



Greening our way out of the recession

ECO Annual Conference 2009

Friday 10 - Sunday 12 July
Karanga Camp, 79 Te Henga Road, Swanson, Waitakere

ECO Member groups, Friends, public officials, students and others are set to gather in Waitakere, Auckland in July for the ECO Annual Conference. The theme of this year's event is 'Greening our way out of the recession'.

With the world in the middle of a financial and environmental crisis, the need to transition to a green economy has become more and more apparent. Most of the environmental issues we face are also economic issues. Solving the current climate crisis must involve changing the way our economy works, reducing dependence on fossil fuels and making agriculture more sustainable.

The ECO conference will focus on how investment in sustainable technologies and 'natural' infrastructure will not only benefit the environment, but also lead to economic growth and create jobs.

The 3-day conference will be opened by former Green MP, Nandor Tanczos, and Ralph Chapman of Victoria University.

Other speakers include Sustainable Business Network CEO Rachel Brown and Wayne Cartwright of Auckland University, who will discuss sustainable business in New Zealand.



ECO Conference 2007. Photo by ECO

Friday evening will feature a political panel, with representatives from National, Labour, the Greens and the Maori Party discussing their parties' plans for green investment and other key issues.

Saturday will see a focus on the Resource Management Act (RMA) reforms, in a panel discussion with representatives from the Ministry for the Environment and interested NGOs.

ECO member groups will have an opportunity to introduce themselves and talk about current projects on Saturday evening. Several practical workshops will also be available throughout the weekend.

ECO's AGM will take place during the conference, starting at 3.30pm on Saturday. A number of field trips is also being organised for Saturday afternoon, including bush walking and a trip around local organic farms.

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Programme and registration form inside

Please send your registration form to ECO, PO Box 11-057, Wellington or fax to 04 385 7545



Kiwi organisations unite to tackle climate change

By Cath Wallace

To encourage appropriate action in response to climate change in the lead up to the crucial UN climate change conference in Copenhagen this December, organisations nation-wide are uniting through the New Zealand Climate Action Partnership (NZCAP).

New Zealand Climate Action Partnership is focused on bringing together local and national groups, businesses and all levels of government to show New Zealand's political leaders the public demand for effective action against climate change on the national and global level.

The partnership welcomes the New Zealand government's recent announcement that it will consult New Zealanders before setting greenhouse gas reduction targets in August. Oxfam's Lauren Sinreich of the group's steering committee stresses, "The time is now to take multi-level action that really shows our political leaders we need a stance that provides a real chance of avoiding catastrophic climate change, which could be brought on by as little as a two degree global temperature increase."

To minimize the risk of run-away climate change, New Zealand Climate Action Partnership supports a greenhouse gas reductions target for New Zealand and developed nations of at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020. The partnership plans to help recruit 350,000 signatures of support by the time of the Copenhagen conference.

Greenpeace has launched its Sign On campaign at www.signon.org.nz. This aims to build up a large number of New Zealanders who back a 40 percent by 2020 emissions reduction target and who will ask John Key to go to Copenhagen with the 40 percent target for New Zealand.

The core of the campaign is a website because this is the most efficient way to build support. Greenpeace is also gaining support from people on the street.

The partnership seeks to incorporate a range of sectors including industry, agriculture, energy, academics, unions and churches in order to broaden climate change dialogue and action. Organisations currently represented on its steering committee include Oxfam New Zealand, Greenpeace Aotearoa New Zealand, 350 Aotearoa, and the Sustainability Trust.

Oxfam New Zealand's Executive Director Barry Coates said, "For too long climate change has been seen solely as an issue for environmental groups. But the fact is that climate change affects each and every one of us across the world."



Ambassadors for Greenpeace's Sign On Campaign gather at the campaign launch function. © Greenpeace / Nigel Marple

Coates added, "This coalition is about bringing together churches, anti-poverty groups, trade unions...and Joe Public...in the spirit of fulfilling our moral responsibility to poor and vulnerable communities and to future generations."

Oxfam is asking the Government to work together with other developed countries to:

- Work within the United Nations to ensure that the needs of the world's poorest people are at the heart of a new global climate change deal.
- Cut our emissions first, fastest and furthest so that global emissions peak by 2015 and fall at least 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.
- Provide the money and technology needed, independent of existing aid commitments, to help vulnerable people in poor countries adapt to changing climates.
- Reduce emissions to at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020.

New Zealand Climate Action Partnership will be disseminating information and promoting events to increase climate change awareness and action leading up to Copenhagen.

The partnership will focus its efforts on salient dates and events including a national Hui in late July involving a range of sectors, the UN Summit on 22 September, the 350.org Global Day of Action on 24 October, the Greenpeace-led march on 28 November and a global day of action during the Copenhagen negotiations on December 12.

New Zealand gains two Fossil of the Day awards

By Cath Wallace

New Zealand gained two 'Fossil of the Day' awards at the recent climate talks in Bonn, Germany at the beginning of June.

The Climate Action Network (CAN), a coalition of over 450 NGOs worldwide, gives out three 'Fossil of The Day' awards to the countries who perform the worst during the several days negotiations at the UN climate change conference. They vote for three worst countries judged to have done their 'best' to block progress in the negotiations in the days of talks.

New Zealand gained its third prize award at the 2 June, announcements. It received the award for refusing to table a mid-term national emissions reduction target at the Plenary discussion on Kyoto targets and for saying that it will table a target in August. CAN acknowledged that New Zealand had dismantled much of its domestic climate change programme including: raiding the public transport budget to build more roads, overturning a partial ban on thermal power stations, abandoning a phase out of inefficient light bulbs, and further subsidising fossil fuel exploration.

"New Zealand once claimed to be a leader on tackling climate change, then was in the middle of the pack, but it's now lagging behind."

The Second Prize went to Russia. Russian representative Sergey Tulinov said that Russia will continue insisting on including dangerous and inefficient nuclear activities in the Joint Implementation and Clean Development Mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol. Russia also won the award because, since 2004, the greenhouse gas emissions in Russia have continued to grow, not decline.

Saudi Arabia was awarded First Place. While other countries are mainly concerned about the environmental impacts of climate change, Saudi Arabia is most concerned with the impacts of climate change action on their pockets.

As CAN noted: Have you heard about the insurance mechanism that small island states are asking for? The one that they need in case their country goes under water, and they can't adapt anymore? Well, now Saudi Arabia is requesting a similar insurance mechanism that would pay for any loss in their oil trade.

More information

For further information see www.climatenetwork.org. Geoff Key from ECO and Greenpeace NZ is also blogging from the Bonn Meetings. His comments can be found at www.weblog.greenpeace.org.nz

Manado Declaration commits to Marine Protected Areas

By Barry Weeber

The World Oceans Conference in May at Manado, Indonesia, ended with a strong Declaration about the impacts of climate change on the oceans. The Conference was attended by high-level representatives from around 90 countries.

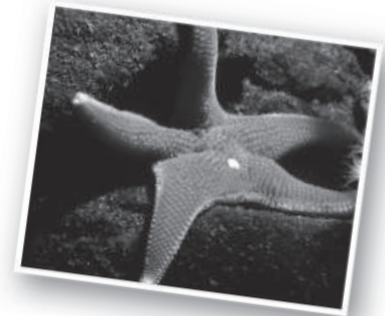


Photo courtesy of ASOC

The Manado Declaration calls for the establishment of Marine Protected Areas to help build resilience within the oceans to withstand the effects of climate change.

Duncan Currie of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition (DSCC), who attended the meeting said: "Building resilience means protecting vulnerable areas from highly damaging practices such as bottom trawling and we will take this Declaration to [upcoming] meetings to inform the measures they put in place in relationship to this practice."

The meeting, which was attended by US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, considered the 2007 IPCC report¹ which found that the oceans have absorbed some 80 percent of the heat added to the climate system and that average sea temperatures have therefore increased down to at least 3000 metres. The oceans are expected to continue heating up for more than a millennium which is likely to result in changes to currents, species distribution, and the chemistry of the water, through ocean acidification.

Paragraph 15 of the Manado Declaration says:

"We resolve to further establish and effectively manage marine protected areas, including representative resilient networks, in accordance with international law, as reflected in UNCLOS, and on the basis of the best available science, recognizing the importance of their contribution to ecosystem goods and services, and to contribute to the effort to conserve biodiversity, sustainable livelihoods and to adapt to climate change."

Full text of the Manado Ocean Declaration can be found at www.savethehighseas.org

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007) The Physical Science Basis – Summary for Policymakers. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report.

IUCN Director-General visits New Zealand

By Cath Wallace

Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), spoke in Christchurch and Wellington on the 4 and 5 June on the case for the protection of ecosystems, biodiversity and natural resources in a time of global recession. ECO co-hosted the Wellington event.

The audience of experts, students and others heard about the work of IUCN, the world's oldest and largest global environmental network which was established in 1948.

IUCN is an extraordinary body in that its membership of over 1000 is of both governments and non-government organisations. Almost 11,000 volunteer scientists and other experts located in more than 160 countries provide the unpaid membership of six expert commissions.

IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. Six commissions cover Environmental Law, Ecosystem Management, Species Survival, Protected Areas, Education and Communication, and Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP). The Union's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, in Switzerland. New Zealanders have been involved since 1950.

Two New Zealanders are members of IUCN's globally elected Council - Aroha Mead chairs CEESP and Diana Shand is one of three Oceania councillors.

While in Christchurch, Julia Marton-Lefèvre visited Antarctica New Zealand and, with several IUCN members including ECO, met with Lou Sanson and other staff including Neil Gilbert, who heads the Committee on Environmental Protection of the Antarctic Treaty's Environmental Protocol.

A number of organisations with an interest in Antarctica have been keen to see IUCN become more active on Antarctic matters, and ECO last year initiated discussion at the IUCN World Conservation Congress about Antarctic conservation matters and how IUCN could be better involved.

This theme, and also IUCN continuing to work on governance of the high seas and its role in Pacific conservation, was picked up with the Director General in an



IUCN Director General Julia Marton-Lefèvre speaks at a public seminar in Wellington in June. Photo by Barry Weeber.

“The importance of finding funding for work on Antarctica, the high seas, invasive species, and work in the Pacific were agreed.”

IUCN members' meeting in Wellington on 5 June. The importance of finding funding for work on Antarctica, on the high seas, on invasive species, and work in the Pacific were agreed.

Taholo Kami, IUCN's regional director for Oceania, informed the meeting about the Pacific Ocean 2020 Challenge which he has pitched to the Pacific Rim countries. This is for them to recognise the importance to themselves and their economies of the conservation of the Pacific Ocean and for them to fund a \$1 billion programme to control over-fishing and fishing impacts, to control invasive species, to act on climate change, and to regulate damaging human activities and effects.

ECO hopes that New Zealand will look favourably on this challenge and work with other countries to protect the Pacific and its ecosystems.

For further information about IUCN visit www.iucn.org and www.iucn.org/where/oceania

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Work programme for Phase II of RMA reforms announced

By Cath Wallace

The Minister for the Environment, Nick Smith, has announced the broad direction of the Phase II 'reforms' of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). Phase I which is currently before Parliament is due to be passed in July.

He said in May that the government's intent is to give 'greater central Government direction' and 'closer alignment with other legislation' to the RMA.

The Minister said that Phase II will have 10 related work streams. "The first four work streams involve greater central Government direction to improve management of aquaculture, infrastructure, urban design and water. There is also a major job to develop the scope, functions and structure of the proposed Environmental Protection Authority."

"A further four work streams involve better alignment of the Resource Management Act processes with those of the Building, Conservation, Forests, and Historic Places Acts. The final work stream involves a number of generic RMA processes that were too complex to include in Phase I of the reforms."

ECO understands that the so-called 'better alignment' of these processes may subjugate Conservation Act considerations to the government's fast tracking agenda and may diminish the chances to protect biodiversity and the coast.

This could also involve a loss of DOC's advocacy function which has been central to protecting biodiversity. Amongst the key projects recently involving the Department are:

- Opposing TrustPower's Wairau River hydro scheme;
- Defending the Buller water conservation order on the Gowan River;
- Opposing Meridian Energy's proposed Mokihinui River hydro dam.

The Department has already had its biodiversity advocacy limited by Cabinet decisions.

Nick Smith also implicitly acknowledged the indecent and reckless haste of the first phase of so-called reforms. He said "due to the detailed and complex nature of the second phase of the RMA reform programme, work will progress at a more modest pace. It will involve a number of advisory groups and significant opportunities for public consultation and engagement. There is also a lot of detail to work through and it will take time to get it right."

The Minister has also announced a new process for freshwater reform. "Reform of New Zealand's fresh water management is needed to address deteriorating water quality and poor incentives for water allocation and storage," Nick Smith said.

"This work is being led through a collaborative process by the Land and Water Forum involving major water users in agriculture, industry and power generation as well as major environmental and recreational groups. This process will run over the next year and the Government will seek public comment before making any policy decisions." ECO is a member of the Land and Water Forum.

The Minister said, "This approach reflects a new style of collaborative environmental governance outlined in National's 2006 Bluegreen vision document and 2008 election policy."

The Minister of Agriculture David Carter said, "The focus of the new direction will be on water quality, water quantity, allocation, and infrastructure including water storage."

The Government is indicating that building water storage will continue. "While this policy work is being advanced, water infrastructure development will continue to be an important part of the work of the recently announced National Infrastructure Advisory Board."

Mr Carter said, "We need to ensure that the changes we make are workable and carefully balance New Zealand's important environmental reputation with the potential for ongoing economic growth from the primary sector."

Ministers want the Land and Water Forum to report by April next year.



Highly polluted Lake Okareka, Rotorua. Photo courtesy of Alan Kilgour.

Budget: Cuts threaten species and destroy carbon sinks

By Barry Weeber and Cath Wallace

This National led government's first budget is environmentally perverse and will damage species and the climate. The government is focusing on the fiscal crisis and forgetting about the much more profound environmental crisis.

ECO is disappointed at the cut by more than 5 percent of the budget (\$54 million over five years) of the Department of Conservation (DOC). It will mean that 30 threatened species will lose protection and 45,000 hectares will now not have possums controlled, leading to ecosystem losses and a loss of carbon absorbing capacity, because of tree loss.

This is environmentally and fiscally perverse, because protected conservation land could have potential benefits as a sink of greenhouse gases. At the same time as the budget cut DOC's funding, the government is subsidising climate change polluters to the tune of \$471 million.

Further cuts occurred at the Ministry for the Environment, Biosecurity NZ, and Ministry of Fisheries. What kind of topsy-turvy world are we in when we subsidise polluters and remove funding for environmental protection?

The Budget did not re-gear the economy to deal with the challenges ahead on climate change and the asymptotic decline of oil availability.

The main environmentally positive move is the home insulation project involving \$323.3 million over four years.

It will have many positive spin-offs for New Zealanders, including better health, lower energy use, benefits for climate change, employment, and positive education outcomes. Funding is tagged to fit houses built before 2000 with insulation and clean heating. As acknowledged by the Finance Minister, Bill English, the work on that policy was done by the Green Party.

The Greens' estimate that the new funding will create 2,700 new jobs, and preserve the jobs that already exist within Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA)'s \$79.6m Energy Wise Home Insulation Scheme. About 180,000 of the estimated 600,000 poorly or uninsulated homes will be eligible for grants over four years.

Currently about 19,000 homes are insulated each year under current programmes. This funding package is expected to increase the number of homes insulated to 27,500 in 2009-10,

40,500 in 2010-11, then 52,000 and 60,500 in the two following years.

An assessment by EECA will establish how much insulation each house needs and homeowners will decide how much they want done. Grants of a third of the cost of home insulation are being offered up to a maximum of \$1300. Community Services Card holders can get up to \$1800 for home insulation.

Homeowners will be able to meet the remainder of the assessed cost through loans provided by electricity companies, councils and banks. Money can be repaid through power bills, council rates or mortgages.

A further \$500 will be available for homes already sufficiently insulated, for buying clean heating devices, including approved log burners, pellet burners, heat pumps or flued gas heaters. Community service card holder can get a further \$1200 for heating. The heating grants are for fixed amounts rather than a third of the cost.

The Ministry of Fisheries suffered a cut of \$7.784m per year over four years. Included is a cut of \$1million for observers for the poorly covered inshore fisheries, an increase that was only agreed last year after consideration of Hector's and Maui's dolphin. A total of \$683,000 is cut from environmental research projects on impacts of fishing on protected species.

The budget confirms the shift of transport spending away from public transport, cycling and pedestrian ways and other alternatives to roads. Currently for every dollar spent on alternatives to cars (for example, buses, trains, walking and cycling) more than \$7 is spent on roads.

The Ministry for the Environment has suffered a range of changes. A number of programmes have been axed including the Carbon Neutral Public Service (programme), the Bioethics Council, and Recycling in Public Places. This has resulted in the loss of 86 positions, or a quarter of the Ministry's capacity. Environment Minister Nick Smith said the previous government had left a \$26 million hole in the ministry's budget.

The budget has cut nearly 2 percent from Environmental Policy advice which includes \$3 million for changes to the RMA, creation of the Environmental Protection Agency, and an additional \$900k for freshwater quality and allocation.

More information about the budget can be found at www.treasury.govt.nz/budget/2009

Wild Rivers: free-flowing or dammed to death

By Quentin Duthie

Wild Rivers provide inspiration to all New Zealanders. Flowing unobstructed from high mountain snowfield or rocky peak, they travel through bush and gorge before spilling into rapids, wetlands and braids on the plains before eventually surrendering to the sea.

Wild Rivers are ecosystems at the heart of our conservation land, they sustain and control the waters that replenish the lowlands where we all live, and they provide important recreation and tourism enjoyment.

And they are protected because they are in conservation land or have Water Conservation Orders (WCOs) on them. Or are they? With only 15 WCOs in existence, and hydro dams proposed on rivers like the Mokihinui (which ranks at the top of the list of most important rivers for natural values), it is becoming clear that we risk losing something special, and losing it fast.

Large-scale hydro and irrigation schemes are being plotted on maps to become indelibly drawn on the landscape. About 30 are currently proposed, and many more are queuing up to join them in the rush for electricity and dairying. Damming a Wild River fundamentally alters its wildness, its charm; but more than that, it damages its ecology and its natural landscape.

On page 10 of this ECOLink, hydro in Tasmania, Australia is mentioned. Tasmania has a similar latitude and climate to New Zealand, with a post-glacial and riverine topography. It once had numerous wild rivers running free from mountains to sea. Incremental damming of Tasmania's rivers throughout the 20th century, including the loss of jewels like the rare pink quartzite beach of Lake Pedder, led to a proposal to dam the last major unobstructed wild river – the Franklin. Tasmania, indeed Australia, suddenly woke up to the finality of what was being lost.



Mokihinui River. Photo by Quentin Duthie.

“Wild rivers are not renewable. New Zealand’s remaining wild rivers must be protected for future generations as national treasures.”

Wild Rivers Campaign vision statement

Wild rivers are not renewable. New Zealand’s remaining wild rivers must be protected for future generations as national treasures.

Key messages

- Wild rivers need the same protection as national parks.
- New Zealand’s energy future does not need to sacrifice our remaining wild rivers.
- Wild rivers are free to be enjoyed by everyone.
- New Zealanders are passionate about wild rivers, which are central to our national identity and international reputation.

If we do not engage in active protection of our remaining wild rivers, New Zealand could end up like Tasmania. Damming a wild river is irreversible – we can’t make a modified river wild again. You can drain the water from a dam, but the river is forever altered. Water is a renewable resource if used sustainably, but Wild Rivers are not. There is a finite number of Wild Rivers remaining in New Zealand, and each one dammed is one fewer left running free.

ECO and its member group the Federated Mountain Clubs have joined with Forest & Bird and other national environmental and recreational organisations to initiate a Wild Rivers campaign. At our inaugural meeting in Murchison in April, we developed a shared vision and key messages for our wild rivers (see above).

This campaign will unfold over the next few months, and ECO member groups will be asked to become as actively involved as you can. We’ll need your stories, your action and your willingness to get wet for the cause. Together we can achieve secure and durable protection for our remaining wild rivers.

More information

Please contact Wild Rivers Campaign co-ordinator, Debs Martin, on 03 545 8222 or d.martin@forestandbird.org.nz or Quentin Duthie, quentin.duthie@gmail.com

Green New Deal globally

By Barry Weeber

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been promoting a green new deal, known as the 'green economy initiative'.

UNEP are promoting this as they see that mobilizing and re-focusing the global economy towards investments in clean technologies and 'natural' infrastructure (such as forests and soils) is the best bet for real growth, combating climate change and triggering an employment boom in the 21st century.

Global economic growth over the past 50 years has been accompanied by accelerated environmental decline. From 1981 to 2005, the global GDP more than doubled, in contrast to the 60 percent of the world's ecosystems being degraded or used in an unsustainable manner.

Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, in commenting on last year's financial, fuel and food crises described the situation as "part of a wider market failure triggering ever deeper and disturbing losses of natural capital and nature-based assets coupled with an over-reliance of finite, often subsidized fossil fuels."

He said there were "enormous economic, social and environmental benefits likely to arise from combating climate change and re-investing in natural infrastructure - benefits ranging from new green jobs in clean tech and clean energy businesses up to ones in sustainable agriculture and conservation-based enterprises."

"The alternative is more boom and bust cycles; a climate-stressed world and a collapse of fish stocks and fertile soils up to forest ecosystems - vast, natural 'utilities' that for a fraction of the cost of machines store water and carbon, stabilize soils; sustain indigenous and rural livelihoods and harbor genetic resources to the value of trillions of dollars a year," said Mr Steiner.

Pavan Sukdhev, a senior banker from Deutsche Bank who is seconded to UNEP said "investments will soon be pouring back into the global economy - the question is whether they go into the old, extractive, short-term economy of yesterday or a new green economy that will deal with multiple challenges while generating multiple economic opportunities for the poor and the well-off alike."

UNEP are promoting this approach so "we move from mining the planet to managing and re-investing in it," said Mr Steiner.

The Green Economy initiative has three pillars - valuing and mainstreaming nature's services into national and

international accounts; employment generation through green jobs and implementing the policies; instruments and market signals able to accelerate a transition to a Green Economy.

Only a fraction of national income is spent on the environment. The global annual spending on the environment is estimated to be at best US\$10 billion per year. This is in contrast to the US\$60-90 billion needed for those environmental investments that contribute directly to poverty reduction alone.

In one to two years the initiative should deliver for governments - North and South - a comprehensive assessment and tool kit for making the necessary transition.

Six Priority Sectors Underpinning a Global Green New Deal

The six sectors likely to generate the biggest transition in terms of economic returns, environmental sustainability and job creation are:

- Clean energy and clean technologies including recycling
- Rural energy, including renewables and sustainable biomass
- Sustainable agriculture, including organic agriculture
- Ecosystem Infrastructure
- Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD)
- Sustainable cities including planning, transportation and green building projects

For further information see www.unep.org

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PASS IT ON!

Feedback sought on Green New Deal package

By Tushara Kodikara

The upcoming ECO conference in July is themed 'Greening our way out of a recession'. The idea behind this is that economic and environmental recovery can happen in partnership. Many countries are beginning to embrace this notion, including the United States of America. President Obama will spend billions on green investment over the next four years. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) also discussed a Green New Deal at its recent meeting in February.



Here in New Zealand, the Green Party has recently released a proposed stimulus package as part of its 'Green New Deal' project. Their Green New Deal is styled on President Roosevelt's 'New Deal' package in 1933. The New Deal was designed to pull America out its economic woes during the Great Depression by giving relief to the unemployed and reforming business and financial practices. However, the Green New Deal not only aims to stimulate economic activity and create jobs, but also tackles environmental and social well-being.

Not as radical or comprehensive as the original New Deal, the Greens' stimulus package includes measures in energy efficiency, transport efficiency, waterways protection, state housing and community sector initiatives. The Green Party have estimated that the total package would cost \$3.3 billion over the next 3 years and is estimated to create almost 18,000 jobs directly and 43,000 indirectly. The breakdown of the total package is:

- \$297m for home insulation, school upgrades, business upgrades, Crown loans and training;
- \$1b (redirected spending) for better public transport and cycling (producing 40 percent more jobs per \$1million than motorways);
- \$600m for protecting waterways;
- \$2b for 6000 new sustainable state houses
- \$439m for community and economic development, including community waste minimisation

The home insulation package announced in the budget is included in these figures. You have to be slightly sceptical with these estimates, as the Greens do not have access to the Government's range of economic planning tools. While the data used in the package is drawn from a range of sources, the above estimations are only approximations.

The Greens have already succeeded in convincing the Government to allocate \$323 million over four years in this year's budget for retrofitting of houses, this allowing home owners to improve living conditions in their homes and thus reduce their household carbon emissions and energy costs. Retrofitting also has many health benefits. Because there is no guarantee that the savings will be spent on environmental goods (rather than bads), complementary sustainability education and incentives are also required.

"The Green Party have estimated that the total package ... would create almost 18,000 jobs directly and 43,000 indirectly"

While the Greens have released this costed stimulus package and have achieved some of it in the Budget, the ideas behind it are nothing new for them or for the environment movement. It involves heavy investment in green infrastructure and could pull the country out of the current recession in the right direction. However, it does show that economic and environmental recovery can indeed happen in partnership.

New Zealand also needs to respond to climate change and peak oil. The Greens admit their stimulus is only a start and may need to include approaches to forestry and pest control amongst other things. They have written to ECO asking for feedback from ECO member groups.

Give your feedback on the Green New Deal package online at www.greennewdeal.org.nz



Photo by Alex DeClerk

News and lessons from the Tasmanian forest campaign

By Caitlin Carew

I recently returned to New Zealand after three years spent living in Tasmania, where I was involved in the campaign to protect the state's last remaining old-growth forests from being clear-felled and wood-chipped. The latest news from the forest frontlines is deeply distressing for those of us who have witnessed these majestic and ancient forests firsthand.

In early May, 60 police assisted Forestry Tasmania to break up a long-standing protest camp and declare an exclusion zone over the Upper Florentine valley. The Upper Florentine lies about 80km west of Hobart, and is ringed by mountains that are protected as part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. It is an area of tall wet eucalypt forest, dark tannin-stained rivers and is home to many threatened species including the Tasmanian wedge-tail eagle. In a case of boundary-rigging that will be familiar to conservationists here, the Upper Florentine valley has been left out of the World Heritage Area because of the economic value of its forest. Logging is now imminent.

Meanwhile the logging giant Gunns Ltd has been pushing ahead with preparations to build its \$2 billion pulp mill in the north of the state, despite still not having secured funding for the project, or all the consents. Gunns has recently been shopping overseas for an investor, and campaigners have been active in lobbying international financiers about the environmental and social impacts of the development.

No Australian banks will touch the project – Gunns' long term financier ANZ refused to provide funding after strenuous lobbying from customers (protests outside ANZ branches in New Zealand also added to the pressure). The pulp mill, which has been approved for

construction via inadequate and fast-tracked approval processes, would accelerate native forest logging, release chlorine-based effluent into Bass Strait, and threaten human health, marine life, and the tourism and fishing industries.

Tasmania has developed a global reputation for environmental destruction as a result of their continued clear-felling of old growth forests, and the corruption and conflicts of interest that cloud the decision-making process.

When I was in Tasmania I regularly heard from local conservationists that they were envious of New Zealand's record of environmental protection, particularly our stand to end native forest logging almost a decade ago. At the time I was proud, but returning to New Zealand I have been reminded of the precarious situation that our wild and precious places are in.

While our forests on Crown land are protected from logging, conservationists here are fighting battles on numerous development fronts, most notably coal mining and hydro dams.

The Resource Management Act (RMA) Amendment Bill currently being rammed through Parliament will push up the costs for community organisations and erode their ability to fight inappropriate development. I recently submitted on the Bill and found that the MPs were particularly interested in my Tasmanian experience

and the perception that New Zealand currently has good environmental regulation. I made the point that the RMA amendments that facilitate more unsustainable development only serve to undermine this, to the cost of our environment and our economy.

Environment Minister Nick Smith recently announced phase two of the RMA reform process, which includes a plan to 'align' the Conservation Act with the reformed RMA, in order to streamline decision-making processes for developments that affect conservation land. This looks set to weaken both the Conservation Act and the RMA.



Activists in the Upper Florentine valley during the police raids in May

“Tasmania has developed a global reputation for environmental destruction as a result of their continued clear-felling of old growth forests”

Public Comment: Sub-Antarctic Marine Protected Area

By Barry Weeber



Upper Florentine forest from above. Photo by Rob Blakers.

Can the NZ conservation movement learn from the Tasmanian situation? The movement in Tasmania is large, strong and well organised. By virtue of a very different environmental history, groups like the Wilderness Society have a grassroots membership thousands-strong who are engaged as activists. They can be mobilised at short notice to paint banners, turn up to demonstrations, organise media stunts and lobby their politicians. And ironically, following the massive non-violent direct action protests that saved the iconic Franklin River in 1982, the Tasmanian government has not constructed any new hydro dams in the state.

“The conservation movement in Tasmania is large, strong and well organised.”

In contrast, NZ groups seem to be struggling despite a core of committed and experienced conservationists. Perhaps the longevity of ‘more-good-than-bad’ Conservation and Resource Management Acts over the last 20 years has seen us distracted by fighting the subtle fights.

With climate change action becoming more pressing by the day, renewed threats of hydro-dams and new coal mines, and major changes to our conservation laws themselves, we need to attract a much broader and more active membership to the movement. How to do this? I hope the ECO conference can start a conversation about how we can strengthen and re-energise the conservation movement in the face of a changing conservation landscape.

Caitlin Carew is an environmental activist living in Wellington. She has worked for the Wilderness Society and Sustainable Living Tasmania in Hobart and in 2004 completed a thesis on the philosophical underpinnings of NZ's Conservation Act.

The Sub-Antarctic Marine Protection Planning Forum is inviting public comment on a consultation document describing proposed options for marine protected areas around New Zealand's Sub-Antarctic Islands.

The Forum was established last year under the Marine Protected Areas Strategy to consider options for area-based protection of marine biodiversity in the territorial seas (12 nautical miles offshore) around the Campbell, Antipodes, and Bounty Island groups. Phase Two will follow at a later stage and look at protection in the EEZ (out to 200 nautical miles) in the remainder of the sub-antarctic region.

The Forum is comprised of representatives from a range of stakeholder groups including Maori, commercial fishers, and environmental (including ECO) and science interests.

“The approach taken by the Forum and the proposed options identified in the consultation document reflect the international significance and World Heritage status of these islands and their surrounding waters, and the existing uses and interests in the area,” said Mr Beverley, the Forum's Chairperson.

Only the Bounty Islands have had fishing within the territorial sea while the Antipodes and Campbell Island have had no fishing. Fishing around the Bounty Islands has so far been restricted to ling long-lining, mainly outside the territorial seas. Information from observer coverage shows this fishery damages a range of benthic species including corals, sponges, and other long-lived species.

There are two alternative proposals for each island: one proposal is for full protection of the surrounding territorial seas in marine reserves while an alternative proposal by fishing industry members is for partial marine reserves around the islands.

Have your say

Visit www.biodiversity.govt.nz/seas/biodiversity/protected/mpa_consultation.html for information about the Forum's proposal and details on how to comment.

Once the Forum has received and considered comments, it will present final recommendations to the Ministers of Conservation and Fisheries for their consideration.

The period for comment closes on Friday 31st July. Either email to: mpa@biodiversity.govt.nz Or post to: Subantarctic Marine Protection Planning Forum Consultation, Department of Conservation, PO Box 10 420, Wellington 6143, or Fax: 04 381 3057.

Clean Stream Waiheke Ltd

By Clean Stream Waiheke

Clean Stream Waiheke Limited (CSWL) is a registered charitable company wholly owned by The Waste Resources Trust (WRT), a Waiheke based charitable trust concerned with protecting the environment and local economic development.

Since mid-2001, CSWL has been operating the refuse and recycling kerbside collection and the Waiheke Waste Transfer Station. We work closely with the WRT who deliver community education and engagement on our behalf.

We maximise the benefit to the local community by employing local people and choosing solutions that maximise employment rather than costly technical facilities, and return as much as possible to the community through reusing and recycling items brought to us as waste. This approach ensures that we maintain a strong community focus and profile. We have partnerships with tertiary institutions, industry groups and development entrepreneurs which supports our innovative approach to waste materials management.

CSWL is the tangible expression of a community's aspirations to manage its waste in an innovative and environmentally responsible fashion, engaging all stakeholders and improving local economic development.

The contracts for the collections, the running and redevelopment of the transfer station, and the freight of waste off island are all currently under threat of being given to another company.

“CSWL is the tangible expression of a community's aspirations to manage its waste in an innovative and environmentally responsible fashion”



Bales of recycled product at the Waiheke transfer station. Photo courtesy of Clean Stream Waiheke

Clean Stream Waiheke projects

- EC Board – A project with Jaytech Industries, using waste materials that would otherwise be going to landfill to produce a durable plastic fibre board product. Using recent waste analysis data, we estimate that 50 percent of non-putrescible municipal waste could be feedstock for this process.
- Greenwaste – we process 2000 tonnes of greenwaste into a variety of grades of mulch onsite. This mulch is a popular product adding much needed fertility to depleted island soils, and we give away about a quarter of the total mulch produced to schools, community gardens and other community projects.
- Waste oil into biodiesel – Our fleet of collection vehicles is run on a biodiesel blend that we produce ourselves from around 20,000 litres of waste cooking oil received at the transfer station each year.
- Crushed glass – Falling glass prices saw CSWL facing significant losses on glass recycling. In partnership with the University of Auckland, we researched alternatives for processing glass, resulting in an award from the NZ Packaging council and a grant from the Glass Industries Forum with which we purchased a glass crushing plant. This plant processes the least valuable glass into drainage material.
- Adding value to recycled plastics by sorting and baling, ensuring maximum value in an unstable market, and minimising shipping costs through volume reduction.
- Revolve shop – This popular service diverts reusable items, decreasing the amount of waste going into landfill and increasing the lifecycle of the products being reused.
- We have identified processes to divert Construction and Demolition waste from landfill that are either operating now (eg the timber yard), or that we hope to develop in the future.
- Participation in community events provides an opportunity to show leadership and engage with Waiheke's diverse community, while communicating waste minimisation and resource recovery principles. 'Junk to Funk' is our wearable arts extravaganza, with art made from recycled materials. It has become the single most attended community event on the island – drawing crowds of over 1400 people.

Save Happy Valley Coalition will fight on

By Jo McVeagh and Quentin Duthie

On Wednesday April 22nd Solid Energy and police removed the long-term Happy Valley occupation camp from the valley and announced that the public will be excluded from a 480 hectare zone in preparation for mining. Save Happy Valley Coalition have continuously occupied the camp during the last 3 years.

The following day, around 30 Save Happy Valley Coalition members resurrected their occupation camp on Solid Energy's front lawn in Christchurch. Front Lawn Occupation spokesperson Anna-Claire Hunter said, "This is by no means the end of the Save Happy Valley Coalition – we will continue to visit the Valley as long as the situation demands." SHVC members camped overnight on Solid Energy's lawn.

"New Zealand's longest running environmental occupation may have come to an end but our campaign has not," said Lynley Hargreaves, a spokesperson for the coalition.

SHVC has, for five years now, been determined to defend the Upper Waimangaroa Valley from the encroachment of Solid Energy's expanding coal mining. The 'Cypress Mine' in Happy Valley, if it goes ahead, would engulf 256ha of alpine red tussock wetlands, and would include two opencast pits covering 105ha. The pits would be up to 95m in depth.

Solid Energy would extract 500,000 tonnes of coal from the mine each year for 10 years for export. This would release 12 million more tonnes of greenhouse gases, and require the removal of 29 million cubic metres of overburden.

In 1998 the Department of Conservation recommended a 2100ha protection area as part of its Protected Natural Areas Programme (PNAP), to conserve biodiversity in the Ngakawau Ecological District, which is the only ecological district in New Zealand defined by the presence of extensive elevated coal measures rocks and associated landforms and vegetation. The Upper Waimangaroa recommended area for protection included a large part of the Upper Waimangaroa Mining Permit area and part of the proposed Happy Valley mine area. Unfortunately however, such a recommended area for protection has no binding power.

The last organised public trip to Happy Valley was over Easter, and marked the beginning of the fifth year of SHVC's work.

"New Zealand's longest running environmental occupation may have come to an end but our campaign has not"



Looking South down the valley. Photo courtesy of Save Happy Valley Coalition

A video of the trip was made - search for 'SaveHappyValleyFilm' on www.youtube.com to hear the weka and see the drilling rig that has been conducting 'exploratory drilling' in the valley since February.

The SHVC Christchurch are planning more creative activities, including a 'Tea Party Against Climate Change' outside Solid Energy's office, and promises to feature circus performers, fair trade chocolate and coffee, and morning tea fun.

In other developments, Solid Energy has stepped up its green-washing by sponsoring a Buller Environment Week including beach clean-ups, blue duck education and tree planting. While these events are positive activities for the district and the environment, they do not mitigate the destruction of mining and the resulting emissions when the coal is used.

ECO has also learned that Solid Energy successfully tendered for a DOC carbon sequestration research project in the North Mokihinui on the boundary of Kahurangi National Park. Again, the pest control and research are useful in themselves, but do not in any way make the continued expansion of the Stockton coal mine acceptable.



More information

For more information about the campaign visit the website www.savehappyvalley.org.nz or to get involved contact occupation@savehappyvalley.org.nz

Change in direction for US

By Tushara Kodikara

President Obama has signalled a new direction for the USA. Compared to the previous Administration, which clearly lacked the will and the understanding of the need for urgency in the matter of environmental change, Obama has selected some strong environmental advocates for his Administration.



Obama's choice for the Environmental Protection Agency's Administrator is Lisa Jackson, former Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. As Commissioner, she had set state targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and to 80 percent below 2006 levels by 2050, to combat climate change. She will need to make some tough choices in her new role.

Obama's next choice is Dr Steven Chu, a Nobel-laureate for Physics, who is Energy Secretary. Chu clearly understands the urgent need for action in regard to climate change. He is an advocate for alternative energy, including biofuels and solar power. He is the first person to be appointed to the Cabinet after winning a Nobel prize. It is believed he will invest billions of dollars into renewable energy projects and create millions of new jobs in the green economy. Critics have labelled his appointment as a sign that science will once again be valued in the US Administration.

The Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change is Carol Browner. This is a newly created position that will help connect energy and climate work across the federal government. Browner is an experienced environmentalist and has previously been the longest serving Administrator of the US EPA during the entire Clinton administration. She is a strong critic of former President Bush and has labelled him as heading the 'worst environmental administration ever'.

John Flicker, the President of the US National Audubon Society has said that "Carol Browner is an outstanding choice to direct the integration of energy and environmental policy and to reposition the US as a leader in addressing global warming. No one is better suited to addressing these challenges than Carol Browner. As the very successful and longest serving administrator of the EPA, Carol Browner has a proven track record of success. She is a skilled and pragmatic leader who gets results."

Dr. Jane Lubchenco has been selected to head the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) - the first woman to hold the position. Lubchenco is a marine ecologist, who taught at Harvard University.

During the Bush era, NOAA ignored scientists' advice on protecting vulnerable fish species. It is thought that Lubchenco will reverse this and make the correct decisions that will put conservation over commercial interests.

Clearly time will tell how well Obama's new green team will fare, but his choices obviously understand the need for urgency for change. It is a refreshing change from the Bush Administration and one that could not have come at a better time in history. The issues that will face the world in this time of environmental crisis will need strong leadership. Let us hope that Obama has made the right choices.

Ocean acidification must be on the Copenhagen climate agenda, world's scientists warn

By Barry Weeber

Ocean acidification, one of the world's most important climate change challenges, may be left off the agenda at the United Nations Copenhagen conference, the world's science academies warned in June.

A joint statement published by the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues (IAP) calls for world leaders to explicitly recognise the direct threat posed by increasing atmospheric CO₂ emissions to the oceans and its profound impact on the environment and society.

AP Co-Chairs stated: "There has been much talk among the science community over the past few years about ocean acidification and its potentially catastrophic consequences, but it has failed to receive the political attention it demands. Its absence from discussions to date is of immense concern, and we call for its immediate inclusion as a vital part of the climate change agenda."

Zhu and Alper added, "The implications of ocean acidification cannot be overstated. Unless we cut our global CO₂ emissions by at least 50 percent by 2050 and thereafter, we could be looking at fundamental and immutable changes in the makeup of our marine biodiversity. The effects will be seen worldwide, threatening food security, reducing coastal protection and damaging the local economies that may be least able to tolerate it."

For further information and to read the full IAP statement visit www.interacademies.net



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Fishing industry opposes trawling controls

By Cath Wallace

Papers obtained by ECO show that fishing companies are pressing the Minister of Fisheries to go soft on controls on bottom trawling for orange roughy and other species in the high seas and in the South Pacific. The companies are disputing the Ministry of Fisheries attempts to gain New Zealand vessels' compliance with the internationally agreed Interim Measures of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO); are disputing UNFAO rules about responsible fishing, and are trying to contest the nature of the interpretation by the Ministry of the 2006 UN General Assembly resolution in relation to controls on bottom trawling on the high seas.

Ambushing a new Fisheries Minister with bamboozling, will-not-melt-in-the-mouth claims of responsibility, and ambushing the Minister and Ministry on legal interpretations are old tricks of the industry. Fisheries Ministers often take several years before they wise up, and typically that is too late.

The South Pacific RFMO negotiations are due to be concluded in Auckland at the end of the year.



Climate change is happening faster than anyone expected. In December this year world leaders will gather in Copenhagen to Sign On to a global agreement for action. For New Zealand to do its bit to help avoid catastrophic impacts, John Key needs to go to Copenhagen and Sign On to reduce New Zealand's emissions by 40 percent by 2020.

www.signon.org.nz

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