

## **Minutes of General Meeting** **Friday, April 16, 2021, 2.30 – 5pm**

Nick welcomed the 8 attendees.

**Present.** Sonny Whitelaw, Edith Smith, Donna Field, Sue Mardon, Ellery Mayence, Grant Davey, David Owen, Nick Ledgard.

**Apologies:** Ailsa Howard, Nicki Snoyink, Sarah Ensor, Jane Demeter, Stephanie Knight, Frances Schmeckel, Bev Alexander, Tony Doy, Jim Jolly, Mike Harvey, Peter Howden, Val Clemens

**Minutes** of previous meeting (October 9, 2020). Circulated beforehand, and approved as a true and correct record. Sue/Edith

**Matters arising.** All items addressed below

### **Correspondence.**

- Orari river trap funding approved.
- Much liaison relative to the 2021 seminar on July 14.
- Offshore requests for support for research in NZ – it was agreed that the BRaid response could be as follows: 'BRaid is an umbrella group with the mission of protecting, enhancing and restoring braided river ecosystems. Our particular focus is on indigenous bird species which breed on the riverbed. We encourage research being undertaken through Crown Research Institutes, universities, the Department of Conservation, and local and regional councils, but are unable to provide support to non-residents wishing to live, work, or do research in New Zealand.'

**Financial.** Sue presented the Income and Expenditure report for 1/07/20 to 15/04/21

Expenditure over Income: -\$5,473.16

Closing Bank Balance: \$33,157.95

Unallocated funds: \$14,261.26

Resolved: 'That the financial accounts be received as true and correct'

Sue / Nick. Carried

'That the amount of \$3,132.00 be approved for payment'

Sue/Edith. Carried

**Bank signatories.** Changing these at the Heartland Bank is proving a lengthy process, but Sue is working through it

**Membership.** We currently have 42 members and 66 casual members. Subscriptions (\$20) now due – 12 yet to pay.

**David Owen report (ECan Principal Biodiversity Advisor, Braided Rivers).** Long-term plans for the Ashley-Rakahuri and Rangitata rivers proceeding. However, still awaiting official rūnunga approval for the Ashley-Rakahuri River, although a 200m strip has recently been sprayed in the mid-section of the A-R. More than \$20m available for the upper Rangitata, where the restoration component is about to be initiated. COVID-related transition project involving restoration of islands (including those on the lower Waitaki) underway. ECan's Rivers Group (rebranded river engineering group) is more holistic and embraces more 'green' infrastructure. Riverbed staff receiving hands-on operational training along these lines.

**Outreach / Manager's report.** A 1.5page separate report covers this.

**2021 Seminar update.** Sonny has notified potential speakers and put together a draft programme for July 14. This was discussed by a committee prior to meeting. Sonny will put together a new outline, and send around for comment. There are already >70 attendees registered, and it was noted that most of these were institutional staff (eg., ECan and DOC). Need to try to get more non-institutional 'pit-face' stakeholders engaged.

**Action:** Sonny to draft a new programme and send around for discussion.

**Biodiversity / climate change update.** The development of this website is well underway, with more than 60 pages written by Sonny. Partial funding secured from ECan.

**ECan / DOC Braided River projects.** This was addressed by Ellery (DOC), who heads DOC's threatened species workstream - which strengthened its braided river component 18 months ago. Ellery works closely with Frances (ECan) on their Regional River Initiative, where the main focus is on the birds in the upper Rakaia, Rangitata and Waitaki catchments. Both the Rangitata and Waitaoa / Clarence projects are coming to the end of a 6-year funding period, but this is being rejuvenated, with a new aspect on aquatic invertebrates and weed interactions. Ellery also emphasized need to review data gathering and storage protocols, including cross-river co-ordination and standardization. A meeting will be arranged soon to discuss.

**Action:** *Ellery to arrange meeting of appropriate people.*

## Monitoring

**Opihi meeting (Nov 9) and subsequent action and intentions.** The Nov 9 meeting near Pleasant Point was well attended and there is definite interest in forming a local rivercare group. This interest will be furthered by promoting another meeting, and pushing ahead with the clearing of 2-3 small areas on the river (David O indicated ECan funding). Hopefully, these will attract breeding birds, and a trapping group can be formed to protect them.

**Action:** *Sonny and Grant to continue with rivercare group / trapping promotion, plus bird site location and clearance on riverbed.*

**SBBG control in upper Waimakariri.** Niall Muga report tabled and accepted (payment approved). We now know the SBBG numbers (300+) and colony (4) locations, plus options for control. However further discussions with Niall are needed to consider these options, before on-river action is determined for the next breeding season.

**Action:** *Nick to arrange a meeting with Niall.*

**Rangiora HS study of aquatic insects in Ashley/Rakahuri.** RHS wants to continue with this work, but COVID disrupted intentions, plus other priorities have arisen.

## River reports

- *Waiau / Hurunui.* New island on Hurunui attracted good numbers of BFT, but colony did not succeed – mainly due to rat predation. A new programme of work is about to start, which continues colony protection, plus work on aquatic invertebrates and weeds.
- *Waimakariri.* Results from last season (including survey figures) have yet to be seen.  
**Action:** *Sonny to enquire about availability of survey results.*
- *Ashley-Rakahuri.* Season's bird and predator control results are available. Apart from one ex-gravel site where good numbers of birds bred, the season was average at best. Much discussion with ECan about management / gravel extractions and their negative impact on braided river habitat. Weed invasion remains the major current challenge and intentions are to clear 60-70ha this winter. Meeting with ECan engineers about this before the end of April
- *Ashburton.* Edith reported on surveys by local group and ECan (Jean Jack). Notable increase in weed invasion (particularly willow seedlings) and SBBG problems. BBG colony on farm alongside river did not get past nest-building stage. Signage at river mouth working well.
- *Others – Orari, Upuha and Opihi.* Orari survey results were poor, mainly due to weed invasion, although BFTs successfully fledged 20-30 chicks. Planned to clear 2 sites of weeds this winter. Opihi plans discussed above, including formation of rivercare group and clearing of 2-3 riverbed sites.

## General Business

*Braided river management and loss of bird habitat / ECan council address.* Grant described his January address to ECan councilors. Well received, but a cautious response relative to subsequent on-river action. Discussions on-going.

*BRaid submission to ECan's Long Term Plan (LTP).* This has been sent, and will be spoken to on April 27. Available on website.

*Bird of the Year intentions for 2021.* Nothing planned for 2021

**Date for next meeting:** Yet to be decided

**Close of Meeting.** 5.10pm

**Action items.**

1. **Seminar 2021.** *Sonny to draft a new programme and send around for discussion.*
2. **Data gathering, storage and analysis.** *Ellery to arrange meeting of appropriate people.*
3. **Waimakariri bird survey results.** *Sonny to enquire about availability of results.*
4. **Opihi rivercare.** *Sonny and Grant to continue with rivercare group / trapping promotion, plus bird site location and clearance on riverbed.*
5. **SBBG control in upper Waimakariri.** *Nick to arrange a meeting with Niall to discuss options.*