

Aquaculture Update

Issue 4—June 2007

Strong interest in marine farming future

Hundreds of Northlanders have taken the opportunity to express their views on local authority proposals to help shape the future management of aquaculture in the region.

Legally, new marine farms can now only be developed in areas formally designated as Aquaculture Management Areas (AMAs) and the Northland Regional Council is part-way through consultation designed to ensure evaluation criteria it uses to consider applications for AMAs are as robust as possible.

Glenn Mortimer, the Regional Council's Planning and Policy Manager, says the Council had earlier this year received 333 submissions on Proposed Plan Change 4 to its Regional Coastal Plan and 255 submissions on its proposed threshold test and maps.

Mr Mortimer says concerns about potential impacts on existing uses and a lack of certainty about where marine farms will be allowed dominate the submissions on Proposed Plan Change 4.

The Council has prepared a detailed 300-plus page summary outlining the issues raised by those submitters and is now calling for further public comment on those issues.

Of the 333 submissions on Proposed Plan Change 4, six percent support the Council's plans to change its Regional Coastal Plan in their current form. Of the balance, the majority raise concerns about a variety of aspects of the proposal. These include a large number of submissions with identical wording.

Key among the concerns raised are the potential impacts of marine farming on coastal property values, tourism and recreation. Another major concern is that the plan does not specifically ban marine farming from certain parts of Northland which submitters feel need special protection.

Where to from here?

If you want to comment on any of the issues raised by submitters on Proposed Plan Change 4, you have until Wednesday 15 August to do so.

However, at this stage of the process, the Resource Management Act only allows the the Northland Regional Council to accept new submissions that either support or oppose one or more of the 333 submissions already made.

Mr Mortimer says the Act is quite clear on the position the Council must now adopt as far as accepting new submissions.

"In a nutshell, people wanting to comment on proposed Plan Change 4 can still do so, but they must confine themselves to issues raised by previous submitters that they either agree or disagree with. This process is sometimes called 'cross-submitting'."

Mr Mortimer says lodging a cross-submission also gives new submitters the right to appear before the Council to present their views in person. (Those who made one of the original 333 submissions already have this right.)

Mr Mortimer says the easiest way to see what the original submitters said is through a Summary of Submissions document and an Overview of Submissions document. Details of how to locate these are on P2.



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Introducing Ben Lee



Ben Lee

Ben Lee is the newly-appointed Coastal Planning Team Leader for the Northland Regional Council. He replaces Tony Seymour, who left Council recently to further his career in Wellington.

Ben – who has a Masters Degree in Environmental Science - is returning to Northland after a two year stint working in aquaculture planning at the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (Environment BOP).

Ben grew up in Whangarei and spent five years working in the Coastal Consents Team at the Northland Regional Council before moving to the Bay of Plenty.

Did you know...

You can view any of the 333 public submissions made to date on Proposed Plan Change 4.

To make finding a particular submission or grouping of submissions easier, Council staff have prepared an overview to help you locate:

- a particular submitter (eg. Joe Bloggs) or type of submitter (eg. a community group)
- submissions relating to particular sections of Proposed Plan Change 4 (e.g. Policy 27.4.5) or other issues (eg. excluded areas)

Copies of the full submissions can be viewed at any Regional Council office.

Summaries of submissions can be viewed (and downloaded for free) on the Council's website www.nrc.govt.nz

Summaries can also be purchased in hard copy for \$15 (incl. GST) or for \$20 (incl. GST) on CD ROM.

Further information

Further information on AMAs is available on the Regional Council's website www.nrc.govt.nz. Plan Change 4, the Threshold Test and the maps can be viewed at Regional Offices, public libraries or from the Coastal Planning Team.

If you wish to discuss anything raised in this newsletter, please contact the:

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