



TAIRĀWHITI

REGIONAL FRESHWATER PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP

Hui agenda, minutes, and actions

Hui #6

Held at Rose Room, Lawson Field Theatre on 13 March 2024 at 09:00am

Advisory Group facilitator	Dr Jill Chrisp
Advisory Group members present	Stan Pardoe, Seanne Williams, Dave Hawea, Dianne Irwin, Taylor Howatson, Colin Kerlake, Alan Haronga, Phil Gaukrodger, Hannah Kohn, Samuel Lewis, Janine du Plessis (<i>temporary replacement for Joss Ruifrok</i>), Shanna Cairns, Murray Palmer
Council	Janic Slupski, Katrina Ungco, Ariel Yann le Chew, Paul Murphy, Sarah Thompson, Desiré du Plooy, Abi Wiseman Lois Easton, Wolfgang Kanz, Karen Inglis
Apologies	Mere Tamanui, Bronwyn Wilson-Hokianga, Laura Watson, Bella Hawkins, Elizabeth Kamana, Owen Lloyd, Matawhero Lloyd, Jacob Harrison, Leo Kelso, Joss Ruifrok

Agenda

Welcome	09:00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karakia and whakawhanaungatanga • Minutes and actions from hui #5 • Recap 	
Session 1 - Overview of Coalition Government's agreements	09:15
Session 2 – Wetlands	09:30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context, current state • Issues and options • Group exercise (20 min) 	
Leg stretch and cuppa tea	10:15
Report back on Session 2 on Wetlands	10:30
Session 3 – Riparian margins	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context and current state • Issues and options • Group exercise (20 min), report back (10 min) 	
Closing karakia	11:25
Shared lunch with both advisory groups	11:30 – 12:30

Summary of actions

	<i>Future Action *Refer to Parked List for summary</i>		<i>Current task</i>
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Tasks to be actioned

Notes:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each task is allocated a unique identifier e.g. T2 for ease of reference • The numbering continues from previous meeting minutes 			
Task	Actions	Responsible	Due
T22	Make presentation slides available to members	Freshwater team	24 April
T23	Share Council's access to high-quality information, inclusive of technical reports, scientific findings and government policy updates	Freshwater team	Ongoing
T24	Request to have more information on the Mangapoike Dam, how it was formed naturally, and then opened up through human intervention	Freshwater team	Asap

Minutes

Karakia and whakawhanaungatanga - welcome & housekeeping

1. The hui commenced with an opening karakia, followed by welcoming members back for the first hui of 2024.
2. Minutes and actions from the hui held on 13 December 2023 were taken as read and accepted as an accurate reflection.
3. Members were reminded to submit invoices after each meeting for payment purposes.
4. As customary, staff set the scene by recapping past hui topics and outlining 2024's focus on water quantity and how all topics covered will feed into the development of the Regional Freshwater Plan.

Session 1 – Overview of Coalition Government's 100-day plan

5. Staff presented, as a previous action item, the key points in the Coalition Government's 100-day plan, discussing its implications for both Council, as well as the Advisory Group.
6. The Government has passed legislation to repeal the Natural and Built Environment Act and the Spatial Planning Act. This includes provisions granting all councils an extra three years until 31 December 2027 to notify freshwater plans. The Government intends to initiate work on a replacement for the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) 2020. As an interim measure, amendments to the Resource Management Act are planned to change how consenting authorities apply Te Mana o te Wai hierarchy of obligations to individual consent applications and consenting decision-making processes. The process is expected to take 18–24-months and will involve consultation.
7. Staff gave the assurance that Council remains committed to publicly notify all freshwater plans under the current NPS-FM 2020 by mid-2026.
8. A Group member requested that staff share Council's access to high-quality information, inclusive of technical reports, scientific findings and government policy updates.

Session 2 – Wetlands

9. Staff provided an overview of, and context for, the highly threatened ecosystem of wetlands in the region, by clarifying definitions of wetlands and highlighting Council's mandate to identify them, using LiDAR technology for this purpose. The process of narrowing down identified wetlands is being conducted on a catchment-by-catchment basis.
10. During the presentation, the different types of wetlands and their main threats were discussed, along with various approaches and options for managing wetlands (This information was included in the pre-circulated Report 1 for this hui). The workshop session focused on the identified existing wetlands in the region and what actions should be taken to protect them.

11. Feedback from the Group emphasised the need for a holistic approach to wetlands, incorporating not only Western science but also mātauranga Māori, mapping the landscape, defining modifications, and addressing both plant and animal pest control.

Group exercise

12. The Group split into five sub-groups, facilitated by Council staff, to discuss wetland management: key activities impacting wetlands, considering the various approaches, pros and cons and the implications of what will and won't work in Tairāwhiti.
13. The verbatim feedback has been documented and is attached to these minutes **(Appendix 1)**.
14. Group feedback included several points regarding wetland management and protection:
 - 14.1. Need for a 'northern star' on how we want to protect and manage wetlands in the region. Seeking Council guidance and direction on what this could look like.
 - 14.2. Acknowledge wetland degradation and emphasised benefits from remaining wetlands while respecting mana whenua in the process.
 - 14.3. Recognise invasive species and pests as significant threats to wetland ecosystems.
 - 14.4. Highlight wetland maintenance in rural areas and the need to identify suitable locations for new wetlands.
 - 14.5. Address concerns relating to stock exclusion rules, fencing, access regulations, margins.
 - 14.6. Mitigate impacts of forestry through exclusion zones.
 - 14.7. Implement restoration management plans.
 - 14.8. Incentivise hill country farmers to participate in wetland conservation.
 - 14.9. Acknowledge funding as a crucial tool for wetland restoration.

Session 3 – Riparian margins

15. Staff presented the importance of riparian margins and discussed defining appropriate management areas based on ecological/cultural/social/recreational values.
16. Council mandates riparian margin distances of 5 meters, consistent with national regulations but smaller compared to international standards ranging from 10 to 50 meters. The width varies based on intended purpose, extending up to 100 meters for significant habitats. Scientific evidence supports their effectiveness, yet conflicts exist between economic interests and ecosystem health.
17. A matrix of catchment-by-catchment approaches was suggested as one size does not address area-specific problems.

Group exercise

18. The Group split into five sub-groups to discuss how appropriate riparian margin area should be defined, and how activities within riparian margins should be managed on

a regional scale. The discussions were facilitated by Council staff. Verbatim feedback has been recorded and is available (refer to **Appendix 2**).

Wrap-up and next steps in the process

19. Staff thanked the Group members for their contributions.

20. The next hui is scheduled for 24 April 2024, and will focus on water quantity as a topic.

Closing karakia

21. The hui closed at 11:30 with a karakia. The Group enjoyed a shared lunch with the Waipaoa Advisory Group.

PARKING LIST

The following matters have been captured from discussions of the **TAIRĀWHITI REGIONAL FRESHWATER PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP** hui. They are captured here to be incorporated as supplementary recommendations in the Group's final report and/or responded to directly.

Ref	Item/Action	Date raised	Status
T11	Future discussion on stock exclusion regulations and implications	16/8/23	Ongoing
T16	Provide opportunity for members to actively participate in the information analysis processes as we progress through plan development	11/10/23	Ongoing
T19	Invitation extended to identify any emerging topics that can be explored in more detail within a smaller group. The goal is to share the findings more broadly afterward	15/11/23	Ongoing
T20	Future discussions to include business sector, as current discussions only have environmental and community aspects.	13/12/23	Ongoing
T21	Revisit discussion on beds of rivers and lakes	13/12/23	tbc

Appendix 1 – Written feedback (Wetlands)

Questions:

1. Key issues: identify key regional issues FWAG members consider in the management of wetlands. What direction do FWAG members want to see in the regional management of wetlands?

2. How should we manage wetlands? What do FWAG members think of the approaches/options?

- Rely only on NES-F, SER and NES-CF to manage wetland activities?
- 'Plug the gaps'? Include some additional rules/requirements beyond NES's because:
 - NES-CF is permissive of forestry activities within/adjacent to wetlands (it trumps NES-F)
 - SER only requires stock exclusion from low slope land and no setbacks buffer
 - NES-F set rules utilising setbacks only (i.e within 10m, 100m), activity could be over 100m away, could lead to drainage of wetlands, but would be permitted under NES-F
- Additional rules for regionally significant wetlands and additional wetlands identified (through current regional mapping work being undertaken)

If you have time, also discuss the following:

3. How should we prioritise and encourage wetland management or restoration activities across the region - particularly as we work to map and ground truth the wetlands across Tairāwhiti (beyond the regionally significant wetlands)?

Should we focus on: larger wetlands; wetlands currently in better state (e.g. biodiversity, water quality etc.); those at imminent risk of deterioration; those at risk of specific activities?

GROUP 1

- Wetlands should have a 10 m riparian margins/setback buffer
- Encourage/incentivise farmers to fence ponds and have a gravity fed system/windmill pump
- Exclusion zone in forests around wetlands
 - Trees suck up water
 - Better for firefighting water supply too. Maybe 20 m.
- Nature is an entity
- Nature can take back what was taken if we allow it
- South island example where residents have to move out to allow wetland to be a natural wetland
 - Move with nature
- We need our 'kidneys' and 'livers'
- Invasive species are an issue – pest control

GROUP 2

- Use of wetland as a 'sieve'
 - Hard to clean out constructed wetland
- Regionally significant wetlands have had human intervention
- Perception around having a wetland on a property

- Need to flip it on the head and make property owners want it
 - Rebates
 - Encouragement of activities
- Need a northern 'star' – a vision for wetlands
 - More than stop loss of existing wetlands
 - What's realistic about reimagining values of wetlands
- Cleaning wetlands

GROUP 3

- Historical draining of wetlands
 - Associated with the Waipaoa
- Knowledge of where they were
 - Stan info
 - Freshwater & estuarine
 - Spring fed
- Impacts
 - Draining
 - Replacement with farmlands
 - Re-classification ("arm of the sea")
 - Mahinga kai
- Wetland values
 - Needs to be recognised "swamps" to another term
 - Mahinga kai
 - Flood mitigation
 - Sustaining groundwater
 - Biodiversity
 - Not just functional role
- Management?
 - Margins
 - Past vs present (lots of rules etc) – maximise
 - High value agricultural land
 - Allow wetlands to comeback where possible
 - Rules +++
 - Enforcement?

GROUP 4

Key issues

- Invasive species taking over
- Need to be able to identify where new wetlands could be formed
 - Areas that need that detention/value that the wetland can provide (e.g. sediment control)
- Need to better classify wetlands
 - Role they play in terms of land they are on the values they have
- Support values
- Recognise 'constructed' wetlands within forestry provide a significant ecological value
- Education needed in terms of where the margin is (not just open water)
- In forestry landscape have many seepages have established wetlands, also earthflow terrain
 - Recognise these for water retention values but aren't 'wetlands'
 - So can have some disturbance or temporary effects
- \$\$\$
 - To create and protect wetlands
 - e.g. \$\$ in natural heritage fund

How should we manage?

- From a regulatory perspective
- Definitely a need for more Tairāwhiti specific provisions?

- Needs to be more qualitative
 - Recognise gradient of activities, not everything Discretionary
- Recognise and support wetland growth that can occur
- Give them room to grow
- Make sure that regeneration of pines is controlled (wildings)
- Need to have setbacks from wetlands
 - Setbacks vary by the type of environment and size of wetland and values

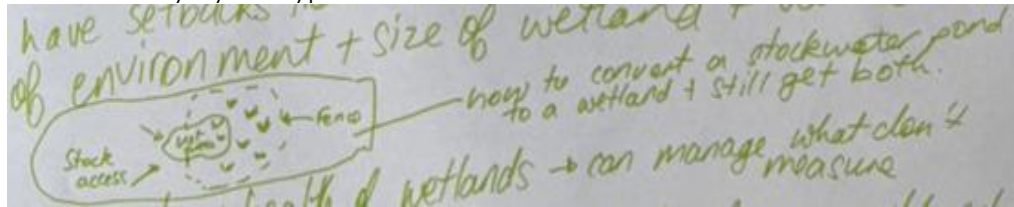


Figure 1: Text reads "how to convert a stockwater pond to a wetland and still get both"

Priorities

- Monitoring health of wetlands
- Can manage what don't measure
- More support for landowners
 - Rates relief for large wetlands
- Incentivise wetland management plan over resource consent
- Support/Recognise economic value of wetlands
- Link some wetland restoration regulations to water take consents/gravel takes
- Investments in wetlands should be recognised on LIMS as a value

GROUP 5

Issues

- Nutrification/eutrophication
 - Birds, stock access – need for water?
- Stock exclusion
 - Who pays for public good. Land fenced off
 - Loss of productive land
- GDC land – what's its obligations?
- Nick's Head – Divide between freshwater and saline
 - Limited extent of salt wedge – good example?

Management

- Mapping for cultural values
- Use wetland to strip nutrients from water – Chris Tanner
- Funding – enabling
- Holistic setting
 - Catchment planning
 - Action planning
 - Strategic context for identifying opportunities

Appendix 2 – Written feedback (Riparian Margins)

Questions:

1. How do we define an appropriate riparian management area? Do we base it on: the ecological/cultural/social/recreation values; the practical needs of adjacent land use; size and type of waterbody?
 - One size fits all (5m from a river, 5m from a lake);
 - Larger riparian areas for regionally significant waterbodies and aquatic ecosystem water bodies;
 - Align with SER requirements (i.e. 3m on low slope land) and/or any requirements in the new Plan for stock exclusion or horticultural setbacks from waterbodies
 - Vary for waterbodies with steep embankments or on high slope land
 - Differ for large/braided rivers
 - Bespoke for urban areas
2. Key issues: identify key regional issues FWAG members consider in the management of activities within riparian management areas? What direction do FWAG members want to see in the regional approach to activities within riparian management areas?
3. How should we manage activities within riparian management areas? What do FWAG members think of the approaches/options?
 - Use SER, NES-CF and NES-F to manage stock access and forestry activities.
 - Update (existing TRMP) rules for vegetation clearance (exotic and indigenous), infrastructure maintenance, lawfully established activities.
 - Additional or more stringent rules for activities in riparian margins of waterbodies with high values (i.e. regionally significant wetlands, outstanding waterbodies, and aquatic ecosystems waterbodies).
 - Additional stock access rules within riparian areas of higher sloped land

[key focus of discussion for this question should be around how/if activities such as earthworks, infrastructure development, vegetation clearance, maintenance of lawfully established structures, forestry (cable hauling, roads) should be managed or avoided in riparian management areas. Are some activities more appropriate in some situations, and others not, e.g. locating a new road within the riparian management area of a regionally significant wetland]

GROUP 1

- Riparian planting and pest management
- Native and non invasive plants
 - Need to see how new species of willow and poplar are performing
- Lakes should be wider
 - They don't move like rivers do
 - From average water level
- Common sense approach to margins setbacks on private land. Give & take to allow for access, rock formation
 - Landowners know their land
 - Taiao groups
 - Can do cheap fencing

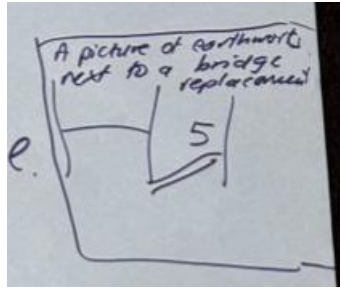


Figure 2: Text reads "A picture of earthworks next to a bridge replacement"

- Use species that have multiuse
- Slash
 - Key issue
 - Just put of up posts and wire until slash under control
 - Poles – intermediary solution
 - Seeds – flax, manuka

GROUP 2

- Give up a lot
 - Cost prohibitive
 - Sacrifice
- Erosion prone land
- Appropriate
- Regulations are what they are
- Evidence behind improvements of water quality
- Prioritisation
 - Economics
- No one saying we don't need it
- Planting can have detrimental impact on ability to manage areas
 - Vegetation can impact
- Catchment approach instead "right tree in right place"
 - Erosion prone
- Rushing into things
- Pushing requirements onto freshwater farm plans

GROUP 3

- Margins
 - How do we compare to other areas?
 - Local & international
 - Min 15 m, 20 m, ~30 m
 - Forest – 60 – 100 m
- Different sizes/purposes
 - Viewed as a resource?
 - Viewed as having intrinsic values?
 - Is the science available? (Yes)
- What margins work? For what?
 - Sediment (quality)
 - Ecosystem health
 - Mahinga kai
 - Flooding
- Taiao plans & farming practices
- Fencing? Tapes vs post
- Conflict between natural processes & economics
 - Floodplain mapping? R.O.G.
 - Bands in the NPS-FM National Bottom Lines
 - Floodplains fertile
- Mahinga kai

- Are they wide enough for lands?

GROUP 4

1. Definition of appropriate riparian management area
 - Need to recognise Stock Exclusion Regulations were based on flat land and dairy, aren't appropriate for hill country
 - Need to be much wider to have any benefit
 - Our farms are sheep & beef, not dairy
 - Stock exclusion regulations don't affect most of the region so are a distraction rather than a big deal here
 - Needs to recognise our environment
 - Variable approach based on a combination of land use and stream value
 - Recognise smaller streams often have higher values
 - Alternative option if there is data
 - Different widths for horticulture/cultivation vs forestry vs pastoral vs cattle/pigs
 - While it's easy to use catchment size/stream width that is not necessarily a reflection of values
 - Mosaic
 - Different types of waterbodies
 - Wide Waiapu braided river, vs
 - Channelised Motu river, vs
 - Raukokore's native bush river
2. Key issues
 - Need to recognise values contributed by riparian margins
 - Not good riparian management in urban areas or on the flats
 - Horticulture no setbacks
 - Need to understand more the state of our riparian areas
 - What are they like now? Are they monitored?
 - For stock exclusion
 - How can we recognise erosion problems
 - e.g. use of cattle collars and computer GIS for stock exclusion rather than build a fence which falls in the river
 - Need riparian margins on wetlands (matrix of definitions and setbacks)
 - Lakes are often classified as wetland so currently don't have riparian protection
3. How should we manage activities?
 - Mosaic recognising the challenges of our environment and land uses
 - Sheep don't impact the way cattle do
 - Need a lot more non-regulatory support and incentives for planting
 - If fence areas off, will become weeds (unless actively managed) or a fire risk
 - Cultivation setbacks need to be wider
 - Spraying setbacks are needed
 - Need to be providing a more solutions-focus not just rules-focus
 - Sheep vs cattle/pigs/horses vs cultivation vs forestry

GROUP 5

Issues

- Development in wrong places – affect water quality of streams
- Density of development
- e.Coli & sediment – stock access to waterways
- Previous willows and poplar planting – collapse
- Pine plantations – slash/debris

How to define riparian management area?

- Identify handful – get achievable result
- Prioritise opportunities for making gains to water quality

Discussion

- Solutions?
 - Ideally need greater setbacks on stop stock from accessing waterways