



**Upper Clutha Conservation
TASK FORCE**

FINAL REPORT

Overview

- A community forum was held in Wanaka on 7th May 2014 to discuss growing conservation in the Upper Clutha.
- We asked what was the MAJOR CHALLENGE facing conservation in the Upper Clutha?



Overview

And then we asked what would provide the best outcome:



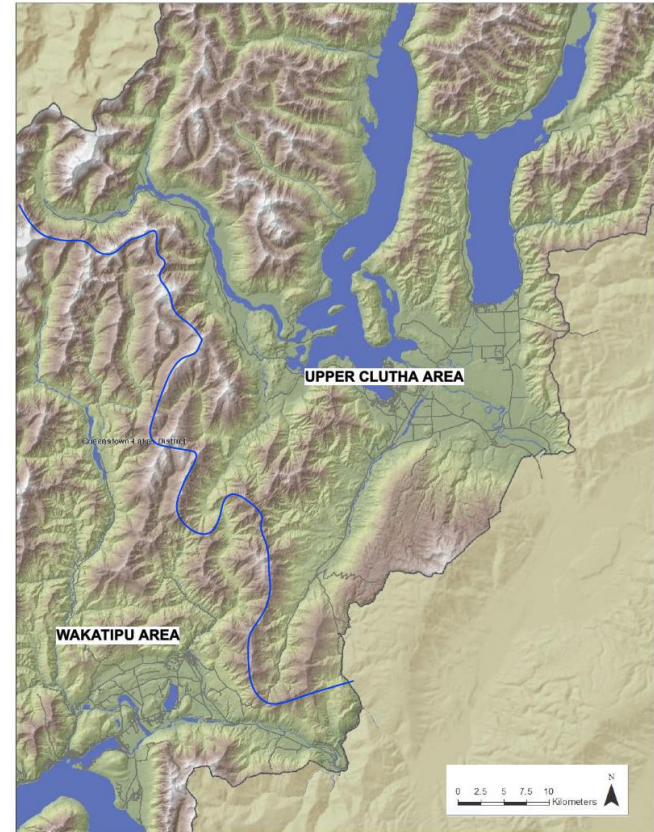
An Upper Clutha conservation taskforce was then established to consider these views and to recommend a way forward.

Overview

Biodiversity, air and water were all focus areas in the initial conservation forum.

Sustainability of the soil, urban conservation issues and healthy landscapes require further discussion within a different context.

The Upper Clutha includes the full catchment of the Upper Clutha River. It does not include the catchments flowing into the lower Clutha eg Wakatipu (Although many of the recommendations will have as much relevance to these areas). We suggest that the Wakatipu area has their own Taskforce.



Taskforce achievements

This taskforce has been active in getting things achieved as well as writing up recommendations for others. Other outcomes from the conservation forum are:

- Nature space website – we have developed an Upper Clutha Online Conservation Network (<http://www.naturespace.org.nz/groups/upper-clutha-conservation-network>)
- Regular Newsletters to community conservation groups
- Pest off meetings & development of a network to share information
- Fundraising workshop including a conservation focus
- Submissions on the Regional Policy Statement to Otago Regional Council
- Support to river monitoring tender by NIWA

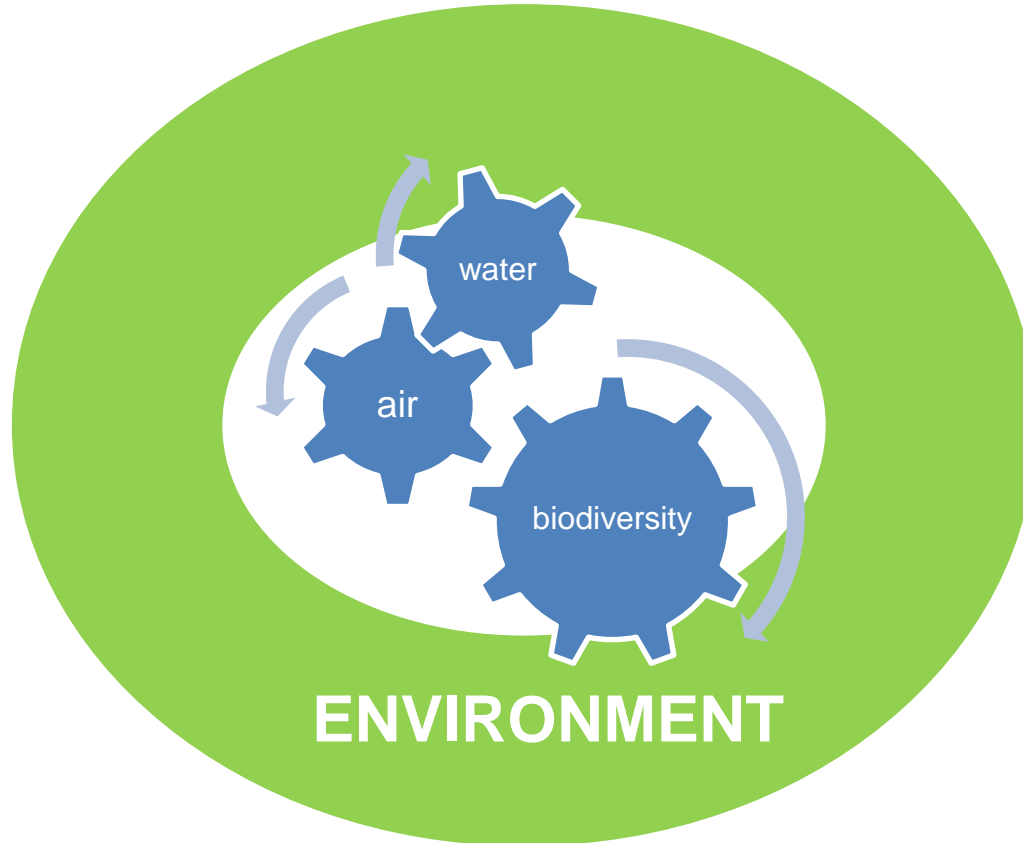
Vision

We, the Upper Clutha community, know, value and care for our area's fresh waters, clean air, indigenous biodiversity and landscapes, and accept the shared responsibility to work together to ensure these are sustained and enhanced.

Our freshwaters and air are of unspoiled quality. The full natural range of indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems are present and flourishing.

The Upper Clutha is renowned for its landscapes expressing its unique and diverse natural character. The perpetuation of these natural resources is recognised as fundamental to our well-being and prosperity and as an integral part of our everyday lives.

VISION 2030 and beyond



Biodiversity refers to the variety of life. It is seen in the number of species in an ecosystem or on the entire Earth. It can be measured to assess “Health of landscapes” Biologists most often define biodiversity as the “totality of genes, species, and ecosystems of a region”

Air – High standards of air quality

Water – unspoiled water in the natural environment

Key recommendations

- **Regional and District Biodiversity Strategies will be operative within 3 years.** The District Strategy will give effect to the regional strategy and the National Biodiversity Strategy but will have district-specific objectives. The district strategy will deliver objectives that are tangible and measurable on an annual plan basis
- **A District Plan that is well aligned with and promotes the objectives of other statutory tools.** - water & air plans (6a water quality, 6b town water), the Regional Pest Management Strategy, the Otago Conservation Management Strategy (DOC) Ngai Tahu (regional plan) 2025. Such a district plan would align current plans and fill in the gaps. The ORC Regional Policy Statement will be instrumental ensuring this happens within the next 18 months.
- **QLDC policy and environmental management gives affect to the district biodiversity strategy.** Individual plans eg reserves management plans will all link into the wider strategy within 5 years.
- **ORC and QLDC to be leaders in conservation management by example on the water and land they manage.** In 10 years time, conservation is integrated into all aspects of local and regional government and the community is fully engaged in this process.
- **Shaping our Future to facilitate initial meetings between key stakeholder groups in the Upper Clutha Conservation area.** The group to include ORC, QLDC and DOC as well as key stakeholders. The purpose of the group is to co-ordinate and share information, examine the recommendations of the Upper Clutha Conservation group and where appropriate follow up on recommendations. The group will also work with technical information – gathering and dissemination, research, monitoring and possible interim management measures.

STATUTORY

International Convention on Biodiversity 1992

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991

CONSERVATION ACT 1987

protection of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitat of fauna a matter of national importance must have regard to the intrinsic values of ecosystems

RESERVES ACT 1977

(legally binding reserve status management plans, private land covenants)

New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2000

(NZs stated commitments arising from the legally-binding 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity ratified by this country in 1993 which came out Rio Earth Conference 1992) an important goal is to maintain and restore a full range of remaining natural habitats and ecosystems to a healthy functioning state,

Convention on Biodiversity Nagoya 2010

THE 20 AICHI TARGETS
"By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people."

(World Commission on Protected Areas IUCN, NZ is a signatory)

Temperate Grasslands Conservation Initiative (TGCI)

NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR FRESHWATER MANAGEMENT (directs local government to manage water quality and quantity within set limits)

(NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT (NPS) ON INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY) (proposed at this time, no legislative effect)

QEII TRUST ACT 1977
legally binding covenants

Reserve Management Plans
Conservation Covenants

OTAGO CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2014-2024

(sets out how the DOC is going to manage conservation values for the next 10 years) currently at revision stage following public consultation on a draft

QEII Trust Covenants (private land)

OTAGO REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT

Regional Plan: Water
Farm Environment Management Plans (FEMPs)

Rural Water Quality Strategy
Regional Pest Management Strategy
(Regional Biodiversity Strategy (dont have one))

QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT PLAN

Objectives and Policies
Resource Consent Conditions

LAKE WANAKA PRESERVATION ACT 1973 provides for the protection of the lake in its natural state

(district biodiversity strategy) (we dont have one)

outcomes for biodiversity in our area



AIR

VISION – 2030

Pollutants from human sources are minimal.

KPI'S

Regular monitoring shows high standards of air quality are being met.

The number of complaints are minimal and reducing.

Breaches are dealt with in a timely efficient manner.

Establish clarity around regulatory responsibilities and who to contact regarding enforcement

GAP WITH TODAY

Several times a year the air is visibly polluted through burning from human activity – it impacts on health, tourism, biodiversity, aesthetics, local business.

RECOMMENDATIONS to ORC and the Otago Rural Fire Authority (ORFA)

Air Plan:

Rural burning issues are addressed regularly with the Upper Clutha Vegetation Control Group.

When open air permit applications are being considered, the effects on human health, environment and tourism are fully measured and accounted for.

Emissions regulations are tightened and enforced.

Prohibit open air rubbish and building waste burning. (Encourage mulching of tree waste instead of burning)

Step up education regarding responsible burning.

Work is done around what standards of air quality we should be meeting to achieve the 2030 vision.

WATER

VISION - 2030

Water in lakes, rivers and streams is of exceptional quality

- No further dams on the Clutha River.
- Water in lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and aquifers is of exceptionally high quality.
- The Clutha River continues to be renowned for its clear turquoise water and its volume, and is almost free of didymo.
- All Upper Clutha catchments (including lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands & aquifers) have comprehensive management plans developed through community consultation
- Rural and urban land uses do not adversely impact water quality.
- A variety of Aquatic habitats show excellent health and supporting the full natural range of indigenous species and mahinga kai
- a network of wetlands is a feature of the district (25% more wetland area than in 2015)
- Increased water usage efficiency.

KPI'S

Lakes, rivers, streams, aquifers and wetlands are being comprehensively monitored for key bio physical attributes and the data are being used to inform management decisions.

Comprehensive monitoring of rivers, aquifers and other water bodies have built a public data-set. (transparency)

The community agreed management plans are in place.

Aquatic surveys show increased health and diversity

Water metering encourages a reduction in water usage.

Numbers of rural landowners with farm environment management plans addressing water quality issues are increasing over 2015 baseline.

GAP WITH TODAY

Lakes, rivers, aquifers and wetlands are not monitored or managed comprehensively. Excessive water use. Poorly managed water outfall. Unknown impact of intensifying agriculture and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ORC, Federated Farmers, Landcare and industry sectors jointly encourage and educate regarding self monitoring of aquatic systems.

ORC: Facilitate establishment of community based catchment groups.

ORC, Federated Farmers, QLDC: All rural landowners are encouraged to have a farm environment management plan addressing water quality issues.

ORC: Comprehensive management plans including catchment and lakes management completed addressing water quality issues within 3 years.

ORC: Develop a comprehensive management and monitoring plan for rivers, surface and sub-surface water bodies. and ORC to encourage individuals contribute to monitoring.

ORC: Ensure ground water allocations do not exceed the levels necessary to sustain healthy functioning aquatic ecosystems.

ORC/ QLDC: Water storage should be encouraged as an alternative to ground water extractions.

QLDC: Urban storm water systems are delivering clean water to the lake (wetland cleansing). More community storm water education.

ORC: Carry out baseline surveys of aquatic habitats to characterise extent, types and health.

BIODIVERSITY

VISION - 2030

Indigenous aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity is being maintained and enhanced throughout the district. In accordance with an effective biodiversity strategy

Giving effect to the biodiversity strategy is inherent in all planning and management processes affecting land and water

Protection and restoration of indigenous biodiversity is interwoven with productive and amenity use on private land

Threatened and at risk species, populations and their habitats are secure.

Significant progress has been made towards having the full range of naturally occurring ecosystems and species present

The impact of pest/ invasive species has been reduced to very low levels.

KPI's

Meaningful biodiversity metrics are regularly measured over a range of representative habitats, both terrestrial and freshwater.

All National Priority 1-4* features and areas and naturally rare ecosystems with remaining indigenous cover are identified and mapped; comprehensive schedules of Threatened and At risk species in the district are kept

Connectivity – there is a good district wide network of corridors and patches supporting long term sustainability and resilience of ecosystems.

An excellent reservoir of biodiversity knowledge in the district and range of good educational material is available.

Clearance of vegetation in gullies and along water body margins is a controlled activity

When burn permit applications are considered, the affects on biodiversity are being fully measured and accounted for.

Co-ordinated pest control is achieving very low pest impact levels.

All consent conditions are being effectively monitored and enforced.

BIODIVERSITY

continued

GAP WITH TODAY

Absence of Effective tools to prevent increasing environmental stress.

Downstream dams prohibit native fish passage between sea and lakes.

Very low levels of protection for biodiversity on private land and in all lowland areas. Areas of significant and rare indigenous dryland habitat are being lost at an increasing rate.

Poor community appreciation and knowledge of about our indigenous heritage.

Lack of incentives for conservation management on private land.

Lack of agency coordination in conservation management and action

Poor implementation of NZ Biodiversity Strategy and National Priorities

RECOMMENDATIONS

ORC & QLDC: Develop Regional and District Biodiversity Strategies. At district level build on indigenous ecosystems planning framework work done by D Lucas in 1996.

QLDC/ORC: allocate annual funding for ecological consultancy in relation to executing and monitoring strategy (incl. RC work) and for extension officers to work with the community to execute strategy/provide information and educate

QLDC: meaningful biodiversity metrics are regularly measured over the range of representative ecosystems and habitats, both terrestrial and freshwater; as part of the district Biodiversity Strategy

QLDC: Investiage rates relief for land put into covenants or protected land agreements. Establish a contestable biodiversity enhancement fund.

QLDC: Undertake actions detailed in District Plan ref section 4.12.4.i & ii Monitoring of Key Environmental Results

ORC: Review Regional Pest Strategy to better address animal and plant pest issues

QLDC: Expand local environmental awareness and interactive programmes with local schools.

ORC: Provision of fish passage across in-stream barriers and hydro dams.

ENVIRONMENT

VISION

In 2030,

- The Natural environment is recognised and valued as a foundation of community well being.
- The district is a leader in developing and using models for valuing nature
- Collaborative processes are in place and resolve tensions in environmental decision making
- Cooperation mechanisms are in place for key agencies
- The community is engaged and aware

KPIS

More of the community is increasingly engaged in conservation with support from all agencies.

All agencies are consistently and effectively working well with each other towards agreed common goals.

Recommendations made by the Visitor Industry forum around the environment are followed through.

Ecosystem services are being demonstrably valued in decision making processes.

Surveys are completed to show when the decline of flora and fauna is halted and reversed.

Regular indices of success of ecosystems are showing improvement.

GAP WITH TODAY

- Awareness of environmental impacts of activities is low in basin and valley floors.
- Native flora and fauna struggle to survive and biodiversity loss is accelerating.
- Water quality is under threat from agriculture, urban runoff and sewer discharges.
- Tension between economic growth and environmental sustainability.
- Tension between public good and private interests/personal gain

RECOMMENDATIONS

DOC / ORC: initiate a programme of Work around “Valuing Nature” (perhaps involving research students)

QLDC: A Destination management presence to look after environmental issues.

All Agencies: adopt transparent and measurable processes for co-ordinated work between agencies.

QLDC,DOC and ORC: Combine to facilitate relaxed informal forum for discussion of nature conservation and natural resource management issues.

NEXT STEPS



TASK FORCE established

Draft TASK FORCE report

COMMUNITY FORUMS

Final TASK FORCE report

PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL & AGENCIES



APPENDICES

- **Terms of Reference**
- **Process**
- **Alignment with priorities and Forums**