

ECO Conference 2005

“MOUNTAINS TO THE DEEP SEA”

24-25 June, Baptist Church, 46 Boulcott St, Wellington
26 June Tapu Te Ranga Marae, 44 Rhine St, Wellington

Conservation and resource management professionals, ECO members, public officials will gather in Wellington to set the agenda for New Zealand's environment and conservation policies and management needs.

This year's ECO Annual Conference will look at crucial environmental issues for the next 3 years. These include energy and climate change, the future of the Resource Management Act, oceans policy and fisheries management, and global environmental issues.

Among the speakers will be Penny Figis who is the Regional-Vice Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas. She will look at conservation priorities for the wider region

Energy and alternatives to large projects will be the focus of several sessions during the weekend. Roy Hemmingway from the Electricity Commission will debate with others on energy alternatives.

Saturday morning will have a session on iwi resource management. New Ministry of Fisheries CEO, John Glaister, will talk about challenges for fisheries management in New Zealand.



Minister Pete Hodgson speaking at the ECO 2003 Conference

YOU CAN FIND A DRAFT OF PROGRAMME AND REGISTRATION FORM INSIDE!

Friday evening will focus on political parties commitments on the environment and will involve a debate amongst political parties on their environment and conservation policies – Politicians on the Green Spot.

A number of field trips are being organised for Sunday afternoon after the ECO AGM.

The conference will be held in Wellington at the Baptist Church in Boulcott St on Friday and Saturday and at the Taputeranga Marae on Saturday night and Sunday.

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PASS IT ON!

Why not to share the information about ECO Conference with someone else? You could give it to a friend or workmate, put it on your organisation's website, send to your organisation's networks, etc.

HELP THE WORD GO AROUND!

Draft of Programme for ECO's Annual Conference 2005

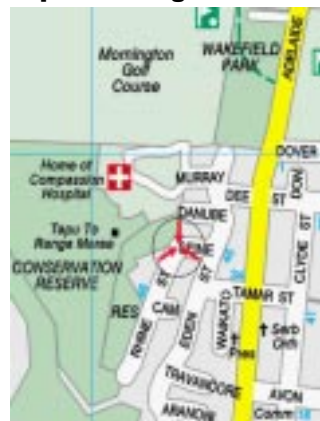
24-25 June, Baptist Church, 46 Boulcott St, Wellington
26 June, Tapu Te Ranga Marae, 44 Rhine St., Wellington

FRIDAY 8:00 - 8:45 Registration
8:45 - 9:00 Powhiri/Welcom, **Mark Te One**
9:00 - 10:30 Priorities for Conservation:
* South Pacific, **Penelope Figgis AM**, Vice-Chair for Australia and New Zealand of the World Commission on Protected Areas
* Antarctic and Southern Ocean, **Debs Martin**, F&B
* New Zealand, **Kevin Hackwell**, F&B
10:30 - 11:00 BREAK
11:00 - 12:30 Think Better than Think Big:
* Introduction of Electricity Commission, **Roy Hemmingway**- tbc
* Energy alternatives, **Molly Melhuish**
* RMA, **Cath Wallace**, ECO
* Public participation, **Geoff Keey**, F&B
12:30 - 1:15 LUNCH with RMAlink display
1:15 - 3:00 Policy and Practice priorities: 7 min presentation + 15 min workshop on each key aspect:
* Environmental Management, **Geoff Keey or Cath Wallace**
* Fisheries and Ocean, **Carmen Gravatt**, GPNZ or **Cath Wallace or Barry Weeber**

Baptist Church:



Tapu Te Ranga Marae:



* Antarctic, **Debs Martin** F&B
* Energy, **Clive Monds or Nigel Isaacs** - tbc
* Climate Change, **Vanessa Atkinson**, GPNZ
3:00 - 4:00 BREAK
4:00 - 5:30 Policy and Practice priorities continuation:
* DoC funding, **Kevin Hackwell**, F&B
* Biodiversity, **Kevin Hackwell**, F&B
* Biosecurity, **Geoff Keey**, F&B
* High Country, **Kevin Hackwell**, F&B
* Freshwater - tbc
5:30 - 7:00 DINNER
7:00 Vote for the Environment: Politicians on the Green Spot - **Representatives of parties: National (Dr. Nick Smith), Labour, NZ First, Greens, United (Larry Baldock), Maori, Act (Ken Shirley)**

SATURDAY

9:00 - 9:40 Environment and Science:- tbc
9:40 - 10:30 Water quality and allocation - tbc
10:30 - 11:00 BREAK
11:00 - 12:30 Maori Environmental and Resource Management: **Jessica Hutchings**, Massey Uni. and Victoria Uni. **Maiki Marks**
David O'Connell, Ngai Tahu
12:30 - 1:45 LUNCH
1:45 - 3:15 Oceans, Fisheries, Deep Sea Biodiversity - impacts what could be done?
John Glaister, CEO at MFish
Marine Biodiversity speakers - tbc
Barry Weeber
3:15 - 3:45 BREAK
3:45 - 4:45 Energy
4:45 - 5:30 **Save Happy Valley Campaign** - Workshop
5:30 - 7:00 DINNER
7:00 - 7:30 Clean up/ move to Tapu Te Ranga Marae
8:30 ENTERTAINMENT: Emily Bailey's presentation about: raw footage of "Kotahi Te Ao" global grassroots film project

SUNDAY 9:00 - 9:30 Keynote Speaker - tbc
9:30 - 10:00 Supporting Capability Building in community and voluntary org **Stephen Blyth**, MSD - tbc
10:00 - 11:00 AGM part I / At the same time screening of raw footage of "Kotahi Te Ao" global grassroots film project
11:00 - 11:10 BREAK
11:10 - 12:40 AGM part II / finishing the screening of the film
12:40 - 1:40 LUNCH
1:40 - 2:00 Clean up
2:00 Field Trips:
1. Karori Wildlife Sanctuary - tbc
2. South Coast, **Ray Mercer**
3. Power Trip, **Confirmed**
4. Energy Efficient Buildings - tbc
5. Tapu Te Ranga rare plants

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Elizabeth Lee at 04 476-9809
or Kate Lower at 04 385-7545
Fax: 04 385 7545
e-mail: eco@reddfish.co.nz

Programme updates on
www.eco.org.nz - subject to change

RMA and Public Participation attacked by Infrastructure Bill.

By Cath Wallace
ECO

Resource Management and Electricity Bill, under consideration by the Local Government and Environment Select Committee, will, if accepted as is, damage severely environmental protection, public participation and strategies for transition to solar and wind power, and other forms of distributed generation.

The Bill, introduced by the Labour government, will fundamentally change the RMA from law whose purpose is to provide avoidance and management of environmental effects, to law that places an obligation on local and central government to promote infrastructure.

The Bill allows councils to require people to supply prior to a hearing written "briefs of evidence" and written expert testimony to council hearings. That would make it very difficult and expensive for most people from the community to participate in council hearings, so reducing public participation.

In clauses that Forest and Bird has dubbed the "I am God" clauses, the Bill, introduced by the Minister for the Environment, would bestow powers on that Minister to direct local authorities to take actions, to supply information, to prepare or change Regional or District Plans, to take any action, and to include matters the Minister directs into plans and policies, and to give these effect. Applicants and local government can ask for central government involvement, but those concerned about the impacts of a project cannot.

The Minister would have extensive powers to make appointments to boards, it will substantially increase the Minister's powers and will severely cut due processes from the existing "call in" process. If unamended, the Bill would significantly skew power to central government to direct local and regional government to do as central government wishes.

ECO repudiates these powers as very poor law. It is plain that behind the Minister for the Environment will be ministers pushing for favoured "think big" projects.

Maori entitlements to be consulted on resource consent applications would be mostly axed by the Bill and instead there are to be more requirements to consult Iwi at the plan preparation stage: so there will be a very heavy burden on Maori to try to imagine all possible activities and effects in all places and so to ask for provisions in plans. This is a heavy burden and an impossible task compared to considering the impacts of activities when the activity and place are known.

The government is using its desire to push through Transpower's transmission line, coal mines and hydro dams, roads and other infrastructure – which could extend to a whole variety of other favoured projects.

The Bill has a few good elements in it – but some of these are under threat.

Most under attack is the provision that would allow appeals against non-notification of resource consent applications that should have been notified. Other welcome

measures include provisions for training and accreditation of local government decision makers, and the ability of the Environment Court to waive fees – but we think this should apply to all cases in the public interest, not just to a few.

One ostensible goal to the bill is to "streamline" the RMA processes – but counter to this goal is that the Bill would not only introduce court-style procedures at the council level, but also give a whole new set of matters to argue at the Environment Court. Only evidence and those matters considered by the Council are to be the subject of Environment Court appeals – but since there will be no written record of those, this will open new matters to contest at the Environment Court, so bogging the Court down, rather than freeing it up.

Provisions for environmental standards have been in the RMA since its inception – and to its credit, the Ministry for the Environment has finally introduced some. A pernicious provision of the Bill is that communities' ability to set environmental standards greater than national standards are to be constrained so that environmental standards will become minimum standards. Councils will have to provide reasons which can be challenged if they want to have higher standards.

The Bill provides for local authorities to allocate natural resources – with water one of the first. It is clear that the National Programme of Action on water and its proposals for water trading is a companion to the infrastructure of this Bill.

ECO understands that there are some on the Local Government and Environment Select Committee who readily see the flaws in the Bill but that the Labour members are under a strict whip to try to get it through as quickly as possible. ECO will watch closely to see how this develops - this Bill due to be reported back by mid-June and passed soon after.

We encourage members and supporters to let Helen Clark and Associate Environment Minister David Benson-Pope know how unacceptable this Bill is.

To see the whole of ECO's submission, see www.eco.org.nz



NO To "Marsden B"

Marsden B was built in 1970s as an oil-fired power station, but never used. Now Mighty River Power want to convert it to an coal fired station. This would mean a disaster for the environment because of the emissions of carbon dioxide, toxic ash and other poisonous substances. Northland Regional Council received around 3000 submissions opposing Mighty River Power's application.

Photo courtesy of Greenpeace/Malcolm Pullman

The Antarctic – In Need of Protection

By Debs Martin

Forest and Bird, Nelson

Expansion of fishing and further threats to the Ross Sea Region are likely, unless New Zealand changes its direction. Our politicians and fishing vessels have been at the forefront of opening up the Antarctic to expanded fishing and our representatives have given the nod to proceed with a road to the South Pole. The government needs a clear message that a recently released discussion document need much revision to meet the conservation needs of Antarctica.

In the 1980s a significant amount of environmental activity was directed towards protecting the Antarctic. Awareness-raising by Greenpeace about the effects of environmental damage through explosives and waste dumping, and a campaign to ditch plans for a minerals regime, provided much of the focus. With the eventual abandonment of the minerals convention, the way was paved for greater protection through the Environmental Protocol. The Protocol brought into effect a long-term ban on mining and related activities. It also heralded the introduction of much stricter environmental standards and controls for any activities in the Antarctic.

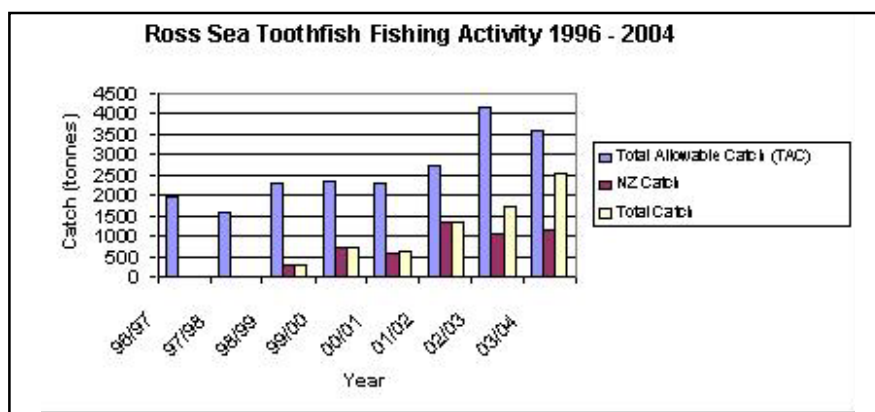
Unfortunately this has also signalled a major shrinking in public awareness of environmental issues in the Antarctic. Given the safeguards provided for in the Environmental Protocol, it is not surprising that many have rested on their laurels. But while the environmental movement as a coordinated advocacy group fails to be informed and active on the Antarctic, the rapidly expanding global economy looks to the frozen continent and surrounding waters with commercial gain in mind.

In 1980 the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resource (CCAMLR) was signed. The fundamental premise to this treaty is ecosystem based management allowing 'wise use'. It was appropriate at the time, trying to curb overfishing and adopting an ecosystem approach. However, twenty years on, New Zealand, as a signatory to this treaty, is using the 'wise use' concept to promote the expansion of fishing in the Ross Sea. The Ross Sea is a relatively pristine ecosystem with a high level of marine biodiversity. So while some political parties in New Zealand have adopted a policy of "World Park Antarctica", the reality is far less convincing.

In 2002 the New Zealand government revised its Antarctic Statement of Strategic Interest. Even though it opens with a broad sweep about "conservation of the intrinsic and wilderness values", it does not preclude any activity relating to commercial gain. Now in 2005, the government is asking 'stakeholders' very serious questions about the direction of our marine activity in the Ross Sea.

A brief synopsis of New Zealand's involvement in fishing in the Ross Sea:

- ◆ New Zealand was a non-fishing member of CCAMLR until 1996.
- ◆ NZ has fished in the Ross Sea every year since, with increasing fishing capacity, both in number and size of vessels. For 5 out of 8 years NZ was the only nation fishing in the Ross Sea.
- ◆ NZ was the first fleet to pioneer fishing below 70 degrees South.
- ◆ NZ toothfish industry has invested several millions into the infrastructure needed to fish at high latitudes – and is proving a very powerful lobbying agency with both the Ministry of Fisheries and Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade.
- ◆ Toothfish industry has consistently lobbied for fishing to move from an 'exploratory' to an 'assessed' fishery. NZ decision-makers are willing to explore this option.



The 2001 'State of the Ross Sea Region Environment Report', acknowledged that not enough is known about population dynamics and the ecosystem role of Antarctic toothfish. The 2002 CCAMLR meeting stated "the approach employed to estimate yield in [the Ross Sea] may no longer be applicable." Yet in the same year Total Allowable Catch (TAC) increased by over 1000t.

Specially protected areas (ASPAs) are painfully slow to advance. NZ has been engaged within CCAMLR for a number of years to try and establish one around the Balleny Islands – the only one within the Ross Sea. There is yet no commitment yet from CCAMLR to adopt this protection measure, whilst at the same time it continues to increase catch size and access. A central problem is that we are dealing with a treaty where most of the partners are committed to Antarctic fishing and are thus swayed by commercial imperatives.

The World Conservation Union, IUCN at the Bangkok World Conservation Congress last November called for comprehensive protection of the Ross Sea. The government has yet to respond to this call and the resolutions not mentioned in the Ross Sea strategy.

But fishing is just one issue - many others face the Antarctic.

- Continued over page

Bioprospecting – the synthesising of natural products from Antarctic species – raises issues about intellectual property rights, patents, and ownership. Who profits from the commercialisation of products originating from an area where there is no certainty over territorial rights? A bioprospecting conference held in Christchurch in 2003 indicated the potential environmental and legal minefields to be crossed.

Ship based tourism continues to rapidly expand in the Antarctic. Vessels of increasing size are visiting identified ‘hot spots’, including the Ross Sea region historic sites. There is also a small, but increasing demand for expansion into more ‘adventure land-based’ activity.

Wilderness values are being compromised. NZ gave recent approval for the US road to the South Pole. It is anticipated the road will be used to lay telecommunications cable – therefore creating a very significant encroachment upon wilderness values. Construction of the road involves extensive blasting and filling in of crevasses. Is this protection of wilderness? With NZ heavily indebted to the US for ongoing logistical support with our Antarctic programme, are geopolitics involved?

Finally, Sir Geoffrey Palmer, NZ’s Commissioner to the IWC, has indicated there is a distinct possibility that the IWC may gain the votes required to allow the recommencement of whaling. The Southern Ocean is the feeding grounds of these large marine mammals – some of which migrate through NZ waters. Can we allow the resumption of whaling in the Southern Ocean?

Antarctic needs your help. There are no indigenous voices to speak for the Antarctic and Southern Ocean, no local community to protect the marine species, and no on-the-spot environmental watchdog. Geographically, we are the ‘gateway’

to the Antarctic. As an environmental community, we have a responsibility to ensure this ‘gateway’ is not misused.

What can you do:

◆ Forest and Bird, along with other NGOs in New Zealand will be working to protect the Antarctic. Please support these organisations and offer your help

◆ Join IceWatch – a NZ organisation with links to international watchdog, ASOC (contact icewatch@paradise.net.nz).

◆ Write to MPs and the Prime Minister urging them to make “World Park Antarctica” a reality. Ask them to:

√ Retain it as a protected wilderness with high marine biodiversity and not to be influenced by commercial lobbying.

√ Support a moratorium on fishing in the Ross Sea region

√ Offer support for their efforts to maintain a moratorium on whaling and to end scientific whaling.

√ Support comprehensive protection of the Ross Sea

PUBLISHED BY ENVIRONMENT & CONSERVATION

ORGANISATIONS OF NEW ZEALAND

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ISSN 1174-0671

Printed on 100% Recycled Paper

NEW ZEALAND TO REVIEW FUTURE OF ROSS SEA

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has released a public consultation and discussion document on New Zealand’s future management and advocacy direction in the Ross Sea under the provisions of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean treaties.

Entitled *Ross Sea Strategy: A Long-term Framework for Management of Marine Living Resources and Biodiversity*, the document can be downloaded from the website at www.mfat.govt.nz/foreign/antarctica/ross/rossseadiscussion.html; accessed via email at apu@mfat.govt.nz or phone 04-439-8000.

Some of the key issues from the discussion document are:

- The protection of areas of outstanding value, including environmental, aesthetic and/or wilderness values
- Proposals to expand fishing interests in the Ross Sea;
- Proposals to move to an “assessed” fishery in the Ross Sea;
- Questions on future marine research priorities

Areas inadequately addressed include:

- Options to pursue a moratorium on fishing in the Ross Sea
- Failure of marine protection to keep pace with demands of fishing industry, and other potential commercial operations, including bioprospecting
- Inadequate information on marine ecosystems and not taking precautionary decisions
- Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- Possible resumption in commercial whaling in the Southern Ocean

ECO, along with other ENGOS with an Antarctic focus, will be responding to this document. If you wish to contribute to this response or have any questions please contact Debs Martin at d.martin@forestandbird.org.nz or 03-545-8222. Submissions close on Friday 20 May 2005.

Distributing the Resource - the Electricity Commission's Role in Shaping our Future Energy System

By Molly Melhuish

The New Zealand media is swamped with warnings of blackouts and electricity shortages. The Electricity Commission has a mandate from Government to reduce those risks.

The solutions now proposed address the risks of the very immediate future – at the expense of longer-term risks. Giant new transmission lines would lock in New Zealand's dependence on bulk electricity. The Marsden B coal-fired station would do the same, and add the risk of savage regulation once climate change bites, whether in two years or twenty. Nobody knows what will fuel future thermal power generation - the risks of non-supply are treated as commercial secrets not matters for public debate.

The use of locally sourced renewable electricity generation, energy efficiency investments, passive and active solar energy, and load management all add diversity and reduce risks. The Electricity Commission's role is to ensure that there are no blocks to these "distributed energy resources". It needs to go further and create an ethos that encourages their development.

The post-World War II generation knew hardship. A "civil defence" mentality focussed attention on risks, and led to strong investments to reduce them. Often those measures had side benefits, including increased social cohesion, local return on investment etc.

Those safeguards and benefits were squandered by the present generation. In many cases they were given zero value. For example, electricity, rail, and other assets, and later Maui Gas, were run down for short-term profits. Often consumer advisory services, ripple control systems, integrated personal systems, and other local expertise were actually seen as liabilities. Ripple control systems were given away with the meters – and at least one company charges extra for tariff options that turn hot water cylinders off.

The Commission is right when it

says more investment is essential. Its only mistake is that it allows itself to be driven by narrow sector interests. It needs to develop a "civil defence" mentality and look beyond the interests of the bulk-electricity sector and the three year election cycle. It must make resilience and sustainability the top priority.

Risk management starts with the community, and with people's needs. These include warmth, lighting and communications at all times. The most effective investment is to ensure that dwellings and work-places in the regions can be self-sustaining over a full slate of short term and long term disruptions.

An intelligent regional focus for energy investment promotes massive benefits that lie outside the narrow cost-benefit analyses now used to approve transmission upgrades, and outside the commercial drivers for new power station investment. Regionally planned development of resources enhances social cohesion and returns control to communities and householders. At present control lies firmly with the bulk-electricity suppliers who can expand almost at will and simply hike the price of their electricity to pay for their organisational growth.

Two examples of regional energy development are Venture Southland's regional energy project, and Christchurch's Community Energy Action, (featured in Dec 2004 EcoLink). Their initial focus is different - each addresses the issues as prioritised at their time of development. These, and others, will surely evolve to achieve greater and more diverse benefits over time.

The word "planned" is used deliberately. "Ready, fire, aim" is a recipe for failure. Uncoordinated investments cannot achieve the synergies of reduced capital and running costs, greater comfort in houses and work places, stable employment, and reduced global and local environmental impacts. The wrong choice of renewable resources can

increase impacts – such as air pollution caused by using unseasoned wood even in efficient wood burners. The wrong choice of compact fluorescent bulbs in a house will frustrate householders who find them dimmer than the advertised "100-watt equivalent".

Sustainable uses of valuable energy forms ensure that future generations can enjoy the range of options we do. These may include using fossil fuels such as natural gas in houses or for cogeneration in industries and even commercial buildings. But for sustainability, the benefit of using cheap fossil fuel must be re-invested to ensure the service can be maintained in future using renewable fuels.

A sustainable resource plan requires careful costing of each component, which will differ sharply in different regions, in different houses, and for different consumers. Standard cost benefit analyses cannot recognise the benefits of tailoring each small investment to the actual need, because they are based on averages, not actual situations.

Hand-waving is not enough. Modelling techniques are now available that can incorporate individuals' decision making, including observed cultural and psychological drivers which can be determined through surveys.

At least 10% of the final expenditure on a sustainable resource plan should be invested in its pre-feasibility study. Transpower's upgrades are planned now on that principle. Sustainable resource planning should be treated no differently.

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.

Government Sets Collision Course With Environment Sector

By Clive Monds
ECO

The Government appears to have decided the environmental sector vote is worth sacrificing to its focus on growth and smokestack development.

Creating a sustainable energy future for New Zealand and the planning and infrastructure needed for that is fast becoming a major source of conflict in this election year.

The proposed Resource Management and Electricity Legislation Amendment Bill aggregates power to the Minister in a way reminiscent of the failed National Development Act of another era. (see article page 3)

Our concerns about this bill have been increased since the release, under the Official Information Act to the NZ Herald, of a December briefing paper from Government officials to new Energy Minister Trevor Mallard.

As reported by Kevin Taylor on 3rd March, the paper reveals the first of a batch of infrastructure national policy statements and environmental standards - which will provide guidance to local authorities - will cover power lines and be ready for Cabinet approval for consultation by July. Other standards - relating to electricity generation and telecommunications facilities - are due to be ready for Cabinet approval for consultation by November.

As the debate over what shape our energy future will take heats up we are seeing concrete proposals meeting community response - the transmission towers battle and the massive 3,000+ submissions against the Marsden B proposal.

What is not so obvious is the concerted effort by the coal industry to sanitise its image. Part of that is the claim that future coal plants will use "clean coal" technology. The Energy Minister appears taken in by this.

Below are excerpts from the Greenpeace fact sheet on 'clean coal' that points out the fallacies of this argument. The full document and others are available at: <http://www.greenpeace.org.nz/campaigns/climate/documents.asp>

What is "clean coal"?

"Clean coal" is the industry's attempt to "clean up" its dirty image - the industry's greenwash buzzword. It is not a new type of coal. "Clean coal" technology (CCT) refers to technologies intended to reduce pollution. But no coal-fired power plants are truly 'clean'. Despite over 10 years of research, and \$5.2 billion of investment in the US alone⁵, scientists are still unable to completely remove harmful emissions from coal-fired power plants. Clean coal technologies are expensive and do nothing to mitigate the environmental effects of coal mining, or the devastating effects of global warming. Furthermore, clean coal research risks diverting investment away from renewable energy, which is available to reduce greenhouse gas emissions now.

The first CCT programs were set up in the late 1980s in

response to concerns over acid rain. The programs focused on reducing emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), the primary causes of acid rain. Now the elusive promise of "clean coal" technology is being used to promote coal as an energy source in New Zealand.

A price worth paying?

Many of the 'clean coal' technologies that industry is currently touting are still in the development stage and will take hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars and many more years before they are commercially available. "Clean coal" technologies are also extremely expensive in terms of day to day running costs. The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates the capital costs of a typical IGCC plant (an experimental low-emission coal power station) to be US\$1,383/kW or \$2,088/kW with carbon sequestration. This compares with US\$1,015/kW for a typical wind farm.

"Clean Coal" Technology in New Zealand

CCT is not widely used in New Zealand. Huntly power station only uses basic electrostatic precipitators to remove particulates but no other CCTs. There are no technologies installed at Huntly to remove SO₂, NO_x and toxic trace elements such as mercury. There are also no available technologies to limit CO₂ emissions - the main greenhouse gas. Despite the coal industry singing the praises of CCT in its promotion of coal, very little CCT would be used in proposed New Zealand coal power stations. Solid Energy only plans to use Flue Gas Desulphurisation to reduce SO₂ at its planned power station in Buller but other "clean coal" technologies are not considered economically viable on a plant this size (150-250 MW). Similarly at Mighty River Power's proposed coal-fired power station at Marsden B, only basic electrostatic precipitators and Flue Gas Desulphurisation are proposed.

Futuregen - what kind of future?

The industry rhetoric sounds very enticing - working towards a zero-emission coal-fired future. The \$1 billion Futuregen project in the USA is based on experimental IGCC technology. Intended to create the world's first 'zero-emissions' fossil fuel plant, the project will take 10 years to complete. It will be even longer before the technology is commercially available. In reality however, there can be no such thing as a zero-emission plant. After being collected by pollution control devices to prevent emissions to the air, pollutants are merely shifted to another waste stream as solid or liquid wastes. Either that, or waste products, which are contaminated with heavy metals, are sold on for construction use. This results in these dangerous contaminants being released into the environment.

Three Bills are Currently Before Parliament with a Strong Environmental Component:

Fiordland Marine Area Bill

The Fiordland Marine Area Bill has been reported back from the Select Committee. The Bill which establishes 6 marine reserves representing 1 percent of the Fiordland Marine Area covered by the Bill, amends the Southland Regional Plan and establishes Guardians for the Marine Area. The Bill puts a ludicrous 7 year moratorium on any new marine reserves in Fiordland. All the constraints are on the powers of the Minister of Conservation and none of the constraints are on the Minister of Fisheries or the Minister for the Environment.

The reported back version of Bill has two additional negative changes:

- Removes the prohibition on anchoring in sensitive areas, known as China Shops in three of the new marine reserves.
- It extends the period to review the management measures from within 5 years to at least 5 years.

The Bill was dealt with by the Fisheries and Other Sea Related Legislation Select Committee. This committee dealt the Foreshore and Seabed Legislation.

The Bill was passed on 13 April

Hazardous substances and New Organisms Bill

The Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (Approvals and Enforcement) Amendment Bill focuses on hazardous substances and was introduced by Government "to reduce business compliance costs, reduce barriers to innovation and reduce costs to Government".

The key change in the Bill is introducing group standards for hazardous substances (clause 20, new Part 6A). This is designed to reduce the number of individual applications and allow for the transfer of over 70,000 hazardous substances into the HSNO regime by June 2006. ERMA will be able to set standards for substances with "similar nature, type and similar circumstances of use". Proposed section 96D sets out the criteria to be applied and has an initial focus on economic costs and benefits of this approach.

The Bill includes other amendments aimed at:

- ◆ strengthening compliance and enforcement – this includes allow regional councils to enforce premise and allows linkages with the Health and Safety in Employment Act;
- ◆ setting standards for ecotoxicity (Clauses 6, 16, and 17 - sections 20A, 75, and 77B);
- ◆ Provisions which allow easier re-export of hazardous substances (clause 10);
- ◆ Rapid approval of hazardous substances in an emergency (clause 12, section 49L);

- ◆ Modified reassessment procedure which may not involve public notification (clause 14, section 63A);

- ◆ Requirement to for a hospital or doctor to notify injuries from hazardous substances (clause 29);

- ◆ Control over test certifiers and certifications, include the ability to revoke certification (clauses 18 and 19 – sections 82A to 82C)

Submissions closed with the Education and Science Select Committee on 15 April 2005.

Marine Reserves Bill

The marine Reserves Bill is stuck in the Environment and Local Government Select Committee. The Bill was first introduced in 2002 but it has mired in the Select Committee since submissions were heard in 2003. National, United and New First have all called for changes in the Bill.

The Bill is now not going to be reported back until at least August 2005. This means it will not be passed until after the election. It also means the Government cannot finalise the marine protected areas strategy.

It appears that Labour caved into United to delay the Bill's consideration.

United pushed for a delay in the Bill's consideration. United's Larry Baldock has complained that the "Marine Reserves Bill is a deeply flawed piece of legislation" and called for a rewrite of the Bill and a moratorium on new marine reserve proposals.

United and Outdoor Recreation NZ have proposed removing DoC from the marine reserve application process and ban it from proposing or initiating marine reserve applications.

National has opposed Labour's target of 10 percent of the marine area and has wanted to reduce DoC's involvement in the marine reserve process.

New Zealand First has called for a complete review of the Bill and have described it as "old and short-sighted". Conservation spokesperson, Edwin Perry, has called for an elaborate final hearing process to adjudicate on DoC applications.

All these parties appear to forget that New Zealand has less than 0.12 percent of the territorial seas around mainland New Zealand in marine reserves. Australia has over 6 percent of its EEZ in no-take marine protected areas while New Zealand has well-under 1 percent. In comparison over 30 percent of New Zealand's land area is in protected areas. In the last year Australia has expanded the no-take area in Great Barrier Marine Park to 33 percent.

It is now critical that all political parties are asked about their commitment to marine reserves, the protection of marine biodiversity and non-extractive uses of the marine environment.

GreenPages
visit: www.greenpages.org.nz

Literature and the Environment: a New Trans-Tasman Initiative

By Charles Dawson
ASLE-ANZ

Conceived at the "Environment, Culture and Community" conference in Brisbane in 2002 and birthed at the "Watermark Nature Writers' Muster" in the Camden Haven in 2003, the Australia and New Zealand affiliate of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (<http://www.asle-anz.asn.au>) was officially inaugurated in August 2004 and is growing slowly but steadily. The New Zealand representative of the association, Charles Dawson, extends an invitation to ECO members to check out the website, particularly if you have an interest in the arts and sciences.

The inaugural ASLE-ANZ conference will be held at Monash University in Melbourne on March 31-April 1 this year, under the Nietzschean rubric, "Be true to the earth"

(<http://arts.monash.edu.au/lcl/conferences/earth>). Later in the year, we also have the second Watermark Nature Writers' Muster (Oct. 4-8) to look forward to (<http://www.watermarkliterarysociety.asn.au>). Meanwhile Charles is helping to set up a multi-disciplinary conference on rivers that will run in about November 2005.

New Zealand ASLE-ANZ members join a supportive network of Australians with a strong interest in the ways and means of engagement with place and story here. As a person with a long interest in these links, Charles looks forward to contact from ECO readers [Please contact Charles via phone, 04 9703652 or email: cmj@actrix.co.nz].

The Effects of Road Transport on Freshwater and Marine Ecosystems

A series of reports prepared for the Ministry of Transport by Kingett Michell Ltd. in association with Fuels and Energy Management Group Ltd. examine the effects of contaminants derived from road transport on freshwater and marine ecosystems.

These reports are part of an overall Ministry of Transport study on the effects of road transport on aquatic ecosystems. There is a further work required regarding how transport policy takes account of the environmental externality costs of transport.

The reports are available at www.transport.govt.nz or by contacting the Ministry of Transport at 04 472 1253 or e-mail: info@transport.govt.nz



New Zealand Urban Design Protocol

The Protocol prepared by Urban Group at the Ministry for the Environment forms part of the Government's Sustainable Development Programme of Action, which aims to ensure our towns and cities are healthy, safe and attractive places to live.

So far 80 organisations signed up to the Protocol, from central and local government, private sector, educational institutes, professional bodies, etc. All of them has made a commitment to create quality urban design. They will participate in a learning network to facilitate sharing of information and experiences.

For more information contact Urban Group at the Ministry for the Environment at 04 917-7564 or e-mail: urban.design@mfe.govt.nz



New Zealand finally ratifies the Cartagena Protocol:

The Government has finally ratified the Cartagena protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biodiversity. New Zealand is an international laggard when it comes to ratifying this protocol. The Protocol will enter into force for New Zealand on 25 May 2005.

The decision to ratify was taken after consultation in mid 2004 and occurred despite opposition from the Ministry of Economic Development, Justice Department, Ministry of Research Science and Technology and the Treasury. These Departments sought a deferment of the decision to ratify while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Ministry for the Environment supported ratification. It is surprising

that officials opposed ratification after 119 countries have ratified the Protocol including 18 countries from Western Europe including the European Community.

The next meeting of parties to the convention is in May 2005. An Order in Council under the Imports and Exports (Restrictions) Act 1988 implements the convention in New Zealand.

Environmental groups will be looking closely to see whether New Zealand acts for positive measures to allow countries to have strong labelling requirements and strict liability or whether New Zealand backs US and Australia in moves to undermine the protocol.

Countrywide Access In New Zealand - The Past, The Present and The Future

By Allan Evans
FMC

The Past

Tracks were opened up and huts built by outdoor club members over an extensive area and rough maps drawn by enthusiasts to help others find their way into the wild lands of unoccupied Crown lands. This gave an experience hard to get in later years of going into territory where no-one had gone before. Access to pastoral leases in the South Island was generally given willingly by lessees and trampers usually delivered mail, newspapers and fresh bread and long-lasting friendships occurred. In one mid-Canterbury case permission to go through the property often depended on the state of the runholder's liver and I had the experience of seeing it given willingly to our leader each time he handed over a half bottle of whisky, which we all subscribed to.

When the deer hunting wars started things changed in some areas and a Canterbury Mountain Club party complained to me that they were refused permission one Labour weekend to go and climb our favourite 2700m peak. He said "a party of Japanese were coming to hunt at \$200 per person and they didn't want the deer disturbed". The convenor of the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association access committee received many other similar complaints. The Walkways Commission had been set up by Government with District Committees and they set up several dozen walkways across private land and these were very popular, especially with urban walkers.

The Present

National and Forest Parks provide a fantastic opportunity to recreate and with the huts and tracks constructed by Forest Service and Department of Conservation, along with maps and aerial photographs and route guide books tramping had become a doddle.

In the South Island tenure review is providing vast tracks of land generally over an altitude of 1,000 metres throughout the 300 pastoral leases, with station huts providing valuable shelter. In addition, several farmers are opening their land to trampers and family groups,

including the Banks Peninsula and Kaikoura Tracks, where cross country access tracks have been formed through farmland, along with the use of huts, and meals and transport are provided if required at a reasonable cost. These opportunities should be encouraged and supported by local authorities. Regrettably the Walkways system has fallen into disrepair and some well-used ones abandoned by DoC. Recently a skier complained to me he was warned not to cross country ski across the property because he had a mob of Tahr on the slopes and "as they were worth over \$1000 each he didn't want them disturbed."

The Future

The most important step Government must take is to resurrect the NZ Walkways system with adequate finance and rebuild and extend the former excellent walkways to provide the wonderful opportunities for family groups and the not-so-fit to get out and appreciate this outdoor experience.

More land occupiers are opening their lands to visitors for farm stay and safari touring and this also provides a good experience for New Zealand and overseas visitors to take home with them.

The Government's proposed access strategy should set up the mechanism to resolve access problems now and in the future. The record of wild land use by climbers, trampers, hunters, skiers and mountainbikers is excellent as the many thousands of people have visited the outdoor areas of National and Forest Parks and other conservation lands while the areas have been tinder-dry and only one accidental fire has been recorded in each island. However, over the south island pastoral leases in 1986 it was recorded that 87% of the fires that escaped had been lit by lessees or their employees.

The newest and easiest form of access in the high country is by helicopter to be lifted up from valley floor or road to 1500-2000m and walk the ridge tops all day and then return by foot. This saves a lot of energy and is the best way of getting a fantastic day or more in the open hills.

Legislation

1. Some legislation is required to control an unfortunate trend and this involves the charging by occupier for access to hunting and fishing areas. The Government should amend s23 of the Wildlife Act and s26ZN of the Conservation Act to make it illegal to sell hunting rights to game bids and wild animals which belong to the Crown and for charging for access to those resources.

2. The Trespass Act should also be amended so that inadvertent trespass or trespass due to accident or weather conditions shall not be a criminal offence.

3. After consultation with Regional Councils, Federated Farmers, Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC), Forest & Bird Protection Society and Fish & Game Council all significant named rivers to be declared public lands, irrespective of land tenure, as the Queens Chain has never been implemented as Queen Victoria intended and many riverbeds are held in fee simple or ad medium fillum title. Just like the Foreshore and Seabed.

4. The Resource Management Act should be amended to include sale or transfer as well as subdivision of land to be the trigger for setting aside Esplanade Reserves as subdivision alone will never produce contiguous Reserves.

Food For Thought

In Sweden and Austria I have experienced the use of occupied land where one may walk anywhere and camp for one night, provided one does not damage crops, disturb stock or interfere with privacy. In Scotland, there is no Trespass Act and one may walk anywhere, but one can be prosecuted if damage is caused. I am not suggesting this wander at will should apply in New Zealand to farm land, but it could be applied to all conservation land as an alternative to being confined in many cases to formed tracks and huts.

Many trampers have complained in the past they cannot get away from mosquitoes and helicopters. Now they are complaining they can't get away from people!

Please return registration form to:

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or Email eco@reddfish.co.nz

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- Karori Wildlife Sanctuary
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Creation, Crisis and Conservation: Christians Respond to a Suffering Planet

By *Richard Storey*
NIWA



Photo: Stephen Pattemore

What does Christian faith have to do with protecting endangered species, restoring polluted waterways or reducing greenhouse gas emissions? Many people have said that the Christian worldview in fact has led to the many degradations of the environment we see around us. Others say that Christian faith is concerned only with matters of the human spirit, and says nothing about the welfare of other species. However, a growing number of Christians are convinced that God passionately loves all that He made, and that for the Christian, love for the Creator and love for His creation are inseparable.

Because of this, on the weekend of February 18-20, a conference called "Creation, Crisis and Conservation: a Christian response to a suffering planet" was held at Auckland University. The aims were to deepen our understanding of why Christian faith demands a response to the ecological crisis, to understand more clearly the most pressing global and local issues in conservation, and to begin a coordinated Christian response in New Zealand.

One of the two keynote speakers was Dr. Simon Stuart, director of IUCN's Species Survival Commission in Washington and an international trustee of A Rocha, a large Christian conservation group. Dr. Stuart opened the conference by examining some common misconceptions of how Christian faith relates to environmental concern, then

updated the conference with a report on the current status of global biodiversity decline.

The other keynote speaker was Dr. David Given, curator of Christchurch's botanical gardens and a member of IUCN's Species Survival Commission for plants. Dr. Given highlighted the gap between our understanding of ecological degradation and the willingness of many people and institutions to change the way they treat the environment. He proposed that the only way forwards is "changed people" and that at its core Christian faith is about changing hearts and calling people to act on what they believe.

An afternoon workshop showed overwhelming support for establishing a Christian environmental network in New Zealand, and possibly also a local habitat-based project. The aims of such an organisation are still under discussion, but a number of needs were identified: first, to help the church across New Zealand to re-discover the profound relationships between God, people and the non-human world that are expressed in the Bible; second, to provide Christians with practical ways to respond to these discoveries; and third, to demonstrate to our country that Christians do place high value on our natural heritage and are serious about protecting it. It was felt that a Christian organisation would be uniquely placed to help people re-connect with the earth on a spiritual level, to offer hope in the face of a depressing ecological picture, and to mobilise the church, which represents a large number New Zealanders.

Many environmentalists believe that at its root, our ecological crisis is a spiritual problem, a broken relationship between humans and the earth. Thus they say the solution must go deeper than technological fixes or tighter environmental laws, to changing the way humans view the ecosystems that support them. Christians are re-discovering a wealth of material in the Bible that speaks of the value of all created things, and of our role in restoring harmony with all creatures.

For more information, contact r.storey@niwa.co.nz or d.pattemore@forestandbird.org.nz, or visit the website www.creationcare.org.nz

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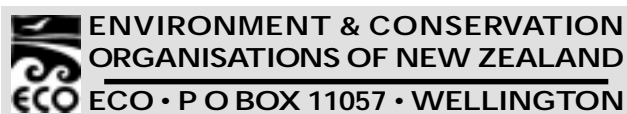
* Early Bird Rates apply before 13th June
 * Prices Include GST
 * Prices include accommodation

Full Conference	Early Bird	Standard
Member Unwaged	\$60	\$80
Member Waged	\$100	\$130
Non Member Unwaged	\$140	\$160
Non Member Waged	\$190	\$210
Day registration		\$70

Accommodation

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