



PROPOSED REGIONAL PLAN: Submission period now open

Northland Regional Council is now calling for formal submissions on the Proposed Regional Plan, effectively the updated rulebook for how Northland's water, air, soil and coast are used and managed.

Council chairman Bill Shepherd says that official notification of the plan, on 6 September, marked the beginning of the formal submission stage.

"We've done a lot of informal development leading up to this point, to get this regional plan in the best shape we can," he says.

"This significant plan has been over three years in the making, and represents substantial input by numerous stakeholders along the way.

"Last year we released a first draft of the plan to 'road-test' it, and the feedback we received from nearly 300 people and organisations has helped refine what the plan is today."

"I'd particularly like to acknowledge our community catchment groups in Doubtless Bay, Poutō, Waitangi, Whangārei Harbour and Mangere.

"Their collaborative efforts over the past couple of years have ensured that catchment-specific freshwater management rules are included in the Proposed Regional Plan, to reflect and address the issues of particular concern in these communities."

The new regional plan will replace the council's three existing regional plans, now over a decade old.

Bill says the council has strived to make the Proposed Regional Plan simple, streamlined and easy to use.

"This new plan is less than a quarter of the combined size of the three plans it will replace."

Along with the plan itself, a suite of background reports and technical documents is available on the council's website for those wanting to delve into the finer detail.

Bill says the council is conscious of giving people enough time to digest the plan's detail and formulate their feedback.

"We've extended the submission period to a full 10 weeks, to make sure people have plenty of time to make a submission."

DOES IT AFFECT ME?

The Proposed Regional Plan may affect you if you:

- Care about the management of Northland's natural environment
- Have a resource consent
- Own livestock that have access to streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands or the sea
- Take water from a stream, river, lake or bore
- Discharge waste water onto land or into water
- Want to do things in rivers, like build erosion protection, construct culverts or divert streams
- Carry out earthworks, burn or bury farm waste, or spray weeds
- Identify as tangata whenua
- Own a mooring permit.

The submission period is open until 4pm, Wednesday 15 November 2017.

WHAT'S IN THE PLAN?

This is a snapshot of key rules in the Proposed Regional Plan. Bear in mind that the Plan has rules covering a whole range of activities – coastal works, land use, earthworks, discharges to land and water, using water, and more.

Keeping stock out of waterways

- Phasing in of requirements for stock to be excluded from most rivers, drains, wetlands and lakes.
- More stringent stock exclusion rules in some catchments, as recommended in catchment management plans.

View these rules in Section C.8.1 of the Plan. View catchment rules in Section E of the Plan.



Taking water from lakes, rivers, streams and aquifers

- Water can be taken, up to a certain amount, without resource consent.
- Limits set for the total amount of water that can be taken.



View these rules in Section C.5.1 of the Plan.

Burning

- Outdoor burning in Whangārei and Kerikeri urban areas generally not permitted.
- Burning of silage bale wrap not permitted.



View these rules in Section C.7.1 of the Plan.

Earthworks and vegetation clearance

- No resource consent required for most earthworks up to 5000 square metres.
- Restrictions on vegetation clearance next to rivers, lakes and wetlands and the coast.



View these rules in Sections C.8.3 and C.8.4 of the Plan.



Boats – hull-fouling, moorings and sewage

- Vessel hulls must only be lightly fouled if entering Northland waters or moving from harbour to harbour.
- In-water vessel hull cleaning allowed in certain areas.
- Vessels may only discharge untreated sewage outside harbours and away from land.
- In most cases, new moorings in mooring zones don't require resource consent.

View these rules in Sections C.1.2 and C.1.7 of the Plan.



Removing mangroves

- No resource consent required for removing mangrove seedlings and mangroves restricting the use of coastal structures.

View these rules in Section C.1.4 of the Plan.

To read the Proposed Regional Plan, view supporting documents and make a submission, go to:

www.nrc.govt.nz/newregionalplan

PROPOSED REGIONAL PLAN: Catchment-specific rules

In a new approach to freshwater management, the Proposed Regional Plan has some tailor-made rules within five priority catchments – Doubtless Bay, Poutō, Waitangi, Whangārei Harbour and Mangere.

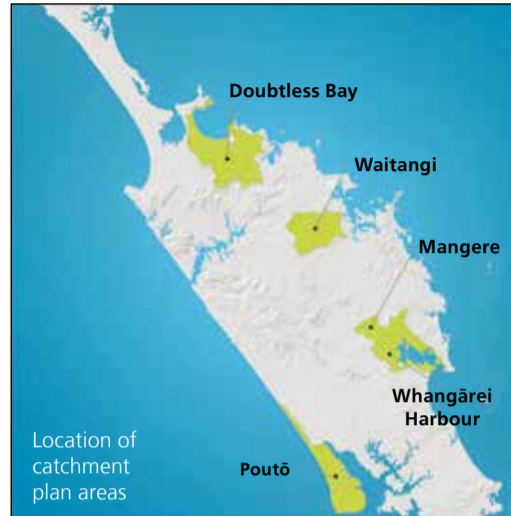
Stakeholder groups within each of these communities have developed catchment plans to address freshwater-related issues of particular concern to them.

The plans recommended a number of catchment-specific rules, which are included in the Proposed Regional Plan and take precedence over (that is, apply instead of) the relevant region-wide rules. The catchment plans also contain a variety of non-regulatory actions to improve the state of fresh water.

View the catchment-specific rules in Section E of the Plan.

Read the full catchment plans at:

www.nrc.govt.nz/catchmentplans



The submission period is open until 4pm, Wednesday 15 November 2017.
For more, go to: www.nrc.govt.nz/newregionalplan

PROPOSED REGIONAL PLAN FOR NORTHLAND

Pursuant to Clause 5 of the First Schedule of the Resource Management Act 1991, Northland Regional Council gives notice that it has prepared the Proposed Regional Plan for Northland and it is open for submissions.

This plan includes policies and rules for using and managing Northland's water, soil, air and coast. The plan will affect you if you use or have an interest in Northland's natural resources.

INSPECTION AND AVAILABILITY OF THE PROPOSED REGIONAL PLAN FOR NORTHLAND

The Proposed Regional Plan for Northland and accompanying Section 32 Report is available:

- on our website at www.nrc.govt.nz/newregionalplan
- online at all public libraries in Northland
- for viewing at all Northland Regional Council offices
- on a USB stick, which we can send free of charge
- as paper copies, which are available for purchase

SUBMISSIONS

We are now seeking formal submissions on the Proposed Regional Plan for Northland. These can be made by any person and can be submitted online through our website www.nrc.govt.nz/newregionalplan. Alternatively, submissions in the prescribed form (detailed on our website) can be emailed to submissions@nrc.govt.nz or mailed to:

PRP – Submissions
 Northland Regional Council
 Private Bag 9021
 Whangārei Mail Centre
 Whangārei 0148

Submissions close 4.00pm Wednesday, 15 November 2017.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Northland Regional Council's Planning and Policy team on 0800 002 004 or mailroom@nrc.govt.nz, or visit www.nrc.govt.nz/newregionalplan.

Mr Justin Murfitt
 Resource Management Planning and Policy Manager

www.nrc.govt.nz

Water quality projects get welcome boost

Attempts to improve the quality of Northland's fresh water have had some significant and very welcome boosts over the past several months, with millions to be injected into a variety of projects.

These include a recent announcement that the government will make a \$2M contribution to \$4M of work to improve freshwater quality in the Northern Wairoa River and more than two dozen Northland dune lakes.

The government confirmed in August it will make a \$1.25M contribution to the river project and \$780,000-plus to the dune lake work via the Ministry for the Environment's Freshwater Improvement Fund.

The regional council (which plans to make its own \$1.5M contribution to the two projects) made the applications for the government funding earlier this

year and council chairman Bill Shepherd is delighted these have been successful.

The larger of the two initiatives will see \$2.5M spent in total over the next five years in a bid to reduce sediment and bacteria levels in the Northern Wairoa and its tributaries.

"This project involves working with landowners to implement sustainable land management practices," Bill says, noting that the other project will see a total of almost \$1.6M spent over a similar length of time to improve more than two dozen fragile dune lakes in the wider Aupouri and Poutō areas.

"This will include modelling, initiatives to reduce nutrient levels, and work to remove and control pest fish and water weeds."

Bill says the projects reinforce an existing, strong



Riparian planting at Lake Waingata, one of a number of dune lakes set to benefit from a boost in funding.

collaboration between the council, local iwi and the primary sector, with a shared goal of improving the quality of fresh water.

"Arrangements will need to be formalised over the next several months, but it means the Ministry joins other project funders, including the regional council, a Department of Conservation/Fonterra Living Waters partnership, Landcare Research and Reconnecting Northland.

Bill says the government cash is part of a \$100M national pool designed to improve the quality and availability of water in lakes, rivers, streams, groundwater and wetlands.

"The value and scope of the work landowners will also be contributing over the lives of these two projects is substantial and should be applauded."

Landowners will be fencing waterways, providing stock water reticulation, riparian planting and conserving soil for erosion control. There will also be afforestation, land reversion/retirement and construction of wetlands and/or stormwater retention bunds.

The government in late June also announced a \$258,000-plus injection over three years to improve water quality at Whangārei Falls. Once again, the money will boost a regional council contribution (\$150,000) over the same period.

Bill says the area just above the falls has been a popular summer swimming spot for years, but it has water quality issues linked to both wild birds and stock in the Hātea River catchment.

The project aims to improve water quality by providing funding for riparian fencing and planting, contributing to stock water systems to help enable fencing, and signage to educate people on the ecological, cultural and other values of the area and how they can help.

Project partners included Northland Regional Council, Whangārei District Council, Whitebait Connection, Pehiaweri Marae, Tikipunga Community Development Trust (including Tiki Pride) and Northland District Health Board.

Landowners and council tackle Kaipara's high erosion risk

Good progress is being made, but there's still plenty to do to reduce Kaipara hill country erosion and sedimentation of the Kaipara Harbour and its waterways.

Now in the second year of the four-year Kaipara Hill Country Erosion Project (KHCEP), Northland Regional Council is exceeding targets set by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), a prime funder of the initiative. The council received a \$666,000 share of the MPI Hill Country Erosion Fund in 2015.

To date, 54 farm plans have been produced for farms with a high risk of erosion, covering nearly 16,000 hectares within the Kaipara catchment. In addition, 48 hectares of pastoral land with high erosion risk has been retired from grazing through recommendations made during the farm plan process.

"These are encouraging results that are a credit to our land management advisors and the landowners they are working with," council chairman Bill Shepherd says.

"I think this shows what can be done when people work together with a common goal. We've made a start on reducing Kaipara's erosion, though it will be



EROSION ... council is working to keep soil on the land and out of Kaipara Harbour.

some time before we see significant results in terms of reduced sedimentation in the harbour."

Research throughout New Zealand has found poplar trees are the most efficient and economic tool for reducing soil erosion in hill country, and the supply and delivery of 3840 poplar poles to 39 Kaipara landowners is nearing completion.

The KHCEP contributed \$20,000 towards the poplar poles, which are delivered to landowners at no cost. Landowners contribute the same amount in kind, mainly in time required to plant the poles.

A further 138 hectares at high risk of erosion in the Kaipara catchment have Afforestation Grant Scheme (AGS) applications pending with MPI. These grants are for new forests.

Also in the last year, 85 Kaipara properties have received funding of \$361,490 from the council's Environment Fund for projects involving fencing of waterways, retiring steep and unproductive land, and planting riparian margins and erosion-prone land. Farmers have matched the council's 50% contribution to the real cost of the projects, contributing the same amount, or often more, in kind.

WAIPAPA SERVICE CENTRE OPEN

Northland Regional Council's first new office in almost 30 years is up and running at Waipapa, near Kerikeri.

The new Klinac Lane office, opposite Waipapa's Warehouse store, is open from 8.30am to 4.30pm weekdays and is designed to bring long-sought customer service improvements to the mid-North.

The service centre allows council to provide a broader range of services and is staffed by locals already working in the council's regulatory, land and biosecurity teams.



A brief prayer at the official opening of the new Waipapa service centre on 31 July.

PRAISE FOR BIOSECURITY WORK

Northland Regional Council's efforts to protect the environment from unwanted pests have been recognised with two awards at the recent New Zealand Biosecurity Awards.

The inaugural Ministry for Primary Industries awards at Parliament saw council's Biosecurity Manager Don McKenzie recognised with a special Minister's Biosecurity Award for his "continuous outstanding contribution" to the field over more than a decade. Minister Nathan Guy described Don as "a leader in regional biosecurity,



L to R: Minister Nathan Guy with award recipient Don McKenzie and council chairman Bill Shepherd.

who has worked tirelessly in Northland delivering world-leading programmes".

Meanwhile, council's long-running and multi-pronged Marine Biosecurity Programme also secured a 'highly commended' award in the awards' government section.

Being able to raise my family in the country

Anna, Kauri

This is my **#truenorth** What's yours?

Tell us what you love about Northland by sharing your photos and videos on the Northland Regional Council facebook page, using **#truenorth**

Northland REGIONAL COUNCIL

Mid-North and Kaipara home for future irrigation schemes?

Lake Manuawai was formed in the 1980s to hold water for the Kerikeri Irrigation Scheme.

A new study – ‘*Scoping of Irrigation Scheme Options in Northland*’ – shows major irrigation projects in the Kaipara and mid-North could boost the regional economy by tens of millions a year and create hundreds of jobs.

Despite relatively high average annual rainfall, lack of suitable storage means most of it isn’t captured for use over the drier months, or during droughts which have repeatedly plagued parts of the region in recent years.

Keen to see water used more sustainably, authorities have been considering the potential of further irrigation schemes, which would not only ease the impact of future droughts, but potentially deliver economic and environmental benefits.

Northland is home to just two 1980s-built irrigation schemes (one near Kerikeri and the other at Maungatapere), and only about 8500 hectares of the entire region is currently irrigated, mainly for horticulture.

Any new larger-scale irrigation ventures would probably continue this mainly horticultural focus,

with Kaipara and the mid-North previously identified as potentially viable locations. The study looks in more detail at the availability of water and likely viability of community water storage facilities there.

Carried out by a consortium of consultants led by Opus over the past nine months, the \$300,000-plus cost has been jointly met by the regional council and central government.

The study estimates around 6300ha – much of it on the Poutō Peninsula – could be irrigated for about \$115 million, predicting this could lead to employment for another 950 people and contribute about \$85M to the region’s GDP annually.

Rainfall, geography and likely demand meant three cheaper and smaller options have been suggested for the mid-North. For example, one (dubbed ‘Mid-North A’) could cost about \$22M and enable irrigation of about 1600ha south of Kaikohe.

Despite its smaller size, securing a reliable water supply would enable higher value use of local land and provide ‘significant opportunities’ within the town and wider community, generating an estimated 500 extra jobs and boosting regional GDP by about \$70M.

Given that it could cost as much as \$300M to develop all four schemes raised in the scoping report, the report’s authors suggest establishing a special funding body to enable a mix of public, private and iwi investment.

They also recommend much more comprehensive pre-feasibility studies (down to individual farm level) which could cost up to \$2M and take another year.

They would also include development of an investment case and benefits model, and would need to encompass detailed environmental impact assessments.

Council has yet to come to a firm collective position on the irrigation issue and is currently reviewing new information in the latest study in more detail.

It also plans to share the report’s findings with its district council counterparts, liaising with them and central government to see what appetite there is, if any, to progress things.

The study is available online at:
www.nrc.govt.nz/economicdevelopment

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