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To whom it may concern,

The role of the Morgan Foundation is to stimulate informed public debate on important issues. Our aim is to engage the public, as we believe our elected politicians ultimately implement what the public wants.

The Morgan Foundation supports progress in the true sense – making people better off. Many of the problems we see around the country occur because individuals and businesses don't pay the full costs of their actions. The result is that during the pursuit of personal profit the environment is damaged, which hurts everyone. We don't want to stop economic activity, we just want to make sure we are truly better off because of it.

The story of Foxton is one of the most disturbing examples of this problem that we have seen in the entire country. This is a situation that clearly needs remedying, particularly given that people's wellbeing has been damaged and a RAMSAR site is at threat.

Having lost over 90% our wetlands, these are now one of New Zealand's rarest and most important ecosystems. In recognition of this fact the Manawatu Estuary is a RAMSAR site. And yet this site is being degraded, and not just because of the water quality issues upstream. There are also massive issues with predators in this area that threaten the large populations of birds that live there.

Wildlife Foxton Trust can provide the people power to sort this problem out, however they are a community group and therefore need funding and support to set up the trapping network. New Zealand faces a massive reputational risk if the Estuary is delisted as a RAMSAR site, which seems inevitable given current trends.

Our Foundation is fully committed on conservation and environmental activities at present, but it seems astounding that given the huge social and environmental benefits no one is taking the opportunity to work with Wildlife Foxton Trust to improve water quality (for example by keeping all stock out of the river) and trap predators in the Estuary area. Those actions would start to counteract some of the damage done in pursuit of economic gain. And with the rise of eco-tourism, these actions might even bring economic benefits too.

Regards

Geoff Simmons

General Manager