

Natural Resources Working Party
Tuesday 21 February 2023 at 9.30am

AGENDA

Natural Resources Working Party Agenda

Meeting to be held in the Council Chamber
36 Water Street, Whangārei
on Tuesday 21 February 2023, commencing at 9.30am

Please note: working parties and working groups carry NO formal decision-making delegations from council. The purpose of the working party/group is to carry out preparatory work and discussions prior to taking matters to the full council for formal consideration and decision-making. Working party/group meetings are open to the public to attend (unless there are specific grounds under LGOIMA for the public to be excluded).

MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES WORKING PARTY

Chairperson, Councillor Amy Macdonald
Councillor Joe Carr
Councillor Geoff Crawford
Councillor Marty Robinson

KARAKIA

RĪMITI (ITEM)

Page

1.0 NGĀ MAHI WHAKAPAI/HOUSEKEEPING

2.0 NGĀ WHAKAPAHĀ/APOLOGIES

3.0 NGĀ WHAKAPUAKANGA/DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

4.0 REPORTS

- | | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 4.1 | Natural Resources Working Party 2023 Work Programme | 4 |
| 4.2 | Identifying Northland's most impacted catchments | 7 |
| 4.3 | Harbour remediation business case | 11 |
| 4.4 | Plantation Forestry - Overview of regulatory initiatives | 13 |
| 4.5 | Update on Lake Ōmāpere Trust MOU | 14 |

Opening Karakia

Whakataka te hau ki te uru,
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga.
Kia mākinakina ki uta,
Kia mātaratara ki tai.
E hī ake ana te atākura he tio,
he huka, he hauhunga.
Tuturu whakamaua kia Tina (Tina)
Haumi e! Hui e! Tāiki e!

Closing Karakia

Unuhia, unuhia
Unuhia ki te uru tapu nui
Kia wātea, kia māmā, te ngākau, te tinana, te wairua i
te ara tangata
Koia rā e Rongo, whakairia ake ki runga
Kia tina! TINA! Hui e! TĀIKI E!



TITLE: Natural Resources Working Party 2023 Work Programme

From: Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao – Group Manager Environmental Services

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao – Group Manager Environmental Services, on
Group Manager/s: 12 February 2023

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

The objectives of the Natural Resources Working Party (the Working Party) are to:

- Provide oversight and assistance to the Chief Executive on council's natural resources' strategic activities ensuring accountabilities; and
- Make recommendations to council on natural resources matters.

The portfolio of the Working Party is very broad, covering council's regulatory functions, land management, policy and planning, and science and monitoring. The purpose of this report is to provide a draft work programme for the working party to consider and adopt in order to ensure the Working Party is providing oversight and governance support towards key strategic initiatives within the ambit of the Working Party's terms of reference.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommended actions

1. That the Natural Resources Working party endorse the work programme set out in this report subject to any changes made by the Chair of Natural Resources Working Party throughout the term of the work programme.
-

Background/Tuhinga

A draft work programme for the Natural Resources Working Party is set out below, along with a brief explanation of each workstream. Each work programme milestone is timed with the Working Party meeting schedule. It is anticipated that other matters will be brought to the working party on a case by case basis and the below workstreams are not necessarily the only matters to be considered by the working party throughout the course of the year.

May 23

Soil Conservation Strategy

Northland has a significant erosion challenge, with 60% of the region and 40% of the grazing land classed as highly erodible. Managing our erosion soils has a vital role to play in improving freshwater quality in Northland. NRC's [10 Year plan for managing freshwater](#) includes action to develop a strategic soil conservation plan help Council to prioritise its resources on the initiatives that will make the most impact to reduce soil loss into our waterways. A draft strategy is under development and is close to completion.

The new strategy will provide:

- an evidential basis for future soil conservation programmes, including cost benefit analysis of soil conservation initiatives
 - an outline of critical erosion sources (based on existing available information)
 - priorities for sediment mitigation efforts
 - resourcing requirements to support the strategy delivery for the purpose of Long-Term Plan budgeting
 - an implementation plan that includes prioritisation and timing for the strategy delivery.
-

The Strategy will be an important document to support future budgeting and resourcing decisions on soil conservation initiatives, particularly in the lead up to the development of the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan.

Harbour Business Case scope

At its 26 April 2022 meeting, Council allocated \$300,000 towards a harbour remediation business case(s) to support Council, mana whenua and Central Government investment partners to identify strategic investment options, associated costs and net benefits for harbour scale remediation programmes. As part of that same direction, Council resolved that, prior to undertaking the Harbour Remediation Business Case(s), staff would present an options assessment to Council in order to gain Council approval to confirm which harbour(s) will be subject to the business case and the scope and purpose.

The project sits within the remit of the Working Party and it is proposed to present to the working party the draft scope and selection process before bringing the matter to full Council for workshopping and a decision.

Fishing controls implementation plan

Council received appeals on the Proposed Regional Plan seeking that there be prohibition on fishing in particular areas. The Proposed Regional Plan currently has no such rules. The Court released its decision on the appeals on the 4 November 2022. The decision includes new rules to prohibit fishing in various areas from the Bay of Islands down to Mimiwhangata for the purposes of protecting significant ecological values.

The decision represents a substantial shift in respect of NRC's regulatory activities and successful regulation of the fishing controls will require a comprehensive approach that includes education, engagement and monitoring alongside hapū and iwi partners along with appropriate resource allocation.

It is proposed to present to, and gain endorsement from, the Working Party in respect of Councils implementation plan for achieving compliance with the new rules.

August 23

Compliance and enforcement strategy

Council adopted a Compliance Monitoring & Enforcement (CME) Strategy in 2021. Since then, further legislation relating to freshwater management has come into place that imposes additional CME responsibilities on the council. New regional rules have also become operative with the ongoing resolution of appeals on the Proposed Regional Plan for Northland (PRP).

A plan for implementation our environmental legislation and PRP is being development and the CME component of the plan is currently being reviewed internally. Once this has been completed, it is intended that an external review of the CME component will also be done, which may recommend changes to our existing CME Strategy. It is proposed that the outcome of this work will be presented to the Working Party together with any changes proposed to the CME Strategy for its consideration and endorsement.

Science and data communication framework

NRC collects a substantial amount of data across the region. This data is a public asset and is currently displayed on Councils public web platform. This is a common method used by all councils. The data is available but not easily understood by the lay person in terms of what is happening in the environment. Often the science is stored in technical reports which again requires some base knowledge to understand and decipher. The way we communicate science and data needs to shift away from conventional methods to reach into all communities across Te Tai Tokerau and fulfil the commitments Council has made under Tāiki ē, particularly around how we collect and report data supplied by kaitiaki.

It is proposed that a draft data communications framework is brought to the Working Party to endorse and recommend up to Council. It is expected this work will play an important role in directing how we communicate our science and monitoring data in a way that is meaningful to communities and tangata whenua.

Term of Reference review

The Terms of reference for the working party are to be reviewed within six months of the working party establishing. The purpose of this item is to provide recommendations on any changes to be made for the working party terms of reference, taking into account what is working well and where there needs to be changes.

November 23

Land management review and recommendations

At its 13 April 2022 meeting, council adopted a series of resolutions relating to adjustments to NRCs Land Management approach, including criteria by which Environment Fund and the new tangata whenua and catchment group fund is awarded. The 22/23 year was to be treated as a transition year, with the new approach implemented over the at the beginning of June 2023 and reviewed in December 2023.

The purpose of this item is to present a review of the new approach along with recommended changes for the Working Party to consider and recommend to Council.

2025 work programme

It is proposed to outline a work programme for the 2024 calendar year to enable staff to forward plan for future working party meetings and to align the working party involvement in key strategic initiatives that are underway. This work, alongside the amended TOR will put the working party in a good place to work effectively over the 2024 year.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil

TITLE: Identifying Northland's most impacted catchments

From: Ben Lee, Planning and Policy Manager

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao – Group Manager Environmental Services, on
Group Manager/s: 14 February 2023

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

Staff have been working on a methodology for determining the catchments where water quality and freshwater ecosystems are most impacted, to help prioritise where improvement efforts are focussed. The methodology uses sedimentation and faecal indicator bacteria (FIB) as the key indicators of freshwater health. Feedback is sought from the working party on the proposed methodology.

Staff are of the view that council should be targeting more effort in the most degraded catchments. Endorsement is sought from the working party for staff to develop a draft package of more targeted efforts in the most degraded catchments, and to bring this back to be presented back to the working party.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommended actions

1. That the Natural Resources Working Party endorse the draft methodology for identifying the most degraded water quality catchments.
2. That the Natural Resources Working Party endorse staff to prepare a draft package of increase council focussed effort for the most degraded catchments, and the draft package to be presented to the Natural Resources Working Party.

Background / Tuhinga

Northland's freshwater water quality, the ecology of our freshwater bodies, and the coastal receiving environments (estuaries and harbours) are in a poor state. This was made stark by the NPS-FM baseline work highlighting we are well below national bottom lines for *E.coli*, sediment, phosphorus and macroinvertebrates¹. There are increasing drivers for improvement including from tangata whenua, our communities, and central government direction requiring an improvement of the health of freshwater².

Most impacted catchments methodology

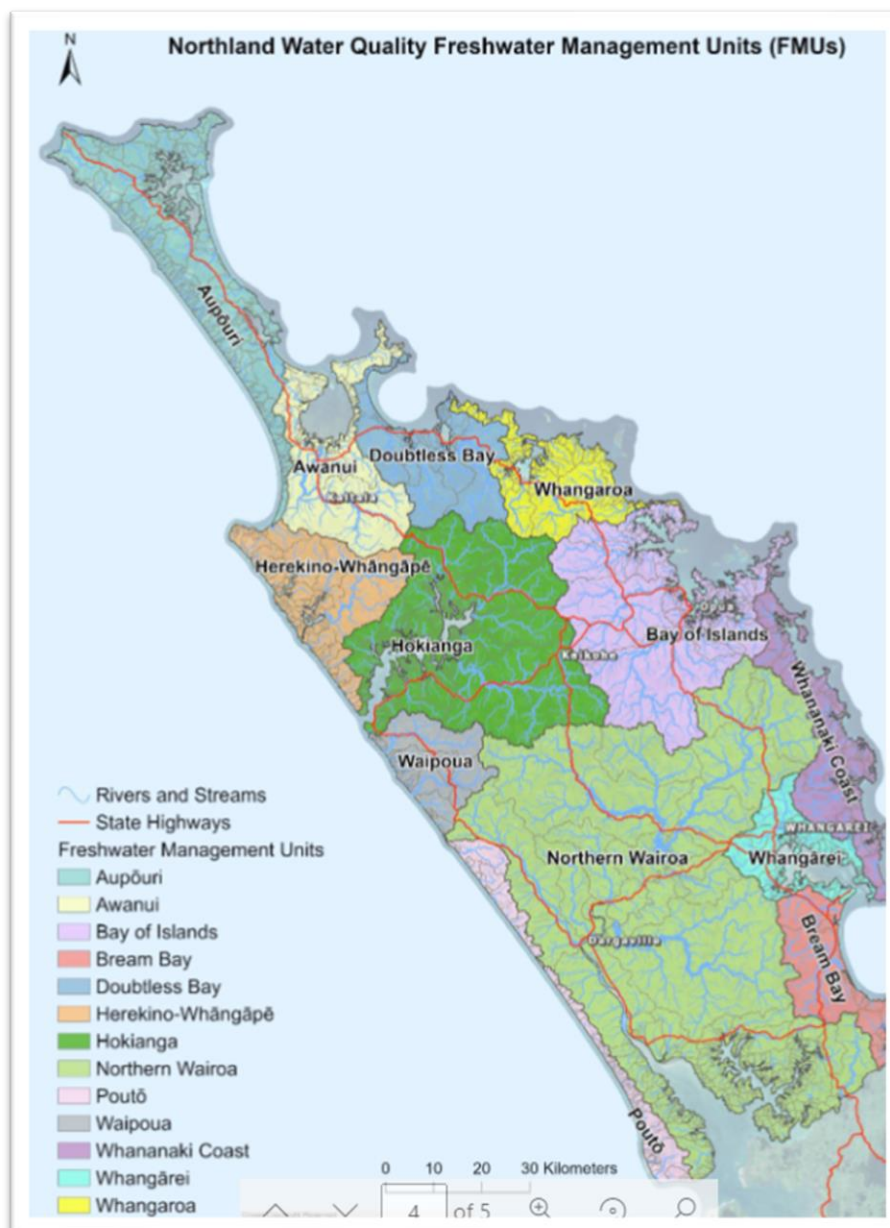
Staff have been working on a methodology for identifying the catchments where water quality, freshwater ecology and coastal receiving environment are most impacted, for the purpose of identifying where there could be more targeted efforts.

The methodology uses sedimentation and faecal indicator bacteria (FIB) as the key indicators of freshwater health. Sediment is arguably our most significant issue – as evidenced by the accumulation of sediment in our estuaries and harbours. Faecal contamination increases the risk of people getting sick from ingesting water and eating shellfish. The presence of sediment and FIB are also a proxy for ecosystem health and the presence of other contamination.

¹ *Water quality modelling for Northland to support NPSFM implementation*, Prepared for Northland Regional Council, NIWA, June 2021. (Note – this report is currently embargoed by council for public release).

² National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM)

The method uses the draft Freshwater Management Units³ as the catchment unit. FMUs were chosen because they are not too big / not too small and they have been used as a unit for reporting data/information.



The methodology does not consider uses and values of water (e.g. swimming, drinking water and mahinga kai). Values are inherently subjective and ultimately every waterway will have significant values associated with it by tangata whenua and/or communities.

The methodology uses a ranking system – the lower the rank the worse the state (relative to other FMUs). The most impacted catchment will therefore have the lowest score.

The methodology is still a work in progress (the coastal receiving environment rankings still require some work). Provisionally, the 'top 5' most impacted catchments in order are:

³ <https://www.nrc.govt.nz/media/a4oba4hi/northlands-water-quality-freshwater-management-units-2021.pdf>

1. Bream Bay and Hokianga
2. Northern Wairoa
3. Whangarei
4. Whangaroa

Table 1: Impacted catchment rankings

- Lower the rank, the more degraded (compared to other FMUs)
- Highlighted cells = top five ranked

FMU	Area (km2)	Sediment rank	FIB rank	Total average rank	Overall rank
Aupōuri	867	10	10	10	12
Awanui	613	9	7	8	9
Bay of Islands	1234	6	7	6.5	5
Bream Bay	394	5	3	4	1
Doubtless Bay	537	9	5	7	7
Herekino - Whangapē	575	5	11	8	9
Hokianga	1550	3	5	4	1
Northern Wairoa	4361	3	6	4.5	3
Poutō	283	5	11	8	9
Waipoua	348	10	12	11	13
Whananāki Coast	472	8	6	7	7
Whangārei	286	6	4	5	4
Whangaroa	438	6	7	6.5	5

The “Sediment rank” is determined by a combination of the ranked:

- proportion of land in each FMU identified as being a priority for soil conservation (based on erosion susceptibility of the land and land use)⁴
- turbidity (water clarity) in the coastal receiving environment⁵.

The “FIB rank” is determined by a combination of:

⁴ Northland Soil Conservation Strategy: Geological Classification and Catchment Prioritisation, Land and Water Science Ltd., August 2022

⁵ NRC coastal State of the Environment water quality data

- The proportion of waterways in a FMU that are in an 'E' state (the worst state) for *E.coli* as determined by NIWA's modelling of the current state of Northland's water⁶.
- Enterococci results in the coastal receiving environment⁷.

Targeted package of effort

Staff are of the view that councils focus should be on lifting the state of our most impacted water quality. The NPS-FM requires that water quality not meeting bottom lines must be improved to at least meet bottom lines. Water quality is the number one issue for our communities, and they want water quality to be improved (e.g. council residents⁸ survey and Arohatia Te Taiao⁹).

Endorsement is sought from the working party for staff to work up a draft package of increased council focussed effort for the most degraded catchments, and the draft package to be presented to the Natural Resources Working Party for review.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil

⁶ *Water quality modelling for Northland to support NPSFM implementation*, Prepared for Northland Regional Council, NIWA, June 2021. (Note – this report is currently embargoed by council for public release). Based on *E. coli* median results.

⁷ NRC coastal State of the Environment water quality data and recreational bathing water quality data. Based on 95th percentile Enterococci results.

⁸ [Northland Regional Council Annual Residents' Survey, 2021.](#)

⁹ Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai O Te Tai Tokerau/ Northland Conservation Board, March 2022: [Arohatia te Taiao](#)

TITLE: Harbour remediation business case

From: Ben Lee, Planning and Policy Manager

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao – Group Manager Environmental Services, on
Group Manager/s: 14 February 2023

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

Council has budgeted \$300,000 to fund the development of a Harbour Remediation Business Case, to be commenced during the 2023/2024 financial year. The business case would estimate the cost and benefits of restoring a harbour or harbours within the Northland Region. This information could then be used to advocate for funding from central government alongside iwi and hapū, similar to the process undertaken for the Kaipara Moana Remediation programme. Staff have developed an initial shortlist of potential candidates for the business case based on a multi-criteria prioritisation process. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement from the Natural Resources Working Party in respect of the process by which staff identify harbour(s) to be considered by the business case.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommended actions

1. That the Natural Resources Working party endorse the initial shortlist of harbours and associated catchments, noting that a final selection will be brought to the Working Party for endorsement at its next meeting.
2. That staff report back to the Natural Resources Working party at its May 2023 meeting to seek endorsement for the scope of the business case and the harbours and associated catchments that the business case should cover.

Background/Tuhinga

At the 26 April 2022 Council meeting, council made the following resolutions:

- *That council approve the allocation of \$300,000 from the Equalisation Reserve to fund the development of a Harbour Remediation Business Case, to be commenced during the 2023/2024 financial year.*
- *That, prior to undertaking the Harbour Remediation Business Case, staff present an options assessment to council in order to gain council approval to confirm which harbour(s) will be subject to the business case and the scope and purpose.*

The resolutions were made off the back of the successful business case that set the foundation for the Kaipara Moana Remediation programme (KMR).

The supporting paper identified the following implementation issues:

It is anticipated that the business case development will require substantial staff input. This will prove challenging within the Environmental Services Group due to the heavy workload to implement the freshwater reforms and significant staff turnover within the Land Management Team. It is therefore recommended that the business case development commence in the 2023/2024 financial year.

Critical to the success of any business case is the need to build strong partnerships between mana whenua, local and central government and key stakeholders. Our learnings from the Kaipara Moana Remediation Programme process is that a great business case is only as good as the partnerships that are built around it. It is critical that any business case is progressed within a partnership model and at a pace that allows everyone to come along for the journey. While

the technical development of a business case can be outsourced to consultants, the development of those relationships and partnerships will require strong staff support.

At the stage of confirming which harbour(s) will be the subject of a business case, council will also need to consider staff resourcing. This may include the need for an additional fixed term role.

The Land Management team (the team which would lead the business case work) has not had any capacity to advance the business case work. The team has been significantly understaffed and up until very recently, been without a permanent manager for over six months. Staff acknowledge, however, that the business case represents a significant opportunity for the region and will compliment other strategic initiatives around improving water quality and strengthen Council's partnership with iwi and hapū. With that in mind, staff have undertaken an initial shortlisting process using a multi-criteria selection method (reported separately). Based on this selection process, staff have identified the following Harbours and associated catchments as candidates for the business case:

1. Bream Bay
2. Hokianga
3. Whangarei

It should be noted that the initial selection methodology is intended as a guide only. It provided an objective means of identifying those catchments and harbours that would potentially benefit most from investment from a water quality perspective. There are a number of other matters that need to be considered alongside a data driven approach, including socio-economic factors, possible opportunities to leverage investment with central government, and opportunities presented by settlement proceedings. For this reason, staff are seeking endorsement from the Working Party to proceed with further refining the selection process, based on the three harbours and catchment identified above. This will enable staff to develop the final selection and report back to the working Party in May 2023 to recommend the harbours and catchments that should be subject to the business case in addition to a scope for the business case itself.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil

TITLE: **Plantation Forestry - Overview of regulatory initiatives**
From: Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao – Group Manager Environmental Services
Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao – Group Manager Environmental Services, on
Group Manager/s: 13 February 2023

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

Plantation forestry is an important part of Northland’s economy. However, this land use activity can play an important role in influencing Northland freshwater quality. Moreover, rising carbon prices and the permanent forestry category in the Emission Trading Scheme are leading to the potential for the establishment of a large volume of permanent unmanaged exotic forests, which can result in broader social and cultural impacts. There are a number of initiatives underway to address these challenges. The purpose of this paper is to provide a presentation to the Natural Resources Working Party summarising the work that is being undertaken at a central and local government level in respect of plantation forestry in order that the Working Party can decide how best to be involved in this work taking into account its Terms of Reference.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommended actions

1. That the Natural Resources Working party provides feedback to staff in terms of the extent to which the topic of plantation forestry should be covered within its work programme.
-
-

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil

TITLE: Update on Lake Ōmāpere Trust MOU

From: Jason Donaghy, Natural Resources Monitoring Manager

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao – Group Manager Environmental Services, on
Group Manager/s: 14 February 2023

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

Council staff have been working with the Lake Ōmāpere Trust (LOT) to enter into a relationship agreement. The purpose of the agreement is to improve the mauri of Lake Ōmāpere. A draft agreement has been developed with LOT. The endorsement of the Natural Resource Working Party is sought in respect of the relationship agreement.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommended actions

1. That Natural Resource Working Party endorse the draft relationship agreement between the lake Omapere Trust and the Northland Regional Council in principle.
 2. That the final relationship agreement is brought to the Chair of the Northland Regional Council for signing.
-

Background/Tuhinga

A draft relationship agreement has been worked on with LOT over a number of years. However, to date, no agreement has been entered into. On 7 April 2022 senior Council staff met with the LOT for a virtual hui at the request of the trust. The discussion included the future relationship between Council and LOT. At that meeting it was agreed the document would be taken to a full trust meeting for review as a potential starting point for building a partnership.

On 08 November 2022 the LOT sent through an amended version for Council to review. The draft document attached to the paper is the latest version for the working party to discuss and review.

In summary the document includes:

- Te Tīmatanga Whakamuri - Background
- Whanaungatanga - Nature of the Relationship.
- Te Pae Tawhiti - Term (three years).
- Ngā Whāinga Tautoko - Goals.
- Ngā Tikanga - Relationship principles.
- Appendix of actions.

Some of the proposed actions contained within the relationship agreement can be supported within existing budgets and resourcing. However, some of the actions listed agreement will require additional funding and resourcing. It is estimated implementation of the actions set out in the agreement will cost on average \$15-\$20k per annum. Actual costs will be developed once the action plan is agreed upon with LOT. If Council supports the agreement, it is proposed through the Long -Term Plan process to seek the required funds to support the additional mahi. The amount will be finalised by June 2023 alongside LOT.

Council staff travelled to Kaikohe in November 2022 for a hui with the LOT to discuss some current concerns and provide some clarity on some of the tasks listed in the action plan. The LOT indicated:

- The weed in Lake Ōmāpere was the top priority, a weed survey would assist the LOT in deciding what steps to take regarding removal of the weed. The Biodiversity team have organised a survey to commence early 2023.
- LOT raised concerns regarding the monitoring and response when algae blooms struck Lake Ōmāpere. Council is looking into options to streamline data supply to the Lake to alleviate some of the concerns raised by the LOT.
- Working together with Council and having input into the monitoring of Lake Ōmāpere. Monitoring tuna (eel) and kākahi (freshwater mussel) was critical to the LOT.
- Training young Māori as kaitiaki regarding lake Ōmāpere. This is a long-term aspiration which required support from Council and aligns with Te Mana o te Wai.

Key steps:

1. The Natural Resource working party review and endorse the proposed relationship agreement
2. The Natural Resource working party provide a recommendation to whether Council supports the agreement at a principle level, noting the document is reviewed annually and some of the actions may change in the listed table.
3. Any significant changes to the agreement will need to be sent to the LOT to review and consider.
4. Council chair reviews final agreement and signs on behalf of Council.
5. Final Agreement sent to LOT for signing.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Attachment 1: Relationship Agreement - Lake Ōmāpere Trust and Northland Regional Council [↓](#) 



Relationship Agreement

Lake Ōmāpere Trust and Northland Regional Council

DRAFT

