

AML 6.2

Maureen Pugh

10 February 2009

Forest and Bird
PO Box 631
WELLINGTON

Attn: Kevin Hackwell

Dear Mr Hackwell

RE: REQUEST FOR AN AGENDA ITEM

Council has recently received a letter from Federated Farmers written on behalf of AHB, TB Free West Coast, DOC, and Royal Forest and Bird. As advised to Federated Farmers a time slot of one hour has been dedicated to the topic of aerial discharge of 1080 and I suggest you contact the other parties to determine the best way for you all to utilise the allocated time. My understanding is that AHB will be doing a presentation so a data projector and screen will be available on the day should you require it.

A comment I wish to make is in regards to the water being poisoned by 1080 in Westland, as quoted in your letter. When you put poison in water the water is poisoned, the dilution becomes irrelevant to the many people who are forced to drink it. Westland District Council represents people on both sides of this debate and we must all work together to find a compromise that satisfies everyone. There is no doubt in our minds about the need to control Tb to safeguard the dairy industry on the West Coast and we are open to discussion on how we can all achieve our respective objectives.

Yours faithfully



Maureen Pugh
Mayor

MP/KM

5 February 2009

Forest & Bird
PO Box 631
Wellington

Mayor Maureen Pugh
Councillors of the Westland District Council
General Manager, Westland District Council
Private Bag 704
HOKITIKA

Dear Mayor Pugh and Councillors,

Council's decision to oppose aerial 1080 drops within water supply catchments in Westland.

Effective pest control in our catchment forests provides many benefits. It protects the indigenous flora and fauna, improves water quality by reducing faecal contamination and sediment loads and also helps those catchments withstand flooding events.

Forest & Bird has therefore followed with concern the Westland District Council's decision to oppose aerial 1080 drops within Westland's water supply catchments. We are particularly concerned by the suggestions that the 1080 operations carried out by both the AHB and DoC in Westland have lead to drinking water being "poisoned" (Mayor Pugh's interview on RadioNZ this morning).

The Ministry of Health recommends that water taken from catchments sown with 1080 baits should not be used for human supply until tests show that the concentration of 1080 is below 2 ppb. However, between 1990 and June 2008, some 2098 water samples associated with 1080 operations have been tested by Landcare Research. There was no detectable 1080 in 96.4% of these samples. Concentrations of 1080 in the remaining 76 (3.6%) samples ranged from 0.1 to 9 ppb. For the 324 samples that were taken from reticulated town drinking water supplies, only one of these contained detectable 1080 residues at 0.2 ppb, which is a tenth of the MoH recommended maximum¹.

Given the Council's position we would be keen to know whether the Council has any evidence of 1080 being present in any Westland drinking water?

We understand that Federated Farmers, the Animal Health Board (AHB), TB Free West Coast and DOC have requested a time slot on the agenda at the Councils full meeting on 19 February. Forest & Bird also has an interest in the effective use of pest control techniques in Westland and therefore would like to also have a time slot on the agenda of the 19 February meeting to discuss the position the Council has taken

Yours faithfully,

Kevin Hackwell
Advocacy Manager
Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand

¹ Fisher, P.M. 2008; Landcare Research, Brief of Evidence before the Waitangi Tribunal, Wai 903.

AML 6.2

Maureen Pugh

5 February 2009

Basil Meyer
President
West Coast Province
Federated Farmers of New Zealand
PO Box 1992
CHRISTCHURCH

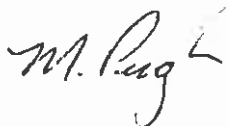
Dear Mr Meyer

Your letter of 29 January requesting time at Council's February meeting is acknowledged. As Diane Maitland has communicated to you an hour has been allocated on the agenda.

Your concerns and your public comments have been noted regarding Council's resolutions on 1080. The most effective way to overcome your concerns is to work in partnership with Westland District Council, as advocates for our communities, to ensure that all options in the fight against possums and Tb are vigorously pursued.

We look forward to your presentation.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Pugh', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Maureen Pugh
Mayor

MP/KM

AML 6.2



29 January 2009

Mayor Maureen Pugh
Councillors of the Westland District Council
General Manager, Westland District Council
Westland District Council
36 Weld St, Private Bag 704
HOKITIKA

Dear Mayor Pugh and Councillors,

1. On behalf of Federated Farmers, the Animal Health Board (AHB), TB Free West Coast, DOC and Royal Forest and Bird, we are writing to formally request a time slot on the agenda at the Council's full meeting on 19th February. At that meeting we would like to discuss two resolutions passed recently which would seek to ban aerial drops of 1080 in water catchment areas.
2. As you are aware there are several affected parties disappointed in the lack of consultation by the Council. Therefore we formally seek an opportunity to speak to the Council about the issue and request an additional hour (to the time already allotted to AHB and TB Free West Coast) on the agenda to do so. This should give all parties an opportunity to speak and leave time for any questions.
3. We also refer to a letter dated 5th December (attached) from Federated Farmers which outlines in further detail the reasons behind the frustration and disappointment in these decisions. We note that as yet no reply has been received to that letter.
4. We would appreciate a reply at your earliest opportunity to our request.

Yours faithfully,

Frank Brenmuhl
Vice President, Federated Farmers

Donald Aubrey
Board Spokesperson, Game and Pest Animal Management, Federated Farmers

Basil Meyer
President, West Coast Province, Federated Farmers

5 FEB 2009

Kumara Environmental Action

- Laurie Collins, Beach Road, Kumara - Ph: (03) 736 9926

Fluoride Action Group Hokitika

- Jackie Douglas, 70 Stafford Street, Hokitika - Ph: (03) 755 7740

Friends Of Mahinapua Forest

- Tracie Piercy-Taege, C/- PO Box 81, Hokitika - Ph: (03) 755 6588

Westland Regional Environmental Network

- Greg Maitland, 89 Cement Lead Road, Hokitika - Ph: (03) 755 7542

31 January 2009

GM	HWM	MPP	MC

The Mayor and Councillors
Westland District Council
Private Bag 704
Hokitika

Dear Mayor and Councillors

Re: Water Catchment Exclusion Zones for Aerially Discharged 1080 - Protection of Public Water Supplies

It is recognised Westland District Council has an obligation to care for the wellbeing of the community it serves.

This letter is written in response to a front page local newspaper article entitled 'Fed Farmers Slam 1080' dated 30 January 2009, in which the Westland District Council was publicly criticised for its decision to protect water catchment areas from aerial application of the poison Sodium MonoFluoro Acetate (1080).

A strong feeling regarding the use of the controversial poison, 1080, has emerged in the Westland community - "the health and safety of the majority should not be compromised for the profit and convenience of the minority".

It is appreciated that the Westland District Council has attended to the two points below:

- **Water Catchment Areas** become clearly *Identified* from ridgeline to ridgeline to ensure exclusion from aerially discharged 1080 (Sodium MonoFluoro Acetate) poison drops
- **Water Catchment Areas** be *Protected/Excluded* from 1080 (Sodium MonoFluoro Acetate)

Westland District Council has declared that it has no 'legal standing on the prohibition of 1080 poison, (this is an area which may require some clarification in relation to Council's obligation to protect public water supplies).

Westland District Council has stated it is not opposed to ground sowing of 1080 baits, but it clearly has an obligation to maintain fair and reasonable representation of the community via a cross-section of council members voted democratically into office.

We would like to make the following three points at the upcoming council meeting on 19th

February 2009, and request that this letter be provided for each council member as an Agenda item.

1. Public Consultation

Council, elected through a confidential and strictly monitored public process, is designed to provide the community with an 11-strong group of West Coast residents who have a 'vested interest' in the future well-being of the people they serve.

Public consultation cannot logically be considered necessary for each and every issue which Council addresses.

Constant public consultation would not be prudent due to the expensive and time-consuming nature of the process.

It is disturbing to see Councillors subjected to such unwarranted public criticism from Federated Farmers West Coast which appears to indicate a lack of willingness to respect the advocacy role of Councillors.

2. Possum Control & TB Threat

30 August 2008 West Coast Messenger publicised a Draft Annual Plan for the West Coast Regional Council, forecasting to June 2009 a figure for Vector Management of \$10,300,000.00 Further stated in the summary "from 1 July 2008 a Vector Programme Manager would be employed by the AHB and other vector management staff would be seconded to the AHB at least until June 2009. Impact on WCRC assessed as minimal"

Federated Farmers West Coast President Basil Meyer, in a public criticism (Grey Evening Star 30/1/09) of the WDC decision to protect public water supplies from aerially applied 1080, stated that an **85% increase in the cost of 1080 operations would "have to be funded by ratepayers"**. This statement is viewed by members of KEA, FAGH, FOMF, WREN, and a fast growing number of informed individuals who have expressed their concern to our groups, as a ***"manipulative scare-tactic which resembles propaganda."***

It is believed that this type of approach will not be acceptable to the 'thinking majority', because long term vector management over a 50 year period of 1080 use has resulted in a reputed 48% infected cattle-herd rate on the West Coast, possibly mainly due to poor management of stock control, and lack of research into more affective alternative vector control methods.

The time of inefficiency and soiled public waterways, is fast coming to an end. Accountability now rests with the *well funded and responsible organisations* such as DoC, AHB, Royal Forest & Bird, Federated Farmers. This accountability and the ensuing pressure is undoubtedly causing the frustration expressed in the recent public criticism of Westland District Council's decision regarding the protection of public water supplies.

3. ERMA

Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) added in the 'Chair's Introduction' to ERMA Decision August 2007 - "We stress that our decision on this application is **not intended to be for all time**"

ERMA recommended **"tighter management of 1080 use"** in 2007. ERMA made recommendations for **further research into the breakdown of 1080 in water**, and in section 10.3.24 stated "Large water bodies (more than 3 metres wide) should be avoided to mitigate potential risks to public health." Clearly carcasses which rot in the waterways are a problem not accounted for, and in addition, reports have been received by KEA of poisoned possums travelling into farmland to die and subsequently be 'licked by inquisitive cattle'.

Ministry of Health Publication dated December 2008 states "to date there are no known epidemiological studies that have been carried out in relation to 1080 and potential adverse health effects on humans".

Countries which have banned 1080 use have not done so lightly, and members of the Federated Farmers would do well to remember the 50-100 metre buffer zones for aerial poison drops near waterways do not allow for the 6-18 hours of travel a poisoned animal has

time for, nor for the decaying carcasses left unremoved. (Refer: MAF Biosecurity NZ "1080 Reassessment Decision". Full ERMA report can be obtained from: www.ermanz.govt.nz/news-events/1080/index.html)


The European Union which is one of New Zealand's primary overseas importers for our meat and dairy industry, have strongly emphasised (Refer Report: *EU Import Conditions for fresh meat and meat products*) that they want 'organic', nitrate-free products for the import of meat from bovine, ovine or caprine animal species (cattle, sheep and goats). Exporting countries have to apply for determination of their **BSE status**. This status is based on a risk assessment and is linked to specific BSE-related import conditions. 1080 will in time obliterate NZ's meat and dairy export industry. We do not wish that upon our farmers.

Change is not always achieved easily or without compromise. In view of the massive taxpayer/ratepayer subsidised budget allocation for vector control in the West Coast region, a change towards safe acceptable possum control (which does not contaminate the public waterways), would be an intelligent and positive change for the better.

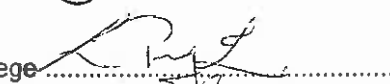
In the immortal words of George Washington: "*No punishment is too great for the man who builds his fortune on his country's ruin*"

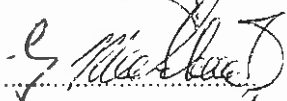
Please can you advise our members by way of written response, that the above matters will be heard by Council at the meeting dated 19th February 2009.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Collins 

Jackie Douglas 

Tracie Piercy-Taege 

Greg Maitland 



17 October 2007

AUTHORITY WELCOMES NEW RESEARCH BEING DONE ON 1080

The Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA New Zealand) welcomes progress being made on further research into the effects of 1080 following its decision to allow continued aerial use of the pesticide.

The Authority released its decision on the reassessment of 1080 in August, confirming the value of 1080 in the fight against possums, but indicating that significant improvements are needed in using the poison. The Authority imposed tighter mandatory controls on users, including active monitoring of aerial operations by means of a watch list and better management practices. It also called for further research to be done into alternative methods of possum control and certain impacts of 1080.

The new management regime, which will be in place by 1 January 2008, will require users of 1080 to produce detailed reports for the Authority on each aerial drop carried out after that date, including comments on any incidents and public complaints.

Authority Chair Neil Walter says the Authority has written to the government about its recommendation that more research be done into 1080. “We have made it clear to the government that we would like more research funding to be made available for research into the effects of 1080, its persistence in water and soil and possible alternative ways of controlling possums.”

He says the Authority is encouraged by research work already being commissioned by one of the country’s biggest users of 1080 – the Animal Health Board, whose brief is to combat the spread of bovine tuberculosis. “This research addresses one of the 1080 reassessment committee’s key concerns, which is the risks posed by 1080 to native plants valued by Māori such as watercress and puha.”

Mr Walter says the board is helping Māori by actively taking the results of its research to Māori communities.

The Authority is also making progress on appointing someone to coordinate the 1080 monitoring and reporting regime. Applications for the position close on 17 October.

The Authority expects to release its first annual report on 1080 aerial drops around this time next year. This first report is expected to focus on the implementation of the Authority’s research recommendations.

For further information contact:

David Venables, Communications Manager, ERMA New Zealand.

◆ Telephone +64 4 918 4835

◆ Mobile 021 224 3304

◆ Facsimile +64 4 914 0433

◆ Email: david.venables@erma.govt.nz

www.ermar2.govt.nz

Chair's introduction

The reassessment of 1080 for use in pest control is the largest and most challenging exercise ever undertaken by ERMA New Zealand.

The application was some five years in the preparation; more than 1400 submissions were lodged with us and we heard in person from more than 150 submitters during our two weeks of hearings around the country

Our decision is to approve the continued use of 1080 but to apply more stringent controls, including a mechanism for monitoring future aerial drops. We also recommend more research into alternative methods of possum control, further studies on the impact of 1080 and improvements in the overall management of aerial drops.

Public opinion is deeply divided on the continued use of 1080. This is because our nation is faced with an extraordinary environmental and economic dilemma. On the one hand, pests like possums, rabbits, rats and stoats pose a major threat to New Zealand's environment and economy. On the other hand, the aerial application of the poison 1080 is seen by many to impose unacceptable risks. Many who support the aerial use of 1080 do so only because of the need to manage the threats to the environment and the economy posed by possums and the absence of any better options at the present time. These people view aerial application of 1080 as something of a "necessary evil" pending the development of a suitable alternative

The Committee took full account of the deeply-felt concerns of many New Zealanders about the risks and costs involved in the aerial application of 1080. At the same time, we were bound to recognise the critical importance of aerial drops of 1080 to current possum control programmes. We also took into account the considerable improvements made by the principal users in recent years to the way 1080 operations are managed. Many – though by no means all – of the complaints and criticisms we heard were historically based and have now been addressed by changes in such areas as improved consultation and notification procedures, reduced bait dosages and more precise and reliable navigational systems in aircraft.

Our decision recognises that for the time being there is no practical alternative to the continued use of 1080 in areas where the preservation of our native bush and agricultural production would otherwise be at serious risk. But it also reflects our view that there is an urgent need for further improvements in the way 1080 is used. The tightening up of mandatory controls, the establishment of a watch list to monitor the impact of future aerial drops, our recommendations for research into the adverse effects of 1080, our appeal for more research into alternative methods of pest control and our decisions on the management of aerial drops will hopefully ease some of the remaining concerns.

We stress that our decision on this application is not intended to be for all time. Aerial drops of 1080, which account for most of its use in New Zealand, will in future be kept under close scrutiny. Whether or when a further reassessment is undertaken will depend largely on how well the new management regime is implemented and on the response to our recommendations – including that more research be undertaken into alternative methods of possum control.

1080 – why the controversy?

Sodium fluoroacetate, commonly known as 1080, is a highly toxic vertebrate pesticide that has been proven to be effective in controlling possums, rabbits and wallabies.

1080 has recently been the subject of media reports. It has been used in New Zealand for several decades, but it remains controversial because of the uncertainty around potential long-term health effects on humans.

From a public health perspective, most public concerns about possum control operations relate to possible contamination of drinking-water supplies with 1080, resulting from aerially sown baits.

Although incidents have been reported in the past relating to contaminated meat and milk, these forms of exposure are considered to be rare events.

It is considered that the most likely source of human exposure would be from contaminated drinking-water in areas where the water dilution is low, such as in streams which are used for drinking-water.

On this basis the greatest concern would be short-term exposures at high concentration, particularly for pregnant women during the vulnerable periods of organ development in their unborn babies.

Studies show that 1080 can cause foetal skeletal malformation, cardiomyopathy/damage to heart muscle, and testicular effects/reduction in sperm count in animals.

To date, there are no known epidemiological studies that have been carried out in relation to 1080 and potential adverse health effects on humans.

It is difficult to detect adverse health effects at low levels of exposure in epidemiological

studies. If such studies are available, they often lack quantitative information on the concentrations to which people have been exposed to.

In the absence of human data, it is a standard procedure to look at data from animal studies when assessing risk. The risk assessment is considered to

be precautionary because of the uncertainties involved; whether or not the adverse health effects are relevant in humans and, if so, at what level you might see toxic effects.

There are strict controls imposed under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996. In addition, designated public health officers are empowered to impose additional conditions to take account of and address local needs. For example, an alternative drinking-water supply such as bottled water should be provided until water testing shows that the water meets the requirements under the Drinking-water Standards in New Zealand.

To date, there are no known epidemiological studies that have been carried out in relation to 1080 and potential adverse health effects on humans.

Ministry of Health publications

Unless otherwise specified, you can obtain copies of all Ministry of Health publications from:

Ministry of Health

C/o Wickliffe Limited

PO Box 932, DUNEDIN

Tel: (04) 496 2277 (Wellington) Fax: (03) 479 0979 (Dunedin) Email: moh@wickliffe.co.nz

Ministry of Health publications are also available on our website: www.moh.govt.nz

CJ Coachlines

TRA 2.

John Andrew

Mobile: 021 596 028

Owner Driver

GM	HWM	MPR	MO	MAC	MF	MPA	CSO	ENG
				john.andrew@cjl.co.nz				

The Manager
Westland District Council
Hokitiki

→ COUNCIL

FEB 10

19 JAN 2008

Dear Sir / Madam

with map (SIMONE, MITG)

I am writing with a request to have the
tow coach stop in front of the Gade Factory opposite
the council office in Weld St extended to the
paving at the roundabout

When a car is parked at the spot between
the coach stop and paving we can not get our
coaches to fit on the coach stop.

The size of the coaches is now 13.5 metres
compared with the old 12.5 metres and 1 and others
kind we are sticking out on to the road making it
dangerous for everyone and sometimes the coach stop
to the rear of the Gade Factory is full with other
coaches please take this into consideration

Thank you for your time

John Andrew

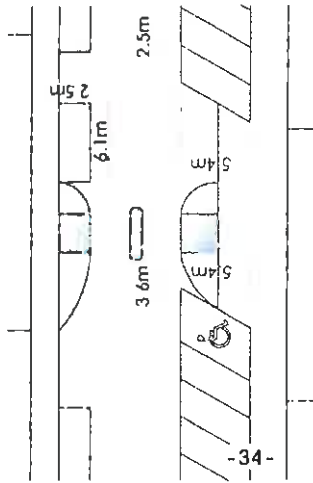
CJ Coachlines

J H Andrew

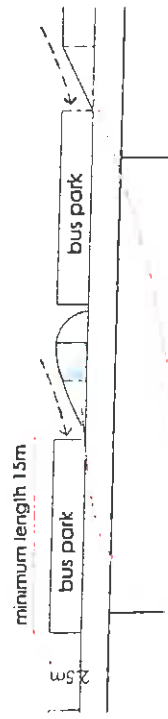


P

Railway Terrace campervan parking to be encouraged with proposed signage (illustration indicative only). Space to be allowed at north end of Railway Terrace for emergency helicopter landing.



Typical Parking Space Setout Scale 1:40 @ A3



Pull in space (typical length: 4-6m) for each bus park as space allows. This will be provided by a no parking section or by the angled form of bulbous kerbs before the bus park.

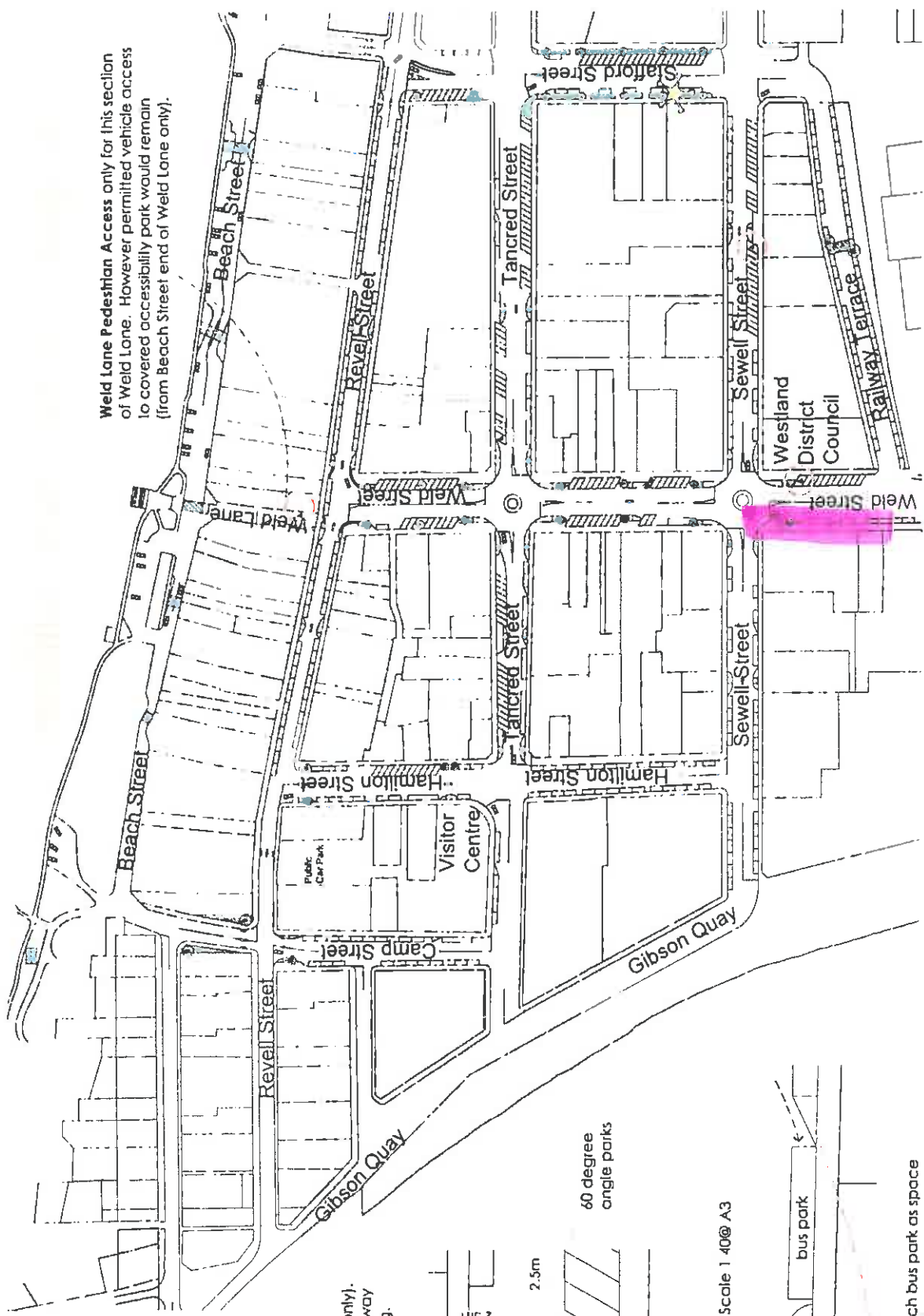


Accessibility parks indicated on plan are to be provided at dimensions as detailed. 1.5m wide drop kerbs to be provided for ease of access to footpath.



Stafford Street

By narrowing the grass verge to the south side of Stafford Street a tidier and more continuous line of parking is achieved for both sides of the road. This will be enhanced by an avenue of street trees. Note - this work along Stafford Street would be a lower priority in regards to the Council's staged development



Weld Lane Pedestrian Access only for this section of Weld Lane. However permitted vehicle access to covered accessibility park would remain (from Beach Street end of Weld Lane only).





5 FEB 2009

File: PAL 03-02-11-56

2 February 2009

General Manager
Westland District Council
Private Bag 704
Hokitika

GM	HWM	MPR	MO	M&C	MI	MFA	CSO	ENG
<i>[initials]</i>						✓		

cl agenda

Dear Sir

Sec 758 Blk IV Mahinapua SD

The above section at Takutai, south of Hokitika is a Gravel Reserve by Gazette 1918 page 3213.

While it may have been used for the above purpose when first set aside for that purpose, the land has not been used for any reserve purposes for a number of years. The adjacent landowner has applied to the Department to purchase this section, which will require revoking the reserve status, then disposing of the land.

The Department has investigated the proposal and are prepared to public notify our intention to revoke the reserve status. Before doing so, I would appreciate any comment you may have on this proposal.

Enclosed is a location map for your information.

Yours faithfully

Lara Kelsen
for Conservator

Encl

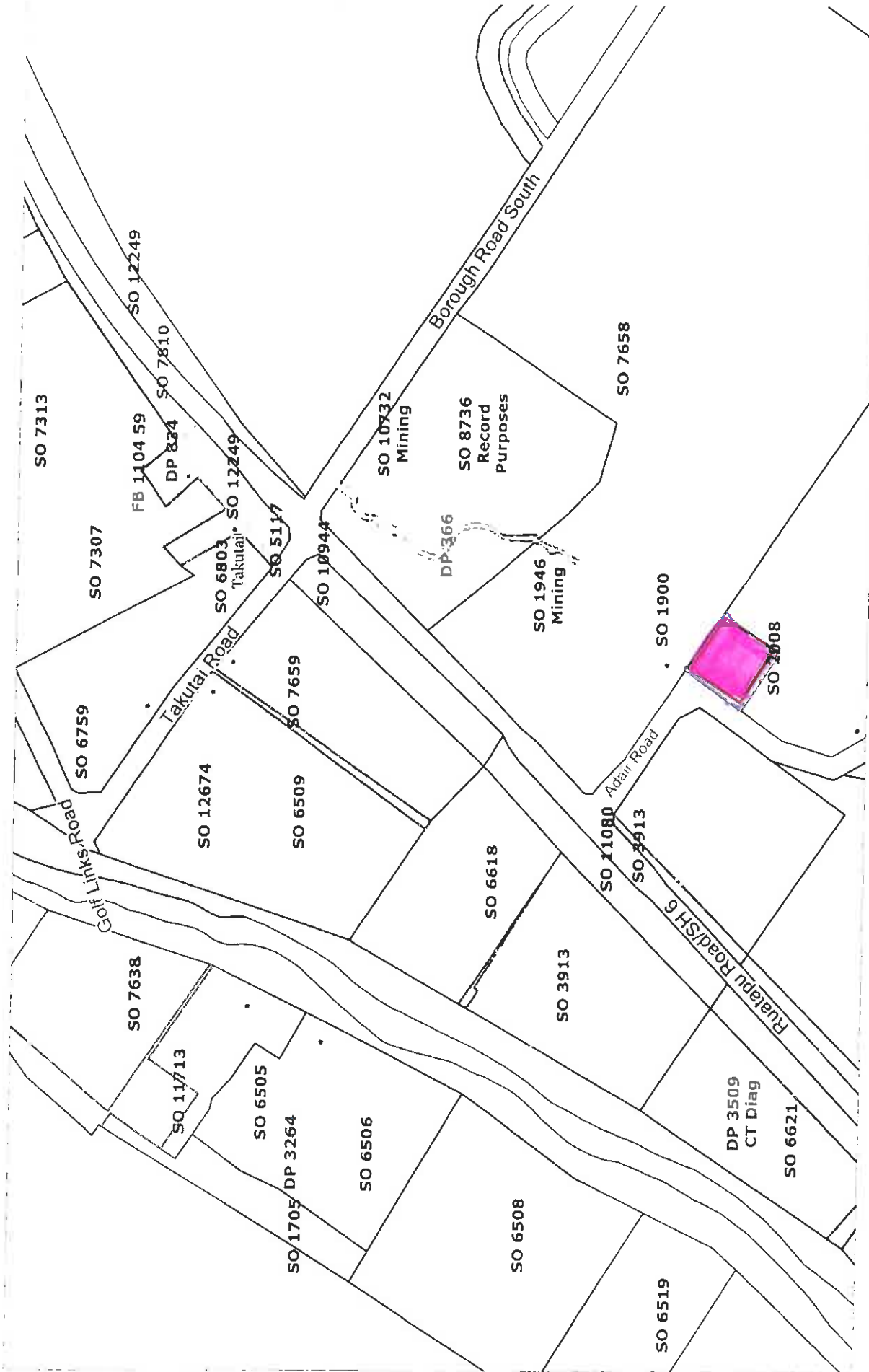
Location



Scale: 1:40955

4.5 kms

Res 758



Scale: 1:5119

500 metres

22 FEB 2009

LAKE KANIERE SCENIC TRIATHLON
PO BOX 331
HOKITIKA
'25 YEARS AND STILL RUNNING'

23 January, 2009

The General Manager
Westland District Council
Private bag 704
Hokitika

GM	HWM	MPR	MO	MAG	MF	MFA	USO	ENG
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

Dear Robin

Lake Kaniere Scenic Triathlon – 7th.March 2009

This year the Lake Kaniere Scenic Triathlon is celebrating its 25th. Anniversary. This event has remained popular because of the continued success and support by our community.

In past years the Westland District Council, as one of the major sponsors, has provided assistance with the Triathlon in many ways and we are seeking the same assistance for this special event on 2009.

This involves:

1. The use of Cass Square for the day
2. Use of showering facilities at Cass Square
3. Computer services
4. Racepack handouts from. The WDC parking area on Friday 6th. March between 5-7pm and the area next to the Kaniere Butchery on Saturday between 7-9.30am.
5. Assistance with laying out the course on Friday
6. A representative at the prizegiving

We look forward to your support, if you want any more details, please contact our small committee

Yours faithfully

Ian Gilbertson
For Committee

RVA-08 WCW-1

11 February 2009

Rob Daniel
Westland District Council
Private Bag 704
HOKITIKA

Dear Rob

PROPOSED COPLAND VALLEY CREEK NAME CHANGES

Over the past year, the Department has installed several bridges over waterways in the Copland Valley, South Westland. Three of these waterways currently have no known geographic name according to topographical maps and Land Information New Zealand. The Department wishes lodge an application to the New Zealand Geographic Board (NZGB) to name these creeks to provide reference points on interpretation material which will help people who walk this track.

A cultural report on Copland Valley that the Department has adopted states that the Department will involve Te Runanga o Makaawhio in place name changes and consider the use Maori place names. The Department has consulted with the runanga and they have proposed names for these three creeks and one change in spelling for a hilltop. The Department proposes to use these names in it's submission to the New Zealand Geographic Board.

The NZGB have requested that written support should be provided from community interest groups and local authorities when lodging submissions for place name changes. We are now seeking the Westland District Council opinion on the following names (please refer to the attached map for locations):

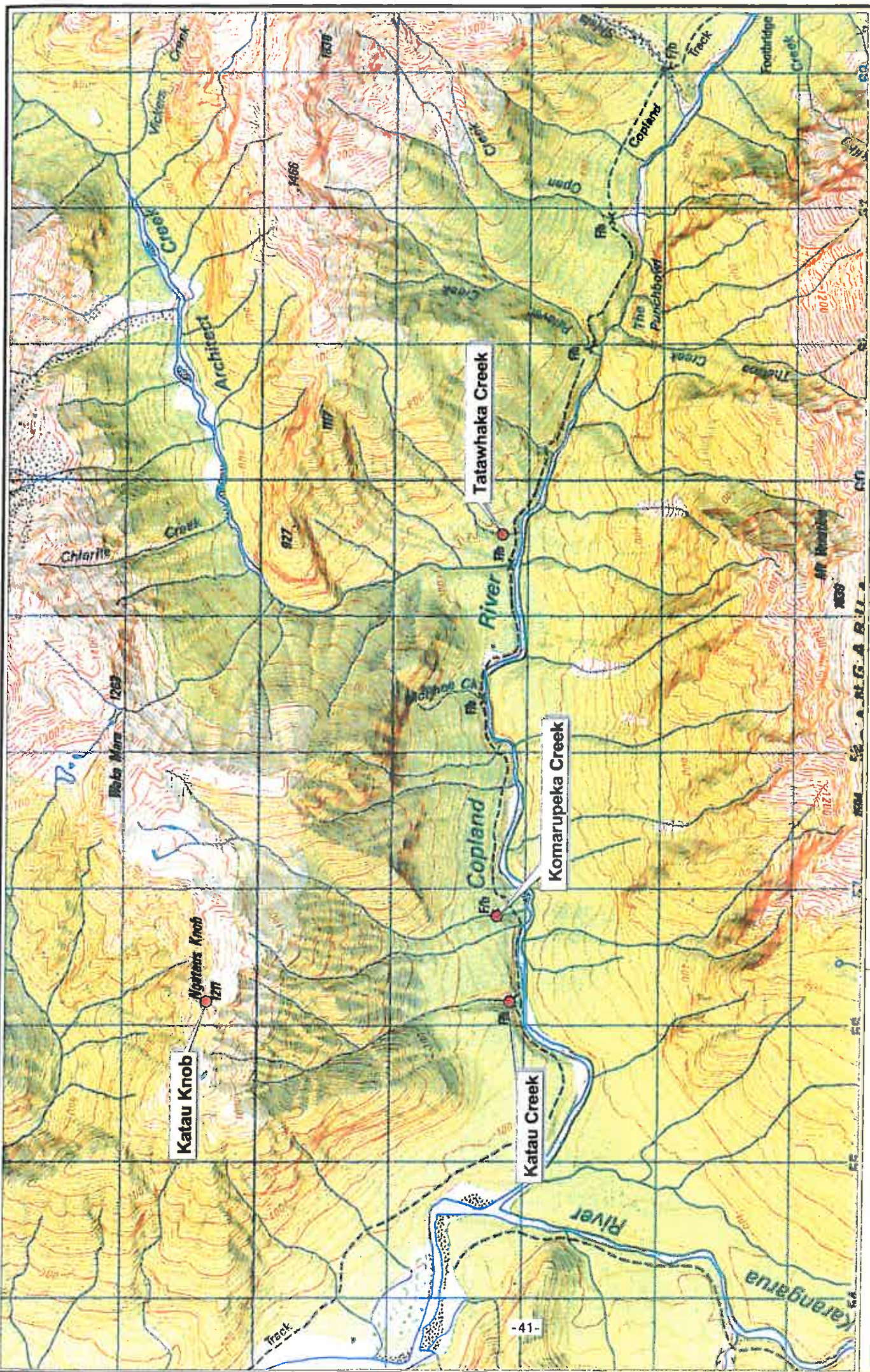
- **Katau** - a tupuna name
- **Tatawhaka & Komarupeka**- The two sons of Ohinetamatea who made the journey with her when she discovered the Copland Pass, which took descendents to the east coast before their return a few generations later back to Te Tai o Poutini

The Geographic Board meets to consider place name changes several times year. The next meeting is scheduled for late March, therefore applications have to be made by the 16th of February.

It would be appreciated if you could please provide your written comment or support for these proposed names by the 13th of February.

Yours faithfully

Gary Patterson
Ranger - Visitor/Historic Assets



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

**COPLAND VALLEY
PLACE NAME PROPOSAL**



PROPOSAL
29/01/09

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4 February 2009

File Number: LG10-01

MEMORANDUM

To: Elected Members
cc:
From: Eugene Bowen, Chief Executive
Subject: Opportunities for Engagement

Happy New Year.

With a new Government and economic uncertainty it is all the more important that you stay informed of developments affecting local government in New Zealand and issues affecting your communities. The need for a strong collective local government voice has never been greater.

I would like to remind you that the regular Zone meetings are a very good way of staying in touch with other elected members and with what is happening at a national level from *Local Government New Zealand*. The next round starts in February and I hope to see you there.

As the peak body for local government in New Zealand, it is *Local Government New Zealand's* role to work between Government and local government, to advocate for your interests, and to ensure that solutions are jointly developed and workable. To do this, we need a strong presence in Wellington and the range and quality of skills to work with Government agencies whose activities impact on local government. We work on your behalf to influence and respond as Government policy affecting us unfolds.

The services we offer also extend far beyond collective advocacy and negotiation with Government. We have a strong focus on good practice in governance and in regulatory implementation. For small councils, in particular, there are considerable benefits in our development of national submissions on legislation, to which each council can then attach its own particular concerns, rather than councils developing 85 separate submissions across the country. Where we develop good practice material, such as the KnowHow publications, we save councils time and money.

We lead, as well as respond. We have worked hard on improving how government agencies engage with councils and, with SOLGM, in the area of local government funding. The recommendations of the Inquiry into Local Government Rates contained significant risks to council autonomy and to council rate-setting powers and these threats were effectively addressed. The Inquiry's recommendations for significantly increased government assistance to fund local government infrastructure, left unaddressed by the previous Government, were a direct result of our advocacy on your behalf.

Finally, we allocate significant resources to making sure you know what is happening at a national level, including attendance at the regular meetings of each of the six zones. The 2009 schedule for the zone meetings is available on our website at www.lgnz.co.nz, under Events.

On behalf of National Council I would like to invite you to attend a Zone meeting near you, to learn more about the issues confronting the sector and what we intend doing about them. I hope you can make it in February.

Eugene Bowen
Chief Executive
Local Government New Zealand