



Report from the **Waikato Biodiversity Forum workshop** day held on Monday 23 July 2012 at the Hamilton Gardens

Purpose

The purpose of this day was to:

- Identify what we have achieved and our strengths as a Forum
- Identify what we should bring forward from the current workplan
- Identify what we want to achieve as a Forum in the future
- Identify a set of recommendations for the future direction of the Forum.

Introduction to the Forum day

Wiremu Puke welcomed the 70 workshop participants and blessed the proceedings. Helen Ritchie introduced the agenda for the workshop and then handed over to Bruce Clarkson who set the scene of the workshop by reminding us of where we have come from over the past nine years. He highlighted the achievements of the Forum including the publication of "Restoring Waikato's Indigenous Biodiversity: Ecological Priorities and Opportunities", the Forum events, running or assisting with community group workshops, biodiversity advocacy for plans and policies, the networking and dissemination of information, the maintenance of the community group database, the provision of assistance with funding applications and the publicising of the importance of biodiversity protection and enhancement through the media and presentations.

Results of Workshops

Strengths of the forum

Networking Links, collaboration, diversity of members, relationship building, united voice, databases, website, depth of knowledge communication, key decision makers are members

Advocacy Lobbying, watch dog, links to LAs, submissions on plans and policies

Coordinator Dedicated, well established and recognised

Forum events and information Workshops, newsletters, personal visits to community groups, mobility of Forum around the region

Funding and in-kind support from DOC, WRC and LAs

Provision of funding advice and alerts for community groups

Support and advice-referral.

Current workplan to bring forward

The following key results areas were supported:

- Advocate for biodiversity protection TA links, submissions, lobby for biodiversity
- Publicise, educate and promote the importance of biodiversity
- Organise events, workshops, local events and promote the Forum
- Maintain records, database and networks
- Gain funding for Forum
- Promote funding opportunities, assistance and alerts to what's available
- Provide o8ooBIODIV advice
- Provide support to the Forum and Focus Group
- Linking groups/projects that need support
- Networking - database, connection with "doers", newsletters
- Work with business as a potential funding link.



Future Directions

- **Involve youth** - Youth Forum, Enviroschools, Uni students, JUNATS, KCC
- **Use Social media** - Youtube videos, Blogs, Facebook, Twitter
- **Work with private sector and businesses**
- **Tourism** - Waikato region as a “Nature Destination of NZ”
- **Waikato River Authority (WRA) legislation** - Use legislation to push for biodiversity protection and enhancement
- **Market, brand and promote the Forum to raise profile**
- **Funding for groups** - Co-ordinate funding for groups and landowners on a regional scale
- **Forum funding** - Achieve 50% non-governmental funding, ensure funding continues – future proof
- **Develop Strategy for future** - Regional Biodiversity Strategy – assist with implementation
- **Understand and observe customary Maori practices for biodiversity protection**
- **Identify biodiversity priorities**
- **Forum contact point for volunteers**
- **Identify local “Champions” for biodiversity**
- **Super lobby group at government level**
- **More regionally coordinated implementation**
- **Monitoring for accountability-assist groups** - with simple monitoring and promote monitoring by sharing results
- **Grow Forum membership** - keep membership free
- **Get measurement of biodiversity progress** - toolkits
- **ONE STOP SHOP on Waikato biodiversity**
- **Retain the collective voice of the Forum**
- **Policy and Planning** - Policy integration with TLAs, Regional Council and DOC
- **Education of the public**
- **Forum** - middle player between Councils and Community groups
- **Focus on catchments and water quality**
- **Landowners** - Pro-active engagement with willing landowners
- **Significant Natural Areas** - Give effect to the WRC SNA project and provide advocacy and education to educate landowners on SNA
- **Community groups** - Facilitate community group approaches to larger scale projects-fill in gaps – corridor approach across landscape
- **Avoid centralisation of Forum** - Continue to support local regional group input into local initiatives
- **Grow conservation groups** - Help set up more conservation groups with broader range of participants
- **Biodiversity off-setting** - Support off setting without selling out ideals of Forum
- **Expertise of Forum members** - Increase number of people who can work with the Forum to share skills and expertise – volunteer helpers and maintain group register of Forum members and their expertise



Priority Directions with Action Plans

Direction	Actions
Volunteer Exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate groups within the Forum where approved quality groups and accommodation Groups need to be well organised and coordinated for health and safety reasons Not have unreasonable expectations of volunteers Take time to explain goals, and appreciate and respect volunteers Allowing time for play
Ecotourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish brand Waikato Nature Destination of NZ ID resources and networks LAs supply information Get national, regional and local government support Publicity through Information Centres Hands on experiences – WOOFERS, Conservation Corps
Facilitating skill-sharing and networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join LinkIN or set up a facebook group Create online Forum (like BNZSKT has) Provide connection with wanted skills/knowledge Use Skype to connect groups Column in Waikato Times – writing of articles shared by Forum – Coordinator to action
Raahui Protective prohibition Public notice Restoration tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place names – Backed with historical research from local hapuu (sub-tribe) Weaving the Strands within the restoration community local tangata whenua and community groups Restoration tools- waahi whakahirahira, raahui whaktupua (rakau/manu) whenua taunaha – long term planning restoration
Waikato River Authority (WRA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50/50 Crown/Iwi Vision and Strategy Overarching documentation for the Waikato River
Restoration Management Plans Restore natural plant communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ownership of “natives” Partnership with Ecosourced Waikato “Natives” what do we mean? Protect natural local heritage while maintaining genetic vigour viability of biodiversity and genetic diversity Understanding natural processes Promote local ecology e.g. for Hamilton learn and be inspired by Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park Native plants as a way to make connections to local natural areas Continuum of plant species from exotic- hybrid native plants – ecosourced Waiwhakareke restore natural patterns and processes. All (most) are useful??
Branding and Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forum remains independent and community based Creating brand Represents groups and individuals Coordinating body representing people working on biodiversity and group happy with brand as understood Start raising profile – strengthen central organising/coordinator and having groups go out to periphery
Funding of Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forum to take advantage of biodiversity off setting (match making – take the commission!) WBF partnership with Chartered Accountants to encourage corporate sponsorship of biodiversity Biodiversity rate (dedicate to specific causes/organisations)
Web Technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media-establish target market Google/Facebook Big organisation Blogs-discussions Quiz surveys Twitter Website linked to everybody Use contact within the group and Waikato University communication students to set up sites e.g. facebook Newsletter (email) mailchimp (free) Flickr Youtube videos Linking all these to a main social media site Place keywords e.g. Waikato, pest control, biodiversity on websites so google picks up site first

Youth Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on how to become a member (mailing list) and why • Youth planning group • Internship - to record stories - Put on Youtube • Tapping into Enviroschools/youth at event level and at local level • Focussing a workshop on youth-get their voice • Communicating vision to kids to pass on • Collaborating with KCC and JUNATS • Trees for Survival links • Kura and schools • Youth Forum
Councils Relationships and Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum identified as a key stakeholder in all biodiversity issues • Consultation at front end of process with Biodiversity Forum reps for District Plans reviews and LTPs • Producing pamphlets for LAs about what the Forum does and local maps showing key species locations and special biodiversity places, community groups • Increase profile of Forum and local projects - What the Forum does-network and projects • Contact LAs without biodiversity plan and offer assistance to develop plans • WBF provide examples of policies for District Plans • Add value to Councils plans and policies at stakeholder consultations

Where to from here?

The Forum Focus Group will discuss the findings and prioritise current work to bring forward with future directions suggested at the workshop. The Focus Group will report on this discussion to the wider Forum when this work has been completed.

If you have any queries or would like a copy of the raw data from the meeting please contact Moira Cursey m.cursey@xtra.co.nz or phone 07 8465066 or 0272 223 791.

