

Minutes of General Meeting
Friday, November 26, 2021, 2 – 5pm
Abberley Park Hall, 15 Abberley Cres., St Albans

The Chairman, Nick Ledgard, welcomed those present: Edith Smith, Sue Mardon, Sarah Ensor, Sonny Whitelaw, Frances Schmechel, Andy Bray, Jim Jolly, Naomi Welsh, Marilyn Yurjevich

Apologies: Bev Alexander, Val Clemens, Grant Davey, Tony Doy, Peter Howden, Peter Smith, Ailsa and Ted Howard, David Owen, Donna Field. Edith/Andy Carried

Minutes of the April 16th 2021 meeting had been circulated and were confirmed as a true and correct record. Edith/Sonny Carried

Matters Arising:

- Sonny to obtain results of 2020 Waimakariri bird survey results from Andy Grant. *Action item.*
- Other matters all covered below.

Correspondence.

- Annual letter from Boffa Miskell relative to riverbed weed control operations for coming year.

Financial. Sue presented the Income and Expenditure report for 1/07/21 to 17/11/21

Expenditure over Income: -\$18,799.28

Closing Bank Balance: \$19,406.10

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

Nick/Frances. Carried

'That the amount of \$30,204.28 be approved for payment'

Nick/Frances. Carried

It was moved that the hourly rate for the Manager be increased from \$30 to \$35/hour

Nick/ Andy. Carried

Bank signatories - Heartland. Remain as Sue, Nick and Edith.

Membership. We currently have 36 paid members, 14 unpaid and 81 casual members. Subscriptions / donations (\$20) now due.

Outreach / Manager's report. A 1.5page separate report covers this. Newsletter is currently sent to 270 verified email addresses, up from 188 in April.

2021 Seminar. Some 210 people were registered to attend. Cancellations and re-bookings resulted in 190 attendees confirmed and 184 present on the day. The presentations of 17 speakers were well received, and are available on the website. Sonny was thanked by acclamation for organizing the seminar, with due acknowledgment for funding to ECan and the Rakaia Catchment Environmental Enhancement Fund (RCEEF). After a brief discussion about a different format and possible alternative venues, it was agreed that another seminar should be held in July 2022. Details will be worked out closer to the time. *Action: Sonny to work on organizing 2022 seminar.*

Biodiversity / climate change update. A considerable amount of material has been prepared for this website. Even though this project is officially part of BRAID (for administration and funding application reasons), it has been agreed that it be managed separately - as there is not a great depth of appropriate knowledge/experience within the BRAID committee. For this reason, it is funded independently to BRAID and a separate committee oversees the project.

ECan / DOC Braided River projects. This was addressed by Frances.

Weed management

- Weed control underway in upper Rangitata and Rakaia (joint program with LINZ implemented by Boffa Miskell)
- Upper Waimak weed and sensitive areas mapping and control strategy tender awarded
- Clarence River (zone led and on-going as before)

Mahinga kai project – eggs and faeces collection tested for pathogens

Other on-the-ground projects:

- Joint ECan/DOC package of projects are underway, updates on all due mid December (developing management techniques)
 - Clarence ground and aerial control & monitoring incl harrier banding
 - Rakaia predator control comparing flows with islands (SBBG control on hold)
 - BFT tracking – project shifted from Ashley-Rakahuri to Clarence
 - SIPO tracking up Rangitata with additional work in Rakaia.
 - Invertebrate monitoring – post flood recovery (Ashley-Rakahuri and Cass)
 - River flows/channels and invertebrates
- Ashburton river trapping underway

Monitoring, learning & reporting

- River surveys: Opihi, Arrowsmith, Upper S. Branch Ashburton/Hakatere
- Rangitata trapping analysis and summary report - 2nd draft out for final review
- Setting up wetland monitoring for upper Rangitata pig control
- Intern work: summaries of management designs and monitoring for three projects
- ECan biodiversity ‘snapshot report’ just released – includes braided rivers
- Project River Recovery meeting and annual report
- SBBG working group being formed (led by Rivers)

David Owen report (ECan’s Principal Biodiversity Advisor Braided Rivers). David sent in the following:

- We now have a contract in place with MKT to progress the Ashley-Rakahuri Draft Revival plan through various consultation phases including public. Timetable for sign off is now 30 June 2022.
- Work on the Restoration/Revival plan for Rangitata River is progressing slowly within the Agency Rūnanga Group. An engagement plan is nearing completion to bring in community input. ECan is supplying Comms and Project Management support. Wildlands has completed 6 drafts for a site restoration across various habitat types.
- Pest monitoring with Wildland Consultants is underway in the Waimakariri.
- A pest plan is also under preparation with Wildlands for Ashley River Rakahuri.
- We are supporting the existing work programme \$70k with DOC and LINZ in the Waiau Toa River.
- Ashley-Rakahuri vegetation clearance project between Gorge and Okuku junction is approximately half completed.

Monitoring

- Standardising braided river data base and access. At the April meeting, the need to review data gathering and storage protocols (including cross-river co-ordination and standardization) was emphasized. A meeting has been held on this matter, but it needs revitalizing. Action: Nick to remind Ellery of the issue.
- Opihi group. Meetings have been held, but needs someone (or an organization) to take the lead. Jim stated that Timaru ECan should do this. Jim also said that the Opuha Water company is becoming interested in facilitating bird management, especially as there is a good BBG colony just below the dam – where there is constant water flow, plus locked gates and video security surveillance. Action: Sonny to write to Opuha Water to see how this interest and infrastructure can be utilised further.
- SBBG control in upper Waimak. The report and recommendations by Niall Muga need to be discussed relative to implementation. Action: Nick to follow up on this.
- River reports
 - Waiau / Hurunui. Progress with bird management on-going. Possible field trip to view BFT colony at Shark Point. *Action: Nick/Frances to organize.*

- Waimakariri. No bird survey this year. Colony disturbance near Woodstock. Need for lupin/broom control by new upper Waimakariri weeds group in Andrews shelter area. **Action:** *Nick to follow-up on this.*
- Ashley-Rakahuri. Survey has shown positive increase in bird numbers (refuge for flooded Waimakariri birds?), but big problems with rat predation, particularly on BFTs.
- Ashburton. Edith updated on bird numbers and major flood clearance of weeds.
- Orari. Big weed cleanout by floods. Decisions needed on how bird-favoured stretches can be maintained as weed-free. There is a BFT colony not far above SH1 which has had a bund created by local gravel extractors to stop vehicle access and reduce human traffic.
- **General Business**
 - Naomi Welsh. Updated on her proposed PhD study on the river-associated movement of nitrogen and nitrous oxide emissions..
 - Weed control. Nick commented on current state of low riverbed weed populations consequent to major flood removals in May/June 2021. Need to make use of this and aim for weed control in bird-favoured areas while weeds are small and more cost-effectively controlled.
- **Date for next meeting.** To be decided – probably the 4th Friday in April
- **Close of Meeting.** 4.30pm

Action items.

1. **Seminar 2022.** *Sonny to work on organizing 2022 seminar.*
2. **Survey results for website.** *Sonny to obtain results of 2020 Waimakariri bird survey from Andy Grant.*
3. **Data gathering, storage and analysis.** *Nick to contact Ellery relative to revitalizing this matter.*
4. **Opihi rivercare.** *Sonny to write to Opuha Water to see how their interest and infrastructure can be utilised further (details under Monitoring above)*
5. **SBBG control in upper Waimakariri.** *Nick to arrange a meeting with Niall to discuss his report further.*
6. **Upper Waimakariri weeds.** *Nick to follow up on lupin/broom control on stretch below Andrews shelter.*
7. **Waiau / Hurunui.** *Nick/Frances to organize a trip to view colonies, particularly Sharks Tooth BFT colony.*