

Regional Report

Northland news and updates from your regional council



Water

Do you support spending more on looking after water?



Native life

How much should we invest in protecting Northland against pests?



Flood infrastructure

Should we all chip in to help flood-prone communities? New work for Whangārei, Awanui, Kāeo, Taumāreke and Panguru?



Other decisions

Funding for emergency services, funding for sports facilities, changes to transport rates, and more.

This is a snapshot of the key issues that Northland Regional Council wants feedback on for its Long Term Plan 2018-2028. For more detail, see the Consultation Document at www.nrc.govt.nz/ltp2018

Mahere roa mo te Taitokerau 2018-2028

LONG TERM PLAN 2018-2028

Whakataua nui i mua: I to kōrero

Big decisions ahead: HAVE YOUR SAY!

More funding for fresh water, pest management and flood protection are the big issues Northland Regional Council wants your feedback on for its Long Term Plan 2018-2028.

Chairman Bill Shepherd says with increasing demand from the community to do more, and a growing drive from central government, council is proposing to significantly boost its work in these key areas – now they need to know if people support the move.

“We see this as a hugely important investment for our region’s environment to flourish and to keep our communities safe from flood risk,” says Bill.

“It’s something that’s been echoed back to us by our community, too – do more to care for our water, do more to reduce threats to our native life and, for several at-risk communities, do more to provide better flood protection.

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Feedback closes at 4pm Tuesday 17 April 2018

Whakataua nui i mua: I to kōrero

Big decisions ahead: HAVE YOUR SAY!

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"As your regional council we've kept a tight rein on rate increases in recent years, stretching our budgets as far as we possibly can, but we're now seeking your support to boost spending and step things up a gear."

The proposed new work, outlined in council's Consultation Document, would mean an average of \$66.59 more per ratepayer for the coming year, a 29% increase (about \$1.30 per week).

It includes an extra \$2.3 million a year for pest management, much of which would go directly towards supporting local pest management projects and high-value pest control areas around the region.

To pick up the pace on water quality improvement, the council is proposing a package of water quality initiatives, worth \$2.2 million by 2020, to expand on its existing work. This would largely go towards further reducing sedimentation in waterways, looking after lakes and wetlands, and better understanding our water resources.

New flood infrastructure is proposed for Whangārei, Awanui, Kāeo, Taumāreke and Panguru. Also proposed is a new way of funding the infrastructure that would see ratepayers across the region help foot part of the bill.

Other proposals the council is seeking feedback on include making its rates system more fair and transparent, locking in funding for emergency services, helping to pay for sports facilities, changes to transport rates and more.

Every council in New Zealand is required to develop a Long Term Plan every three years. The Long Term Plan will drive what council does, and how that's paid for, over the next decade. Detail about council's proposals for the Long Term Plan 2018-2028 is in the council's 24-page Consultation Document.

"Our Consultation Document highlights the main changes and new proposals we're considering for our Long Term Plan 2018-2028," says Bill.

"I encourage everyone who's interested to read this important document, find out more about the proposals and, most importantly, let us know what you think."

Mahere roa mo te Taitokerau 2018-2028

LONG TERM PLAN 2018-2028



Read all about it!

Before you give your feedback on our Long Term Plan 2018-2028, jump online and read our Consultation Document. It has more detail on the key issues we need feedback on, how we plan to fund the work, and what it means for your rates.

For those who want to delve into the detail, you'll also find the *Supporting information: Long Term Plan 2018-2028* document on our website. This roughly 250-page document sets out all our proposed changes, activities, objectives, targets, policies, rates, budgets and more.

We're also seeking feedback on our draft Charging Policy 2018/19, draft rating policies, revenue and financing policy, significance and engagement policy, and financial contributions policy – you'll find them all on the above web page.



How to have your say!

The best way to give feedback on our Long Term Plan 2018-2028 is to do it online:

www.nrc.govt.nz/ltp2018

We encourage online feedback as it's more efficient for us to process and we're conscious of keeping costs down for ratepayers as much as we can.

However, you can still give feedback by email, mail, or dropping it into one of our offices if you prefer.

- Email us: submissions@nrc.govt.nz
- Or mail your feedback to:
 - Long Term Plan
 - Northland Regional Council
 - Private Bag 9021
 - Whangārei Mail Centre
 - Whangārei 0148

Come and talk to us

Keen to talk to councillors and staff about proposals for our Long Term Plan 2018-2028? Want to give your feedback in person? Come along to a Have Your Say event!

Whangārei:

Tue 20 Mar, 4-6pm, 36 Water St (NRC office)
Wed 21 Mar, 10am-12pm, 36 Water St (NRC office)

Kerikeri:

Thu 22 Mar, 9:30-11:30am, Cornerstone Church

Kaikohe:

Thu 22 Mar, 2-4pm, Memorial Hall

Kaitiāia:

Sat 24 Mar, 10:30am-12:30pm, Te Ahu Centre

Dargaville:

Tue 27 Mar, 9:30am-11:30am, Town Hall

Mangawhai:

Tue 27 Mar, 2-4pm, Mangawhai Domain

Please note that we won't be holding formal hearings – so if you want to give your feedback directly to councillors, this is your chance.

If you want to kōrero with us in te reo or you need a sign language interpreter, contact us as soon as possible and we'll do our best to meet your needs: (0800) 002 004 or mailroom@nrc.govt.nz

Rohe whakahaere hou mo riha rawaho

New pest control area plugs east coast gap

Plant and animal pests are now being controlled in a continuous swathe from Whangārei Heads right through to Mimiwhangata after a new agreement with an enthusiastic Whananaki community plugged a previous gap.

Regional councillor Joce Yeoman says roughly 4600 hectares of mainly private land between Mimiwhangata and Whananaki South is now included as Whananaki Landcare joins the ranks of Northland's official Community Pest Control Areas (CPCA).

Joce says Northland Regional Council will meet roughly 25% of the overall \$435,000-plus costs of the CPCA over the next five years, with the remainder coming from the landowners involved and other funders.

The bulk of the 4600ha-plus area encompassed by the CPCA is owned by 250 private landowners, with another roughly 150ha (most of it coastal strip) owned by the Department of Conservation and about 20ha (in 12 reserves) by Whangārei District Council.

"Whananaki Landcare is an established community group that works closely with local landowners, tangata whenua, farmers, holiday home owners, DOC, Kiwi Coast and the regional council to co-ordinate and resource pest control in the area," says Joce.

While the Whananaki group sits within the Coastal North constituency Joce jointly holds with council chairman Bill Shepherd, it links with other CPCA (including Whangārei Heads) in neighbouring Coastal Central, represented by Cr Paul Dimery.

Joce says all three councillors are hugely impressed by the dedication shown by a range of individuals and groups within those communities, whose hard work and enthusiasm is producing some fantastic results.

"For instance, there's been a noticeable improvement in local biodiversity in the Whananaki Landcare area over the past five years, including the return of fern birds, sightings of bellbird and pateke (brown teal) numbers increasing to become some of the highest in Northland."



A male Pateke (brown teal)

The newest CPCA project has five key objectives:

- Continuing the landcare group's work to date
- Filling the gaps to create a continuous predator trapping control network
- Establishing a combined bait station network
- Plant pest control and;
- Community education and capacity building.

"Possums, wild pigs and cats, rats and mice and mustelids, as well as wild ginger, moth plant, woolly nightshade, Elaeagnus, climbing asparagus, privet and wilding pine will all be targeted using a variety of controls," says Joce.

Whananaki Landcare is one of more than 60 CPCA established by the regional council over the past decade in parts of Northland identified by the region's communities as worth protecting.

"Collectively these already involve more than 1500 properties/landowners and cover more than 80,000ha."

In the 2016-17 financial year, about \$250,000 had been spent on the CPCA programme Northland-wide, with a similar amount expected in the current financial year (ending June 30).

Joce says CPCA are a great example of how authorities and local communities can work together and pool resources, skills and enthusiasm to maximise the collective environmental and other benefits.

General information on the CPCA process is available online from www.nrc.govt.nz/CPCA or by calling members of the council's biosecurity team on free phone (0800) 002 004.



Craig Venables (DOC's Otamure Bay Camp Manager), left, looks on as Kane McElrea (NRC's Biosecurity Manager – Partnerships and Strategy) shakes hands with Whananaki Landcare Co-ordinator Gretta Harman during the signing of the CPCA in Whananaki late last year.

Rangahau mo nga wāhi kauhoe

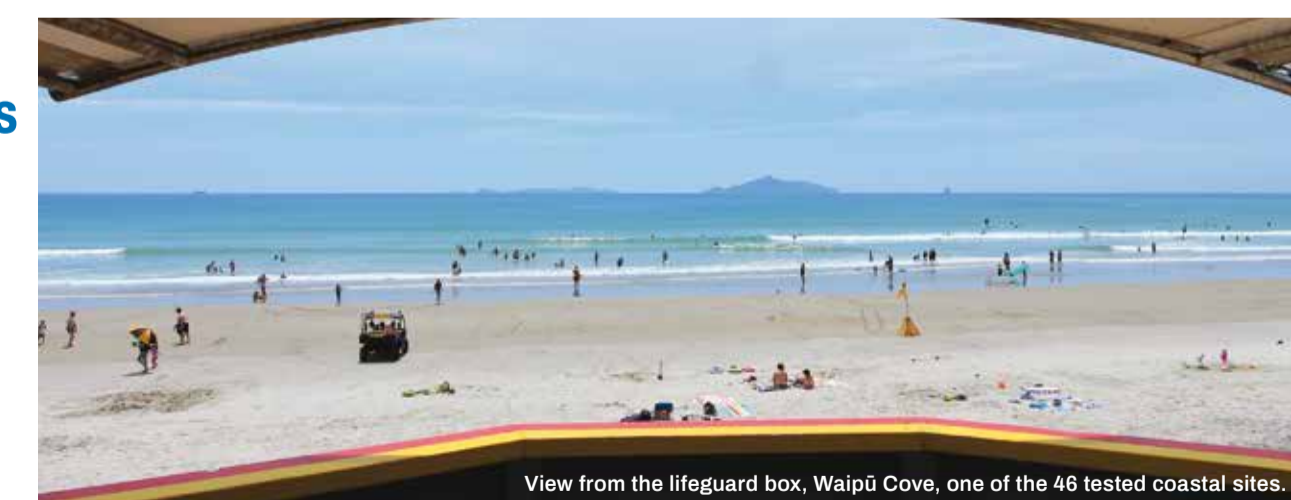
Summer swim survey ends

Summer water quality testing at popular Northland beaches, rivers and lakes is coming to an end, with heavy rain (which can carry run-off from land) contributing to a mixed bag of results this year.

Testing began in December and is due to end shortly. Regional council staff have collected hundreds of samples from 46 popular coastal sites and more than a dozen freshwater locations across the region.

The testing looks for bacteria used to gauge the risks of contracting gastrointestinal and other infections while using beaches, rivers and lakes for swimming, water sports and other forms of recreation.

Weekly results have been posted on the national environmental reporting website LAWA – www.lawa.org.nz/explore-data/northland-region/swimming



View from the lifeguard box, Waipū Cove, one of the 46 tested coastal sites.

Last summer 99.8 percent (642 out of 643) samples at coastal sites and 92.9% (169 out of 182) samples at freshwater sites over summer met national 'guideline values', meaning they were considered suitable for swimming.

As this edition of Regional Report was being prepared the testing programme still had a few days

to run, but initial results indicated more 'unsuitable for swimming' results this year, largely attributed to the much wetter summer weather.

As a general rule, council recommends not swimming for two or three days after heavy rain, if the water looks murky (you can't see your feet when knee deep) or if it smells or has scum on top.

Feedback closes at 4pm Tuesday 17 April 2018

www.nrc.govt.nz/ltp2018

He kaupapa hou hei whakaiti nga waipuke ki Otiria me Moerewa

New scheme to cut flood impacts at Otiria, Moerewa?

A deep path left by an ancient volcanic lava flow could be an unexpected ally in a long battle to better protect homes in Otiria and Moerewa from flooding.

Pictured (right) is Joseph Camuso indicating a stretch of the Waiharakeke Stream that could eventually form part of an expanded flood spillway under a proposed \$2.9 million Taumārere-Kawakawa flood scheme.

Joseph, the regional council's Rivers and Natural Hazards Manager, says the stream – which now flows down rapids off the old lava flow behind the mothballed Otiria railyard – could safely contain vastly bigger floodwaters if the staged scheme goes ahead.

“The lion’s share of the proposed work – estimated to cost about \$2.5M alone – would eventually see construction of a spillway upstream of the disused rail bridge in this picture. Currently, in really heavy rain, floodwaters spill over the top of the streambanks and spread across the floodplain upstream of Pokapu Rd, where the channel is much shallower and only a metre or two deep in places.”

The escaped floodwaters can flow rapidly overland, including through Otiria, its marae and Moerewa, and these damaging floodplain flows currently return to the Waiharakeke Stream at a number of spots between the railway bridge and Moerewa.

The proposed work would help safely steer these overland flows into the wider and much deeper stream channel at the railway bridge before they could reach Otiria and Moerewa homes; but the work is unlikely to start for at least another five years due to cost, time needed for consultation, and complexity of design.

Instead, the council is proposing to start its Taumārere-Kawakawa flood scheme by allocating \$400,000 towards two projects over the next three years; one is on the Otiria Stream downstream of the Moerewa’s Turntable Hill Bridge, the other where the Waiomio Stream runs through Kawakawa.

Both would involve ‘stream-benching’ work – essentially cutting into riverbanks to create large, controlled overflow areas for floodwaters.



“Council is also liaising with national roading authorities, hoping they will contribute at least another \$200,000 towards the Otiria Stream work, as this would also help reduce flooding at the notoriously flood-prone Turntable Hill bridge on State Highway One,” says Joseph.

A proposal for the staged Taumārere-Kawakawa flood scheme is outlined for the Long Term Plan 2018-2028.

As proposed, about half the cost of the work would be met via a roughly \$60 annual rate on properties in and around the affected areas, with the other half subsidised via another new, region-wide rate.

More information on the proposal – and the council’s full 30-year infrastructure strategy for flood protection and control right across Northland – is available from www.nrc.govt.nz/ltp2018

Mahi pai o nga pepeke

Beetles doing good work



Jenny Dymock shows the impact tiny beetles have had on tradescantia levels in Kerikeri. She’s holding a photo taken two years ago in the same spot – at that time carpeted with a thick green layer of tradescantia.

Delighted authorities are cautiously optimistic about the initial impact two species of specially introduced Brazilian beetle appear to be having on one of Northland’s most-loathed weeds – tradescantia.

The bane of property owners across the region, highly-invasive tradescantia, also known as wandering Jew, is an issue because it forms thick blankets that can rapidly smother and exclude virtually all other plant species.

In a bid to better control the hardy, shade-tolerant pest plant, the regional council introduced two host-specific tradescantia beetles at the Kings Rd site in 2015 – the first time both had been released in the one location. The first was the leaf feeder *Neolema ogloblini*, followed by the stem borer *Lema basicostata*.

Cable Bay-based entomologist Jenny Dymock, who works with the regional council, says unbeknown to most Northlanders, there’s a surprising number of biocontrol agents quietly working away here.

“They include insects like tradescantia beetles, but also

fungi and rusts which collectively attack a variety of pest plants and insects including tropical grass webworm, mistflower, gorse, ragwort and tobacco weed.”

Jenny says the beetles appear to be thriving in Kerikeri’s relatively mild, semi-tropical climate and are beginning to have a noticeable impact as numbers build up.

“We’re really pleased with what we’ve seen to date and are quietly confident that these beetles are going to be a really useful biocontrol asset going forward.”

Jenny says before any biocontrol can be released in New Zealand, it is subjected to extensive and lengthy research to make sure it is host-specific and won’t target other species.

“While biocontrols alone aren’t a ‘magic bullet’ solution to pests, they’re a smart tool for today’s world and as a bonus don’t require the use of potentially costly or harmful herbicides or other chemicals.”

For more information, go to: www.nrc.govt.nz/nasties

YOUR REGIONAL COUNCILLORS



Bill Shepherd
(Chairman)
Coastal North
Ph: (021) 433 574
E: bills@nrc.govt.nz



Mike Finlayson
Te Hiku
Ph: (027) 542 2286
E: mikef@nrc.govt.nz



Paul Dimery
Coastal Central
Ph: (027) 542 2406
E: pauld@nrc.govt.nz



David Sinclair
(Deputy Chairman)
Whangārei Urban
Ph: (021) 865 988
E: davids@nrc.govt.nz



Rick Stolwerk
Coastal South
Ph: (021) 823 770
E: ricks@nrc.govt.nz



Joce Yeoman
Coastal North
Ph: (027) 542 2358
E: jocey@nrc.govt.nz



John Bain
Whangārei Urban
Ph: (021) 961 894
E: johnbain@nrc.govt.nz



Justin Blaikie
Hokianga-Kaikohe
Ph: (027) 542 2992
E: justinb@nrc.govt.nz



Penny Smart
Kaipara
Ph: (021) 439 735
E: pennys@nrc.govt.nz

CONTACT DETAILS

Free phone
(0800) 002 004

Environmental Hotline
(0800) 504 639

Website
www.nrc.govt.nz

Fax
(09) 470 1202

Email
mailroom@nrc.govt.nz

Facebook
www.facebook.com/NorthlandRegionalCouncil

Twitter
www.twitter.com/NRCExpress