

CONFIRMED

**MINUTES OF THE OTAGO CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING
HELD ON 17 APRIL 2009 IN THE MEETING ROOM, THOMAS'S
CATLINS LODGE & HOLIDAY PARK, CNR RYLEY & CLARKE
STREETS, OWAKA STARTING AT 10.30 AM**

422499

PRESENT

H S Langsbury (Chairperson)
R R Allan
G H Nixon
C Morris
B J Parker
I Scott
A M Smith
C F Tanner
J E Williams

IN ATTENDANCE

J Connell	Conservator, Otago Conservancy
M van der Goes	Community Relations Manager, Otago Conservancy
M Clark	Community Relations Officer (Board Support)

Some members of the public and a member of the press were also present during parts of the meeting.

1 KARAKIA – WELCOME – APOLOGIES

H Langsbury welcomed everyone present and read two items printed over a hundred years ago – one an article about the Catlins forest from the 'Otago Witness' of 28 December 1904, and the other a short poem entitled 'Little Grey Warbler' by J T Bryant, published in 1902.

He informed other board members that E McAtamney had recently resigned from the board, because she felt that ongoing problems with her health were not allowing her to function effectively as a board member.

He then drew attention to the announcement that G Nixon had received the 2009 Peter Snow Memorial Award for rural health research and service. Board members acknowledged this with acclamation.

Nga Mate – James Cessford, a worker associated with the Grand and Otago skink recovery programme whom board members had met briefly during the February field trip, passed away last week.

It was agreed that apologies be received and sustained from:

A Penniket	
M J Planner	
C Tanner	(field trip only)
J Connell	(Conservator, Otago Conservancy – late arrival and field trip)
M Slater	(Conservator, West Coast Tai Poutini Conservancy)
C Hickford	(Community Relations Manager, West Coast Tai Poutini Conservancy)
Juno Hayes	Mayor, Clutha District Council

2 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA (SBC 8)

The agenda had been circulated.

It was agreed that the agenda be confirmed as circulated, subject to the following addition:

- 11.2 (d) Consultation on WARO Permits.

3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES (SBC 9)

The public minutes of the board meeting held on 13 February 2009 had been circulated.

RESOLVED

That the public minutes of the board meeting be confirmed as circulated, subject to the following change:

- page 1, lines referring to Joanne Dowd and Anthony Steel to be replaced by:

Joanne Dowd	Environmental Consultant, Mitchell Partnerships	
		- agenda item 11.2(c) only
Anthony Steel	Environmental Engineer, Duffill Watts	
		- agenda item 11.2(c) only"

Smith/Tanner

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes that would not be covered under subsequent agenda items.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

5.1 Confirmation of Outwards and Receipt of Inwards Correspondence

The correspondence register had been circulated with the meeting agenda.

RESOLVED

That the inwards correspondence be received and the outwards correspondence be confirmed.

Langsbury/Morris

6 STRATEGIC PLANNING

6.1 Implementation of Otago CMS (SBC 81)

H Langsbury noted that no comments about Special Places 33-41 (pp 378-457) had been received before the meeting.

A Smith asked why some areas in Mount Aspiring National Park had been included as Special Places in the Otago CMS.

M van der Goes said that all parts of the park in Otago would be treated as a 'place' in the next Otago CMS, because the Otago CMS was meant to implement general policies and establish objectives for the integrated management of natural and historic resources in the Otago Conservancy. However, it would refer to the Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan with regard to detailed management objectives.

A Smith suggested that there should be a category for areas of public conservation land which adjoined Mount Aspiring National Park.

Referring to the Greenstone/Caples Special Place (pp 394-399), C Morris drew attention to significant visitor impacts between the Upper Caples (western catchment) and Howden Hut in Fiordland National Park.

M van der Goes said that she would find out how the department intended to address this issue.

J Williams said that the information associated with Special Places 33-41 needed to be updated. For example, an old skeleton had been discovered in the West Matukituki, there was an urupa site in the Rongahere Gorge, and a unique peripatus species had been found on Birch Island.

With regard to future board consideration of this agenda item, there was general agreement with A Smith's suggestion that the 'Table of Contents' was worthy of discussion at the next board meeting.

6.2 Review of Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan (SBC 83)

Copies of the draft plan and a covering letter of 2 April 2009 had been circulated, and copies of an article on the Routeburn Track were tabled.

M van der Goes drew attention to the extended time for public submissions. While it was not yet known how many submitters would ask to be heard, it was likely that hearings would be held in Dunedin, Wanaka, Queenstown and Haast. She was hoping that they could be held either in the week beginning on 13 July or the week beginning on 20 July. If those weeks did not suit board members, the week beginning on 27 July was another possibility. It was prudent for board members to declare their interest when making any comments about the plan outside formal board meetings.

C Tanner said that it was on record that he had withdrawn from any involvement in the preparation of submissions on the draft plan by outside organisations.

H Langsbury suggested that it was a good idea for board members to follow C Tanner's example so that the audit trail showed no conflicts of interest relating to board member involvement.

H Langsbury, G Nixon, B Parker and C Tanner indicated that they were available for a full week of hearings between 13 and 31 July. A Smith said that she could attend the hearing in Dunedin and one of the other hearings.

M Clark undertook to circulate the preferred hearing dates so that board members could indicate specifically on which dates they were available.

M van der Goes said that the department proposed to include written and verbal submissions in its summary and analysis of submissions on the draft plan in order to reduce delays in the review process. It was working through the planning and legal network and would check with the NZCA to ensure that this approach was acceptable.

With regard to the draft plan itself, A Smith suggested that at least some of the maps could be A4 size to reduce the document's thickness. A few other members said that they liked to be able to fold out the A3 maps when referring to related portions of the text.

RESOLVED

That the board records its appreciation of the work carried out by departmental planner B Hunt in bringing the draft plan to the stage of public notification.

Smith/Langsbury

6.3 Review of Canterbury CMS (SBC 81)

M van der Goes summarised the approach taken by the Canterbury Conservancy in the preparation of a new Draft Canterbury CMS, noting the following points:

- * the departmental planner and the entire board were involved in the review process;
- * there was a huge amount of public participation, with draft chapters being placed on the DOC website as they were written and feedback on them being received;

- * meetings were being held with local communities and interest groups throughout the Draft CMS preparation process;
- * using the new template was not as challenging as had been expected;
- * a one-day workshop on 4WD vehicle access and impacts was being held because this was such a significant issue;
- * there would probably be 12 or 13 'places' eg. Banks Peninsula, two national parks (as one place), all the conservation parks, coastal wetlands, lowland forests, Canterbury limestone, spits and dunes, land yet to become public conservation land following tenure review etc;
- * an A4 volume for the text and a separate A3 volume for maps were proposed;
- * the contents were divided broadly into places and functions.

A Smith noted that Canterbury was using an ecologist's approach to places. She saw dangers in a generic approach to categories of protected area. The existing Otago CMS was specific enough to enable those who referred to it to determine whether or not objectives had been achieved. It would be helpful if there was a discrete section on the Hawea Conservation Park in a new Otago CMS. Linking related items in a CMS was desirable, so that readers could easily find all of the relevant statements on an issue or a place. In software for scientific papers for example, icons were used to link maps to the relevant text.

J Williams observed that in the approach taken by Canterbury, there was apparently no focus on places which were special to Maori.

G Nixon said that the public needed to see that specific areas were going to be managed effectively. A section on each individual high country conservation park under the generic place 'high country conservation parks' could achieve that.

H Langsbury suggested that the CMS could be a 'living document', by being in an accessible electronic library and receiving regular updates.

M van der Goes pointed out that a CMS was currently not intended to be a 'living document', because it was signed off on a specific date. She invited board members to look up the Canterbury CMS on the DOC website by searching under 'Canterbury CMS'.

B Parker said that the DOC website crashed his computer every time he tried to look something up.

M Clark undertook to find out if anything could be done by the department to remedy that situation.

6.4 Review of West Coast CMS (SBC 81)

A letter of 11 March 2009 from the DOC West Coast Tai Poutini Conservancy and an extract from the Draft West Coast CMS on Private Accommodation and Related Facilities had been circulated.

M van der Goes said that the latter item had been circulated as an example of an approach to the issue of private accommodation on public conservation land that was more pragmatic than the relevant statements in the Conservation General Policy. The department and the board would have to address this issue during the review of the Otago CMS, since there were private dwellings on land managed by the department in the Nevis valley, at Falls Dam and elsewhere.

7 ADVICE

7.1 Proposed Land Exchange – Lake Dispute Scenic Reserve (SBC 73)

REPORT 0906 and board advice of 20 March 2009 had been circulated.

RESOLVED

That the board advice on this proposal be endorsed.

Tanner/Parker

7.2 Gates of Haast Bridge Replacement (SBC 71)

A letter of 27 February 2009 from the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board had been circulated.

C Tanner confirmed that car parking for users of the Wills Valley Track could be a problem.

7.3 Marine Protected Areas Implementation (SBC 39)

M van der Goes said that the Minister of Conservation and the Minister of Fisheries had agreed that the SBR Forum (Marine Protection Planning Forum for the Southern Coastal Biogeographic Region) should not be established until the gaps analysis had been completed – possibly in July this year.

Several board members expressed their disappointment in yet another delay to local marine protection efforts, and there was general agreement that something along the lines of A Penniket's previous unsent draft letter should be sent to the relevant Ministers.

RESOLVED

That the board sends a letter to the Minister of Conservation and the Minister of Fisheries, expressing the board's dismay and significant concern about the lack of progress being made in Marine Protected Areas Implementation in the Southern Coastal Biogeographic Region.

Smith/Tanner

M Clark undertook to circulate a draft letter before it was sent.

8 ADVOCACY

8.1 High Country Tenure Review (SBC 34)

(a) Shingley Creek

The board submission of 20 February 2009 had been circulated.

RESOLVED

That the submission be endorsed.

Parker/Williams

(b) Riverslea

The board submission of 23 February 2009 had been circulated.

RESOLVED

That the submission be endorsed.

Williams/Allan

(c) Cambrian Hills

The board submission of 26 March 2009 had been circulated.

RESOLVED

That the submission be endorsed.

Smith/Tanner

(d) Cluden

The board submission of 30 March 2009 had been circulated.

RESOLVED

That the submission be endorsed.

Williams/Parker

J Williams suggested that the board could visit the rock art site beside the Lindis River during the field trip associated with its proposed meeting at Tarras.

(e) Glenfellan

A letter of 13 February 2009 from DTZ New Zealand Ltd and the board submission of 15 April 2009 had been circulated.

RESOLVED

That the board submission be endorsed.

Tanner/Morris

(f) Mt Aspiring

A letter of 20 February 2009 from Opus International Consultants Ltd had been circulated and the draft board submission of 16 April 2009 was tabled.

With regard to the term of proposed grazing concessions over parts of the Proposed Conservation Area CA1, R Allan pointed out that 30 year grazing agreements had been negotiated over parts of the Glen Nevis and Glenroy properties. He was comfortable with the 15 year term associated with Grazing Concession GC2. The Fish and Game Otago report on the tenure review of the Ben Nevis and Craigroy pastoral leases was relevant to this issue.

It was agreed that the sentence requesting a reduction in the term of the grazing concessions to five years should be removed from the draft board submission.

G Nixon said that while the proposed area of unencumbered freehold land was relatively small, he had no faith that the Queenstown Lakes District Council would prevent inappropriate developments (eg. a hotel) on it through RMA processes. As a result, he was opposed to the creation of any unencumbered freehold land on this property. He was also concerned about the continued presence of the Whare Kea Chalet about 300 metres from the boundary of the Remote Zone in Mount Aspiring National Park. He understood that the Myer family of Australia effectively used the building as a personal lodge.

C Tanner confirmed that there was not much public use of sites near the lodge.

M van der Goes said that the department would insist that the hut should be available for use by the public in similar ways to the concessionaire huts on the Milford and Routeburn Tracks. A concession for the hut would be considered, subject to conditions which were acceptable to the department.

It was agreed that the draft board submission should recommend a concession condition which required a public shelter to be attached to the existing lodge.

There was also general agreement that the introductory paragraphs should include statements reflecting the board's concern about potential developments on unencumbered freehold land.

J Williams wondered whether the proposed conservation areas adjoining Mount Aspiring National Park should be considered as possible additions to the park.

M van der Goes said that it was an appropriate time to raise the issue of possible future additions to the park. However, the department saw value in having 'buffer' areas of public conservation land adjoining the park that were not subject to the same high level of protection as the park itself.

RESOLVED

That the board sends the draft submission on this preliminary proposal, subject to the changes recorded above.

Williams/Smith

(g) Carrick

A letter of 27 February 2009 from Opus International Consultants Ltd had been circulated.

G Nixon offered to draft a board submission on this preliminary proposal. He believed that Conservation Covenant CC4 needed a higher level of protection and that the snowmobile operation needed to be phased out.

J Williams remarked that there was an old Maori trail along the Nevis River.

(h) Report by Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment

Some board members already had copies of the PCE report titled 'Change in the high country : Environmental stewardship and tenure review', and other copies were tabled.

M Clark undertook to obtain copies for J Williams, I Scott, A Penniket and B Parker.

J Connell said that the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment had been working on the report through changes of staff since 2006. The final report was for reading only – no submissions had been invited. It was up to the Government whether there would be any changes as a result of the report. The department supported the overall thrust and intent of the document.

I Scott said that she was pleased to see support for her view that the best outcome for a property undergoing tenure review was not necessarily a division between freehold land and public conservation land. The report suggested that serious consideration be given to a broader approach.

H Langsbury drew attention to the specific recommendations on pages 72 to 81 of the report.

G Nixon said that recognition of the need to protect water quality was admirable, but he was disturbed by the report's failure to recognise 'inherent values'. He noted that the document favoured covenants over private land rather than concessions over public land. Since high country farms could be marginally viable, he worried about the security of the protection afforded by covenants. Regardless of the legal mechanisms used, a choice needed to be made between placing the land in private ownership or public/community ownership. In British Columbia, about 90% of the land was in public ownership, and various commercial activities were permitted to be carried out on it. The system appeared to work effectively.

I Scott said that there was room for only one operator on each patch of snow, so the status of the underlying land made little difference.

8.2 Moeraki Sewage Discharge (SBC 91)

B Parker said that he had raised the suggestion of a community planting project with the Hampden Community Group and the members were not comfortable with it. They were very concerned about the Otago Regional Council's dismissive attitude to the problem.

M van der Goes hoped that it was clear that the idea for the planting project arose from a concept that planting the area would assist in steering human contact away from the stream, and was not intended to address the water quality issue.

A Smith suggested that a warning sign in the DOC car park would help to alert visitors to the problem with the quality of the water flowing across the beach between there and the Moeraki Boulders/Kaihinaki.

RESOLVED
 That the board asks the department to communicate with Public Health South on this issue, and to arrange for a suitable warning sign to be placed in the car park of the Moeraki Boulders Carpark Recreation Reserve.
Smith/Tanner

8.3 Project Hayes (Proposed Lammermoor Wind Farm) (SBC 94)

G Nixon said that there had been no significant developments since the previous board meeting.

8.4 Proposed Changes to Regional Plan : Water for Otago (SBC 91)

The board submission of 6 March 2009 and a summary of decisions requested by submitters had been circulated.

With regard to the statement in the submission about community controlled and monitored allocation schemes, R Allan said that community control could have benefits. C Morris agreed that it worked well in some areas.

B Parker offered to speak to the board's submission when hearings were organised.

RESOLVED
That the board submission be endorsed.
Parker/Smith

8.5 Mount Watkin Scenic Reserve Management Plan (SBC 80)

Letters of 11 February and 2 March 2009 from the Dunedin City Council and the board submission of 19 March 2009 had been circulated.

RESOLVED
That the board submission be endorsed.
Smith/Allan

8.6 Proposed National Environmental Standard on Ecological Flows and Water Levels (SBC 20)

A letter of 11 February 2008 from the Ministry for the Environment had been circulated and a copy of the summary of submissions was sent to B Parker only.

There was general agreement with B Parker's view that a further board submission on this topic was not necessary.

8.7 Proposed Hydro Dams on the Clutha River/Mata-Au (SBC 91)

Some general information on this topic from the Contact Energy Ltd website was tabled.

J Connell outlined the history of Special Place 41 Rongahere Gorge in the Otago CMS (pp. 452-457). The board had opposed Contact Energy's proposal for a hydro dam at Tuapeka Mouth in the mid 1990's, because the associated lake would have drowned or adversely affected Birch Island and some significant areas of native forest on the banks of the Clutha River/Mata-Au. Although the company decided not to proceed with the project at that time, the board advocated the long-term protection of the conservation values at this location by adding Special Place 41 to the then Draft Otago CMS. He understood that Contact Energy wanted to decide by 2010 which of the four current hydro dam proposals affecting the Clutha River/Mata-Au to pursue, following consultation with communities and stakeholders.

A Smith pointed out that dams across rivers flowing into the sea have significant effects on the coastline, exacerbating coastal erosion where river sediment would normally be deposited. She believed that more dams on the Clutha River/Mata-Au would worsen the effects of the existing dams in this regard. Input from the scientific advisory group would help board members appreciate the broad range of effects associated with these proposals. She suggested that at the next board meeting, it would be useful for the board to reflect on statutory process which might be used for one or more of these proposals, in the light of recent developments on RMA processes.

There was general support for the idea that the board should relate the story behind its involvement in the Project Hayes resource consent applications to the select committee when speaking to its submission on the Resource Management (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Bill. [Item 8.12 below also refers].

H Langsbury suggested that the board should seek support from the NZCA in connection with this issue. Since no current board members were on the board in the mid-1990's, it would be helpful for members to revisit relevant papers and decisions from that time. As far as the four new hydro dam proposals were concerned, it seemed likely that the board would need to identify priorities for the use of the limited resources at its disposal.

RESOLVED

That the board approaches the current proposal by Contact Energy Ltd for more hydro dams on the Clutha River/Mata-Au by:

- 1 asking members of its scientific advisory group to contribute to an information paper on the conservation values that might be affected;
- 2 requesting the department's support in obtaining relevant background information;
- 3 conveying its concerns about constraints on its RMA advocacy role to the Local Government and Environment Select Committee when speaking to its submission on the Resource Management (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Bill.

Langsbury/Parker

8.8 Proposed Plan Changes 5A-5W to Central Otago District Plan (SBC 94)

G Nixon said that hearing dates for submissions had not yet been set.

8.9 National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation (SBC 20)

A letter of 4 March 2009 from the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board had been circulated.

G Nixon wondered if a reference to the hierarchy of reversibility would enhance the statement by the Taranaki/Whanganui Conservation Board.

8.10 National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (SBC 37)

A letter of 11 March 2009 and an email of 7 April 2009 from the Board of Inquiry had been circulated.

8.11 Provision of Toilets at Camp Creek (SBC 37)

C Morris said that he would see Paul Hellebrekers to find out whether the former Transit New Zealand's commitment to provide toilets at Camp Creek had somehow been fulfilled via a contribution to the toilet block at Boundary Creek to the north.

8.12 Resource Management (Simplifying and Streamlining) Amendment Bill (SBC 19)

A letter of 25 February 2009 from the Opposition Spokesperson for the Environment and the board submission of 3 April 2009 had been circulated.

[**Note:** See also item 8.7 above].

M Clark undertook to tell the Local Government and Environment Select Committee that the board wanted to be heard in support of its submission.

RESOLVED

That the board submission be endorsed.

Tanner/Parker

8.13 Lifting of Speed Restrictions on the Hunter River

Emails on the topic and a letter of 2 April 2009 from the DOC Wanaka Area Manager to the Wanaka Community Board had been circulated.

M van der Goes summarised the background to this issue and confirmed that the department supported a continuation of the 5 knot speed restriction for jet boats.

I Scott related how the policy of no jet boating on the Rees River had been overturned as a result of pressure on the Queenstown Lakes District Council by jet boat clubs.

On the general topic of disturbance to existing recreational users of the Hunter valley, C Morris said that there had been problems with a local concessionaire who landed fishing clients unreasonably close to other anglers.

M Clark undertook to send C Morris a copy of the concession in question.

It was agreed that the board sends a letter to the Wanaka Community Board, with copies being sent to the Queenstown Lakes District Council Chief Executive Officer and the Harbour Master, expressing

the board's support for a continued 5 knot speed restriction on the Hunter River, apart from one-off authorisation of an increased limit for special events.

C Morris offered to draft a board letter along these lines.

8.14 Future of Pest Management in New Zealand (SBC 32)

An email of 2 April 2009 from MAF Biosecurity New Zealand about public stakeholder consultation meetings had been circulated.

I Scott tabled a recent issue of the 'Bovine Tb Newsletter' and reminded board members that the Animal Health Board did not plan to fund possum control beyond 2012-2013.

9 PUBLIC EXCLUDED

RESOLVED
That pursuant to the Local Government Information and Meetings Act 1987, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following subjects and for the reasons given:

General subject of each Matter to be considered	Reason for passing this resolution in relation to each matter	Grounds under section 48(1) for the passing of this resolution
9.1 Confirmation of Public Excluded Minutes of 13 February 2009	To protect the privacy of natural persons.	48(1)(a)(ii) OIA (9)(2)(a)
9.2 Matters arising from previous Public Excluded Minutes	To protect the privacy of natural persons.	48(1)(a)(ii) OIA(9)(2)(a)
9.3 High Country Issues	To enable the department to carry on negotiations without prejudice or disadvantage.	48(1)(a)(ii) OIA (9)(2)(j)
9.4 2009 Loder Cup Award	To protect the privacy of natural persons.	48(1)(a)(ii) OIA(9)(2)(a)
9.5 2009 Conservation Awards – Coastal and Inland Otago	To protect the privacy or natural persons.	48(1)(a)(ii) OIA(9)(2)(a)

That the following officials and persons be permitted to remain at the meeting, after the public has been excluded, because of their knowledge of these topics:

Agenda Item 9

Jeff Connell	Conservator
Marian van der Goes	Community Relations Manager
Mark Clark	Community Relations Officer (Board Support)

This knowledge, which will be of assistance in relation to the matters to be discussed, is relevant because the stated persons have had input into, advised on or been advised of the matters sought to be excluded.

Langsbury/Morris

RESOLVED
That the public be re-admitted.

Langsbury/Williams

10 BOARD ADMINISTRATION

10.1 Board Expenditure (SBC 5)

REPORT 0907 (Board expenditure to 31 March 2009) had been circulated.

Board members noted the current position.

J Connell said that the department was currently looking closely at all areas of expenditure to see where savings could be made. The board meeting programme for 2009/2010 might need to be reviewed later this year following official budget announcements.

10.2 Discussion of Items Raised in Public Forum

Referring to comments made by Fergus Sutherland, A Smith agreed that the Catlins River Track was poorly signposted for visitors and that gorse control was needed in places.

I Scott asked whether it was feasible for DOC and the Otago Regional Council to work together on gorse control around the Catlins estuary.

J Connell said that DOC, the Otago Regional Council, the Clutha District Council, and Federated Farmers would all need to work together to tackle this problem effectively. With its limited resources, the department was focusing on gorse control in locations where it was confident of achieving lasting results (eg. the Otago Peninsula).

10.3 Discussion of Items for Media Release

The two main suggestions under this heading were the good numbers of mohua being heard and seen around the Catlins River track, and the board's views on Contact Energy's revived proposal for a hydro dam that would flood much of the Rongahere Gorge, including Birch Island.

10.4 Board Meetings and Field Trips (SBC 7)

A list of proposed meeting dates and venues for 2009-2011 had been circulated.

It was agreed that the next board meeting should be held in Milton on Friday 3 July 2009, with no field trip on the following day.

10.5 Reducing the board's carbon footprint (SBC 3)

M Clark said that Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust representatives were bringing some native shrubs for the board to plant at Long Point tomorrow.

11 INFORMATION ITEMS

11.1 Conservancy Status Reports (SBC 11)

REPORT 0908 (Otago Conservancy Status Report) and REPORT 0909 (West Coast Tai Poutini Conservancy Status Report) had been circulated.

J Connell reported that unfortunately, most of the buff weka released on The Peninsula beside Lake Wanaka had been predated by mustelids or cats.

G Nixon complimented the department on the results of the upgrading work on two huts in the Upper Manuherikia.

R Allan drew attention to the development of a wilding tree control method involving the chemical ring-barking of trees.

11.2 Concessions (SBC 25)

(a) Triggered Applications and Concessions Monitoring (SBC 25)

M van der Goes said there were no new triggered applications for the board to consider. The department was waiting for **nzski.com** to lodge an application for a concession to siphon water from Lake Alta this winter.

(b) Applications for Helicopter Landings

Copies of comments by board members on the proposed landing sites and daily limits had been circulated.

RESOLVED

That the comments be endorsed as the board view on the topic.

Langsbury/Nixon

(c) Heli-hunting Concessions in South Island

An email of 27 March 2009 from the North Otago Branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association Inc (along with a letter of 27 March 2009 from the Minister of Conservation to the North Otago Branch) had been circulated.

M van der Goes said that the department was currently reviewing WARO (Wild Animal Recovery Operations) concessions. Some WARO operators had been conducting heli-hunting trips under the auspices of WARO concessions. From the point of view of compliance monitoring, it was difficult to distinguish heli-hunting from WARO activity.

J Connell added that WARO activities took place mainly in Mount Aspiring National Park and adjoining areas, while authorised heli-hunting was carried out only in areas outside the park.

B Parker said that he had invited Aaron Meikle (President, NOB-NZDA) to speak to the board on this topic at a board public forum.

RESOLVED

That the board sends a reply to the North Otago Branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association Inc:

- 1 thanking it for bringing the matter to the board's attention;
- 2 advising it that the department is currently consulting key stakeholder groups about possible changes to the WARO permit framework;
- 3 conveying the board's support for the way in which the department is handling the reviews of WARO permits and heli-hunting concessions.

Smith/Parker

(d) Consultation on WARO Framework

An email of 14 April 2009 from the DOC Canterbury Conservancy had been circulated.

It was agreed that M Clark should draft a board submission and circulate it to all board members by 15 May, before it was sent.

11.3 Other Conservation Boards (SBC 63)

C Morris and B Parker reported on significant issues being considered by the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board and the Aoraki Conservation Board, respectively.

C Morris said that it had been a good season for the Haast tokoeka and there had been an effective tahr culling operation in the Landsborough catchment.

H Langsbury observed that the Air Users Group on the West Coast could be a useful precedent for aircraft operators in Otago.

B Parker said that there had been good use of the Oteake Conservation Area from the Canterbury side. However, damage from 4WD vehicles was a problem in one of the new conservation parks in Canterbury.

11.4 New Zealand Conservation Authority (SBC 61)

A memorandum of 16 March 2009 from the NZCA chairperson had been circulated.

M Clark undertook to scan the memorandum and send it to H Langsbury electronically, so that he could email a response.

11.5 Fish and Game Councils (SBC 66)

R Allan said that Fish and Game Otago was concerned about the proposal to lift the speed restriction on jet boats using the Hunter River. Reporting under the Back Country Fisheries item, the

organization's Chief Executive Officer said that in the Greenstone Controlled Fishery Area during February/March 2009, only 88 of the 177 beats available had been booked (i.e. 49.7%). The board was aware of its advocacy to protect the Nevis River from modification.

11.6 Board Liaison with Territorial Local Authorities (SBC 67)

It was agreed that G Nixon should replace E McAtamney as the board liaison representative for the Central Otago District Council.

B Parker said that the Waitaki District Council was intending to do more work on the blue penguin colony.

11.7 Yellow-eyed Penguins (SBC 30)

Notes of a YEP Consultative Group meeting held on 18 February 2009 had been circulated.

R Allan drew attention to the Symposium to be held on 2 August and asked whether any other board member could represent the board at it.

11.8 Miscellaneous Publications

Various publications and reports were tabled.

I Scott tabled a copy of the 'Hunting New Zealand' magazine, noting that there were errors in an article about Otago.

H Langsbury tabled the Otago Regional Council's Long Term Council Community Plan (2009-2019) and Draft Otago Regional Land Transport Programme (2009-2012).

A Smith offered to peruse the former document and prepare a draft board submission if this seemed desirable.

The meeting ended at 5.25 pm.

Confirmed: / / 2009

Chairperson:

**RECORD OF THE PUBLIC FORUM HELD ON 17 APRIL 2009 IN THE
MEETING ROOM, THOMAS'S CATLINS LODGE & HOLIDAY PARK,
CNR RYLEY & CLARKE STREETS, OWAKA**

STARTING AT 1.30 PM

On behalf of the board, H Langsbury welcomed five members of the public and invited them to share any views or comments they had on conservation in Otago.

Fergus Sutherland, local resident and ecotourism operator, said that he was a former member and chairperson of the Otago Conservation Board. He praised the Department of Conservation for its achievements with Operation Ark in the Catlins. He had seen more mohua in the past two years than in the previous 20. Parakeets, riflemen and falcons had also become more common. He hoped that the pest control work which had produced these results would continue. He also complimented the department on the developments at Nugget Point/Tokatā, but he did not feel that the local community had been given much of a chance for input. The meetings held to present the proposed plans did not constitute proper consultation in his view. More consultation with local people was desirable when projects of this kind were undertaken.

He continued by saying that better road signage was needed to direct visitors to the Catlins River Track and that too much maintenance work on the track had been deferred. The local community wanted more day walks to be available for visitors. With regard to the Catlins Tourism Strategy, he noted that the Otago Conservancy had shown little support by comparison with the Southland Conservancy. Guidelines for the Catlins Interpretation Plan had been drawn up in consultation with the department and it was proposed to link the Owaka Museum with panels at sites throughout the Catlins. There was a broad range of wonderful natural environments in the Catlins (eg. wetlands, lowland forests, tussock grasslands, shrublands) on public and private land. He advocated the identification and promotion of wildlife 'corridors' which linked the remaining patches of forest. After noting that the proposed marine reserve at Nugget Point/Tokatā was in abeyance, he encouraged the department to maintain the pressure on possums that had led to significant improvements in the condition of the native forest in the Catlins.

On behalf of the board, G Nixon thanked F Sutherland for his participation in the recent hearing on Project Hayes.

Mary Sutherland, local resident and ecotourism operator, said that she had also been a member of the Otago Conservation Board. Looking to the past could help when planning for the future. With regard to Contact Energy's proposals for more dams on the Clutha River/Mata-Au, she suggested that current board members familiarise themselves with how the board handled the Tuapeka Mouth hydro proposal about 14 years ago.

John Burgess, local resident, said that he was a member of the former Otago National Parks and Reserves Board. He wanted to see all of the pest control in the district handled by one authority. The gorse around parts of the Catlins estuary was a disgrace, but he could not see the problem being tackled effectively by the various parties who were responsible if they acted separately in a piecemeal way.

Brian O'Callaghan, local resident, said that he had been involved in a trapping and planting programme at Nugget Point/Tokatā organized by the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust. He had also spent two days at the Maclennan Hut, and had been pleased to see and hear mohua thriving in the forest again.

H Langsbury thanked those who spoke for their comments and invited them to stay for the rest of the meeting if they wished to do so.

Board members H Langsbury, R Allan, C Morris, G Nixon, B Parker, I Scott, A Smith and J Williams; and J Connell (Conservator), M van der Goes (Community Relations Manager), and M Clark (Board Support Officer) from the DOC Otago Conservancy office; and D Agnew (Programme Manager - Biodiversity Assets) from the DOC Coastal Otago Area office; and six representatives of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust; and five members of the public took part in the field trip.

The party first visited the Owaka Museum, looked through the displays of historic events and activities, and enjoyed two audio-visual presentations on the wrecking of the 'SURAT' and the 'MANUKA' on the Catlins coast.

At Long Point, the party was joined by six representatives of the Yellow-eyed Penguin Trust, who pointed out which coastal areas were going to be managed by the Trust. Party members were able to see two yellow-eyed penguins (*Megadyptes antipodes*) moulting in the westernmost area. After driving and walking to the southern tip of Long Point, the group gathered while board members planted some native shrubs provided by the Trust, and then proceeded to Cosgrove Creek near the Cosgrove Island Bird Sanctuary. At this location, the Trust proposed to establish a scientific reserve. Among other things, this meant that there would be no public access as of right. Free public access would apply to the reserve on Long Point and the other smaller areas to the west however. If a coastal walking track was created, it could be routed around the reserve at Cosgrove Creek.

Most party members then walked along the coast to Purakaunui Bay, where the department had recently installed a new toilet block. There was a private crib on the coast to the south of the bay, and a short formed road leading to a proposed subdivision nearby. Attractive coastal cliffs could be seen to the north of this popular camping site, and much of the Purakaunui Bay Scenic Reserve/Conservation Area to the west was covered in coastal lowland podocarp forest with emergent miro, matai, rimu and totara.

Before returning home, the party visited the Purakaunui Falls Scenic Reserve, noting the new toilet block and walking through some forest dominated by silver beech to the Purakaunui Falls. This short walk was very popular with visitors to the Catlins.