

Report 09.07

Date 21 January 2009

File WO/03/40/10

Committee Catchment Management

Author Dave Cameron, Manager, Land Management

Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee - Meeting Update

1. Purpose

To provide a summary of the Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee meeting held on 15 December 2008.

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 15 December 2008 to consider matters relating to carbon farming, the future development options for Akura nursery, an update on the Bovine Tb and possum predator programmes, soil disturbance in the coastal environment management area, and an update on weather information as contained on the Greater Wellington website.

John-Paul Praat from Peter Handford and Associates addressed the meeting on a proposed information transfer programme on carbon farming. He was seeking opinions and feedback on the content and information dissemination options as they related to the farming community.

Minutes from the meeting are attached.

4. Comment

Key outcomes from the meeting were:

- It was suggested that use be made of the Meat and Wool Monitor Farm programme to inform farmers of the opportunities and issues surrounding carbon farming. This programme is well established and

has a strong following from the rural community. It was agreed that Peter Gawith and Dave Cameron meet with organisers to discuss possible inclusion at the next field day.

- The publication of a series of fact sheets on carbon farming was strongly supported. Circulation of fact sheets through rural newsletters, including those produced by Greater Wellington would provide good regional coverage. Farm accountants were also seen as a group that should be targeted as they have regular contact with farmers and the financial impacts of carbon farming will be an important part of future business management.
- Members were updated on recent Council decisions relating to increasing pole production at Akura and Mangapakeha nurseries. Members were strongly in favour of acquiring additional land now, rather than waiting until 2012. A resolution to make a submission to the Council's LTCCP process to bring forward Stage II of nursery development programme was passed unanimously.
- Members were updated on outcomes from the most recent LTCCP workshop. Specifically these related to Bovine Tb, possum predator and the regional erosion control initiatives. Members gave support to an LTCCP submission on the proposed Bovine Tb and possum predator programmes.
- The Proposed Wairarapa District Plan contains a number of provisions to control soil disturbance in the Coastal Environment Management Area (CEMA). General farming practices such as fencing, track maintenance and dam cleaning were currently being caught by proposed rules relating to natural landscape values. Federated Farmers are in mediation regarding the proposed provisions and members resolved to support their efforts in gaining amendments to the proposed Plan.
- GW's website contains rainfall and soil moisture information gathered from remotely telemetered rainfall sites throughout the region. Members suggested that quick links to soil moisture sites and the ability to read all information from the one site on the one page would be highly advantageous. Additionally they needed further information to enable interpretation of soil moisture readings. This is very important information that enables future pasture growth to be estimated.

5. Communication

A number of communication issues were identified, including

- Joint statement from Chair Wilde and Cr Buchanan on the availability of funding for forestry through the Afforestation Grant Scheme

- Joint advertising opportunities with the Meat and Wool Monitor Farm programme.
- Promotion of the GW web site and the information available on rainfall and soil moisture from around the region.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

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

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Dave Cameron
Manager, Land Management

Wayne O'Donnell
Divisional Manager, Catchment Management

Attachment 1 – WHCAC Minutes 15 December 2008