

Friends of Nelson Haven & Tasman Bay Inc. P.O.Box 365, Nelson 7040
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ANNUAL REPORT July 2010-June 2011

Our AGM will be held on Monday, August 15, 2011 at 7.00 pm at Hearing Rooms, 354 Trafalgar Square, corner Church Lane.

The AGM will receive the Annual Report, the Annual Accounts, discuss matters arising and elect officers and committee members. Please consider joining our committee. We would be especially happy to find a treasurer and can train someone for the job.

At 7:30 pm, Cawthron scientist Dr. Paul Gillespie will give an illustrated talk on Tasman Bay's estuaries – Delaware Bay, Nelson Haven, Waimea Inlet, Moutere Inlet and Motueka River Delta. This is part of a national monitoring of 40 estuaries assessing them on 31 agreed criteria including physical measurements, natural character and indications of adverse impacts. This is a public lecture and all are welcome.

Summary of Annual Report

Friends have had a busy and productive year with emphasis on keeping the coastal environment ecologically healthy and preserving its natural beauty. Our major work included communicating and mediating with AWE (Australian Worldwide Exploration) on its oil exploration in Tasman Bay. Application for mussel farm development by Red Sky Trust in Forsyth Bay had been settled previously and a grant from Red Sky is helping design research on King Shags. We remain, along with Pelorus Wildlife Trust and Guardians of the Sounds, opposed to the mega expansion of NZ King Salmon.

Rob Schuckard will speak on “King Shags and oil exploration” for Forest & Bird on Wednesday, August 10th at 7:30 pm at Tahuna school.

N.Z. Nature Co's September catalog will have a child's **personalised growth chart** featuring Nelson's lighthouse and local sea life. Friends will receive \$1 for every chart sold. The address is 107 Bolt Rd, Nelson and the catalog is on www.nznature.co.nz.

We have reprinted “**The Story of Friends of Nelson Haven**” by Michael North. Copies \$5 for members, \$15 for non-members. The history is also available on our website.

Congratulations to our co-chair Steffan Browning on receiving an Orangi Kaupapa Trust award for his volunteer work for numerous organisations. **Congratulations** to Danny Boulton of French Pass, who often testifies on behalf of Friends, for winning the World Wildlife Fund's short film award for his undersea film of fish and other sea life.

Marlborough District Council (MDC)

1. **Oil exploration in Tasman Bay** by AWE (Australian Worldwide Exploration) 10 nautical miles west of D'Urville Island occurred in August 2010 after receiving a Resource Consent from MDC. Ngati Koata appealed on kaitiakitanga grounds and settled out of court. Friends appealed on grounds that no adequate Environmental

Assessment had been made. By direct mediation we obtained three important concessions. The 3 points were

- 1.1. To tighten conditions allowing the drill hole capping to occur only in a period of extensive calm weather,
- 1.2. To have joint endorsement of the Friends' commissioned report on the Standards for environmental assessment of oil and gas exploration risks, which was written by an Australian consultant with both conservation and industry respect. This document is on Friends' website (www.nelsonhaven.org.nz) and is available to anyone needing help on oil exploration applications. Copies have been presented to all 3 Top of the South councils, the new Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) the Environmental Defense Society (EDS) and others.
- 1.3. To undertake new ecological research of Tasman and Golden Bay. This could form part of the basis of an Environmental Assessment should AWE take up its option to explore for oil at another site in Tasman Bay, as well as a basis for appealing such an application. NIWA has the contract, and the fieldwork has been completed using Ornithology Society members and Friends' Rob Schuckard. Tasman and Golden Bays have been surveyed by air and boat for bird, fish and mammal activity. The results will be publicly available. AWE will pay for both 1.2 and 1.3 above.

Friends continues to be completely opposed to oil exploration in coastal waters. The risks of damage far outweighs any temporary financial gain – of which NZ would be lucky to get 5% of any profits. Friends considers it fortunate that insufficient oil was found – at least by current methods. The appended Rod Oram article outlines how unprepared N.Z. is for ocean exploration.

2. Concern over mining and ocean oil exploration has resulted in several activities to raise awareness of threats to our coast. Friends has supported well attended actions at Tahuna Beach on April 20 and June 25, and Motueka Quay and Pohara Golden Bay on June 25 as part of an international movement (www.handsacrossthesand.org) to show our horror at what oil exploration can do for short term “gain” for the few and long term harm for many. An anti-mining meeting in June was organised by Greenpeace, Forest & Bird, and Friends. Speakers included Friends' Rob Schuckard with an excellent Power Point talk on the Tasman-Golden Bay research resulting from the AWE settlement described in MDC 1 above.
3. The application for **mussel farm development** by Red Sky Trust in **Forsyth Bay** has been settled. As a measure of goodwill and acknowledgement of the natural character of the Bay and nearby Duffers Reef King shag colony the Trust made a grant to Friends and the Marlborough Environment Centre to bring Dr. Mennobart vanEerden, an expert on shags/cormorants, to design a study of King shags. In February Dr. vanEerden gave a public talk describing the work so far and related our shags to their overseas relatives. The study will be useful in environmental assessments if there is a future application for a Resource Consent for inappropriate developments in this Bay.
4. The **NZ King Salmon Co** (NZKS) has applied for a Declaration from the Environment Court to have a salmon farm at Waihinau Bay, Pelorus Sound near Bulwer. Friends and Ngati Koata are supporting the Pelorus Wildlife Trust, which owns adjoining land, in its objection to the farm. It is felt that the annual 3000 tonnes discharge of salmon feed would have adverse effects on the natural character of the bay, its sea life and seabed. The case has been delayed due to the Christchurch earthquake and proceedings have shifted to the Wellington Court. NZKS has now applied to the new Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to decide on five new

- applications which would bypass MDC's hearings process. EPA deals only with national issues and presumably this is a local issue. The process is not yet clear.
5. Friends continues to support the resident Marchant family in their efforts to maintain the natural character of the **Port Gore** marine environment. The Environment Court has heard the case and there is no decision so far.
 6. The **Admiralty Bay** Consortium has put in an application for a marine farm at Puketea with a hearing scheduled for July 5, 2011.
 7. Friends co-chair Steffan Browning testified at a hearing about corruption within MDC. His concern was that the Council had an inconsistent approach to Resource Management issues, which allowed significant negative environmental effects. He stated "It could be called a corruption of process. My experience over the last 20 years show systemic management and governance shortcomings."
 8. We are kept informed of the decisions of the **Sounds Advisory Group** which includes coastal questions such as salmon and mussel aquaculture, biosecurity, Long Island Marine reserve and monitoring

Tasman District Council (TDC)

1. The saga of getting TDC to put **Landscape Priority Areas** (LPAs) into their Management Plan, as required by law, is now in its 14th year – and the stalling continues. The Letter of Agreement signed when Friends withdrew its Environment Court appeal stated the first stage of identifying areas was to be completed by December 2009. The later time date of June 2011 has also been ignored. The inaction continues to make a mockery of the whole legal procedure. A working group of stakeholders has been established to identify Golden Bay's Outstanding Landscapes, with no decision powers or formal terms of reference. This project has been expanded to include land beyond the coastal areas and this hugely expands the work and makes for more delays. There are no plans for work on the rest of Tasman area except for general studies. There was a Frank Boffa presentation in Golden Bay on 9 December 2010 covering his 2005 preliminary report. Even this TDC commissioned report was not accepted nor approved by TDC and is now only used in an ad hoc way by the Council. A June 24 informal meeting organised by Federated Farmers identified areas of agreement between farmers, Forest & Bird, Friends of Golden Bay and the Community Board. A further meeting with TDC on July 20, 2011 will continue these efforts to identify outstanding landscapes and how to manage them. We continue to seek advice on how to proceed. The Environment Defence Society (EDS) suggests Friends seek a Declaration from the Environment Court or pursue a Private Plan Change. These are both expensive legal options and we feel the money would be better spent doing the job itself. We'll see.
2. Friends has made submissions, or supported local initiatives, on the following coastal abuses.
 - 2.1. The Dunn family's illegal attempt to retain and enlarge their coastal Waimea estuary building continued. In this instance Friends supported TDC in the Environment Court and the applicants have finally withdrawn their appeal.
 - 2.2. **Carter Holt Harvey's subdivision** on Rural 1 land at **Kina Peninsula** was strongly opposed by residents, and Friends submitted against the development. No decision has yet been released.
 - 2.3. N.Z. Transport Agency (NZTA) work damaged **Higgs Reserve** land. Mitigation work is planned with local residents urging TDC and NZTA to act.

- 2.4. Friends wrote a letter concerning the impacts on the lower reaches of the Field Stream on local bird and fish life of the **Muddy Buddy** annual event by the Tasman School.
- 2.5. Friends supports the concern that regular **motorcycle races at Rabbit Island's** NW beach can impact on birdlife.
- 2.6. The reserve strategy of TDC is being discussed with Rabbit Island to be the first reserve under consideration.
- 2.7. Friends submitted on the question of **Wharf Rd Motueka walkway/reclamation**, which was discussed at a June 21, 2011 pre-hearing. The loss of estuary from causeway infilling is proposed to be mitigated with a \$6500 NZTA contribution towards estuary enhancement.

Nelson City Council (NCC)

1. The NCC **Biodiversity Forum** will be working on coastal and ocean issues and Friends has applied to be a member organisation. The Forum submitted a report on the importance of considering Tasman Bay as a whole in terms of management – and not have its fate determined by 3 unitary councils each with its area of control. The division of Waimea Inlet management by two separate Councils is equally illogical, although on some issues the two councils do work together.
2. There were two **arterial roading** workshops for community organisations resulting in general agreement not to enlarge either Rocks Road or Waimea Road/Rutherford Street. At present there is no money for any expensive option and with road use declining nationally, hopefully in future more enlightened solutions will prevail with neither damage to our coast nor to functioning communities.
3. At the **Port Nelson** Environment Advisory Committee, Friends expressed concern over “yellow cake” radioactive material regularly going through our Port. Likewise impacts of fertiliser loading at the Port with wind drift into the water, was raised by Friends. The latter was a temporary event, the former is ongoing. Members of the public brought both issues to our attention. We have also requested access to the 1990s port earthquake vulnerability report. They have replied that new studies have begun and results are expected in 3 to 6 months.
4. We made suggestions for reducing discharges in the Resource Consent report for renewal of 35 years for **overflow storm and “waste”water**. The discharges usually occur from heavy rains or accidents.
5. We had two quarterly meetings with the executive manager and one meeting with the mayor to discuss council structures and environment issues.

General

1. The Waimea Inlet Charter was launched at Sandeman Reserve in September 2010. This Charter is endorsed by TDC, NCC, community groups and individuals.
2. Nelson's Altrusa Club celebrated its 30th birthday by giving a monetary gift to 25 volunteer groups, including Friends – for which we gave a two-minute summary of our activities. Hearing the work of the other 29 groups was very interesting.
3. We attended the Forest & Bird regional meeting, which had a coastal theme, including a presentation by Mat Bartholomew from Mfish on the National Aquaculture Strategy. A panel included Friends' co-chair Steffan Browning, Barry Weeber from ECO (Environment and Conservation Organisations) and Mark Bellingham from F&B. Rod Witte from DoC told of planned severe financial cutbacks. Since DoC is the main Ministry advocating for conservation and there are

powerful ones pushing for exploitation, there is cause for concern. The DoC slogan “Conservation for Prosperity” is sufficiently alarming that the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment has queried its appropriateness.

4. Friends attended the Challenger Scallop Enhancement Company consultation on its commercial harvesting plans for Golden Bay and the Sounds. (Tasman Bay has had no commercial beds for six years.) The enhancement program has operated for 16 years, following the depletion of the natural shellfish beds.
5. On the National level, we have made submissions and attended workshops and meetings. These include
 - 5.1. Submission on the Aquaculture Amendment Bill (No.3) to the Primary Production Select Committee in February 2011.
 - 5.2. Submission on the National Environmental Standards for plantation forestry. Operations are often uncontrolled and cause huge damage to coastal waters through siltation. Photographic examples of this in Marlborough were included.
 - 5.3. Submission on the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) bill. One concern was that local input will be made more difficult and appeals abolished.
 - 5.4. We attended the national Land and Water Forum.
 - 5.5. The N.Z. Coastal Policy Statement 2010 is now available.
 - 5.6. The National Aquaculture Strategy workshop was attended.
 - 5.7. Friends opposed commercial harvesting of seaweed from Clifford Bay. These plants are important food and nurseries for sea life. 500 tonne per year is to be harvested from the shore by Yealands Wines.
 - 5.8. Steffan, Friends co-chair, addressed the national ECO conference.
 - 5.9. We attended the launch of EDS’s oceans strategy for N.Z. in which ocean policies of many nations are compared and suggestions made for NZ.
 - 5.10. Friends sent a representative to the EDS conference on Coastlines spatial planning for land and sea. The appended Rod Oram article refers to EDS work on oceans policy and shortcomings in present government thinking. And recently (July 2011) the head of NIWA, Chris Mace, has stated that a Marine Management overall strategy is essential. At present NZ ocean policy is totally inadequate.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

1. Thanks to the committee members who make all our work possible.
2. Thanks to the Friends’ members for their ongoing support.
3. Thanks to New Zealand Nature Company for its continued support.
4. Thanks to Nimbus Software of Nelson for continued support.
5. Thanks to T-Gear Trust for their support of Friends’ work.
6. Thanks to the Canterbury Community Trust, whose donation will support our work to protect Tasman landscape.
7. Thanks to Rob Schuckard for all his expertise and work on research projects.
8. Thanks to Konica Minolta for help in printing our Annual Report.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Gwen Struik, co-chair
July 2011