

NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (NZCA)
TE POU ATAWHAI TAIAO O AOTEAROA
10 August 2011

120th meeting held at Conservation House, 18-32 Manners St, Wellington

CONFIRMED MINUTES
(Recorded in order taken at the meeting)

Present:

Kay Booth	Louise Savage
Linda Conning	Yvonne Sharp
Waana Davis	Brian Stephenson
Basil Morrison	Hally Toia

Apologies

Mike Browne	John Nankervis
Charles Crofts	Don Ross

In attendance:

Catherine Tudhope, Manager Statutory Bodies Unit, Department of Conservation (DOC)

Katrina Edwards, Senior Statutory Bodies Officer, DOC

For the morning session:

Doris Johnston, Deputy Director-General Policy

For agenda item 8.1, 8.2 & 8.3:

Sarah Bagnall, Senior Planner, DOC

For part of the afternoon:

Al Morrison, Director-General, DOC

Agenda item 1. Welcome

The meeting opened at 10:30am.

The Authority resolved to elect Yvonne Sharp as the Chairperson for the meeting.
Basil Morrison/Brian Stephenson/Carried

The Authority resolved to send the outgoing Chairperson, Don Ross, an appropriate gift.

Linda Conning/Waana Davis/Carried

Agenda item 2. Apologies

The Authority resolved to receive the apologies tendered by Don Ross, John Nankervis, Charles Crofts and Mike Browne; and Kay Booth for travel-related lateness.

Basil Morrison/Louise Savage/Carried

Agenda item 3. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest for the meeting were identified.

Agenda item 4. Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting on 23 June 2011

A typing error was noted on page 5 of the minutes. The support of the Authority for the action taken by the Manager with regards to statements of general policy and Treaty Settlements needed to be added to agenda item 14.

The Authority resolved to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2011 subject to the required amendments.

Basil Morrison/Brian Stephenson/Carried

Agenda item 5. Correspondence

The Authority resolved to receive the inwards and approve the outwards correspondence.

Basil Morrison/Linda Conning/Carried

Agenda item 14. Representation and liaison

Northland - Hally Toia advised that Te Roroa has opposed the establishment of a Kauri National Park unless it has co-governance over the park. Co-management is not sufficient.

Yvonne Sharp noted that that was a matter for Government consideration, not the Authority.

Doris Johnston offered the Department's support for developing a process for the Authority's consideration of the national park investigation report and its consultation with Te Roroa.

Waikato – Basil Morrison advised that he had contacted Arthur Hinds after the assault on Arthur, as had Don Ross.

Agenda item 6. Status report

It was noted that Don Ross would not now complete the outstanding chairperson's conference report. The Manager said she would investigate what could be done.

In response to an enquiry Doris Johnston advised that the Game Animal Council Bill was still being drafted and she did not expect the select committee process to occur until next year.

Agenda item 11. Annual report

The recommendation of Catherine Tudhope that, in view of imminent changes of membership, the annual report be approved jointly by Don Ross and herself was discussed. It was agreed not to wait for the conservation board annual reports, to finalise the report as soon as possible and for Kay Booth to deputise for Don Ross if he was unavailable. Catherine Tudhope thanked those who had already provided comments and asked that any further comments on the draft be given or sent to her immediately after the meeting.

The Authority resolved to delegate to Don Ross (with Kay Booth as alternate) and Catherine Tudhope the power to approve the 2010/2011 annual report.

Basil Morrison/Brian Stephenson/Carried

Kay Booth arrived at 11.15am.

Agenda item 12. WAI 262.

Doris Johnston advised that Te Puni Kokiri is the secretariat for departments who are working through the report and considering the implications. The report was very comprehensive and would take time to consider fully and brief Ministers.

The Authority resolved to note the Waitangi Tribunal's WAI 262 conservation fact sheet.

Linda Conning/Hally Toia/Carried

Agenda item 7. Deputy Director-General, Policy

Doris Johnston spoke about the review of the department's organisation. Overall there is an average of a 20% reduction in service and support personnel across the country, and an average reduction of 10% of staff in National Office with about 100 jobs in total being lost.

She advised that external parties, including NZCA and conservation boards, are not being consulted about the proposals.

She advised that individuals' circumstances will be known by the end of November.

She advised that the board servicing role is to be added to the tasks of conservancy administrators. She was unable to guarantee that the NZCA would receive continuity of staffing or servicing and support to current standards

Specific areas of concern which the Authority discussed were the management planning area, the Pou Kura Taiao network, the servicing of conservation boards and the Authority, and the legal risk associated with DOC's new commercial business direction.

Agenda item 9. Issues of national importance – NZCA rivers discussion paper

Kay Booth gave an update on the 'Protecting New Zealand's Rivers' discussion paper. She expected it to go to the science editor in approximately two weeks, then design and publication.

The meeting adjourned at 12:10pm.

The meeting reconvened at 1:15pm.

Agenda item 8.1. Management planning update

Sarah Bagnall, Senior Planner, spoke to the agenda paper for this item.

The Authority resolved to receive the management planning update.

Linda Conning/Hally Toia/Carried

Agenda item 8.2. CMS national issues

The Authority had a discussion on CMS national issues draft policy papers for mountain-biking and private accommodation and feedback was provided to Sarah.

Mountain-biking - key amendments for the policy were providing more context, emphasizing the network of opportunities, adding a monitoring policy, providing for review of access if impacts are unacceptable, heli-biking be included in the aircraft policy, rather than the biking policy, delete "dedicated" before mountain bikers, change non-powered to non-motorised.

Private accommodation - key amendments for the policy should be references to compliance with district plans if the land was disposed of, filling the gap about rebuilds (or not) if a building is destroyed, restriction to existing footprint and floor area should be required if a rebuild.

Sarah Bagnall said that she would circulate amended drafts for sign-off before 18 August 2011.

Heli-hunting (aka aerial assisted trophy hunting) - Sarah Bagnall reported on the recent workshop which had been attended by Don Ross. It was attended by staff

from all functions touching on the activity; the first time this had occurred. The outstanding issue was how heli-hunting fitted within wilderness criteria and the wilderness policy work is being expanded to address both wild animal recovery operations and aerial assisted trophy hunting.

Kay Booth said that the Authority had expressed repeated concern that consultation about heli-hunting had been targeted and not inclusive of the public.

Brian Stephenson said the Department was in danger of being seen as captured by the trophy hunting interests due to its reluctance to be open about heli-hunting.

Linda Conning was concerned that the Department would issue 10 year concessions with no public consultation and no guidance in conservation management strategies. She said this was poor process when allowing commercial use of public resources.

The Authority resolved to:

- (i) write to the Minister to request a copy of the report on heli-hunting due from the Department on the 10th of August 2011;
- (ii) send a follow-up letter to the Director-General, copied to Mike Cuddihy
 - (a) regarding the Authority's expectation it will be consulted on heli-hunting concessions beyond the 2011 year; and
 - (b) asking what process the Department is following to decide whether or not to undertake public consultation on any long-term concession for heli-hunting.

Basil Morrison/Linda Conning/Carried

Linda Conning reminded Sarah Bagnall of the Authority view that determinations under the National Parks Act is a CMS national issue and its request for policy to be developed. Sarah advised that it is on the list but not as a top priority. She undertook to follow-up on the request.

Agenda item 8.3. Fiordland National Park Management Plan Milford aircraft landings decision

Sarah Bagnall said that the Minister of Conservation's decision to grant concessions for Milford aircraft landings and take-offs to all that applied was thought to be more about the allocation process followed by the Department than the Fiordland National Park Management Plan. The Department does not expect this decision to affect other operational national park management plans, nor should it have any implications or set a precedent in relation to policies about use limits in national park management plans. The Department will be looking at the lessons learnt from the allocation process.

Members discussed the management planning process, noting that the Fiordland National Park Management Plan development went through a democratic process with extensive consultation, with Milford aircraft use being a topic of much debate and many meetings of all interested parties. The Minister, in making this decision, could be seen as overriding this democratic process "at place". Members considered that the public was probably unaware of the rights of the Minister (or her delegate) to overrule the provisions of a national park management plan.

Agenda item 8.4. Tongariro National Park Management Plan Partial Review – progress report by Committee Convenor

Linda Conning summarised the recent Committee discussion about the partial review. John Nankervis, who was not present for the Committee discussion, had previously expressed concern that allowing over-snow vehicles at Tukino would detract from the 'wild' experience on that side of the mountain. Also Tuwharetoa Maori Trust Board and Ngati Turangitukua opposed the change for cultural reasons as they thought it would increase visitor numbers.

Brian Stephenson advised that the purpose of the change is to move people already there more efficiently rather than increasing numbers and that over-snow transport is the most reversible form of uphill transport. Brian also advised that the people doing 'wilderness' activities were doing this outside the area of the ski field to which the over-snow vehicles are to be restricted. Brian advised that the Committee has agreed on suggested rephrasing to tighten up the text.

Brian advised that the Committee discussed the change to allow mountain biking concessions on the Old Coach Road and the Desert Road – Pillars of Hercules Track. The Desert Road – Pillars of Hercules Track is mostly not in the National Park and the other 'track' is more of a road. Hence, the Committee had no issues with that proposed change.

The Authority resolved to send the Tongariro National Park Management Plan Partial Review to the Minister subject to changes to the wording to the satisfaction of the Committee.

Linda Conning/Brian Stephenson/Carried

Agenda item 8.5. Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve Management Plan

Linda Conning paid tribute to the contributions of Kay Booth, Robyn Jebson and Catherine Tudhope to the submission on the draft Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve Management Plan. The submission had supported important policies and addressed inconsistencies between the Foreshore Plan and the National Park Management Plan which the committee thought could be to the detriment of the Park. Limits on concessions in the Foreshore Plan had been set in a very unusual way, lacking transparency and using a strange methodology. The Authority has asked for limits to be expressed in a way that had a clear rationale.

The Authority resolved to ratify its submission on the draft Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve Management Plan.

Linda Conning/Kay Booth/Carried

Members agreed to write and thank Robyn Jebson for her work on the Committee.

Agenda item 10. Incoming Authority

There was discussion on what worked/what didn't work/good ideas for induction for new members of the Authority.

It was suggested that the advice to the incoming Minister should be developed at the December meeting.

Director-General, Al Morrison

The Director-General came to farewell the members and for a final discussion about the role and model of the Authority. He also referred to the budget constraints being faced both this year and in 2012 and looked forward to discussing these with the new

Authority. Yvonne Sharp thanked the Director-General for his candour and willingness to engage in robust discussion.

Agenda item 13. Towards better use of evidence in policy formation: a discussion paper

The Authority resolved to write to Sir Peter Gluckman in support of his releasing a discussion paper and supporting knowledge-based decision-making.

Kay Booth/Louise Savage/Carried

Agenda item 14. Representation and liaison (continued)

Kay Booth reported that the Southland Conservation Board had 6 major issues currently:

- 1 Milford landings: concerned that the Minister's decision may set a precedent for over-turning Plan provisions, but opened the way for better management for aircraft control in the national park;
- 2 Conservation Board servicing: very concerned that the changes made as a result of the Departmental review won't work;
- 3 Milford Dart tunnel: can expect an outcome soon regarding the concession application. The Southland Conservation Board and the Otago Conservation Board were consulted. The Southland Conservation Board wrote a letter to the Department outlining concerns, but it did not express a view either way regarding whether the concession application should be approved or declined. The Board considered that such a concession was inconsistent with the Management Plans and the General Policy for National Parks. The Board was also concerned about the effects of a tunnel, such as safety, noise and on water quality. The Otago Conservation Board opposed the proposal;
- 4 The Waituna wetlands (a Ramsar site): is very close to the tipping point where it will irreversibly go into a toxic anaerobic state. The Board has written to the Minister of Conservation and the Minister for the Environment;
- 5 1080: Southland Conservation Board encourage people to see the benefits of the use of 1080;
- 6 Destination Management Framework: the Board is concerned that in Rakiura National Park all the huts and tracks do not meet destination management framework priorities. They will await fine tuning of the framework, but do not want to see back country huts and tracks being 'abandoned' by the department just because they are not a priority.

The meeting closed at 4:10pm

Confirmed as a true and correct record of the meeting

Yvonne Sharp, Acting Chairperson

Catherine Tudhope, Manager