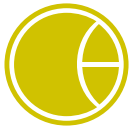


CONFIRMED



OTAGO CONSERVATION BOARD

**MINUTES OF THE OTAGO CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING HELD
ON 16 APRIL 2010 IN THE MEETING ROOM, SINCLAIR WETLANDS
EDUCATION CENTRE, 854 CLARENDON-BERWICK ROAD, BERWICK
STARTING AT 11.00 AM**

567623

PRESENT

H S Langsbury (Chairperson)
R R Allan
D K Holdsworth
C Morris
G H Nixon
A Penniket
I Scott
A M Smith
C F Tanner
J E Williams

IN ATTENDANCE

M van der Goes	Conservator, Otago Conservancy
K Stewart	Community Relations Manager, Otago Conservancy
B Hunt	Community Relations Officer (Planning)
Tony Perrett	High Country Tenure Review Manager - item 8.1 only
Jeremy Barr	Programme Manager, Crown Property & Investment, Land Information New Zealand - item 8.1 only
Martin Kessick	Community Relations Manager, Southland Conservancy - item 11.2 (d) only
Chris Visser	Concessions Consultant - item 11.2 (d) only
M Clark	Community Relations Officer (Board Support)

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

1 KARAKIA – WELCOME – APOLOGIES

After welcoming everyone present and opening the meeting with a karakia, H Langsbury outlined the history of the Sinclair Wetlands. The 315 hectare site was now privately owned by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and protected by a Queen Elizabeth II National Trust Open Space Covenant.

It was agreed that apologies be received and sustained from:

Don Ross	Chairperson, New Zealand Conservation Authority
Helen McPhail	Southland Conservation Board
Kuao Langsbury	Upoko Rūnaka, Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou



Steve Bryant
 Juno Hayes
 Peter Chin
 M Slater
 C Hickford

Chair, Sinclair Wetlands Management Committee
 Mayor, Clutha District Council
 Mayor, Dunedin City Council
 Conservator, West Coast Tai Poutini Conservancy
 Community Relations Manager, West Coast Tai Poutini Conservancy

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 additions:

- 8.5 Proposal to Lift Speed Restrictions on the Hunter River
- 8.6 Wildlife Enforcement Group Actions
- 8.8 Regional Plan: Water for Otago - Proposed Plan Change 1C.

3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES (SBC 9)

The public minutes of the board meeting held on 12 February 2010 had been circulated.

RESOLVED

That the public minutes of the board meeting be confirmed as circulated.

Scott/Holdsworth

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

With regard to page 8, item 8.2, M Clark undertook to contact the Coastal Otago Area Manager and arrange for board members to be notified when the department had erected an appropriate warning sign.

5 CORRESPONDENCE

(a) 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/Smith

(b) Endorsement of Board Submissions and Letters

The following board submission and letters had been sent since the previous board meeting:

To	Date	Subject
Perriam Family	8.2.10	Condolences on passing away of Heather Perriam
NZCA (copied to all Cons. Bds)	4.3.10	Waste Disposal from Tourist Campervans
Mayors, Clutha Dist Council/DCC	10.3.10	Invitations to attend board meeting/field trip on 16 April 2010
Various people and organizations	11.3.10	Thanks for assistance with 'Otago's Changing Seas' Symposium
FMC	15.3.10	Acknowledge letter on review of Mt Aspiring Nat Park Mgmt Plan
Rob Mitchell	15.3.10	Acknowledge memorandum on review of MANP Mgmt Plan
Stu Thorne	16.3.10	Letter acknowledging contributions to conservation

RESOLVED

That the board submission and letters listed above be endorsed on the basis that no further discussion of the specific topics is necessary.

Smith/Morris

6 STRATEGIC PLANNING

6.1 Otago CMS (SBC 81)

A map of public conservation land in the Coastal Otago Area and a summary of Coastal Otago Area issues raised by board members since 1998 had been circulated.

Referring to item 16 in the summary of issues, C Tanner drew attention to a patch of cabbage trees beside the Otago Central Rail Trail between Wedderburn and Ranfurly. Others present said that these were probably being grown in connection with a local community Rail Trail revegetation project.

With regard to item 21, C Tanner was of the view that the current level of visitor facilities and signage in the Silverpeaks Scenic Reserve was appropriate for the kind of visitor experience offered. M van der Goes undertook to share recent public feedback on this issue with the board when it became available.

A Smith referred to item 32 and said that the Graves Walkway was currently in good shape. Having seen about 100 people at one time enjoying the views of yellow-eyed penguins and coastal scenery in the nearby Bushy Beach Scenic Reserve, she commended the department on the excellent visitor facilities at that site.

Referring to item 19, A Penniket asked what predator control measures were in place to protect jewelled geckos on the Otago Peninsula. M van der Goes said that some areas of jewelled gecko habitat were benefitting from predator control but others were not. The department supported the local initiative for a predator-free Otago Peninsula and would assist with efforts to achieve that objective where it could.

G Nixon drew attention to item 7 and said that the next CMS should strongly advocate for the protection of the remaining indigenous forest on SILNA Lands in the Catlins. Referring to item 14, he believed that it was time to revisit the conservation status (e.g. ecological area) of Birch Island in the Clutha River/Mata-Au.

R Allan suggested that the restoration of the Taieri Lake wetland should be added to the list.

K Stewart expressed the hope that the conservancy would have a clear idea of the shape of the next generation of CMS documents by mid-June.

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

[**Note:** This item was first discussed with the public excluded as agenda item 9.6 and then the record of the outcome of the discussion was transferred to item 6.2 in the public section of the meeting minutes.]

Disks containing an analysis of submissions had been circulated by post, miscellaneous updates had been circulated by email, and several new maps were tabled.

The following record summarizes the outcome of discussions among board members, as well as between the board and the department, on the following parts of the amended draft plan:

Karakia

The board and the department agreed that a suitable poem or statement in English was also appropriate in this section.

Administration and Management of the Park

The board and the department agreed that words along the lines of section 8.2 (page 40) of the current plan need not be added to the amended draft plan, as they referred to operational matters.

4 Overall Park Outcomes

The board and the department agreed to add a new bullet point 7: *“The essential character of Mount Aspiring National Park as New Zealand’s remote and undeveloped alpine national park*

is retained”, and to add relevant words which were consistent with the above to sections 2.1 Introduction and 6.6.1 Public Use and Enjoyment - Introduction.

2.4.2 Adjoining Lands

6.4.1 Boundaries and Additions to the Park

Lower Dart Conservation Area

After lengthy discussion, the board resolved with a majority vote to support the department’s view that the part of the Lower Dart Conservation Area shown on amended **Map 2a** as a proposed addition should be added to the park.

Snowy Creek

The board and the department agreed that this area should be added to the park.

Burmeister Morass

The board and the department agreed that the intent of previous park management plans regarding the mountains-to-sea link in the west and the importance of the western conservation lands should be included in the amended draft plan, without singling out the Burmeister Morass. This would involve the addition of appropriate words to the text of section 6.4.1 and the deletion of the final two sentences in paragraph 6 on page 54.

Other Public Conservation Land adjoining the Western Boundary

The board and the department agreed that there should be a reference to the importance of the role played by the western conservation lands as a buffer to the Olivine Wilderness Area in particular, and to the park as a whole. The following wording was supported:

“The conservation lands surrounding the western and southwestern parts of the park contain some of the most remote and inaccessible mountain country in New Zealand and nationally significant lowland forest, river and wetland ecosystems. These ecosystems are considered unique for their scale, integrity, complexity and diversity. They also provide a valuable buffer to the Olivine Wilderness Area and help to protect the essential character of the park as a remote and largely undeveloped national park.”

6.2.3.2 Introduced Animals

The board and the department agreed that a reference to hares as a potential threat should be added to the text.

6.6.5 Aircraft

Policy 6 (i) (Bevan Col – Aircraft Landing Site 25)

Following discussion, the board resolved with a majority vote to support the department’s view that an aircraft exclusion period was unnecessary at this site.

Policy 6 (ii) (West Coast Remote Zone roar sites – Aircraft Landing Sites 35-42)

The board and the department agreed that the wording on this topic should revert to the wording in the notified plan, with roar sites only available during the roar. Among other things, this would involve the removal of “available all year” for these sites in Table 1.

Policy 8 (Forbes)

The board supported the new wording proposed by the department, viz:

“Concessions for aircraft landings in the Forbes Aircraft Landing Area (landing area 29) should not exceed 200 landings per year (see also policy 13 in relation to permits for one-off landings).”

Policy 9

The board and the department agreed that the phrase “*except in emergency situations*” was not necessary in (i).

Policy 10 (WARO)

The board and the department agreed that the wording should revert to what was in the notified draft plan (i.e. with roar sites available only during the roar).

Policy 11 Trophy Hunting/Helihunting

The department had received legal advice that the existing policy statement (i.e. “*Applications for concessions for trophy hunting activities should not be granted in the park*”) fettered the Minister of Conservation and would have to be changed.

Being firmly of the view that this activity was inappropriate in the park and wanting the strongest policy possible - preferably a “*should not*” statement, the board requested further legal advice through the department.

The board and the department agreed that if a whole-of-park exclusion was out of the question, the possibility of a “*should not*” statement applicable to the wilderness and remote zones should be explored. The rationale for this was that helihunting was basically a recreational activity which made a minimal contribution to Wild Animal Control, so people involved in this activity should not be treated differently from those other recreational users who had little or no access to the wilderness zone and most of the remote zone.

All agreed that this might be an issue for the New Zealand Conservation Authority to resolve.

Policy 13 (One-off landings)

The board and the department agreed with the following new wording:

“Proposals for one-off aircraft landings in the park may be considered subject to the following:

- i. landings will not be permitted in the Olivine Wilderness area or Te Koroka (Dart/Slip stream) Specially Protected Area, except for conservation management purposes (see footnote 69). [NB. This footnote now refers to pounamu management.]*
- ii. landings should not be permitted in the Pikirakatabi/Mount Earnslaw and Tititea/Mount Aspiring tōpuni areas, except for conservation management purposes (see also policy 10 and footnote 69).*
- iii. landings in the remote zone should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. The landings should be at designated sites (as listed in Table 1). Landings should only be permitted where:*
 - (a) the landings, or activities associated with aircraft use, are consistent with the objectives, policies and outcomes for any relevant place in the remote zone (see sections 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) and with the provisions of sections 6.6.1, 6.6.2 and 6.6.2.2; and*
 - (b) the activity occurs at a time when it is very unlikely that other people will be in the area; and*
 - (c) the activity is for a short duration (generally not more than one day); and*
 - (d) the applicant has demonstrated that there are no other suitable locations, either outside the park or in an alternative location in the park that is not within the remote zone, where the activity could occur.*
- iv. landings in the back country and front country zones should only be permitted in limited circumstances. The landings should be at designated sites (as listed in Table 1). Landings should only be permitted where*
 - (a) the landings, or activities associated with aircraft use, are consistent with the objectives, policies and outcomes for any relevant place in the park (see sections 7, 8, 9, 11, 13) and with the provisions of sections 6.6.1, 6.6.2, 6.6.2.3 and 6.6.2.4; and*
 - (b) the activity is unlikely to have more than minor adverse effects on other people in the area or on existing recreational opportunities; and*
 - (c) the applicant has demonstrated that there are no other suitable locations, either*

outside the park, or (if the location is not at a designated site, as listed in Table 1) at designated landing sites in the back country or front country zones in the park, where the activity could occur.”

[**Note:** There will be subsequent amendments to the introductory text in 6.6.5 to explain the intent of this policy and its relationship to Table 1 landing limits and policies for long-term concessions.]

The board requested an addition to this policy requiring an annual report on all one-off landings deemed to be ‘*exceptional*’ in the remote zone. The department agreed to find appropriate wording to address this request and to report back to the board.

The department suggested that the board could review its concession application triggers if it wanted to be advised of certain concession applications before they were granted.

Policy 14

The board and the department agreed that any requirement for GPS logging data when aircraft were flying within the park boundaries, was a matter which would be more appropriately addressed in concession conditions.

Policy 17

Following discussion, the board agreed to support the department’s view that there was no need for a policy referring to Civil Aviation Authority regulation relating to aircraft overflights.

6.6.6 Jetboating

The board and the department agreed that that the new map showing where jetboating was permitted within the park and where jet boat access was available adjacent to the park, should be sent to those who submitted on the issue, but not included in the amended draft plan. The board and the department also agreed that a sentence on the jetboating opportunities adjacent to the park should be added to this section.

6.7.3 Filming

The board and the department agreed that statements in this section should reflect any changes made to 6.6.5 Aircraft.

6.7.4 Mining and Gravel Extraction

The board and the department agreed that a new policy stating “*There should be no mining in Mount Aspiring National Park*” should be added above the existing policy statements.

6.7.5 Grazing and Farming

The board and the department agreed that the current policies should be retained.

6.7.7 Hydro Electric Power Generation and Transmission

The board and the department agreed that that Policy 1 should be changed back to what was in the notified draft plan (i.e. “*Applications ... should be declined*”).

8.4 Routeburn

The board supported the department’s view that no changes were required to the plan in relation to the old Routeburn Shelter and an alternative track in the lower Routeburn.

10.4 Mount Aspiring Climbing Region

The board supported the department’s view that the existing policy on caches at Bevan Col was appropriate, as long as wording to address cumulative effects was included.

RESOLVED

That the board:

- 1 supports the wording in the amended draft Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan dated January 2010, subject to those further minor amendments specified above which are supported by the board and the department;
- 2 agrees that the above summary of the discussion on this topic should be transferred to the public section of the board meeting minutes.

Langsbury/Tanner

RESOLVED

That pursuant to Section 47(5), (6) and (7) of the National Parks Act 1980, and subject to the further minor amendments specified above, the board sends the amended draft Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan to the New Zealand Conservation Authority for approval.

Langsbury/Nixon

Recalling the review in the early 1990s which led to the existing park management plan, C Tanner believed that the current review had been far better and that the end result was a 'bloody good plan'.

RESOLVED

That the board commends B Hunt for her excellent work in connection with the review of the Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan.

Smith/Scott

It was also agreed that the board should acknowledge the work of G Nixon, C Tanner, M van der Goes and K Stewart for the parts they played in the plan review process.

7 ADVICE

7.1 Marine Protected Areas Implementation (SBC 39)

(a) MPA Implementation

K Stewart said that there had been no significant developments since the previous board meeting.

A Penniket asked why the completion of work on the gaps analysis had been delayed from July 2009. M van der Goes said that staff at DOC National Office were still engaged in this work.

(b) Marine Protection Symposium on 7 March 2010

A Smith reported that the symposium had been very successful. About 75 people attended, with around 20 of those using the free bus to and from the Dunedin Railway Station. The speakers presented a range of relevant background information and interesting ideas on marine protection. It was useful for the board members who attended to learn more about existing marine protected areas (e.g. taiapure) in Otago.

RESOLVED

That the board thanks A Smith for all her work on its behalf in connection with the successful Marine Protection Symposium on 7 March 2010.

Tanner/Scott

H Langsbury suggested that the board could discuss ways to follow up on the symposium at its next meeting.

7.3 Gates of Haast Proposal (SBC 71)

REPORT 1007 had been circulated.

C Tanner said that he believed the board's concerns had been addressed satisfactorily.

C Morris added that after visiting the site recently, he could confirm that the broad area to be designated as State Highway just south of the existing bridge comprised a very steep, rocky slope with sparse vegetation cover.

Following a discussion on the desirability of regular monitoring of the project by the department, M Clark undertook to ask the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservancy to include updates in the status reports which it prepared for the board.

RESOLVED
That the board:

- 1 supports this proposal to exclude land and add land to the Mount Aspiring National Park, Gates of Haast site;
- 2 recommends to the New Zealand Conservation Authority that it recommends to the Minister of Conservation to change the status of approximately 1.2250 hectares of land at the Gates of Haast from national park to public conservation land using the ROLD Act, in order to facilitate an exchange under the Public Works Act 1977;
- 3 recommends to the New Zealand Conservation Authority that it approves the proposal to add an area of approximately 4,920m² of existing State highway into the national park by way of exchange under the Public Works Act 1977, at the completion of the project and rehabilitation process.

Tanner/Williams

7.4 Proposed Revocation of part of Seven Mile Recreation Reserve - Matakauri Lodge (SBC 73)

An email of 17 February 2010 from the DOC Otago Conservancy and the board response of 24 February 2010 had been circulated by email.

RESOLVED
That the board confirms its support for the proposed revocation.

Tanner/Williams

7.5 Hunting in the Oteake Conservation Park (SBC 72)

An email of 19 March 2010 from Barry Wilson of the NZ Deerstalkers Association (North Otago Branch) was circulated by email.

M van der Goes said that the concerns raised in the email related to those parts of the Oteake Conservation Park managed by the Canterbury Conservancy. WARO operations were not permitted in parts of the park managed by the Otago Conservancy, though helihunting operations were a separate matter. There was no management plan for the park as a whole.

D Holdsworth commented that a request by Barry Wilson for the relevant GPS records from the helicopter companies was declined for reasons of business privilege.

K Stewart said that DOC concessionaires were under no obligation to provide such information to people or organizations outside the department.

J Williams expressed concern about the apparent division of the Oteake Conservation Park into a Canterbury side and an Otago side. He suggested that it was desirable for one conservation board to have oversight of the whole park.

M van der Goes said that this situation would be resolved through the CMS planning process.

RESOLVED
That the board:

- 1 sends the email from Barry Wilson to the Canterbury Conservancy and requests its comments on the points raised in it;
- 2 informs Barry Wilson of this action.

Langsbury/Allan

8.1 High Country Tenure Review (SBC 34)

(a) 2009/10 Tenure Review Programme

A letter of 30 March 2010 from the DOC Otago Conservancy had been circulated.

G Nixon and A Penniket indicated that they would attend the meeting on 27 April 2010.

(b) Tenure Review and Pastoral Lease Management

Jeremy Barr (Programme Manager, Crown Property & Investment, Land Information New Zealand) introduced himself and explained that his role combined the usual roles of a programme manager and a technical manager. He responded to the board's prepared list of questions (shown below in italics) as follows:

- **Government Policy**

Is the recent High Country Cabinet paper actually Government policy?

Yes, but it involved a movement in focus only.

What weight does it have relative to the requirements of the CPLA?

It guided LINZ in the implementation of the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 (CPLA).

Does LINZ envisage a major change to tenure review outcomes under this administration (recognizing that while Government policy may have changed, the CPLA still has not)?

No. LINZ was still implementing the CPLA as written, and considering all of the legal mechanisms available to it under that legislation when working through the tenure review process. As a result of financial constraints, further whole-of-property purchases were unlikely.

Is it conceivable that some of the proposals that have already been advertized (e.g. lakeside properties) could be significantly altered at this late stage?

Yes. It would be decided on a case-by-case basis whether or not readvertizing was necessary. LINZ now identified gaps between the tenure review process and the provisions of the Resource Management Act 1991.

- **Length of Process**

Are there any ways of speeding up the tenure review process, in view of the fact that some proposals have been in the system for close to 10 years?

LINZ was conscious that the process has been very slow for some properties. He was currently involved in an operational review of the tenure review process and hoped that there would be continuous improvement in the way that LINZ implemented the CPLA.

- **Freeholding of Montane/Alpine Lands**

Does LINZ see the freeholding of montane/alpine lands as being consistent with the CPLA's requirement to promote ecological sustainability?

He could not comment on this, except to say that the Government was encouraging the greater use of covenants (e.g. sustainable management covenants). LINZ tried to promote ecological sustainability within the legislation available to it, but LINZ had no control after land was freeholded. However, the Biosecurity Act and local territorial authority requirements would then apply.

- **Alternative Outcomes**

There has been a call from the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment and others, for outcomes that include alternatives to the straightforward subdivision involving 'freehold' vs 'Crown ownership'. Options include more covenants or the Crown granting grazing licences. How does LINZ see these options being used in the future?

There were a number of available options. It was likely that covenants would be used more often. Special leases were an option that was currently available under the CPLA. The intention was to free pastoral leases from some of the constraints to which they were subject under their existing tenure.

What effect will the CPLA's stated desire to see 'significant inherent values' retained in full Crown ownership [CPLA section 24 (b)] have on the way LINZ will promote these two options?

LINZ regarded 'significant inherent values' as being very important, but tenure review was a matter of negotiation. LINZ relied on DOC advice to determine what constituted an area with 'significant inherent values'.

Do you see any possible future tenure options, apart from tenure review or remaining on a Crown pastoral lease, that might become available to current pastoral lessees by negotiation with the Crown (e.g. whole-of-property management plans)? Are there other possibilities?

LINZ was constrained by the CPLA as it was currently written.

- **Input by Minister of Agriculture**

What influence does the Minister of Agriculture (as opposed to Minister of Lands) have over the tenure review process?

None - the legislation did not allow for this.

- **Wilding Tree Control**

What responsibilities do pastoral lessees have in terms of their lease agreements and the Land Act, to control wilding trees and other weeds on their properties, and to what extent does LINZ monitor their performance in this regard?

The Land Act included an implied covenant for the lessee to keep the pastoral lease weed free. LINZ conducted regular property inspections using a five-yearly cycle.

- **Biodiversity Values**

Does LINZ have any interest in or responsibility for the protection of high biodiversity values on pastoral leases which are not currently undergoing tenure review (e.g. rare grand and Otago Skinks in the Hawea-Lindis area)?

Pastoral leases were created and are administered for the purpose of farming. Pastoral lessees can apply to have covenants established (e.g. QE II Open Space Covenants) to protect biodiversity values on parts of their properties, but LINZ takes them into account only in connection with the tenure review process and discretionary actions.

- **Public Vehicle Access**

What is attitude of LINZ to the importance of achieving secure public vehicle access (where this is intended as an outcome) as a result of tenure review, in the light of the current public vehicle access problems following the Dome Hills tenure review in North Otago?

Public foot and vehicle access were addressed during the tenure review process. The NZ Walking Access Commission would tackle some access issues that were not dealt with in terms of the CPLA. There were several instances of changes to tenure review proposals following public submissions. Proximity to a particular local community was not a criterion that LINZ could use when making recommendations. Establishing public roads was a local government responsibility. Since tenure review was not deemed to be a subdivision though, councils could only become involved after an agreement had been made.

- **Soldiers Syndicate**

How is the Soldiers Syndicate review progressing?

LINZ could not comment on particular properties which were going through the tenure review process.

Replying to further questions from board members, J Barr pointed out that Section 60 of the Land Act 1948 gave the Commissioner of Crown Lands the option of creating an easement through a pastoral lease to provide access where there was a difficulty relating to access. Pastoral lessees did not influence the choices of LINZ regarding its agents for tenure review processes, but LINZ might consider changing the agent if there was a personality clash. One objective of the review of the tenure review process was to ensure that personality was removed from the process. The goal was to make it as open and transparent as possible.

On behalf of the board, H Langsbury thanked Jeremy Barr for taking the time and trouble to attend the meeting and to respond to the board's questions.

8.2 Waste Issues associated with Freedom Camping (SBC 90)

The board letter of 4 March 2010 to the New Zealand Conservation Authority (and copied to all other conservation boards) had been circulated by post, and miscellaneous media articles had been circulated by email.

H Langsbury reported that the New Zealand Conservation Authority had considered the board's letter just before the board meeting, and it believed that the Tourism Industry Association New Zealand was the appropriate organization to follow up on the matter (i.e. to involve DOC, the NZTA and local government organizations in a coordinated national approach).

It was agreed that the board should redirect its letter on this issue to TIANZ.

8.3 Dunedin City District Plan – Prop. Plan Change No 11: Earthworks (SBC 92)

A letter of 5 March 2010 from Dunedin City Council had been circulated by email.

It was agreed that the board need not take any action on this proposal.

8.4 Stocktake of Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act (SBC 20)

A hyperlink for the discussion paper titled 'Maximising our Mineral Potential: Stocktake of Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act and beyond' and a letter of 26 February 2010 from Wellington Hawke's Bay Conservation Board had been circulated by email.

H Langsbury noted that Mount Aspiring National Park had not been affected by the review.

R Allan said that the Orokonui Nature Reserve had been proposed as an area to be added to Schedule 4.

C Tanner expressed disappointment that although one of the statutory roles of the department was to advocate for conservation, it seemed to have been silent on this issue.

M van der Goes said that an important role for the department was to provide advice to Ministers in the Government when this was requested. The department had provided such advice on this topic and was expected to provide further advice after public submissions had been received.

A Smith spoke in defence of the department's actions, knowing that government departments were required to implement the policies of the government of the day.

A Penniket said that a mining expert he knew was of the view that 'surgical' mining was unlikely in the types of areas being considered for mining.

G Nixon drew attention to the second paragraph on the second page of the letter from the Wellington Hawke's Bay Conservation Board. He believed that there was a major problem with the back-to-front process that was being followed. The first step should be an assessment of whether or not an area of land had conservation (including recreational) values which were high enough to justify its inclusion in Schedule 4.

D Holdsworth pointed out that the fact that certain areas had been included in Schedule 4 showed that such an assessment had already been carried out.

RESOLVED

That the board sends a submission on the discussion paper (with copies to the Minister of Conservation, the Minister for the Environment, the Minister of Energy and Resources and local MPs):

- 1 stating that it is pleased that all of Mount Aspiring National Park has been left in Schedule 4

and that the Orokonui Nature Reserve has been proposed for addition to Schedule 4;

- 2 advocating that no public conservation land in Otago should be removed from Schedule 4.

Smith/Morris

8.5 Proposal to Lift Speed Restrictions on the Hunter River (SBC 93)

A letter of 31 March 2010 from the Queenstown Lakes District Council had been circulated by email on 7 April 2010.

A Penniket said that he was now available to represent the board at the hearing on 21 April 2010.

RESOLVED

That the board asks A Penniket to speak in support of the board's submission at the hearing.

Nixon/Smith

M Clark undertook to convey this to the Queenstown Lakes District Council as soon as possible.

8.6 Wildlife Enforcement Group Actions (SBC 30)

A Penniket drew attention to the two major recent successes of the Wildlife Enforcement Group in apprehending and successfully prosecuting jewelled gecko poachers. Jewelled geckos from the Otago Peninsula had been recovered in the operation. He believed that harsher penalties were needed in such cases. Fortunately, local MSc student Carey Knox was able to identify almost all of the geckos and return them safely to their home trees or shrubs on the Otago Peninsula.

M van der Goes added that the department could not return recovered native lizard species to the wild if it did not know exactly where they came from.

RESOLVED

That the board sends a letter to the Wildlife Enforcement Group (copied to the Ministers of Conservation, Customs, and Agriculture and Forestry):

- 1 conveying the board's congratulations and appreciation for their efforts;
- 2 advocating harsher penalties for smugglers of native wildlife.

Penniket/Williams

[Item 10.2 in these minutes also refers]

8.7 Mount Watkin/Hikaroroa Scenic Reserve Management Plan (SBC 80)

A letter of 10 March 2010 from the Dunedin City Council and the draft management plan had been circulated by email.

R Allan said that while the draft plan did not incorporate all of the board's recommendations, it was generally a good document. Among other things, it stated that dogs should not be permitted in the reserve at all. He had discussed some issues of interest to the board (e.g. more plantings of podocarps) with Dunedin City Council staff. The board had advocated the negotiation of walking access to the summit, but he was told that the provision of access to the crest near the summit would provide views almost as good. He was prepared to draft a board submission for consideration by other members.

I Scott suggested that the board could ask the NZ Walking Access Commission to look at negotiating public walking access to the summit of Mount Watkin/Hikaroroa.

RESOLVED

That the board:

- 1 asks R Allan to draft a submission on the Draft Mount Watkin/Hikaroroa Scenic Reserve Management Plan so that it can be circulated to all board members for comment before it is lodged;

2	sends a letter to the NZ Walking Access Commission drawing its attention to the desirability of negotiated public walking access to the summit of Mount Watkin/Hikaroroa.	Smith/Williams
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8.8 Regional Plan: Water for Otago – Proposed Plan Change 1C (SBC 91)

A letter of 9 April 2010 from the Otago Regional Council had been circulated.

C Morris and D Holdsworth offered to communicate on whether or not further board involvement in this issue was desirable.

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 12 February 2010	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 Conservation Awards	To protect the privacy of natural persons.	48(1)(a)(ii) OIA (9)(2)(a)
9.5 Loder Cup Award 2010	To protect the privacy of natural persons.	48(1)(a)(ii) OIA (9)(2)(a)
9.6 Review of MANP Management Plan	To maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any department or organisation in the course of their duty.	48(1)(a)(ii) OIA (9)(2)(g)(i)
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		
Marian van der Goes	Conservator	
Ken Stewart	Community Relations Manager	
B Hunt	Community Relations Officer (Planning)	
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/Williams		

RESOLVED	That the public be re-admitted.	Langsbury/Smith
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10 BOARD ADMINISTRATION

10.1 Board Expenditure (SBC 5)

REPORT 1004 (Board expenditure to 31 March 2010) had been circulated by email.

Board members noted the current position.

M van der Goes said that as part of the requirement for the department to reduce its overall expenditure by a significant amount, the board's annual budget had been reduced by \$2,000 for the 2010/11 financial year. [Note: The reduction was later confirmed to be \$4,000 rather than \$2,000.]

10.2 Discussion of Items Raised in Public Forum

As a result of a suggestion by A Smith, it was agreed that the board should send a letter to Carey Knox, thanking him for his role in returning some jewelled geckos to their home habitat on the Otago Peninsula. [Item 8.6 in these minutes also refers.]

Board members also agreed with H Langsbury's suggestion that the board should send a letter of support to the Lake Waipori Waiholo Wetlands Society, in recognition of its impressive achievements relating to the enhancement and restoration of conservation values in those wetlands. The Society's work could also be recognized in a board media release.

J Williams suggested that the department could donate some native trees (e.g. kahikatea) from one of its nurseries to the Lake Waipori Waiholo Wetlands Society.

G Nixon said that it was good for the department to be open about the work it was doing with community groups.

K Stewart undertook to follow up on the issue of signage for the historic cottage mentioned by John McIntyre.

With regard to the proposed use of covenants in the Mackenzie Basin, M van der Goes pointed out that the outcome of the particular process referred to by Janet Ledingham had yet to be determined, and that covenants have a place as a conservation protection mechanism.

H Langsbury and I Scott agreed that a restriction on uncontrolled public access to and through covenanted areas sometimes enhanced conservation values in those areas.

10.3 Discussion of Items for Media Release

There was general agreement that the board should wait to see what media coverage it received as a result of the reporter's presence at the meeting, before deciding whether or not to issue its own press release.

10.4 Board Meetings and Field Trips (SBC 7)

A list of proposed meeting dates and venues for 2010-2012 had been circulated.

It was agreed that former board members and members of the scientific advisory group should be invited to share lunch with the board during its next meeting on 2 July 2010 in Dunedin. [Note: The date for the next board meeting was subsequently changed to 11 June 2010.]

R Allan suggested that Jonathan Wallis, Chair of the High Country Accord, could be invited to speak to the board at its meeting on 18 February 2011 at Hawea.

A Smith offered to arrange a speaker for the board meeting at Kaka Point on 26 November 2010.

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

It was noted that the board had planted three young cabbage trees (*Cordyline australis*) near the Sinclair Wetlands Education Centre during the break for afternoon tea.

10.6 Communication between Board Meetings (SBC 3)

After drawing attention to the high number of board-related emails she had received since the previous meeting, A Smith suggested that information items and other items not directly pertaining to the meeting agenda could be posted on something along the lines of a wiki page/facebook page/blog site. This would reduce the number and size of board-related emails and allow board members to read the items at their convenience.

M Clark undertook to find out how other Board Support Officers were handling this challenge and to introduce a system that suited the needs of the Otago Conservation Board.

10.7 Proposal for Board Blog Site (SBC 3)

D Holdsworth believed that as a community voice for conservation, the board had a responsibility to communicate with the public and to keep in touch with public opinion. One of his colleagues had offered to set up a board blog site and to maintain it for a while at no cost to the board.

H Langsbury said that the board needed to be very careful that the comments on such a blog site were not interpreted to be the board's or the department's views.

M Clark undertook to investigate web-based electronic mechanisms that could accommodate this feature as well as those identified under item 10.6 above.

11 INFORMATION ITEMS

11.1 Conservancy Status Reports (SBC 11)

REPORT 1005 (Otago Conservancy Status Report) and REPORT 1006 (West Coast Tai Poutini Conservancy Status Report) had been circulated.

C Tanner noted that the Oteake Conservation Park was being officially opened on 13 May.

M van der Goes said that the ceremony would take place at noon in St Bathans on that day. There would not be room for a large number of attendees, but a couple of board members were welcome to participate.

H Langsbury and G Nixon indicated that they would attend on behalf of the board. R Allan and I Scott gave their apologies.

D Holdsworth noted that the department was using aerial spraying for wilding tree control in the park. He said that he had seen some small wilding trees near the Omarama Saddle at Easter.

M van der Goes explained that aerial spraying operations were followed up every few years to ensure that new seedlings were not becoming established.

RESOLVED
That the reports be received and noted.

Smith/Tanner

11.2 Concessions - Triggered Applications and Concessions Monitoring (SBC 25)

(a) General Information

K Stewart reported that the department intended to have a new process for concession applications in place by 1 July.

(b) Triggered Applications

K Stewart invited the board to review its concession application triggers at the next board meeting, to ensure that they were compatible with statements in the amended draft Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan and other recent developments.

(c) Helihunting

A letter of 5 April 2010 from the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board to the DOC Canterbury Conservancy and REPORT 1008 had been circulated by email.

K Stewart invited the board to give its advice to the department on the 10 helihunting applications relating to public conservation land in the Otago Conservancy. While he acknowledged the board's view that there should be no helihunting at all in Mount Aspiring National Park, the department had been told that it was not acceptable to simply ban such an activity from a whole national park. Decisions on applications for helihunting had to be based on the effects of the activity.

Noting that one of the applications covered the Young-Wilkin-Blue catchments within Mount Aspiring National Park, G Nixon said that these areas were heavily used by recreationists on foot.

K Stewart said that the department would send board members more information on the effects associated with the applications as soon as it could.

M van der Goes asked board members to convey their comments and concerns to K Stewart or R Clarke.

(d) Application by Milford Dart Limited

A report by Chris Visser (Concessions Consultant, Southland Conservancy) had been circulated by email. C Visser tabled corrected copies of the report.

H Langsbury welcomed Martin Kessick (Community Relations Manager, Southland Conservancy) and C Visser to the board meeting and invited them to brief the board on this application.

M Kessick said that the department planned to send the draft first determination report to the applicant and to the Southland Conservation Board in confidence next week. The Southland board had agreed to give the department its advice on the application at its 16 June 2010 meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Otago board requests that the draft first determination report also be sent to its members in confidence next week.

Langsbury/Morris

[**Note:** The arrangement outlined above was subsequently changed as a result of developments following the board meeting.]

Replying to questions, M Kessick explained that although the current Mount Aspiring National Park Management Plan (1994) stated that "there will be no increase in the extent of formed park roads within the existing park boundaries", the department had received legal advice that the plan could not fetter the Minister of Conservation from considering the application from Milford Dart Ltd. However, he agreed that the board was bound by statements in the current plan when giving its advice on the application. Board members would need to read the draft first determination report to find out whether or not the road inside the tunnel was considered to be in the national park. The Minister's delegate in the department would decline the application if the adverse effects could not be avoided, remedied or mitigated to a satisfactory extent.

C Visser added that the proposed bus tunnel would not be available for use by the general public. The Manapouri Power Station vehicle access tunnel in Fiordland National Park provided a precedent for physical barriers which prevented public access into such a tunnel, even though public access could not theoretically be restricted on the formed road outside the tunnel. Because the actual route

followed by the existing Routeburn Road did not coincide exactly with the legal road line, the legal status of any new formed road would need to be tidied up in connection with a formal survey. The new Fiordland National Park Management Plan included policies which took the recent studies on the Milford Sound visitor experience into account. Wildlands Consultants Ltd had prepared an independent report on the biodiversity values at the Routeburn end of the proposed tunnel, and the department had conducted its own assessment as well. She asked how soon the board would be able to give the department its advice on the application.

It was agreed that the Otago board should hold its next board meeting in mid-June this year instead of on 2 July, so that it can formally discuss this application as a board and give its advice to the department.

M Kessick and C Visser left the meeting at this point.

Following their departure, G Nixon expressed concern that so little information on the biodiversity values at the Routeburn end of the tunnel had been included in the brief report which had been circulated to board members. He also drew attention to and read out the relevant policies under 1 Interpretation of Policies in the General Policy for National Parks (page 14), which had been omitted from the report.

11.3 Other Conservation Boards (SBC 63)

A Penniket said that the Southland Conservation Board would be considering a new concession application lodged by the proponents of the Von Monorail.

C Tanner said that David Round of the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board had drawn his attention to some useful notes by departmental planner Poma Palmer on recreation in Canterbury.

M Clark said that he was liaising with his Canterbury Conservancy counterpart regarding a suitable date and venue for a joint meeting involving the Otago and Canterbury boards.

11.4 New Zealand Conservation Authority (SBC 61)

The NZCA minutes of 10 December 2009 had been circulated by email, and three copies of the NZCA 2008/09 Annual Report had been circulated by post.

Board members noted the contents of the minutes and the annual report.

11.5 Fish and Game Councils (SBC 66)

R Allan said that Monty Wright was the new Chairperson of the Otago Fish and Game Council.

11.6 Board Liaison with Territorial Local Authorities (SBC 67)

There were no reports under this item.

11.7 Yellow-eyed Penguins (SBC 30)

H Langsbury said that he had nothing to add to the update in the status report.

11.8 Update on Progress made by National Hunting Advisor (SBC 11)

An email of 17 February 2010 from DOC National Office had been circulated.

M van der Goes said that the person in this position had already helped to facilitate better communication between the department and recreational hunters.

D Holdsworth noted that the Big Game Hunting Council had been quiet about recent developments associated with hunting. M van der Goes suggested that it was waiting for the results of current reviews before commenting.

11.9 Miscellaneous Publications

Various publications and reports were tabled.

M Clark agreed that he could list these in a board blog site along with other bulky documents.

The meeting ended at 6.35 pm.

Confirmed: / / 2010

Chairperson:

RECORD OF THE PUBLIC FORUM HELD ON 16 APRIL 2010 IN THE MEETING ROOM, SINCLAIR WETLANDS EDUCATION CENTRE, 854 CLARENDON-BERWICK ROAD, BERWICK 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.

John McIntyre, local resident, drew attention to a small historic cottage near the Sinclair Wetlands which was built in 1867. Although it had been gifted to the Taieri Historical Society, he wondered whether the Department of Conservation could assist with signage at the site.

K Stewart said that the department normally restricted the use of its limited resources to sites on public conservation land, but he would talk to the Coastal Otago Area Manager about this case and let J McIntyre know the outcome.

Pauline Bacon, Secretary – Lake Waipori Waihola Wetlands Society, tabled copies of the society's 'Wetland News' December 2009 newsletter and a recent 'Weed Risk Assessment for the Waihola-Waipori Wetland Complex, Otago' by Wildland Consultants. She said that the society included representatives from all affected farmers, the Otago Regional Council, the Dunedin City Council, Fish and Game Otago and the Department of Conservation. The society was grateful for DOC employee Peter Raal's recent work to produce a Weed Management Plan for the Waihola-Waipori Wetlands. She asked when the department would be finishing the Tea Tree Creek track.

M van der Goes said that she was not sure when the track was going to be completed but that she would ensure Pauline was advised of this.

Janet Ledingham, Chairperson and Executive Member - Forest & Bird (Dunedin Branch), tabled copies of a paper about threats to the conservation values in the Mackenzie Basin. Although that area was outside the board's jurisdiction, developments in the Canterbury high country could set precedents for the Otago high country. She sought the board's support in advocacy against a reliance on covenants to protect conservation values when tenure review was carried out. With regard to tenure review in Otago, she acknowledged that DOC Otago Conservancy staff had been very helpful to Forest & Bird representatives who became involved.

She also acknowledged the department's role in organizing a consultative group to improve the protection of local jewelled geckos. While it was very unfortunate that so many of these lizards had been lost to poaching, the recent successes of the Wildlife Enforcement Group in apprehending poachers was encouraging. It was especially good to see jewelled geckos being returned to the Otago Peninsula as a result of the research carried out by Carey Knox. She asked when the public would get a look at the new Otago CMS.

M van der Goes said that there would be public consultation when the department started preparing a new draft Otago CMS later in the year.

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