

Report 2017.253
Date 17 July 2017
File CCAB-628029985-17

Committee Wairarapa Committee
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Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee Update

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Wairarapa Committee on the progress of the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee.

2. Background

The whaitua process is a community-led, collaborative planning process to address a number of land and water management issues and carry out our obligations under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM). The programme aims to improve the integration of activities and achieve better resource management practices which reflect local aspirations.

The region has been divided into five whaitua or catchments (see Figure 1). Whaitua committees, consisting of community members and partner representatives, will make recommendations to the Council through a Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP) report. These committees are a partnership between GWRC, iwi, territorial authorities and the community.



Figure 1: Whaitua catchments

A WIP will contain strategies and actions that will form a programme of work to implement the NPS-FM in the catchment area of the whitua committee. It will include both regulatory provisions and non-regulatory programmes. The regulatory provisions will be included progressively into the Natural Resources Plan by way of plan changes into the whitua specific chapters. The recommendations from WIPs aren't being considered as part of the current Proposed Natural Resources Plan Schedule 1 process.

The Ruamāhanga Whitua Committee was the first of the five committees to be established in December 2013.

The Wairarapa Coast Whitua Committee will be the last of the five committees to be established, currently scheduled for 2020.

2.1 Collaborative Modelling Project

Collaborative Modelling Projects support whitua committees by feeding knowledge into their decision making process. Experts in the various topic areas (for example, ecologists, economists, social scientists) work collaboratively to ensure information and data is up to date and to provide expert advice to the committee when required. The project involves partnering with mana whenua as well as having significant iwi and community input from relevant stakeholders.

The current modelling project for the Ruamāhanga Whitua provides collective scientific, cultural and community knowledge, data and information to describe the current state of each catchment. The whitua committee ask questions about what could happen in the future under certain conditions, such as different land management practices, and how the catchment would respond to those. These are called scenarios. The models will be used to forecast the potential environmental, social, recreational, cultural and economic consequences of these scenarios. The whitua committee will use this information, alongside their own knowledge of community values, agriculture, biodiversity, mana whenua, recreation, urban and economic interests in setting freshwater objectives and limits.

3. Progress to date

The Ruamāhanga Whitua Committee (the Committee) was established in late 2013 and has 14 members, one from each territorial authority, an elected member from Te Upoko Taiao – Natural Resources Plan Committee, representatives from both iwi, and eight community representatives.

Since its establishment, the Committee has been working to increase its understanding of the history, physical geography, hydrology, water quality and the ecological state of the catchment.

The Committee has worked closely with the community to develop a set of community values, key catchment issues and a vision and outcomes it would like to see for the future.

The Committee achieved a major milestone in late 2016 when it finalised the scenarios it wants to test through the collaborative modelling project. The

scenarios contain a range of management options purposely chosen to provide the most relevant information to aid their decision-making. The scenarios include three integrated packages and six separate management options around water storage options, lakes, wetlands, and allocation and minimum flow options.

Since then the Committee has been developing its preferred policy approaches to managing discharges and water allocation to test with the community and stakeholders. For its approach to managing discharges, the Committee considers that change is necessary to maintain or improve water quality and achieve its vision and outcomes. The Committee will look to set natural resource limits (a form of regulation) at a sub-catchment scale for all contaminants, combined with a mainly non-regulatory approach for individuals to achieve these limits, particularly through sub-catchment groups and farm planning. The Committee may recommend that more regulation is used in the future if this approach does not achieve the desired outcomes. The Committee has started to discuss this approach with stakeholders at various primary sector field days and has released a survey to receive feedback:

<http://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/ruamahanga-whaitua>.

Discussions to develop a preferred policy approach to water allocation are ongoing.

All reports and workshop records can be found on our website www.gw.govt.nz/ruamahanga-whaitua.

4. Key work in the coming months

The Committee will focus on completing its draft policy approach to water allocation to test with the community and stakeholders. This includes its preferred policy around permitted activities and how water is re-allocated on consent expiry. It also includes a review of minimum flows and allocation limits.

Modelling results will be received in the coming months for current state, and the business as usual, gold and silver scenarios. These results will be weaved into the Committee's work to draft freshwater objectives for each freshwater management unit (FMU).

5. Communication

No communication is necessary as a result of this report.

6. Consideration of Climate Change

The matters addressed in this report have been considered by officers in accordance with the process set out in the GWRC Climate Change Consideration Guide.

6.1 Mitigation assessment

Mitigation assessments are concerned with the effect of the matter on the climate (i.e. the greenhouse gas emissions generated or removed from the

atmosphere as a consequence of the matter) and the actions taken to reduce, neutralise or enhance that effect.

The matters addressed in this report will have no significant effect on the climate.

Officers note that the matter does not affect the Council's interests in the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) or the Permanent Forest Sink Initiative (PFSI).

6.2 Adaptation assessment

Adaptation assessments relate to the impacts of climate change (e.g. sea level rise or an increase in extreme weather events), and the actions taken to address or avoid those impacts.

An assessment of the impacts of climate change on rainfall and catchment hydrology has been undertaken by NIWA. This information will feed into analysis of impacts on water allocation and contaminant generation and flow. Policy responses will be required to address these issues. Consideration of these is ongoing.

7. The decision-making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report. This report is for the Wairarapa Committee to receive an update on the progress of the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee.

7.1 Engagement

Engagement on this matter is unnecessary.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

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