



## MINUTES

### MARINE PROTECTION FORUM MEETING

21<sup>st</sup> MEETING – 4 & 5 November 2008

Regular meeting held at St Johns Rooms, Stafford Street, Hokitika.

### *Present*

Bruce Hamilton (Chair), Denis Shannahan, Stuart Thomson, Bruce Watson, Geoff Rowling, Kerry Egging, Carrol Browne and Rick Barber.

Eugenie Sage, Emily Arthur – Tuesday only.  
Richard Wallace, Brad Stenhouse - Wednesday only.

### *In Attendance*

Campbell Robertson and Don Neale (Department of Conservation), Scott Williamson, Laura Boren and Nicola Pindur (Ministry of Fisheries), Andrea Jackson (Minute Secretary), Sarah Wilson (facilitator).

### **1.0 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Ian McKenzie and Carol Scott, while Denis Shannahan held the chair until Bruce Hamilton arrived a little late. Apologies to be accepted.

*Moved apologies accepted - Eugenie Sage/Rick Barber*

*Apologies Accepted*

### **2.0 Agenda Confirmation and Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

The meeting agenda was confirmed and no conflicts of interest were declared. Eugenie Sage requested that the discussion on the Consultation Plan be deferred until Wednesday, and this was agreed.

### **3.0 Meeting Schedule**

The Forum timetable was briefly discussed and Forum members asked about their availability in the second half of February. It was agreed that Eugenie Sage would provide her timetable and Andrea would check with Carol Scott too, then circulate possible meeting dates for this month.

### **4.0 Correspondence**

No correspondence had been received or sent since the October meeting.

### **5.0 Media Articles**

Campbell Robertson reported on the media articles that have appeared since the last meeting in October. The Greymouth Star had told Bruce Hamilton that they had copies of the Forum's draft candidate site maps, so Bruce had felt it appropriate to provide some background information. In discussion with MinFish and Bruce, Campbell proceeded to add the maps to the Forum's website, because the maps had entered the public domain and were also subject to an Official Information Act request, and also to forestall misinformation circulating. He had also added a one-pager of background information.

Kerry Eggeling noted that there had not been much response to the media articles, while Stuart Thomson noted that the Greymouth Star had rung him. Campbell Robertson advised that the normal approach taken by DOC staff when dealing with the media is to find out what information is being sought, ask for it in writing, and then let the reporter know they will be back in contact. Subsequently, the information is assembled and usually supplied in written form [as promptly as possible].

Discussion then ensued about the sufficiency of information on the Forum website and whether a press statement should be released at the end of the meeting. Eugenie Sage noted that the one-page information sheet states that the candidate sites have been narrowed down to three sites; she considers this statement goes too far as other sites are still under consideration. Changes to paragraph 5 of the one-pager were then discussed.

The Forum decided the Chair and officials would redraft this paragraph at the end of the meeting, to reflect the consensus and current progress re sites and to include information about the Consultation Plan. This material can then be added to the website and used in a press release.

## **6.0 Community Feedback**

*Denis Shannahan feedback* – Advised that he had attended a meeting with the Greymouth black sand miners. No representatives from Seafield or other large exploration companies were present. The black sand miners were concerned about whether their claims would be encompassed in the Forum's proposed protected areas. They had advised that the impacts of this activity are very low, as the tide repairs any holes. It has the interest of tourists, who often stop to look at how the mining operates. Some possible MPA sites include black sand mining licence areas.

Campbell Robertson advised that black sand mining occurs from the Heaphy to Haast. This activity is periodic and low impact, and permitted under the Regional Coastal Plan, although authorisation is required from DOC when occurring below MHWS.

Bruce Watson advised that black sand mining has impacts through the use of water extracted from land above the beach, access routes and huts. He noted that the 5 Mile Beach is mined continually. Therefore he considers that the Forum should consider excluding black sand mining from some marine reserves, and if the Forum has to also recommend the purchase of a licence/s then that should be considered. Eugenie Sage advised that another approach would be to seek a change to the Regional Coastal Plan to prohibit black sand mining adjacent to a MPA.

*Stuart Thomson feedback* – Advised he had had a meeting in Greymouth with commercial fishers (together with Carol Scott). Many fishers present accepted the process was underway,

while some were concerned about the possible size of MPAs. Carol Scott had requested information on fishing effort and associated income, to try to see if the shifting of fishing effort would have impacts. Stuart was unsure how long it would take for Carol to collate this information. A Nelson area meeting had yet to be held.

*Kerry Eggeling feedback* – Advised he had attended a meeting of fishers, mainly crayfishers (21), and some from as far away as Te Anau. Kerry had presented the possibilities for South Westland. In response to his query about least cost areas, the fishers agreed the existing proposal (Longridge-Hackett) is the least cost area and was acceptable, but they were concerned about the larger area, as they did not trust that the outcome of the process would still enable them to fish in the larger proposed MPA area. Kerry reported that fishers were also worried that if a special species was discovered, e.g., black coral, then a MPA locale would automatically become a marine reserve.

Geoff Rowling suggested that a review period for MPAs should be set, say 25 years. He mentioned other ideas, such as quantity controls, other ways of measuring cray potting could be considered, e.g. a limit on pots. Stuart Thomson suggested that controls such as limits on pots would be difficult to get support for, while Nicola Pindur commented that such measures were moving into quite a fine level of management.

*Kerry Eggeling feedback*– Kerry also reported on a meeting of amateur fishers, who seemed reasonably happy with the process. Very few of them fish too far south of Jackson Bay anyway. The idea of a Jackson Bay educational marine reserve out to 6-10 metre depth was acceptable to fishers. Recreational fishers would still need access to Ocean Beach. Fishers thought the current fish catch limits were too high, e.g., 5 groper, 20 finfish, and that for this area some input/output controls might be better received than blanket closures. Marlborough Sounds was cited as an example of over-fishing, often by amateurs, due to the bag limits being too high.

*Campbell Robertson reported on a discussion he had with Ian McKenzie* – Ian had discussions with Westport fishers, who don't fish within the Kahurangi candidate site. Up to 18 boats fish that area, being trawlers from the Nelson Region, although the fish is often processed at Westport. Fishers had been alarmed at the prospect of a 12nm offshore boundary. Many of those fishers who fish in the candidate site have started fishing the area more recently and generally have bigger boats and often fish the whole of the regional coastline.

*Sarah Wilson reported on feedback gathered by Carol Scott* – The candidate site at Kahurangi Point was too big, and the size unnecessary to protect habitat. Geoff Rowling commented that commercial crayfishers especially would like to maintain access to the Kahurangi Shoals area, which is north of the candidate site. Amateur fishers only go out to just south of the Point and not further south, as the Point is already 20nm from Whanganui (Westhaven) Inlet.

Eugenie Sage queried what constitutes a "significant impact" and Scott Williamson advised that under the Marine Reserves Act legislation states that marine reserves can only proceed if the proposed does not interfere unduly" on recreational and commercial fishers. Mataitai reserves have a similar test.

*Carol Browne feedback* – She spoke to a small group of 6 people at Okarito, who seemed to support the process. Carol had initially contacted just a few people but more heard about the meeting and turned up to discuss the MPAs. Carol thinks that the areas outside the Gorge and

Okarito sites might be acceptable based on the discussions with these people. Meetings need to be held in all areas adjacent to the candidate sites, to ensure the input of locals. People are unsure about what an MPA might mean.

Carrol supports the bag limit idea, and Geoff Rowling commented that bag limits are part of the overall balanced fishing regulations. Scott Williamson responded to this idea by explaining that Charlie Boulton from Haast is part of a recreational fishing forum, where items such as bag limits are discussed. Currently members of this forum are developing ideas on the issues in their local area for MinFish to consider.

Bruce Watson commented that Jacksons Bay and the Steeples would be two areas that may be heading the way of the Marlborough Sounds in terms of recreational fishing pressures, especially over the summer holiday period. Geoff Rowling advised that Mataitai reserves might be the best tool in these areas to limit fishing pressure.

*Eugenie Sage feedback* – A meeting had been held on the West Coast with members of the Royal Forest and Bird Society and other local groups with attendees from Buller to Mokihinui (There had been some discussion, but no meeting with the major conservation NGOs). Overall feedback was disappointment at the small extent of coast and small number of sites. Not seen as equalling 10% of marine environment.

- Forest & Bird had advised that West Coast is a seabird “hot spot” and seabird habitat need to be protected. She tabled a copy of a draft report on seabirds for MFish by Birdlife International, titled ‘Small et al (in prep) Albatross & petrel distribution in NZ Fishery Management Areas’. This report has used satellite tracking to map locations of where seabirds spend a lot of time, within the 200nm area, including the Westland black petrel. For example, breeding age Southern Buller’s albatross from the Snares and Solander Islands spent 95% of their at sea time off the central and south Westland coast.
- Gorge River candidate site: the meeting wanted the northern boundary extended to Bonar Knob so that karst and geological features being nominated for inclusion in NZ Geopreservation Inventory could be included (nationally important limestone features). These include The Steeples; wave cut platforms and Seal Cave site of a fossilised seal skeleton (Mary Traves key informant).
- Paparoa Coast marine reserve and MPA. This was strongly supported given the international values of the dramatic coastline, and the opportunity for mountains to sea protected area. Suggested boundaries were Seal Island to Maher Creek/Barrytown Flats as MPA with a marine reserve within this out to 30 m deep and from Gentle Annie Rocks to Razorback Point out to 12 NM as a marine reserve.
- A marine reserve inshore and MPA offshore was suggested for the Rapahoe/Point Elizabeth locale. Reasons included adjacent conservation land, dramatic karst coastline which was an extension of Twelve Apostles landform, Te Puna sea cave area is being nominated for NZ Geopreservation Inventory as nationally significant, NZ fur seal haul out site, spotted shag colony, Point Elizabeth area is readily accessible from Greymouth, schools used Rapahoe and Point Elizabeth for educational trips, and recreational fishing was limited. The majority of Forum members did not support the proposal.

- A MPA site from south of the Hokitika River/Mahinapua Creek to Totara Lagoon was suggested as an accessible site. Adjoins regionally significant wetland, Shearers Swamp, important whitebait reserve at Mahinapua Creek, coastal forest remnant Mananui Bush. Group disappointed that no MPA has been suggested for central Westland and thought this a significant gap.
- Okarito - It was suggested that this should be expanded further out to sea, and north to Saltwater Lagoon.
- Kahurangi site – members didn't support the thin outlier pieces, in general think that the sites should be squared up more.

*Rick Barber Feedback* – There was a general feeling amongst the Te Runanga o Ngai Waewae that marine reserves are not greatly supported, as the access to kai moana is important. There is support for the concept of kaitiakitanga and for 'future proofing' of the marine environment. The Kahurangi site was remote from the runanga's fishing sites, so that site is probably the best site for a marine reserve. Sites in South Westland were not discussed, as they are the concern of the Makaawhio runanga.

*Brad Stenhouse feedback (Weds)* - Advised he had meet with two small groups and discussed the topic at the Divers Association AGM. Divers are happy to have distinct sites mapped and not every rock needs to be included. He found it difficult to explain the requirement for 'replicate' sites for each habitat, especially if sites extended out to 12nm (and thus captured a lot of habitat). Most people in the club are hunter/gatherers in this region, generally due to the limited visibility when diving.

#### Forum to move into committee

Moved Kerry Eggeling/Carrol Browne

Carried

**On the second day of the meeting the public session was resumed.**

#### 7.0 Consultation Plan

It was clarified that all information given to the Forum, essentially as personal communications, can be used in the Forum's Report without being personalised to the informant. Instead such material will be referenced more generally, e.g., "the Forum understands.... / the Forum has been informed..."

It was agreed that Don Neale would rework the maps of candidate sites within the next fortnight for any on-going discussion between now and the December meeting. There followed discussion about the degree to which the Forum members can continue to canvas interest groups/locals for feedback. It was agreed that members could continue to canvas for feedback but need to be mindful that a public consultation round is coming soon.

It was agreed that the discussion of 'threats' needs to be tidied up, and Nicola Pindur had a couple of additional comments, but due to the time of the day, these will be incorporated before the plan is sent out to the Forum in preparation for the next meeting.

#### 8.0 Bottom trawling information

Summarised information on the impacts of bottom trawling had been circulated to the Forum members and was tabled at the meeting by Laura Boren. The commercial fishing representatives disputed the information; they emphasised the high degree of natural turbidity and disturbance of the benthic sediment. Laura Boren noted that specific research relating to the West coast marine environment is quite limited, and the research methods vary. She noted that the paper on turbidity was useful for the West Coast.

### 9.0 RMA Analysis

The requested RMA analysis was tabled and the Forum expressed satisfaction. Don Neale noted that the same potential approaches could also be applied to the other areas of intertidal cobble habitat.

### 10.0 Press Release

The Forum discussed the content of the press release.

- The emphasis should be on the full public consultation process in early 2009.
- The Forum members continue to work constructively with their communities.
- The public can be referred to the Forum minutes on the website.
- Incorrect facts about the Big Bay and Okarito sites have been fine-tuned. It should be noted that no sites have been finalised.
- The Forum had been brought up-to-date on the mataitati reserve proposals and was seeking a meeting with Te Runanga o Makaawhio to gain understanding of the process, especially implications in the southern part of the region.
- The Forum was developing a balance for the whole of the West Coast.
- The objectives of the Forum have been reaffirmed.
- Website maps to be retained without change, except to be dated, with indications that they will be updated.

The next meeting date was reconfirmed as being 15 December, 9.30am-5pm.

Confirmed  
Bruce Hamilton  
Chair

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#### □ Papers Tabled

1. Draft minutes from 6 October 2008 meeting
2. Copy of website information
3. RMA Analysis
4. Effects on trawling habitats
5. Revised Consultation plan and timeline
6. Report on Seabirds