

Welcome

Nau mai haere mai

Greetings. It gives me great pleasure to serve as your Chairman for another three years. A warm welcome to new Councillors John Bain and Joe Carr and congratulations to Stan Semenoff, who retired from Council to successfully contest the Whangarei mayoralty.

I'd like to acknowledge Stan's NRC role and also the significant contribution of long-time Councillor and Chairman Jim Peters, who also did not seek re-election.

Looking ahead, the next three years will see major changes in the way local government services are delivered as Northland Councils work collaboratively to address matters raised by the Government's rates inquiry and concerns expressed by the public prior to the election.

Best wishes,



Mark Farnsworth
Chairman



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Aquaculture hearings to start

Two independent experts and two experienced Regional Councillors will soon begin overseeing the latest step in a process designed to guide future aquaculture development in Northland.

A special four-member Northland Regional Council Hearings Committee will in late November begin hearing more than 300 submissions on proposed policies and evaluation criteria that the Council will use to consider future applications for Aquaculture Management Areas (AMAs).

Glenn Mortimer, the Regional Council's Planning and Policy Manager, says the fact the hearings will be determining only the policies and criteria used to consider applications for AMAs - not actually designating physical areas as AMAs - is a subtle, but important, distinction.

"This is not about designating particular areas as AMAs, it's about ensuring the criteria the Council will use - when it eventually begins hearing applications from someone wanting to create an AMA - are as clear and robust as possible."

Legally, new marine farms can now only be developed in areas formally designated as Aquaculture Management Areas by Regional Councils.

However, Mr Mortimer says the Council is still some way off being able to process any applications from would-be marine farmers who want to set up a new venture/s.

He says the four-strong Hearings Committee is not expected to deliver its findings until early in the New Year and there will then be a 30-day period during which its decisions can be appealed.

Once any appeals are dealt with and criteria are eventually finalised, would-be marine farmers will still have to go through a relatively lengthy and expensive staged private plan change process (with further opportunities for public input) and with no guarantee of success.

Mr Mortimer says, based on the Council's own experience in processing plan changes, Northland is unlikely to see any new AMAs created for at least 18 months to two years.

He says 333 submissions were received on the Council's proposed plan change earlier this year, with another 58 submissions received in support of, or in opposition to, the original submissions.

Key among the concerns raised are the potential impacts of marine farming on 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.

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Mr Mortimer says Hearings Committee members will hear from submitters who have asked to deliver their views in person in Whangarei from 23 to 30 November and in Kerikeri from 3 to 7 December.

Regional Councillors Lorraine Hill and Craig Brown will be joined on the Committee by Independent Commissioners Dr Hamish Rennie and Dr David R Schiel.

Dr Rennie presently works at Lincoln University as a Senior Lecturer in the Environmental Management Group. He has particular expertise in environmental impact assessment; aquaculture, coastal, marine and tourism planning

He has served as an Independent Commissioner, Minister of Conservation appointee and expert witness on resource consent and Regional Coastal Plan hearings (e.g., Commissioner for Environment Waikato's marina variation to its Regional Coastal Plan). He was also a technical advisor to the Parliamentary Select Committee for the development of aquaculture legislation.

Dr Schiel heads the Centre of Excellence in Aquaculture and Marine Ecology (CEAM) at the University of Canterbury. He has published many papers on aquaculture, the ecological effects of aquaculture and on marine ecology generally. He has provided professional advice to the Marlborough District Council in its aquaculture planning for a number of years.

Mr Mortimer says the Commissioners' involvement will be paid for using part of a successful \$230,000 Northland Regional Council application for Central Government aquaculture planning funding.

The same fund is also being used to pay for consultants' reports on the submissions to be considered by the Hearings Committee.

Negotiations for rail corridor continue

Negotiations to buy the corridor of land needed for a proposed multimillion dollar Marsden Point rail link are progressing well.

A four-strong negotiating team hired by the Northland Regional Council (NRC) has now met with about 20 Bream Bay property owners, parts of whose land is needed for the proposed 16km Oakleigh to Marsden Point line.

Lead Negotiator for the Council, Northland farm accountant Peter Byers, says negotiations are continuing and in general the response from landowners has been very favourable.

The hand-picked team is working with landowners to try to reach a "fair and mutually satisfactory outcome" on the value of affected land and a proposed sale and purchase agreement. Discussions are also taking place on how existing land owners might continue to use any land purchased in the interim until the proposed link is built.

The Regional Council says it's important to secure the land involved - currently a mixture of farm and industrial property - to allow eventual construction of the \$100 million-plus link itself.

Meanwhile, Mr Byers says the Council continues to work closely with rail operator Ontrack and is still hopeful a formal designation process for the proposed route could begin before the end of the year.

Sustainable Development Award



Congratulations to Fullers Bay of Islands, winner of this year's Northland Regional Council 'Sustainable Development' Business Award at the recent Northland Naturally Business Excellence Awards. Pictured is Mike Horne, Fullers' General Manager for Northland, with one of the company's vessels. The Regional Council award goes to the Northland business which best epitomises overall commitment to sustainable development. Businesses are judged on the economic, environmental, cultural and social value they add. In recent years Fullers has undertaken a host of environmental initiatives including measures to improve fuel efficiency, waste recycling, supporting native biodiversity protection on islands in the Bay of Islands and staff education programmes. (Northern News photo)



Mangawhai Harbour plans

Boaties and others interested in how moorings are handled in Northland are being urged to visit Mangawhai this month to check plans for a pilot mooring management plan proposed for the area.

Ben Lee, the Northland Regional Council's Coastal Planning Team Leader, says the Council is planning to develop mooring management plans for each of Northland's roughly 40 identified moorings areas.

These plans will cover issues including maximum mooring numbers, mooring layouts and shore-based facility requirements like toilet and sewage pump out facilities, and carparks.

Mr Lee says the Council is using the popular Mangawhai Harbour as a pilot for the programme and will outline its proposal - and seek public feedback - at Mangawhai's Senior Citizens Hall from 10am to 3pm on Saturday 24 November.

Although it has just 50 to 60 moorings, Mangawhai shares problems common to other popular, larger Northland harbours. These include lack of new mooring space and limitations with shore-based facilities like parking, toilets and rubbish disposal.

Mr Lee says 2005 changes to the Council's Regional Coastal Plan cleared the way for the Council, in collaboration with mooring owners and District Councils, to tailor-make management plans for all mooring areas in Northland and it's now in a position to begin that work, starting with Mangawhai.

Vital to the process will be consultation with affected mooring owners, other relevant parties and the Kaipara District Council (KDC), which is itself undertaking a review of foreshore reserves surrounding the harbour and will also be consulting with the public at Mangawhai.

The Regional and KDC initiatives are separate but each has implications for the other. For example, the location and type of shore-based facilities identified within the KDC's Mangawhai Reserve Management Plan will influence the number of moorings provided for within the NRC's mooring plan.



Mangawhai

Mr Lee says the NRC's proposal will attempt to address issues including: a maximum number of moorings, mooring layout and type and the type and size of vessel to be moored, the type and level of facilities and services to be provided and/or upgraded and any recognised recreational areas, including bathing beaches, navigation channels, ski lanes and sites of cultural value.

However, the proposed management plan will not identify new mooring areas or alter the boundaries of current ones.

The Regional Council is also keen to develop a Harbour Safety Management Plan to identify and manage potential navigation and safety issues within the harbour. This will include risks assessment, a review of aids to navigation and the likely designation of specific areas for various water-based activities.

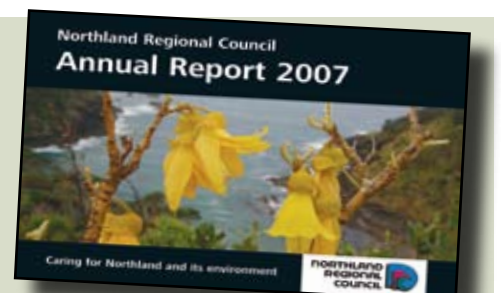
Proposed steps to develop a Mangawhai Harbour Mooring Management Plan:

- Establish a Mangawhai Community Liaison Group to help Council develop the Management Plan.
- Seek public input on the issues the Plan needs to address.
- Develop a draft Mooring Management Plan in consultation with the Community Liaison Group.
- Seek public feedback on the draft.
- Seek endorsement of the Mooring Management Plan from Kaipara District Council.
- Northland Regional Council approves Management Plan.

Annual Report 2007 available

The Northland Regional Council's Annual Report and Summary Annual Report for the 2006/07 financial year have just been published.

Copies of the Report proper or a 24-page summary are available on the Northland Regional Council's website: www.nrc.govt.nz/annualreport



Introducing your new Council



Your newest Regional Councillors...

John Bain (Whangarei, left) & **Joe Carr** (Far North)

Cr Bain, 62, of Whangarei, is best-known to most as Chairman of the high-profile air ambulance provider the Northland Emergency Services Trust (NEST). A former member of the Northland District Health Board, Cr Bain has had a 35-year involvement with the Northland Ambulance Service, including many years as its Chairman. Cr Bain has been self-employed since his early 20s and is currently in the importing business.

Okaihau-based Joe Carr, 57, has local business, farm and forest interests and is also a Justice of the Peace. He is a trustee of the Far North Life Education Trust and is a former Far North District Councillor. Cr Carr has served on a number of Regional Council Committees over the past nine years including Civil Defence and Emergency Management, Regional Land Transport and Landcare. For the past three years he has been a Hearing Commissioner and Appeal Negotiator for the Far North District Council.



Northland Regional Council 2007

Pictured back row from left: Ian Walker, Lorraine Hill, Mark Farnsworth (Chair), Craig Brown, and Peter Jensen (Deputy Chair)
Front row: Joe Carr, Bill Rossiter and John Bain.

Ballance Farm Environment Awards open

You can be rewarded for sustainable land management practices. Applications are open for the 2008 Northland Ballance Farm Environment Awards, which the NRC sponsors in Northland. Applications close 7 December 2007. Details – including application form - are available from www.nrc.govt.nz/bfea or Gayle Farrell, Regional Co-ordinator, on (09) 433 1576.

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Your Regional Councillors



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 Lorraine Hill (09) 403 7504
 Ian Walker (09) 408 0072

KAIPARA
 Mark Farnsworth (09) 431 5438
 (Chairman)

WHANGAREI
 Peter Jensen (09) 437 6386
 (Deputy Chairman)
 John Bain (09) 437 6096
 Craig Brown (09) 432 7575
 Bill Rossiter (09) 437 2807

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Caring for Northland and its environment

