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**Minutes of the Meeting of the Regional Pest Management Strategy Hearings Committee held in the Council Chamber, Regional Council Centre, 142 Wakefield Street, Wellington on Tuesday 1 July 2008, at 10.00 a.m.**

**Present:**

Councillors Ian Buchanan (Chairperson), Rex Kirton, and Mr Peter Gawith.

**Officers Present:**

Wayne O'Donnell, Ray Clarey, Richard Grimmett, and Ewan Kelsall.

**Public Business**

**RPS 01 Apology**

William McGimpsey, Federated Farmers of New Zealand. Federated Farmers requested that their submission be heard at the Masterton hearings meeting on 2 July.

**RPS 02 Submissions Received on the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022 Five Year Review**

The Hearings Committee noted that 23 submissions had been received with 11 of the submitters requesting to be heard in support of their submission.

Cr Buchanan then invited the following persons to make oral presentations in support of their written submissions:

Dr Hugh Barr	New Zealand Deerstalkers Association (NZDA)
Chris Close	Hutt City Council (HCC)
Chris Horne	Wellington Botanical Society
Cr Celia Wade-Brown	Wellington City Council (WCC)
Amber Bill	Wellington City Council (WCC)
Geoff Flavell	Department of Conservation (DOC)
William McGimpsey	Federated Farmers of New Zealand Incorporated (FFNZ)

### **New Zealand Deerstalkers Association (NZDA)**

The major request of the NZDA was for the removal of wild (feral) deer and feral pigs from the RPMS document. This was aligned alongside the recommendation that recreational hunters are used for the control of deer in GW forests.

Other major points included:

The opposition of the NZDA to the labelling of deer as ‘pests’ within the strategy.

Challenged the concept that deer are increasing in numbers, and that feral pigs contribute to erosion.

Criticised the Cost Benefit Analysis document for lack of detail.

Scientific research was quoted, which indicated that the general public consider feral deer and feral pigs a resource and not a pest.

Various points surrounding the use of 1080 and the potential by-kill of feral deer and feral pigs were also discussed.

### **Response:**

Thanked for their submission.

Mr Gawith indicated that untested deer at any level (including feral deer), are unacceptable for Tb management purposes.

Cr Buchanan questioned what impact the inclusion of feral deer and feral pigs in the RPMS will have on the membership of the NZDA. Noted that the majority of KNE areas are urban/peri-urban and unsuitable for recreational hunting.

## **Hutt City Council**

HCC expressed the value of the close working relationship between GW and HCC. They are strongly opposed to the proposed changes for old man's beard (OMB), banana passionfruit and cathedral bells. HCC has undertaken control on these species for a number of years.

For example, OMB control has been undertaken in the Hutt City Council region since 1989. The control is free of charge on private land, and is undertaken by contractors on behalf of HCC. Expenditure has dropped from \$60,000 per annum to \$30,000. Sixty per cent of sites were clear at the last inspection. This successful programme will come under threat if GW makes the proposed changes to the RPMS. GW is the only enforcement support that HCC has for these species.

HCC indicated that if the proposed changes were made to the strategy, HCC would treat Council land only, leaving private land in the Hutt City area to GW to manage.

### **Response:**

Cr Buchanan indicated that GW will consider amending the document to assist the HCC programme, and suggested a meeting at a later date for further discussion.

## **Wellington Botanical Society**

Positive feedback was received from the Botanical Society regarding pest control in the region, particularly the improvements that pest control has had on local ecosystems.

The Society indicated their concern that many pest plants in the RPMS are having their status changed or reduced. Requested that a number of species be reinstated in the RPMS, the concern being that if left uncontrolled they will become the responsibility of future generations to manage.

Particular concern that Darwin's barberry is spreading in south Wellington. The infestation started as a cemetery planting in Karori, and now poses a serious threat to the local area.

The expanding Canada goose population and the consequent damage to wetlands were raised. The Society requested that if DOC changes the status of this species under the Wildlife Act 1953, GW should instigate control of the geese under the RPMS.

Discussion focused on potential future problem species as the Wellington climate continues to warm. Examples included agapanthas, cape ivy and Chilean rhubarb, which are all problem species in the north of the North Island.

The Society suggested that some native species should now be considered as pests in reserve areas, including karo, pohutakawa and karaka.

**Response:**

Thanked for the submission.

Suggestions will be considered by the Committee. Cr Buchanan indicated that while the Society's arguments are valid, it is important for GW to focus on the key regional priorities due to limited resources for pest control and management.

**Wellington City Council (WCC)**

WCC acknowledge and support the emphasis on biodiversity in the proposed RPMS.

Major points included:

Request for the inclusion of feral exotic pigeons in the final RPMS.

Request a contribution from GW towards feral goat control by service delivery. This control would be undertaken to protect KNE areas, including surrounding private land.

Request to exclude the Wellington south coast from the Containment Zone for boneseed, and that old man's beard, cathedral bells and banana passion fruit be included in the site-led programme.

Request for further education information to be included in the document, with an expansion of information on the KNE programme.

Request for buffers around KNE areas for plant and animal control. This would assist with the maintenance of KNE areas.

**Response:**

Thanked for their submission.

There were a number of requests for the Committee to consider.

GW is currently reviewing the KNE programme. Further public education material will be added. The education section of the RPMS document will also be reviewed and expanded.

Requests for changes to species management and categories will require further consideration.

### **Department of Conservation (DOC)**

DOC congratulated GW on the expansion of the RPMS document, and the new information provided.

Discussion on appropriate pest categories for red-eared slider turtles, rainbow skink, and purple loosestrife, requested that detail provided in the written submission be included in the RPMS.

Requested eradication of feral goats in areas which complement DOC control programmes. For example, the Aorangi Forest Park is re-invaded by goats from surrounding private land following control operations.

Requested an expansion of buffer areas from 10 metres to 500 metres for pest plants in KNE areas and other sites of high ecological significance. Ten metres is considered an insufficient boundary for species spread by wind or birds.

DOC expressed concern over the changes in management for some pest plant species, particularly reductions in their control.

Discussion occurred about pest fish species. DOC had concerns over the status of several species in the RPMS, and why some species were included and others excluded.

Questions were raised over the details of the feral and unwanted cat category, particularly the means of achievement.

### **Response:**

Thanked for their submission.

Cr Buchanan acknowledged the valuable working relationship between GW and DOC and the similar ecological goals of the two organisations. Emphasis was placed on the limited resources of GW, which faces similar constraints to DOC. The points raised in the submission are valid, but GW is constrained by the resources available for control and management.

Further discussion continued on the oral submissions. Cr Buchanan said the committee would reconvene to hear the remaining submissions on 2 July. All

submissions would be considered further by a committee at a meeting scheduled for 13 August.

The meeting adjourned at 1.00 pm.

**Minutes of the Reconvened Meeting of the Regional Pest Management Strategy Hearings Committee held in the Committee Room, Greater Wellington Regional Council, 34 Chapel Street, Masterton, on Wednesday, 2 July 2008 at 10.00 am**

**Present:**

Councillor Ian Buchanan (Chairperson), Councillor Rex Kirton and Mr Peter Gawith

**Officers Present:**

Wayne O'Donnell, Ray Clarey, Richard Grimmett and Ewan Kelsall.

**Public Business**

**RPS 03 Apologies**

Councillor Rex Kirton for lateness.  
William McGimpsey, Federated Farmers of New Zealand Ltd.

Councillor Kirton arrived at 12.00pm.

**RPS 04 Submissions Received on the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy 2001-2021**

**Hearing of Oral Submissions**

Councillor Buchanan invited the following persons to make oral presentations in support of their written submissions:

Mike Longworth	Flood Protection, Greater Wellington
David Holmes	Hill Country Advisory Committee
Kevin Worsley	
Anders Crofoot	Federated Farmers of New Zealand Inc.

### **Flood Protection Dept, Greater Wellington**

Expressed concerns over old man's beard infestations in the river corridors, and the impact on protection plantings. Because of the extensive boundaries with neighbours along the corridors, boundary clearance rules cause compliance and control problems for both parties.

#### **Response:**

Thanked for their submission.

Despite control work being restricted by funding, management of old man's beard along the corridor is beneficial to all parties. Cr Buchanan suggested that further discussions be held between the Flood Protection and Biosecurity Depts to address the issue.

### **Hill Country Advisory Committee**

The Committee expressed their concern over possums as an on-going Tb and biodiversity threat, and that GW may reduce the level of control following downsizing of the AHB Tb control programme in the region.

Discussion occurred on the spread of old man's beard in the Ruamahanga River management area. The seed is spreading downstream, causing infestation of further properties. The Committee suggested mandatory landowner control in river corridors in an integrated catchment management approach.

#### **Response:**

Thanked for their submission.

Cr Buchanan explained that the possum programme is currently under review, with consultation of landowners taking place. Discussion included the Flood Protection Dept's concerns with old man's beard infestations. The widespread nature of the problem increases the resources required to reduce the spread.

### **Kevin Worsley**

As a former employee of the Regional Council, Mr Worsley expressed a number of concerns with the proposed management for a number of pest plants species.

Mr Worsley has noted an expansion of nodding thistle in the Wairarapa over the last three to four years. The seeds are viable for long periods, meaning that the seed beds can cause problems for many years. Mr

Worsley recommended total control of nodding thistle with landowner responsibility, suggesting that the boundary control programme will create large infestations in the future.

Expressed similar concerns with gorse, with only a boundary control regime and large areas getting beyond control.

**Response:**

Thanked for his submission.

GW does not have the resources to enforce total control for these species. GW can no longer be the ‘policeman’, and is moving towards stopping new problem pest plants species. Biological control agents have been released for nodding thistle and gorse, and these will continue to work over coming years.

**Federated Farmers of New Zealand Inc.**

Apologies from William McGimpsey, Policy Advisor. Anders Crofoot, President of Wairarapa Federated Farmers, presented on his behalf.

FFNZ expressed their support for the proposed RPMS document in general.

Commended the request for the Crown to be bound to the Strategy, citing examples of boundary issues with DOC and other Crown lands.

FFNZ objected to the reduction in gorse boundary clearance rules, with large infestations on neighbouring properties.

Concern over growing feral pig numbers in the Wairarapa, with discussion on the damage and other associated problems of a feral pig population.

FFNZ indicated their support for on-going possum and predator control in the region, following downsizing of the AHB Tb programme.

FFNZ requested the control of Canada geese by GW if their status was changed by DOC.

Critical of how the RPMS is funded, and requested an investigation with the consideration of a Uniform Annual Charge.

**Response:**

Thanked for their submission.



Cr Buchanan explained that the new gorse boundary rules only impact on non-productive land, with the existing rules remaining for commercial farming and forestry operations.

Further discussion took place on feral pig control and numbers.

Discussion was held on the RPMS funding, with an explanation that any change in funding policy would require the agreement of the full Council.

Further discussion continued on the oral submissions. It was agreed that the Committee would reconvene on 13 August to decide on all submissions, and discuss adaptations or additions to the final RPMS document.

The meeting adjourned at 12.00 pm.

**Minutes of the Reconvened Meeting of the Regional Pest Management Strategy Hearings Committee held in the Biosecurity Meeting Room, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Cnr Victoria and Albert Streets, Masterton, on Wednesday, 13 August, 2008, at 11.00 a.m.**

**Present:**

Councillor Ian Buchanan (Chairperson), Councillor Rex Kirton and Mr Peter Gawith.

**Officers Present:**

Wayne O'Donnell, Ray Clarey, Richard Grimmett and Ewan Kelsall.

**Public Business**

**RPS 05      Apologies**

There were no apologies.

**RPS 06      Summary of Submissions and Officers Comments on the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022**

Members considered the officers revised changes to the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy as a result of the hearings on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> July. Sample response letters to submitters were also discussed.

Officers noted the Hearing Committee's amendments to the Proposed Regional Pest Management Strategy.

The Hearings Committee congratulated the Officers on their input to the strategy process, and the proposed changes to the RPMS document.

The meeting closed at 1.00 p.m.

Cr Ian Buchanan  
CHAIRMAN

Date: