

Attention: Reg Kemper

The Hearing Panel Convenor,

DOC

P.O. Box 10420

WELLINGTON, 6143

Kia Ora,

Re: Ruahine Conservation Park Change of Status - Your Ref: PAL-06-23-01-04 H

Thank you for sending me a copy of DOC's "Assessment of Proposed Land Exchange" with your 5 June letter

I would like to make the following comments:

(a) In the 31 March "Talking Point" opinion piece in the HB Today newspaper, Te Tarai's Amelia McQueen compared the 22 ha of DOC land with the 146 ha of Smedley land as being like comparing 22 diamonds with 146 glass gems; they are not "like for like".

The Assessment Report you commissioned does not seem to support her claim (although it does support the view that the Dutch Creek parcel is extremely important but then goes on to dismiss it on the grounds that there's plenty more like it;

That is RUBBISH; we have long since passed the point where we "cannot not" save every little piece that is left

(b) Why doesn't the Report support her claim?

(c) Could it be that your assessors (or whoever compiled their assessments) highlighted information that supported the conclusions that the Applicant sought and downplayed information which was not helpful, like the facts that the Smedley Exchange Block

(i) has no braided river bed

(ii) has lower stream values

(iii) has lower fresh-water species values

and (iv) no threatened species.

And of course, the SBB is a more suitable habitat for lizards and geckos as a fair bit of it is rocky hillside.

But it does ~~not~~ not have an oxbow wetland.

This sort of highlighting/downplaying occurred with the Kessells "Terrestrial Ecology Study" Reports between the original report, where at P79 onwards it made statement after statement about how adverse the RWSS would be for the nationally-vulnerable-to-extinction longtailed bate, and the final ~~then~~

(b) continued

(2)

report (that was presented to the Board of Inquiry) where it merely stated on P42 that "the reservoir population... is possibly the largest of those detected and this is a population of importance" and on P56 that "the reservoir area represents an important habitat"

That was, in my view, a watering-down of monumental ~~proportions~~ ^{proportions}.

(c) The report ~~also~~ ^{did} highlights the fact that neither parcel of DOC land is managed and then implied the Smedley Block would become a worthy addition to the Ruahine Forest Park if proper management processes were followed.

(d) In my verbal submission to the Panel, I asked it to give DOC back its spine by rejecting this proposed Change of Status and by not rolling over and being complicit in the proposed act of vandalism of the 22ha in question (let alone the rest of the Maharoero River and its other ^{environs} ~~environs~~). I feel that if DOC was genuine, it could have found ample evidence to support rejecting the proposed Change of Status.

(e) I also feel DOC has a responsibility to the environment outside ~~the~~ DOC land anywhere in NZ. So as ^{also} mentioned in my verbal submission "168ha of ecologically sensitive vegetation... 183ha of threatened Fauna & Flora species... etc... would be lost (if the massive industrial reservoir, with its rising and falling water-level, were to be built in the Maharoero River)" (Kessell's "Proposed Integrated Mitigation & Offset Approach" Report)

^{and} further, ~~that~~ that DOC considered "an area of significant conservation value is included within the reservoir footprint"

So whilst technically you are restricted to looking only at 22 ha of DOC land, if you were to look at the bigger picture of what DOC has responsibility for, then you could quite easily make a different decision to the one that the Assessment Report portends.

(f) In a postscript to my 26 February written submission, I stated I would support DOC taking over the 146ha of the Smedley Block (~~if~~ if the Ruess does not happen in the proposed form) as it and a number of other areas within the reservoir footprint would make valuable additions to the Ruahine Forest Park.

The Assessment Report and various others (Kessell et al) prove this suggestion.

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The HBRI lawyer (Martin Williams) and a high profile barrister (Jonathan Krebs whom, I understand, just happens to share Chambers with Mr Williams) who on yet another HB Today "Talking Point" opinion ^(25 March) ~~indicated~~ indicated that this suggestion is tantamount to "theft".

That amazes me that they would see this suggestion like that. Especially when what HBRI is wanting to do to the Maharara River and its environs is, in my opinion, the real crime!

Thank you for this opportunity to make comments and I look forward to you making the right decision for the Maharara River and its environs in due course.

Kia Ora,


(GERARD 'PATW')