

NRC Environmental Management Committee meeting - 28th February 2012

[LINK to appropriate Agenda](#)

The meeting today got away at 0930hrs with Deputy Chairman Cr Graeme Ramsey welcoming all and advised that two more were coming.

Apologies were received for Cr Joe Carr, Dr Greg Blunden (Environmental Interest Groups) and Ms Nicole Anderson. (Cultural Interests)
Cr Joe Carr and Dr Greg Blunden were travelling down from the far north and had encountered heavy fog and heavy rain.
The receiving of the apologies was fairly subdued. Graeme claimed it was not a strong response and wondered if everyone had consumed enough coffee.

Deputy Chief Executive Tony Phipps advised there was a supplementary item to be tabled.

Item No.1. Confirmation of Minutes – 25 October 2011 (Page 1) (0933hrs)
No discussion was entered into with this item.

0934 hrs Item No.2. Reducing the risk of kiwifruit vine disease (Psa) (Page 8)
Don McKenzie, Biosecurity Senior Programme Manager advised that this item was about safety in an industry valued at approximately \$36million per annum and employing up to 800 seasonal workers. (see page 8)
Don introduced Robbie Bell, a local grower and Brad Siebert, Biosecurity Manager for Kiwi Vine Health. Robbie explained that the program was buying them some time. Brad Siebert gave some details of the issues they were addressing and the effects on the industry.
Cr Joe Carr and Dr Greg Blunden joined the meeting at 0937 and 0938 respectively with Joe resuming the chair.
Robbie Bell explained some of the restriction on the industry in Northland and after being questioned believed bees could well be a problem.
Cr Tony Davies-Colley questioned if growers were changing to more resistant crops and the 'swap out' was explained which gave two options for growers.
Craig Brown (ex officio) asked how it (Psa) got here.
Brad Siebert gave some info; it was questionable when and where and MAF (ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries) were checking if it was from pollen.
Chris Jenkins, Department of Conservation, had concerns on this and sought information on 'what about domestic growers and gardeners'.
Robbie Bell advised that a flyer had been sent out and feedback received.
Cr Graeme Ramsey asked what I should do if I have Kiwifruit growing.
Brad Siebert advised people to contact KVH, Kiwifruit Vine Health [Link to KVH](#) , or contact local companies.

It is important that any people reading this, who do grow Kiwifruit in their own gardens, take note and report to the appropriate authorities listed in this report and in the agenda regarding any queries they may have with their vines. This is a serious issue and we all need to get on board to ensure it does not affect the industry.

Cr Joe Carr resumed the chair and apologised for himself and Dr Greg Blunden for their lateness. He claimed 'the industry had got it together and that's good to see'.

Cr Crichton Christie (WDC) asked how many abandoned orchards were there.

Robbie Bell advised there was; 1 at Whatatiri of approximately 2Ha; 1 at Tatton Road, Maungatapere but it was not in the system; 1 other at Maungatapere; 1 at Maunu that was planted some 30 years ago approx 2Ha, that had major problem situated on the state highway; and 1 in Austin Road that was abandoned about 5 years ago.

Geoff Gover (Forestry Industry) asked if they had considered aerial spraying as modern technology allowed them to spray without the fears of any spray drift.

Cr Bronwyn Hunt queried about funding for the program in northland areas.

It was suggested that the NRC send out information in their newsletter and also provide information on their website in regards to this issue.

Time now at 0955hrs Item No.3. River Schemes – Update Report (with supporting slides) (Page 10)

There was some general Questions and answers to Bruce Howse, Land/Rivers Senior Programme Manager on the extraction of gravel from rivers and the benefit of doing it.

Bruce Howse advised of a brochure regards gravel extraction giving advice to farmers.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley believed the average farmer was not aware that they can remove scoria from rivers and streams.

Geoff Gover asked if the Kaihu River extraction job was open to all or just to a select few for tender.

Cr Graeme Ramsey advised that it had to be an open and transparent process. *There are those magic words again; Open & Transparent. Sadly some councils don't know the meaning, or have they exempted those words from their vocabulary.*

Joseph Camuso, Rivers Programme Manager gave a power point presentation on the Kaihu River extraction works and explained that the 'gravel' was more like 'boulders' which was evident on the slides. It was into general questions and answers with Chris Jenkins commenting that the process was quite complicated for extraction.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley advised that the 'road network' of councils was at risk with gravel buildup eg. Whananaki Road; and did this new science need to be given to councils to assist in their roading projects and for clean-up of storm damage to roads.

Cr Joe Carr believed it was 'new enthusiasm' not 'new science' and council could take it back to report to district councils.

CEO Malcolm Nicholson, advised that he will meet with the District Council's CEO's to discuss this solution with them.

Item No.4. Environment Fund Progress Report (Page 27) at 1021hrs.

Cr Joe Carr advised this report was self explanatory so no further discussion was necessary.

Item No.5. Update of Mangrove Management Support Programme (Page 28) (1026hrs)

Bruce Griffin – Estuary Management Advisor, gave a brief update on this issue and the reading of the agenda (page 30) gives more detail on the progress.

Item No.6. Update on Safe Beach Driving Education Programme (Page 31) (1027hrs)

Cr Joe Carr explained this was normally in the Transport Committee meeting but it was good for this committee to also get an update on this situation.

Deputy Chief Executive Tony Phipps advised that government had changed the 'boundaries' giving clarity to where the responsibilities now lay. There was some general discussion about the changes and how the responsibility is now on the landowners. It was suggested that there needed to be clarification of the areas where people can go to 4wd or motocross on beaches.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley informed that when certain areas are closed they (councils) needed to find alternative places for people to use.

Item No.7. Report on Environmental Monitoring for the period 1 December 2011 – 31 January 2012
(Page 35) (1039hrs)

Riaan Elliot, Monitoring Senior Programme Manager gave a brief informing that a lot of dairy farms are still non-compliant.

Richard Booth (Farming Community representative) advised that farmers had spent a lot of money on farm effluent management and they want to get it right.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley claims that looking at the reports; non-compliant is not falling, it's rising and was the bar set too high.

Richard Booth did not believe the bar was set too high.

Cr Joe Carr explained that they really need the industry to engage in this; the challenge for us was about wanting good relationships, but not as a cost to the environment

Richard Booth informed that Fonterra will do a free audit and tell you what is needed.

On to Item No.9. Community Wastewater Treatment Plant Discharges – current compliance status
(updated) (Page 64)

It was now 1055hrs and Joe decides to go to this item while Riaan Elliot is still on his feet.

Riaan Elliot, Monitoring Senior Programme Manager mentioned that District Councils are starting to get their management plans in. *About B..... time; they have been slacking for a long time and our waterways bear the brunt of their discharges and bad management practices.*

Richard Booth claimed 'farmers get in the gun for discharges, yet councils get resource consent to discharge.

Craig Brown claims 'he has been the advocate for the stick and not the carrot'. 'It's been a long struggle and he doesn't see any improvements'. *Craig I don't think you have even looked at sticks yet let alone bought one. If you need a hand; I am sure I can sort one out for you.*

Tony Davies-Colley asks if the sticks in pumps in farmer's sediment traps are any different to the sticks that block the councils pumps. *You are on to it Tony; they have 'soft c..ks' for too long, time they sorted it.* The discussion was getting a bit heated; *oh what? It's been stopped*

Cr Joe Carr states we are going to have a workshop. *Does this mean it's going behind closed doors to save embarrassment or will it be an open and transparent public invited workshop?*

Craig Brown, in his normal humour, quips 'Is this just for Tony?'

Cr Joe Carr interrupts 'This is not a kid's debate'. *Oops and I thought, as Joe was chair of the Environment Committee, he was for the Environment; I thought Tony was attempting to bring some much needed issues to the fore; Why should councils be treated any different? What has happened to level playing grounds?*

It was now 1114hrs and it was back to Item No.8. Reporting on council's response to recent complaints regarding stock access to waterways (Tabled Item)

Deputy Chief Executive Tony Phipps advises the meeting that Riaan Elliot, Monitoring Senior Programme Manager has tendered his resignation and is going into the private sector. *A great loss to NRC and a gain to whoever; Riaan, we have always found has been professional in his approach, a pleasant person to deal with and supplied facts when required. Riann, Pat & I wish you well in the future.*

Cr Joe Carr supported Tony's comments and felt Riaan was a loss to the organization, had worked well with him and he would definitely be missed.

Tony Phipps gave a power point presentation on this issue that has recently been well documented in the media.

Cr Joe Carr advised that the biggest effort should be in the areas of biggest gain.

Craig Brown queried the facts on the presentation of stock in access to waterways in the Wairua River.

The figure of 12; 6 stock had access & 5 dead in waterways. He asked how many stock in waterways incidents over the district and it was confirmed 1000. Craig felt after hearing those figures that it was over rated in the media about the Wairua incidents.

Tony Davies-Colley also asked about the weeds in spillways.

Cr Crichton Christie (WDC) claimed he was waiting for the workshop, amidst some laughter around the room. *Does this mean Crichton that the cap fits?*

There was some debate as the photos of stock grazing on riverbanks.

Geoff Gover advised that the forestry industry was not allowed to plant within 5 metres of waterways or streams.

Ben Smith was invited to speak from the public gallery. Ben was introduced by Joe as a 'future NRC councilor', which Craig Brown corrected 'he thought it was for WDC'.

Ben was the farmer from the Hikurangi Swamp that gained attention from Whangarei District Council after his speech at last Wednesdays WDC Public Forum. He must have touched a nerve as the mayor is now contemplating stopping public forums. Can't they handle being exposed for the claims made by Mr Smith about some of their processes and people? Hey Mr Mayor, egos can and do cause problems and here is an old quote; "the only pressure I'm under is the pressure I've put on myself" – Mark Messier. .

Ben gave some information in response to the photos on the presentation. He continued that there was some coverage of their day paddling on the Wairua River, about to be shown on Maori Television shortly. *So watch this space.*

Cr Joe Carr informed the meeting that they need to ask Millan Ruka about his concerns to find a common way forward, as they want to work with people like Millan. *Are you telling me they haven't contacted him yet?*

Richard Booth asked if this agenda item was exclusively for the Wairua River or did it pertain to other waterways, in general.

Tony Phipps advised that this would be part of the development of policies in the future.

Richard Booth wanted the bullet points in the recommendation to read 'landowners' not 'farmers'.

Craig Brown advised that they had attended a meeting at Kaiwaka re the health of the Kaipara Harbour.

This meeting involved representatives from the districts that surround the Kaipara harbor. Cr Graeme Ramsey has been appointed as the representative for Northland Regional Council.

Item No.10. Kauri dieback (Page 72) (1203hrs)

Don McKenzie gave some bullet point comments and he wanted the committee to note the information in the report. They were continuing with a survey to find Kauri dieback in our forests. People need to check and clean what individuals are taking into the region; we must be better at what we transport around.

Geoff Gover believed it would be a good idea to put signage up about Kauri dieback in appropriate areas in the district to prevent the spread of the problem.

Don McKenzie advised that there are control options; but this is not an easy one.

It was time at 1205hrs Item No.11 Report back on Biosecurity Workshop (for information) (Page 72)

Cr Joe Carr gave a brief report and the contents should be noted.

Dr Greg Blunden also gave some details and informed the committee that he wanted to do a presentation about biodiversity at the next meeting.

Chris Jenkins, from Department of Conservation claimed they need to work out what our priorities are.

Cr Tony Davies-Colley believed they had given the CEO some ideas about solving some of these issues. He had walked a walkway at Russell at the weekend and was disgusted at the amount of noxious weeds present en route this walkway. He suggested that they have signs up identifying and saying "this is Ginger" so people can become aware at what ginger is. It should be an educational walkway identifying all our native trees and fauna.

Chris Jenkins advised that he was happy to take the ideas back to 'weed busters'.

Before closing the meeting Cr Joe Carr wanted a motion of appreciation to the great work done by Riaan Elliot. Riaan had earlier left the meeting so was unable to hear the applause.

The meeting closed at 1215hrs.

Now off home to pick up some hay.