

Kāpiti-Mana Forest and Bird Newsletter - April 2021



Kahikatea growing in Lake Brunner, West Coast

Chairs Opinion - Kāpiti Long Term Plan

At the Waikanae Saturday market, councillors and staff were promoting the long-term plan. I asked a councillor what the council was doing about mitigation of climate change. She said that the long-term plan had money allocated for seawalls and stormwater improvements. She obviously did not understand the difference between mitigation and adaptation. And she's a councillor in a climate change world?

Let me explain.

Reducing carbon emissions (e.g. using trains instead of cars, rewetting peat, using solar power, changing to more sustainable land use), is mitigation. So is absorbing carbon emitted, (planting trees, improving the health of forests (pest control). Mitigation is stopping or slowing climate change.

Building bigger sea walls, putting in bigger storm water pipes, higher stop banks is adaptation. This is protecting ourselves from climate change.

I wondered what an adapted climate change world would look like. Sea walls along much of the coast marching inland to meet larger

river flood protection. Huge pipes, some overground, taking stormwater direct to the sea. Storm strengthened buildings for those that can afford it and damaged homes alongside because insurance no longer insured for storm damage. Dry rivers in summer because we needed the water to grow crops. Heat pumps will be in fashion keeping you cool over the blistering summer and warm during storms but power shortages because there is no snow to melt on our mountains. Crop failures from too much, or too little, rain or from warming temperatures or damaging storms. I'm sure that's not the half of it.

Councillors will be busy deciding what asset to protect next with your rates. The current generation will use their oil-fuelled technology to protect their assets. It's a bleak outlook - especially for the asset poor and for young people.

In contrast, a mitigated world would return our weather to a stable more benign state over time - as it has been for thousands of years. We would have to give a lot back to nature and seriously reduce our most destructive practices. We would need subsidised or

cheap mass transport (or serious carbon tax on fuels). We may need to trade locally, and to make every process very carbon efficient (smart insulated buildings). Perhaps our stormwater and sea walls would cope. This option would benefit the asset poor.

It's not as easy as I have portrayed, because we cannot turn climate change around in a short time and many others will also not mitigate, they will adapt, but **adaptation without mitigation means committing to greater impacts in the long term and adaptation without end.** It's a matter of choice. But with large money going into adaptation and little money going into mitigation, Kapiti is cementing in a high temperature future.

The councillor asked for my ideas!!! She did not know about the part the QEP peatlands could play as a mitigation strategy. She was dubious that we could stop farmers and developers reducing or draining wetlands. Giving back to nature - how can we do that? She did point out that Council pays some money for two staff to help volunteers restore natural areas.

So, adaptation is done by trained and paid professionals and costs millions and two council staff help volunteers undertake mitigation planting. That sends a very strong message.

Here's a thought: Put equal intellectual energy into mitigation and adaptation. Get reports of equal value on both. Spend equal money on mitigation and adaptation solutions. Show the public that council is serious about mitigation of climate change and protecting the public.

While investigations and decisions are being made, here is are two small suggestions:

AGM Coming Up - Chair's Report

Branch business

Meetings

Covid-19 knocked out some of the evening meetings but also low attendance, our distance from some of the more interesting speakers (and the effect of Covid on those speakers) made meetings more difficult. We decided to reduce meetings and hold them at Waikanae in the meantime, but this is not necessarily permanent.

- I have always been impressed with what two council staff have done helping volunteers. They add significant mitigation value. Plantings that would fail, survive. Things volunteers find difficult to do get done, they do. There are more projects and volunteers in Kāpiti than the two can manage. so **Add two extra staff.**
- **Teach councillors the difference between mitigation and adaption** so they understand the messages they are sending and decisions they are making.

As I left, the councillor said she might stand for GWRC. From what I have seen so far, this term of GWRC councillors have been tackling climate change head on. Maybe no results yet but mitigation is not easy and takes time.

Submit online to the Long Term Plans

Follow the links on the underlined words to access the documents you're after:

GWRC's Long Term Plan asks for comments on three big topics.

- Pushing the Go button on electrifying our bus and rail network.(Mitigation)
- Ramping up or restoration of Regional Parks to fight climate change.(Mitigation)
- Taking Joint action to super charge our region.

Comment on GWRC LTP by 2 May 2021

KCDC's Long Term Plan big issues are

- Build sea walls (Adaptation)
- Increase Stormwater capacity (Adaptation)

Comment on KCDC LTP by 8 May 2021

Porirua Long Term Plan focusses on

Renewal of water infrastructure (Business as usual)

Stream Planting (Mitigation)

Comment on Porirua LTP by 27 April 2021

Contact with Youth Hub

Youth Hub is Forest and Bird's youth movement. It has been operational in Wellington for a few years but is starting in Kāpiti. We have met twice with Ella Harvey who is organising the Kāpiti Youth Hub and have discussed ways we can co-operate. I was extremely pleased with the meetings and we will meet again.

Six is not enough

Six committee members and it's not enough. We can continue, but the energy levels stay low. We don't have enough people with ideas and energy. We have to decide what to pursue and what to leave. So, if you've an environmental thing you want to see achieved, or want to input into a valuable organisation, please join the committee (or you could act outside it in some capacity). We'd especially like a Mana representative.

Participation in conservation

Plimmerton Farm Residential Development

This is a huge residential development on farmland on the East side of Taupo Swamp. The land still has a number of natural values that should be preserved. In particular, a high-quality wetland and large valleys with native trees. These natural areas would not have been eliminated but may be damaged by residential construction and runoffs if they were not well enough protected by Porirua City Council. We looked over the site and helped Friends of Taupo Swamp (FOTSC).

The Wellington region F&B officer, Amelia Geary, took up the fight and wrote and presented a submission on our behalf. We cannot stop the subdivision. We may not be able to protect all we would wish, but I am sure that our involvement will have made a difference. This process has also strengthened our relationship with the Friends of Taupo Swamp and thereby brought more F&B influence into Mana. It has also strengthened our relationship with Amelia.

Participation in formal and informal discussions

- Wainuiwhenua's (ex Perkin's Farm) use as part of Kapiti Regional Park
- QEP lizard fence

Successes

Queen Elizabeth Park Wetlands

We achieved a massive win. We supported the Friends of QEP in their fight to get GW to retire the QEP peatlands from farming (about 160 ha) and restore them as wetlands thus achieving a very large wetland and stopping

Financial one-off event

Some of central office funding came from organisations that derived their income from tourism so Covid was a significant hit on their finances. We gave central office a one-off payment of \$10,000 to help offset the loss of funds.

Membership

Our membership has continued to increase by about 10% and now is 677

Sanderson Memorial and the Paraparaumu Gateway project.

It looks like the gateway project at Paraparaumu Beach will conflict with the Sanderson Memorial. This is the only memorial to Sanderson in Kāpiti and is very important to Kāpiti because of the island and to Forest and Bird. He was our founder. We have written to KCDC about ensuring this is not lost. Amelia has also contributed. I am sure this will be satisfactorily resolved. As far as I know, we are not precious about the location of the memorial. Captain Val Sanderson lived in Paekakariki and started F&B about 98 years ago, so our centennial is coming up.

Submissions made by the branch

- Marine Reserves Revision
- Draft Parks Network for Wellington Regional council. Thanks to those members who also made a submission.
- KCDC Transport strategy
- Protecting a large Totara in Porirua

Work in the Field

Continuation of trapping in the Field Reserve. Health and safety requirements have been completed because Forest and Bird own the reserve so must take responsibility for those who volunteer in it.

significant carbon emissions (about 2500 tonnes per year from peat and another amount that I cannot calculate from industrial agricultural meat production). GWRC has also decided rewet and restore to wetland 80 ha of the peatlands (all that area north of Waterfall Stream).

This is such a turnaround from five years ago when GW adamantly declared the land was farmland with a stream through it rather than, as the Friend declared, a peat wetland with drains through it that GW maintained. GW also saw little reason to use the park for its legal purpose as a recreation reserve. This fight might not be all over, but change has been very significant, and we now have councillors who will use GWRC controlled land to reduce GW's carbon emissions and will progressively allow the public to access our recreation asset. A side benefit from this win was that due to carbon accounting principles, that is too difficult to explain, GW has also decided to contract plant 50 ha of low fertility sand dunes in QEP over the next 3 years.

Climate Change Mitigation Projects Grant

Your branch, with other groups, (named below) applied for funds from Wellington Community Trust's Climate Action Fund. We put together 6 projects.

1. Ngā Uruora - a 5 ha revegetation of weedy ground on the escarpment,
2. Ngā Uruora - 1000 long lived natives suitably planted,
3. Whareroa Guardians - plant a 1 ha wetland,

Other Kāpiti-Mana Projects of note

We did not actively participate in these and can take no credit for them but they add Kāpiti's biodiversity (or could do).

Lizard fence?

A funded feasibility study has been undertaken to determine the best place for a fenced lizard enclosure on the Kapiti Coast. The study will conclude that QEP is the best place it seems and most involved are very enthusiastic about it. It will be quite big and if funding is forthcoming will enclose most of the Remnant Bush and Dune Swamp in QEP.

Thank you

I want to thank the F&B committee and Lower North Island representative, those who have run the tea roster, trapped in our reserve, sold calendars, run Kiwi Kids, collaborated with F&B and all our members who have supported

4. Friends of QEP - contact Emerald Glen landowners and ask if the streams in their properties can be riparian planted, then plant them

5. Friends of QEP - rewet and plant the QEP peatlands south of Waterfall stream,

6. Forest and Bird and Nga Uruora combined - the restoration of Waikakariki wetland: a small wetland between road and rail just south of Paekakariki. Alongside it will be signage that talks about Captain Sanderson (our founder and a Paekakariki resident).

Our application was for several hundred thousand dollars over 3 years, and we were successful. Kāpiti Coast Biodiversity Group will provide governance and manage the finance of the projects.

Pimmerton Farm Residential Development

During our look-over of the former farm we identified a very large Totara and alerted the council. That tree and land around it is now protected. Although we cannot identify ecological improvements that will be made because of our and Amelia's participation in this development, we will have made a difference.

Of course, protecting lizards will also protect birds etc.

Waikanae River small oxbow

This is located by the equestrian centre on the north bank. Over time it will be cleared of weeds and planted in natives.

Waikanae River Mountain to Sea Funding

It is likely that the majority of the \$8.5m funding won for Waikanae ki Uta ki Tai will be spent on catchment pest control and fencing, and riparian planting in Reikorangi.

F&B this year. Without your support Forest and Bird could not be a force for nature.

I also want to thank all those who in any way contributed to biodiversity or climate change projects or recognition of their importance.

There are people working in GWRC that I also want to thank.

I look forward to another exciting year with its successes. Though we may not be able to achieve successes that are as significant as

this year, we will see the implementation of this year's successes.

Any win for nature or climate change is a win for the world and our future.

Kind regards to all

Russell

Next Meeting April

Next meeting is 28 April, which will be our AGM. Our guest speaker is George Hobson on Forest and Bird's Youth Hubs and what drives them, so bring your young people. A Kāpiti F&B Youth Hub is in the process of being set up.

We are looking for more members for our committee, even a new chairperson. It is not an onerous job, and it's a great place to learn, and to make a difference. I'd be happy to talk with you if you want to know more.

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