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Report to the Wellington Regional Council
From Councillor Chris Laidlaw

Report on Wellington Conservation Board Meeting - 6 October 2000

I attended the meeting held in Levin on 6 October 2000. Matters of significance were as follows:

1. Following Margaret Shields' letter to the Chairman of the Board, Peter Bygate, of 7 September, the Board had another discussion on the issue of landscape values. It is now accepted that anticipated changes to the Resource Management Act will necessitate another look at the RPS in terms of landscape provisions and it was agreed that the Board should address this again when the Regional Council is ready to consider the matter.

It was suggested that a workshop involving Department of Conservation, the Conservation Board and Wellington Regional Council might be organised at that stage to look at the scope for action collectively and I agreed to commend this suggestion to Wellington Regional Council.

It was also suggested by several members of the Board that coastal provisions in the Regional Policy Statements needed to be included in the landscape review as these were of direct relevance to the issue.

2. There was satisfaction at the recent Environment Court outcome over the application by a developer (Kotuku Parks Ltd) to develop land adjacent to the Waikanae Scientific Reserve. Forest and Bird representatives attended the meeting and stressed the need for more action in anticipation of a revised proposal

coming back to the court. The approach by Department of Conservation to the management of surrounding land was seen as crucial and the neutral stance by Department of Conservation thus far came in for some strong criticism. Those objecting to the development want Department of Conservation to advocate much more strongly from here on. Forest and Bird raised the issues of dog and vehicle access and it was agreed that a joint working party of interested Non Government Organisations should meet to form a firm position to put to Kapiti Coast District Council and Department of Conservation on the issue before the matter goes back to court.

3. The whole question of Department of Conservation's ability to advocate for conservation values on land beyond the Conservation Estate - as is apparently the wish of the minister - was discussed. It was agreed that the Board should recommend to the Conservation Authority that this matter be put on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting between the Minister, the New Zealand Conservation Authority and the Regional Board Chairmen. This may have considerable implications for Department of Conservation's future role vis-a-vis that of Regional Councils in this whole area. Watch this space.
4. The Conservator reported that a decision had been taken to log the Catchpool Pine Forest (on Department of Conservation land) and that this had stirred up some anxiety among Non Government Organisations and other interested parties. This block is a fairly sensitive area and Hutt City Council have decided to make the resource consent for the logging a notifiable one. The Conservator was expecting a tough time from submitters but was certain that Department of Conservation will be able to proceed. He intended being "an even harder taskmaster than WRC" so far as Rayonier, the contractor is concerned. It will be interesting to see how this develops, particularly in light of our own experience in the area.

The next meeting will be on **15 December 2000** with an excursion to Kapiti Island to follow.

CHRIS LAIDLAW
Councillor

14 October 2000