

Natural Resources Working Party
Wednesday 18 September 2024 at 10.00am

AGENDA

Natural Resources Working Party Agenda

Meeting to be held in the Council Chamber
36 Water Street, Whangārei
on Wednesday 18 September 2024, commencing at 10.00am

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, NRC (Deputy Chair) Tui Shortland
Councillor Amy Macdonald
TTMAC Representative, Geraldine Baker
Councillor Marty Robinson
TTMAC Representative, Mira Norris
TTMAC Representative, Nora Rameka
Councillor Rick Stolwerk
Ex-Officio Geoff Crawford (Ex-Officio)

KARAKIA

RĪMITI (ITEM)

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2.0 NGĀ WHAKAPAHĀ/APOLOGIES

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| 4.5 | Resource Management Update | |
| | <i>An update on the resource management reforms by the coalition government will be presented at the meeting.</i> | |
| 4.6 | 'Tidy up' and 'Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe' Plan Changes | 23 |
| 4.7 | Land Management Review | 26 |
| 4.8 | Presentation - Air Quality In Northland | |
| | <i>A presentation will be given outlining air quality challenges in Northland and our role in managing this issue.</i> | |

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: **Record of Actions – 20 March 2024**

From: Sandra Harris, Personal Assistant - Pou Tiakai Taiao

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 12 September 2024
Group Manager/s:

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to present the Record of Actions of the last meeting (attached) held on 20 March 2024 for review by the meeting.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Record of Actions 20 March 2024 [↓](#) 

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20 March 2024

Natural Resources Working Party Record of Actions

Meeting held in the Council Chamber
36 Water Street, Whangārei
on Wednesday 20 March 2024, commencing at 9.30am

Tuhinga/Present:

Working Party Chair, Tui Shortland (NRC Deputy Chair)(online)
NRC Chair, Geoff Crawford
TTMAC Representative, Nora Rameka (apology)
TTMAC Representative, Mira Norris (online)
TTMAC Representative, Geraldine Baker (apology)
Councillor John Blackwell
Councillor Joe Carr
Councillor Marty Robinson (in attendance)

I Tae Mai/In Attendance:

Ruben Wylie (Group Manager, Environmental Services)
Tami Woods (Policy and Planning Manager)
Alexandra Ashkettle (Senior EMO – Compliance Monitoring)
Personal Assistant Pou Tiaki Taiao
Tess Dacre (Compliance Monitoring Manager)
Clark Ehlers (Compliance Monitoring Manager – Coastal and Land)
Gavin Dawson (Governance Specialist)
Janice Kirk (Personal Assistant – Biosecurity)

The meeting commenced at 9.31 am with a karakia by Tui Shortland.

(Secretarial note: please note that agenda item 4.6 in the original agenda became agenda 4.3 with the agreement of the Working Party)

Ngā Mahi Whakapai/Housekeeping (Item 1.0)

Ngā Whakapahā/Apologies (Item 2.0)

Nora Rameka and Geraldine Baker.

Ngā Whakapuakanga/Declarations of Interest (Item 3.0)

Nil.

Reports (Item 4.0)

Record of Actions – August 2023 (Item 4.1)

Staff spoke to the relevant matters raised.

Moved: Crawford/Seconded: Norris – Carried.

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Receipt of Action Sheet (Item 4.2)

Staff spoke to the relevant matters raised.

Matters raised:

- Noted that Ōmāpere Trust have now appointed a co-ordinator and emphasised the need to continue to work together to achieve progress at the lake.
- Noted that a paper is coming to council on the Hokianga proposal at the next meeting.

Moved: Carr/Seconded: Crawford – Carried.

Vehicles on Beaches (Item 4.3)

Presented by: Tess Dacre (Compliance Monitoring Manager) and Clark Ehlers (Compliance Monitoring Manager – Coastal and Land).

Matters raised:

- Noted the concerns have been addressed and NRC is working on addressing any further matters or concerns. Explained that the plan change process is available to address their concerns
- Explained the jurisdiction of NRC on beaches and how that links with other local and central government agencies and noted that it requires co-ordination of all agencies on education and enforcement
- Discussed the possible opportunity of creating spaces for the use of recreational vehicle spaces. Noted that jurisdiction plays a big part and determines how it should be structured
- Emphasised the need to include Iwi/hapu in the process to consult establish working groups.

Fish Passage Action Plan (Item 4.4)

Presented by: Alexandra Ashkettle (Senior EMO – Compliance Monitoring)

Matters raised:

- Emphasised the need for good planning to ensure that the relevant government agency is paying for future mid to long term works that may result
- Emphasised the need for action and to keep momentum with the programme through communications and engagement with community and stakeholders
- Discussed situations where the passage ways have had unintended consequences elsewhere in New Zealand. Noted that work is ongoing in identifying and mitigating risk for Northland
- Noted that meeting central government regulations and policy is important
- Noted that the future proposal will include all stakeholders and Iwi/Hapu will be supported to prioritise the work of the action plan

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- Emphasised that the purpose of the project is to deal with the biggest barriers in appropriate areas in a cost-effective way for all impacted stakeholders
- Explained that baseline connectivity in the model is the current situation
- Emphasised the need for an efficient model of moving forward that builds on action
- Noted that Iwi/Hapu is critical to the success of the roll out of the project
- *Direction: continue as presented in principle and include in a GMs briefing and decide next steps.*

Freshwater Farm Plan Regulations Implementation (Item 4.5)

Presented by: Ruben Wylie (Group Manager, Environmental Services)

Matters raised:

- Noted that reforms are still be developed and confirmed and may impact on next steps.
- Emphasised that a clear and measured approach to dealing with the whole issue is needed. Discussions are ongoing and matter will be raised as information becomes available
- Noted that auditing of farms may be removed, this is to be confirmed
- Noted that certification/auditing may be done through external regulation of the stakeholder/industry body groups, processing companies, this is to be confirmed
- Emphasised the need for a light touch on matters to still give effect to existing regulations before they are changed
- Noted that there may be changes to Te Mana o te Wai
- Noted that central government are looking to utilise existing compliance structures and encourage a decrease in compliance costs

(Secretarial note: Cr Robinson left the meeting at 11.12 am)

- Discussed how council systems and regulation connect with government systems and regulations
- Emphasised the need to work with all stakeholders to create an effective and efficient model.

Resource Management Reforms (Item 4.6)

Presented by: Tami Woods (Policy and Planning Manager)

Matters raised:

- Noted that the marine farm extensions has caused some concern across the regional govt sector due to the work required in this Aqua culture sector
- Emphasised the need for a clear and measured approach to meeting responsibilities and obligations
- Emphasised that there is clarity needed from officials and programme delivery based on legislation/regulations

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- *Action point: Chair Geoff Crawford to write to the MFE minister on getting clarity on statutory change timeframes*

Whakamutunga (Conclusion)

The meeting concluded at 11.33 am with a karakia by Deputy Chair Shortland.

UNCONFIRMED

TITLE: **Receipt of Action Sheet**

From: Sandra Harris, Personal Assistant - Pou Tiakai Taiao

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 12 September 2024
Group Manager/s:

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to enable the meeting to receive the current action sheet.

Nga mahi tutohutia / Recommendation

That the action sheet be received.

Attachments/Ngā tapirihanga

Attachment 1: Receipt of Actions [↓](#) 

Natural Resources Working Party– Schedule of Actions

Meeting date	Item	NRWP action	Responsible staff	Status	Notes
21 February 2023	Plantation Forestry – Overview of regulatory initiatives (Item 4.4)	Agreed next step is to consider potential controls for plantation forestry as part of the Fresh Water Plan Change workshops and revisit topic to cover matters outside of scope of the plan change.	Justin Murfitt	Completed	Presented through workshops on Freshwater Plan Change.
21 February 2023	Update on lake Ōmāpere Trust MOU (Item 4.5)	Working party request workshop needed for counsel to raise base knowledge of governance in respect of the history on understanding the lake.	Jason Donaghy	In progress	A verbal update to be made to presented to Working Party March 2024
02 May 2023	Harbour Remediation Business Case Proposed Scope (Item 4.4)	That staff prepare a report to council to confirm the business case framework set out in this report and the recommendation of Natural Resources Working party in respect of the preferred location for the business case	Ruben Wylie	Completed	Presented to Council 27 June 2023
		That staff report to the August Natural Resources Working Party meeting to provide an update on progress with the business case development	Ruben Wylie	In progress	
29 August 2023	Poplar and Willow Nursery Investment Options (Item 4.4)	That staff workshop Option 3 to find a new nursery site, investing only in essential H&S Improvements with council and report back at a future Working Party meeting. Staff to explore the most cost-effective method to increase production.	John Ballinger		To be presented to Council 28 November
29 August 2023	Whangārei harbour algae bloom update (Item 4.6)	Staff to discuss with Comms team around proactive release of information, prioritising relationship with mana whenua.	Jason Donaghy	In progress	
20 March 2024	Freshwater Farm Plan Regulations Implementation (Item 4.5)	Chair Geoff Crawford to write to the MfE minister on getting clarity on statutory change timeframes	Ruben Wylie	In progress	

TITLE: **Natural Resources Mahi: 2024 Highlights**

From: Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 12 September 2024
Group Manager/s:

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

This report includes highlights of work undertaken by council over the last six months that is aligned with the remit of the Natural Resources Working Party.

Background/Tuhinga

Policy and Planning

Submissions on central governments changes to resource management framework.

As significant amount of work has been undertaken of the last 6 months analysing, and submitting where needed, on changes proposed by central government to the resource management act framework. Refer separate presentation with a summary of all the changes underway.

Whangarei Future Development Strategy (FDS)

The National Policy Statement – Urban Development 2020 includes the requirement for councils over a certain size to prepare a Future Development Strategy (FDS). Whangarei district is defined as a Tier 2 council and therefore must prepare an FDS in conjunction with the NRC to manage future growth. The growth projection is for an additional 40,000 residents over the next 30 years requiring 17,000 new household units.

Work has been underway for the last 18 months to develop a plan to accommodate this growth. Consultation has been undertaken with a wide range of stakeholders and Te Tiriti partners to develop a draft strategy which is open for submission from 3 August to 2 September 2024. Consultation events are being held throughout August with drop in sessions for the public, targeted sessions for interest groups and hui with iwi/hapu representatives. Attendance at these events has been positive with significant interest from the community and a number of submissions already received. Hearings will be held in front of the FDS Working group which consists of council staff, WDC and NRC councillors and representatives from TTMAC and Te Kārearea. Once deliberations have been completed, a finalised FDS will be put forward to both councils for a decision on adoption.

Freshwater Workstream Working Groups

NRC consulted on a draft Freshwater Plan Change (FW-PC) during November 2023 – March 2024. The consultation provided NRC with a great deal of valuable feedback covering a wide range of views on approaches to freshwater management. In December 2023 the government extended the deadline for councils to notify freshwater plan changes from December 2024 to December 2027 pending a review of the current NPS-FM. This resulted in NRC deciding to ‘pause’ the development of the proposed plan change until the legislation is amended. Council did direct staff to progress with a number of workstreams that are more complex and likely to remain priorities for addressing freshwater issues in Northland regardless of changes to the legislation.

Access to Experts potential projects

NZ Landcare Trust and Beca have been commissioned by the Ministry for the Environment to create a free service (Access to Experts), designed to enable councils, iwi, and community groups involved with freshwater management to access expert knowledge and support and implement the Essential Freshwater reform programme.

Support can include technical, policy, or more general expertise, as required. The service is focused on building capability, not capacity – experts are intended to provide advice but not implement actions themselves.

Staff have lodged five applications to the Aces to Experts Programme. We have also had further discussion with Beca around the experts we would need.

All applications are currently on hold due to over subscription. We are however hopeful that the applications will be able to be funded.

Applications lodged include:

- GIS mapping sites of cultural significance to support the development of the TOAT Plan Change
- Support for ongoing Freshwater Plan Change workstreams (see above)
 - Social assessment of various policy options / scenarios being considered as part of a package of work considering stock exclusion from HEL and waterbodies.
 - Economic assessment to support development of a s.32 Analysis for the Proposed Freshwater Plan Change. Includes two pieces of advice. The first an economic model that can assess changes to regional macroeconomic variables including output levels, GDP, employment and household incomes. The second analysis from an ecosystems' services valuations perspective.
- Support for on-going implementation of TWWAG's recommendations on the Freshwater Plan Change
 - Targeted Water Allocation Policy - Planning / Environmental Economics / Financial mechanisms design options.
 - Legal Personhood for Wai - identifying options that might be available, to progress the desire expressed by tangata whenua and others to provide for legal personhood for all wai in Te Taitokerau.

Fish Passage Action Plan and Fish Barrier Partnership

Staff have been working with support of NIWA and Boffa Miskell on fish passage barrier identification and prioritisation under an MfE funded project which ended in June. This work is now being developed with input from tangata whenua experts and Te Taitokerau Fish Passage Working Group. The Working Group has representatives of key stakeholders such as district councils, KiwiRail, Waka Kotahi, Fish & Game, DoC and Nga Kaitiaki o Nga Wai Māori. The draft Fish Passage Action Plan (FPAP) will be brought to the next Natural Resources Working Party meeting for feedback prior to engaging with key stakeholders. The FPAP will help prioritise the key existing barriers to fish passage for remediation or removal and identify actions that can be taken to improve fish passage. Associated with this piece of work is the \$100k Fish Passage Partnership project in the annual plan with Nga Kaitiaki on Nga Wai Māori which includes data collection on existing fish barriers focussing on the western Northern Wairoa catchment, training other hapu in fish passage/barrier assessments and knowledge, and input to design and monitoring of pilot fish passage remediation trials in NRC's Taika Forest. An initial project meeting has been held and contract being prepared.

Land Management

Key highlights from 2023/24FY

- The Environment Fund supported projects across Te Taitokerau with a total of \$547,743 used to complete 102 kms of waterway fencing, 20km of wetland fencing which included to support of stock exclusion from 5 top 150 wetlands, and 9kms of forest fencing which supported the retirement of 113 ha of forest.
- This year the Tāngata Whenua and Catchment Group Fund supported 13 projects across Te Taitokerau (excluding the Kaipara Moana catchment). The fund used \$375,571 to support projects including riparian and bush fencing on whanau-owned land, water quality


monitoring, catchment planning, GIS training and mapping, and erosion monitoring and remediation.

- The Whangārei Urban Awa project, a three-year project co-funded by the Ministry for the Environment Jobs for Nature Fund, was completed in January 2024. The project supported local contractors post COVID and resulted in 20km of stock exclusion fencing, 20,890 plants covering 2.3ha, and 9,300 hours of contractor work.
- The Hill Country Erosion Fund completed the first of its four MPI co-funded years (2023-2027). This is the fourth erosion/sediment reduction based co-funded project run by NRC but the first to include a specific focus on engagement with Māori landowners to support managing eroding whenua. In this first year, the project achieved 22kms of fencing (retiring 184ha of marginal hill country) and 10ha of new native forest planted

S-Map

Under the 2022 National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land, Regional Councils were tasked with mapping highly productive land. In collaboration with MPI and Manaaki Whenua, NRC initiated an S-map extension program to cover portions of Northland’s more productive soils. This information is crucial for decision-making related to freshwater management, integrated catchment management, and sustainable production.

S-map serves as New Zealand’s national geospatial soil information system and while it offers good coverage, there are still significant gaps in soil data relevant to primary production. The extension program aims to address these gaps by providing soil mapping for survey areas around Kerikeri (approximately 34,000 hectares), Waipu to Whangārei (about 38,000 hectares), and North Whangārei (approximately 55,000 hectares). On the 30th of September, the Manaaki Whenua team travelled to Whangārei to give an in-person presentation of the work to date, an update of work to come, and answer more in-depth questions from staff about Northlands soils.

	<p>Presentation from Manaaki Whenua for NRC staff</p>
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Freshwater Farm Plans

Freshwater Farm Plans continues to be seen by the coalition government as a practical way for farmers and growers to identify, manage and reduce the impact of farming on the freshwater environment. The Freshwater Farm Plans roll programme was planned to occur in tranches. Northland Regional Council was in the last tranche. We were planning to commence roll out in August this year. The rollout programme process however involves an ‘Order in Council’ carried out by central government. The Northland roll out programme has not been through the ‘Order in Council’ process and is currently on hold while the government reviews the freshwater farm plan system.

Sector groups and farmers have advised the coalition government that the current system is too costly and complex. The government is therefore currently exploring if there are ways to make the system more cost-effective and practical for farmers. In the interim, the Government has also recently announced that they will formally place current implementation on hold for earlier tranche Councils (e.g. Southland and Waikato).

Further information on the changes being explored will be covered as part of the 'Resource Management update' presentation. The government currently expect these changes to be in place by mid-2025.

The Northland Regional Councils implementation programme around freshwater farm plans has therefore changed accordingly. Workstreams around communication, training for auditors and certifiers and the database for recording information being developed with other regional councils have been paused. The following work however continues:

- Developing a land management work programme to support farmers undertaking risks assessment as a foundation to freshwater farm planning.
- Freshwater Plan Change workstreams to look at options as to how freshwater Farm Plans could be better utilised in rules (see separate agenda item).
- Staff involvement in the MfE Reference Group on the review of freshwater farm plan system.
- Development of the Catchment Context Challenges and Values (CCV) for the Northern Wairoa catchment. There are currently no plans to change the role of CCCV's as part of the government review. They are also considered to play a key role in supporting current implementation of industry farm environment plan programmes (NZGAP and Fonterra's Tiaki) and our land management programme.

The on-going workstreams above are envisaged to build a strong foundation for commencing implementation from mid-2025, following the governments review.

Natural Resources Unit: (Science, Data, Water Quality, Hydro teams)

Highlights for the Natural Resources Unit (NR Unit) include completing four major projects initiated in the 2018 long term plan (LTP). Additional to these projects, the NR unit has been busy engaging with hapū across the motu on a wide range of mahi and issues.

Big LTP projects completed are:

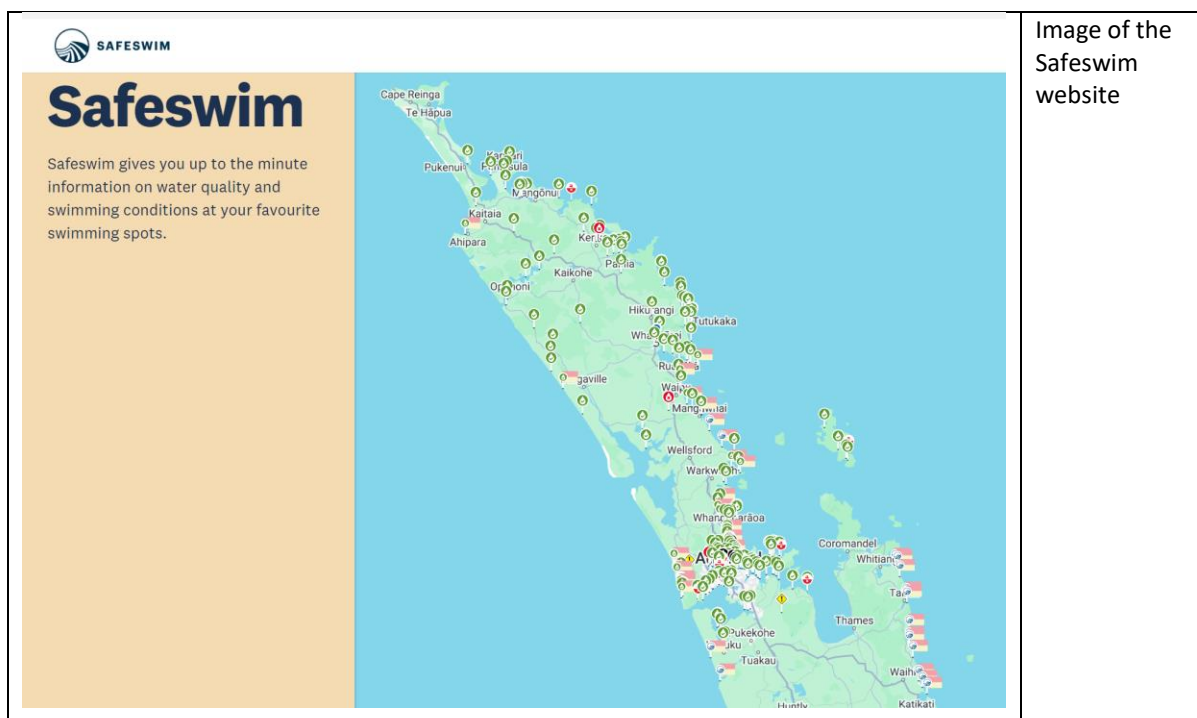
1. Safeswim
2. Data Automation tool
3. Digital River Network
4. Land use layer

Safeswim:

Safeswim provides real-time advice on the level of risk associated with swimming specific locations. Safeswim allows beach users to make informed decisions on when and where to swim. Safeswim is a collaboration between Auckland Council, Surf Life Saving New Zealand, Watercare, Northland Regional Council, Auckland Regional Public Health Service and Drowning Prevention Auckland.

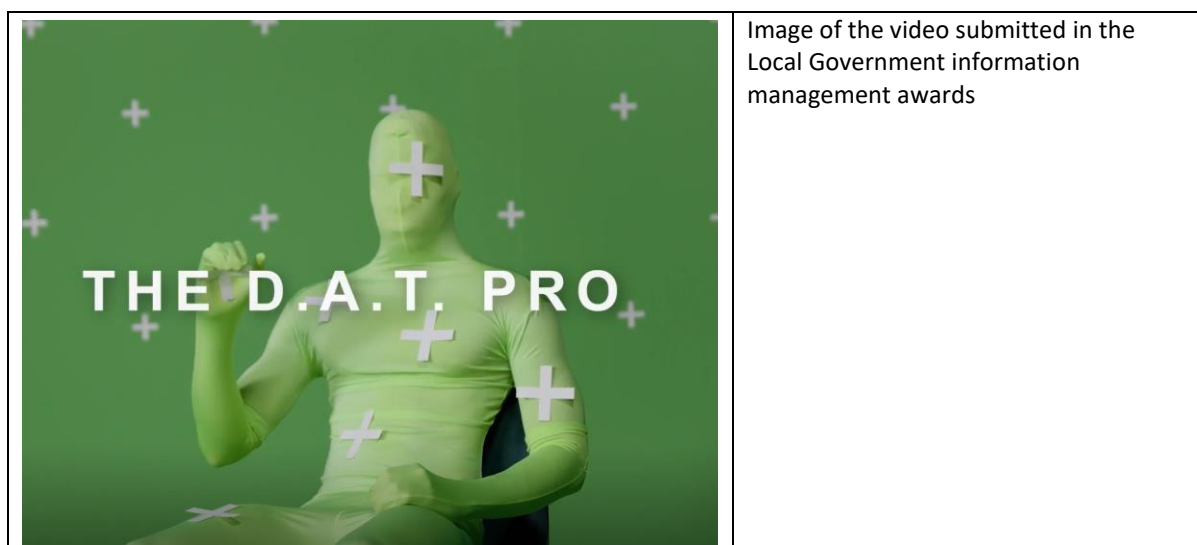
Below is a link to the site that provides more detailed information:

<https://www.safeswim.org.nz/>



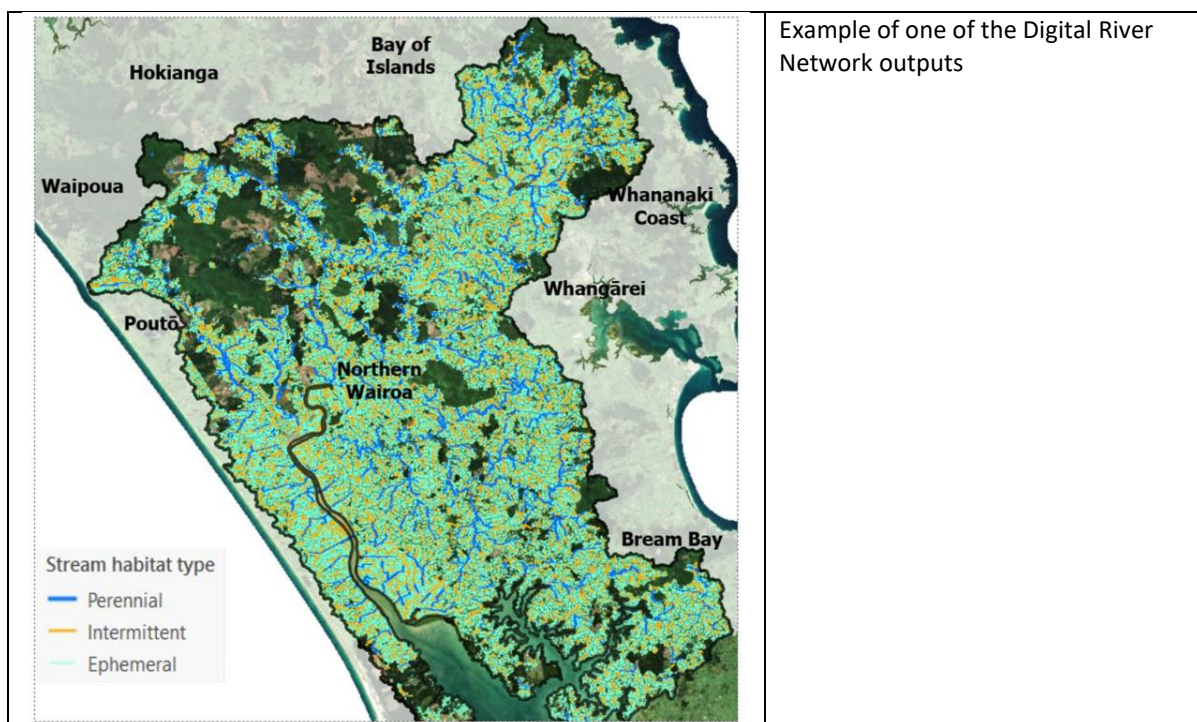
Data Automation Tool: DAT PRO

The number of environmental data points Council collects is increasing by nearly one million data points every year. Each data point is manually checked before it is used for analysis. Council staff embarked on a mission to build a tool that would replace people manually checking data. The tool automates the checking process, this tool was called “DAT PRO”. Data checking that took seven hours now takes one hour. Below is a video that gives a good overview of how it works. This tool was a finalist in the 2023 Local Government Information management awards.



Digital River Network

Typically, rivers and streams are mapped using photo imagery and other techniques which have some large errors. The DRN used laser technology that has mapped all streams to 0.5 m accuracy. NRC was the first Council to develop a regional DRN, a massive achievement for staff who worked on this project over multiple years. This project came in underbudget and was completed for a total cost of \$70k.



Land use Layer

Council approved \$160k to develop a high-resolution land-use GIS layer with the capability of integrating key regional scale information (e.g. soil, geology, landcover, land use intensification) which is critical for improved freshwater accounting, economic impact assessment, policy development, and efficient implementation of land management mitigation measures. Staff have now completed the GIS layer; the project was delivered on time and on budget.

Natural Resource Unit Māori Engagement highlights:

In recent years the NR Unit has come under increased pressure from hapū wanting to upskill in environmental monitoring. In order to service this demand, Council repurposed a role to help hapū upskill in western monitoring. Since February 2024 the Environment Monitoring Officer – Māori Relationships has met with 19 hapū/ Kaitiaki groups over 28 meeting to provide the awahi as required.

Staff engaged with Ngāti Rēhia, Patuharakeke and Nga Kaitiaki o Ngā Wai Māori regarding the monitoring action from Tāiki E. The engagement occurred over two wānanga including a very special moment where Patuharakeke share some of their mātauranga on whales.



Patuharakeke sharing their mātauranga with Council staff

There have been many highlights for the NR Unit team member when engaging with hapū. Below are some but not all of the highlights:

Ahipara Takiwā:

In March 2022 Te Rarawa formally contacted Council regarding concerns they had for the safety of their mokopuna swimming in the Wairoa stream at a local swimming hole in Ahipara.

Staff then met with the Ahipara Takiwā on marae and listened to their concerns. A 12-month catchment investigation was initiated by the Natural Resource Unit. The investigation concluded that upstream land use was impacting the health of the Wairoa stream. Council Land Management team is now working alongside the Ahipara Takiwā and Te Rarawa so support the restoration of the Wairoa with fencing and riparian planting.

Ngāti Rēhia:

The Water Quality team and other Council staff were invited onto the wharehau named Te Whetu Marama in Takou Bay. Ngāti Rēhia explained the deep history of Takou Bay and their connection to the whenua. Ngāti Rēhia were going to bless the new Council water quality monitoring but then decided to bless the Council team members.

During the day Ngāti Rēhia talked about their mātauranga and some of their western monitoring aspirations. Council staff have worked with Ngāti Rēhia and NIWA to develop a pāua monitoring program that hapū will undertake annually. Staff have also worked with Ngāti Rēhia regarding inanga spawning habitat surveys and SHMAK monitoring.

The support from Council fulfils part of its obligations under the Mana Whakahono ā Rohe agreement.

Te Roopu Taiao O Utaura:

Regular hui to progress their freshwater aspirations that is well attended by kaitiaki.

Te Runanga O Te Rarawa:

Ongoing hui with a keen group of young kaitiaki to progress their training workshops.

Te Runanga O Ngai Takoto:

eDNA sample training and developing a freshwater monitoring programme, involving a team of young men who are already doing riparian planting and fencing.

Maunga Taniwha Ki Rangaunu Trust:

Kaitiaki working to determine saltwater wedge for inanga spawning habitat research.

Kaikohe Wastewater Treatment Plant:

Grouping of seven hapu within the Kaikohe area that want to establish a control monitoring site in the upper catchment above the Kaikohe wastewater treatment plant.

Doubtless Bay Community Led Roopu:

Group of Hapū (Ngati Aukiwa, Ngāi Takiora, Ngāti Matakairiri, Matarahurahu) who have bi monthly hui with DOC, NRC, FNDC, MPI, Honeymoon Valley Landcare Group and Industry leaders (Fulton Hogan) to discuss environmental concerns, project outcomes and funding support etc.

Grant Strategies Workshop:

Coordinating multiple hapū and iwi coordinators to undertake training workshop to improve success rates with funding applications. Also provided information on a website that lists fund providers both national and international and philanthropists.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil

TITLE: Freshwater Plan Change Work Programme

From: Tami Woods, Policy and Planning Manager

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 12 September 2024
Group Manager/s:

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

This paper reports on work programmes that are presently underway since council gave direction to pause delivery of the Proposed Fresh Water Plan Change. These work programmes were agreed by council at a workshop held 14 May 2024.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommended actions

That the Natural Resources Working Party:

1. Note the proposed work programme.
2. Provide feedback on the proposed work programme.
3. Note that work programme progress will continue to be reported to the Natural Resources Working Party over the next 12-18 months.

Background/Tuhinga

Council developing a freshwater plan change since 2020, as required by the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM), with the intent to notify the plan change by the (then) deadline of December 2024.

As part of the process to develop the plan change, council decided to prepare a Draft Freshwater Plan Change for public consultation, with the draft and associated action plan and other consultation documents released in October 2023.

In December 2023, the government amended the Resource Management Act to extend the deadline for notification to December 2027 and signalled further freshwater legislative reforms planned over the next 18-24 months.

The Council agreed to continue with the consultation phase on the draft, as the feedback would provide vital information to assist in further work.

A total of 583 total written responses were received.

The feedback received highlighted that further work was required on how best to manage highly erodible land, stock exclusion, forestry activity and better utilise freshwater farm plans as a tool to provide a more flexible, property-specific approach. Another key theme was providing more analysis of the costs and benefits of the various options and in particular economic and social implications for landowners and the region as a whole.

The concept of recognising waterways as living entities with legal rights along with how a targeted water allocation policy might work (and how to prevent/phase out over-allocation given climate change) was a key theme from tāngata whenua.

Most Māori also expressed strong views that NRC should be supporting and enabling tāngata whenua to use mātauranga māori (alongside NRC staff undertaking western science monitoring) and that NRC should explore opportunities for more effective freshwater management through contracting iwi and hapū, as well as joint-management arrangements (s.36B of the RMA) and transfer of powers and functions (s.33).

Representatives from primary sector and community groups and tāngata whenua also indicated a strong desire to continue to work with NRC staff to develop workable policies and provisions prior to the notification of a proposed plan.

At the Council workshop on 14 May the following next steps were endorsed:

1. The Draft Freshwater Plan Change - Consultation Summary Report is made publicly available on council's website.
2. That notification of a Proposed Freshwater Plan Change is deferred until after the release of the revised National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.
3. Staff continue to collaborate with Primary Sector Liaison Group and tāngata whenua representatives to undertake further work on stock exclusion, freshwater farm plans, fencing and planting incentives and support, mapping of Highly Erodible Land (HEL), forestry provisions and s.32 Analysis;
4. Staff continue to work with tāngata whenua representatives on links between the plan change process, key recommendations provided by TWWAG and Te Tiriti Strategy (for example, Actions 7 and 8 relating to monitoring and Action 21 relating to transfer of functions and duties).
5. Communication package, including updated www.wai-it-matters.nz website text;
 - a. Acknowledgement letters sent to those who provided detailed feedback;
 - b. Six-monthly email pānui be sent to those who indicated they wished to be kept informed; and
 - c. a media release - to close the feedback loop with the general public.

This paper provides further information on the work programme in response to bullets 3 and 4 above.

Work Programme

1. Primary Sector Liaison Group and the Tangata Whenua Advisory Group Collaborative Workstreams

Five workstreams are being progressed as a priority on the basis that these attracted a lot of feedback in consultation and are likely to remain issues for Northland regardless of the direction in the revised NPS-FM:

1. Mapping Highly Erodible Land (HEL)
2. Managing livestock access to waterways, riparian margins and HEL
3. Earthworks / vegetation clearance on HEL
4. Afforestation provisions
5. Farm Dairy Effluent discharges.

The workstreams each include nominated members from the Tangata Whenua Advisory Group (TWWAG) and the Primary Sector Liaison Group. Workshops will occur once a month. Each topic will be addressed one after another over the next 12 to 15 months.

To date two workshops have been undertaken on Topics 1 and 2.

For Topic 1, Mapping Highly Erodible Land, feedback was sort from the group on the scope of work and options to improve how Highly Erodible Land could be mapped. Further mapping work is then envisaged to occur later this year then updated maps/mapping scenarios discussed with the working group in 2025.

Workshops on topic 2 to 5 will explore different options as to how the topics could be managed through the plan. The options will range from status quo through to greater use of freshwater farm plans or separate rules.

The working group will collectively evaluate the options effectiveness and efficiency from their different perspectives.

These options will then be further analysed against the revised NPS FM once released.

The resulting analysis will be provided to the Council to inform the development of content in the proposed Freshwater Plan Change and/or Action Plan.

In addition to the five workstreams above, it is also proposed that we work with both the Primary Sector Liaison Group and the Tangata Whenua Advisory Group on the section 32 analysis. To support this work, we have also sought support from the Access to Experts programme to help with social and economic analysis.

2. Tangata Whenua Workstreams

Workstreams in response to the Council direction under bullet four (above) on the 14 May Workshop can be split into two categories.

The first are actions consistent with Tāiki ē around monitoring, transfer of powers and functions and delivery of regulatory services. These workstreams are being progressed as part of the Council's Tiriti Strategy and Implementation Plan.

The second group of actions that relate to key recommendations from TWWAG, and key themes received in feedback on the draft plan change around the concept of recognising waterways as living entities with legal rights along with options around how a targeted water allocation policy might work.

To support analysis and options on these topics staff have approached the Access to Experts programme. If successful, the work would identifying potential options that would be presented to Council to inform the development of the proposed Freshwater Plan Change and/or Action Plan.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil

TITLE: 'Tidy up' and 'Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe' Plan Changes

From: Alison Newell, Policy Specialist; Michael Payne, Policy Specialist and Tami Woods, Policy and Planning Manager

Authorised by Group Manager/s: Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 12 September 2024

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

In the 2024-2034 Long Term Plan, council budgeted \$55,000 in 2024/25, and \$50,000 in 2026/27 and 2027/28 to support a 'Tidy Up' Plan change and a plan change to align the Regional Plan with the Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Beach Management Plan. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement from the Natural Resource Working Party of the proposed approach for developing these plan changes.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommended actions

1. That the Natural Resources Working Party endorse the development of the plan changes outlined in this report.
2. The Natural Resources Working Party recommend to council that:
 - a. The draft minor tidy up plan change is endorsed by the Natural Resources Working Party before it is brought to council for adoption.
 - b. The draft Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Plan Change is endorsed by Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Board before it is brought to council for adoption.
3. That staff seek approval from council to proceed with the plan changes as outlined in this report and as per the recommendations of the Natural Resources Working Party.

Background/Tuhinga

1. Tidy-Up Plan Change

The Regional Plan for Northland has now been in effect for over a year, during that time staff have identified aspects of the plan that are unclear, difficult to interpret or contain errors. This is fairly typical as a new plan beds in.

The Policy and Planning Team are preparing a plan change to identify and correct provisions of the Regional Plan that need to be made to improve interpretation or correct errors.

The plan change will be confined to minor matters to ensure the best chance of getting the plan change in place as soon as possible and manage the risk and cost associated with Environment Court Appeals.

2. Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Plan Change

In 2015 Te Hiku a Te Ika Iwi Treaty Settlements established Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe (TOAT) Board (the Board) as the statutory body to prepare a Beach Management Plan and provide governance and direction to all agencies over the management of TOAT beach management area. In 2021, after extensive public consultation, the Board approved the Beach Management Plan which sets out the vision, objectives and desired outcomes for the beach, and includes various actions that are required to achieve the vision, including those requiring a plan change to the Proposed Regional Plan for Northland (Regional Plan).

Under the Treaty Settlement, council "must recognise and provide for" the Beach Management Plan (emphasis added), and the regional plan change is identified as the main means to implementing the Beach Management Plan.

Both FNDC and DOC have already released their proposed plan changes (to the District Plan and the Northland Conservation Management Strategy respectively) that recognise and provide for the TOAT Beach Management Plan. FNDC have completed hearing relevant submissions and further submissions on the proposed TOAT District Plan provisions and DOC recently released their proposed Te Hiku CMS for public submissions which close in October.

The actions in the Beach Management Plan relating to this proposed plan change are:

A6.	Provide GIS mapping expertise and templates to support Iwi, Hapū and whānau to identify wāhi tapu and sites of significance in the Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Management Area, for the purposes of including these for protection in the district and/or regional plans.
A7.	Include sites identified in A6 in the regional and district plans for protection as relevant.
A9.	Identify Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe and Te Ara Wairua as a culturally significant landscape in the regional and district plans and specify provisions requiring protection from inappropriate activities.
A12.	Reflecting Tikanga Māori, include rules in the regional plan prohibiting the scattering of human ashes in the sea, on the beach, on sand dunes and in waterways.
A20.	Change the regional and district plans so that activities that require resource consent in the Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Management Area, or adjacent to the Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Management Area that may have an impact on Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe, must include in their assessment of environmental effects an analysis of the effects on Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe.
A21.	Change the regional and district plans to recognise that the Board must be considered an affected person/body regarding notification of a resource consent application where the adverse effects on Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe are minor or more than minor.
A35.	Amend regional and district plans to require resource consent for new commercial activities related to Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe, including requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For the assessment of consistency with the vision, objectives and desired outcomes outlined in this Beach Management Plan. 2. That specify that the Board is an affected person regarding notification of an application, where the adverse effects on Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe are considered minor or more than minor.

At its July meeting the Board recommended council proceed with developing a proposed plan change to implement the relevant actions in the Beach Management Plan.

3. Development of the plan changes

Staff propose that the Natural Resources Working Party oversees the development of the Tidy Up Plan Change. This will mean content of the plan change is workshopped with the Working Party of the course of the plan change process, and the draft plan change is brought to the Working Party for endorsement before bringing it to full council for approval.

With Regard to the Te Oneroa-a-Tōhe Plan Change, it is proposed that this is overseen in a similar manner but by the TOAT Board, with regular updates brought to the Natural Resources Working Party.

The full Council will be responsible for the decision to notify the plan changes, and so it may be necessary to involve full council in future workshops before the matter is brought to the formal council meeting.

The development of the content of the plan change will occur between September and May 2024. A decision around notification is anticipated to come to Council in June 2025. If hearings are required, staff anticipate these will occur in 2025/26 financial year.

Bundling of both plan changes together

Both plan changes are proposed to be run concurrently to gain efficiencies in process and share costs, where possible. The TOAT Board at its July meeting also endorsed the TOAT Plan Change

being run concurrently with the 'Tidy-up' plan change to maximise efficiencies and cost savings where possible.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil

TITLE: Land Management Review

From: Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao and Ellen Williamson, Land Programme Manager

Authorised by Group Manager/s: Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 12 September 2024

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to outline the revised land management approach and to seek endorsement to from the Natural Resources Working party for recommencing delivery of the Efund for the next financial year.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommended actions

1. That the Natural Resource Working Party recommend to council that delivery of the Environment Fund is taken off hold for the 2024-2025 financial year.

Background/Tuhinga

The Freshwater Farm Plan Regulations 2023 (the Regulations) initially required Northland Regional Council to commence rollout of the farm plan system by August 2024. Full time equivalent (FTE) costs associated with implementing the regulations was estimated to be around 8 FTE across the organisation. To support the implementation of the regulations, council decided through its 2024-2034 LTP to pause delivery of the Efund over years 1 and 2 of the LTP. Doing so would free up land management staff to support the farm plan system development and delivery. Unspent Efund is transferred to the Land Management Reserve, which could in turn be used to initially fund the role out of the farm plan system.

The Government has made it clear that it is committed to supporting a Fresh Water Farm Plan (FWFP) system. However, the role out is on pause while changes to the regulations, or the relevant parts of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA), are considered. The latest estimates are that changes could be in place by mid-2025. It remains unclear what these changes would look like.

Despite there being uncertainty around timing and the details of future changes to the freshwater farm plan system, staff have continued with several workstreams linked with the system implementation. One of these workstreams includes reviewing the service delivery model of the land team to complement and enhance the freshwater farm plan system.

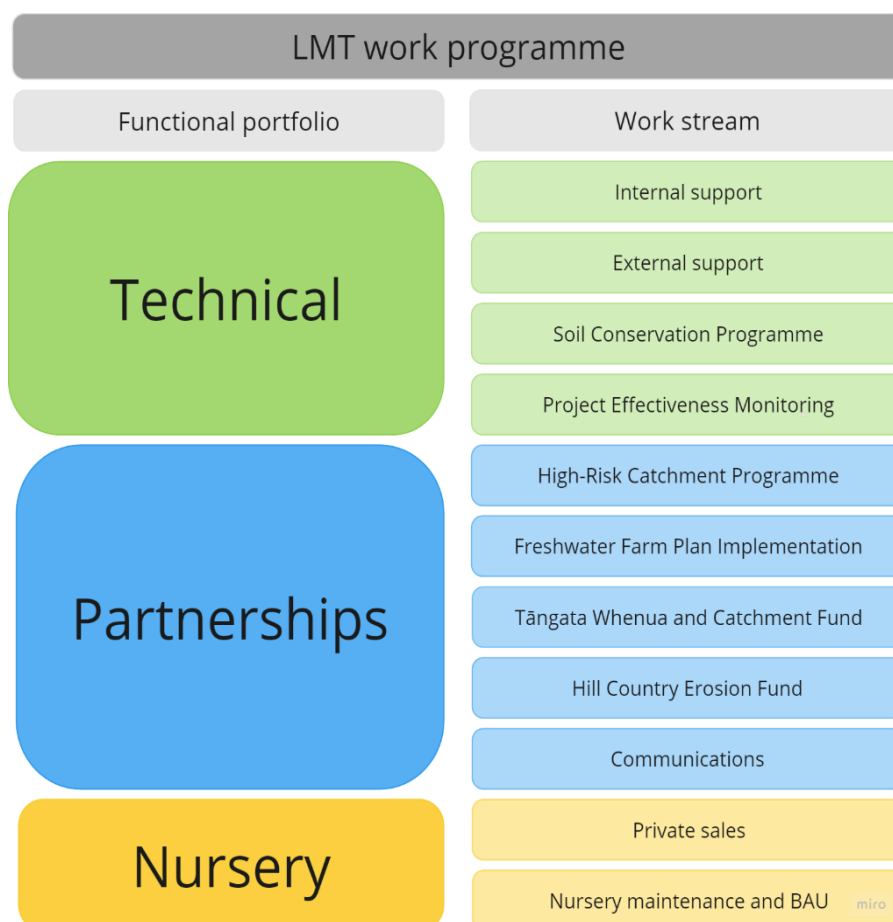
Staff have undertaken a review of the delivery model for land management services with the goal of focusing efforts the places where they are most needed; and to be able to support freshwater farm plans when they are rolled out. The purpose of this report is to outline the revised land management approach and to seek endorsement to from the Natural Resources Working party for recommencing delivery of the Efund for the next financial year.

Service delivery changes

The Land Management Team (LMT) is currently undergoing a review of its service delivery model. This is a chance to take pause, reflect on our work to date, and consciously move forward in a fit for purpose way. The Land Management Team has experienced an extended period of change over the last couple of years, leading to instability in both work programme and staffing. The purpose of reviewing of the service delivery model is to create sustainability within the team allowing us to move forward with clarity and the ability to readily adapt to future changes. No additional resourcing is required.

Work programme

One of the key actions through the service delivery review is the creation of a sustainable Land Management Team (LMT) work programme. This work programme splits the work of the team into three functional portfolios so we can better resource, train, and recruit for specific requirements. Within each functional portfolio is the associated work streams that fit that function. These include two new work streams (*Project Effectiveness Monitoring* and *High-Risk Catchment Programme*) and the reinforcement of previously existing work as shown below:



In order to effectively deliver the new service delivery model, it is proposed that the EFund be reinstated in the 2025/26 financial year, 1 year ahead of end of the LTP pause. The EFund will be delivered through the new work stream: High Risk Catchment programme.

High Risk Catchment Programme:

The High Risk Catchment Programme is proposed as a revised approach to delivering Land Management Services. Historically, the delivery model has relied on working with willing landowners who already have a relationship with NRC or proactively reach out for land management support and funding. This model can bias where funding and support is delivered and can also spread resources very thin across the Northland region. The outcome is that funding and support is not necessarily targeted to those areas that would most benefit from it.

The revised programme is intended to focus on proactively supporting catchments/sub-catchments across Te Taitokerau based water quality risk (e.g. high risk erosion potential, sensitivity of receiving environment). This programme will result in the team working in catchments most in need of land management support and represents a transition away of the current “working with the willing” model. This means that, while priming the rural community for the future implementation of both the Freshwater Plan Change and Fresh Water Farm Plans, we are also providing support that is

otherwise relevant should these regulations not have direct effects on a landowner or to those who may not have had a lot of previous contact with/support from council. This support will come in the form of a 'package' of tools to choose from, meaning we can adapt our support to be the most appropriate for each situation. This includes risk mapping, mitigation plans based on risk, and EFund support to assist with the implementation of mitigations. Any actions to be funded will meet the already existing EFund criteria (see Attachment 1.)

The matrix for determining the risk scale for the high-risk catchments is under development but will have a freshwater focus with considerations given to council-wide strategies such as the Soil Conservation, the Climate Change Strategy and Tāiki ē.

Project Effectiveness Monitoring:

This work stream is a new part of the LMT service delivery model dedicated to reviewing the effectiveness of projects the Land management Team have funded in the past. This will allow us to have a better understanding of which types of support have been best outcomes in terms of positive environmental and behavioural changes. This will also enable us to make better informed decisions regarding the best use of funding in the future. The work stream will look at the effectiveness of land management treatments, as well as behaviour change in previous funding participants. A one-year pilot will run over the 2024/25 financial year, establishing the process and resourcing required for the programme to become BAU.

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Attachment 1: Approved Environment Fund mitigation approaches [↓](#) 

Appendix 1. Approved Environment Fund mitigation approaches.

Treatment	Description
Erosion treatment	Sediment from erosion on farmland is one of the most significant contaminant in Northland's waterways. Erosion treatment options such as poplar pole planting, retirement fencing, and afforestation are important mitigation options for improving water quality.
Stock exclusion from wetlands and wetland enhancement.	Supporting landowners to maintain and protect wetlands is considered an appropriate mitigation approach given the substantial amount of wetland loss that has occurred in Northland and their ability to hold and retain sediment. This is despite the regulatory requirements to exclude stock from these ecosystems. Moreover, those regulatory requirements only apply to wetlands that exceed 500m ² in area. Support to exclude stock from smaller wetlands will also help with the overall protection of wetlands across the region. In addition, there are likely to be opportunities to enhance wetlands through pest plant control and planting and opportunities to fence and enhance wetlands as a package of work.
Wetland creation	Northland has lost many of its wetlands through drainage. New wetland creation through fencing and returning water tables back to natural levels may be an appropriate means of enabling wetlands to be created and thus start to reverse the current trend of wetland loss.
Stock exclusion that exceeds the statutory requirements	Stock exclusion that exceeds the statutory requirements (for example substantially exceeding the buffer between the stream bank and the fence line) could provide enhanced environmental benefits over statutory requirements.
Biodiversity enhancement adjacent to or within outstanding waterbodies or waterbodies with high biodiversity values	<p>Biodiversity enhancement activities can have major flow on effects to improve stream health. Improved biodiversity within riparian margins can support a more diverse, resilient and intact stream ecosystem. Key mitigation options could include riparian planting, pest plant control and improved management of fish passage.</p> <p>Given planting can be costly compared to other mitigation options, it is proposed that planting is limited to outstanding waterbodies, top 150 wetlands and streams adjacent to mapped Terrestrial Top 30 Sites (e.g. sites that are in the top 30% ranking by biodiversity potential).</p>

TITLE: Catchment Managment Planning

From: Justin Murfitt, Strategic Policy Specialist

Authorised by Ruben Wylie, Pou Tiaki Taiao, on 12 September 2024
Group Manager/s:

Whakarāpopototanga / Executive summary

At the meeting of 26 March 2024, council approved the development of a business case to identify cost effective solutions and the resourcing required to implement measures to improve freshwater in the Taumarere catchment and its coastal receiving waters. The catchment contributes a significant proportion of the sediment impacting the inner Bay of Islands and is a good representation of Northland's freshwater issues – it is therefore is an ideal pilot for such catchment planning initiatives.

While the focus is on improving water quality (with a particular focus on reducing sediment and *E.coli* concentrations), mitigation measures are very likely to have co-benefits such as reducing peak flows, increased climate change resilience and improved ecosystem health and cultural values. Martin Jenkins have been engaged to develop the business case given their experience and expertise in this field (including in Northland).

Initial scoping for a similar project for the Hokianga Harbour catchment is also being undertaken as part of the contract with Martin Jenkins. It is anticipated the Taumarere case will be completed by the end of 2024 calendar year, after which point staff will move on to focusing on the Hokianga case, which is a much more complex catchment. Staff will be available to give a verbal update at the working party meeting.

Ngā mahi tūtohutia / Recommended actions

1. That the working party continue to be updated on progress with these catchment planning initiatives.

Background/Tuhinga

Not applicable

Ngā tapirihanga / Attachments

Nil