so the appropriate funding could be applied for from relevant sources. It was also hoped to be able to work with larger companies/organisations in the district on a cost sharing basis for biodiversity projects. Another project to be developed was an interactive biodiversity map, linking to the website.

It was also planned to hold field days in spring 2023, in liaison with WDC visiting some of the significant biodiversity sites in the district.

Cr McKay noted that there was an appetite for people to propagate, grow from seed and get good strikes. J Roper-Lindsay said it was planned that this would be one of the topics of the outdoor field days. This would encourage the connection with people on their plantings and biodiversity.

M Griffin asked about the coordinator position and J Roper-Lindsay said there was funding available for this role until the end of this year. It was suggested that the Trust may need the position of a part-time Project Manager for each project. This may be someone who would be able to offer advice on Biodiversity projects and the person suited to the role would depend on their capabilities. It may be that the role is filled by a person from an organisation. M Griffin spoke on the criteria for Zone Committee

funding. E Harvie suggested having discussions with the biodiversity and planting groups in Ellesmere and Selwyn on how these groups operate.

J Roper-Lindsay noted that there was no shortage of projects for the Trust to work on for the year, but confirmed the need to secure funding for these projects. It was also confirmed that any SNA sites (Significant Natural Areas), would be kept separate from the work of the Trust.

Moved C Latham

Seconded M Jolly

THAT the CWMS Waimakariri Zone Committee:

- (a) **Receives** this information with consideration to the Committee's 2021-2024 Acton Plan priorities.

CARRIED

5. **COMMITTEE UPDATES – M GRIFFIN (CWMS FACILITATOR, ECAN)**

5.1 **Zone Committee Working Groups.**

Biodiversity Working Group: M Jolly spoke to this update, which was taken as read. At the previous meeting of the group, it was suggested that a whole of committee workshop topic of SNAs Significant Natural Areas be scheduled in this year. This would include appropriate WDC staff, to discuss landowners' rights and responsibilities.

Regarding nitrate testing, M Jolly to investigate some costs involved for equipment to do the testing.

Another matter the group wishes to move on with is an environmental award for 2023. This would require some further discussion by the Working Group, to bring back to the Committee potential criteria for an award.

Lifestyle Block Working Group: It was hoped to be able to provide a further update on the Top Ten Tips for Lifestyle/small block owners leaflet at the March committee meeting. The ECan design and communications teams are currently working on this document. It was suggested having a stand at the Ohoka Farmers Market to distribute the leaflets.

Monitoring Working Group: E Harvie noted the community water quality testing day was successful and the group would be endeavouring to arrange another day in coordination with Dr Tim Chambers (University of Otago Public Health). J Ensor noted that there were 1500 residents on the Mandeville Lifestyle block owner's database and members of this group could be advised of any future testing days.

Regarding the nitrate testing, Cr McKay said it was important to be aware that there may be different causes that can make single testing for nitrate levels unreliable, and that nitrates were not the only contaminant that could be present, for example, E.coli.

Dr Davie also highlighted a recommendation going to an upcoming ECan Land and Water Committee meeting in response to a Notice of Motion from September, regarding a regional water testing programme. One of these recommendations relates to improved communications to people on private water supplies and making information available on what other testing was needed.

Waimakariri Landcare Trust: The report was taken as read in the agenda.

There were no questions.

5.2 **Waimakariri Land and Water Committee – 27 September 2022 Meeting.**

The agenda from this meeting was included in the Zone Committee agenda for information. The importance of communications with rural landowners was reiterated.

5.3 **Waimakariri Zone Communications Report for September – December 2022.**

M Griffin spoke to the Communications Report for the Zone Committee included in the agenda. In future there would be quarterly reporting on communications matters. This report was a collation of items relevant to the committee over the past quarter.

There were no questions.

5.4 **Further Information Links.**

M Griffin noted that these are included as standard items in the agenda, for members information. This included links to the ECan's overview of Government's Essential Freshwater Package, and the ECan updates on Plan Change 7 and 2 to the Canterbury Land and Water Plan. If there were any significant changes to these, committee members would be notified accordingly.

5.5 **Action points from the previous Zone Committee meetings.**

M Griffin provided an update on these matters and that there had been follow up on the matters from the 5 September 2022 committee meeting. Regarding the closure of stockwater races, it was suggested that Cr Fulton could convey feedback from the committee to Waimakariri District Council on the impact of the closure of stockwater races. C Latham suggested Council needed to ensure that people who want to undertake a closure are aware that there was a bigger picture around nitrate dilution, and incremental closures over time could increase nitrate issues in the district. Cr Fulton noted that the maps may need to be updated to show where stockwater races are, with some having been diverted or closed, and the importance of keeping the public facing map up to date.

E Harvie commented on the Ashley Rakahuri Draft Strategy, given recent happenings in the north island, highlighting there could be an issue with forestry slash in the river being an environmental impact. The committee would have an opportunity to provide further feedback during consultation in May 2023.

Moved M Blackwell

Seconded Cr T Fulton

THAT the CWMS Waimakariri Zone Committee:

(a) **Receives** these updates for its information.

CARRIED

6. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

6.1 **Minutes of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy Waimakariri Zone Committee Meeting – 5 September 2022**

Moved M Blackwell

Seconded M Jolly

THAT the CWMS Waimakariri Zone Committee:

a) **Confirms** the Minutes of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy Waimakariri Zone Committee meeting, held on 5 September 2022, as a true and accurate record.

CARRIED

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS

C Latham mentioned the filtration trench and also the denitrification wall installed at Silverstream (as in a report in the WDC Land and Water Committee agenda provided for information to the committee). The result showed that it could be done, even though it involved some regular maintenance and C Latham asked how this could relate to useful information to farmers and were there any next steps following this trial. M Blackwell noted that the trial was severely compromised by the silted water coming in from the Waimakariri River. Cr McKay responded that this was a good start, despite the sedimentation affecting the water, it was a successful trial. It was suggested that the consent costs could be prohibitive, but the next step could be a trial trench going into a storage tank on property. Cr McKay referred to sites in Hinds that use a system, funded by ECan and Ministry of Primary Industries. Dr Davie noted that this trial in Hinds had been advanced and managed by a community Trust. This was a good example to be considered and learn from. Dr Davie added that there had been an ECan Councillor field visit to the Silverstream denitrification wall in December 2022, it was continuing to be monitored, partly to monitor how long it lasts. He noted the set-up costs were substantial for this wall, partly because it was set up as a scientific experiment, so alternatives are being looked at. Another alternative was also to put denitrification walls at the end of tile drains, which would be on a much smaller scale. There was ongoing work on this matter.

M Griffin spoke on the Action Plan Budget, and it was agreed to arrange a Committee Briefing Session on 20 February, 3.30 to 5.30pm to discuss options to be considered.

KARAKIA

A Reuben provided the karakia to close the meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the CWMS Waimakariri Water Zone Committee is scheduled for 6 March 2023 at 3:30pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 5.33pm.

CONFIRMED



Chairperson
C Latham

6 March 2023
Date

At the conclusion of the meeting a Training Session was held on Standing Orders and Meeting Protocols – Thea Kunkel (Governance Team Leader, WDC)