



Report 02.168

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Report to the Regional Council
from Councillor Hugh Barr

Wellington Conservation Board (WCB) Meeting, Friday, 22 February and Wellington South Coast Inspection, Saturday, 23 February 2002

1. Purpose

To advise the Council of significant issues arising from the Wellington Conservation Board Meeting

2. Riparian Management (Item 5.1)

The Wellington Conservation Board (WCB) received the Wellington Regional Council (Wairarapa) letter on Riparian Management, and is interested in seeing the final policy document. I circulated the WRC's recent NIWA report on inanga spawning habitat for the waterways in the Wellington sub-region.

3. Eel Bycatch When Cleaning Rural Drains

A WCB member expressed concern about apparent WRC drain cleaning on the eastern side of Lake Wairarapa. A large number of small and medium sized eels had been cleared out of the drains with the mud and vegetation, and apparently killed on the bank (photos circulated). The Board will be writing to the WRC about its concern.

Following the meeting, I asked Ian Gunn of the Wairarapa Division to investigate. He advises me that the work was not done by the WRC. Apparently, the work was on DOC land which is administered by the South Wairarapa District Council. It was complicated by the very dry winter (June-July 2001) and the fact that eels hibernate in winter in these drains.

While it seems that the WRC is not responsible for this incident, it did show up a gap in our Regional Plans, as the relevant rule does not contain a provision about allowing eels to return to the water.

At the next Environment Committee, I will ask that WRC to note the Conservation Board and my concern that Rule 39 of the Regional Freshwater Plan does not presently require eels to be returned to the water and thus allows them to be left on the land to die. I will also ask that the Environment Committee investigate opportunities to improve the rule when further changes are made to the plan.

I understand that WRC staff will liaise with District Councils and Wairarapa drain clearing contractors to make them aware of the problem and how it can be addressed as well as prepare information material for the press, landowners and contractors.

4. Upgrade to the Masterton Sewage Scheme

The WCB was concerned about stream pollution created by the scheme not being adequately upgraded. A waiver had been granted the MDC in 1996, but there had been little progress in the subsequent five years. WCB felt the WRC was being too soft on MDC, and wanted the upgrade done as soon as possible, e.g., programmed in the next Annual Plan.

I see that the matter is the subject of a report to the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee and that the WRC Regional Services Committee took action in December 2001, and put the MDC on notice, so I will report back to the Conservation Board at its next meeting.

5. Wellington South Coast (Seatoun to Sinclair Head)

The WCB inspected this area on Saturday. Much of it, (e.g., the quarry, land down from Hawkins Hill) is Wellington City Council (WCC) owned, and the WCC has a South Coast Management Plan. Only three small reserves, including Sinclair Head Scientific Reserve and Red Rocks Scientific Reserve are public conservation estates (DOC). A marine reserve is probable. None is WRC reserve or park, though WRC has responsibilities for the coast and sea out to 12 miles. A "Wild West" regional park has been proposed for land to the west, including part of Terawhiti Station, and a walkway around the coast has been discussed. It would be useful for the three organisations (WCB, WCC, WRC) to get together to discuss future co-operation and options when some of the current uncertainties are decided. The area is one of land and sea, and we are only starting to come to grips with sea management and sea ecosystems.

I realise that under the current programme, a "Wild West" Regional Park is not planned until at least 2010. However, I would like Landcare staff to make initial contact with DOC and the WCC so that they are aware of the area and its values. I will be raising the "Wild West" Regional Park and/or a coastal walkway as part of the next 10 year financial plan.

6. Kapiti Marine Reserve

This has become a success in terms of the larger fish in the reserve, etc. Ken Grange, the Chair of the Marine Reserve Committee, showed a video of the fish life in three different parts of the Reserve. This would be of interest to Councillors. I suggest that Councillor Turver, Kapiti Marine Reserve Committee, show the video to the Council.

7. Wellington Heads Recreation Reserve

DOC have achieved a recreation reserve on the coastal escarpment at the former Fort Dorset army base, complementing the protection provided by the East Harbour Regional Park on the east side.

8. Recommendations

That the Council.

- (1) *receive the report.*
- (2) *note the contents of the report.*

Report prepared by:

HUGH BARR
Deputy Chairperson
Landcare Committee