

ECO Conference 2004 'LINKS AND CONNECTIONS'

18 June - Salvation Army Citadel, Christchurch

19-20 June – Living Springs, Governor's Bay

NEW ZEALAND IS FACING SOME HUGE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES AND SOME NEW WAYS FORWARD MUST BE TAKEN URGENTLY TO PROTECT THE COUNTRY'S ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY.

The ECO Conference is tackling issues at the top of the environmental priority list. Two key national issues are the way New Zealand generates and wastes energy, and the way we manage our fisheries. The country needs to get on a new path with both energy and fisheries management pronto.

It is astonishing that with all the heat over the foreshore and seabed there has been virtually nothing said about the government's advanced plans to largely privatise fisheries management and research. We think that this will make ownership of the seabed irrelevant because the trawlers will have squashed anything that is there. We have already lost huge amounts of vital marine life and have crashed our most valuable fish stock, orange roughy. This will be one of the



challenges posed to the new Minister of Fisheries, David Benson-Pope at the conference.

The conference will canvass the practical means to get the country to switch tracks away from use of fossil fuels and into sustainable and secure energy paths.

We have natural resources and the technology to make far better use of the energy we use and to shift away from energy sources that cause pollution and contribute to climate change. The conference will look at how we can bring about this change.

The ECO conference will also examine other environmental and conservation concerns, including South Island high country issues, water allocation, the attacks on the Resource Management Act and fast tracking proposals for big projects. The Government's proposals to change the Resource Management Act will be a focus of some of the discussion.

Antarctica is under threat from commercial activities with increasing tourism and fishing activity. Antarctic expert, Alan Hemmings, who is now based in Australia, will be discussing these major threats and the response from the international environmental community and the Antarctic Treaty parties.

The conference is expected to draw conservationists and environmentalists from throughout the country for the three days. People can register by downloading the conference brochure from the ECO website, www.eco.org.nz or by phoning ECO on 04 386 7545.

**YOU CAN FIND PROGRAMME AND
REGISTRATION FORM INSIDE!**

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Environment and Conservation Organisations of New Zealand Annual Conference 2004

Friday 18 June, Salvation Army Citadel, Christchurch City Centre, 9am-6pm

Friday 18 June evening to Sunday 20 June 2pm, Living Springs, Governor's Bay

Friday 18th June

- 8:30am Registrations and coffee
- 9am Powhiri/Welcomes
- 9:30am Tea break
- 10am South Island Issues:
Water Allocation - ethics and resource use:
Barry Carbon MFE
- 11:15am Impacts of coal mining: **Richard Anstiss**
- 11:40am High country matters: **David Round**
- 12:30pm Lunch break - individually self provided
- 1:30pm RMA: Defending the RMA
and **Jan Simmons** on ECO RMA project
- 2:05pm **David Benson-Pope**, Minister of Fisheries,
Associate Minister for the Environment
- 3:00pm Antarctica: **Alan Hemmings**
- 4:00pm Afternoon Tea
- 4:30pm Marine matters: **Barry Weeber** *Forest and Bird*
- 6:00pm Buses to get us all to Living Springs
- 7:00pm Dinner
- 8:00pm Introductions
- 8:30pm Slide show on high country or more on
Antarctica

Saturday 19th June

- 8:00am Breakfast
- 9:00am Attitudes to Growth: **Geoff Keey**

The conference opens with powhiri at 9am on Friday 18 June. Please assemble at the Citadel before this. On Friday at 6pm (TBC) buses will take us to Living Springs. If driving to Living Springs from the city centre take Colombo St. and follow the road to reach Governor's Bay. 3.5km from from Governor's Bay or 4km from Gebbies Pass/ Diamonds Harbour intersection, turn off at Bamfords Road to reach Living Springs.

City Centre:



Forest and Bird, and **Cath Wallace** ECO

- 10:00am Morning tea
- 10:30am Energy Options including Climate Change:
Geoff Bertram, Jeanette Fitzsimons, Bede Martin CEA
- 12:15pm Lunch
- 12:45pm Field trips: TBC
- 2:45pm Workshops on:
- ◆ Policy
 - ◆ Environmental Education-**Maiki Marks** on Environmental Schools, **Rhys Taylor** on adult education for sustainability
 - ◆ Growth - **Geoff Keey**, *Forest and Bird*
 - ◆ Environment Centres - **John Kenderdine** *FNEC*, **Derek Shaw** *Nelson Environment Centre*
- 5:15pm Community and Voluntary Sector: **Peter Glenzor**
- 6:00pm Dinner
- 7:30pm Entertainment *TBC*

Sunday 20th June

- 8:00am Breakfast
- 9:00am AGM
- 11:00am Morning Tea
- 11:30am Round table discussion of policy and communication
- 12:00noon Communication with ECO: keeping members in the loop
- 1:00pm Lunch
- 2:00pm Close of Conference

For more information contact:

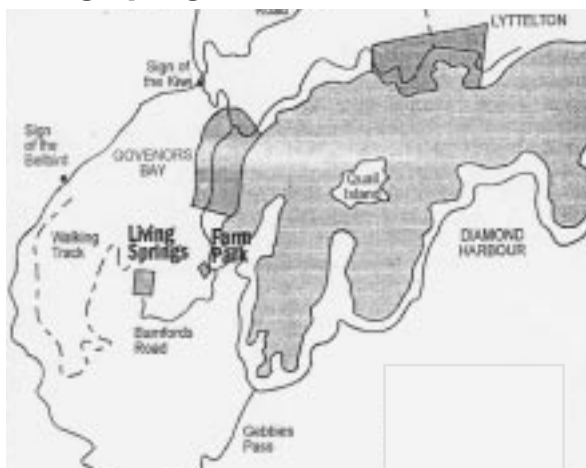
Elizabeth Lee at 04 476-9809 or Kate Lower at 04 385-7545

Fax: 04 385-75-45

e-mail: eco@reddfish.co.nz (with ECO Conference in subject line)

Programme updates available at www.eco.org.nz

Living Springs:



RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT FINE-TUNING OR GUTTING THE ACT?

The Government has announced a fast-track process to review and amend the Resource Management Act. This process is on a fast track and there will be no formal consultation process with the Government's intention to introduce legislation in August.

Fear mongering by some business groups has lead the Government into looking at further amending the Resource Management Act. Many of the so-called facts about delays are inaccurate and do not paint the full story over the legislation and its implementation.

New Zealand has relatively weak environmental law and standards when compared with Europe or North America.

Despite claims that the RMA is holding up development, one of the major indicators of new construction activity (building consents) are at all time highs.

The decision by Meridian to withdraw from the Waitaki consents seems to be more to do with geotechnical issues (ie the soil and geology of canal and power station sites made them very expensive) rather than the RMA.

The categories the government is particularly interested in receiving feedback on are:

- ◆ Achieving the right balance of national and local interests;
- ◆ Improving the design and process for local policy formulation;
- ◆ Improving the consent decision making process;
- ◆ Allocation of natural resources (water, air or geothermal);
- ◆ Supporting measures for building capacity and promoting best practice and implementation.

The government has said that any options proposed to improve existing law and practice must comply with the following principles:

1. **Achieving good environmental outcomes in line with the purpose of the Act (but not the principles).** There should be a proper assessment of environment effects so that adverse effects can be avoided and mitigated.
2. **Certainty of process but not outcomes** - Resource consent applicants should have reasonable certainty about how long it will take to obtain a final decision, but the outcome must be determined by a proper assessment of environmental effects.
3. **Certainty of cost** - Resource consent applicants should have reasonable certainty about how much it will cost to obtain a consent.
4. **Local decision-making** - Communities are well placed to make environmental decisions where

appropriate in their areas and should have the opportunity to plan and make decisions.

5. **Public participation** - Those affected by resource consent applications are best placed to identify the adverse effects on them, and should have the opportunity to put these before decision makers and to seek avoidance or mitigation of adverse effects.
6. **Central government leadership** - Central government should show leadership and give guidance to those involved in resource management."

One strong suggestion has been reducing the role of the Environment Court to matters of law and thus remove the ability to re-hear decisions of council. This would be a major change to the balances in the Resource Management Act and it is unclear what this proposal would mean for mediation. Most references or appeals on Council plan or policies are resolved through mediation. This is a much cheaper process than going than having a full court decision.

Feedback can be given through the Ministry for the Environment website www.mfe.govt.nz or www.rma.govt.nz

Parliamentary Update

Forest Amendment Bill Passed

Parliament has passed the Forest Amendment Bill which brings SILNA (South Island Landless Natives Act) land under the indigenous forests provisions of the Forests Act. These provisions will prevent the export of logs and chips from Southland which has been driving part of the logging on Maori land.

Government is also promoting measures to covenant and protect the special conservation values on parts of this land through Nga Whenua Rahui covenant and special arrangements.

Foreshore and Seabed Legislation

The Foreshore and Seabed Bill has been introduced to Parliament and referred to the Fisheries and Other Sea-Related Legislation Select Committee which is chaired by Russell Fairbrother. Submission close on the Bill on 12 July with the intention to report the Bill back to Parliament by 5 November.

GreenPages

visit: www.greenpages.org.nz

Eco Nuclear Legislation

By *Bunny McDiarmid*
and *Stephanie Mills*
Greenpeace

The National Party has severely damaged its credentials as a government-in-waiting by attempting to appease the US administration with the suggestion that it would repeal our nuclear free legislation. To then propose a referendum after Mr Brash has already assured the Americans that the legislation would be gone by lunchtime augments the damage.

Our nuclear-free legislation was enacted to reduce risk of attack by parties hostile to nuclear weaponry, and to fulfil our own international obligations regarding global nuclear disarmament. It was not put in place to be used by any political party as a tool to gain political advantage.

National proposes to remove the section (Section 11) in the Nuclear-free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Control legislation which bans nuclear powered vessels from entering our waters, but to retain the section that bans nuclear weapons. They suggest that it is possible to retain our nuclear-free status by changing the ban on visits from a law to a policy, and then allowing the government of the day to decide whether to allow nuclear-powered vessels to visit. It is very clear that if the government of the day were to be National, nuclear propelled vessels would be allowed entry.

If the US cannot accept our law banning visits by nuclear propelled vessels, it makes one wonder what makes National believe that they would treat a mere policy seriously, unless that policy were to contain a loophole that effectively changed our nuclear-free status.

Nuclear propelled ships, nuclear weapons and nuclear fighting strategies are intimately linked. Nuclear powered vessels are not only a symbol of nuclear fighting strategies, they are at the heart of an ability to make them operative. Removing our ban on nuclear powered vessels visiting our harbours would weaken our nuclear-free status.

Section 11 of the Act is even more important now than it was in 1987,

because US nuclear weapons are currently carried only on nuclear propelled vessels and submarines. (Tactical nuclear weapons were removed from surface ships in the early 1990s, but the US has retained the capability to return nuclear-armed Tomahawk missiles to nuclear powered attack submarines; deep sea ballistic missile submarines remain routinely nuclear armed).

Late in 2003 the US approved the development of a whole new generation of nuclear weapons, which they claim will be smaller and more 'usable'. The US has not signed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and recently reduced the time necessary to ready their Nevada test site for nuclear testing. Nor have they met their legal commitment to disarm under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. One advocate of US arms control has noted, "It is like a drunk in a bar preaching abstinence whilst ordering a new round of drinks." This sort of behaviour spurs a whole new arms race, one that no country can afford. It is an irony that although the US has the largest nuclear weapons arsenal on the planet, September 11 happened nonetheless.

The security theme of this century is terrorism. The G8 considers the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons the single most important threat to peace and security today. One of the most concerning aspects of this is the possibility of the nuclear threat and the terrorist threat becoming intertwined.

Radiation, along with nuclear weapons, has not been made safer since our legislation was enacted. The cornerstone of modern radiation protection philosophy is the ALARA principle, (as low as reasonably achievable). The key assumption behind this is that any dose of ionising radiation carries with it some risk of deleterious effects to health. Therefore exposure is not acceptable unless there is a demonstrable benefit outweighing the effects of the risk, and which is understood and accepted by those who take the risk. The risk of an accident with a nuclear powered vessel is very small, but it is not zero, and the consequences



of accident could be very serious. Should New Zealanders be exposed to this risk without their consent?

Accidents do happen, and according to the International Maritime Organisation's statistics, 80% of them are the result of human error.

Military vessels are not exempt from accidents, as was seen when the UK warship, HMS Nottingham, ran aground near Lord Howe Island in July 2002. In trying to explain the grounding, a Royal Navy spokesperson described the accident as a "reminder that the sea is a very dangerous place and pretty unforgiving despite all the training and electronic wizardry."

The National Party's position and approach are misguided, if not irresponsible, and their arguments only serve to demonstrate that the proposed changes are not in New Zealand's best interests.

Logically, New Zealand's nuclear-free legislation only makes sense if seen as a complete package, applying to all nuclear weapons and nuclear propulsion globally. If we unravel it, we unravel our own status as a serious and committed player in the global non-proliferation movement, in which along with South Africa, Ireland, Sweden, Mexico and other influential nuclear "rejectionists," we are leaders in setting the disarmament agenda at the United Nations.

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

CHARITIES BILL

www.charities.govt.nz

The Government has introduced the Charities Bill into Parliament. The Bill establishes a Charities Commission tasked with registering and monitoring community sector organisations.

ECO believes our member groups should have some serious reservations about this Bill. We are particularly concerned that the Bill as it stands threatens to undermine the independence and political advocacy role of the community sector.

The Bill has been sent to the Social Services Select Committee.

Concerns with the Bill:

Registration with the Commission will be voluntary but only registered charities will get the tax benefits currently available to all charities registered with the IRD. Registration is likely to become de facto compulsory as funders make registration with the Charities Commission practically essential to get funding.

In order to gain registration as a charity, an organisation will be required to show that it is “established and maintained exclusively for charitable purposes” (cl. 13). The definition of “charitable purposes” is “the relief of poverty, the advancement of education or religion, or any other matter beneficial to the community” (cl. 4(2)).

The concerns discussed below focus on charitable organisations rather than philanthropic trusts but most of the issues are the same or similar.

Advocacy

Like other community sector groups many environmental organisations carry out political advocacy work as part of their broader range of activities. For example, a forest restoration trust may make a submission to a Parliamentary select committee or may lobby a politician around restoration issues. The current wording of the Bill would mean that such an organisation may not seek registration with the Charities Commission.

The independence of the sector

The community sector is the independent voice of the community and provides a vital check on government power. The structure proposed in the bill threatens that voice.

The Bill proposes to establish the Charities Commission as a “Crown Agent”. The category of “Crown Agent” is the least independent form of Crown Entity (under the Public Finance (State Sector Management) Bill), which means that the Commissioners can be easily removed by the Government and the Minister has the power to direct the Charities Commission to give effect to Government policy (cl. 86). This is a power which means that a Minister or Cabinet can decide Government policy and could then impose it on the community sector by making it a mandatory provision for registration as a charity.

This is in contrast to the treatment of other Crown Entities. For example, the Commerce Commission and the Accounting Standards Review Board are “Independent Crown Entities” and can’t be directed to implement Government policy. Even the Arts Council and the Artificial Limb Board are to become “Autonomous Crown Entities” with more independence than the proposed Charities Commission.

Compliance costs

Fees: The Government has suggested that the Charities Commission may be self-funding, which is at odds with the whole rationale for the charitable tax exemption, which is to recognise that charities carry out work considered to be a public good. If the purpose of the bill is to establish a mechanism to protect the integrity of this public good provision, surely the mechanism itself is part of the public good and should be paid for out of general revenue. In addition, the Government states that one of its policy objectives is to gain greater information about the sector in order

to assist the Government to develop social policy - why should the sector pay for this information gathering?

It is worth noting that the Commerce Commission and the Securities Commission both receive public funding to carry out regulation of profit-making businesses.

Regulations: A great deal of the detail of the Bill is left for regulation. We have no way of knowing how detailed or intrusive these regulations may be. We need limits to the power to make regulations.

Criminal record of trustees

The Bill (clause IS (2)) disallows serving as a trustee on a board if you are:

“(c) A person who has been convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment for a term of 2 year or more:

(d) A person who has been convicted of an offence punishable by a term of imprisonment of less than 2 years and has been sentenced to imprisonment for that offence.”

There are environmentalists who have been convicted of such offences at some point in their lives who would make good trustees. Some other organisations, for example prisoner support groups, would struggle to find trustees that did not fail this test.

These are just some of the concerns about this Bill that the voluntary sector need to be concerned about.

The Bill and Government information can be found at www.charities.govt.nz

Submissions close with the Social Services Select Committee on 3 June.

PASS IT ON!

When you've finished this issue of ECOLink why not share it with someone else? You could give it to a friend or workmate, leave it in the dentist's/bus station/doctor's waiting room, give it to your local library or reading room.

HELP ECO GO AROUND!

35 YEAR AQUACULTURE CONSENTS TOO LONG

Suggestions that mussel farmers will be given 35 year consents terms under the aquaculture reforms, are disturbing say Top of The South Environmental groups.

The Government is proposing to introduce legislation later in the year that will amend current controls on aquaculture or marine farming under the Fisheries Act and Resource Management Act.

There is growing new information on the complexities of marine life and interaction with mussel farming says Friends of Nelson Haven and Marlborough Environment Centre spokesperson Steffan Browning. Some of the same marine farmers who are asking for such security of tenure are already concerned at the impacts of their own industry and to commit public space to potentially damaging effects for such a term is worrying.

RESERVES ESSENTIAL FOR "FAVOURITE FISH"

The need for drastic fisheries quota reductions is evidence that scientist do not always get it right when setting catch limits. With political leverage, large amounts of money at stake, vast expanses of water and often the necessary research following behind discoveries of new stocks, this should not be all that surprising, according to New Zealand Underwater's marine biologist, Peter Crabb.

"There are examples of fish stocks that have been managed to commercial extinction before now and it follows that in the absence of some moderation that there will be more."

"We must take further portions of the 18 000 km of coastline that NZ has, put them aside and leave them alone forever, then our grandchildren will be able to see natural populations of New Zealand's native marine life such as snapper, blue cod and paua in those areas as they were prior to the settlement of New Zealand," says Crabb.

"No-take marine reserves have benefits for tourism, education and local economies and we know this from Goat Island with 200 thousand plus visitors and \$12.1 million of revenue generated annually."

A nationwide network of marine reserves will preserve a percentage of our sea and its inhabitants. Unlike overfishing, this is sustainable and permanent, Crabb says.

Crabb says, the principal of setting aside areas that we do not fish or disturb and leave them that way is so simple yet lots of folks resist it, when the state of our fish stocks should make each of us very worried that human greed will prevail where common sense has left off.

In my experience, many people apportion blame onto commercial fishers or foreign joint venture fishers for reduction in fish stocks and do not want a reserve near their batch or where they go fishing, and are driven by fear, Crabb says.

A compromise might be necessary to give first right of refusal for consent holders with 10 yearly terms to review the environmental effects and community wishes says Mr Browning. He added that already some Marlborough mussel farms are not expected to run past the next few years.

It is not unusual for regional councils to limit consents to around 10 years for farms in new areas which historically have not had marine farms. This short period recognised that the impact of marine farms on the aquatic environment, marine mammals or seabirds had not been assessed. One fear from the Department of Conservation is that large offshore marine farms will just become new traps for migrating whales and dolphins. DoC have recently received a MoRST research grant to investigate the impact of marine farms on marine mammals.

Mussel farms currently pay no resource rentals or rates for the use of public space for marine farms. This subsidised access to public space is one issue which the Government needs to deal with in these proposed reforms.

Blame will not achieve anything when the fish are gone. When I speak with people in their seventies they can remember fishing being a lot different and a picture emerges that collectively all extractive users have had a dramatic effect on New Zealand's marine ecology over a short time, Crabb says.

In the 1940s there was over 10 times the snapper in the Hauraki Gulf and 20 times the snapper on the West Coast of the North Island than there is there now.

Some Increased Funding for Solar Water Heating

The Government has doubled the funding available to assist home owners install solar water heaters but it still means only \$400 thousand dollars is available.

According to the solar water heating industry there is currently an annual growth of 50-60% in number of systems being installed. However, on the bigger scale, the solar industry need to grow ten folds before it will contribute a significant amount of energy savings to the overall energy balance of New Zealand.

According to the Solar Industry there are now 108 accredited installers around the country who can supply a range of accredited products. Those products are suitable for residential homes, farming and commercial applications such as food outlets where quantities of hot water are required.

The Government needs to seriously consider requiring all new houses to install solar water heating systems. This would help reduce electricity demand and reduce the need for new gas supplies and new power stations.

For further information see www.eeca.govt.nz

Further Proposals to Amend the Hazardous Substances Legislation

The Ministry for the Environment is seeking submissions on proposals to amend the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO). The proposals can be found on the Ministry for the Environment website.

The proposals came out of the government's Hazardous Substances Strategy which according to MFE aims to improve the workability of hazardous substances legislation and includes actions to amend the HSNO. The intention is to introduce amending legislation into Parliament before the end of 2004.

The MFE proposal include measures to:

1. "streamline" the hazardous substance application process, particularly for lower-risk substances. MFE proposes the development of a group standard pathway to enable the Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) to set up groups of substances and apply a single set of controls to all the substances in that group (e.g. fly spray), reducing the number of approvals that will be

required and streamlining the application pathway.

2. improve how hazardous substance controls are communicated: The HSNO controls on packaging, labelling and storage, for example, are designed to reduce the likelihood of any adverse event, and, should one occur, reduce the potential damage. Industry has indicated that the controls would be more "user friendly" if they were organised according to the means by which they may be implemented (eg, all the requirements for labels in one place), rather than the function they perform (e.g. identification, containment, managing emergencies). Further, for smaller businesses, if controls were simplified and more prescriptive rather than being performance based they would be easier to comply with.

MFE are proposing to enable ERMA to create standard sets of controls that would still allow better-resourced industry to take advantage of the performance-based nature of the regulations, but that would simplify

compliance for those industries that do not have the resources to interpret the control regulations. The proposal would reduce the number of controls being used, making it easier for enforcement agencies to enforce the HSNO requirements and to help people to comply.

3. improve the compliance and enforcement regime. Section 97 of the HSNO lists enforcement agencies together with the places or subject areas each is responsible for. There have been teething problems, and the loss of enforcement capacity within territorial authorities has been a particular concern. In response, the MFE proposes that:

- the current role of territorial authorities should be clarified;
- regional councils should have an HSNO enforcement role;
- there is formalised emergency response planning system.

Submissions close on Friday 11 June 2004 with Ian Cairns, ian.cairns@mfe.govt.nz at Ministry for the Environment, phone: 04 916 7657, fax: 04 916 7641.

WATER PROGRAMME DEVELOPING

A 2 year Water Programme of Act is being co-ordinated by the Ministry for the Environment as part of the Government's four leg sustainable development strategy. This process is also being linked with the RMA review which the government has also announced. The Programme of Action initially consists of three strands covering:

- water allocation and use including priority of allocation;
- water quality;
- water bodies of national importance which potentially includes a review of water conservation orders.

Within these strands, research projects will look at:

- how to manage water allocation and factors affecting water quality – this includes investigation of water trading and other economic instruments;
- what the national interest in water is;
- identifying the water bodies of national importance;
- developing ways to get sustainable and fair results.

The Ministry is in the process of having reports produced on:

- Economic instruments;
- Property rights and perceptions;
- Governance;

- Waters of national importance;
- Management of Waitaki and lake Taupo;

A stakeholder group has been established and has had one meeting to date. Cath Wallace is ECO's representative on that group. Further information is on the MFE website or email wpoa@mfe.govt.nz,

RMA LINK INFORMATION AND EDUCATION ON THE RMA

RMA Link is a resource for individuals and groups with a concern for the environment which has been developed by ECO.

RMA Link contains:

- Directory of environmental and community groups with interest and experience in RMA processes;
- Quick-find directory of information sources on a wide range of resource management issues and topics;
- Information on how you could get involved in RMA processes;
- Potential sources of advice on the RMA.

RMALink was developed with funding from the Ministry for the Environment, Environment and Education fund.

RMALink is in the process of going live on the web at www.rmalink.org.nz during May and June.

SHORE KIDS LOVE STREAMS

By *Kaipatiki Project*

The involvement of schools in testing stream health with the Kaipatiki Project is a partnership that is win-win for all involved. The schools visit the Kaipatiki Project to learn about what makes a healthy stream, in accordance with the curriculum. Great advantages of the sessions are that they are so hands-on and the children learn to use scientific equipment, see and touch the different components of the ecosystem and develop an understanding of the components of a riparian ecosystem.

After games and a bit of training on the equipment at the Environment Centre, Education Coordinator Kate Jackson takes the children to the streamside and teaches them stream health testing, bug identification, and all about water quality indicators. Trays of bugs are carefully examined and identified before being gently returned into the water, while pH, water clarity and other aspects of stream health are investigated.

The children love the interactive aspects of the exercise and enjoy the activities and resources from Wai Care, a council initiative that encourages community participation in stream testing and restoration. The children, parents and teachers always respond very positively to the sessions and some quotes are included.



"I enjoyed going down to the stream because of the nice plants" Sam

"I liked the acid and clarity testing and catching bugs" Blake

"I liked it when me and Ethan caught a cricket" Anon

Kate believes that the interactive nature of the programme results in the children being more likely to feel a sense of guardianship of the health of their local waterways. Councils all over the country implement Wai Care and selected environmental education programmes but the Kaipatiki Projects programme is unique. Feel free to contact us about children and adult education programmes. Phone 482 1172 or email secretary@kaipatiki.org.nz for more information or advice



A SONG OF THANKS AND PRAISE

It is time to recognise the many unsung heroes of the ECO story, the unstintingly generous Automatic Payers from whose bank accounts, month after month, sums of money are extracted and deposited into ECO's account. Without your silent partnership, APers, ECO would find it much more difficult to carry out its work of informing, educating and advocating. We thank you sincerely for your support, and hope that we can count on you in the future.

If anyone else is thinking of making regular donations to the work of ECO, we encourage you to arrange to do it by automatic payment. Contact Kate Lower at the ECO office to get automatic payment form or go directly to your bank to arrange it. Please use the following bank account: National Bank, Courtenay Place, Wellington, Acc. No.: 06 0582 000769004.

Thank You!

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ENERGY – HOMEGROWN

By John Kenderdine
ECO

Our demand for energy continues to increase and our present patterns of consumption are unsustainable. Industry demands new large-scale generating systems to meet its future needs, Maui gas is fast disappearing, oil extraction is thought to be peaking about now - and we have enough coal to keep us going for the next 2000 years. However, some of us think it's not such a good idea to rip that coal out of the ground and use it to foul the air for the next 2000 years. What then can we do? To start with, we can certainly look very carefully at our consumption patterns and reduce our power requirements substantially without any reduction in our standard of living, but if we look at the freely available energy all around us from wind, water and the sun, we can still "live like a king, below the poverty line."

A few lucky people have managed to be in the right place at the right time to get good deals on second hand or recycled systems, but for most the capital costs of an alternative power system have been prohibitive. With the dramatic increase of



Photo source: EcoInnovation's website

power prices following the privatisation of energy supplies, though, and the prospect of a continuation of the same as market forces dictate competition for diminishing supplies, an alternative source of energy seems to be not such a bad idea.

A home power system consists of a generator, storage capacity, and controls. Generation can come from a diesel or petrol generator (though these are not sustainable), solar photovoltaic panels, wind generators or mini hydro generators. Storage is in batteries, or by being connected to the grid and feeding all the power produced into the local network, to be drawn on as needed. Controls are things like inverters and regulators, and any other bells and whistles that may be needed.

The prices of most components seem to be coming down, but batteries and solar panels can often be still too expensive for many. What is good is that exciting options for both generation and storage are developing. EcoInnovation from Taranaki have developed efficient wind and hydro generators using Fisher and Paykel Smart Drive washing machine motors, and other readily available materials, which can be bought

off the shelf or as kitsets, with options to suit everyone. The wind generator produces between 400 and 700 watts and can be configured 12, 24 or 48 volts. It is priced at \$1,200 plus GST, or alternatively you can build your own at one of their workshops for much less.

The deal for one of their hydro systems is similar, with the price being around \$1,000 plus GST. EcoInnovation produces two hydro systems, the pelton turbine and the turgo turbine, and they have a water wheel system under development, with the units covering a range of field conditions from high head and low volume to low head and high volume; there is something to cover the needs of most hydro sites. EcoInnovation will calculate the best option for you if given the change in elevation between the source of the water and the point of generation, the distance covered and the flow rate in litres per second. Check it out yourself at www.ecoinn.co.nz.



Photo source: EcoInnovation's website

Options for batteries are new ones at considerable cost, or recycled ones from industrial back-up systems, which need to be renewed every ten years or so. The latter option relies on your being in the right place at the right time to acquire the batteries. The alternative to storage is to use the local network, which requires a two-way meter and an agreement with the lines company and the retail power supplier. The concept could not be simpler, but in fact it is not so easy, for at present each applicant for what is called "distributed" or "embedded" generation has to negotiate his own agreement from scratch. Even though the Government has issued press releases and discussion documents to encourage the system, one gains the impression that the power companies are not interested, so if you want to produce your own electricity and stay hooked to the grid, you need to be a lobbyist for a standard nation-wide interconnection agreement that would allow consumers to attach their own generating system to the grid at no charge, but being subject to recognised safety standards, of course.

Another issue that needs attention is the way in which power generation is credited. Net metering is the term used for the difference between power produced and power consumed, and if you have your own generation system, "wouldn't it be louverly" to get a cheque instead of a bill for your electricity usage?



Photo source: EcoInnovation's website

There's lots of (almost) free energy out there, and if enough of us can get motivated to grab some, we can reduce the need for more Project Aquas and Meremeres.

Urgent Action Needed to Protect Seamounts, Cold-Water Corals, and other Vulnerable Deep-Sea Ecosystems

The following NGOs: ECO, Greenpeace, World Wide Fund for Nature, The World Conservation Union, Oceana, Conservation International, Marine Conservation Biology Institute, New England Aquarium and others, have jointly called on the UN General Assembly to adopt a resolution declaring an immediate moratorium on high seas bottom trawling, and to simultaneously initiate a process under the auspices of the UN General Assembly to 1) assess deep sea biodiversity and ecosystems, including populations of fish species, and their vulnerability to deep sea fishing on the high seas; and 2) adopt and implement legally binding regimes to protect deep sea biodiversity from high seas bottom trawling and to conserve and manage bottom fisheries of the high seas consistent with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982), UN Fish Stocks Agreement (FSA 1995), UN FAO Compliance Agreement (1993), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD 1992), and the UN FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (Code 1995).

In addition, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, whose members comprise 72 states and nearly 1000 NGOs, is calling on the UN General Assembly to immediately protect seamounts, deep water corals and other biodiversity hotspots from high seas bottom trawling until these vulnerable areas can be identified and measures to protect them adopted and enforced, including effective international management measures for bottom trawl fisheries in these areas.

In 2002, the UN Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (UNICPOLOS) recommended that the UN General Assembly call for *urgent* consideration to improve the management of risks to vulnerable deep-sea areas and biodiversity. This was subsequently endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 2002, and reiterated by both UNICPOLOS and the UN General Assembly in 2003. In February 2004, the 7th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) responded to the call made by the UN General Assembly, stressing the need for rapid action to address threats to the marine biodiversity of deep-sea areas including seamounts, hydrothermal vents, cold water corals and other vulnerable marine ecosystems and features beyond national jurisdiction. In view of the central role played by the UN General Assembly in coordinating international action to address the threat to biodiversity on the high seas, COP-7 of the CBD called upon the UN General Assembly, as well as other relevant international and regional organizations, to:

“urgently take the necessary short-term, medium-term and long-term measures to eliminate/avoid destructive practices, consistent with international law, on a scientific basis, including the application of precaution” through, for example, on a case by case basis, the *“interim prohibition of destructive practices adversely impacting the marine biological diversity associated with [these] areas...”*¹

Also in February 2004, over 1000 marine scientists from around the world released a consensus Statement calling for swift action to protect imperiled deep-sea coral and sponge

ecosystems at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.² They identified bottom trawling as an especially grave threat to these communities and urged the United Nations and other international bodies to establish a moratorium on bottom trawling on the high seas. This Statement was preceded by a similar statement from over one hundred scientists attending the Tenth Deep-Sea Biology Symposium in Coos Bay, Oregon USA in August 2003, and the Second International Symposium on Deep Sea Corals in Erlangen, Germany in September 2003. They too urged the UN General Assembly to adopt an immediate moratorium on bottom trawl fishing on the high seas.

Accordingly it is vital that in June of this year, UNICPOLOS recommend specific and immediately effective short-term measures so that the UN General Assembly can take action to urgently address the threat of high seas bottom trawling at its 2004 meeting. Further, UNICPOLOS should also identify longer-term options for comprehensively addressing the conservation and protection of deep-sea biological diversity and its equitable and sustainable use.

Scientists and the public are increasingly concerned about the threats to vulnerable deep-sea biodiversity hotspots, including seamounts and cold-water corals, posed by bottom trawl fishing conducted on the high seas. These deep-sea features typically support slow-growing, long-lived species, which are particularly sensitive to disturbance. Fish inhabiting these deep-sea ecosystems can live for up to 150 years, and coral structures may reach several thousands of years in age. Urgent action is needed to protect seamounts, deep water corals and other vulnerable deep water habitats that occur beyond the 200-mile limit from bottom trawl fishing and to prevent the serial depletion of populations of numerous commercially important species of deep-sea fish associated with them.



Seamounts are submarine mountains and hills that rise 1000 meters or more above the ocean floor. They are distributed throughout the world's oceans. Less than 1% of seamounts have been biologically sampled, but recent research indicates that seamounts have large numbers of

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endemic species (species that are not found anywhere else). Along with cold water corals and other deep-sea ecosystems, seamounts represent a major reservoir of biodiversity in the oceans. Yet much remains unknown about the distribution, abundance and dynamics of deep coral and seamount ecosystems.

The international community has repeatedly called for the prevention, deterrence and elimination of unregulated fishing. Bottom trawl fishing is completely unregulated in extensive areas of the high seas. This represents an important gap in the governance of the world's oceans. Only a handful of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (e.g., NAFO, CCAMLR, NEAFC, SEAFO) have authority to regulate deep sea bottom fishing, and few if any have restricted bottom trawling to protect sensitive ecosystems. In relation to other high seas fisheries, bottom trawling on the high seas is still relatively limited in terms of the number of vessels, the countries involved, and the amount and value of the catch.³

Faced with declining fish stocks in nearshore coastal waters, fishers are venturing farther out into previously unfished ecosystems of the deep sea. Advancing technology now allows them to easily locate and catch fish in these formerly inaccessible areas, and some of the gear used, such as bottom trawls, can rapidly reduce ancient, thriving bottom coral complexes to rubble and deplete the fish populations that inhabit them. There is great concern that many species are being lost to bottom trawling before they can even be identified. This type of fishing also destroys the habitat of commercially important species, and the serial depletion of many commercial fish populations associated with these features, such as orange roughy, demonstrates the unsustainability of these fisheries. It greatly reduces the opportunities for all states to benefit from deepsea species and biodiversity.

A scientific assessment of deepsea biodiversity and ecosystems must provide detailed information on the marine biodiversity associated with seamounts, deepsea corals and other deepsea ecosystems, and how deepsea ecosystems relate to open ocean ecosystems. It should also provide for further identification and mapping of deepsea biodiversity

hotspots and ecotypes/bioregions. It should assess the viability of sustainable exploitation of deepsea fish stocks and species on the high seas with particular reference to the impacts of such activity on associated and dependent species and related ecosystems.

In exploring legally binding regimes to protect deepsea biodiversity and conserve and manage high seas bottom fisheries, the options include, *inter alia*:

- extending the 1995 UN FSA to cover all high seas fisheries, together with additional regional agreements/arrangements for unregulated deepsea fish stocks, and ensuring that RFMOs with competence over high seas bottom fisheries fully reflect the provisions of the international instruments noted above; or a new convention on unregulated deepsea fisheries on the high seas; and
- identification of measures available to the coastal state to prevent or mitigate damage resulting from high seas bottom trawl fishing to sedentary species subject to coastal state resource rights on the continental margin beyond 200 n.m;
- establishment of areas where bottom fishing activities are either strictly managed or excluded – to protect biodiversity, ensure sustainable fisheries, and/or maintain ecosystem integrity;
- adoption of further binding international measures to eliminate the problems of illegal, unreported and unregulated high seas bottom fishing, including the strengthening of flag state and port state jurisdiction and comprehensively addressing the issue of vessels flying flags of convenience; and
- adoption of measures that effectively provide for the equitable and sustainable use of deepsea biodiversity as a matter of interest to all nations.

¹ Decision VII/5 of the Seventh Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity on Marine and coastal biological diversity, para. 61. See also paras. 57-62. February 2004. <http://www.biodiv.org/decisions/default.aspx>.

² <http://www.mcbi.org>, under 'New at MCBi'.

³ Gianni, Matthew. High Seas Bottom Fisheries and Their Impact on the Biodiversity of Vulnerable Deep-sea Ecosystems: Summary Findings, February 2004.

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