



12 June 2009  
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**Minutes of the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee Meeting held in the Committee Room, Greater Wellington Regional Council, 34 Chapel Street, Masterton, on Monday, 8 June 2009, at 4.30pm.**

**Present:**

Peter Gawith (Chairperson), GWRC Cr Ian Buchanan, Jamie Falloon, Jenny Boyne, David Holmes (representing Wairarapa district councils), Andy Pottinger, Michael Blundell, Emily Crofoot.

**Officers present:**

David Cameron, Wayne O'Donnell, Ian Gunn

**(1) Apologies**

There were no apologies.

**(2) Confirmation of Minutes**

*Resolved*

*(Jenny Boyne/Jamie Falloon)*

*That the minutes of the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee held on 9 April 2009 be confirmed.*

**(3) Afforestation Grants Scheme (Dave Cameron)**

Dave updated the committee on progress with the AGS. He explained how the grants scheme operates. The fund has been reduced by the government to \$34M. It is split 50:50 between a public tender round and a regional council tendering process. Regional councils offer two tender rounds per year. The panel, which is chaired by Dave, comprises staff from Hawkes Bay RC, Horizons RC, Environment Waikato, Environment Canterbury and a senior MAF official Peter

Gorman. Grants are made on a first in first served basis with a grant of \$2400 per hectare of plantings. Each application is scored against a number of attributes including the landuse classification index. The grant rate is reviewed each year. If the score is achieved but the pool is full then the project is automatically entered into the next year's pool. In the first two years a total of 1925 hectares have been allocated. GW has achieved an allocation of 400 hectares with 390 hectares already allocated for next financial year 2010/11. The average sized allocation is 30 hectares. Applications for total farm development are directed to the public tender round. Dave expects the fund to come under pressure over time. There is a real benefit in getting in now. It was noted that the public tender round is not fully allocated and there is the opportunity for unallocated money to be directed back into the regional council funding stream.

**(4) Update on LTCCP (Wayne O'Donnell)**

Wayne reported that Catchment Management had been very successful as all proposed new activities had remained in the budget unchanged. Additionally, the Stage 2 Akura development has been brought forward with \$15K of additional rates being used to fund the loan. Ian Buchanan stated that all of the new activities had been well supported by submissions from the farming community adding considerable weight to the decision to proceed with these projects.

The committee requested that the new projects be well publicised and they were very happy that they are now proceeding.

**(5) Akura Nursery Development – Stage 2 (Dave Cameron)**

Dave outlined that the drilling of a new well at Akura is well underway. Testing of flows from the new well was expected shortly.

He has discussed the opportunities to grow additional poles at Homebush, adjacent to Masterton District Councils sewage treatment plant, with David Hopman MDC's chief engineer. There is strong interest from MDC in a partnership with GW with the ability to expand the size of the proposed new nursery as required. Expressions of interest to use treated wastewater were currently being advertised by MDC. The land is currently leased until June 2010. The committee supported an expression of interest being expressed to develop a new nursery on suitable soil types and requested that Dave pursue with Stuart Forbes, the current lessee, the opportunity to plant new poles this winter, given there is only one year left on the lease.

There was then discussion about the future of the existing nurseries at Akura and Mangapakeha. Jamie Falloon urged Dave to consider whether there might be benefits from consolidating all of the nursery operation at Homebush and quitting the two existing nurseries. Dave said this would be considered. There are issues of disease control when all plantings concentrated at one site, known locality at Akura plus chattels.

**(6) Draft supercatchment discussion (Ian Gunn)**

There was some initial discussion about the concept with more questions than answers. It was explained that input is required from groups such as WHCAC for the development of the new regional plan. Without input from such groups staff will develop and solve the issues themselves. WHCAC has made it clear they do want to be involved in the development of new policy right from the beginning. The draft paper is an attempt to give a snapshot of the supercatchment and to be a catalyst for the development of policy relevant to this area.

Points noted included:

- Achievement of representation for this community
- Economic prosperity is paramount
- Development (and protection) of infrastructure such as broadband is necessary
- Relationship of land/soil and water is vital to this area.
- How do we involve the district councils? Michael suggested that WHCAC could perhaps speak at the next inter-council meeting in the Wairarapa.
- It would be good to see a map with the rivers plotted and identified and the relationship between pine plantations and highly erosion prone land.

Agreed to discuss further with a focus to identify the issues for the community and then to consider how they can be pursued in the future.

**(7) AHB Update (Wayne O'Donnell)**

Wayne explained that the regional contribution to the AHB for the 2009/10 financial year had been reduced from \$600k to \$520k. A consequence from this was that there will only be 1.5 GW staff assisting AHB manage the Wellington regional programme. There was then a spirited debate about whether the cut in funds was triggered by GW to balance its budget or the AHB deciding that it would only require a \$520k contribution.

The following motion was moved (Jamie/seconded Jenny) “that the WHCAC is unhappy with the decision by GW to reduce its contribution to the AHB funding by \$80k as this will result in a loss of \$700k funding from the Crown and key stakeholders to the Wellington region’s AHB vector control programme.”

After further discussion and acknowledgment that the AHB has recently confirmed the annual programme for next year to be \$520k the motion was

withdrawn. Wayne undertook to confirm what changes, if any, have been made to the initial programme following the AHB decision to request a reduced regional share for 2009/10. The committee decided it would wait until it understood the full picture before considering a further response to GW.

**(8) Proposed Regional Policy Statement (Emily Crofoot)**

The deadline for comments on the proposed ROPS has just closed. Emily outlined that she and Anders had spent the weekend preparing a submission. She believed the document, as prepared, shows little understanding of farming practise and an antipathy with farming in general. The submission was tabled and drew the committee's attention to points 1 – 5 of the submission:

- Farming receives limited recognition as a legitimate and valuable land use.
- Nature is not defined
- Misleading terminology, eg rivers and lakes with values requiring protection flowing down to stream catchments.
- A farm is a grass factory and GW's concerns should only be with outputs which have an adverse effect.
- Economic considerations are scant throughout the document.

There was no time for further discussion.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.