

BEFORE THE HEARINGS COMMITTEE

IN THE MATTER of hearings on
submissions concerning
the proposed One Plan
notified by the
Manawatu-Wanganui
Regional Council

REPORT OF A MEETING BETWEEN ECOLOGISTS

Graeme La Cock

Fleur Maseyk

**TO DISCUSS AND RESOLVE ISSUES OF DIFFERENCE IN RELATION TO
RESPECTIVE EVIDENCE ON SCHEDULE E OF THE PROPOSED ONE PLAN**

Name (Representing) Submitter #

DoC = Department of Conservation, RC = Regional Council

1. A meeting was held in Wanganui (DoC offices) on 5 August 2008 from approximately 1pm-3pm. Attendees were: Graeme La Cock (DoC 372), and Fleur Maseyk (Horizons RC).
2. This meeting follows on from that held between DoC and Horizon's ecologists on the 16 July 2008, with the purpose of further addressing issues regarding protection of duneland habitat under Schedule E.
3. Graeme La Cock recommended in his Statement of Evidence that 'Active duneland' be added to Table E.1 as a Rare habitat type. Mr La Cock provided a definition of this habitat type and a number of criteria (for inclusion in Table E.2) by which to further define inclusion and exclusion of areas considered to be habitat.
4. This evidence had been discussed previously (on the 16 July 2008) but no outcome had been reached as the recommendation required further consideration.
5. After the meeting on the 16 July, a series of aerial photographs of the west coast dune system were produced by Horizons staff, and the criteria recommended by Graeme La Cock in his evidence for the inclusion of 'Active duneland' habitat was tested by Fleur Maseyk. The aerial photographs were brought to the meeting and formed the basis of discussion.

6. This report has been prepared by Fleur Maseyk as agreed at the meeting.
7. The key issues that were discussed are reported in summary form below.

Issue: inclusion of 'Active dunelands' as a Rare habitat type in Table E.1

Matters agreed

8. The ecological value and contribution to regional (and national) biodiversity of the dune system was agreed on. It is considered by both parties that the ecological processes (eg. presence and movement of bare sand) that drive the dune system are a crucial component of the system, and any method for protection of duneland habitat needs to address this.
9. Proposed provisions in Schedule E support elements of the duneland habitat – eg. wetlands, indigenous vegetation and threatened plant species.
10. Analysis of the aerial photography and test application of the criteria (as presented in Graeme La Cock's evidence) for 'Active duneland' habitat confirmed that:
 - The last remaining area of functioning duneland habitat that remains in private ownership is the area between Himatangi and Foxton known as the Foxtangi RAP. This area (280 ha) sits within one land parcel and currently has one owner.
 - Other areas of ecologically important duneland habitat are already under legal protection administered by DoC (eg. Whitiāu and Tawhirihoē Scientific Reserves and Moana Roa Conservation Area).
11. Foxtangi and the DoC reserves were the only key areas that met the criteria proposed by Graeme La Cock.
12. The major current threats to the Foxtangi RAP are vehicles, rubbish and green waste dumping, and pest plants and animals.
13. In light of the above analysis, it was agreed that a more effective method of protecting Foxtangi was via the non-regulatory provisions of the Proposed Plan. This would allow for active management of the values and processes of this area, and afford the level of appropriate protection required for such an ecologically valuable habitat type.
14. Consequently, it was agreed that Graeme La Cock's recommendations to:
 - list 'Active duneland' habitat in Table E.1,
 - include one inclusion criterion and six exclusion criteria in Table E.2; and
 - delete the habitat types: i) Grassland and sedgeland on active dunelands, and ii) Dune slack.

Could be reviewed.

Noted

1. Graeme La Cock maintains that formal recognition within the Plan of the ecological importance and biodiversity value of the dune system is required, as is the acknowledgement that the ecological processes that occur within this system are crucial to the persistence of the system.

Fleur Maseyk
SENIOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST – ECOLOGY

