

# NORTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the Waitangi Catchment Group workshop  
*Sub-Committee of the Environmental Management Committee*  
held in the Okaihau Rugby Clubrooms,  
Thursday, 19 February 2015  
commencing at 6.30pm

## Present:

Donald Jack	Drystock Farming Interests
Terence Brocx	Dairy Farming Interests
Darryl Way	Waimate North Landcare
Neil Cates	Transfield (Industry Interests)
Liz Kingsford	Forestry Interests
Alec Jack	Public Interests
Sue Johnsen	Dairy Farming Interests
Cr Joe Carr	Northland Regional Council (Interim Chair)
Roger Ludbrook	Dry Stock Farming Interests
Rio Greening	Ngati Korohue
Hone Tiatoa	Lake Omapere Trust
Bill Hunter	Kerikeri Irrigation
Maurice Williamson	Public Interests
Nicole Simonotti	Living Waters

## In Attendance:

Natalie Glover	Northland Regional Council
Suzie Greenhalgh	Landcare Research
Minnie Patel	Member of the public
Richard Fox	Member of the public
Jo Armstrong	Ministry for the Environment

## Apologies:

Duncan Kervell	Northland Regional Council
Arnold Maunsell	Ngati Hineira
Helen Moodie	DairyNZ
Marty Robinson	Bay of Islands/Whangaroa Community Board (FNDC)
Albie Apiata	Waitangi River Liaison Group

## KARAKIA MIHIMIHI Hone Tiatoa

The meeting opened at 6.46pm.

## **Item 1            APOLOGIES**

Noted above.

## **Item 2            Confirmation of minutes**

The group agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed.

Matters arising:

### **Comments about December 2014 field trip:**

- Can issues identified on the field trip become actions by Northland Regional Council (NRC) rivers team?
- Will work being carried out by farmers make a difference?
- Can Northland Regional Council provide guidance on management practices to counter the natural erosion processes evident?

## **Item 3            Presentation by Susie Greenhalgh**

### **DISCUSSION POINTS:**

1. Is this a reflection of what is happening with other groups? No – elsewhere in NZ groups have big water issues to deal with.
2. Process usually goes up and down in terms of group having optimism then pessimism about water management.
3. Scope of process re LTP and catchment plans. Power of catchment group to make recommendations to regional policy committee.
4. Relating back to interest groups, NRC will need to facilitate an open day for the community, for example at Pakaraka hall. Very hard for catchment group members to reach rural community.

### **“Structured Decision Making”**

#### **DISCUSSION POINTS:**

1. Minimum flow in NPS.
2. Who pays?
3. How to distribute the costs. Need to have robust discussion first and consider:
  - Opportunity cost;
  - Benefits;
  - External factors to developing performance measures.
  - If they want a faster process, council should consider paying performance bonuses!

## **Item 4            Round Table (facilitated by Natalie Blandford)**

### **What have we learned?**

- Sediment is the major issue – old and new.
- Sediment in BOI harbour – science can identify the source. Some have suggested much is from landuse involving cattle.
- Sediment loading in waterways is often due to natural events.
- Water quality mostly at B on NOF scale. Ecoli at C. therefore concern from the group for people using public swimming holes.
- Streambank erosion and in the upper catchment, including the golf club.

- E. coli after flooding is an issue, as water runs off pasture.
- Heavier, more intense events are what we need to plan for due to climate change.
- Overallocation; Kerikeri irrigation has rectified the data – need more science on this though.
- High allocation activity - much is non-pastoral.
- Other key indicators of water quality are surprisingly good.
- Water temperature is relatively high due to lack of vegetation cover.
- Do we want to speed up or slow down the water in relation to addressing the high sediment loading?
- Water level data will hopefully improve in the future.
- We don't know how long we have to improve water testing.
- Important to ensure consistency of results in terms of choosing to sample before/during/after flood events.
- The group agreed that dinners at catchment group meetings and workshops are amazing!

**Action: Waiora Action Group (WAG) to clarify:**

- Proportion of the time Haruru Falls is unswimmable according to MoH standards
- Sedimentation rate now compared with pre maori settlement
- Percentage of the time biodiversity is negatively affected by water quality
- Is it possible that sedimentation rates have increased since switch from sheep to beef? Need to investigate. Discussed at field trip.
- Water quality mainly class B or C of the NOF.
- Heavy metals are present naturally in Ngāwhā.
- Trout released in the catchment.
- Not enough knowledge of biodiversity at present and how water quality indicators affect it (group will receive some training on this during the next workshop/fieldtrip).

**Action: WAG to provide more information to the group on:**

- key indicator species and biodiversity in the Waitangi catchment.
- Effects of the catchment's freshwater on estuarine and coastal receiving waters
- Water take records and how they inform the "Highly allocated" status of the Waitangi catchment.
- Farmers have fenced areas to exclude stock.
- Riparian planting not always beneficial – not one size fits all.
- Sediment key but varied issue. Different solutions and drivers need to be understood.
- Noted that national measures and standards don't necessarily reflect the stakeholders in Haruru to Waitangi part of the catchment. Don't meet expectations in terms of what the river should be providing.
- Gap in knowledge in terms of understanding whether there are sediment management strategies or if it's simply a natural phenomenon we have no control over.

**Action: WAG to update the group on the sediment research underway in the catchment.**

- Allocation: we had some understanding that there was an over allocation view, but don't understand if over allocated in terms of the outcome. Are we seeing it on the ground? Does the allocation process need to change?

**Action: WAG to investigate if current allocation regime is likely to be affecting water quantity objectives (note: catchment group have not set these for the catchment group, so investigate in terms of likely regional objectives.)**

- Some of the data we've been shown doesn't seem to reflect the reality in terms of point source of sediment.
- Heavy metals: geothermal area generates high heavy metals. That part of the river has a unique characteristic that must be identified.

**Action: WAG to source research to assist catchment group to understand the geothermal area and its impact in terms of heavy metals inputs on other parts of the catchment.**

- Other groups are doing science in our catchment e.g. mercury in eels (from old sulphur mines, abandoned industry that has leached mercury). Waitoni naturally high in arsenic and boron.

## **Item 5                      Field Trip Date for Waitangi**

### **DISCUSSION POINTS:**

1. Shellfish gathering in upper reaches of Waitangi between bridge and Haruru Falls.

### **ACTIONS:**

1. **Set a date during March 2015 in liaison with Darryl Honey. Prefer week day from 4pm. Try for a Thursday.**

### **GENERAL BUSINESS**

Roger attended the Beef and Lamb Environment Conference in Wellington on 12, 13 February 2015. His comments were:-

- We are a second generation catchment. First generation catchment committees were Ecan and Horizons. Mistakes were made. They have reached final resolution and are now trying to appeal some of the outcomes. If someone who hasn't engaged then appeals it's a nightmare. We have the opportunity to learn from this and do it differently.
- In Hurunui lots of sheep and beef farmers knew what was going on, but didn't perceive they had much of an influence so didn't engage. Nitrate caps were then imposed. People who engaged were intensive farmers. Grandparenting scheme was the allocation used. All needed to drop N leaching by a third. Outcome was the sheep and beef farmers who had failed to engage needed to completely change their farming systems to comply. Cost will be in \$100s of thousands.
- Discussed equal allocation rights.
- Each catchment can create an allocation scheme.
- Can get locked into one farming system if grandparented approach used.
- Iwi settlements likely to have a large impact on decisions made by catchment group. Could put Iwi at a huge disadvantage. Important that they engage through the process.
- Nathan Guy presented to the conference. Economic guidance not coming through at ground level.
- Economics, environment: most catchment allocation to non-pastoral groups. Consenting for farmers? First come first served basis of allocation, leaves others out. Should NRC stop issuing consents until full allocation picture is known?

## DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Right to consent, stock and human drinking water rights.
2. Key is need to engage.
3. Using water as an asset with a value – Māori may be able to claim half.
4. Use of meters to understand allocation picture.
5. Minimum environmental flow – need understanding of this.
6. Natural process due to drought, versus over allocation.
7. Creation of policy by catchment committees: opportunity to learn from previous experience.
8. How do we know that the current utilisation is the most economically effective?

**Action: Darryl Jones to advise on availability of research that proves particular utilization as the most effective use of water. Report back to Duncan.**

9. Waitangi Catchment Group hasn't yet discussed water storage options, e.g. capturing water between April and October.

**Action: WAG to follow up with NRC hydrology department to inform discussion on water storage options for Waitangi catchment.**

10. Is there a nitrogen issue at Watea?

**Action: WAG to investigate whether any nitrogen issue exists at Watea.**

11. Rights to water for Māori.
12. Is engagement going back to other Māori reps who aren't here tonight?
13. Iwi leaders forum discussion about ownership of water.
14. Māori waiting for RMA amendments on s6 and 7 to be resolved before engaging. New bill due 3 March 2015.
15. Poroti/Maungatapere scheme selling water.
16. The issue needs to be an item in the agenda. Hone's hapu are working on their hapu management plan currently and wish to engage.

**Action: Hapu representatives and Hone to present on the topic of "Māori association with / uses and values for water."**

- Approach to consenting for water take?

**Action: WAG to follow up with NRC consents department on what their approach to issuing water take consents is in the Waitangi catchment.**

- How to develop Māori land without increasing nutrients in waterways? Unjust to Māori to impose regulations that will impact upon their development potential.
- Measuring water takes – logistics are complex. We should consider the pros and cons of measuring the water take.
- Significant cost for reticulation borne by farmers – community will benefit.
- Drivers of installing meters include efficiency of use, identifying leaks quickly.

## CONCLUSION

The meeting concluded at 9.25pm.