



Whakarāpopototanga Mahere Hopuwai o Mōtū

Mōtū Catchment Plan Summary



HE KUPU ARATAKI INTRODUCTION

What is the Upper Mōtū Catchment Plan?

The Mōtū Catchment Plan is the planning document that outlines the vision and ideas about how to manage the freshwater resources within that Upper Mōtū, Koranga, Opatō Pakihi catchments within the Gisborne District area.

The Mōtū Catchment Plan will be a statutory document – a regional plan – and the draft Plan has been prepared to meet the requirements of the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM) 2020.

The draft Plan contains objectives, rules, limits and targets to achieve the vision and environmental outcomes outlined in the Plan. Because in some areas water quality is degraded, it includes an Action Plan which identifies projects to achieve the vision and environmental outcomes.

How was the draft Upper Mōtū Catchment Plan developed?

The Council worked with a group of stakeholders representing the catchment plan area and its values to develop the draft Plan. Information from three public meetings/workshops, information gathering from stakeholders and iwi as well as some specific science studies informed the development of the draft Plan. We are at the point now where we are seeking feedback on the draft Plan.

If you have feedback on the draft Mōtū Catchment Plan it needs to be with the Council by 18 November 2022.

Please send your feedback by email to trmp@gdc.govt.nz

About the Upper Mōtū Catchment Plan Area

The Upper Mōtū Catchment

The Mōtū River begins in the Matawai Conservation Area and flows northwards through the Raukumara Ranges to the Bay of Plenty. The total catchment area is 1373 km², and the river is 147km in length. Within the Gisborne – Tairāwhiti region, the catchment area is 700km² and covers areas of indigenous forest, plantation forest and pastoral farming. Mōtū and Matawai are the two main villages within the catchment, with fewer than 100 people living in Matawai and only 6 permanent residents' houses in Mōtū.

The main land use within the catchment area is pastoral farmland covering 65% of the land area. There are small amounts of forestry. The remaining areas are dominated by native vegetation cover.

Most farming is sheep and beef with some deer farming. There are two dairy farms in the catchment and several other

farms provide dairy support for dairy farms in the Bay of Plenty. The beef farming that is present is often intensive, and also situated adjacent to the river.

Major tributaries of the upper Mōtū River are the Matawai Stream, the Waiwhero Stream, Whakamaria Stream, the Kokopumatarā Stream and the Waitangirua Stream. The Whakamaria, Kokopumatarā and Waitangirua Streams are included within the Water Conservation Order area.

The Mōtū River was the first river in New Zealand to gain protection from a Water Conservation Order as a “wild and scenic river”. The Water Conservation Order says the river should be preserved as far as possible in its natural state from the Mōtū Falls to the SH35 bridge.

The area upstream of the Mōtū Falls and the Water Conservation Order is not protected. However, activities and impacts on the upper Mōtū River are felt within the protected area and impact upon its values.

Ecologically, the Mōtū is categorised as an upland river – the only one in the region. Interestingly, one of the few places where weka and kiwi are known to co-exist.

There are a number of significant wetlands within the catchment – most notably the headwater wetland at the Matawai Conservation Area, the Alcuin Wetland and the Mōtū Wetland.

The upper catchment of the river has a diverse range of native freshwater invertebrates, with a number of rare species. Longfin eel, shortfin eel, koaro, shortjaw kokopu and torrentfish are found in some of the tributaries.

The Mōtū Falls act as a major barrier to native fish, meaning that non-migratory bullies, koura (freshwater crayfish) and eels are the main native fish species found in the upper Mōtū River.

Below the Falls, the Mōtū River and its tributaries have even more of threatened and at risk native fish species.

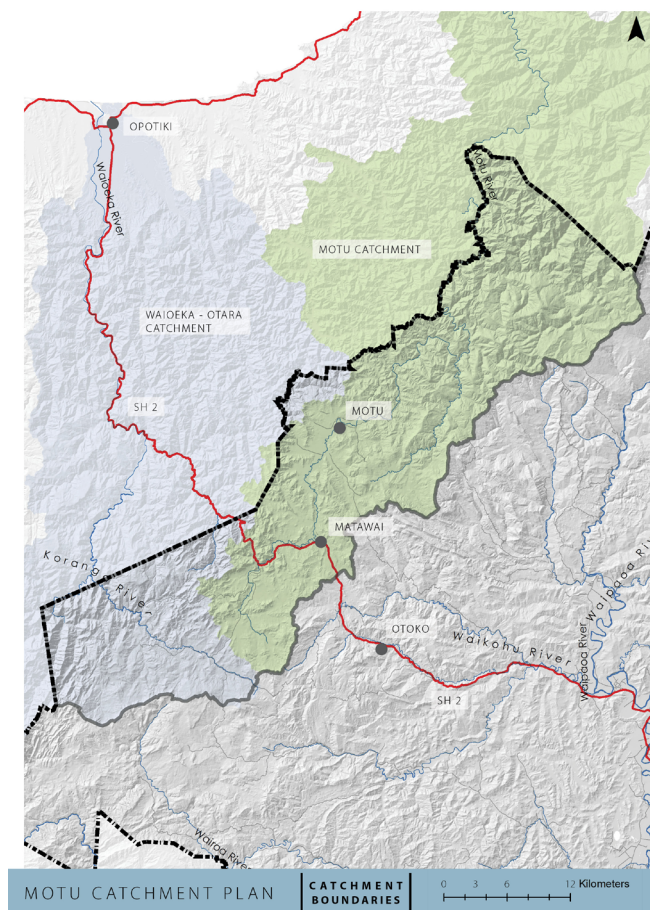
The Mōtū River and the Mangaotane Stream are also key habitats for Hochstetter's Frog and whio/blue duck.

The Mōtū is a nationally significant trout fishing river and is also recognised for its wilderness and recreational values.

Upper Waioeka – Otara Catchment

Some of the headwaters of the Waioeka – Otara Catchment are within the catchment plan area – these include the Koranga River, and its tributary the Moanui Stream, the Opatō Stream and Pakihi Stream. These streams and rivers are all well known for their clear water, high ecological values and high value trout fishery. They are important habitats for native fish as well as riverine species such as whio.

The catchments intersect the rohe of multiple iwi – Te Aitanga ā Māhaki, Te Whanau ā Apanui, Ngāi Tuhoe, Ngāti Ira and Whakatōhea.



What is in the draft Upper Mōtū Catchment Plan?

Freshwater Management Units

Two Freshwater Management Units (FMUs) have been identified – the Te Wai o Ngāhere FMU and the Farmlands and Settlements FMU. The draft Plan content is structured around these two FMUs.

Long-term Vision for the Catchment

The mauri of freshwater is protected and enhanced for the full extents of the Upper Mōtū and the Upper Waioeka – Otara Catchments.

The Mōtū River and its tributaries continue to be recognized locally and internationally as a significant destination for back country trout fishing. The waterways are safe for swimming, fishing and the harvesting of mahinga kai.

The outstanding natural and scenic values of Te Wai o Ngāhere FMU are maintained and protected from degradation. The FMU remains a bastion of high ecosystem health and ensures the catchment continues to be an important place for education, recreation and biodiversity.

The productive landscape of the Farmlands and Settlements FMU continues to provide for the productive and economic wellbeing of the Mōtū community. Sediment and E.coli no longer make their way into the waterways.

Sediment inputs are reduced across the Upper Mōtū and Upper Koranga rivers and riverbank erosion is substantially

reduced. Suspended and deposited sediment levels in the rivers have reduced to levels above national bottom lines and there is a corresponding improvement in fish and freshwater insect health and abundance within the catchment area.

The natural form and character of the Mōtū River is improved – targeted recovery work along the riparian margin naturalises the channel morphology, reduces streambank erosion and supports freshwater biodiversity.

Objectives of the draft Plan

There are three groups of objectives, recognising Te Mana o Te Wai and the priority set by this around management of freshwater under the NPSFM.

The first priority is the health and wellbeing of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems and there are three objectives.

Objective 1

To improve the water quality of the freshwaters in the catchment so that they support a diverse and abundant range of native biota.

Objective 2

To maintain the diversity of rare, threatened and unique riverine species in the catchment and undertake habitat improvements that enable threatened species to expand their range.

Objective 3

To ensure that wai tapu are free from human and animal waste, pollutants and excess sediment and that taonga are protected.

The second priority under Te Mana o te Wai is the health and needs of people and there are four objectives in this area.

Objective 4

To ensure that tributary streams and puna/springs within the catchment continue to provide for domestic use with healthy safe drinking water.

Objective 5

To improve the water quality in the catchment so that the local community are able to safely swim during the bathing season in the Farmlands and Settlements FMU and year round in the Te Wai o Ngāhere FMU.

Objective 6

To ensure that mahinga kai is plentiful and safe to harvest and eat and is able to provide food for the people of the rohe.

Objective 7

To maintain the existing natural character of the freshwaters in the catchment; and

- Restore the riparian environment in modified areas through planting and use of soft engineering methods as a preferred method for erosion protection; and
- Minimise any further straightening or relocation of the rivers and streams; and
- Avoiding the damming of the main rivers.

The third priority under Te Mana o te Wai is the ability of

people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing and there are six objectives in this area.

Objective 8

To maintain the nationally significant trout fishery values within the Mōtū and Koranga Rivers, including:

- Maintaining successful spawning in tributary streams; and
- Maintaining angler access to the river to fish at a range of locations.

Objective 9

To maintain the wild and scenic values that attract people to the Mōtū and Koranga Rivers and continue to provide for a range of recreation values that derive from these wild and scenic qualities.

Objective 10

To retain the use of streams of rivers in the catchment as the source of drinking water for livestock but undertake this in such a way that other values of the waterbodies are not compromised.

Objective 11

To ensure that the Mōtū River remains navigable for waka and they are able to launch, land and trails cross at traditional sites.

Objective 12

To ensure that farming is able to continue in the catchment as a major land use and to support the livelihood of the local community.

Objective 13

To enable the Mōtū River water to be used to support existing commercial and industrial uses, irrigation and cultivation of permanent and annual crops where there is water available and where its use does not compromise other values of the river.

How do the Catchment Plan Areas compare with the objectives?

Currently some of the objectives of the draft Plan are not being met. Some objectives of the draft Plan are not being met because of water quality degradation. Water quality in the Farmlands and Settlements FMU fails to meet the bottom lines set by the government. These attributes are:

- Visual clarity and deposited sediment. Research identified that riverbank erosion is the main source of this sediment.
- E.coli bacteria from faeces. Research identified that stock are the main source of this contamination.
- Dissolved Reactive Phosphorus. The main source of this is likely to be the sediment and soils in the catchment rather than fertiliser use.
- Macroinvertebrates – the insect life that lives in the waterways and supports a healthy ecosystem. We think that sediment is the main cause of poor insect numbers, but there are some localised issues in the Matawai Stream that might have different causes.
- Fish – other than trout and tuna (eels) there are no native fish present in the Upper Mōtū River – we think an extinction event occurred and that because of the

barrier of the Mōtū Falls, native fish were not able to repopulate the area. Tuna are awesome climbers so live in the upper catchment.

What is proposed to improve the water quality so it meets the objectives?

The draft Plan proposes a number of actions and measures to help meet the objectives and achieve the vision for the catchment plan area.

Water Quality Improvement Targets

We have identified the current (baseline) state for various measures of water quality within the catchment area. Where water quality is good, the aim is to maintain it at this level and where improvement is needed, the draft Plan proposes target attribute states, and gives a time frame for achieving the targets. Key targets include:

- Improving Ammonia levels in the Matawai Stream to reach the A band by 2031
- Improving visual clarity at all monitoring sites in the Farmlands and Settlements FMU to 0.85m and at the Matawai Conservation Area monitoring site to 1.0m by 2041 (this is still below the National Bottom Line but would be a significant improvement)
- Improving E.coli levels to the C band (above the National Bottom Line) by 2041, and to the D band by 2031
- Improving Macro-invertebrate health in the Matawai Stream to the C Band by 2036 and in the Mōtū River at the monitoring site above the Mōtū Falls to the B Band by 2036
- Improving deposited sediment and dissolved reactive phosphorus levels at the Kotare Station monitoring site to the C Band by 2036.

Upper Mōtū Catchment Plan specific Policies and Rules

- Setting a minimum flow for water take consents for the Upper Mōtū and Koranga Rivers that are the median flow for the rivers. This means that during summer the priority is that water remains in the river to support the ecosystem health. People wanting to extract water from the river for other than Permitted Takes (e.g. stockwater, domestic use) will need to provide storage, as the rivers will be below the minimum flow for water take consents for most of summer.
- Restricting further land conversion for intensive farming uses, including dairy farming, dairy support and winter intensive grazing. The rules proposed extend the current interim rules in the NES – Freshwater. They also include wider setbacks between dairy support and winter intensive grazing for the main named streams in the Koranga and Mōtū Catchment and make further Dairy Farm development a Non-complying Activity.
- Removing the Permitted Activity for small gravel takes from the Mōtū River and restricting this to tributaries. This is because disturbance of the bed of the Mōtū River increases riverbank erosion, destroys habitat and increases sedimentation.

Action Plan

A major part of the draft Upper Mōtū Catchment Plan is the Action Plan. This lists 17 key actions and gives dates for them to be achieved. There are a further 9 actions with no dates set. The Key Actions to be achieved in the next 5 years are:

- Developing an erosion management plan for the mainstem Mōtū River by 2023
- Ensuring that best practice cropping and breakfeeding practices are in place across the catchment by 2023
- Identifying and mapping all the wetlands by 2025
- Stock exclusion with 5m setbacks from the mainstem Mōtū and Koranga Rivers by 2026
- Riparian planting with native plants along the mainstem Mōtū and Koranga Rivers by 2026
- Developing a water quality improvement plan for the Matawai Stream by 2026
- Reviewing the resource consents for discharges and their consent conditions by 2026

Want to Know More?

You can read the full draft Mōtū Catchment Plan on the Council website here https://www.gdc.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0031/9976/motu-catchment-plan-background-2020.pdf or if you would like a paper copy sent to you please contact Janic Slupski at trmp@gdc.govt.nz

What happens next?

We are seeking feedback on the draft Plan by 18 November 2022. Following that feedback we will make any changes needed to the Plan before publicly notifying as a legal Proposed Plan for submissions. Because it will be a proposed Regional Plan, the rules in the Plan will take effect immediately. However, once submissions have been received there will be a hearing in front of RMA Commissioners and decisions released with any changes to the Plan.

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