 **Minutes of the BRaid General (53) Meeting held on Friday October 9th 2020 at 2.45pm at DOC Maahanui Area Office, Sockburn.**

**Present:** Nick welcomed those present: Edith Smith, Bev Alexander, Sue Mardon, Grant Davey, Sonny Whitelaw, Frances Schmechel, Tony Day, Nicky and Rosalie Snoyink.

**Apologies:** Val Clemens, Sarah Ensor, Jim Jolly, Adele Coombes, Peter Howden, Peter Smith, Ailsa and Ted Howard. Edith/Sonny. Carried

**Minutes of previous meeting (Jan 24).** Had been circulated beforehand, and were confirmed as a true and correct record*.* Nick / Tony. Carried.

.**Matters Arising:**

**1.** Case for management of smaller rivers. This was addressed at the BRaid workshop on July 8.

All other items addressed below in current agenda.

**Correspondence:**

Discussion about what should be included, and noted that all important material is usually recorded on website.

**Financial Report.** Sue presented Financial Report for the period 1/07/2020 to 7/10/2020

Expenditure over Income: $6,710.49

Closing Bank Balance: $29,339.54

Unallocated funds: $15,330.47

Resolved: ‘That the financial accounts be received as true and correct’ Sue / Nick. Carried

‘That the report be received and accounts amounting to $43,096.76 be approved for payment’ Sue/Nick. Carried

**Membership:** 41 general members (24 unpaid) and 58 casual members. Unpaid members are moved to casuals.

**Biodiversity / climate change component of BRaid website**. BRaid acts as the ‘umbrella’ group for a developing S. Is focused ‘biodiversity / climate change’ website (‘climatesolutionsnz.org.nz’). This is being promoted by a separate ECan-based group, with BRaid chosen as the umbrella ‘host’ (rather than ECan itself) due to BRaid being less restricted by institutional protocols, and having greater funding opportunities. Plus BRaid’s manager, Sonny Whitelaw, combines skills in website creation with a good knowledge of climate change material. It was agreed that a BRaid biodiversity/climate change sub-committee (BCC) be formed to oversee this part of the Group’s development.

***Action****: Chair to write to ECan (Frances) suggesting the formation of BCC and seeking advice as to its make-up.*

**David Owen report** (David not present).

David is ECan’s Principal Biodiversity Advisor Braided Rivers. He is charged with writing 9 plans for braided rivers over 10 year, bringing together the likes of ECan, DOC, LINZ and communities in a common strategy. The first ‘cab off the rank’ is the Ashley / Rakahuri river. Chosen due being a foothills-fed river, and local Group’s good records since 2000, depth of community interest, and support by Zone Committee, rununga, ECan and the Waimakariri DC. End result will be a long-term plan with appropriate funding for implementation. All plans will have an emphasis on protecting and enhancing indigenous biodiversity.

**Manager’s Report:**

Attached separately.

**2020 Seminar (July 8) report.** This event was a great success, despite it being held not long after a 5-week Level 4 lockdown period. It featured eleven speakers and attracted just under 100 people. All the proceedings are on the website. All the feedback was positive, to the extent that another symposium is planned, and has already been tentatively booked for July 14, 2021. Major thanks are due to Sonny Whitelaw for the organizing, ECan for the funding and LINZ for the morning and afternoon teas.

**ECan / DOC braided river projects.** These were briefly updated by Frances. They are all proceeding, and have recently benefitted from major new funding, particularly for the Rakaia and Rangitata catchments. It was agreed that summary information on all these projects should be available on the BRaid website.

***Action****: Frances to email Sonny relative to contacts for accessing information needed for the website.*

**Monitoring.**

1. DoC database. All survey results and reports are sent to Andy Grant DOC. Comment made that a standardised data base of these should be available for all to see. Sonny and Grant have discussed this with DOC’s Andy Grant.

***Action****: Nick to write to Ellery Mayence (DOC) relative to standardising database and improving access.*

1. Survey of lower section of Wilberforce river. A recce survey was undertaken in November, 2019, and was to be considered for the spring of 2020, but will not go ahead this year.
2. SBBG control in upper Waimakariri. Long-term control can be more effectively implemented in outlier colonies such as those in the upper Waimakariri, and BRaid has funding available for this. Need for a recce visit this year to assess what might be done in 2021.

***Action****: Nick to contact Niall Mugan requesting quote for a recce visit and short report this year.*

Rosalie S asked as to possibility for similar control work in the mid-Waimakariri (from end of gorge down to Oxford/Sheffield bridge). Nick will ask Niall about cost of doing a second recce in this stretch of the river.

1. Rangiora HS study of aquatic insects in Ashley-Rakahuri river. The RHS did initiate an intended long-term study 2 years ago, but there has been no recent work.

***Action****: Sonny to write to RHS asking after possibilities for continuing this student study.*

1. Student study topics for Orari / Opihi area. No report back from Adele Coombes on this.

**Updates:**

1. Waiau / Hurunui: On-going work on island creation and predator control.

***Action****: Sonny to write to ECan’s Zip Ploeg for an update of information for website.*

1. Ashley-Rakahuri. Survey on Nov 21. Update from Nick on the tractor-mounted undercutter being used on the Ashley-Rakahuri river for weed control. Around 40ha cleared this year at a cost of $250/ha.
2. Waimakariri. Survey on October 21.
3. Ashburton: Survey on Nov 21. Good progress by the management group at the mouth of the river. The major breeding sites have been well fenced and signed. Collaboration with Ashburton DC, who are protecting adjacent dryland area. SBBG numbers in riverbed again look excessive.
4. Orari: Local group going well. Currently 30-35 traps set. Scouting for colonies in upper stretch, and spraying weeds on 1ha favoured island. Focus on saving adults below SH79, as poor water flow does not usually allow breeding to be completed successfully – despite Balance road area always attracting BFTs.
5. Opihi / Opuha. Poor response to a proposed rivercare group meeting. This will be renewed next year. Noted that the Opihi is virtually ‘had it’ as a braided river, and any bird work (plus predator control) should focus on creating and protecting a couple of weed-free sites.

**General Business.**

* Bird of the Year: No time to discuss this.
* Trap funding. Frances reported that ECan has funds available for trapping.
* Loss of braided river habitat due to berm encroachment of fairway and too much operational emphasis on flood control. Grant led a vigorous discussion on this, describing his work looking at past aerial photos which show significant loss of braided fairway area since the mid-1900s. This is compounded by excessive gravel extraction. Current management needs to change emphasis - from almost sole focus on flood control, to better conservation of indigenous braided river values. It was noted by Nicky S that the time is ripe for pushing changes in this direction. Grant was encouraged to complete his in-depth report on this matter.

***Action*** *(Edith/Sonny): BRaid/ARRG to present a report / deputation to ECan councillors in the near future – supported by the likes of F&B.*

**Meeting concluded at 4.50pm**

**Next meeting: To be decided.**

**Signed: Date:**

**Action Items**

1. ***Nick*** *to write to ECan (Frances) suggesting the formation of a biodiversity / climate change (BCC) subcommittee to oversee new part of BRaid website, and seeking advice as to BCC make-up.*
2. ***Frances*** *to email Sonny relative to contacts for accessing ECan/DOC braided river project information needed for the website.*
3. ***Nick*** *to write to Ellery Mayence (DOC) relative to standardising braided river database and improving access.*
4. ***Nick*** *to contact Niall Mugan requesting quote for an upper Waimakariri SBBG recce visit, plus short report this year.*
5. ***Sonny*** *to write to RHS asking after possibilities for continuing their aquatic insect studies on the Ashley-Rakahuri river.*
6. ***Sonny*** *to write to ECan’s Zip Ploeg for an update of work being carried out this season on the Waiau/Hurunui – to go on website.*
7. ***Grant*** *to complete his report on loss of braided river habitat within foothills-fed riverbeds, and to prepare a report / deputation for presentation to ECan councillors in the near future*