



Notes for:	SDC Ecosystems & Indigenous Biodiversity Working Group –District Plan Review			Date:	19 September 2018
Meeting held at:	SDC Head Quarters, 2 Norman Kirk Drive, Rolleston				
Time:	3.10pm-7.20pm			Room:	Executive 1
Name	Inits	Title/Role	Name	Inits	Title/Role
Working Group Members:					
Murray Lemon	Chair	Chair (Councillor SDC)	Sefeti Erasito	SE	Te Taumutu Rūnanga
Ben Rhodes	BR	S & P Team Leader SDC	James Guild	JG	Landowner
Nicky Snoyink	NS	Forest & Bird	Peter Graham	PG	Landowner
Scott Pearson	SP	Fish & Game NZ	Hamish Rennie	HR	Landowner/ Waihora Ellesmere Trust
Jenny Ladley	JL	Landowner (University Canterbury)	Julia Forsyth	JF	Environment Canterbury
Ken Murray	KM	Department of Conservation	Elisha Young-Ebert	EYE	Federated Farmers
In Attendance					
Stephanie Styles	SS	Group Co-ordinator Planning Consultant (Boffa Miskell Ltd)	Emily Arthur-Moore	EAM	Fish & Game NZ
Andrew Mactier	AM	Strategy and Policy Planner SDC	Natasha Brown	NB	District Plan Review Administrator
Apologies					

Agenda:



Item #	Item	Lead
1.0	1. Follow up from last meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any guest appearances to respond to issues raised? Any issues arising from the minutes of the last meeting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reminder on decisions made at the previous meeting - range of decisions on permitted activities – see “straw man” Any follow up questions or discussion from the group? 	CHAIR
2.0	2. Timing Issues <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group timeframes to convey recommendations to District Plan Committee (no later than February 2018) and limited number of remaining meetings (Sept, Oct, Nov) Suggested approach 	CHAIR
3.0	3. Discussion on approach to rules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue discussion and decision on ‘improved pasture’ provisions <p>Decision to make: “will there be a permitted activity status for clearance of indigenous vegetation within improved pasture? And if so, what definition of improved pasture to use and what rule to apply?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion on biodiversity management plans – see attachment 7 <p>Decision to make: “will there be explicit provision for biodiversity management plans in the rule as an option or will this be left out?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion based on the “straw man” concept and the options for general rules <p>Reference material:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 1 - a “straw man” for discussion Attachment 2 – prompts for general rules Attachment 3 - the existing Selwyn rules and comparable plan provisions Attachment 4 – sample definitions Attachment 6 - activity status explanations Attachment 7 – biodiversity management plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Outputs:</u> group agreement on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> basic framework for rules general approach to permitted activities general approach to activities in SNAs general approach to general rules definitions <p>[A final decision on these matters can be made at the next meeting.]</p>	SS / CHAIR
4.0	4. Specific issues to be raised by Working Group Members (further discussion, and a final decision on these matters can be made at the next meeting if necessary) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Environment Canterbury <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary listing of SNAs vs not listing, and subsequent application of relevant rules Fish and Game <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use of satellite/aerial imagery to facilitate ecological assessments and monitoring and enforcement 	
5.0	5. Next meeting:	SS



Item #	Item	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What material or information does the group want to make a decision on rules? Any other information needed? Do we need to keep including background material in each monthly agenda? 	
6.0	Next meeting: 17 October 2018	SS

Notes:

The Chair opened the meeting at 3.10pm with a greeting in Te Reo Maori, and a special welcome to Ms Julia Forsyth – representative from Environment Canterbury (filling in for Sam Leonard).

The Chair stated that the Committee is nearing the end of the group discussion timeframes, so decisions are required.

The Chair gave a few reminders to the Committee:

- Conversations will need to be kept on track. There is ample opportunity for everyone to provide input and feedback into the various discussions.
- Ms Emily Arthur-Moore holds an observer status during the Working Group Meeting. EAM acknowledged this.
- Be courteous to the group ie: to have one conversation, rather than multiple conversations, so to give full credence to the person talking.

AM added that the agenda has been slightly amended. Hardcopies were made available to all.

SP raised an amendment to the previous minute notes:

EIB – R2: Clearance of Indigenous Vegetation (including within a SNA)

- EIB – R2/4*
 - SP commented that there needs to be more discussion around vegetation clearance **methods**.*

The word 'methods' was not recorded.

AM commented that we are quickly running out of time to finish discussions on the various issues and to make final decisions. We are expected to present the Working Group's recommendation on proposed planning framework on this topic to the District Plan Committee at their meeting in February 2019. Three meetings left (including this one) to go through the various issues and come to a consensus on what the Group will recommend.

SS noted on the whiteboard the 4 issues to make decisions on at this meeting:

1. Improved Pasture
2. Biodiversity Management Plans



3. SNA rules
4. General Rules

The Chair reiterated if there is an item not agreed on, it will be noted and the reasons why. We are trying to achieve a consensus decision and arrive at a unanimous decision but acknowledge this may not always be the case. There may be some further public consultation from May 2019 but possibly not until the district plan is publicly notified in 2020. This current work will form part of the preferred option report to a DPC meeting in February 2019.

The DPC meeting will not likely change significantly from the recommendations provided by this group. This group is unique that it is working at a working group level like this. The Chair commended the group on their input.

Apologies for lateness – 3.17pm – Ben Rhodes.

Suggestion to use homework to speed up the discussion process.

SP checked on the process. Are we concerned we have lots of decisions to make, or work to get through? Is there new stuff?

AM asked about the level of detail needed

SS answered that it is all in the material, but a lot of material and issues that we have not got to yet and needs to be worked through.

AM noted on the agenda, an amendment at item 4. ECAN and Fish and Game wanted to raise additional topics. The reason to put them at the end is to get through the Agenda without being distracted. However, where possible it can be integrated into the natural course of the discussion.

SS commented on improved pasture and noted that on Pg 5 in particular, updated the strawman from last discussion and left in comments to focus the discussion. Suggested we allocate one hour on this issue to get through all the material and then reassess our position and progress.

A briefing note summarising feedback from landowner representatives and other conversations since the last meeting was circulated to the Working Group last week.

JL asked if the briefing note contained feedback on improved pasture and dryland species?

SS confirmed, yes, and other conversations included also.



SP asked whether there are any other areas on the farm that you'd want improved. PG answered in an earlier meeting that there would be other areas that would fit into that camp.

PG answered, Yes, most high country places have a bit of everything. From fully improved through to SNA. The point is that you are dealing with the same people.

KM commented, looking at the improved pasture definition if we applied it to the plains area, you could end up losing important ecosystems, such as kanuka or dryland short tussock. This is an issue. Also concerned that we have used the concept of ground cover, and rare plants. This has become an issue in neighbouring councils. Ensure this isn't caught; i.e. this area has been over sown and the shrublands are still rare. This goes back to a list of particular species to be protected. The new plan needs a list also. This would solve things. Word smithing suggested.

EYE asked if we are going to have a list?

SS answered that the list relates to the general rule. It can be useful or dangerous thing – difficult for landowners to know what the plant they are looking at is and to be certain due to lack of plant knowledge for some people. The way CCC tried to deal with this is a list with pictures, however, it hasn't solved the issue that people don't know what the species are. The general approach is to not have lists. It's a decision the working group needs to make. The current lists in the operative Plan needs to be updated.

The Chair posed the question, at what point would we do this?

SS answered that it is a key issue for the general rule, by species, area etc.

The Chair asked whether this could be parked for the morment?

SS answered, Yes, unless you want to link it to a particular rule and deal with it at the time of discussing general rules.

SP commented that this raises issues and difficulties with how the improved pasture definition is applied/interpreted. The approach hasn't worked in the past. Suggested an alternative and with the permission of the group would like 5 minutes to explain an alternative approach.

Fish and Game concerned about areas on farms where we don't know what is going on in terms of improvements/development which impacts on areas of indigenous biodiversity. Looked at the potential to develop a method that uses satellite imagery and aerals to identify areas/landforms/ecosystems etc. where, based on an experts experience, there is likely to be significant indigenous vegetation. This would allow mapping of potential significant vegetation areas



(Traffic Light approach – Red: highly modified areas indigenous vegetation largely absent and no consent required; Orange less modified, consent likely to be required, Green – most ‘pristine’ areas from an indigenous biodiversity perspective - consent required (approach subject to modification/discussion, with various consent processes for different areas). Has been done in places like the Waitaki and Waimakariri by ECan and SP provided example maps of what this could look like (provided by ECan staff).

Process involves a desktop analysis first, using satellite imagery first, then drilling down to individual farm level using aerial photographs (ecologists would do this piece of work), then groundtruthing by talking to landowners to verify whether assessment has areas of significant disagreement. Suggested that landowners could be notified of the results of mapping and given a time period to register concerns.

SP advised that according to ECAN technicians this process can be relatively quick. It doesn't have to take 12 months and could be done in a matter of weeks (major sections). Certain landforms stand out. This approach could replace the improved pasture rule and remove any issues of interpretation. Fish and Game, Forest and Bird, DoC and Ngai Tahu would like to work on this concept and develop it for the next working group meeting.

BR asked whether the shorter timeframe (weeks) related to the desktop study?

SP answered that it is capable of drilling down to the farm level. They have done it in the Waitaki area, at a farm level. It is reasonable to do it. There are occasionally significant species in modified pasture, this is a plausible approach. There are less risks and uncertainty this way rather than relying on interpretation of improved pasture definition.

JL asked who gets to decide – high/low?

SP answered that Council would need to work with ECAN and a team of experts to create the model. This group would need to make this call – whether experts would be employed independently by Councils.

SS commented that the mapping would not identify what areas are significant, but would show where there is a likelihood that significant areas could be? Make it clear that it is areas that likely to be areas of ecological significance. Not SNAs. SS asked SP whether he is suggesting that ECAN do the work?

SP answered, Yes, with Selwyn DC working together and pulling together an expert team.

SS asked if this included desktop, aerial, then working with farmers?



SP answered that the desktop process would be a three month period. Land forms registered will be captured in this process. Criteria developed around it. Would need to ground truth it following that with landowners. Keep in mind, Council is anti doing a whole of district assesement (through this alternative an ecologist makes a call on what is significant to investigate further) This way is a probability approach, more practical.

JG clarified the process and questioned if that is the right way to go about it and whether landowners should be involved sooner rather than at the end?

SP answered, Yes, it needs to be a technical process as ecologists have the expertise to determine what is/isn't relevant, instead of asking the farmer themselves as they do not have the technical expertise to make these types of judgements. Landowners would be bought in at the groundtruthing phase.

JG questioned, is my whole farm a significant area? What about the productive land?

NS answered that the model may need another layer, high producing grasslands, low producing grasslands like tussock grassland, which in her view would meet significance criteria. Going back to what the RPS says, trying to hold the decline. In the low productive grasslands has high biodiversity. Council's role under the RMA is to protect this. Also identify areas with no values that can be developed.

SP clarified, looking at areas against criteria in RPS. In terms of enforcement, it is difficult with improved pasture area. It is difficult to know what there was before. If you use aerial footage, you can use this to identify poor practice and use as an enforcement tool.

EYE commented that the concept is good, might provide greater certainty, also works towards the council's obligation to protect significant biodiversity under RPS and under section 6 to hold across Canterbury. Section 10 RMA protects existing use rights, so long as the effect isn't detrimental to the environment. What you are suggesting is that you can see the risk of what the definition is. Farmers are entitled to do certain things on the land and there is a tension between use of land and protection of values.

There are concerns in relation to privacy issues. The concept is far better suited to untouched land with low modification and could be used to gain greater knowledge of areas.

However, this does not suit an everyday farmer who is looking to improve their pasture. This will not work on most farms.

AS asked whether this would stand up in court with aerial imagery only? It would need to be ground truthed as well. Council have aerial imagery from Boffa Miskell



circa 2003 to identify and collect potential areas that may well be SNAs (based on previous PNA surveys). Acknowledges technology - that there are a lot of areas left out. Difference in foothills where there are pockets, but difficult to pick up or be certain about based on aerial imagery. Have to acknowledge potential risks and what would sit outside the area.

HR commented, as a landowner, the problem with simple definitions, unless an enforcement officer comes around, you don't know whether you comply or not.

Other comments from the group:

- Advantages of being straight up – no surprises. Likes this approach in principle.
- Technicalities of scale and mapping and width of lines, how thick is the line that demarcates this. It can become significant on the ground level. This could cause problems with the implementation.
- The issues of species identification e.g. identifying habitats around the lake, there are some problems arising there, whether it is significant or not. Dominated by exotics. Is this a good use of time for someone to see it?
- Possibility of unintended consequences. As soon as put out map, I would change what is happening there, if I felt it was incorrect, I would change if not ground-truthed. The aerial imagery shows an area of high probability but still not certainty.
- How does this then link into the DP? You might not be able to get around all landowners in the district to understand what is on the ground. Ngai tahu must be involved. Should also involved FF and small holders association also.

SP commented that they would target significant areas first.

PG commented that everyone needs to accept it is all privately owned land. The only person who can look after the land is the landowner. You are reliant on the landowner's cooperation. Is this approach going to ensure greater cooperation from landowners or less? I would argue less. Statutory access rights is an issue, no general right of entry to private land, you only have this after a breach. It is not conducive to gaining landowner cooperation. Need to win hearts and minds and get landowners on board. Suggests it needs further thought.

SP asked whether the current approach working? It is hard to introduce innovative ideas. Everyone needs certainty and to know what is there. This approach is more flexible. Look at it from both sides, like the braided river example. The farmer understand what is sensitive. The point is, the Group's endorsement to put more work into this and answer some of the barriers heard today.

NS supports the approach. The law applies to everyone.



EYE asked about s10 (existing use rights)

NS answered that they would like to see a working landscape. Improved pasture approach doesn't work, do we even have to have a definition in the plan, as it's not working.

BR asked whether this conversation impacts on the discussion/decisions needed to be made tonight?

SS answered that if we don't have a permitted activity rule then we could consider this approach but this would be delaying the group's decision making on this issue until the next meeting. We really need to make a call on whether the group wants to consider this approach or not as it fundamentally changes the decision making around general rules that is next to be discussed. So, the group needs to decide if this concept is endorsed, or not.

JG commented that the suggested approach is not appropriate in his view. It is innovative but provocative and could be opposed by landowners.

Given what we heard earlier, we don't appear to have the luxury of time to resolve this before given the time pressures of the DPR process. If the alternative approach is to be followed it needs landowner buy in and that can't be rushed.

No problem with doing more work on the suggested approach but it is essential for landowner involvement from day one.

SP added that the beauty of this approach is that exotic plants are naturally seeding. We understand the trust thing, however this approach is in the open and we have certainty of certain areas and zone in on these. Through an ecological assessment you'll find where the significant areas are. The improved pasture definition is too waffly. If you use the Bovis example, you're expecting 100% security checks, however there is a better probability to identify these species. Lots of biodiversity is being damaged at present.

JG commented that if you are disappointed now, you will be really disappointed later.

PG commented that SS's approach has a more cooperative feel to it than the suggested approach.

AM clarified that we do that now – using aerial photographs to try and identify areas that have changed.



SS said that aerial photos alone did not usually provide enough evidence for enforcement. It hasn't been tested recently. But courts have said it needs to be ground truthed.

AM there has been case law, however it's different to waimak basin and a case by case approach.

SS As noted previously, it's been used as a starting point for SNA processes. What SP is looking at is probability of significance, not on ground assessment of significance according to criteria.

BR asked is this is the optimal process?. The process we use at the moment, using aerial photographs without ground truthing may be a struggle. How will it get through the s32 process?

KM commented that the technology is amazing and the level of detail.

AM likes the idea, but has a lot of issues. Risks goodwill of affected landowners. Timeframe to implement (3 months) once developed model and done desktop, and allowing landowner engagement/ground truthing/feedback. The 3 months to get landowner feedback is quite short – we can develop a process, but ensuring it is a fair process important. Simply doesn't seem possible to do this process adequately by the cut off of June 2019.

SP clarified the timeframes as being 3 months for initial desktop work followed by landowner engagement and ground truthing.

SS answered that it is June next year when everything has to be finalised.

BR suggested we focus on the current process first, then get evidence based information, rather than an overlay, this is how we will start monitoring, get the picture, then over time to get the areas into the provisions. Struggling with timeframes and the level of scrutiny to get this over the line in the timeframes of the District Plan review.

AM commented that we can develop a process however long we want – 3 months, 6 months 12 months whatever. Proper robust process critical and still not sure it would be acceptable to some. Used example of PNAs identified as SNAs in 1995 Proposed Plan and the plan got withdrawn due to poor process/lack of landowner engagement, leading to community concern and a loss of trust- we run the risk of setting ourselves up to do the same with this process.

JL asked whether this would be part of biodiversity management plan?

AM answered that it would form part of the framework. Could be a variation with interim rules. Provides time to work up the new proposal and rest of the process



to go with it (assuming the variation idea gained traction/approval of Working Group and DPC).

NS commented that there is an integrated approach to farms which is the norm now.

AM commented that it may be seen as council imposing this on landowners which has some risks.

SP is frustrated with RMAs process. Always stuck for time and never time to explore innovation. Let us come back with a few examples. Get more facts before we throw it out. Supports the variation idea. It would be disappointing to pull it now.

BR posed a suggestion/resolution that we look to do through this group and then feed into a variation should it all pan out in the future, but continue with the current process in the meantime. Notifying in 2020, variation come through after that with due consideration and engagement.

AM questioned the context of the example and what is Waimakariri Council doing? Is this a regional model?

SP gave the Waitaki example, and explained that it drilled down to a good level of detail.

AM commented that in the context of finding a fit for purpose solution to the issues – perhaps at the start of the Working Group we could have developed some Working Group ‘Principles’ – one example could be that provisions provide certainty to all landowner and stakeholders. Don’t necessarily want to throw out the proposal put forward by SP – it sounds innovative and sometimes that takes time to get your head around it.

The Chair summarised and commented that his personal opinion is immaterial (due to making a decision at DPC). However, posed the question to the group - What does this mean as part of today’s decision?

SS answered that the group needs to make a decision whether we allow this alternative process to be developed, and come back to the group and make a decision next month or not. We can still make decisions on Issues 2 and 3 on today’s agenda. Can start talking about general rules. Could progress SP proposal in parallel – to develop, investigate and work over it with a less restrictive time frame. It would help with identifying SNAs. This fits within the identification of SNAs as one output. Those could be integrated. Need to make a decision now on what process to follow.



SP clarified that he is keen on bringing it in at a later date and to continue with that process. Next meeting we can hear more about the concept and look to bring it on stream later in the process as a 'Variation'.

SS commented that it should take more time to work it through if a parallel decision. It takes time away from other decision making.

SP is concerned we'll run out of time

AM questioned whether it means that we park what we've done over the last year?

SP answered that they will continue with what they are doing, but with longer implementation timeframes.

SS asked whether it could continue as a separate parallel process.

PG commented that to date, the group has spent so much time working through the agenda, concerned that this is quite provocative. Thought the approach which we have been working on for the last year was the priority.

EYE commented that even if you did map, what about the areas where we don't know what is on the ground i.e. unofficial CCC schedule B scenario. This would be a good approach. The areas that aren't significant would still need a definition. If you don't want to define improved pastures?

KM commented that this is the advantage of mapping it out, it clarifies where you can clear vegetation.

HR added, SP is looking for certainty that work could continue over time in terms of consultation with landowners. If it comes into variation (supports), then it is the way to go. You'll need support from this Committee. This would require resources from the Council. I am comfortable with working on this if it is brought through as a variation. It will require a resource consent anyway, so it will go through the process.

The Chair thanked HR for a timely comment. A discussion for another day, there is merit in that and would support the continuation of this group going forwards.

BR added that this group should continue to focus on what is in front of us, the stakeholders can have discussions with Council and as a side process. The main focus is to continue on this framework. This is an innovative approach and outside this approach.

SP concluded by saying that the group wants this to occur over a longer timeframe, this means we are backing down, and is not happy with that. The longer term approach is reasonable but not if the project gets put off. Wants to officially start



process straight away, not later down the line. Wants formal agreement from this group next month that the parallel process can proceed.

BR suggested it is a subcommittee in the background doing the parallel work – with the full awareness of this group, so we are still progressing discussions of this group. Ultimately, it's the approach we have been discussing the whole time. Same outcome. working in the background to develop framework that may lead to a variation. Keeps us focused on delivering something within the timeframe we have.

AS commented on the practicalities of this on the ground. Where owners have SNAs, don't want to engage in a conversation with us on that. With those landowners who don't want to engage, this does provide an answer to this scenario. Sees merit in the process over the longer term and in parallel.

The Chair summarised the conversation, seeking agreement that this continues as a parallel process that may become a variation. Would go back to initial discussion to achieve decisions. Understand that we aren't parking the suggestion or paying lip service. We may come to a decision that is not a variation. Further discussion can be held once there is more information on the concept. Asked everyone to express an opinion.

SP wants this process to happen and will make it work and give it a fair go

NS supports SP. See alternative advanced further.

KM supports as it is more certain than definition.

JG sees no problem with parallel process. Doesn't endorse it as a replacement process. Needs landowners involved from the start.

JL agrees.

BR agrees, but costs need to be discussed/considered. Discussion further, resourcing cost etc with ECAN required.

JF (ECAN) echoed the comment on cost, what is technically feasible and what is actually on the work programme. Comfortable if it is going out over a longer timeframe. Come up in the Mackenzie plan change to support all parties. Selwyn could be at the cutting edge.

HR commented that this would mean certainty for landowners and this would get us there.

SE agrees, farmers need to be consulted with from day one.



PG agrees with HR. IF you want it to be successful, you have to win hearts and minds of people.

EYE commented that it is conceptually okay but asked that you work with landowners - not impose on them. Think about how you can engage landowners so it is a positive experience.

Chair concluded that there is agreement to continue the parallel process.

Dry land species

KM raised question around provision for special dry land species occurring in improved pasture on the Plains.

SS commented that this is covered in the second part of the permitted activity rule B.6 and could be moved to restricted discretionary activity.

Rule B.6.

Clearance of indigenous vegetation where it is in an area of improved pasture, except where it involves the removal of indigenous vegetation on the Canterbury Plains where the land has not been subject to clearance, cultivation or application of fertilisers/chemicals

The group discussed ambiguity of some words currently included in Rule B.6. and suggested taking some words out and some 'wordsmithing' to enhance its legibility.

Suggested amendments include:

- A Clearance of indigenous vegetation where it is in an area of improved pasture, except where it involves the removal of indigenous vegetation on the Canterbury Plains where the land has not been subject to cultivation or application of fertilisers/chemicals
- B Clearance of indigenous vegetation where it is in an area of improved pasture, except where it involves the removal of indigenous vegetation on the Canterbury Plains where the land has not been subject to clearance or cultivation.
- C Clearance of indigenous vegetation where it is in an area of improved pasture, except where it involves the removal of indigenous vegetation on the Canterbury Plains where the land has not been subject to cultivation.

Unanimous decision is that AS will discuss wording of Rule B.6. with SH and report back to the Group with the outcomes of that discussion and amendments to the rule.

Biodiversity Management Plan



Question posed to the Working Group was whether we want a specific rule that provides for biodiversity management plans as an explicit process or leave this to be an informal process for any consent.

SS explained the intent of BMPs, the need to ensure they are developed correctly and approved in a way that enables them to cover many activities over large spatial areas and extend over time – similar to a 'global consent' process. Would need to review and consent the plan to ensure proposals are appropriate.

JG – Asked whether a mangment plan also covered/affected QEII covenants.

JF – the QEII covenant would be referenced in the Plan

SE noted that management plans need to also include reference to cultural values

Group agreed unanimously that BMPs should be explicitly provided for in the rules.

SNA Rules

Discussed Rule F – Clearance of indigenous vegetation in a SNA and whether this should be a non-complying activity.

SS reconfirmed the activity status hierarchy and that it is best practice for SNA areas, where values are clearly known and ground truthed, to be protected strongly through non-complying activity status.

Group agreed unanimously with this rule.

Rules relating to earthworks in a SNA

Discussed rules relating to earthworks in a SNA and whether there is a need to have a rule on earthworks as well as on clearance of indigenous vegetation.

Discussed the possibility that there could be earthworks in a SNA that do not involve clearance of vegetation but could impact on the overall SNA area. Discussed the situation where a track might be wanted through a SNA but could need specific consideration of effects.

Group agreed unanimously with having a earthworks rule for SNAs as a non-complying activity.

Planting of Potential Pest Species



AM – advised that this is subject to a separate DPR workstream. AM and SS will discuss and report back to the Group at the next meeting.

Improved Pasture Definition

Continued discussion on the definition of 'improved pasture' and the application of a permitted activity rule to this. The Definition circulated in earlier background material is:

Improved pasture:

means an area of pasture where exotic pasture species have been deliberately introduced, where those exotic pasture species form the dominant ground cover, and where the naturally occurring species are largely absent.

Chair and SS – noted there has been feedback from landowners and others on this definition. That Feedback notes that there should be ongoing clearance activities in areas that have been improved. The briefing note circulated earlier has amended definition as follows

Improved pasture:

Improved pasture means an area of pasture where exotic pasture species have been deliberately introduced, where those exotic pasture species dominate in cover and composition, and where the naturally occurring species are largely absent.

Group discussion about the wording of the Briefing Note definition and how it could be enhanced. Particular note on the need to clarify that it is indigenous species that are largely absent. Other key elements of the discussion included:

- Need to deal with layering of species over pasture
- Lack of certainty in dealing with shrubs
- Use of visual components to understand definition
- Issues where a wider area of improved pasture includes a smaller area of indigenous vegetation e.g. gully
- Ambiguity of wording and interpretation
- Need to use more education and trust not legislation
- Options to use % cover or other measures of dominance
- Option to identify key species within improved pasture
- Need to have clear rules that provide appropriate protection
- Need for integration with other parts of the district plan

The group considered three options for the definition:

- A. Improved pasture means an area of pasture where exotic pasture species have been deliberately introduced, where those exotic pasture species dominate in cover and composition, and where the naturally occurring indigenous species are largely absent.



- B. Improved pasture means an area of pasture where exotic pasture species have been deliberately introduced, where those exotic pasture species dominate in cover and composition, **excluding any area where naturally occurring indigenous species form a dominant habitat**
- C. Improved pasture means an area of pasture where exotic pasture species have been deliberately introduced, where those exotic pasture species dominate in cover and composition, and where the naturally occurring indigenous species are largely absent **from that area**

The Group ultimately agreed with the following amended definition, recognizing the further work SP and others will be working on may have an impact on whether it is ultimately used.

Improved pasture means an area of pasture where exotic pasture species have been deliberately introduced, where those exotic pasture species dominate in cover and composition, and where the naturally occurring indigenous species are largely absent from that area

SP and NS feel even with the suggested changes there is still too much ambiguity such that areas which are not improved pasture could be cleared, and that the alternative approach discussed earlier in the meeting improves this situation. As such they do not support any of the options for enhancing the Improved Pasture definition that were discussed by the Group.

SE expressed concern over all the definition options citing the Kaitorete Spit situation.

KM advised that we will need to come back to the definition once we have discussed General Rules.

6. NEXT MEETING

The Chair closed the meeting at 7.20pm.

Next meeting (17 October 2018) the focus will be on progressing the general rules.