

Notes of the Sounds Advisory Group Public Meeting, held at Mistletoe Bay on Monday 10 November 2014 commencing at 1.30 pm

Present: Jim Campbell, Helen Campbell, Max Jelley, Jane Jelley, June Ballagh, Andrew King, Councillor Trevor Hook (Chairperson), Robin Cox, Joe Heberley, Victor Koller, Monyeen Wedge, Ken Roush, Rob Schuckard, Tim Greenhough, Rachel Drake, Eric Jorgensen, Linda Booth, Judy Hellstrom, Ross Withell and Councillor Graeme Barsanti

MDC Staff: Alan Johnson, Steve Urlich and Kay Leach (Secretary)

Apologies: Kristen Gerard, David Hayes, Ron Sutherland, Ian Mitchell, Poneke Rene, Councillors David Oddie, Jenny Andrews and Jessica Bagge

Trevor Hook introduced himself as Chairman of the Sounds Advisory Group and spoke on the role of the Group. Members of the Group introduced themselves.

Victor Koller then showed attendees the Mistletoe Bay Trust presentation given to the 2013 Trustpower Environment Awards. The presentation explained the role of the Trust and Mistletoe Bay. Simon Health is the Chairman of the Trust. Victor is proud of the achievements of the Trust. He believes our young people are the guardians of this planet.

Robin Cox noted that Council had remitted resource consent fees and contributed to the wastewater system. Very early on that was one of the big steps needed to be made. Robin thanked ratepayers for their contribution.

Robin spoke of the two stage takeover of the Department of Conservation land. The Trust had control and management of the land for 10 years, however when the Department realised the progress made by the Trust, they suggested the Trust develop a management plan to get control and management in perpetuity.

Trevor Hook then opened the floor to the public in attendance.

Moorings

Andrew King spoke with regard to the Plan review. He understood it is intended for moorings to have an annual professional inspection and felt this not to be necessary. Trevor Hook advised some consents have a consent condition requiring an inspection every two years and a report filed to Council. Trevor noted his own consent required him to inspect the mooring and report to Council. Andrew objected to a condition that required an inspection by a registered mooring inspector every two years. Trevor advised this objection had been noted.

Outstanding Landscape

Andrew King felt the threshold trigger is too low. He felt some outstanding landscapes are not justified and would have an impact on future activities. Trevor Hook advised that submissions on outstanding landscape would go through the new Plan process.

Andrew advised that between Skiddaw to Hopwell there is a piece of native bush that comes right down to the foreshore. He would like to see this portion classed as outstanding landscape. Alan Johnson would take this feedback to the Policy Team. Trevor advised the threshold had been set by Boffa Miskell. Trevor also advised that after the maps were sent out to affected parties, quite a few areas changed, with some other areas being included due to landowner consultation.

Robin Cox felt if there was a continuous area of native vegetation from the sea to the ridge that should be outstanding landscape.

Alan Johnson advised that it was appropriate to provide feedback to the planning team on any matters of concern.

Trevor suggested to take a look at the draft Plan when notified as that is the last opportunity to make a submission and be heard.

Surety for Marine Farming

Andrew King would not have invested and developed a marine farm, providing an income for three families, had he known there were no secure property rights. Since the change from licences to resource consents, there is a feeling of threat of losing the farm at each renewal application. There is a need to have confidence that, if the farm is managed correctly and sustainably, you can continue. Trevor Hook spoke, in a Resource Management Act perspective, on the difference in surety of property rights and rights on the water space. On the water is a leasehold type situation. To give surety of lease is much more difficult than to give surety of private property ownership. Andrew felt the community needs to decide if they want a healthy marine farming economic activity, which requires investment and commitment.

Policy for Replanting of Commercial Forests

Jim Campbell questioned what the policy was in replanting commercial forests.

Trevor Hook advised that under an existing consent there is a right of replanting once. We are getting into the second generation now of the cycle. Under the consent there will be certain criteria to abide by, i.e. setback to riparian margins. Under the proposed Plan it is being considered not to prohibit new forestry in the Sounds, but raising the bar. Alan Johnson indicated one consideration at present is setbacks from foreshore reserve.

Another issue is how to get the trees out, barge sites or roading (trucks on the road). Trevor advised these issues would be considered with the new Plan.

Joe Heberley queried what rules are in place regarding a forestry block which was due to be harvested and had been flattened by wind. Are they required to clean up the site, it is an eyesore and the trees could end up floating in the Sounds. There is also a fire risk. Alan Johnson noted they would have the standard consent conditions. Robin Cox thought there is resource consent approval to harvest in this instance.

Graeme Barsanti advised there had been discussion regarding combination of harvesting sites to allow barging rather than trucking out, which they have a right to. Council does not have the right to stop the trucking of logs if the resource consent indicates this. Trevor advised it may be a requirement in the new Plan for logs to be barged out.

Group Mooring Applications

Trevor Hook advised of the morning meeting discussion on group applications for moorings. There was consensus that this is the most cost effective way to proceed. It is good for the community to work together.

Victor Koller spoke on the process his bay had followed. One person deals with all applications at once. An information sheet was sent to all residents in the bay, with a deadline to fill in the mooring renewal application form. Alan Johnson advised to go through due diligence to make sure all the right information for each consent (type of mooring and vessel size). It is particularly important to get the swing circle right. Linda Booth advised it is important to get confirmation from swing circle neighbours and a letter from the neighbour providing permission. If everyone in the bay is not included it could cause problems in processing. Linda advised the map on the Council website shows moorings and swing circles.

Pests

Monyeen Wedge spoke of a conflict of interest regarding the use of 1080 or to ban 1080 within a community dealing with pest control.

Water Ski Lanes

Monyeen Wedge spoke on the concern of the excessive use of water/jet skis in her bay. It would be better to have a nominated area, but some do not want water/jet skis at all. Water/jet skis appear to be becoming a contentious issue. Alan Johnson would take this issue to the Harbour Master and, if there is an issue, ring the Harbour Master's office. Compliance patrols during the summer are scheduled.

Helicopters

Monyeen Wedge advised of a perception that helicopters destroy the tranquillity of an area. Judy Hellstrom felt the sound of a helicopter was usually someone in trouble and they are going to help them.

Water Supply

Victor Koller spoke of a situation where an initial tank was utilised to filter the water prior to entry to the main tank. As a consequence they exceeded their water take which was contrary to consent conditions. It was requested, for common sense, if a new system like this is installed there should be allowance for the cleaning system to take extra water. Graeme Barsanti advised to notify Council and this could be achieved.

Victor also advised the community disagrees that the metering must be undertaken prior to the first tank. It makes sense to clean the water first before metering it. Alan Johnson advised it is a Central Government requirement for metering to be undertaken at point source. Trevor Hook advised this is an example where a community or a resident could bring an issue to the notice of a Councillor. Graeme suggested contact be made early to enable enquiries and reduce misinformation.

Judy Hellstrom queried at what point does Council monitor a community water take or conditions. Alan Johnson advised there are numerous community water takes and it depends on the conditions of consent, often self-monitored. In the future most consents would be telemetered. Fresh water is a precious resource.

Torea Wharf Lifebuoy

Linda Booth queried who was responsible for the wharf at Torea. The lifebuoy is not in good condition. Graeme Barsanti advised the lifebuoy had been provided by the Harbour Master through Marlborough Roads. Graeme would arrange for a new one to be supplied.

Discharges from Vessels

Joe Heberley referred to a previous meeting where there had been discussion regarding boats moored in Picton Harbour which are permanently inhabited and may be discharging effluent to sea. He queried if there were any checks to see if they have holding tanks and discharging appropriately. Alan Johnson advised that vessel discharges are not monitored directly and Council tends to only monitor by complaint. Trevor Hook noted Picton Harbour is monitored for water quality every week from 1 November to 31 March.

Proposed Ohingaroa Toilet

Jim Campbell requested an update regarding the proposed new toilet at Ohingaroa. Graeme Barsanti advised mediation had been undertaken and an agreement had been made. It is awaiting sign off between the two parties. Signs will be required dealing with freedom camping. There is no one in the bay prepared to clean the toilet so a cleaner has been sourced from Havelock.

Log in Moetapu Bay

Victor Koller advised this issue was raised two years ago. Recently there was a close call with a dinghy carrying children. Johnson Barges had attempted to remove the log, without success. Recently there was consideration of an attempt by another party. Victor suggested they check with their insurance company who said no. It is a hazard. Graeme Barsanti advised the Harbour Master spoke of cost issues. Graeme would take this issue back to the Harbour Master.

Portage Scheme

It was questioned when would Portage stop putting effluent into the bay? Trevor Hook advised a consent had gone through for a community scheme. As soon as the community scheme is operational then Portage turn their system on to land. If Council had issued an abatement notice Portage would have cut off the community and their effluent would have gone to sea. At least at present effluent is going through a primary system, in the interim.

Concern was expressed that there is not a no swim notice at Cowshed Bay, which is close to the Portage outfall. Alan Johnson would look into this.

Alan Johnson advised all other community systems are compliant (resorts and accommodation). This is a major achievement for Council.

Robin Cox was concerned that Furneaux would be discharging to land as he has not seen code compliance. There should be no discharge to Department of Conservation land until the installation has code compliance. Alan Johnson would look into this.

Monyeen Wedge received a letter from Gina Ferguson advising she would present to the Sounds Advisory Group on the Sounds wastewater monitoring programme and provide an update of compliance on the wastewater systems. Alan Johnson advised Gina would attend the next meeting.

Trevor advised a report is provided to the Environment Committee each year on commercial wastewater systems in the Sounds. Only three had not complied in the last report.

Salmon Farm Best Practice Guidelines

Steve Ulrich advised a point had been reached to go out for public comment on the seabed standards. Rob Schuckard has been part of the working group. Eric Jorgensen has been part of the Best Practice Farming and Operations Group.

Rob commended Steve Ulrich on how pleasant it had been to work with Steve on this.

Rob advised that in November 2013 the Sounds Advisory Group was invited to participate in the salmon guidelines working group. In December 2013 a meeting was held with Councillors, New Zealand King Salmon, science providers, the Ministry for Primary Industries and Professor Kenneth Black from Scottish Association for Marine Science (science reviewer of salmon monitoring reports contracted by Council). The formed working group, with representation from Council, New Zealand King Salmon, Cawthron Institute, NIWA Ministry for Primary Industries and the Sounds Advisory Group had its first meeting in February 2014 and the last meeting in October 2014.

Initially, there was some confusion on what the guidelines were about. The Best Practice Guidelines is not a future allocation tool for spatial distribution for farms, instead it is trying to be more precise and accurate in establishing whether existing farms are compliant or not as per latest science and framework of conditions directed by the Board of Inquiry during the New Zealand King Salmon application.

The guidelines are more stringent and better for the environmental performance of salmon farms certainly when compared with the old existing consent conditions. It would now be up to industry if they want to use the guidelines as the guiding principle to modify their consents to improve the sustainable management compared to the old consent conditions. Both cannot be claimed to be sustainable.

Eric advised he is on the team looking at how the farms are operated. A whole of life cycle approach was taken when developing the guidelines, from first wanting to set up a farm, what operational best management practice might be, through to decommissioning of farms. Next meeting is to be held on 20 November to discuss final feedback on the final draft of the operational guidelines. New Zealand King Salmon has put in a lot of work, particularly on the operational guidelines. Bruno Brosnan of Council had also put in a lot of work as well.

Eric is somewhat uneasy with two areas of the operational guidelines. One is how hot to run a farm, i.e. how close to maximum capacity it is run through the life cycle of the fish. When farms are run at or near capacity, when issues arise there are fewer management responses available. Also how the guidelines recognise and cater for the importance of the amenity values that the Sounds offer from a recreational/residential perspective. He is keen to see how these will be reflected in the final draft.

Eric advised it has been a really good process. Maybe this is a way forward for other contentious issues in terms of planning for the Sounds. He believes that in the future guidelines should be produced for all finfish farming in the Sounds, whereas today it is just New Zealand King Salmon farms.

Appreciation to Mistletoe Bay Trust

The Group wished to thank Chris for her support during their visit and to the Trust for allowing them to hold the meeting at Mistletoe Bay.

The meeting closed at 2.55 pm

Action	Responsibility
Advise Policy Team of Andrew King's objection to a potential policy condition that requires an inspection by a registered mooring inspector every two years.	Alan Johnson
Advise Policy Team of concerns expressed by Andrew King in respect of outstanding landscape classifications in the Sounds.	Alan Johnson
Advise Harbour Master of concern of the excessive use of water/jet skis.	Alan Johnson
Arrange for a new lifebuoy to be supplied for Torea Wharf.	Graeme Barsanti
Advise Compliance of concern regarding boats moored in Picton Harbour which are permanently inhabited and may be discharging effluent to sea.	Alan Johnson
Advise Harbour Master of continued concern with the log in Moetapu Bay.	Graeme Barsanti
Investigate the possibility of bacteria risks in Cowshed Bay as a potential impact from portage.	Alan Johnson
Investigate if building control code compliance has been issued for the Furneaux wastewater system to enable Department of Conservation final approval.	Alan Johnson
Letter of thanks to Mistletoe Bay Trust for use of meeting facilities.	Alan Johnson

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