

## Chairman's Report LWWWS June 8<sup>th</sup> 2011

This is the fourth annual report for LWWWS. The last twelve months have been significant for the society, community and especially the wetlands. I apologise for the length of this report. Much has happened.

The funding LWWWS had applied for was sufficient to begin a large weed control program. Much of this was covered in last year's annual report but as it was not all confirmed I will record it. We were successful with applications to Lotteries, Biodiversity Advice Fund, Biodiversity Condition Fund, Sustainable Farming Fund, and the Clutha District Council Biodiversity Fund. We also had support from Ngai Tahu, Fish and Game, Department of Conservation and the Otago Regional Council. There is a large amount of detail required in making successful funding applications. We are particularly indebted to Nicola McGrouther from the Otago Regional Council for the effort she has made. We must also thank Pete Raal and Pete Ravenscroft from the Department of Conservation for their expertise.

Part of the funding LWWWS secured allowed us to engage a weed coordinator. In October Paul Pope from the Dunedin based company Spiralis was contracted to implement the weed control program. Paul's role is to coordinate the weed control program, monitor the results, and organise events and publications to keep the community informed.

In October the Sinclair wetlands hosted members of LWWWS, DOC, ORC and local landowners. Sinclair Wetlands highlighted key issues for them. In particular *Glyceria maxima* ( red sweet grass ) The same day we visited Boundary Creek to look at the problem willows were causing in its lower catchment.

As part of our brief to keep the community informed about the upcoming weed program the society held an open day in conjunction with the Waihola Yacht Club on November 28<sup>th</sup>. The day was very successful. Helicopters Otago flew short flights over the wetlands, and members from the society gave boat trips through the channels. Fish and Game, the Otago Regional Council, the Department of Conservation and the Waihola Volunteer Fire Brigade provided displays. The Waihola Yacht Club opened to the public to try sailing. The society gained 100 new members. Many who took rides were surprised at the extent of the wetlands. We are grateful to Helicopters Otago, people who provided boats and the agencies whose staff tended displays.

An unexpected task for the committee was applying for a tree weed exemption from the Emission Trading Scheme. This was a large and onerous task. LWWWS is indebted to Nicola McGrouther ( Otago Regional Council ) for the hours of work required to meet the dead line. We are also indebted to Ian Young of Wenita for the mapping work he did to define the weed areas. Without this exemption the spray operation would not have proceeded. I want to record that these regulations may well prevent community groups from undertaking weed control work in the future.

The spray program was scheduled to start on January 10<sup>th</sup>. A very inclement summer delayed aerial operations until February 1<sup>st</sup>. The operation finished on the 4<sup>th</sup> February after weather delays. 353 hectares were sprayed. This was greater than 320 hectares estimated

in the operational plan. Much of this difference is because of the accuracy of the on board GPS used by Helicopters Otago as opposed to the desk top mapping in the operational plan. LWWWS would like to record thanks to Helicopters Otago for their assistance and expertise in the operation. We would also like to acknowledge Ian Young from Wenita for their assistance in providing shape files for the GPS. I would especially like to thank land owners. Without their co-operation the spray program would not have happened. It is necessary to note that that some areas in priority 1 were not sprayed. This decision was made on the ground during operations. The difficult weather conditions played a large part in this. It is intended to follow up these areas this season. Some of these areas we will control with hand operations using volunteers.

The conservation volunteers have visited the wetlands 4 times over the year. They stay for five days on each occasion. Thanks to Sinclair wetlands we are able to host them.

Weed Busters program. This money will be used to buy equipment and chemical for hand control by volunteers. This will be very useful to attack those "outlier" willows in priority 1 areas.

In February Paul reported on the spray operation to land owners. Pete Raal presented the best practice for hand control. Again thanks to Sinclair Wetlands for the use of their facilities.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Fish and Game ( Ian Hadland ) Chris Hogg and Bert Wiel who have provided boats and their time to assist Paul with the monitoring.

The Titri reserve area of the Wetlands is still frustrating and awaiting completion. We understand the constraints the Department of Conservation is facing and will continue working with them.

The Clutha District Council has again been very supportive. Three news letters have been printed this year and a weed plan summary. Thank you to Jamie Shaw and Julie Pearse for their time and expertise.

I would like to record that although we have had a very successful year we have a large hurdle in front of us next year. At present our accounts look strong. However with the follow-up required next year and on going commitments we will require further funding.

I will conclude by thanking the committee. Especially Pauline Bacon ,for her conscientious secretarial work and drafting of the newsletters. Wayne Bacon has dealt with our complex funding arrangements expertly. Thank you.

David Vollweiler ( chairman LWWWS )