

PEGASUS BAY COASTCARE NETWORK

Submission to the LTCCP's of the Hurunui District Council, Waimakariri District Council, Christchurch City Council and Environment Canterbury.

Pegasus Bay Coast Care Mission Statement:

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

Pegasus Bay Coast Care Objectives:

1. *To Support and encourage Coastcare in each of the coastal communities in Pegasus Bay*
2. *To drive the preparation of a non-statutory Management Strategy for the coastal zone of Pegasus Bay.*

Over the last year the Pegasus Bay Coast Care Network has continued to work towards achieving the above objectives. Some of the highlights were:

- A successful tsunami awareness meeting in July 2005 which included presentations on tsunami, Civil Defence and Coast Care.
- Network Chair, Greg Bennett presented a paper to the Environmental Defence Society Conference in November 2005 (This paper is appended) and attended the 9th Annual Coastal Dune Vegetation Conference held in Southland during March 2006.
- A successful beach clean up was organised in February 2006 with assistance from the combined 4WD clubs of Canterbury. This event will be held annually.

Last year the Pegasus Bay Coast Care Network requested 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 Waimakariri River).

The process in developing this strategy has commenced with the first public meeting held at Waikuku Beach recently. There will be several more of these meetings over the next few months.

What we seek from the Councils:

1. Continuing representation from each Council at network meetings.
2. Assistance in achieving the above objectives and continuing commitment and provision of resources to the completion of a non-statutory management strategy for the Pegasus Bay coastal zone.

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 as supported by the majority of Councils **with extended responsibilities that include coordinating and supporting the Coastcare groups.**

We would like the opportunity to speak further in support of our submission.

Yours sincerely

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Chair
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*This paper was presented to the Environmental Defence Society Conference: **Seachange 05, Managing our coastal waters and oceans** in November 2005.*

The role of community-based initiatives in managing fragile areas of the coast:

The Pegasus Bay Coast Care Network

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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 a widely accepted fact and our coast is, in many areas, poorly prepared to deal with the projected rise in sea level and coastal storms. 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.

Pegasus Bay consists of a progradational coastal plain extending north from Banks Peninsula approximately 70 kilometres to Amberley Beach. The plain is at its widest (6km) where it joins Banks Peninsula and tapers to less than 1 kilometre wide at Amberley Beach. This wedge of sand and gravel has been laid down in the last 6500 years.

Prior to European settlement the coastal hinterland of Pegasus Bay was an extensive network of dunelands, wetlands and coastal lagoons. There is evidence that sand dunes extended several kilometres inland. The Waimakariri, Rakahuri/Ashley, Kowai, and Waipara rivers draining into Pegasus Bay were typical examples of South Island rivers with large areas of gravel islands in between braided river channels. These rivers were, and still are important nesting areas for black fronted tern, wrybill, stilt and black-billed gull. At the mouth of the Rakahuri/Ashley River is a large estuary, an important feeding site for wading birds.

Today the dunes are limited to the coast and are largely stabilised with marram grass. The back dunes have been planted with pine and the balance of the land has being converted to pastoral farming. The rivers have become less braided and infested with exotic plants, mostly broom, gorse and willow. There are a number of coastal wetland and coastal broadleaf forest remnants.

North of the Waimakariri River are the following beach communities: Amberley, Leithfield, Ashworths, Waikuku, Woodend, Pines and Kairaki. South of the Waimakariri in Christchurch City are Spencer Park, Waimari, North Beach, New Brighton, South Brighton, South Shore, Sumner and Taylors Mistake. Some of these settlements have concerned residents that have formed small community groups that endeavour to look after the coastal environment. The Christchurch City beaches have full time rangers coordinating coast care activities. The northern beach communities are relatively small however there has been extensive growth north of Christchurch with towns like Kaiapoi and Woodend expanding and there are plans to create a whole new town between Woodend and the coast complete with shops, school and golf course.

Fifteen years ago steps were initiated to preserve wetlands between Waikuku Beach and the Waimakariri River with a partnership forged between Ngai Tahu and the Waimakariri District Council and the formation of Te Hokaha o Tuhaitara Trust. Many years of discussions and planning finally paid off with the 200-year management plan for 550ha of coastal reserve finally signed off in October 2005. In 2003 the Draft North Pegasus Bay Motor Vehicle Access Strategy was released. This was a joint undertaking by the Department of Conservation, Environment Canterbury and the Hurunui and Waimakariri District Councils. Christchurch City did not participate as their beaches have been closed to vehicles for years with the exception in the area between Spencer Park and the mouth of the Waimakariri River. The strategy focused on one issue – that of vehicle access to beaches and excluded other coastal issues such as people access, dog control and weeds.

Also in 2003 a meeting was convened in the Waikuku Beach Hall to discuss coast care. It was well attended by representatives from all of the communities north of the Waimakariri River. The main topic of discussion was the subject of vehicles on beaches with people's frustration and anger very evident. Since this meeting a small group of people started to meet regularly in order to foster coast care along Pegasus Bay. These meetings included 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 The Pegasus Bay Coast Care Network was formed with 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*

To achieve these objectives the network requires a wide sphere of influence, including Environment Canterbury, District Councils, Christchurch City Council, the Department of Conservation and Ngai Tahu.

Objective Two:

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

The Pegasus Bay Coast Care Network is of the opinion that the North Pegasus Bay Vehicle Access Strategy has not been successful, in that damage to sand dune, estuarine and open beach habitats continues unabated and communities remain polarized over the issue of vehicle access. In saying that, we are so far in agreement to allow vehicle access to continue and intend to form relationships with 4WD, fishing and other recreation groups. 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.

In 2005 the Network has been involved in the following:

- ❖ Made submissions to all the Pegasus Bay Council's LTCCP's. This has resulted in representatives from the Hurunui and Waimakariri District Council attending PBCCN meetings and commitment from Environment Canterbury to drafting a Non Statutory Management Plan.
- ❖ Organised a presentation on tsunami that included coast care and civil defence education.
- ❖ Was consulted over the issue of vehicle access to Ashworths Beach and fencing Ashworths Ponds.

What is next?

- ❖ In 2006 the Network is planning on initiating an education programme, which will include introducing Coast Care information brochures kindly provided by the Bay Of Plenty Coast Care, website and newsletters.
- ❖ Develop and improve on relationships with other organisations and stakeholders.
- ❖ Coordinate annual awareness campaigns on environmental issues like litter during Keep NZ Beautiful Week and conservation during Conservation Week.

Ultimately Pegasus Bay Coast Care will have it's own brand and the whole coast will be managed as a coastal park, seeking a balance between nature and recreational needs of people. It will be a place for learning, pre-school and primary level to university level study. It will be a haven for indigenous wildlife.