

Forum supports Marine Park Concept for the Marlborough Sounds

Over 60 people endorsed a “Marine Park” concept for the Marlborough Sounds at a public forum on Sunday at Waikawa Boating Club.

The Forum was hosted by the Marlborough Sounds Integrated Management Trust.

Trust Chair Eric Jorgensen said “We were blown away by how many people turned up and the range of interests represented. What amazed me was, that when we split them into 6 groups they all came back with the same line on the map for a marine park. They all wanted Croiselles, Durville, and Cloudy Bay included for consideration. There were differing views about what it should be called, with Marlborough Marine Management Area being the second most popular after “Marine Park”. What really encouraged me though was that, when people had a clear picture of what it could do for our marine environment, they were 100% in support”.

Jorgensen said that “Forum participants really appreciated the presentation by our Coordinator Peter Lawless, who presented an overview of his research and findings undertaken through his Winston Churchill Fellowship scholarship. Peter outlined how different areas across the world had faced similar situations of competing needs and values coupled with degrading coastal environments and the approaches to managing those challenges. He presented summaries of case studies from Australia’s Great Barrier Reef, British Columbia along with Chesapeake and Monterey Bays in the United States. This helped everyone understand what constituted current best management practice from for multiple use marine parks. The upshot was that different areas did different things well but overall the principles, governance structure and resourcing used on the Great Barrier Reef were strongest. However, their recognition and engagement of the indigenous peoples was not well handled, but we can learn on that score from British Columbia. People accepted his recommendation that the Great Barrier Reef model was the best fit for Marlborough, with improvement around how obligations to Maori needs and values were incorporated. Participants also endorsed what the Trustees have already said about principles for managing the area and gave us ideas of their own to consider.”

The Trust reported that discussions and questions from the floor highlighted:

- A unanimous support that developing and implementing a marine park type concept for Marlborough Sounds – although many/most prefer different name.
- Specific management/governance body required and to be adequately resourced and empowered.
- The place is facing real environmental issues today. Need to focus and work towards enduring, long term issues and their solutions but also make a tangible difference today.
- Need to allow for and manage all needs and values.
- Relevant information is needed to support decision making critical
- Need to overcome ‘humps’ that have halted previous work.
- Communication, including education, is critical.
- If central government will not lead then leadership needed to come from the community.

Jorgensen commented that “Clearly people felt the need for change and supported the work of the Trust and Marine Park concept as it was evolving. On behalf of the Trust he committed to compiling into a report the outputs from the group sessions and other ideas presented to provide some focus to proceed with development of the ideas.”

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