

14 August 2015



Media release: Final communique from *Wild Things: addressing terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity loss*

The EDS *Wild Things* Conference concluded yesterday, and is expected to have established a turning point in the way we resource and manage nature in New Zealand.

The day began with a breakfast presentation by Sir Michael Fay about the restoration of Great Mercury Island.

The post-breakfast session focussed on the interface of biodiversity and development. Dr Suzie Greenhalgh led with a presentation of the huge potential for economic instruments to help meet biodiversity goals.

Minister Nick Smith announced a large number of actions that his government is taking – including resourcing a collaborative process on a National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity.

An inspiring series of midday presentations highlighted opportunities following Treaty settlements and much more. Speakers detailed the relationship between Maori and the environment and that Western perspectives still dominate. A challenge was laid down for EDS: to convene a workshop on co-management at its 2016 conference.

In the afternoon Chris Rose from Parks Victoria detailed the conservation investment possibilities from preventative health budgets. Deputy Director-General Kay Booth confirmed that the Department of Conservation is exploring this concept – linking parks with healthy communities.

Kimberley Collins from Forest & Bird gave an excellent presentation on the importance of social media to engaging New Zealanders. EDS – as a fairly new entrant to the tweetsphere – is delighted that our conference hashtag #edswildthings2015 trended at number 4 in New Zealand for much of the second day!

Conservation Minister Maggie Barry announced the appointment of New Zealand's first Threatened Species Ambassador, Nicola Toki – a role funded through the DOC partnership with Air New Zealand. The Minister advised that DOC is revising the Native Plant Protection Act 1934 – a law that *Vanishing Nature* identified was long out of date and not fit for purpose.

In response to a question, Minister Barry indicated that she thought DOC was ready and willing to operationalise an increase in its core funding, if that was offered. The conference was keen to see a significant uplift in funding for nature and EDS staff undertook to raise this directly with the PM.

Wild Things has been the largest ever EDS conference, confirming the concern about the state of our Biodiversity. We are thrilled with the diverse and engaged audience from such different backgrounds. Tangible outcomes from the event will be rolled out by EDS and partner organisations over the next couple of months.