

**Minutes of the BRaid General (45) Meeting held on Friday March 24th 2017 at 3pm at DOC Maahanui Area Office, Sockburn.**

**Welcome:** Nick welcomed those present, Jim Jolly, Bev Alexander, Richard Maloney, Grant Davey, Karen Renouf, Val Campbell, Ailsa Howard and Sonny Whitelaw.

**Apologies:** Edith Smith, Peter Smith, Frances Schmeckel, Jane Demeter.

**Minutes of the November 25 2017** meeting had been circulated beforehand, and were confirmed as a true and correct record. Moved by Bev, seconded by Richard.

**Matters Arising:**

**1.** Case for better management of smaller rivers. This is an increasingly important topic. **Action**:  *To be addressed by Jim and Nick with advice from Richard Maloney*.

2. Lupins. Letter sent to ECan CEO and Minister for Primary Industry, Nathan Guy, and to Bill Bayfield, CEO ECan. Response from MPI that the letter has been placed on the Minister’s desk.

3. Encroachment of farmland into braided rivers. It was proposed that this could be addressed in the June braided river seminar, although inquiries have failed to unearth a potential speaker. **Action**: *Manager to chase this along*.

4. Health and Safety. Manager has drafted a policy (in consultation with DOC). This is now on file and can be adapted to suit upcoming situations.

5. Trapping workshops. It was agreed that BRaid does have a role to play in improving predator control on braided rivers.

**Action**: *Manager to identify local groups which could benefit from workshops (eg., contact Trapping NZ), and to advertise on website for those wanting BRaid support..*

6. Awareness signage. Manager is in discussion about signage at the Rakaia/Lake Coleridge (Coleridge Habitat Trust), up at L. Coleridge (Trustpower), and at the Ashley/Saltwater creek estuary (Waimak DC).

**Action:** *On-going attention by Manager.*

7. Release of new RCD K strain. Discussion about need to alert those involved about importance of rabbits in predator cycles on braided rivers. This needs to be considered in any release strategy. **Action:** *Manager to write to ECan on this matter.*

**Correspondence:**

Addressed above (Lupin letter) and in Manager’s report.

**Financial:**

In the absence of Treasurer (Edith and Peter Smith) the financial report was presented by the Manager. This was moved for approval (Bev/Jim) and passed. The same two moved that the payments to be paid ($11,808.30) be approved. This was passed.

Available funds on 20th March were $23,226.18

**Membership:**

Many members still to pay current membership fee. **Action:** *A reminder to be sent out in next Newsletter (Manager)*

**Manager’s Report:**

**Braided River Partnership Project**

* + - Orari: Thanks to Fulton Hogan, the Orari Rivercare Group, & ECan, work went ahead this year rather than next year, to clear weeds near Burden Road to create possible nesting site for black-fronted terns this coming season. The application of Ann Schlesselman’s research on the Lower Waitaki in the coming season should also prove to be highly beneficial. Awarded Bronze Accreditation under the terms of the Partnership Project Environmental Management plan.
    - Craigmore Farm : Awarded Bronze accreditation. They worked in conjunction with ECan’s Robert Carson-Iles, who agreed that their level of their commitment and a successful outcome warrants accreditation
    - Waikuku Beach Farm : Awarded Bronze Accreditation
    - Harper and Wilberforce Rivers: Trustpower awarded Bronze Accreditation
    - Ashley River: Taggarts awarded Silver accreditation for the assistance over many years
    - Ashburton: signs around the colony at the rivermouth destroyed
    - Rakaia and Lower Waitaki: In terms of last year’s eggs thefts, DOC was to erect signs and local campaign to warn against interfering with wildlife. No news is good news?
    - Waiau: most traps lost to floods, recommendations from Nick developed into proposed plan to HW Zone Committee via Jess Hill. Follow up meeting with Biodiversity sub-committee in April.

**The Flock project**

* Estimated somewhere between 400-500 birds created through schools and other groups
* Huge uptake from Kaikoura to Mt Cook, with some 20+ displays across 4 districts
* Ashburton District libraries ran holiday programme over January using The Flock teaching resources
* Other groups are now adopting the idea. Really want to develop a more cohesive approach in 2017, with the production of ‘permanent’ members of the Flock made from plywood and painted in realistic colours, with stronger & more resilient ‘legs’**.**
* Arts in Oxford community art project 30 May to 6 June before the 10 June opening of the exhibition " From the River to the Shore”  and "Flyways Print Exchange”.

**Other meetings and issues arising**

* **Waimakariri Science Stakeholder Advisory Group** – keeping the focus on weeds and terrestrial ecology/birds in the Ashley-Rakahuri; proposed that as a concentrated weed eradication programme in one of the smaller foothill fed rivers has not yet been undertaken - perhaps the Ashley Rakahuri could be a good start as part of a visible suite of managements solutions. Sent a copy of Grant Davey’s weed mapping to ECan (Matt Dodson) who suggested the Zone Committee should see it.
* **Waimakariri Council Environmental Focus Group** – 30 year plan input for **District Plan** is focussed on town planning for population growth, with inputs from the Zone Committee, DOC, and stakeholders such as BRaid to find a better balance between development and environment.
* **NIWA** meeting re proposed bathymetric research
* **Waimakariri Council Environmental Focus Group** – 30 year plan input
* **H&S plan** - completed
* **Website** – up to 100 hits a day/ major source of info. Rebuilt and updated search engine and calendar
* **BRaid Seminar 2017** - 61 booked so far, further presentations to be actioned by Sonny

**Correspondence:**

* Invited Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust to utilise BRaid resources, as they are exending their interests into braided rivers
* Letter of support for NIWA funding application
* Letter inviting Alice Shanks (Botanical Society) to join BRaid
* Letter to Nathan Guy and Bill Bayfield expressiing concern aboutt the spread of Russell lupins, especially in the upper Waimakariri
* Letters fo accreditation sent to Fulton Hogan, Craigmore Farm, and Trustpower

**Monitoring:**

**Upper Waimakariri**  The final report has been completed by Jim Jolly. A key finding from the three surveys (2102, 2014, & 2016) is that there has been no major change in bird numbers since the very first survey in 1981. Three recommendations about i) controlling black-backed gulls, ii) monitoring and controlling the spread of Russell lupins, and iii) better public awareness of upper Waimakariri bird situation (eg., as part of Alpine Scenic rail commentary). **Actions**:

**1**. *Report to be made available on the website (Manager)*.

**2**. Gull control can best undertaken by DOC. *Nick to seek a quote from DOC as to what this might cost.*

**3**. Lupin control. Concern about this was also expressed by Val Campbell, who was proposing some local community action later this year. Unfortunately, Mike Harding’s weed report (requested by DOC in 2014) only covered the river stretch above the Bealey bridge. *Nick to discuss potential weed control action with Val and DOC.*

**4**. Improving awareness. *Manager to contact KiwiRail about supplying information for Alpine rail commentary. Nick to explore media article for Press*.

**Ashley/ Rakahuri river**. 2016-17 was one of the poorer bird breeding seasons, probably due to increasing weed invasion of breeding and feeding sites (see comments on Grant’s PPT address at end of meeting). Success story of black-billed gull colony on working dairy farm – fledgling productivity of at least 1.0.

**Wilberforce.** On-going liaison with Trustpower about signage and future assistance with bird monitoring and management. Discussion about a potential BRaid-run survey of the Wilberforce this coming spring. DOC has a strategy for timing of future surveys, plus a current proposal to the Rakaia Enhancement Fund for increased bird management (monitoring and predator control) in the Rakaia, within which a Wilberforce survey could be covered. *Nick to liaise with a) Andy Grant relative to future survey intentions, and b) DOC relative to outcomes of the funding application and potential role for a BRaid survey.*

**Waiau / Hurunui**. BRaid comments on 2016 Waiau survey are being considered by Biodiversity sub-committee of the Hurunui/Waiau Zone Committee. Jim mentioned the need to extend monitoring up beyond where 2016 survey started. *Karen R to explore getting more involved with HWZC on BRaid’s behalf. Nick and Manager to follow up on these initiatives.*

**Ashburton Hakatere River**. Their ShoreBird Management Plan has been released and a group of interested parties is being set up and facilitated by Donna Field from ECan to implement the plan.

**General Business**

**Use of historic information**. Jim stated that there are heaps of reports on braided rivers (often as part of consenting processes) which contain a lot of useful information, but have never seen the light of day. *This matter will be raised at the next meeting*.

**Powerpoint presentation by Grant Davey**. This addressed the increase in weeds on the Ashley/Rakahuri River and the subsequent loss of bare gravel areas, which appears to be closely linked with decreasing bird numbers over recent years. Grant’s Ppt quantified the areas involved, explored possible reasons and proposed active intervention in the form of weed clearances in riverbed stretches historically favoured by birds. It was noted that the weed species invading are moving towards a greater component of more persistent woody weeds, such as gorse, broom and willows (all currently present in the main fairway as young plants).

**Meeting concluded at 5.30pm**

**Next meeting: Friday, July 14, 1pm.** *(Note earlier starting time)*

**Signed: Date:**