Environmental Legal Aid still awaited

DELAYS by Ministry for the Environment officials means that funds allocated for environmental legal aid as part of the Greens Budget Package have yet to be released. No announcement has been made when groups will be able to access funding. Funding for environment centres has also been delayed.

The Government agreed in June to the Green's budget bid for a $1 million environmental legal aid fund. Another $300,000 was agreed to for funding environment centres, with grants of up to $50,000 per centre available to assist groups with day to day running costs.

With just two weeks to go before Christmas, expectations that an announcement will be made before the end of the year are extremely unlikely. It is understood that there have been delays in getting sign-off from some officials, and Cabinet only has two meetings scheduled in which to consider legal aid implementation.

Requests to Ministry officials for a timetable outlining steps for allocating the fund, and details of the criteria had not been answered at the time of going to press.

The Greens, which have been pushing for swift implementation of the legal aid fund, have expressed frustration at the delay.

It is understood that some of the tardiness has been caused by disagreements about the preferred delivery mechanism for the fund, and how to set up appropriate financial checks and balances.

A suggestion that an environmental defenders office be established to allocate funds, firmly opposed by ECO, has been discounted. Instead, ECO understands, funding will be allocated directly to community and environment groups. For good decisions on allocation to be made, ECO argues that nominations for decision-makers be open to the environmental movement and wider community. It is imperative that any panel not be stacked by people that have proved to be hostile to public participation in the RMA, including members of the legal profession.

There are a number of cases pending that could benefit considerably from the availability of funding for both technical expertise and legal representation. Some ECO members have had to pull-out of Environment Court appeals because of the high costs posed.

Department of Conservation Green Package funding

In the 2000-2001 financial year the Department of Conservation received a $2.5 million conservation awareness package, funded through the Green Package. This package has already been allocated to 61 projects, with more than half focusing on increased contact between DoC and communities and better involvement in conservation work.

The necessity for legal aid is amply spelt out in numerous reports from within the Ministry itself, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE), and even the OECD when it visited in 1996. In the PCE’s report “Public Participation under the Resource Management Act 1991: the management of conflict” it is noted that “[f]or the opportunity of appeal and redress to be genuine, parties must have genuine access to the appeal process, including the ability to afford not only legal counsel, but expert witnesses. If the system is biased in favour of well-resourced parties, inequitable outcomes may result.”

In contrast to the Ministry for the --Continued over page

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Environment’s slow approach, the Department of Conservation has already allocated the $2.5 million it was given in the Green Package.

It is of concern to ECO that one of the most significant barriers to effective community participation in resource management planning is not being addressed quickly. Although environmental legal aid is only part of the solution, and this current arrangement perhaps not the most durable, provision of some resources to communities will help ensure communities are able to participate in resource management processes. Permanent provision for environmental legal aid needs to be given effect in legislation.

The government gained considerable kudos for supporting funding for participation in resource management process. The poor performance of the Ministry for the Environment in following implementing legal aid funding casts the Ministry and the Minister in an unfavourable light. ECO is worried that MfE has negative attitudes to consultation with environment groups and with public participation in general.

It’s not too late for government to save face – prompt attention by Cabinet can ensure that an environmental legal aid fund can be up and running early in the new year.

Stephen Blyth

ACTION
Write to Marion Hobbs urging her to swiftly establish the environmental legal aid fund and funding for environmental centres (Parliament Buildings, Wellington, fax:04 495 8467 or email: mhabbs@ministers.govt.nz)

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Parliamentary Watch

A RANGE of environmental legislation has been recently passed or is currently before Parliament.

Recently passed Legislation:
Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Bill
This Bill was passed by Parliament at the end of November.

Bills before Select Committees:
Resource Management Amendment Bill and Resource Management (Costs) Amendment Bill - Local Government and Environment Select Committee
It was intended these bills be reported back to Parliament by mid-December but given the issues involved ECO does not expect the Bills to again see the light of day until 2001.

Forests Amendment Bill - Local Government and Environment Select Committee
The Select Committee has yet to progress this Bill.

International Treaties Bill
This is a private members Bill introduced by Green MP Keith Locke. Submissions close on this Bill on 21 March 2001 with the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee. This Bill would require Government to get the approval of Parliament before ratifying or withdrawing from an international agreement.

If passed, the government would be required to carry out an analysis of the national interest of any agreement prior to it being tabled in Parliament. However, the Bill does not enable the Treaty to be incorporated into international law without further legislation. This is a significant flaw in the legislation as often New Zealand ratifies treaties which never become a part of domestic law as the requisite legislation is never enacted. There are several international environmental agreements which currently are not part of domestic law including the Biodiversity Convention, the World Heritage Convention, the World Charter for Nature and the Ramsar Agreement on Wetlands of International Importance. The Bill should be amended to allow treaties government has ratified to be considered a part of New Zealand’s domestic law.

Summit Road (Canterbury) Protection Bill
This is a private members Bill introduced by National MP David Carter and it is before the Government Administration Select Committee. Submissions close on this Bill on 31 January 2001. There are concerns that this Bill may make it harder to protect the Port Hills above Christchurch due to its accommodation of existing uses.

Tutae-Ka-Wetoweto Forest Bill
This Bill implements the deed and covenant between the Crown and Rakiura Maori Land Trust which protects the Lord’s River block on Stewart Island. This settlement was reached by the National government prior to the last election. The Bill validates that deed of covenant which requires the land to be managed as if it were national park. Submissions close on 31 January 2001 with the Maori Affairs Select Committee. The Select Committee considerations will be constrained by the deed and covenant.

Newly Introduced Bills:
Electricity Industry Bill
This Bill has been introduced by the Minister of Energy, Pete Hodgson but has yet to be referred to a Select Committee. This Bill enacts Government policy decisions in response to the Electricity Inquiry which enables the establishment of an Electricity Governance Board; oversight and reporting by the Auditor-General and Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment; and electricity pricing rules which involves the Commerce Commission. The Government’s released policy statement requires spilling of hydro water to be minimised, gas to be used efficiently and the fostering of renewable electricity production technologies.

Barry Weeber

• Disclaimer
While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information contained in this publication, ECO, its Executive and Editorial Staff accept no liability for any errors or omissions. Views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the policy opinions of ECO or its member bodies
Heading towards a National Energy Efficiency Strategy

The Government is in the process of establishing a national Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy. The Strategy is a requirement of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act 2000, which was introduced by Jeanette Fitzsimons and came into force with government support on 1 July 2000.

The Act promotes energy efficiency, energy conservation and the use of renewable sources of energy; taking into account health, safety, social, economic, cultural and economic concerns; the environment; future generations and the Treaty of Waitangi.

The Act requires early input from a range of interest groups including industry, commerce, environmental, community and Maori organisations, local authorities and the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment. The Strategy is being developed by the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority (EECA) under a very tight timeframe. It started with a set of steering groups, vision document, and issue papers in July, then preliminary consultation workshops were held in October. In April 2001 the Minister of Energy will release a draft strategy for consultation. From April to June next year there will be a formal public consultation and submission making process. The draft Strategy will be reviewed, amended and appraised during June to September and in October 2001 the final Strategy will be released.

Forecasts of New Zealand's energy consumption indicate that total energy demand will increase by 30% by 2020. If the economy carries on in a "business as usual" scenario, carbon dioxide emissions are projected to be about 40% higher than 1990 levels, rather than the reduction to 1990 levels New Zealand has committed to under the Kyoto Protocol. Clearly we need to change!

It is absolutely critical that environmentalists get involved in the Strategy process to ensure it isn't dominated by business interests seeking to rely solely on market forces and industrial voluntary mechanisms. We need a strong commitment (including regulations) to ensure real environmental gains are made, moving away from using fossil fuels and other non-renewable resources, penalising inefficient energy users and making it easier for people to choose and afford energy efficient and conservation measures.

For further information contact Strategy Team, EECA, PO Box 388, Wellington; strategy@eeca.govt.nz; or website: www.eeca.govt.nz – follow the Strategy signpost.

by Richard Frizzell

The National Energy Efficiency Strategy must address:
• the Government’s policies in relation to the promotion of energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy;
• the objectives to be pursued to achieve the Government’s policies;
• the measurable, reasonable, practicable and appropriate targets to achieve those policies and objectives;
• the means by which the policy and objective targets are to be achieved;
• other matters that may be necessary to achieve the purpose of the Act.

Organising for the Oceans

ECO is looking forward to the announcement of the membership of the task force that is going to drive the public consultation on the Oceans Strategy. It is likely that an announcement will happen in February 2001.

ECO would like all those interested in being part of ECO’s marine network to supply us with their contact details, how you can contribute and your skills and areas of marine interest (if any particular ones). We would like also to know which member group you belong to if any, and whether you are a friend of ECO. We would also like the names and contacts of other people who might like to be part of an effort to protect oceans. Send details to ECO, PO Box 11-057, Wellington; fax/phone 04-385-7545 or eco@reddfish.co.nz.

GE Fund: Can You Help?

Engaging in the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification is not only a drain on time and energy, but also on finances. Providing the Commission with multiple copies of the ECO submission cost hundreds of dollars and now ECO are faced with funding a videolink to an expert witness. Can you help?

If you can, please forward your donation with a note indicating it is for our GE Fund to ECO, PO Box 11-057, Wellington.
Billions of years of Kermadec evolution to be mined?

"THERE ARE NOT MANY COUNTRIES that would put their museums through the mincer" observed Jacques Cousteau tartly about New Zealand allowing limestone formations with important records of extinct species to be mined for the Charleston lime works.

New Zealand seems now to be going to do it again. This time it is the rare, very rare and hitherto unknown species on underwater volcanoes and vents, some only discovered in 1995.

Neptune Resources, an Australian mining company, has made three applications to the government for prospecting licences covering a huge arc from the 200 nautical mile (n.m.) limit to nearly 12 n.m. in the north east of the New Zealand Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The applications concentrate on underwater volcanoes, hydrothermal vents, seamounts and troughs in the Kermadec and Colville Ridges, North East of New Zealand, and in the Havre Trough that extends between the Colville and Kermadec Ridges.

Some of the seamounts in this area have recently been the subject of a decision to close them to certain kinds of trawling to protect the biota. NIWA's records show that, in so far as there is information, these features have biota that is rare, very rare and in some important cases, hitherto unknown to science.

Neptune is on a quest for gold and perhaps other minerals such as lead and copper that are emitted from the vents. Some of these were discovered by a 1995 research project. IGNS, NIWA and other parties used a mobile subservible and chemical analyses of water, to find the "black smokers". Now Neptune wants to hire the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences and NIWA, to do literature surveys, depth sounding, geochemical appraisal and dredging of the volcanoes, seamounts and other structures.

The applications, lodged in October 1999, have not been advertised as far as we can ascertain. The Ministry of Economic Development's Crown Minerals section under the Crown Minerals Act is processing them. Since the RMA does not extend beyond 12 n.m., the Continental Shelf Act 1964 applies and so, we presume, do the much neglected Environmental Protection and Enhancement Procedures (EP&EP).

One of applications has been sent to Paul Swain the Associate Minister of Energy (Crown Minerals), for a decision. The advice of the Crown Minerals Section of the Ministry of Economic Development to their Minister is not known, but the Ministry of Fisheries has sent MED notes prepared by NIWA's taxonomist Steve O'Shea. As far as we can ascertain there has been no public consultation process or any environmental assessment or impact assessment.

The company's application apparently suggests that there is no marine life at the 1000-2000m depths: but NIWA's information and the Ministry of Fisheries show this is not true. On the basis of the small amount of information that is known, there are rare, very rare and unique species.

The Ministry of Fisheries has pointed out that the Continental Shelf Act 1964, though not requiring consent from the Minister of Fisheries, does, under s8(j) (Regulations) require the prohibition or restriction of any exploration or exploitation of the continental shelf, or part thereof, if it could result in an unjustifiable interference with navigation, fishing and the conservation of living resources of the sea (letter to MED 28 January 2000). Since it is certain that dredging would allow interference, then the next question is whether such interference is justifiable. This requires informed public discussion.

ECO calls on the Minister, Paul Swain not to make a decision until completion of a full (low impact) environmental assessment, and impact report and audit, full public disclosure and public input. This is a case in which any such Environmental Assessment and Impact Assessment and Report should be independently audited, and the Environmental Protection & Enhancement Procedures (EP&EP) must apply. The EP&EP must be applied when the Crown grants licences, permits, privileges etc, which may have environmental implications (P1-2 EP&EP Revision 1987). The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's (PCE) November 1996 report Environmental Management of Petroleum and Mineral Mining Activities beyond the 12-mile Limit notes that the Minister for the Environment on 26 September 1995 by letter to the Commissioner confirmed that the EP&EP 1987 still apply.

This is an area of extraordinary biodiversity, with a project that clearly fulfills the criteria in the EP&EP for requiring EIR (section 13). The Minister for the Environment must require an EIR and an audit by the PCE with public input. Anything less must be to violate the requirements of the EP&EP, rob the future and violate our international responsibilities.

Action:
Write to Hon Paul Swain, Associate Minister of Energy (Crown Minerals); the Minister of Conservation, Hon Sandra Lee; the Minister for the Environment, Hon Marian Hobbs, and the Prime Minister, Rt Hon Helen Clark. Email using the format Firstname.Lastname@parliament.govt.nz or by snail mail at Parliament, Wellington. Letters to MPs and ministers are postage free.
Submit now on the NZ Road Safety Strategy 2010

A DRAFT ROAD SAFETY Strategy was issued by the National Road Safety Committee in October. The proposed strategy aims to bring New Zealand’s road safety performance in 2010 up to current world’s best practice.

People who currently cycle or walk in New Zealand face significant safety problems on the country’s roads. These derive from the behaviour of the cyclists or pedestrians themselves, from the behaviour of other road users, and from other aspects of the road environment such as road design and vehicle design.

There are many people who have given up cycling in New Zealand, and people who would like to take cycling up but are deterred from doing so. For these people, a perception that New Zealand’s roads are unsafe for cycling is a major factor in their decision to stop cycling or not to take it up.

The Cycling Advocates Network (CAN) would like to see a road system that provides a good level of safety for all road users. We had hoped to see this vision reflected in the draft NZ Road Safety Strategy 2010 and were encouraged by the Strategy’s aim of bringing NZ’s road safety performance in 2010 up to current world’s best practice.

Unfortunately, while the Strategy mentions so-called ‘vulnerable modes’ quite often, CAN believes it will lead to little improvement over the current situation - a disproportionately low level of attention and resources allocated to cyclist and pedestrian safety. In CAN’s view, the Strategy has fundamental flaws that require substantial revision.

Cyclists’ Right of Access: Perceived and actual lack of safety in current road environment is compromising cyclists’ basic right of access to a fair amount of the road network. As well as being an issue of equity, this has created the ‘Catch 22’ situation where resources to improve the road environment are allocated on basis of existing crash data but some roads are so cycle-unfriendly that no-one cycles there (hence there is a drop in cycle crashes). The draft Strategy does not address this problem - it will effectively maintain the status quo as far as cyclists are concerned. This is the most fundamental flaw of the draft Strategy from CAN’s perspective.

Three Option Concept: The draft Strategy presents three options for submitters’ consideration: an enforcement option, an engineering option and a mixed option. The additional funding required for each of these options over the next ten years is $280 million, $2-2.5 billion and $3-3.5 billion respectively.

CAN thinks the three option idea is flawed because it directs submitters more than is desirable. For example, the inclusion of a 90km/hr open road speed in the enforcement option is likely to ensure this option will not be widely supported by the general public or politicians.

The engineering option is backed up by ‘non-safety’ arguments such as time savings, reduced vehicle operating costs and comfort, while obvious non-safety arguments for speed reduction (such as reduced fuel consumption/greenhouse gas emissions) are omitted. Health issues are also off-limits.

The draft Strategy emphasises the benefits of the engineering option but does not consider its disbenefits. For example, safer vehicles may result in more risk taking; reduced travel times imply higher average speeds, which may result in less safety for some road users (e.g. cyclists and pedestrians).

Role of Education: One of the biggest problems with the three options proposed is that education is understated. It is assumed to underly all options. This doesn’t help people understand the implications of different levels and types of education approaches. Instead, only engineering and health are considered and it is implied that the way we educate road users is adequate. CAN questions this assumption.

Education is simply tagged as “Included in other interventions”. Arguably, before decisions are made on what mix of road safety interventions we want we need to get some institutional changes in place. For cyclists and pedestrians, basic issues like funding systems and data quality have not been addressed, yet they are crucial to the effectiveness of the Strategy. The draft Strategy appears to have already gone too far past these questions, without letting us question the assumptions made.

The Government has said it is committed to encouraging alternatives to private motor vehicle use. The Road Safety Strategy 2010 can make a crucial contribution to achieving Government goals by making alternatives like cycling and walking more viable. Unfortunately, the way it is shaping up does not look promising, and there is a real danger that a ‘business as usual’ Road Safety Strategy will set the scene for other transport reform in the pipeline.

Copies of the draft strategy can be obtained from the LTSA, PO Box 2840, Wellington, Tel: 0800-699 000, e-mail: info@ltsa.govt.nz, or from the LTSA’s website at www.ltsa.govt.nz. If you do not have time to obtain or read the draft, you may still wish to make a submission based on the information in this article.

by Robert Ibell, CAN

Action

Submissions should be sent by Friday 22 December 2000 to: Road Safety Strategy 2010 Submission, Land Transport Safety Authority, PO Box 2840, Wellington E-mail: info@ltsa.govt.nz or Fax: 04-494 8601
For assistance, contact us at:
Cycling Advocates Network of NZ, PO Box 6491, Auckland can@actrix.gen.nz
www.kennett.co.nz/can
Tel/Fax: 04-385 2557

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FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENT CENTRES

Introducing the Christchurch Environment Centre (CEC)

WE HAVE A 27 YEAR HISTORY of involvement in environmental issues and education. From a base in central Christchurch, CEC is an independent provider of information and a venue for meetings. What’s more, CEC maintains a library of mixed media and environmental education resources.

The Christchurch Environment Centre ensures strong links are maintained with community groups, local and central government. We pride ourselves on providing a friendly service for all.

The Centre provides office space and a point of contact for more than 80 Christchurch and Canterbury community groups including links from our website. And yet a further indication of just how active the Christchurch Environment Centre is, enquires from phone and email average 30+ a day.

What do we do at the CEC?

Currently we have two staff and several invaluable volunteers, without whom the CEC would not be able to function as well as it does. We have a number of projects and activities we get involved with throughout the year including:-

- running the free bike parks at the City’s Summertimes events;
- the DOC open Day festivities at Motukarara Nursery;
- the CEC annual Green Heart award;
- World Environment Day;
- Conservation Week,
- Seaweek and many, many more!!

Victoria Keene, Manager

How to contact us

We are open weekdays 10am-5pm at our inner-city location. Everyone is welcome!!

Christchurch Environment Centre, Plymouth Lane (off City Mall), PO Box 2657, Christchurch
Ph: (03) 379 2237 or Fax (03) 379 2250
Email info@environment.org.nz
Web www.environment.org.nz

The Resourceful Nelson Environment Centre

THE NELSON ENVIRONMENT CENTRE began in December 1977. For 20 years we operated a small public environmental information centre with an associated Environment Shop, office and storage space.

We acted as a regional umbrella organisation for environmental and related groups in the Nelson region. A quarterly Nelson Environment Journal was produced as a combined newsletter for several groups and distributed to combined mailing list. We also undertook a range of activities that were generally not being covered by other local groups. These included: promotion of waste recycling and energy conservation; making lots of submissions and organising countless public meetings on a wide range of topics; administering the Environmental Grants scheme in the top of the South Island for several years; and sponsoring the Nelson Green Business Challenge for a couple of years.

In 1997 the Centre committee decided to quit the responsibility of leasing office space as the costs were exceeding our income and the level of use made the ongoing costs hard to justify. However, we continue to have a Management Committee that meets regularly and undertakes a variety of activities, including the ongoing preparation of submissions on a wide variety of issues and the production of a newsletter for our members. This year we helped with the organisation of ECO’s annual conference in Nelson at the end of August.

The Centre has a contract with the Nelson City Council to operate the Nelson Recycling Centre at the refuse transfer station in Tahunanui. Now in its seventh year the recycling centre diverts reusable and recyclable materials from the waste stream and has the added benefits of not only providing employment opportunities and returning a modest profit, but also of prolonging the life of the Nelson landfill.

The money that was previously expended on maintaining the office infrastructure is now available to support other environmental initiatives. For example we have assisted with

—Continued over page
Marlborough Environment Centre 10 years on

THE MARLBOROUGH ENVIRONMENT CENTRE Inc (MEC) was set up during 1990 after a well attended public meeting which arose out of a concern for the local Marlborough environment. It was a time when people here seemed concerned about some issues whose only guidelines were the whim or will of a few long term local government councillors and employees.

Enter the Resource Management Bill! Our public debut was a well planned and reasonably well attended seminar on the “Big Bill”. The MEC submitted on the proposed bill and really hasn’t stopped submitting on local and national issues since.

Looking back, the early days of the MEC were energetic, exciting and outgoing. There was more optimism in the early nineties, less hyper-consumption and without computers we all seemed to have a lot more time. The Centre created and evolved within a retail shop for at least six years, and thanks to a benevolent real estate agent, found cheap rents wherever there was an empty shop going in Blenheim. We utilised the Community Task Force Scheme to staff the shop and had rosters of volunteers. Our members neither liked nor were very good at retailing but we felt it was essential to have a venue to interface with the public.

The retailing and grants paid the rent. Over time a considerable resource library was developed and for a while a local environmental magazine called “Sticky Beak” tried to stir things up. We worked with DOC and other organisations on annual projects such as Earth Day and Conservation Week, visited high schools, and spoke to community groups.

By the mid nineties, committee meetings burnout set in and the costs of environmental education programmes at the Nelson Community Organic Gardens and the construction costs of their composting toilet, as well as worms in schools project. Last year we sponsored an awareness raising campaign on genetic engineering which included a bus tour around the both the South Island and the North Island. We are currently assisting with the establishment of a “green bike” scheme in Nelson with finance and old bicycles from the recycling centre. We are also supporting the co-ordinator of Seed Savers Aotearoa to get this new group up and running and onto a sustainable basis.

Over the past few months we have been establishing our own website, (http://www.converge.org.nz/mecc) as a means to service our members and interested people in the Nelson region and elsewhere. It is intended to continually add material to the site and to provide links to other environmental sites to increase its usefulness and effectiveness. As long as funds permit we intend to continue initiating and supporting worthy environmental awareness raising projects and activities.

Derek Shaw, Chairperson,
N E C Management Committee

the responsibility of retailing to pay rents was burden enough to make the decision to wind up shop and retreat to people’s homes for meetings.

Currently MEC’s committee and work is quietly carried out by a small but effective force of environmental campaigners, mainly occupied with written and oral submissions. At present MEC could use a burst of young idealism. A membership drive would help increase its profile and possibly its direction. However, as all things in nature, it continues to evolve, and looking back over this last fleeting decade the people behind the MEC have accomplished a wide variety of things that have helped lift environmental awareness in our district.

Perhaps the Marlborough Environment Centre’s greatest accomplishment within a small conservative province, is that it continues to exist, (and is perhaps New Zealand’s third longest surviving environment centre).

Alison and Norman Fletcher

Contact: Tim Newsham, Marlborough Environment Centre Inc, PO Box 774, Marlborough

The MEC list of notable highlights and achievements include:

- hosting a large public meeting with guest speakers who debated a proposed giant overseas owned and operated tourist resort in a remote part of the Marlborough Sounds.
- making an appeal to the Environment Court on the resource consent application for Blenheim’s Sewage Scheme and gaining a win-win situation for both Blenheim ratepayers and the local environment.
- producing festive street stalls to raise funding and awareness.
- providing input into the District Plan and Regional Policy Statements.
- challenging marine farming applications and consents, again to the Environment Court.
- lobbying the Marlborough District Council and getting opinion pieces and letters in the Marlborough Express consistently regarding the wake damage of the Fast Ferries.
- recently we have been a useful facilitator for the establishment and running of Guardians of the Sounds, an organisation that has been influential in slowing the fast ferries to 18 knots and which has now become environmentally aware on a wide range of issues.
- encouraging open democracy and sound environmental practice by way of verbal submissions to our District Council through the Annual Plan process.
- promoting appropriate waste management practices and facilities to the public and local government.
- hosting various interesting speakers on an assortment of environmental issues.
- most recently a vigorous campaign to raise awareness of and participation in the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification.

ECOLINK DECEMBER 2000 • PAGE 7
Human Rights and the Environment

There is a strong link between the environment and human rights. Regrettably there are all too many cases of environmental protectors suffering for their work to protect the environment. Two immediate cases cause us particular concern: the Mexican environmentalist-farmers detained and tortured, and the fishers holding environmental scientists hostage, threatening them and torching their offices in the Galapagos Islands. We ask that people do all they can to pressure for better treatment of the environmentalists concerned.

NOTE Mexican Environmentalist story:

Since signing the “Declaration” Cath Wallace has received a nasty letter from Ralph Poore, Senior Communications Associate of Boise Cascade Corporation. This takes exception to the Tapu Te Ranga declaration’s mention of the company.

The letter says in part:

“Boise Cascade neither conducted nor supervised any logging in Mexico. The logging was conducted by Mexican citizens on their own private property, and these individuals chose to sell some of the logs to Boise Cascade.”

“Throughout the time of our operations in Mexico - which permanently ended in April 1998 - we had no information or awareness of the activities of Rodolfo Montiel Flores and his organization, no personal acquaintance with him, and no contact. In fact, it was not until Mr. Montiel’s arrest that we became aware of Mr. Montiel and subsequent false allegations linking the termination of Boise Cascade’s Mexico operations to him”.

“While Boise Cascade has no information about the arrest, conviction, or treatment of Mr. Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera beyond what has appeared in the news and on other media, we sincerely hope that no injustice or mistreatment has occurred. We share in the values of protection of individual rights and the free expression of opinions, in the United States, in Mexico, and everywhere”.

Cath Wallace notes that while the loggers and landowners were local, it was for Boise Cascade’s consumption that the forests were felled. We note also that the ignorance of Boise Cascade of Montiel and Cabrera is exactly the problem that such multinationals pose. They do not notice the impacts of their activities on the locals and often such multinationals do not care. We think that Boise Cascade should be more informed as to the fate of Montiel and Cabrera than simply what they read in the media. They should make strenuous efforts to have them released and bring an end to both the harassment of environmentalists and to logging. It is well known that Boise Cascade has withdrawn from the area - no one suggested otherwise.

ECO was one of many signatories of the “Tapu Te Ranga” Declaration, developed at an international forests activists conference held on 24-26 November. The conference was organised and hosted by the International Native Forests Network and Native Forest Action at the Taputeranga Marae in Wellington.

The Declaration called on President-elect Vicente Fox of Mexico to immediately release the tortured farmer environmentalists, Rodolfo Montiel Flores and Teodoro Cabrera Garcia. The pair have been imprisoned after conviction on trumped up charges following their peaceful opposition to logging in the Mexican state of Guerrero.

A copy of the Declaration was presented to the Mexican Embassy in Wellington and Helen Clark, who was asked to assist the international campaign for the release of Montiel and Cabrera. She expressed her concern and said that New Zealand would take the matter up with the Mexican representatives.

The environmental farmers were arrested for opposing the logging in the state of Guerrero where 40% of the forests have been stripped away in the last eight years. The loggers included Boise Cascade, a US company of which Blue Star is a New Zealand subsidiary. Local landowners log land made available for logging and in turn make deals with huge timber companies. Corruption is endemic and seems to involve politically powerful landowners, the army, paramilitary groups, the police and the timber companies.

The Declaration also calls for an end to the harassment of Montiel and Cabrera’s colleague environmentalist farmers in the Organizacion de Campesinos Ecologistas de la Sierra de Petatlan y Coyuca de Catalán. In late October urgent appeals for help were issued for help for group members who are reportedly facing death threats from soldiers and “paramilitary” groups. Amnesty International has adopted Montiel and Cabrera as prisoners of conscience and is now also very concerned about their colleagues too.

The delegation to the Mexican Embassy and to the New Zealand Prime Minister included Juan Carlos Beas Torres, representative of UCIZONI, an indigenous community union from Oaxaca, Mexico; Anatoly Lebedev, of the Taiga [forest] Rescue Network, Vladivostok, Russia; Pat Rasmussen, American Lands Alliance, USA; Dr Leonie van der Maesen, Friends of the Earth International, University of Utrecht, Amsterdam; Orin Langelle, of Native Forest Network and Action for Community and Ecology in the Regions of Central America; and ECO’s Cath Wallace.

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Galapagos violence against Scientist

The Economist reported on 23 November 2000 that "on November 17th Juan Chavez, the director of the Charles Darwin Research Station on the Galapagos Islands, had to be rescued from a mangrove swamp by special forces from the Ecuadorian navy."

Fishers then burnt the national park offices and ransacked his house. They also destroyed telephone system equipment on the island, blocked roads and held a giant tortoise hostage.

The Galapagos archipelago, which lies 1,000km from the Ecuadorian mainland, is an international hotspot of biodiversity.

The Economist explains that there has been an influx into the area of fishers. Sea cucumbers, for instance are valuable, easily caught and have been targeted. In a classic open access tragedy, as more fishers have arrived, pressure to increase catch limits have intensified but conservationists have resisted this. The government has given ground to fishers and seems to have turned a blind eye to taking action against those who have intimidated conservationists.

The violence has occurred despite the inclusion of local fishers in management processes and decisions. The influx of outsiders has eroded the incentives of local fishers to comply with the limits they have helped to set.

Politicians and authorities with business interests in fishing have not resisted the pressure and tourism authorities wanting to avoid bad publicity from protests had urged catch limit increases, despite the unsustainability of these.

Japanese Vote Buying in the Caribbean: Visit by former Environment and Agriculture Minister

IN EARLY NOVEMBER, ECO hosted a visit to New Zealand by Atherton Martin, the former Environment, Planning and Agriculture Minister of Dominica. He gave a first hand account of the pressure put by Japan on economically vulnerable Caribbean states to vote against the South Pacific Whale Sanctuary proposal at the International Whaling Commission. Contributors to the visit included ECO, Greenpeace and Forest and Bird.

Atherton is a specialist in sustainable and non-extractive development options for small island states, in environmental protection and in cross country cultural and sporting collaboration. He was as fascinating for his rich and imaginative ideas for non-environmentally damaging economic options as he was for his account of the methods and motivations of Japanese cheque-book diplomacy and bullying in the Caribbean.

Atherton Martin resigned as Minister in July 2001 when the Dominican representative to the IWC, under pressure from the Prime Minister in turn under pressure from Japan, ignored a Dominican government decision to abstain on the South Pacific Whale Sanctuary proposal and instead voted with the Japanese. It is reported that Japan threatened to review Japanese aid to Dominica at a time when the Dominican economy was in dire straits. The multinational Chiquita had managed to toss the Dominican economy into free fall after a challenge at the WTO to Dominican banana market arrangements.

For the geographically challenged, Dominica is one of the Windward Islands in the Caribbean (north of Venezuela) and is not to be confused with the much larger Dominican Republic. Dominica now markets itself as a "Nature Island", has only a 74,000 population, high levels of literacy, and is heavily dependent on bananas to earn export income.

Whilst here Atherton met many environmental organisations, Maori, Helen Clark, Conservation Minister Sandra Lee and various officials. Jeanette Fitzsimons hosted a public meeting in the Beehive and he visited the Kaikoura whale watching operation. Dominica also has a whale watching business and many Dominicans object to their country supporting a whale killing nation and opposing a South Pacific whale sanctuary.

Cath Wallace
ECOLINK JUNE 2000 • PAGE 9
Suwarro Atoll National Park: Cook Islands Update

THE TAPOROROANGA IPUKAREA Society in the Cook Islands sent ECO the following call for help and accompanying information (dated 29 November 2000). As was covered earlier in the year in the ECOLink, there is a proposal to de-list a National Park on an ecologically sensitive atoll and to develop a major pearl farm in the lagoon. This has been revived under a new Cook Island administration.

"Kia Orana Friends around the world.

"The Save Our Suwarro Campaign is continuing in its endeavours to persuade the Government of the Cook Islands to leave [the Suwarro Atoll National Park] as a wildlife sanctuary.

"We have launched a nationwide petition with the intention to show the Prime Minister, Hon Dr Terepai Maoate, that his people want Suwarro left as a wildlife sanctuary. Response by the people of the Cook Islands is positive. We will extend this petition to the people of the world, as it concerns us all.

"The Prime Minister, who recently visited Suwarro, and was struck by its beauty and the variety of wildlife, in particular the birds has made the following decisions regarding Suwarro. (1) That a caretaker who is versed in both conservation & Customs procedures will be appointed as soon as possible (2) That a new cyclone proof shelter will be erected on Anchorage Island for the caretaker. (3) That many of the islets and a small part of the lagoon will fall into a Conservation Area category.

"The Caretaker is to act as a Customs Officer, controlling the visiting yachts & collecting fees; ensure any developers abide by certain conservation criteria; monitor the wildlife.

"The limited Conservation Area is better than nothing but is not good enough. Human habitation whether it is pearl farmers or fishing ventures will have a significant impact on the precarious balance of nature on Suwarro.

"What we really need now is for you to send out faxes and emails of support. We welcome your advice and comments to strengthen this Campaign.

"We need you to email the leaders, stating your real concerns. If you’ve done it before, please do it again.

"We thank you from our hearts for your support. We cannot rest until Suwarro is protected forever. Kia manuia."

Save Our Suwarro background information

WITHIN the 2 million sq. km of sea designated the Cook Islands waters lies Suwarro. An atoll measuring 17km x 15km, with a huge deepwater lagoon, dotted with 30 tiny islets. The highest point above sea level is 3m.

It has never been settled by the Polynesian people, but it has been a temporary home to pearlers. World War 2 Coast Watchers, pirates, visiting yachts, Cook Islanders collecting copra, and its most famous inhabitant was hermit/adventurer/writer Tom Neale. From time to time there has been an official caretaker in residence, but not during the Cyclone season. There is no infrastructure at all, with the only potable water supply coming from above spasmodically, and minimal.

The islands of Suwarro flourish with a healthy ecosystem due to the lack of human interference. Significant colonies of Red-tailed Tropicbirds, Least & Great Frigatebirds, Sooty Terns, Red-footed, Brown and Masked Boobies are in residence. A large population of fish species, an abundance of sharks, Manta Ray, marine invertebrates, a small colony of black-lip pearl oysters, coconut crabs, Green & Hawksbill Turtles co-exist. The Humpback whale frequents the near vicinity of the island. Suwarro is a significant biologically diverse paradise as God intended it to be. Currently Suwarro has a Category IV IUCN status.

In spite of all these relevant factors, it is this atoll, that is now flavour of the month with the Cook Islands Government who are taking advantage of legislative bloopers to entice overseas investors to develop.

Although Suwarro was declared a National Park in 1978, subsequent updating of environmental legislation somehow the National Park status has been revoked (at least according to one legal interpretation). There is confusion over the status of the land and coastal management because of multiple government agencies having jurisdictions.

Government is considering a proposal to lease fishing rights and include Suwarro for pearl farming. Big bucks are promised to each of the Outer Islands as an incentive for the deal to go ahead. If this one fails, there will be others wooled to be sure.

The Save Our Suwarro campaign, initiated by Cook Island environmental NGO’s in 1998, was set-up when the Suwarro Development Corporation was being formed by Government as an offshoot of the Cook Islands Investment Corporation. The public awareness campaign, spearheaded by the NGO Taporoporoanga Ipukarea Society Inc, was successful in halting development plans.

-Continued over page
With a change of Government to one that is pro-development, especially in the Outer Islands, the challenge is stronger. Emotive reasons such as benefiting the Cook Islands people is the cry. But what about existing Cook Island pearl farmers? Won’t they be threatened by overseas interests competing with them? In leasing Suwararoo, these fishing orientated developers just may use Suwararoo as a fishing base.

Just where will the birds go, and go they will, with the threat of human interference? And what of the Rio Convention and Apia Convention? Surely the Cook Islands is contravening these Conventions which sees member countries promising to preserve and protect biological diversity.

Following a visit to the atoll the Prime Minister, Hon. Dr Terepai Maoate, considers Suwararoo truly a paradise, and now the Office of the Prime Minister has agreed to appoint a new Caretaker, one familiar with conservation issues, and build a cyclone proof shelter. It has been indicated that under any pearl farming agreement most of the islets and a small part of the lagoon will be designated a Conservation Area. The Save Our Suwararoo campaign urges this is not enough to protect the wildlife.

Rhys Jones, from New Zealand, (email: rhys.jones@agresearch.co.nz) has just completed a bird survey of Suwararoo. He supports the Save Our Suwararoo campaign in seeking the whole atoll becoming a Conservation Area and applying for World Heritage Site status.

Whilst the Traditional Leaders of the Country recognise the importance of Suwararoo being a Conservation Area, they have been told that a balanced co-existence can be struck between conservation and development and they must take into consideration the promised monetary gain to the country and its people.

**Contact**: **Save Our Suwararoo Campaign**
Box 649, Rarotonga, Cook Islands
Taporopoaroanga Ipukarea Society Inc: jandp@oyster.net.ck
Takitumu Conservation Area: kakerori@tca.co.ck
Rhys Jones: rhys.jones@agresearch.co.nz

**Action:**
What is needed now is overwhelming support of the Save Our Suwararoo campaign in the form of faxes, emails, media coverage on the immense importance and priceless value of Suwararoo being a carefully managed Conservation Area/National Park/World Heritage Site. Such support should go not just to the organiser but to the Government and Traditional Leaders, and as soon as possible. Write to: Prime Minister Hon. Dr Terepai Maoate -
coso@pmono.office.gov.ck
Minister for the Environment Hon. Norman Geave -
vaine@DPMoffice.gov.ck
Minister for Marine Resources - Hon. Dr Robert Woonton -
woonton@oyster.net.ck
House of Ariki - Pa Ariki nuaoa@oyster.net.ck
Koutu Nui - Te Tiaki Dovce Reid - lit-poly@gatepoly.co.ck
Cook Islands Investment Corporation - Mr Joe Caffrey -
clic@oyster.net.ck

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**Major review of Public Works Act announced**

**MINISTER FOR LAND** Information Matt Robson has announced a major review of the Public Works Act 1981. The Public Works Act affects every New Zealander. It has allowed the Government and local authorities to acquire land for ‘public works’ such as schools, hospitals, roads and airports.

The Review of the Act seeks public input on how the Act should be changed for the new millennium.

“The increasing importance of the Treaty of Waitangi has also put the Crown’s land-related activities under greater scrutiny. The law is clearly showing its age and needs to be overhauled to give the Public Works Act a 21st century perspective,” says Matt Robson.

The public Review raises a number of basic questions:

- what is a ‘public work’?
- how should Treaty of Waitangi obligations be met?
- who should be able to exercise public works powers?
- how should land be acquired?
- who should be compensated and to what extent?
- how should land that’s been acquired for public works be treated if it’s no longer needed?
- how should compliance be enforced, especially where

former public works have been transferred to private organisations that continue to provide public services?

“While the Act has largely been responsible for creating New Zealand’s transport infrastructure, schools, hospitals and other amenities these developments had costs, particularly for Maori. Land was sometimes taken in the face of strong protest.

The Public Works Act has also raised concerns over the impacts on natural areas taken to build facilities.

As a starting point, Land Information New Zealand has produced a discussion paper setting out the background, outlining some issues and suggesting some options.

Consultation begins in December and finishes at the end of March 2001. The Review is expected to take until 2002 when the Government is likely to introduce a Bill to Parliament.

Submissions to the Review can be made:
- using the submission form on the LINZ website: www.pwareview.linz.govt.nz
- emailing a submission to pwareview@linz.govt.nz
- faxing a submission to 04 498 3519;
- posting the submission form in the discussion document to LINZ.

For further information please contact: Senior policy analyst
Karin Knedler on (04) 460 0171 or email: kknedler@linz.govt.nz
CLIMATE CHANGE

Deadlock at The Hague

A SALUTARY CRISIS? November 25, 2000 will doubtless go down in history as a black day for climate protection. But thanks to the European commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the worst was prevented.

The European Union was able - for once - to resist American attempts to literally sabotage the environmental integrity of the Kyoto Protocol.

Adopted three years ago, the protocol remains the only international treaty in existence to compel 38 industrialised nations to reduce “slightly” their emissions of greenhouse gases. Everyone, or almost everyone, agrees that this is no more than a small step towards protecting our climate.

But rather than implementing this accord, some countries have been - and still are - desperately trying to limit even its modest scope and invent all kinds of get-outs, in the process ignoring what is at stake in climate change.

The US, backed by its Japanese, Canadian and Australian allies, is without doubt at the head of this organised chicanery. The failed negotiations in The Hague are irrefutable proof of this. Certainly, no agreement at The Hague was better than a bad agreement.

America and its allies claimed that the “architecture” of The Hague decisions was more important than whether or not emission reductions actually resulted. Yet their proposals on the inclusions of forests in the Kyoto Protocol would have resulted in a long term architecture which may have made it impossible to work out in reality whether emissions were reduced at all. And their proposals in the short term would have resulted in real emission increases.

For those who followed the negotiations in the early hours of that long, black Saturday morning, it is clear that proposals tabled during the final hours represented nothing less than an attempt by the Americans to emasculate the protocol to avoid having to take any real measures to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels within the US.

The proposals would have led to an unavoidable increase in greenhouse gas emissions in the industrialised nations. That made them unacceptable. So, as President of the European Union, Dominique Voynet was right to reject them.

Despite the inevitable differences between some member states, the EU ultimately managed to overcome its own divisions and hold firm against US attempts at railroadin a last minute agreement. The Union has, for now, upheld the environmental integrity of the Kyoto Protocol. At the conclusion of the meeting in The Hague, it is certainly possible to speak of a “crisis”. But in this respect it is worth considering Chinese calligraphy, in which the symbol for “crisis” is made up of two other words: “danger” and “opportunity”.

So this crisis could well be a salutary one. Europe should move now to take advantage of its current determination to reach an accord with the US, which makes real progress in environmental issues without selling the already limited effectiveness of the Kyoto Protocol down the river.

Without any doubt, now is the time to reopen negotiations and reach agreement with the United States, before President Clinton hands over the reins of power to his successor, whoever that may be.

It is also incumbent on both the EU and the US to undo the damage that was done to relations with developing countries who were cut out of key discussions amidst the chaos of that dark Saturday in the Hague. These two moves are essential for the success of the reconvened COP6 in the New Year.

By Bill Hare, Climate Policy Director, Greenpeace International

This story was reprinted from the Greenpeace International website: www.greenpeace.org/-climate/climatecountdown/

Photo: Greenpeace protestors raising awareness about the potential impacts resulting from Climate Change

‘Sea to Sea’ Cycle-ride

As a challenging fundraising activity, ECO supporters will be hopping on their bikes and cycling a colossal 200km in late February - early March of next year. The cyclists will be seeking sponsorship as their added incentive for pushing their muscles to the limit.

We need a few more cyclists to take up this challenge - could you help?
To register your interest, either as a cyclist or as a generous sponsor, please contact the ECO Office.
Legal and Planning Costs hamper Environment Group

BAY OF ISLANDS COASTAL WATCHDOG Incorporated was formed in 1990 from members of Maruia Society, Guardians of the Bay, Coast Protection Group and Opua-Kawakawa River Protection Society. All had the same goal: to protect the water and the land and support only sustainable uses of coastal areas.

We feel our Bay is an interconnected and finite resource - a place which more and more people seek to live in and use. As an 'amenity' the Bays' natural beauty brings tourist dollars and makes 'lifestyle blocks' soar in price. But there will be no more tourists nor quality of lifestyle if we deface and destroy it. It is not only valuable as a destination and real estate. The Bay has its own intrinsic value and mana. From this we gain our spiritual and cultural wealth - it is our heritage and we have chosen to protect it.

We stand for: clean water in our rivers and bays, unspoiled natural habitats and coastal landscapes, public access to coast and rivers, public participation in decision-making and keeping local government on the side of the Environment.

To this end we are deeply involved in on-going submissions to the Far North District Council District plan, the Northland Regional Council Coastal Plan and the reinstatement of the status of Bay of Islands Maritime and Historic Park as a legal entity. Our group has a steady membership of 100. Our resources are very stretched meeting legal and planning costs for the Regional Coastal Plan negotiations. We hope these will are coming to a conclusion after several years.

The main issues left to resolve are: signs; establishing a correlation between land and marine standards (we are the only ones submitting on this issue); integrated management for provision of infrastructure and facilities relating to activities between shore and marine areas, i.e. instead of the greyzone between district and regional council jurisdictions, ensure an overlap and mutual support for the aims of each council's plans.

Key marine management issues revolve around provision for both 'small commercial wharves' and larger port operations. There are questions about sustainable management of existing structures, their expansion into other marine areas and provision for inclusion of outstanding landscape areas (as mapped by Fred Brooks). The group is a member of a working party consulting on moorings and structures in the marine area and is involved in the resource consents process.

We have registered as an interested group to the Ministry for the Environment regarding legal aid funding for environmental groups but we understand they are still working on criteria for who should receive this funding.

Any donations would be much appreciated at this critical stage in our negotiations with Northland Regional Council which will have a lasting impact on the future of the environment of the coastal areas of Northland.

by Helen Pick, Secretary/Treasurer
Bay of Islands Coastal Watchdog Inc.

Action:
To assist the Bay of Islands Coastal Watchdog Inc meet the costs of engaging with Regional bodies for the protection of their local environment, please send your donations to:
Secretary/Treasurer,
Bay of Islands Coastal Watchdog Inc.
36 Matawhai Road, Russell, Bay of Islands.

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Royal Commission on Genetic Modification Hearings scheduled for Environment Groups

ENVIRONMENT GROUPS, which have interested person status received their hearing schedule this week from the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification.

Most groups will be appearing before the Royal Commission in Wellington, although both Greenpeace NZ and SAFE (Save Animals From Exploitation) have opted for their hearings to be held in Auckland.

The hearings are open to the public and all of the environment groups involved would appreciate any support you can give on the day.

The venue for the Auckland hearings is the District Court Building, 3 Kingston Street (off Albert Street). The Wellington formal hearings will take place at Level 11, Dalmuir House, 114 The Terrace. The hearings run from 9.30am to 5pm and are broken into four sessions.

The submission and two witness briefs provided by ECO to the Royal Commission are available from the ECO office for $10 (hardcopy).

Donations to the ECO GE Fund are gratefully welcome.

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Schedule:
29/1  Pesticide Action Network
Safe Food Campaign
30/1  GE-Free NZ (RAGE)
Nelson GE-Free Awareness
31/1  Soil and Health Assn of NZ
1/2   Green Party of Aoteaor/ NZ
7/2   Pacific Institute of Resource Management (PIRM)
Friends of the Earth
8/2   RFBPS - Auckland Central
RFBPS - Marlborough
RFBPS - Nelson/Tasman
9/2   ECO
16/2  SAFE
Greenpeace NZ
When is New Zealand going to ratify the convention?

THE CARTAGENA Protocol set controls on the international movement of genetically modified organisms and products. New Zealand has signed the protocol but has not ratified it. The protocol includes the precautionary approach and is a protocol to the Convention on Biodiversity.

The following item written by South American based environment groups was received by ECO, which seeks support and action from NGOs to stop “Agent Green” biological crop eradication agents:

“The use of biological agents such as Fusarium oxysporum and Pleospora papaveraceae to eradicate illicit crops raises grave concerns for the environment and agriculture in every region of the world. Global environment authorities should urgently act to pull the world back from the slippery slope of allowing use of biological agents to attack crops and biodiversity.

Some governments, particularly in South America, have already taken steps in this direction. But a global response will be required to make regional efforts most effective. Use of the agents, which are designed to be applied massively over hundreds of thousands of hectares will have Transboundary environmental impacts. If the agents are permitted to be used anywhere, backers will argue that it is a precedent and governments across the world will be pressured to risk biodiversity and accept the ill-advised technique of biological eradication.

A very small number of promoters of biological eradication are readying persistent and virulent plant diseases to spray on farmland in South America and Asia. The US and the UN Drug Control Program (UNDCP) maintain that once tested in one region, this practice may be applied globally - wherever illicit crops are sown. Developed in secret facilities by the US and by researchers who worked in the former Soviet Union’s offensive biological weapons program, the agents are ready for use on opium poppy and coca plants. The US says that the agents field tested so far are non-genetically-engineered fungi; but they have created laboratory GMO strains and US and UK funded researchers in central Asia admit considering genetic manipulation to make more lethal types.

An international network of NGOs including the Sunshine Project, the Latin-America Free of Transgenics network, Accion Andina, the Transnational institute, Accion Ecologica, and many more NGOs in Colombia and all over the world are working to stop all use of biological eradication agents. We believe that they are biological weapons that threaten biodiversity and set very dangerous precedents on biological weapons proliferation.

The NGOs of Colombia and Latin America request considering actions on this issue at the First Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Cartagena Protocol on Biodiversity and in forthcoming meetings of the CBD:

1. We suggest that biological agents may be addressed under the Biosecurity Meeting Agenda, item 4.4 of the provisional agenda, related to Protocol Article 18 (see paragraph 16, UNEP/CBD/ ICCP/1/6). We urge governments to condemn the development and any use of genetically engineered organisms for use as Biological Weapons to eradicate crops as a plain violation of the spirit and letter of the Biosafety Protocol.

2. We invite governments specifically to reject the use of biological agents to trigger plant disease epidemics in crops, such as strains of Fusarium oxysporum and Pleospora papaveraceae, whether genetically modified, products of mutagenesis or other breeding, or naturally occurring virulent isolates, to eradicate illicit crops in Colombia and the Andes, considering the effects on human health, and on indigenous and local communities practices and the biological and cultural diversity of the entire Amazon Region.

3. We also invite governments to commit to reject the use of biotechnological development in the production of biological agents as biological weapons.

4. We also suggest that biological eradication agents may be addressed by under the Alien and Invasive Species agenda item at the 6th Meeting of the CBD’s Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), in Montreal from March 12th -16th, 2001. SBSTTA could recommend that Parties prohibit the use of biological eradication agents and forward this recommendation to the 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (The Hague, April 8th - 26th, 2002) where a resolution can be passed. Approved by the Conference of the Parties, the ban would provide a sound basis for national legislation and be a strong deterrent to any country considering use of such agents or pressuring others to use them.

Parties to the CBD may also wish to consider, as was proposed by the African Group at the 5th Conference of the Parties in Nairobi (May, 2000), action against biological eradication under the current CBD Program of Work on Agricultural Biodiversity.

We reject Biological Weapons Proliferation that threatens biodiversity in the Amazon and the rest of the World”

If you would like to add your institution to this statement email: torocalalina@hotmail.com

CAN Membership campaign

Membership applications have been rolling in since the CAN brochure was inserted in the last issue of ECOlink. Our thanks to ECO for giving us the opportunity to profile our membership campaign, and to those who’ve shown their support for CAN by signing up. If you’ve still got your brochure and won’t be using it yourself, we’d love it if you’d give it to a friend or workmate who will.
Conferences and Events
The Organic River Festival
20-22 January 2001
Kimberley Reserve, Levin

The Organic River Festival is an event organised by OrGro. The Kapiti Horowhenua Organic Industry Cluster Group.

The group consists of growers, wholesalers, retailers, educators and research institution’s representatives and is facilitated by Enterprise Horowhenua Inc, an economic development agency.

OrGro is a non profit group run by EHI to promote the organic industry.

Stall sites (including campsite) are priced at $150 for three days, powered sites are $200. Campsites cost $30pp for 3 nights and a family concession price of $60 is available. Daily visitors will need to pay just $2.

For more information, contact Georgie Pate at Enterprise Horowhenua Inc, PO Box 197, Levin, email: georgie@enterprisehorowhenua.co.nz, phone or fax 06 367 0524.

It is recommended you visit the following website: www.orgo.co.nz

Summer School of Activism for Social Change
16 - 19 February 2001
The Kotare Education Centre, Hoteo North, Wellsford

The Kotare Trust’s Summer school of activism provides an opportunity for individuals to participate in a variety of workshops. The workshops have been tailored to explore your creative side using art, drama and music. The aim of the workshops is to provide a platform from which investigation into different ways of effecting political and social change locally, nationally and internationally can be undertaken.

For more information on the ‘Summer School of Activism’ or on the Kotare Trust contact:
Kotare Trust, Ground Floor 26 Anzac Avenue, Auckland (09) 379 8345. registration for the Summer School need to be returned to the Kotare Trust by January 30, 2001.

ECO receives grant from the Macarthy Trust

ECO WISHES to express it’s gratitude to the Thomas George Macarthy Trust for the $2500 contribution towards archiving costs for ECO Resource Centre material. The money will ensure archive material can be stored for up to two years in a secure facility, which is accessible within 24 hours.

The Public Trust, which administers the Thomas George Macarthy Trust grants distributed funding in 1999 under a variety of classifications. Funding is made available to early childhood care programmes, youth organisations, education organisations, social services and a variety of other community-based initiatives.

To contact the Public Trust for gathering information on the Macarthy Trust and its next funding round:
Public Trust, PO Box 5024, wellington or phone: 04 474 3752 or fax: 04 474 3784.

ECO plans workshops for 2001

LAST MONTH, the New Zealand Lottery Grants board approved a grant application made by ECO under the International Year of the Volunteer. The funding was allocated for a series of workshops that ECO intend to run around the country in the first half of the new year.

The grant received from the NZ Lottery Grants Board was for $2500 (GST excl), which provides a sizeable ‘chunk’ of the overall estimated costs for the project.

At this stage of the planning, ECO intends to hold the workshops in most main centres around the country. It is hoped some of them will be staged at the Universities and that the local environment groups will take an active interest in the topics raised.

The main focus of the workshop will be volunteer recruitment, retention and programme development. In the case of many environment groups, volunteers are needed for hands-on ‘grassroot’ activities, whilst other groups may find the topic useful since it translates directly to group membership retention and capacity-building.

It is hoped a volunteer manual, which has been undergoing development since July this year will be ready in time for the workshops. ECO Volunteer, Tony Gazley has been researching the manual with this in mind.

A programme for the workshops will be developed in January. If you would like to be kept informed about the workshops or if you have the time to help organise or publicise the workshops, please contact the ECO office:
ECO, PO Box 11-057, Wellington, telephone 04 385 7545, or email: eco@reddfish.co.nz

GE Seminar
7.30 - 10 pm, 7 February 2001
MacLauran Lecture Theatre, Victoria University, Wellington

Organised by the Pacific Institute of Resource Management (PIRM), this highly informative seminar will be chaired by Rod Alley. Seminar speakers include: Vandana Shiva, Beatrix Tappeser, Edward Goldsmith and Francis Weaver.

For more information, please contact: PIRM, PO Box 12 125, Wellington or phone 04 473 6623 or email: pirmoffice@clear.net.nz

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Submissions

- MFISH: Cast your line! Sounding out NZ views on the future of recreational fishing, submission by 20 December
- Justice and Electoral Committee: Bay of Plenty Regional Council (Māori Constituency en.powering) Bill, submissions by 12 February 2001

Marine Organiser needed

ECO are seeking applications from interested persons for the Marine organiser role.

You will need strong organisational skills, an interest in promoting the protection of the environment as well as patience, judgement and good interpersonal skills. Computer literacy and familiarity in Microsoft Access, as well as strong writing skills are desirable (preferably desktop publishing skills). The position will involve some fundraising activities.

Please send a copy of your resume including any experience you have that relates to work in the not-for-profit sector or the environment (paid or unpaid) to the ECO Office.

- I would like to support ECO by:
  - subscribing as a ‘Friend of ECO’
    - $35 p.a. (GST incl.) ‘Friends of ECO’ receive this quarterly newsletter, mailings and invitations to ECO gatherings.
  - subscribing as a sustaining ‘Friend of ECO’
    - $112.50 p.a. (GST inclusive).
  - subscribing as a corporate ‘Friend of ECO’
    - $500 p.a. (GST inclusive).
  - subscribing as a student ‘Friend of ECO’
    - $20 p.a. (GST inclusive).
  - making a regular automatic payment
    - send me a form and details today.
  - contributing services or goods:

- making a donation (donations over $5 are tax deductible)
  - $25  $50  $100  $  

- Total enclosed: $ 

- Join ECO

Please place me on your e-mail list for notices and information
-or contact us by e-mail at eco@redfish.co.nz

- Please send information on becoming a member of ECO.
Membership is by application for groups involved in the protection of the environment. Subscriptions for membership organisations are determined by the size of the organisation:
1-100 members: $80 p.a.
101-1000 members: $125 p.a.
1000+ members: $430 p.a. (all GST inclusive).

Sent by ECO
P O Box 11 057
Wellington
Aotearoa/New Zealand