



Report 10.394
Date 22 July 2010
File WO/03/40/10

Committee Catchment Management
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Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee - meeting update

1. Purpose

To provide a summary of the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee meeting held on 5 July 2010.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee (WHCAC) met on 5 July 2010 to consider matters relating to the Wairarapa Water Use Project, updates on the Landscape Evaluation Project and Animal Health Board Strategy, and the timetable to initiate the Natural Resource Management Plan consultation phase.

Minutes from the meeting are attached.

4. Comment

Key outcomes from the 5 July meeting were:

- Scott Ihaka, Policy Advisor with responsibility for the Wairarapa Landscape Evaluation project gave members an update. A number of workshops have been held to discuss the character descriptions. These workshops have been well attended and have provided useful information for the next phase.

This phase will provide a draft list of features containing outstanding landscapes or significant amenity values. Boffa Miskell will use 12 criteria to assess each feature and present a draft list as part of the next round of consultation. Ultimately a Plan change may be required to the Combined District Plan to add or remove features from the current list.

- Bruce Geden, Project Manager for the Wairarapa Regional Irrigation Trust gave a presentation on the Wairarapa Water Use Project. A feasibility study has been completed and identifies the potential to irrigate 30,000 hectares within the Wairarapa valley. Offline storage is proposed to take advantage of high river flows.

The next stage will seek funding to investigate resource consent issues, high value production crops and the mechanism for delivering the water to users. This study is likely to require \$2-3M. Estimates for the whole project range between \$200M - \$300M.

- Peter Gaskin, Chair of the Wellington Region Tb Free Committee presented an update on the current status and content of the National Strategy and its likely impacts on the Wairarapa. There are clearly issues of reductions in funding, particularly for South East Wairarapa and it is possible that Greater Wellington could be pressured into ensuring that the massive reduction in infected herds is maintained.

Concerns were also expressed about the illegal release of pigs at a number of locations in the region. Tb has been recorded in pigs at Akatarawa, Mataikona, Tinui, and Bideford. Pigs are an excellent sentinel for identifying residual Tb in wildlife. They are known to scavenge on animal carcasses. Therefore, the presence of a Tb pig normally means that other infected wildlife (i.e. possums) still reside in the area. However, the issue is confounded if the pigs have been illegally introduced into the area. As Tb pigs are often used as a trigger for ongoing possum control, illegal releases could mean that control resources are wasted. Finally, infected pigs may end up dying and being scavenged by possums, resulting in a new wave of infection in what was a 'clean' possum population.

Despite the Tb NPMS having a rule which prohibits the release of pigs into the wild, in practice this has been extremely difficult to monitor and enforce.

5. Communication

The main communication issues noted were:

- Members were keen to meet with the CE of the Animal Health Board (William McCook) before decisions are made on the proposed National Pest Management Strategy that is currently with the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister has yet to decide whether to call for a Board of Inquiry to work through the submissions that were received on the Proposed Strategy.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***

Report prepared by:

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Attachment 1 – WHCAC Minutes 5 July 2010