

Friends of Nelson Haven & Tasman Bay Inc. P.O.Box 365, Nelson 7040
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ANNUAL REPORT July 2011-June 2012

Our AGM will be held on Wednesday 29 August 2012 at 3pm at Hearing Rooms, 354 Trafalgar Square, cnr Synagogue (formerly Church) Lane.

The AGM will receive the Annual Report, the Annual Accounts, discuss matters arising and elect officers and committee members. New committee members or helpers are always welcome.

CHAIR'S REPORT

We have lost our co-chair, Steffan Browning, since he now works full-time-plus as a Green Party MP. Steffan remains a committee member and continues to contribute his considerable knowledge. We wish him all the best in his new life.

August 2013 will be the 40th anniversary of the founding of Friends of Nelson Haven. One idea is to celebrate the amazing life and achievements of one of our founding members, Mrs. Perrine Moncrieff. Any help in this regard from our members is greatly appreciated.

It is of concern that the Department of Conservation has lost 96 staff nationally and 21 from the Nelson office. The replacement people will be "commercial business development, outreach and engagement managers" (Nelson Mail 11 June 2012). This truly puts possums in charge of the rata and bird-egg patch. Since DoC is the only government department with statutory advocacy duties on environment matters, so this leaves volunteer NGOs with this responsibility.

Friends continues to work in the areas of three Top of the South Councils, with much effort going into Marlborough since the current coastal aquaculture decisions will have flow on effects for Nelson, Tasman all of New Zealand/Aotearoa.

Tasman District Council –TDC area

1. Friends continues to work with TDC on incorporating Outstanding Natural Landscapes and Features (ONLF) into their Plan, as required by law and an Environment Court decision. We support the NZ Coastal Policy Statement view that avoidance of adverse effects is preferable to mitigation/remedying after the fact. TDC continues to stall despite organising numerous discussions. There is now a draft Golden Bay study, but important areas are not identified. Although estuaries are listed as outstanding, there is no thought to buffer zones on adjacent land and no mention of seascapes. The remainder of Tasman is ignored.
2. Friends submitted on the Abel Tasman Foreshore Scenic Reserve Management Plan, which came into effect from November 2011 and will be administered by TDC and DoC.
3. The Carter Holt Harvey subdivision at Kina has antagonised users of the Baigent Reserve. Friends supported the TDC commissioner's report to not allow the subdivision to proceed. TDC tried mediation, which failed, so now the matter is in the Environment Court.

4. At the Kaiteriteri Scenic Reserve, Harry Baigent illegally felled a tree and by paying a \$15,000 fee the charges were withdrawn.
5. The Muddy Buddy event in Moutere Inlet was originally at the mouth of a stream and disturbed the life cycle of fish and birds. On Friends' suggestion, the event has been moved to a less sensitive area.
6. The Motueka Wharf Road resource consent application resulted in a pre-hearing meeting with concern over loss of estuarine area to infilling. The Ornithological Society's David Melville thought no harm was likely
7. The Cycle Trails Trust original route was through a very special bird habitat around Pearl Creek. The trail will now go around the sensitive area with buffer blinds and vegetation hopefully protecting the very shy and rare native bittern in particular.
8. The Ruby Bay seawall submission from Friends requested a period of 10 years and relocateable buildings within the hazard zone.
9. The Golden Bay commissioner's recommendation for the Wyllie subdivision granted consent with strict conditions to protect natural features. However, an unfortunate precedent has been set.
10. The Higgs Reserve damage, caused by contractors and repaired by TDC, has been funded by the NZ Transport Agency.
11. Friends made a submission of the TDC's Long Term Plan.

Nelson City Council - NCC's area

1. Friends is a member of the NCC's Biodiversity Forum, which represents 23 partner organisations - NGOs and statutory bodies - working to protect and enhance significant natural areas. The Forum works with the other Top of the South Councils to integrate a biodiversity strategy. We hear updates on the work of such groups as Cawthron Institute, the Waimea Inlet Forum, NIWA's coastal research (including Friends' funded coastal survey), and Aquaculture Management. The NCC Forum differs from the TDC Biodiversity Forum in that the latter is open to the public and takes no stands, while NCC's Forum can formally approach other Councils, when authorised by the members. In other words, NCC can be proactive in initiating a strategy similar to the Kaikoura Te Korowai o TeTai Marokura Marine Strategy where community and statutory groups formulated a coastal and marine strategy (see M15 below). This approach is essential where three unitary Councils have jurisdiction over Tasman Bay and a decision by one Council can impact on another Council's foreshore. A case in point was when MDC allowed oil exploration in Tasman Bay where an accident would have impacted on NCC and TDC waters and foreshores.
2. Friends continues to be represented at the Port Nelson Environment Consultative Committee which now is pretty ineffective. For example, the staff were unable to locate an earthquake vulnerability report, though a new one is planned. They are now monitoring the dredging dumped over the years into Tasman Bay, which could be a factor in the disappearance of scallop and other shellfish beds. A multi-million dollar clean up of the seabed at Calwell slip is part of a bigger strategy to clean up contaminated sites, in this case mainly tributyltin (Nelson Mail, 12 June 2012). This could be a case of private profit being subsidised by the public purse paying the environmental costs.
3. Port Nelson Ltd shows no known concern over the radioactive yellowcake uranium which passes through NZ ports including Nelson.
4. Friends has made submissions and been involved in consultations over infrastructure. These include: A. the fisheries outfall discharge permit monitoring

and its breaches of oil/grease, enterococci and pH, B. the Regional Sewage Trust Strategic Plan and the discharge resource consent process . C. the Waste Water (sewage) emergency discharge resource consent process, and D. the Arterial Traffic study.

5. Friends made a submission to the Long Term NCC Plan.

Marlborough – MDC's area

1. AWE (Australian Worldwide Exploration) was granted the consent to explore for oil in Tasman Bay. Friends appealed the decision and negotiated research money to survey the fish, bird and dolphins of Tasman and Golden Bays, since AWE had, with good reason, claimed there was no known biological activity in that part of the Bay. AWE has the right to apply at 3 more sites in the Bay so a survey is an essential first step. NIWA was commissioned and, with essential volunteer aid from Ornithological Society members, aerial and boat grids were used to survey the Bays over a three day period in November 2010. This is just a snapshot sample, but the resultant maps show “hot spots” of activity. These maps have already been used in power point public talks. In addition, NIWA required 25 blood and feather samples for each seabird species to use in stable isotope studies. This was a major task for the volunteers. The data is important in understanding the feeding and biology of each species, since like us, the juveniles have different needs from adults. For some unknown reason, NIWA only analysed half the samples and refused to do the rest. Friends plans to obtain the samples and try to find a way to have the remaining data analysed. All the data will be useful if there is an oil spill or other disaster in the Bay affecting bird, fish and cetacean life.
2. Another research project, negotiated by Friends with the Red Sky Trust, is the King Shag work initiated by Rob and organised by a Dutch expert with Ornithological Society help with field work. King Shag is a magnificent endemic and the pellets, otoliths and feathers collected were analysed by NIWA with DOC funding. Especially exciting was the discovery of a dead shag (first ever), which gave much helpful DNA confirming surprising relations with Stewart and Chatham Island King Shags. Also, there is now definite evidence that water clarity is essential for feeding by diving birds – a fact which is relevant to salmon “farms” which produce murky water.
3. The NZ King Salmon (NZKS) application for eight new salmon “farms” and the change of a ninth “farm” from mussel to salmon is a major current effort for Friends. I use inverted commas for “farm” since I believe this aquaculture is more closely akin to mining than farming. Sustainable farming maintains or improves the habitat, whereas this aquaculture degrades the benthic and water column and, in the case of mussels, kills phyto and zoo plankton. The salmon effluent can potentially also change plankton composition through over-fertilisation, with flow-on effects to all life dependent on the plankton base of the food chain. Essentially the natural health, plankton and biodiversity of the coastal habitat is being mined. Aquaculture is being pushed to be a \$1 billion industry so the Resource Management Act is being bypassed. The application is designated as of national importance and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) process is being used, enabling a decision from go to whoa in 9 months. Despite the fact that NZKS is majority foreign owned (Malaysian Tiong family) the Overseas Investment Org is bypassed. A new group has been formed called Sustain Our Sounds (SOS) with the huge task of organising a case and raising funds for legal and expert witnesses. Friends is a member and supports SOS as well as running its own case and dividing

the efforts to minimise overlap. MDC, which originally supported NZKS, now is opposed since 20 years work on the Sounds Plan could be swept aside. MDC is providing 8 witnesses to stop the application. 1221 submissions have been received with about 800 opposed and 400 supporting. Other opposition groups include the Nelson Underwater Club, Pelorus & Waikawa Boat Clubs, DOC and the Environmental Defence Society. Friends, and some other groups, have applied for and received some Min for the Environment-Legal Aid funds.

The EPA decision has the potential of a ripple effect on several fronts.

- A. The 8 farms are outside the areas zoned for aquaculture in the Sounds Plan. If this Plan, the result of 20 years consultation and numerous Environment Court decisions, can be overturned by a 5 man-9month process than all Plans in NZ are vulnerable
 - B. NZKS is 54.69% foreign owned and could have a 35 year lease on our coastal waters zoned presently as non-aquaculture. The majority share holder could decide to send profits as well as jobs offshore and leave an environmental mess and degraded Sounds for NZ to clean up. Another curious shareholder is the CRI, Agresearch via Biopacific Ventures Ltd. These shares officially belong to the Minister of Finance and Minister of Science, Research and Development. Since the NZ Government cabinet determines the EPA process and appointments it seems to me there is a conflict of interest issue. This is outside the NZKS-EPA process, but why is a CRI investing in business? I thought its function was research.
 - C. Ecological impact is ultimately the most important long term issue, in my opinion. The 9 “farms” occupy about 12 ha on the surface, but 240 ha of benthic securing the fish pens in place. More devastating is the fact that it takes 1.8 kg of protein feed to produce 1 kg of salmon – the balance is released into coastal waters with faecal nutrient equal to an estimated 250,000 people. The water current is expected to carry this away so a large area is effected and the likelihood N:Si balance will favour dinoflagellate plankton over diatom plankton. Diatoms are the main food of mussels and other invertebrates which form the base of the food web, thus the present ecology of the Sounds could be changed.
 - D. We already know that the 40 year old mussel industry has lost 373 jobs in June 2008 and more recently 50 jobs were lost when Sealords closed its Nelson factory. This calls into question the sustainability of aquaculture. Reasons given for Sealords closure were exchange rates, fuel prices and growth offshore offering stronger profits, factors equally relevant to salmon. The Tahunanui Nelson plant had not made money for 4 years and heavy automation and job losses were considered the way of the future (Nelson Mail, 14 June 2008 p13). Again, relevant to the salmon industry.
 - E. Landscape and Natural Character are very important and NZKS has left major structures from an abandoned farm rusting in the Sounds water.
4. The Admiralty Bay Consortium (ABC) application for a mussel “farm” at Puketea has been opposed by Friends and DoC. In October 2011 MDC granted part of the area and refused the outer area. The 3 year Dusky Dolphin study required of ABC over 2 years ago is due to begin this year. All appeals in future will start from scratch – a huge waste of time, effort, money and due to continual exceptions allowed to the Sounds Plan.
 5. The Admiralty Bay application by Talley’s to extend their “farm” at St. Lawrence by 6 ha was opposed by Friends and the area has been reduced to 1 ha and we have

withdrawn our opposition. Dolphin issues are still important. The 44 existing “farms” in the Bay occupy <1 square km, but already are known to influence dolphin use of the Bay.

6. Waitata Reach – NZKS has applied to change its mussel “farms” to salmon in a King Shag feeding area. Friends have submitted an objection.
7. Waitata Reach-Goulding & Curtis has applied for a mussel “farm” with an arbitrary suggested 10 metre buffer zone around a sensitive reef. Friends have put in a submission.
8. In Port Gore, Friends have supported the Marchant family in their successful non-renewal of 3 mussel “farms” adjacent to native reserves.
9. Port Gore South. The government has gazetted about 75 ha for iwi settlement for 20% of aquaculture area equivalent. Other Sounds areas are being considered, all of which will be subject to Plan change and resource consents. 2400 ha of Sounds is already zoned for aquaculture, and Sealords’ “farms” are scheduled to be sold, hence available presumably for iwi settlement.
10. Friends joined others in submitting against the KPF Investments Ltd/ Port Ligar application to change a mussel to a salmon “farm”. The conversion was granted in June 2012.
11. A salmon “farm” application has been made for Crail Bay.
12. Friends is appealing two Beatrix Bay “farm” applications, which were granted in June 2012. The Bay has 297 ha of marine area (15% of water area) in aquaculture. Less than 5% of the coast has uninterrupted linkage between shallow habitat and deeper water.
 - A. South Beatrix Bay/ Knight Somerville Partnership.
 - B. Ngai Tahu Seafoods Ltd applied to convert from mussel to hapuku (groper) “farming” and 13 other marine species. They also plan to extend their present area beyond the current 200 metre offshore limit to 450 m offshore. This latter granting will set a precedent for all ring road “farms” and start a new race for marine space.
13. Croisilles Harbour, McLaren Bay, Squally Cove marine “farm” has a 35 year resource consent which has been submitted on by Friends due to concerns over red algae growing near the boundary. The submission was withdrawn due to time constraints.
14. Marlborough Oysters Ltd (MOL) + Global Prospects Ltd have a non-notified application for a 4.6 ha area in Sanson Bay, Croisilles to grow Pacific oysters.
15. Friends is part of a consultative process for Integrated Management of Marlborough Sounds. MDC supports the Sounds Fish seminar proposing a framework along the lines of the Kaikoura model Te Korowai o Te Tai Marokura where the whole community is consulted. In Kaikoura the process took 9 years and one wonders if all the adhoc plus EPA decisions being made at present will reduce options.
16. MDC has put new rules on forestry on hold until the government completes its standards for the sector. Friends has concerns over ways that forestry practices impact on the coast.

General and National Activities and Connections

1. Friends supported the activities and demonstrations against Coastal and Deep Sea oil exploration in NZ waters. Hands across the Sands was a worldwide initiative acted upon locally at Tahunanui beach, Motueka Quay and Pohara in Golden Bay. Rob Schuckard gave a power point talk showing Friends /AWE data on oil exploration.

2. Steffan represented Friends at the NZ Environment & Conservation Organisations (ECO) conference 2011.
3. Helen attended the Environmental Defence Society (EDS) coastlines conference in Auckland which dealt mainly with the Hauraki Gulf.
4. Several committee members attended the weekend Top of the South Forest & Bird weekend conference on marine matters.
5. Members attend and support seminars and activities of the Waimea Inlet Forum. At the August meeting Philip Woollaston pointed out that the NZ Coastal Policy Statement is the only mandatory policy in the Resource Management Act. The Act was designed to have other policy statements and it has never happened. The Forum also had a visit to the Bell Id sewage facility and hosted an EDS workshop on coastal environment and Marlborough Sounds aquaculture.
6. Steffan attended a discussion group on Friends' behalf in Wellington with Mfish, NIWA, F&B and others, on the Forest & Bird fish guide.
7. Friends submitted on the EEZ & Continental Bill and took part in a teleconference with the Select Committee.
8. Friends made a submission on the Environmental Protection Authority bill in February 2012 although very little time was allowed for submitting. Working through the EPA process at present, it is clear there is an assumption that voluntary groups and individuals have free time anytime to meet the demanding tight schedule.
9. Members attended the NZ Seafood Industry public meeting to hear Prof Hilborn on the low environmental impact of world fishing. His terms of reference ignored dredging, processing and the fact that despite technology efficiencies the world fish catch has not increased in 20 years and some fisheries are now non-existent.