

Report 99.521

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Report to the Wellington Regional Council
from Councillor Chris Laidlaw

Wellington Conservation Board Meeting, 3 September 1999

I attended the meeting on 3 September. Several points of interest to WRC arose.

1. The Kapiti Environmental Action Group, represented by a sturdy battalion of Waikanae dowagers, came to complain about the resource consent for the Kotuku subdivision, adjacent to the Scientific reserve at the mouth of the Waikanae river. They plan to appeal it and wanted the Conservation Board to back them up. There are concerns about the proximity of domestic pets to the reserve and the possible degradation of the sandhills. The board will write a letter of support.
2. Several people, including one or two from the Eastbourne area, raised the issue of the future of the East Harbour Regional Park. There appears to be growing interest in this among the NGO community and pressure will inevitably mount for more action to develop and protect its more fragile ecosystems. I outlined the current WRC approach and suggested that we were tentatively thinking of a new name for the park, notwithstanding the constraints of the legislation, to something like "Pencarrow". The reaction was, perhaps surprisingly, quite positive.

It was agreed that at the next meeting of the Board in November a WRC staff member (Susan Edwards?) should be invited to give a presentation to the board on plans for the East Harbour Regional Park, including signature values, access, ownership issues etc. Arrangements for this should be made with Jenny Brown, the Board secretary, who is a DOC head office official.

3. It was revealed that the Minister of Conservation has instructed DOC to pull back from its advocacy role in respect of landscape and natural character values, leaving this to the public to pursue. It was noted that the WRC landscape plan for the region may assume greater importance as a result.

Chris Laidlaw