

PEGASUS BAY COASTCARE NETWORK

Submission to the Annual Plans of the **Hurunui District Council, Waimakariri District Council, Christchurch City Council and Environment Canterbury.**

Throughout New Zealand the coastal environment is amongst the most degraded of natural areas. The sea has always attracted people and the recent spate of increased coastal property values and developments proves that the seaside is more popular than ever. This places great pressure on the coastal environment with many areas devoid of natural dunes and native vegetation; many of the beaches of Pegasus Bay are typical of this. Erosion is also a major problem on many New Zealand coasts and is usually caused from the interference with natural systems and environment by people. Climate change is now an accepted fact and our coast is, in many areas, poorly prepared to deal with the projected rise in sea level and coastal storms. We believe a mixture of native coastal species would provide a more robust buffer against the ravages of the sea as well as going some way to mitigating biodiversity loss. It is with utmost priority that we need to restore the natural form and function of sand dunes and strengthen the landward side of the dunes with native coastal plants.

In 2003 the Draft North Pegasus Bay Motor Vehicle Access Strategy was released. That strategy focused mainly on one issue – that of vehicle access to beaches and excluded other coastal issues such as people access, dog control and weeds etc (It should be noted that this strategy was at that time supported by the Hurunui DC, Department of Conservation, Environment Canterbury and the Christchurch City Council, but not the Waimakariri DC.

In respect to the CCC, that Council resolved on 27 June 2002:

- 1. That a submission be prepared on the North Canterbury Pegasus Bay Coast Draft Vehicle Access Strategy.*
- 2. That the submission supports a unified approach to addressing vehicle access issues along the whole of Pegasus Bay, in conjunction with Environment Canterbury, the Waimakariri DC, Hurunui DC and Department of Conservation.*
- 3. That the submission supports the proposed management measures including unified signage, educational projects and a ranger service.*
- 4. That the Parks and Waterways Unit be requested to address the issue of providing alternative areas, away from the coast and other sensitive ecosystems, for recreational use by drivers of 4WDs, motorbikes and other similar vehicles, in partnership with Environment Canterbury, Waimakariri DC, Hurunui DC and the Department of Conservation as applicable.).*

It is our opinion that the strategy has not been successful where adopted, in that damage to sand dune, estuarine and open beach habitats continues unabated and communities remain polarized over the issue of vehicle access. We believe that introducing the concept of Coastcare to the Pegasus Bay communities will promote a sense of ownership and caring for our coastal environment and the issue of vehicle access will become a smaller part in the bigger picture. The community Coastcare concept has been very successful around New Zealand in recent years, most noticeably in the Bay of Plenty.

This submission is to firstly introduce ourselves and secondly to extend an invitation to embrace the concept of Coast care and participate in our network. Over the last few months we have held several meetings with concerned people and representatives of Pegasus Bay communities, residents groups, representatives from the Christchurch City Council Coast Care, the Department of Conservation, Environment Canterbury, The Royal New Zealand Forest & Bird Society and the New Zealand Ecological Restoration Network. From these meetings we have formed a group that we have named "*The Pegasus Bay Coast Care Network*" and developed a mission statement and objectives as follows:

Mission Statement:

To unite Pegasus Bay Communities to protect and enhance the natural coastal environment for all to enjoy now and in the future

Key elements of Mission Statement:

- ❖ *Protection of native wildlife, flora and habitats*
- ❖ *Involve and inform our communities*
- ❖ *Promote safe sympathetic recreation use*
- ❖ *Restore the natural form & function of sand dune systems*
- ❖ *Provide a common voice for Pegasus Bay Issues*

Objective One:

To Support and encourage Coastcare in each of the coastal communities in Pegasus Bay

Through:

- ❖ *Collective representation*
- ❖ *Feeding information back to communities*
- ❖ *Building partnerships and relationships and widen our sphere of influence*
- ❖ *Help with on-ground projects that benefit all groups, e.g. pingao nursery*
- ❖ *Support Coastcare Groups as appropriate*
- ❖ *Support Coastcare Groups with funding applications*

To achieve these the network requires a wide sphere of influence, including Environment Canterbury, District Councils, Christchurch City Council, the Department of Conservation and Tuahuriri runanga

Objective Two:

To drive the preparation of a non-statutory Management Strategy for the coastal zone of Pegasus Bay.

What we seek from the Councils:

1. Representation from each Council at network meetings
2. Assistance in achieving the above objectives and the commitment and provision of resources to the completion of a non-statutory management strategy for the Pegasus Bay coastal zone (similar to that recently completed for the lower Waimakiriri River)
3. Consultation on coastal management/development issues as an interested stakeholder.
4. Provision of a ranger service as originally proposed in the North Pegasus Bay Motor Vehicle Strategy and as supported by the majority of Councils with extended responsibilities that include coordinating and supporting the Coastcare groups.
5. We would like the opportunity to speak further in support of our submission.

Yours sincerely

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