



## Minerals and conservation areas: cabinet decisions, Brownlee's Spin

By Cath Wallace

The people have spoken: they do not want exploration or mining in areas removed from the protected-from-minerals-activity status of Schedule Four of the Crown Minerals Act. This rejection of Brownlee's proposal was 98 percent to 1.5 percent of submitters according to the submissions' analysis.

Nor, we might add, do people want mining in conservation areas, despite Gerry Brownlee, Minister of Energy Resources, claiming that the responses gave him a mandate to allow mining in the non-Schedule Four conservation areas (60 percent of the Conservation Estate).

The government's announcement of its decisions included the following, in Q & A format:

### Questions and answers

#### 1. What decisions has the government agreed to?

After carefully considering the feedback received on the *Maximising Our Mineral Potential: Stocktake of Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act and Beyond* discussion paper, the Government has agreed that:

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Otahu Ecological Area in the Coromandel (above) and other Schedule Four areas will remain protected from mining. Photo © Kim Westerskov and Forest & Bird.

- i. No areas will be removed from Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act.
- ii. All of the 14 areas proposed for addition to Schedule 4 will be added to the schedule.
- iii. A technical investigation will be undertaken of Northland (in strategic alliance with Northland Regional Council, the Far North District Council, and Enterprise Northland), the West Coast of the South Island and various other highly prospective areas in the South Island - excluding any Schedule 4 areas. This will identify mineral deposits and assist with hazard identification (for example, faults and slips), road maintenance and conservation planning.

ECO Comment: This involves a \$4.5 million subsidy to the minerals exploration industry, which will put at risk sensitive areas in conservation areas that are not already protected by Schedule Four, and other sensitive environments. For instance World Heritage areas not in National Parks are unprotected, many ecological reserves are unprotected, and much of the Coromandel Peninsula is not covered by Schedule Four. Newmont mining has interests just south of the Kopu-Hikuawai Road.

- iv. Areas given classifications equivalent to current Schedule 4 areas (for example, national parks and marine reserves) will in the future be automatically added to Schedule 4. Such classifications will be agreed by Cabinet.

ECO Comment: ECO welcomes this. Its lack was an unintended oversight from previous drafting.

- v. Significant applications to mine on public conservation land will be publicly notified.

ECO Comment: This is welcome and long overdue, but it applies only to mining applications and not to exploration which can have significant and widespread impacts with clearing of grid lines and drill sites, and substantial “bulk sampling”. We do not have a definition of “significant”. The Cabinet paper notes that this could be done either by a change to the Crown Minerals Act or as a matter of policy, and that the RMA test of “significance” could be used.

- vi. The process for approval of mineral-related access arrangements over Crown land will be amended so that approvals are jointly decided by the land-holding minister and the Minister of Energy and Resources, and take into account criteria related to the economic, mineral and national significance of the proposal.

ECO Comment: this is particularly pernicious to conservation values and should be the subject of vigorous protest and objection when the Bill is opened to submission and heard in Select Committee. Such joint decision making will allow the Minister of Energy and Resources to push the Conservation Minister around.

- vii. The proposed conservation fund based on mineral royalties will not proceed.

ECO Comment: It was greenwash anyway.

“The automatic inclusion of some types of public conservation land in Schedule 4, the process for classification of those classes of land, and public notification of mining applications on public conservation land were not proposed in the discussion paper but are decisions that have been adopted in response to the feedback received in submissions.”

## 2. What response did the government receive on the discussion paper?

In total 37,552 submissions were received; 32,318 submissions were made by individuals using standard submission form templates provided by organisations such as Greenpeace and Forest & Bird and 5,234 unique submissions were made by individuals and organisations.

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(Source: [www.beehive.govt.nz](http://www.beehive.govt.nz), Statement by Brownlee and Wilkinson, 20 July 2010)

### The Grounds for the decision to allow minerals activity on Conservation areas:

The Cabinet decision is notably silent on the glaring disparity between the grounds on which decisions to allow minerals activities on conservation areas must be made, and those for all other activities. The minerals decisions are under s61 of the Crown Minerals Act and, amongst other differences, simply require that the purpose for which the land is held must be taken into account. By contrast, for any other activity, the Conservation Act tests in s17U apply, and these include a specific prohibition on activities contrary to the purpose for which the land is held. This disparity will be made even worse with the Cabinet’s decision to require that economic, mineral and national interest matters be considered when minerals applications are made over conservation land and waters. ECO urges all those making submissions on the Crown Minerals Amendment Bill to raise this disparity and urge that the same prohibition on permitting activities contrary to the purpose for which the land is held be also inserted into s61 of the Crown Minerals Act.

MED and DOC have provided useful maps of the areas of the North and South Islands that are proposed for further exploration and show the areas that were proposed for removal from or addition to Schedule Four. These can be found respectively at [www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/NthIspdf.pdf](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/NthIspdf.pdf) and [www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/SthIspdf.pdf](http://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/SthIspdf.pdf).

ECO urges Members and Friends to remain vigilant during the forthcoming changes to the law, Minerals Programme and policy change process. You can be sure that the mining industry will be. Give voice to your concerns both in submissions to the Select Committee, and in lobbying MPs.

## Mining and conservation: it's not over yet. New law, new policies

By Cath Wallace

The Government has launched a programme of 'reform' of minerals and petroleum laws and policies and programmes to promote economic growth. The policy measures decided by Cabinet in relation to the attempt to open conservation areas protected by Schedule Four of the Crown Minerals Act are to be included in the changes to the Act, but are not covered by this paper which foreshadows other changes for the Act and for Minerals Programmes and regulations.

The Discussion Paper released on 27 August is open for submission to the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) at 5.00pm 8 October. An amendment bill to the Crown Minerals Act 1991 is to be introduced to Parliament mid-December with Select Committee hearings in early 2011.

New policy and regulations, including changes to detail of the Act that are to be transferred to Minerals Programmes and regulations are to be consulted on in March-April 2011.

The focus is on increasing economic growth, paving the way for minerals activity, including gasification of coal gas from coal seams and mining methane hydrates – a new threat to the climate if these are mined from the seafloor. Nowhere in the documentation are greenhouse gas issues addressed.

The Select Committee hearing submissions on the amendment bill is due to report back to the House in June 2011 with the Bill to be enacted in July 2011.

None of these changes is intended to deal with Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) which is to be addressed in a separate process. Changes to pave the way for petroleum exploration and mining in the form of the Petroleum Action Plan were announced in November 2009.

An official paper relating to "how to align New Zealand's health, safety and environmental controls with international best practice" is due to be considered by Ministers in September, along with oil spill management and "proposed new legislation for regulation of environmental effects in the EEZ" which is being led by the Ministry for the Environment.

Changes proposed to the CMA, and foreshadowing changes to the Minerals Programme and regulations are outlined in the paper. The MED poses a series of questions as well as giving details for submissions.

Significantly, the paper says that there is no intention to change the rules for accessing non-petroleum minerals on



*An open cast mine in Stockton on the West Coast. Is this what we want for our landscape? Changes to the Crown Minerals Act could mean tying up conservation and other land for mining. Photo by Pete Lusk.*

non-Crown land, so that compulsory arbitration and mineral interests will not be forced on Maori and private land owners, when the minerals are owned by the Crown.

The Paper frames the purpose of the changes as to encourage economic development from mineral resources and regulatory reform, but restricts the scope of the changes to the Crown Minerals Act's reach to 12 nautical miles, that is, New Zealand's land and Territorial Sea. Changes to the Continental Shelf Act to govern activities in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) are in train but are not included in the paper issued by MED on 27 August 2010.

Key changes include giving the Crown Minerals Act (CMA) a Purpose to match the objective of economic growth and fair returns to New Zealand, increasing compliance measures, provisions for decommissioning mines and wells, and opening up information gathered. Transfers are to be facilitated.

*"The Minister will take more power, and the public will have less assurance in the process"*

New classes of minerals consents are proposed, and one for low technology activities is to be removed. Scientific or research permits are to be introduced, which will allow Geological and Nuclear Research (GNS) and other parties to explore without the normal requirements to apply for standard permits – and opens up the prospect of Japanese whaling style "research". Broad scale seismic surveys are also proposed (likely to be subject to much lower consenting requirements).

The requirement for minerals consents for the operation of alluvial gold operations in river and lake beds or in the marine and coastal environment that use less than five horsepower machinery is to be removed. In sensitive environments, these can have environmental impacts if, say, sluicing is undertaken, but the paper notes that RMA consents may still be required (though ECO notes that many District and Regional Coastal Plans may consider these to be permitted or controlled activities).

The changes also provide for the Minister to have more discretion, and matters that previously were spelt out in the Act are to be matters of policy in Minerals Programmes or simply in conditions of consent. The Minister will take more power, and the public will have less assurance in the process.

The Minister will also have broader powers “to strategically manage resources by reserving land and minerals from allocation”, which could be a means of tying up conservation and other land for mining.

The “optimisation of efficient development of petroleum resources” is to be pursued, as well as other measures to give applicants better and faster access to minerals. Royalty provisions are to be removed from Petroleum and Minerals Programmes, and to be put into regulations, presumably to allow for faster changes to these. The present suggested messy business of having multiple sets of minerals programmes operating simultaneously (depending on when the consent was issued) is also proposed to be changed.

The paper specifically mentions gold, iron sands, quartz gravels for ferrosilicon and the assessment of phosphates for fertiliser, lignite, and several rare earths as of interest, as well as nickel-copper-platinum group metals and chromite mineralisation.

The Crown Minerals Act contains no environmental controls, these being left to the Resource Management Act within the 12 nautical mile limit, or the pending amendments to the Continental Shelf Act in the EEZ. No discussion is contained in the MED paper of greenhouse gas emissions or other environmental impacts of the minerals activities except for the mention of those latter changes.

*“The ‘optimisation of efficient development of petroleum resources’ is to be pursued, as well as other measures to give applicants better and faster access to minerals.”*

## Have your say

A backgrounder on the Crown Minerals Act and a series of detailed questions and answers, as well as the discussion paper and further information on the consultation process, is available on the Ministry of Economic Development’s website at [www.med.govt.nz/CMARReview](http://www.med.govt.nz/CMARReview).

Feedback on the discussion paper is sought by 5.00pm on Friday 8 October 2010.

Submissions should be made by:

- Email to [cmareview@med.govt.nz](mailto:cmareview@med.govt.nz) (preferred option), or
- Post to Crown Minerals Act Review, Ministry of Economic Development, PO Box 1473, Wellington 6140.

## Solid Energy lignite plans

By Cath Wallace

Solid Energy has announced plans for two climate-damaging lignite plants, probably in Southland. One would use new technology to convert lignite and possibly biomass to synthetic crude oil, the other would be a briquetting plant. The first would be designed to convert 30,000 tonnes of lignite to produce 10,000 barrels of crude oil, and 5000 tonnes of char, or pure carbon in a powder.

Solid Energy expects to dig the lignite from Southland near Gore, and has plans to convert lignite to urea fertiliser in association with Ravensdown Fertiliser, and to convert lignite to liquid fuel. Urea is a nitrogenous fertiliser which not only damages the climate but also leads to the eutrophication of waterways.

Such investment will make it harder for non-fossil fuel projects to be competitive and will entrench New Zealand on a carbon-based future at the very time that we should be decarbonising. Such projects are deplorable, the more so because this is a publicly owned company.

Write to Prime Minister John Key and demand that these climate damaging projects be stopped now.

## Why the reckless pursuit of oil should concern us all

By Jay Harkness, Greenpeace NZ

Greenpeace is currently collecting signatures for a petition against Energy and Resources Minister Gerry Brownlee's professed desire to open New Zealand up to the oil and mining industries. Mr Brownlee's push even has its own, slightly ill-conceived slogan: 'Discover Opportunity: Set Your Sights on New Zealand.'

This country's future does not lie underground, or under the seabed. And it does not need to be discovered. The benefits of getting on board with the current global revolution in renewable energy and clean technologies are as plain as day, particularly as we now know what comes as a consequence of burning fossil fuels.

Climate change is the make-or-break issue for this planet this century. There's significant evidence that it's already causing starvation, and turning people into refugees, through drought, crop disease, and flooding. And all the signs are that we are about to trigger a state of runaway climate change. From that point on, life on our planet will never be the same – for anyone – again.

The current sell-off of offshore drilling rights around New Zealand's coast also poses an obvious risk to our coastlines. While the BP oil spill occurred in water that was 1500 metres deep, depths in the zones being sold off by the Government reach up to 3000 metres, at which depth any spill would likely flow unchecked for much longer.

As part of the campaign, Greenpeace volunteers covered themselves in 'oil' to send a message to the Government to stop its plans for the drilling of new deep water oil wells off New Zealand's coast. The event was held at Muriwai Beach, west of Auckland, to highlight the fact that Gerry Brownlee is intending to announce the awarding of further petroleum exploration permits for oil in the Reinga and Northland coastal zones - which together cover 150,000 square kilometres, an area bigger than the whole of the North Island.



Greenpeace volunteers covered in 'oil', at Muriwai beach send a strong message to the Government to stop its plans for the drilling of new deep water oil wells off New Zealand's coast. Photo © Greenpeace/Fraser Newman

New Zealand can either embrace the technologies that have a future, or we can compromise our local environment, and help undermine the chances that the world will find a way out of the climate crisis, with an energy source that belongs.

### Sign the petition

If you agree that the Government is on the wrong track, please sign the Greenpeace petition, calling on John Key to permanently stop all plans to open up New Zealand's coastal waters to offshore oil drilling and stop any expansion of coal mining in New Zealand.

You will find the petition at [www.greenpeace.org/new-zealand/en/take-action/Take-action-online/No-New-Oil-or-Coal](http://www.greenpeace.org/new-zealand/en/take-action/Take-action-online/No-New-Oil-or-Coal)

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## Greenhouse reporting or greenwash?

By Cath Wallace

The accuracy of New Zealand's reporting to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on its emissions and mitigating actions was reviewed by an international review team in August. ECO coordinated input into this process by academics and NGOs.

New Zealand's Fifth National Communication updates New Zealand's progress towards its commitments under the UNFCCC and towards implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. It covers trends in New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions and removals, policies and measures, projections of emissions and removals, research and observations, financial assistance and technology transfer, climate change impacts and adaptation, and public participation and awareness activities. It is a requirement under both the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol.

The key messages from the academics and NGOs was that while much of the reporting was accurate, there were some serious flaws as well, the most serious being what Simon Terry of the Sustainability Council called 'pine wash'.

Scott Metcalfe, public health physician and coordinator of Ora Taiao: New Zealand Climate and Health group of health professionals and others, disputed the government's framing of the problem as solely environmental on the grounds that climate change is an enormous threat to life and health. The team noted with surprise the lack of attention in the New Zealand 5th National Communication to climate change impacts on biodiversity, impacts of climate responses on biodiversity and the potential for protection of natural areas in sinking carbon.

Dr Geoff Bertram and Simon Terry presented the team with their book, *The Carbon Challenge: New Zealand's Emissions Trading Scheme* (2010, Bridget Williams Books). The book is reviewed on page 14 of this issue of ECOlink. For anyone seriously interested in understanding the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and how little it will do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under present government policy settings, this is a must read. The book also shows in detail how the ETS transfers liability for the major polluters' greenhouse gas emissions to taxpayers and



*Pine Wash: Is the government using pine forests to obscure the real situation?*

*"...while much of the reporting was accurate, there were some serious flaws... the most serious being what Simon Terry of the Sustainability Council called 'pine wash'."*

small to medium enterprises. The whole point of a price-based policy instrument like the ETS is that polluters should pay for their emissions, so providing an incentive to reduce them.

The critiques of the NGOs and academics covered the science, including sea level rise projections, the failure of the New Zealand government to own up to the feebleness of the Emissions Trading Scheme, the slithering in New Zealand reporting from gross emissions in 1990 to net emissions in the 2010 (and earlier) reports, energy, transport, finance and technology and aid issues and more. The team noted that some of the reported mitigation and adaptation projects had been either abandoned or substantially undermined since the present government took office, rendering the 2009 New Zealand report inaccurate in several respects.

Simon Terry, of the Sustainability Council, identified discrepancies in the government's reporting on projections for New Zealand gross greenhouse gas emissions with measures to reduce emissions, which have changed from June 2009 at 83.5 Mt to 76.9 Mt in the 5th National Communication. He recorded the failure of officials to explain the discrepancy despite attempts at clarification, and dubbed the 'gap' 'pinewash': that is using pine forests to obscure the real situation, even though there is projected to be large scale logging of existing forests in

*"The team noted with surprise the lack of attention... to climate change impacts on biodiversity, impacts of climate responses on biodiversity, and the potential for protection of natural areas in sinking carbon."*

the 2020s, and little sign that these are to be replaced or kept permanently as carbon sinks.

In some places the New Zealand Communication engages in highly selective reporting. For instance, the New Zealand Communication claimed that the Resource Management Act (RMA) “was amended in 2004 to require all persons exercising duties and functions under the Act to have particular regard to the effects of climate change” (p109). What it failed to report is that the same Amendment Act also specifically forbade councils in considering resource consents to consider greenhouse gas emissions of projects, except in so far as renewables might reduce emissions. Thus councils can privilege wind farms but cannot object to, say, coal burning power stations, Solid Energy’s lignite projects or milk drying plants, on greenhouse gas emission grounds.

### More information

New Zealand’s Fifth National Communication under the UNFCCC can be downloaded at [www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/climate/nz-fifth-national-communication](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/climate/nz-fifth-national-communication), or you can email [publications@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:publications@mfe.govt.nz) to order a free hard copy.



The Academic and NGO Reviews will be made available soon on the Climate Defence Network website at [www.climatedefence.org.nz](http://www.climatedefence.org.nz)

Contributors to the Academic and NGO Review included Prof Martin Manning, Dr Andy Reisinger, Dr Geoffrey Bertram, (all of the Climate Change Research Institute of Victoria University - VUW), Cath Wallace (ECO and VUW), Associate Professor Dr Ralph Chapman (Graduate Programme of Environmental Studies, VUW), Dr Nancy Bertler (Antarctic Institute, VUW), Dr Scott Metcalfe and Liz Springford (of Oro Taiao), Simon Terry (Sustainability Council), Molly Melhuish (independent energy analyst and advisor to Grey Power and the Domestic Energy Users Network), Peter Hardstaff (WWF NZ) Tim Jones (Sustainable Energy Forum), and Sarah Meads of Oxfam.

## National Standards on Plantation Forestry

By Barry Weeber

The Minister for the Environment has released proposed national standards for plantation forestry.

The proposal for a national environmental standard under the Resource Management Act:

- covers the activity status and conditions that might apply to eight plantation forestry activities (afforestation, replanting, mechanical land preparation, harvesting, pruning and thinning to waste, earthworks, quarrying and river crossings);
- does not cover some associated forestry activities (agrichemical use, milling, and processing of timber);
- allows local authorities to retain control over how local natural and physical resources are managed in some circumstances;
- proposes an erosion susceptibility classification system for determining the activity status for some plantation forestry activities.

The standard would require all local authorities to give effect to and enforce its requirements.

The Ministry for the Environment (MFE) refused to engage with environmental groups over the drafting of this standard despite the forestry industry wanting us involved in the process. The forestry industry wanted to give us a copy of the draft standard late last year to look at but MFE refused to release it. It is a great shame that the Ministry is failing to meet its legal obligations under the Environment Act and the Resource Management Act.

ECO will be discussing the standard with the forestry industry to see what concerns are raised in the proposals and whether there are changes and modifications we can agree on.

Further information can be found at [www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/forestry](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/laws/standards/forestry). Six consultation workshops on the proposed standard will be held in centres during September.

Submissions close on the standard with the Ministry for the Environment, PO Box 10-362, Wellington 6143, or by email to [standards@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:standards@mfe.govt.nz), no later than 5.00 pm Monday 18 October.

At same time ECO is participating in a process to develop a national standard for certification of plantation forests by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). A technical group is working through the key contentious issues of chemical use, reserve contribution (particularly for small lot forest owners), and East Coast forest as part of the FSC guidelines and requirements.

## Biodiversity National Policy Statement draft imminent

By Cath Wallace

Federated Farmers has had an inside track on the development of a National Policy Statement (NPS) on Biodiversity. In contrast environmental groups and ecologists have been excluded by Nick Smith, the Minister for the Environment. Smith set up an officials' committee with orders to develop a National Policy Statement on biodiversity that did not advance protection of biodiversity, and a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) with no environmental representatives, only people from iwi, Federated Farmers, and local government. It was agreed that the National Policy Statement should address national priorities for protection and processes that councils should follow to properly engage with land owners.

This information is revealed in papers relating to the preparation of the National Policy Statement obtained under the Official Information Act by David Williams, of The Press, but the Minister has withheld the substantial drafts. The papers reveal that the draft NPS is about to be made public, and that the Minister declined to include environmental NGO representatives or ecologists on the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). This is a continuation of the Minister establishing TAGs for reviewing the Resource Management Act and failing to meet the requirements of the Environment Act.

The 2009 papers show clear anxiety that the creation of a National Policy Statement under the RMA to protect biodiversity might annoy farmers. The officials provided the Minister with advice to cover himself for choosing to use a non-public method of developing the National Policy Statement rather than a Board of Inquiry which could have heard from ecologists and all others in an open process.

*“The 2009 papers show clear anxiety that the creation of a National Policy Statement under the RMA to protect biodiversity might annoy farmers.”*

The Maori Party is due to be consulted on the draft NPS on Biodiversity prior to its going to Cabinet, and ‘key parties’ were to be consulted, but to our knowledge, environmental organisations have been left out in the cold while this secretive and skewed process has proceeded.

All drafts of the NPS on Biodiversity have been withheld from release and so has all internal correspondence within the Ministry for the Environment. Officials

recommended to the Minister that the NPS “will need to be supported by supplementary measures such as on-farm assistance and funding (but public sector funding cut backs make that unlikely), and non-statutory guidance to councils, the provision of information, and council engagement with land owners. It was recommended that central government support local government with the Land Environments NZ (LENZ) tool, and identification of significant ecosystems or sites.

*“...officials also refer simply to ‘slowing the rate of loss’ of biodiversity, and they note the Minister’s instruction not to advance biodiversity protection”*

The goal of “halting the decline of biodiversity” was noted in one officials’ paper, but officials also refer simply to “slowing the rate of loss” of biodiversity, and they note the Minister’s instruction not to advance biodiversity protection.

An officials’ paper noted by Nick Smith on 12 February 2009 records that “there would be advantage in reorienting the approach to biodiversity protection on private land away from traditional conflict between conservation and production.” It emphasises the need to provide land owners with economic incentives such as recognising the economic value of ecosystem services that include riparian planting and carbon credits from retaining vegetation remnants, with a mix of financial incentives, advice and regulation. MAF is recorded as opposed to an NPS.

The development of this NPS has been secretive, clearly at the request of the Minister, since officials initially assumed a Board of Inquiry open process would be used. In March 2010 officials were recrafting the Cabinet paper and the Regulatory Impact Statement, with no evidence that environmental groups had been consulted. The Technical Advisory Group with Federated Farmers had been clearly underway for months. The fact that there is to be an NPS at



## Local Government elections

By Barry Weeber



*Northern Rata flowers.* Photo © Nga Manu Images

all is noted by the officials as required because the emissions trading legislation of Labour had contained a commitment that an NPS on indigenous biodiversity must be promulgated by May 2011, by virtue of a condition of the Greens that this be done in return for support to the Emissions Trading System.

Nick Smith in 2008 assured the ECO conference that National would, if elected, introduce a National Policy Statement. What he failed to say was that he would actually instruct officials not to further the protection of biodiversity!

A table in a November 2009 paper to the Minister lays down the timeline with the Technical Advisory Group appointed in March 2010, the paper with the draft NPS to the Cabinet on July 30, and the draft NPS to be released to the public on 30 August 2010. Submissions were scheduled to close on 30 November and the draft and revised proposed NPS prepared and released to submitters for comment on 30 March 2011, with the TAG involved in the analysis of submissions. On May 30 2011, the final proposed NPS, report and recommendations were proposed to go to the Minister for decision. There is no indication whether that timetable has been adopted.

### Information sources

On the New Zealand biodiversity website at [www.biodiversity.govt.nz](http://www.biodiversity.govt.nz), you can learn about the value of New Zealand's biodiversity, the current state of biodiversity in New Zealand and what is being done to help conserve and manage it.

2010 is also the International Year of Biodiversity. To find out more visit [www.iucn.org/iyb](http://www.iucn.org/iyb) and [www.cbd.int/2010](http://www.cbd.int/2010)

The upcoming Local Government elections are important for the environmental management of your region, district or city. These include powers under the Resource Management Act, Building Act, Local Government Act and transport legislation. Local Government roles include:

- Development and implementation of regional policy statements, coastal plans and other regional plans;
- Development and implementation of district plans which includes subdivision and development controls;
- Development of annual plans and long-term council community plans.

District and regional councils manage a wide range of activities from rubbish, sewage and domestic water through dog control, libraries, roads and other facilities. Some councils run regional parks or important water catchment areas.

A key role for regional government is in transport. Councils have a crucial role in making decisions over the direction of public transport, funding for more roads, and the integration of walking and cycling into the transport mix. Regional councils also have a role in pest management and pest management strategies under the Biosecurity Act. This includes managing important animal and weed pests.

Many local community organisations are running 'meet the candidate' meetings. Go along to these meetings and ask questions about candidates attitude to the environment, conservation of biodiversity, urban form and management of roads versus public transport. For example what are candidates views on:

- Protecting indigenous biodiversity on private land?
- Improving air quality in urban areas?
- Running active recycling schemes to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in land fills?
- Promoting greater use of public transport, facilities for cycling or walking?
- Supporting action on climate change including managing the impact of sealevel rise?
- Supporting water conservation measures to reduce the impact of water demand on local rivers?
- Promoting energy efficiency to reduce the demand for fossils fuels?

The local body election will be completed on Saturday 9 October 2010. The election is conducted by postal vote ballot papers sent out before the start of the voting period between 17 September – 9 October 2010.

## Changes to aquaculture legislation cause concern

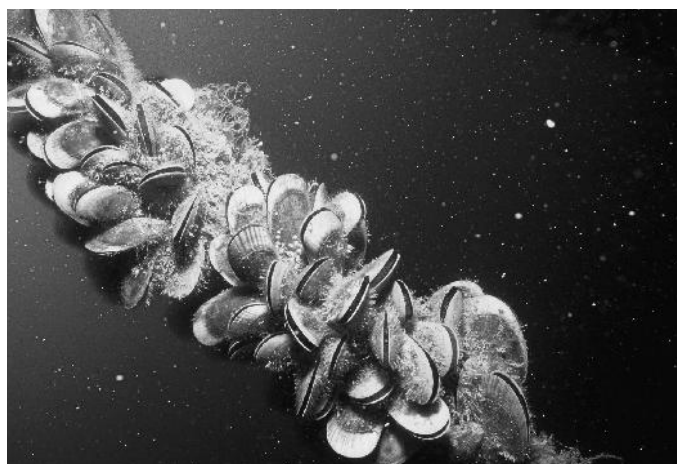
By Barry Weeber

Changes to Aquaculture legislation are like a repeat of a bad movie with Government Ministers failing to remember the mistakes of the past. The current legislation was passed to control aquaculture after a gold rush of application had been applied for around the country. Local government couldn't cope and due to the absence of resource rentals or rates, the aquaculture industry was getting space for free. In the Hauraki Gulf a typing pool who had been typing up applications from marine farmers also got in on the act.

The Government rhetoric is that there has not been agreement to new space for 10 years, but this ignores the huge increase in space that occurred between 1993 and 2003. Furthermore, many of the new areas consented, especially large new areas (thousands of hectares), have only been partly used and it also unclear whether these new areas are economic.

The aquaculture industry has a goal of getting to \$1 billion in exports by 2025. Currently the exports are \$370 million. There has been no independent analysis to indicate whether this is possible or practical. There is only so many mussels that can be sold globally without depressing the price, there are competing salmon producers globally, and new fish species have yet to be shown to be economic since they rely on fish feed coming from overseas, particularly Peru.

*“The aquaculture industry has a goal of \$1 billion in exports by 2025. Currently exports are \$370 million. There has been no independent analysis to indicate whether this is possible or practical”*



Green-lipped mussels growing on ropes in a mussel farm, Port Fitzroy, Great Barrier Island. Photo by Kim Westerskov.

In a sneaky move, the Government is proposing to over-ride coastal plans and allow marine farming consent holders in the Waikato and Marlborough to move from mussel farming to finfish farming without considering the additional environmental effects imposed. While fin fish farms involve the discharge of thousands of tonnes of fish food, no such impact occurs with mussel or oyster farming. The change in activity should be assessed like any other major change in activity – it's like the Government removing discharge consent requirements from factory farms.

Several public meetings have been organised on the Coromandel Peninsula to raise concern about the impact of the Government's changes.

Other changes to the Resource Management Act to be included in the legislation are:

- Remove aquaculture management area requirements – so all areas could be open to marine farming applications;
- Set a minimum resource consent term of 20 years – ironically this may make it more difficult for new species or unusual methods to get consents;
- Jointly notify resource consent and undue adverse affects test under the Fisheries Act.

There are also over 8,000 hectares of marine farming space which are currently frozen which will be opened up. ECO has requested further information on these areas.

Legislation to implement these changes is to be introduced by Government by the end of the year and aims to be passed next year.



Mussel farming, Te Kouma, Coromandel Peninsula. Crown Copyright. Department of Conservation.

## News from the IUCN - CEESP Sharing Power Conference January 2011

By Diana Shand

Participants at the ECO Conference would be interested in following up on the Conference referred to by Aroha Mead in her presentation.

The IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) Conference, 'Sharing Power: A New Vision for Development' will be held in Whakatane on 11-15 January 2011. ECO Members and Friends may be particularly interested in the Youth Network being established, and the call for contributions which closes 18 September.

### Sharing Power Youth Network

The issues to be discussed at the Conference require actions by this generation but have far greater implications for future generations. The participation and perspectives of youth are essential to the effectiveness of Sharing Power. If you are aged between 19-35 years, and would like to join a global youth network to: discuss the issues covered in the Sharing Power Conference; help identify youth speakers; offer a specific session within the Conference; and discuss how this network might be developed after the Conference, please contact [ceesp@iucn.org](mailto:ceesp@iucn.org).

### Update on the Call for Contributions

A number of panel sessions where potential contributors might wish to express an interest are: an inter-faith dialogue, a session to inform participants on relevant global processes (for example, the Earth Charter, the Cochabamba Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth, Rio +20, the Great Transition Initiative and other initiatives); a session on communicating change; panels of global and indigenous business leaders on a new paradigm for business; a panel of eminent indigenous leaders and traditional knowledge experts; a panel of eminent scientists on how science can take a greater role in promoting a more multi-disciplinary approach to environmental and economic policy; and an inter-generational responsibility youth panel.

The deadline for expressions of interest to offer a contribution is 18 September 2010. We're looking forward to hearing from you.

#### More information

For more information about the CEESP Sharing Power conference visit [www.sharingpower.org](http://www.sharingpower.org).

You can also join Nga Wawata o nga Rangatahi - The Global Youth Network on Facebook.

## Unions focus on the environment

By Stephen Day and Bill Rosenberg

Since last year, the Council of Trade Unions (CTU) and several affiliated unions have been meeting regularly with environmental groups to share and discuss views, and collaborate on activities and submissions where there are common viewpoints. During that time, issues covered have included climate change activities, mining, the Robin Hood (international financial transactions) tax, democratic processes including MMP, local body elections and the loss of adequate public consultation, alternative economic policies (including the CTU's Alternative Economic Strategy), the use of the fumigant Methyl Bromide, and energy efficiency.

The CTU has promoted energy efficiency in the workplace and has policies supporting action to combat climate change, incorporating 'just transition' to ensure low income earners do not bear the burden of the transition to a lower carbon society. Its Alternative Economic Strategy, which will be promoted amongst members and has been circulated more broadly, aims to integrate sustainability into economic development.

*"The CTU has promoted energy efficiency in the workplace and has policies supporting action to combat climate change"*

Earlier this year the CTU, with the support of the Public Sector Association, which is the union representing workers in the public sector, and the Tertiary Education Union, which represents workers in tertiary education, formed a partnership with WWF to promote action on climate change in the workplace. Their project is called *Union Climate Action*. Over 400 workers signed up as activists for the pilot and participated in the first project, which was promoting and encouraging their workplaces to become involved in Earth Hour. Since then Union Climate Action has continued and expanded with 350 Aotearoa and the Council of Trade Unions joining the collaboration.

Union Climate Activists are now working on their second big action – getting workplaces to participate in the 350 Aotearoa 10/10/10 Global Climate Working Bee on Sunday 10th October. Thousands of groups across New Zealand, and in over 180 countries, will join together and initiate an action that will benefit the community and help reduce carbon dioxide emissions. For more information visit [www.350.org.nz](http://www.350.org.nz)

**To take action on climate change in your workplace visit [www.unionclimateaction.org.nz](http://www.unionclimateaction.org.nz)**

## Foundations for the future - ECO conference report

By Shane Orchard

ECO was treated to sparkling Canterbury weather for this year's annual conference held at Living Springs in Governor's Bay on 2-4 July. Delegates from around the country joined the national summit aimed at sharing information between community groups and academics.

This year's theme was 'Environment Conservation & Economy: Foundations for the Future'. Alongside the academic presentations, many local groups were present to share their ideas and experience in helping Canterbury make good decisions for the future. All up, there was a wealth of experience in making practical change happen which translated into an insightful programme of speakers, workshops and discussion sessions.

The conference worked towards an appraisal of key issues for the future management of the environment, conservation and the economy. Some of the subjects debated included the use of non-market values in economics, water management and marine issues, the relationship between biodiversity management and tourism, and the effects of recent changes to regional decision-making policy.

The relationship between poor environmental and conservation measures and risks to the economy was an issue raised by many presenters. For example, amongst the points made by Kay Booth, a tourism consultant and former senior lecturer in Parks, Recreation and Tourism was that "Seventy percent of overseas tourists are here for nature based activities, and nature-based international tourists stay longer and spend more than other tourists".

A key conclusion was that the value of the environment to society and the economy must be better identified and protected in the future, and that this perspective is not well reflected in current government policy.

Both the content and the process by which recent Government policy changes were arrived at were topics in the spotlight. In particular, many contentious issues surfacing in the resource management field were explored.



ECO Conference participants gathered at Living Springs in Governors Bay, Christchurch. Photo by Barry Weeber.

*“The relationship between poor environmental and conservation measures and risks to the economy was an issue raised by many presenters”*

For example, “The Environmental Protection Agency is being designed to fast track infrastructure projects for the government and vested business interests,” said Barry Weeber, co-chair of ECO. As a result this and other reforms “Irrigation will be fast tracked: the environment, conservation and communities are being seen simply as obstacles to be shoved out of the way,” he said.

Many delegates also identified that a trend exists towards the erosion of the rights of people to be consulted and considered. “There is increasing concern that economic interests are being privileged while citizen values and voices are being shut out of policy and decision making”, said public policy specialist Cath Wallace.

The conclusion of many was that many elements of the Government's current economic strategy and the suppression of community voice pose considerable risks for not only the environment, but for a prosperous society.

With a focus on the future the conference was especially interested in “where to from here?” Despite the considerable disquiet which emerged concerning public policy, there was no shortage of success stories from the local presenters who added greatly to the event.

**ECO Conference presentations are available on CD at a cost of \$10.00. Please contact the ECO office on 04 385 7545 or email [eco@eco.org.nz](mailto:eco@eco.org.nz) to order your copy now.**

## Introducing ECO's new Executive members

ECO welcomes four new members onto the Executive Committee, elected this year at the ECO Conference: Helen Chambers (Christchurch), Hannah Griffin (Wellington), Elise Smith (Taranaki) and Sylvie Unkovich-McNab (Dunedin).

### Hannah Griffin



Hannah Griffin is the new Victoria University Environment Group - Gecko representative on the ECO Executive committee. She is currently in her first year at Victoria University working towards a BSc in Environmental Studies and a BCA in Economics. Attending the recent ECO planning weekend, she realised just how

lucky ECO is to have such a wonderful Executive, with such a wide skill and knowledge base. Hannah feels very privileged to be able to work with ECO Executive and looks forward to learning from them. Hannah's focus will be ECO's engagement with student groups and she hopes to build connections between student groups and ECO.

### Helen Chambers

Helen Chambers has been an environmentalist all her life. Latterly she helped set up The West Coast Blue Penguin Trust, as a result of seeing the destruction of Penguins both from road kill and roaming dogs. A long time member of Forest and Bird and Native Forest Action she has been an activist in both Women's Health and the Environment. For the last twenty years she has grown plants for DOC to put out at Cape Foulwind and also for other restoration projects. She is on the Banks Peninsula Ecological Survey Steering Committee, and several other environmental groups.



### Elise Smith

Elise Smith has lived in Taranaki for most of her working life. She has raised a family enjoying the sea, mountain and farm, and is involved with a number of community groups, all with interests in the environment. Their knowledge and activities encouraged her academic interest in developing methods to gather community data and how to make this available to be incorporated into



the wider planning process. Elise's involvement with the Taranaki Educational Resource: Research, Analysis and Information Network (TERRAIN) has been most rewarding. It is encouraging that digital methods are now providing ways to share not only information, but offer different perspectives and incorporate community values.

## ECO looking for a new Executive Officer

Based in our Wellington office, this is a full time position (35 hours per week) with a broad range of duties, which support ECO's Executive Committee and the 67 Member bodies of ECO.

The position is challenging, and provides interaction with a range of government and non-governmental organisations. The Executive Officer has responsibility for a sole-charge office and is frequently the first point of contact for the ECO member bodies, government agencies and the general public.

Remuneration is modest but the cause is important and you have a chance to make a difference. Administrative experience or aptitude is essential, as is an interest in the environment.

For a full job description please contact Amelia Luxton on 04 385 7545 or email [eco@eco.org.nz](mailto:eco@eco.org.nz) with 'Executive Officer' in the subject line.

**Applications close on Thursday 23 September**

In this section, we bring you access to information on ecological and environmental issues from a variety of sources. We hope that this information will be useful, and if you would like to contribute a book, website, article, film or anything else, please let us know. Email us at [eco@eco.org.nz](mailto:eco@eco.org.nz), with 'Information Review' in the subject line with all of your suggestions!

### Book Review

By Jenny Baker

#### **The Carbon Challenge: New Zealand's Emissions Trading Scheme**

By Geoff Bertram and Simon Terry

Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2010  
\$39.99

*The story is a not a pretty one, but following it through leads to important lessons about New Zealand as a society, and about the capture of governmental processes (both here and in other nations) by powerful groups pursuing their own interests at the expense of the wider community. It also opens the way to a renewed debate on how climate change policy should be designed and implemented in this country.*



This thoroughly researched and well organised book by two of New Zealand's widely respected researchers, Geoff Bertram from Victoria University's Institute of Policy Studies and Simon Terry, Executive Director of the Sustainability Council, provides a very clear carbon challenge.

From an international perspective it provides an important case study for the real life application of carbon reduction strategies and makes the bridge between text book theory and the reality of who pays for the transition to a low-carbon economy.

The book gives a very clear analysis of New Zealand's poor performance on its gross emissions reduction followed by an excellent chapter on the untidy history of New Zealand's climate change policy. This historical context heightens the concerns for the 2009 amendments and the resultant very diluted and ineffectual Emissions Trading Scheme. The authors provide an evaluation of the impacts of the ETS during the Protocol's First Commitment Period, from 2008-2012 and agriculture's exemption. They argue cogently that agriculture offers by far the biggest set of low-cost abatement opportunities, and give well documented examples.

The part forestry plays as a carbon sink to offset emissions is given full discussion. The introduction of an incentive against deforestation and the anticipated "gains" are shown to be contingent gains, unless and until the forests become permanent forests.

The extensive exemptions and rebates for large emitters such as transport fuels, electricity generation and industrial processes are likewise thoroughly challenged.

The book concludes with positive policy imperatives as a way forward:

A climate change policy designed to honour New Zealand's international commitments and responsibilities, and adapted to the New Zealand Economy would need to satisfy at least five criteria:

- Does the policy deliver significant net reductions in emissions at home through abatement and permanent afforestation, while ensuring that reduction projects financed elsewhere in the world produce genuine gains for the atmosphere and the host country?
- Does the policy allocate the nation's international carbon obligations fairly at each stage, so that each emitter faces the same cost per unit of emissions at any point in time, and is any government transitional assistance equitably available?
- Does the policy transparently and reliably allow any party with the ability to sequester carbon to receive a fair return on such sequestration? This means not merely passing through full credit for forest carbon, but also establishing a market in which other sequestration technologies can realize the value of their contributions.
- Is the policy flexible and responsive to emerging international realities? As the global policy moves beyond the Kyoto CP1 agreement, small open economies such as New Zealand must be able to adapt to whatever the chosen mechanisms turn out to be.
- Does the policy keep New Zealand safe from retaliatory sanctions imposed by large countries with more ambitious goals for global emission reductions? The issue of border carbon-tax adjustments is central, not peripheral, to local policy design.

New Zealand is indeed fortunate to have this excellent critique and contribution by Geoff Bertram and Simon Terry. The book in no way minimizes the inherent complexity of the ETS so at times the analysis and concepts are challenging but this is essential reading for all New Zealanders if we are to demand political leadership that ensures the environment and future generations are not short-changed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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 City \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please place me on your e-mail list for notices and information or contact us by e-mail [eco@eco.org.nz](mailto:eco@eco.org.nz)

**Groups - Join ECO:**

- Please send information on becoming a member of ECO. Membership is by application for groups involved in the protection of the environment. Subscriptions for member organisations are determined by the size of the organisation:
- 1 - 100 members: \$80 p.a.
  - 101 - 1000 members: \$125 p.a.
  - 1001 - 4999 members: \$430 p.a.
  - 5000 + members: \$1000 p.a.
  - Student Groups: \$30 p.a. (all GST inclusive)

**Individuals - Support ECO by:**

- subscribing as a 'Friend of ECO'  
 -\$40 P.A. (GST inc.) '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).
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**Marine Reserve rejected**

By Barry Weeber

The Minister of Conservation, Kate Wilkinson, has rejected a proposal for a marine reserve in Akaroa Harbour. The proposed 530 ha Dan Rogers area marine reserve was first notified 14 years ago.

This is the first marine reserve to be rejected by a Minister of Conservation and would have been the first marine reserve in a Harbour on the East Coast of the South Island. There is currently only one marine reserve on the East Coast of the South Island.

The Maori Land Court modified the Taiapure Boundaries in Akaroa Harbour to allow for the marine reserve which the Minister has now rejected.

The reason the Minister gave for refusing the application, that it would interfere with recreational fishing, is strange given the reviews that took place by the Maori Land Court and that it was only a small part of Akaroa Harbour.

**ECO receives Positive Futures Trust grant**

ECO has recently received a \$5,000 grant from the Positive Futures Trust to re-develop our website [www.eco.org.nz](http://www.eco.org.nz). Over the coming months we will be working on developing new content and a more interactive website including a members' forum.

ECO thanks the Positive Futures Trust for their support of this project. For more information on the Trust visit [www.positivefuturestrust.co.nz](http://www.positivefuturestrust.co.nz)

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## ECO MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Action for Environment	Kaipatiki Project
Appropriate Technology for Living Association	Kakariki - Canterbury University Environment Group
Auckland Civic Trust	Lincoln Environment Group
Bay of Islands Coastal Watchdog	Marlborough Environment Centre
Baywatch Hawkes Bay Environment Group	Massey Environmental Group
Buller Conservation Group	Monarch Butterfly New Zealand Trust
Clean Stream Waiheke	National Council of Women of NZ
Clean Water Clean Water Whangamata	Nelson Environment Centre
Coromandel Watchdog of Hauraki	New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects
Cycling Advocates Network	Nga Uruora - Kapiti Project Charitable Trust
Dunedin Environment Centre	Orari River Protection Group
East Coast Bays Coastal Protection Society	Organics Aotearoa New Zealand
East Harbour Environmental Association	Pacific Institute of Resource Management
Eastern Bay of Islands Preservation Society	Save Mahinerangi Society
Eco Fest Educational Charitable Trust	Save the Otago Peninsula
Engineers for Social Responsibility	Soil and Health Association of NZ
Environmental Futures	South Coast Environment Society
Environmental Law Centre	Students for Environmental Action
Far North Environment Centre	Surfbreak Protection Society
Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ	Sustainable Otago Christchurch
Foundation for Environmental Education New Zealand	Sustainable Whanganui Trust
Friends of Golden Bay	Sustaining Hawke's Bay Environment Centre
Friends of Lewis Pass and Hurunui Catchment	Tasman Environmental Education Trust
Friends of Nelson Haven and Tasman Bay	Te Aroha Earthwatch
Friends of the Earth - NZ	Thames Coast Preservation and Protection Society
Friends of the Shoreline	The Sandy Walker Group
Gecko, Victoria University Environment Group	Toxins Action Group
GE-Free New Zealand in Food and Environment	Wakatipu Environmental Society
Greenpeace NZ	Wellington Botanical Society
Guardians of Pauatahanui Inlet	Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club
Initial Volco Trust	Wildlife Society, NZVA
Island Bay Marine Education Centre	Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust
Island Bay World Service	YHA New Zealand

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