

Minutes of the Kopeopeo Canal Remediation Project Community Liaison Group meeting held at Eastbay REAP - Putauaki Room, on 6 March 2018 commencing at 10:00am

Chair: John Pullar

Scribe: Hazel Ryan (BOPRC)

Members present: Eula Toko (Cultural Monitor), Rene de Jong (Whakatāne Harbour Care Group), Tui Edwards (CS2 representative), Andrew Kohlrusch (Independent Monitor), Neal Yeates as proxy for Amanda Austrin, Gary Searle as proxy for Shane McGhie, Stephen Layne (Toi Te Ora Public Health), Kathryn Barclay (Toi Te Ora Public Health), Cameron Huxley (Toi Te Ora Public Health)

Others present: Bruce Crabbe, Abby Tozer, Brendon Love (BOPRC), Matt James (Independent Monitor Field Observer), Mark Reider (Media), Dr. Paul Butler, Roger Houghton, Guy Barlass, Tracey Godfery, Marlene Kranz, Robbie Martin, Margi Martin

Apologies: Clint Savage (DOC), Amanda Austrin (CS1 representative), Hayden Power (Federated Farmers), Shane McGhie (WDC)

Absent: Tani Wharewera (CS3 and Hokowhitu Marae representative), Scottie McLeod (Whakatāne-Tauranga Rivers Scheme)

Action summary

No.	Actions of 6 March 2018	Responsible	Status
1	Project team to consider placement of warning signs at rear entrance to CS3.	Brendon Love	

Item 1: Welcome and karakia

- i. Eula Toko said the opening *karakia*. The Chair welcomed all those present and thanked them for attending, particularly representatives from Toi Te Ora Public Health attending for the first time. He recognised that there are other historic contamination issues in the Whakatāne District but asked that those present acknowledge the focus of the Community Liaison Group (CLG) meeting as a forum to discuss matters specifically relating to the Kopeopeo Canal Remediation Project (KCRP).

Item 2: Apologies

Apologies were received for Clint Savage, Amanda Austrin, Hayden Power and Shane McGhie.

Motion: Apologies approved	Toko/ Yeates	CARRIED
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Item 3: Minutes of previous meeting

a) **Matters arising:**

- i. No matters arising.

No.	Actions of 23 January 2018	Responsible	Status
1	Project Team to forward Rene de Jong copy of fish catch record.	Hazel Ryan	<i>Completed</i>

Motion: That the minutes of the Community Liaison Group meeting of 23 January 2018 be accepted as a true and correct record.

Yeates/Searle

CARRIED

Item 4: Communications

During the presentation given by Abby Tozer (Slide 3-5), the following points were commented on:

- i. There have been recent changes to the format of the project webpage which members of the community are encouraged to sign up to in order to receive alerts when new updates are published. This project site is the primary source of project news and public notifications.
- ii. In response to queries arising at January's CLG meeting, the [FAQs](#) on the website were updated to refresh the content and to clarify how the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) relates to the KCRP. The UNEP requirements govern the bulk storage of wastes that contain concentrations of dioxins approximately 10,000 times higher than those found in the Kopeopeo Canal.
- iii. There was extensive media coverage of the project in the period since the last meeting with a further article published the morning of the meeting on the first clear validation results.
- iv. The dredge progress can now be easily tracked on the project dashboard report, published monthly on the reports page of the website.

Questions and comments that were raised during the presentation:

- a) Guy Barlass asked for certain historical dioxin sampling results from the Kopeopeo Canal to be uploaded to the Geographic Information System (GIS) page of the website. He highlighted concerns about loss of opportunities for government funding if there are data gaps on the website. Brendon Love responded that there are already plans to remediate the stretch of Canal referred to along Keepa Road which will be dredged in due course and that the analysis already gathered will be redundant once it is replaced by validation data. He also stated that the pump station results requested were provided in a memorandum to Mr. Barlass and that key data is available on the GIS page.
- b) Mr. Barlass also drew attention to the outstanding full delineation of contamination as required in the resource consent hearing which he considered important for warning the public to avoid recreational use of the

Kopeopeo Canal. He said he was happy with the project's general direction and progress but missing data needed to be published online.

- c) Dr. Joanne Kelly asked if the result discussed was from the Te Ohu Mō Papatūānuku bioremediation trial. Brendon responded that the result came from 2007-2008, which was well before his time on the project and was possibly related to some earlier investigation work that recorded the highest concentration in the Canal. Dr. Kelly advised that historically samples were not full congeners, which is why those values were comparatively higher.
- d) Neal Yeates commended the communications effort, but noted concern about the article published in the Beacon after the last meeting and the consistency of the message. Abby responded that reporters from the Beacon used the appropriate channels to check quotes from Tui Edwards before publishing the article but it is not possible to scrutinise an entire article before it goes to press which is why the website is the Project Team's preferred media to ensure accuracy of content going into the public sphere. Ms Edwards expressed satisfaction with the project, but stated the need for her to maintain a healthy level of scrutiny in the interests of representing her community.

Item 5: Project Update

During the presentation given by Brendon Love (Slides 6-13), the following points were commented on:

- i. The first section of the Kopeopeo Canal has been dredged and validation samples tested for dioxins have returned concentrations between non-detect levels and 51 pg (picograms) I-TEQ/g, meaning an average below 60 picograms/gram at the 95% upper confidence level.¹
- ii. Live monitoring is used to track water and turbidity levels and to make decisions accordingly. Turbidity readings were high in the initial section because of the use of a small dredge (Truxor) which relocated sediment for the installation of the control structure. The relocated material is allowed to settle out within silt curtains and is then pumped out to the treatment site by the main barge-mounted dredge. There are 10 turbidity probes for turbidity monitoring along the Kopeopeo Canal which is blocked off at the western and eastern ends of the project area, with strict consent conditions around release of water beyond the project site.
- iii. The Matahina Dam was lowered in preparation for Cyclone Gita and the water release caused Kopeopeo Canal West to remain at high tide levels. This resulted in drainage issues on one particular farm to the west of State Highway 30 and temporary pumps were used to manage water on that property. Other actions such as drain clearing were undertaken following the event to improve future drainage issues. The situation will continue to be monitored.
- iv. Containment Site 3 (CS3) enabling works are in progress including vegetation removal and fencing. Geotechnical investigations have been carried out to

¹ For more information on what this means, see the [Soil Contaminant Standards for New Zealand](#).

- survey wood waste height and wood waste found in the southern portion of the site has been covered over.
- v. Last year the Project Team explored the possibility of seeking a design criteria variation to relax settlement conditions, and profilometers were placed to gather data. Data obtained from the trial helped refine the methodology for compacting material to reduce differential settlement. Based on this, a decision was later made not to pursue the variation. As part of a separate project, overburden material from Wainui Te Whara works has been stockpiled on land adjacent to CS3.
 - vi. There will be two further road closures before the dredge reaches Paroa Road. These closures are to allow for the dredge to be lifted over private canal bridges by crane. These dates will be notified to affected residents and businesses in advance to minimise disturbance.
 - vii. Following January closure of the public access road off Keepa Road to the Whakatāne River stop bank, the Project Team explored alternative access and a track is currently being constructed. This track will be mapped and details shared on the project page shortly.

Questions and comments that were raised during the presentation:

- a) Neal Yeates asked what type of material has been trucked from Wainui Te Whara for use as fill material on CS3. It was confirmed to be silty soil and sand, and is not contaminated material.
- b) Robbie Martin noted that according to the original methodology the Kopeopeo Canal was going to be blocked for a total of six weeks and sought clarification around how long the Flood Control Structures (FCS) would be in place under the revised methodology. Brendon confirmed they would be in place for at least one year.
- c) Mr. Martin expressed concern about the effect on the section upstream of the western FCS. He also noted the potential environmental impact of recontamination of the current project area if the FCS were removed before remediating elevated dioxin levels to the west of the project area. Brendon acknowledged that the risk of recontamination was identified on the Project's risk register, and that the Project Team was involved in investigations and options analysis for that section of the Canal. He also added that because that section of the Kopeopeo Canal is private land, it cannot be discussed in a public forum.
- d) Bruce Crabbe reassured Mr. Martin that the BOPRC Rivers and Drainage team has an ongoing commitment to clear the farm drains on his property and keep water levels under control. He also clarified that water is only able to be discharged east through the site later on in a flood event when sending water west is not proving effective for maintaining water levels. Mr. Martin highlighted that in winter the stop banks might not withstand a prolonged period of elevated water and that the FCS are not designed for containment. Bruce responded that in this case, the site would first be filled to the east, before pumps were turned on at the Kopeopeo/Orini confluence. Brendon

- asked Mr. Martin to check his drain in the next weather event and report back on water levels now that the drain has been cleared. Mr. Martin noted concern about the use of the canal arm for storage and requested advice from the Independent Monitor who suggested revisiting the matter in the drinks break.
- e) In relation to the alternative access track being built around CS3, Guy Barlass advised against recreational use of the area by the public, citing the precautionary principle and the incomplete contamination delineation.
 - f) Mr. Barlass displayed photos of alleged exposed mill waste at CS3 and told of trees being removed without adequate PPE. He also mentioned east bank leachate and asked if rock armouring would be used at that site to prevent the bank from collapsing. Brendon responded that the team would consider bank stabilisation following dredging but that the leachate mentioned had been addressed at a previous CLG with two rounds of data presented. Mr. Barlass said that he was referring to a different site. Brendon replied that the other site is owned and managed by Whakatāne District Council.
 - g) Mr. Yeates asked what volume of sediment would be going into CS1. Brendon replied that sediment density tests and dry solid samples would be used to calculate volume and that the team would have a better idea of the cut-off point after dredging another 500m.
 - h) Mr. Yeates asked for better weed control along Kope Drain Road because he witnessed a vehicle almost hit unmarked pipework. Brendon said this risk would be passed onto the Contractor.
 - i) Tui Edwards drew attention to the absence of odour control. Brendon responded that calibrated nostrils could be considered, but monitoring was usually initiated only if on-site operators identified an issue. He also added that part of the reason for lime dosing, apart from bioremediation, was to stabilise pH and avoid acid-forming conditions that may result in the formation of hydrogen sulphide which could cause offensive odours.

Item 7: Independent Monitor

During the presentation by Matt James and Andrew Kohlrusch (slides 14-17), the following points were commented on:

- i. Matt James highlighted that the monthly reports issued by the Independent Monitor gave a summary of monitoring for the month and were available on the project website.
- ii. He noted proactive flood management being employed on site with pumps brought in on standby in advance of weather events and techniques used to control canal levels in the western section.
- iii. He noted reports of some members of the public threatening subcontractors working at CS3 and that there were more appropriate avenues to voice those issues, such as by contacting a member of the Project Team or himself.
- iv. He stated that the trigger levels for nuisance dust had not been exceeded in the reporting period and that there was now greater confidence in turbidity data following equipment fine-tuning.

- v. A recent discovery of suspected asbestos and an incident which brought a powerline down would be covered in March's report.

Questions and comments that were raised during the presentation:

- a) No questions or comments were raised.

Item 8: Health, Safety and Monitoring

During the presentation by Brendon Love (slides 17-20), the following points were commented on:

- i. Brendon relayed the series of events which took place the week prior when an excavator boom hit a power pole and brought the line down. He stated that there were no injuries and power was restored within three hours. An incident report was recently received and would be provided to the Independent Monitor. He reiterated the need for hazards to be identified when the Contractor is changing their approach. As a corrective action extra power pole stays had been placed on the new poles and warning signs would be adopted because bunting was not able to be added to the lines because of the distance between poles.
- ii. He also told of the discovery of asbestos-containing material at CS3 which had been cordoned off and covered over for later disposal.
- iii. Brendon noted spikes in turbidity at the Orini confluence control point during the last flood event and described the second tier system whereby Total Suspended Solids were used as a real time proxy measurement to determine whether water could be released, given the turnaround for dioxin analysis.
- iv. Brendon requested feedback from Kope Drain Road residents of notification received prior to the last road closure, no comments were received.

Questions and comments that were raised during the presentation:

- a) Eula Toko, the Cultural Monitor for the project, described her role which involves observing oversized material from the top of the shakers to ensure correct treatment of any taonga or koiwi discoveries. Since dredging began, Ms. Toko had observed a number of animal mammalian bones which led her to develop a non-urgent discovery protocol for greater efficiency.
- b) Mark Reider asked if the bones being dredged were mostly fragments. Ms. Toko replied that they come in all sorts of shapes, and the bigger the bones, the more they break down.
- c) Guy Barlass asked about pumping water out of the containment site and Brendon replied that eventually it would gravity feed back into the Canal.
- d) Rene de Jong noted that people were still able to access the Whakatāne River stop bank near CS3 from near the Orini Canal.

Action (1): Project team to consider placement of warning signs at rear entrance to CS3.

Item 9: Other business and date of next meeting

- i. Guy Barlass addressed those present and told them of an upcoming public meeting to be held on the broader dioxin/sawmill legacy issues with the invitation extended to Labour and Green Party representatives. Mr. Barlass provided a contact phone number and offered to provide further details.
- ii. Dr. Paul Butler brought up the UNEP and the Stockholm Convention and queried whether the project was meeting international obligations. Andrew Kohlrusch responded that the methods used in the type of projects referred to by Dr. Butler were energy-intensive, expensive, and led to sterile soil. He also said that dioxin concentrations needed to be much higher to be considered under the Stockholm Convention and had spoken to US colleagues about landfill management for dioxins. Andrew believed that the Project was indeed complying with local legislation and didn't see containment as a contravention of those principles. Brendon responded that while dioxins are considered in the UNEP toolkit, the concentrations within the Kopeopeo Canal are much lower than those referred to in the Stockholm Convention. He reminded those present that the FAQs on the website had been updated.
- iii. Roger Houghton asked if an open day was still being planned. Brendon responded that there would be a site tour for CLG members in late March which would be used as a trial run before the community open day.

Next meeting: Placeholder for Tuesday 24th April 2018

Meeting closed at 12.15pm