From: Mary Beth Taylor <mbtaylor.tierra@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 15, 2023 1:41 PM
To: Regional Plan <regionalplan@gw.govt.nz>
Subject: MB Taylor draft PC 1 NRP submission

Hello Team,

I would like to make a submission on Plan Change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan. I have been unsuccessful using the portal so I will provide you with my submission via email.

I have lived in Whitemans Valley, Upper Hutt for 36 years. My home overlooks the Mangaroa Peatland. I am an environmental advocate and voice on several UHCC reference and focus groups as well as an active member of Forest and Bird.

I have attached a letter I presented to all UHCC councilors, relevant directors and planners regarding their draft submission to Plan Change 1 to the NRP.

I have also attached the photos and screenshots I shared with them to support my position.

I am in agreement with the provisions and rules in this consultation that will lead to better outcomes for fresh water quantity and quality in the region. These make sense and are long overdue. While the steps toward implementation may appear onerous it is a fact that decades of delay in protecting fresh water resources mean that we must act swiftly and decisively. Fresh water has been a hot topic at councils for a very long time and they would have seen these changes coming on the horizon. They chose to ignore the writing on the wall and continued to issue damaging land use consents that have continued to degrade fresh water resources in the region.

In addition to my views, letter and attached information, I would like to see GW push for a better and more clear definition for 'Peatlands' under the RMA. Peatlands are wetlands and this needs to be recognised in legislation in order to work toward their protection and restoration. The RAMSAR Convention should ideally be applied to the Mangaroa Peatland. The Kopuatai peat dome in Hauraki is recognised by the NZ Wetland Trust and this peatland closely resembles the 300+ hectare Mangaroa Peatland in Upper Hutt.

Thank you for receiving my submission. I do not wish to be heard.

Kind regards,
Mary Beth Taylor
[redacted]

mbtaylor.tierra@gmail.com
[redacted]

To: UHCC councillors
Upper Hutt City

Mary Beth Taylor
[redacted]

Phone [redacted]
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Dear councillors, 12 December 2023

https://www.upperhuttcity.com/files/assets/public/v/1/yourcouncil/meetings/2023/cycle-7/council-agenda-20231213.pdf

I am unable to attend Wednesday's Council meeting but I wish to provide some information and suggestions on Item 9 - Submissions on the Natural Resources Plan-Plan Change 1. I have read both the draft NRP Plan Change 1 and this council's draft submission on this draft piece of legislation.

Natural Resources Plan - Plan Change 1

This is one of a suite of recent legislation that has become increasingly protective of the environment. In particular, the NRP PC1 introduces policies and rules and implementation strategies for the NPS Fresh Water Management that were drawn out of the Whaitua work between 2019 and 2021. In my opinion the NRP PC1 is long overdue and yet timely.

We in Upper Hutt have a HUGE responsibility to ensure that Te Awakairangi/Hutt River is a healthy river. The rest of the region depends on this. The source of the river lies within our authority. It is our duty collectively to create, implement and monitor policies and rules around land use that will bring Te Awakairangi back to good health.

This is a sick river. Tributaries, including the Mangaroa River are also very sick. The Mangaroa River is among the top worst 25% of rivers nationally in terms of e.coli contamination. *Check out the attached screen shots from LAWA (Land, Air, Water Aotearoa).* The Mangaroa River water quality is very likely degrading further according to LAWA.

The Mangaroa River runs from its source at the top of the Blue Mountains through rural and farm land picking up water from tributary streams including the Black Stream which drains the Mangaroa Peatland. The Mangaroa Peatland is degraded by human activity which causes it to lose nutrient and bacteria rich water into the Mangaroa River.

This is not a time to point fingers and blame land owners for damaging the quality of the fresh water that runs through their properties and into Te Awakairangi. But it is the time to accept the severity of the fresh water crisis in our city and do absolutely everything we can to fix it.

I urge you therefore, to reject this council's draft submission on the NRP PC1 on the grounds that it is far too soft in its language and intent. There can be no further delays or time allowances given that will contribute to further degradation of the quality and quantity of fresh water sources in our city.

Land owners have seen this legislation coming. There has been ongoing discussion locally, regionally and nationally for decades around the growing fresh water crisis. GWRC has financially supported many land owners to do the right thing by fencing stock off water ways and doing riparian planting. We have examples of land owners taking up these offers and being part of the fresh water solution and we have land owners who turn a blind eye and continue water damaging practices on their lands which flow into neighbouring land, Te Awakairangi and Wellington Harbour. The same can be said for poorly designed or malfunctioning septic systems in the rural areas. The same can be said for continuing to ditch and drain the Mangaroa Peatland.

The strongest possible legislation must be drafted and implemented in order to stop this vicious cycle of fresh water degradation and get on the road to healing all waterways as quickly as possible. Our council's draft submission must be much stronger toward that regionally shared goal.

Mangaroa Peatland – *See attached screenshot of the peatland*

A healthy peatland provides a number of eco-system services including water filtration, flood mitigation and carbon sequestration. A degraded peatland will lose its ability to provide these services. Instead of being a thriving ecological asset it becomes a polluting liability. This is where things are now but with protection and restoration the Mangaroa Peatland can be a big part of the fresh water quality solution in Upper Hutt. *See attached PDF on Peatlands.*

There are other pieces of environmentally protective legislation that will help to support the protection and regeneration of the Mangaroa Peatland, regardless of ownership. I urge you to start this discussion at council for the benefit of our city's fresh water supply.

In closing

In closing, it was touching to see the Mayor in attendance at the PC49 Variation 1 Open Space hearing a couple of weeks ago. It appeared he was there to support the Guildford Timber Company and John Hill's submissions because those were the only sessions he attended. It was lovely to hear the Commissioners acknowledge his presence.

It was encouraging to see the strong and enduring support from several groups and many individuals at the hearings. The community support for the Silverstream Spur to be zoned Natural Open Space with NO infrastructure/transport corridor was overwhelming. We were assured by the Commissioners that we 'were heard' and that they 'heard us'.

Kind regards,

Mary Beth Taylor

Attachments
Landcare 1 – Mangaroa River
Landcare 2 – Mangaroa River
Screen shot: Mangaroa Peatland post rain August 2023
PDF: Peatlands and Climate Change

International Union for Conservation of Nature
ISSUES BRIEF
www.iucn.org

PEATLANDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

NOVEMBER 2017

- **Peatlands are a type of wetlands which are among the most valuable ecosystems on Earth:** they are critical for preserving global biodiversity, provide safe drinking water, minimise flood risk and help address climate change.
- **Peatlands are the largest natural terrestrial carbon store**; the area covered by near natural peatland worldwide (>3 million km^2) sequesters 0.37 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide (CO_2) a year – storing more carbon than all other vegetation types in the world combined.
- **Damaged peatlands are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions**, annually releasing almost 6% of global anthropogenic CO_2 emissions. Peatland restoration can therefore bring significant emissions reductions.
- **Countries are encouraged to include peatland restoration in their commitments to global international agreements**, including the Paris Agreement on climate change.

What is the issue?

Peatlands are a type of wetlands that occur in almost every country on Earth, currently covering 3% of the global land surface. The term 'peatland' refers to the peat soil and the wetland habitat growing on its surface.

In these areas, year-round waterlogged conditions slow the process of plant decomposition to such an extent that dead plants accumulate to form peat. Over millennia this material builds up and becomes several metres thick.

Peatland landscapes are varied – from blanket bog landscapes with open, treeless vegetation in the Flow Country of Scotland – a tentative World Heritage site – to swamp forests in Southeast Asia. New areas are still being discovered such as the world's largest tropical peatland discovered beneath the forests of the Congo Basin in 2017.

Blanket bog of the Flow Country, Forsinard, Sco land © RSPB

Large amounts of carbon, fixed from the atmosphere into plant tissues through photosynthesis, are locked away in peat soils, representing a valuable global carbon store.

A lack of awareness of the benefits of peatlands means that they have been severely overexploited and damaged as a result of actions including drainage, agricultural conversion, burning and mining for fuel, among others. About 15% of the world's peatlands – covering less than 0.4% of the global land surface – have been drained. This has released huge amounts of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide (CO_2), from the carbon stored within peat soils.

Why is this important?

Peatlands are highly significant to global efforts to combat climate change, as well as wider sustainable development goals. The protection and restoration of peatlands is vital in the transition towards a low-carbon and circular economy.

Damaged peatlands contribute about 10% of greenhouse gas emissions from the land use sector. CO_2 emissions from drained peatlands are estimated at 1.3 gigatonnes of CO_2 annually. This is equivalent to 5.6% of global anthropogenic CO_2 emissions. Fires in Indonesian peat swamp forests in 2015, for example, emitted nearly 16 million tonnes of CO_2 a day. This is more than the daily emissions from the entire US economy.

At the same time, peatlands are the largest natural terrestrial carbon store. Worldwide, the remaining area of near natural peatland (>3 million km^2) contains more than 550 gigatonnes of carbon, representing 42% of all soil carbon and exceeds the carbon stored in all other vegetation types, including the world's forests. This area sequesters 0.37 gigatonnes of CO_2 a year.

In their natural, wet state peatlands provide vital ecosystem services. By regulating water flows, they help minimise the risk of flooding and drought and

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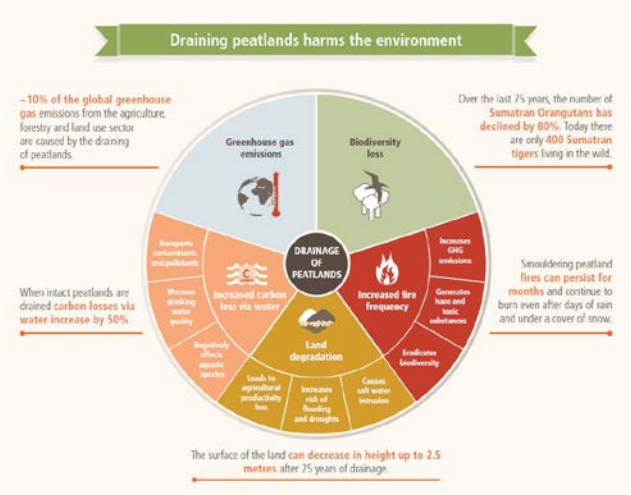
prevent seawater intrusion. In many parts of the world, peatlands supply food, fibre and other local products that sustain local economies. They also preserve important ecological and archaeological information such as pollen records and human artefacts.

Draining peatlands reduces the quality of drinking water due to pollution from dissolved compounds. Damage to peatlands also results in biodiversity loss. For example, the decline of the Bornean Orangutan population by 60% within a sixty-year period is largely attributed to the loss of its peat swamp habitat. The species is now listed as Critically Endangered on The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.



Protecting intact peatland habitats is important to secure the carbon stored within the peat, support unique biodiversity and maintain water quality
© UN FAO

What can be done?

Urgent action worldwide is required to protect, sustainably manage and restore peatlands. This involves protecting them from degrading activities such as agricultural conversion and drainage, and restoring the waterlogged conditions required for peat formation to prevent the release of carbon stored in peat soil.

Global efforts can build on the work of those countries which have taken steps to reverse the decline of peatlands. The United Kingdom, for example, is establishing a strategic peatland action plan to support the UK's climate mitigation plans and international biodiversity targets. In Southeast Asia, the ASEAN Peatland Forests Project (APFP) is supporting the implementation of a multi-stakeholder Peatland Management Strategy to restore peatlands and reduce the rate of degradation and the risk of fire and haze. The European Union LIFE funding has assisted over 260 peatland restoration projects, providing practical experience on the feasibility and techniques of peatland restoration.

Peatland restoration projects have proven to be cost-effective compared to other available carbon reducing technologies. They also have the added bonus of re-establishing the multiple benefits arising from peat-forming ecosystems.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has presented 10 strategic actions that can ensure peatlands contribute their full potential to global agreements such as the Paris Agreement on climate change and Sustainable Development Goals. These include:

- assessing the distribution and state of peatlands
- measuring and reporting emissions from peatlands
- protecting and restoring peatlands with targeted financial support
- stimulating market-based mechanisms to support peatlands
- engaging and supporting local communities
- sharing experience and expertise on peatland conservation, restoration and improved management.

A 2016 IUCN Resolution 'Securing the future for global peatlands' supports the FAO's strategic actions and encourages their adoption within country-focused peatland programmes. The Resolution further recommends:

- peatlands to be included alongside forests in all relevant intergovernmental agreements relating to climate change, geodiversity and biodiversity;
- a moratorium on peat exploitation until legislation is strengthened to ensure peatlands are protected or managed through wise use principles.

Emissions from damaged peatlands and carbon savings from peatland restoration are eligible for national accounting under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. There is therefore an opportunity for more countries to look at including peatland restoration and re-wetting in their national climate action plans.

Where can I get more information?

IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management
Peatland Ecosystems Group: iucn.org/cem_peatlands

IUCN UK National Committee Peatland Programme
iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org

Global Peatlands Initiative
globalpeatlands.org

Cris, R., Buckmaster, S., Bain, C. and Reed, M. (eds.) (2014). *Global Peatland Restoration Demonstrating SUCCESS*. Edinburgh: IUCN UK National Committee Peatland Programme.

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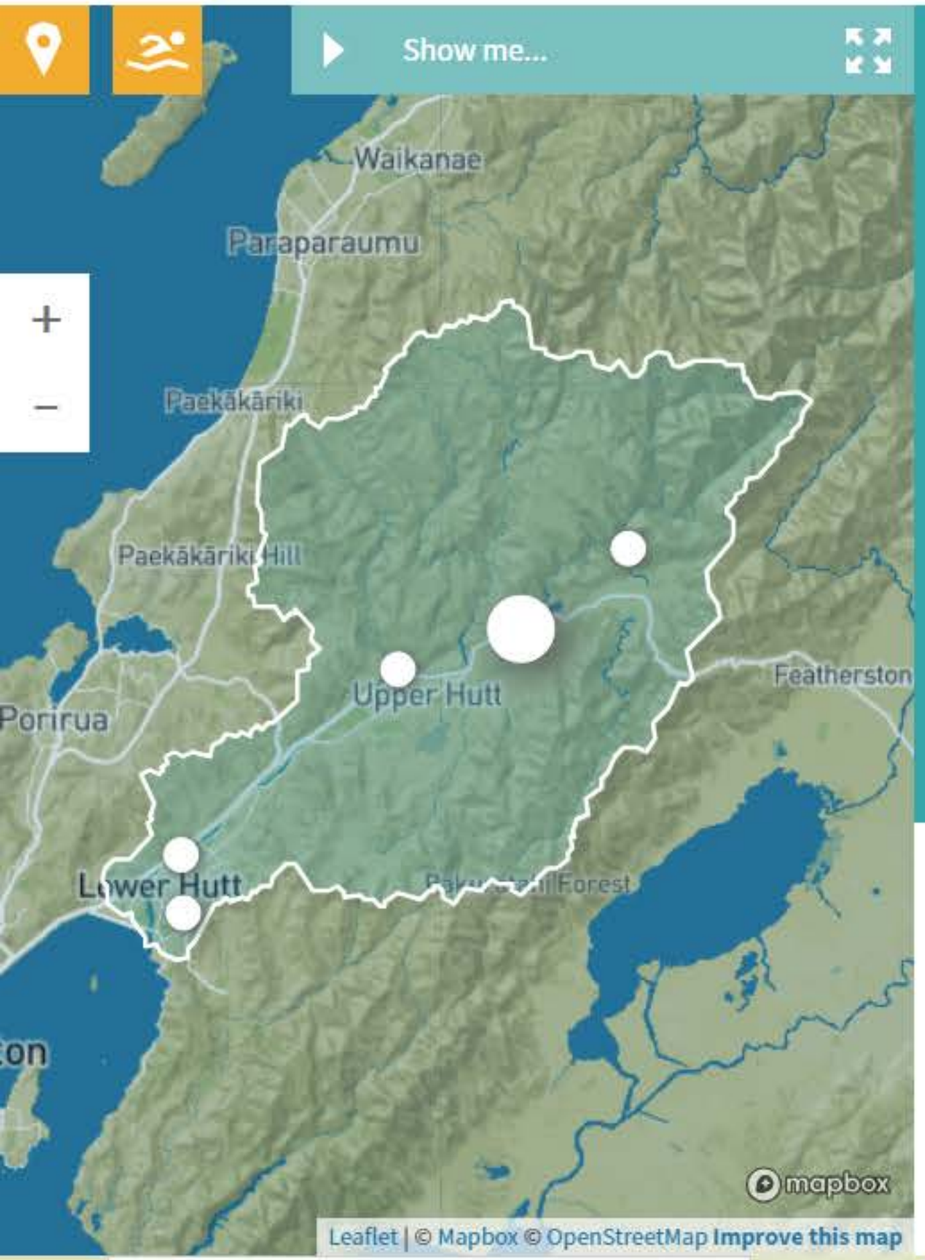


Mangaroa River at Te Marua

Greater Wellington
Te Pane Matua Taiao

This site is located in the lower reaches of the Hutt River. The Mangaroa River is a tributary of the Hutt River and drains the north eastern part of the catchment.

This site is monitored as part of a programme specifically designed to measure the health of rivers and streams in the Wellington Region. This involves monitoring of water quality (see the 'Scientific Indicators' tab below) as well as the aquatic invertebrate communities, i.e, the insects and bugs that live in the riverbed (see the 'Ecology' tab below).

Read more +

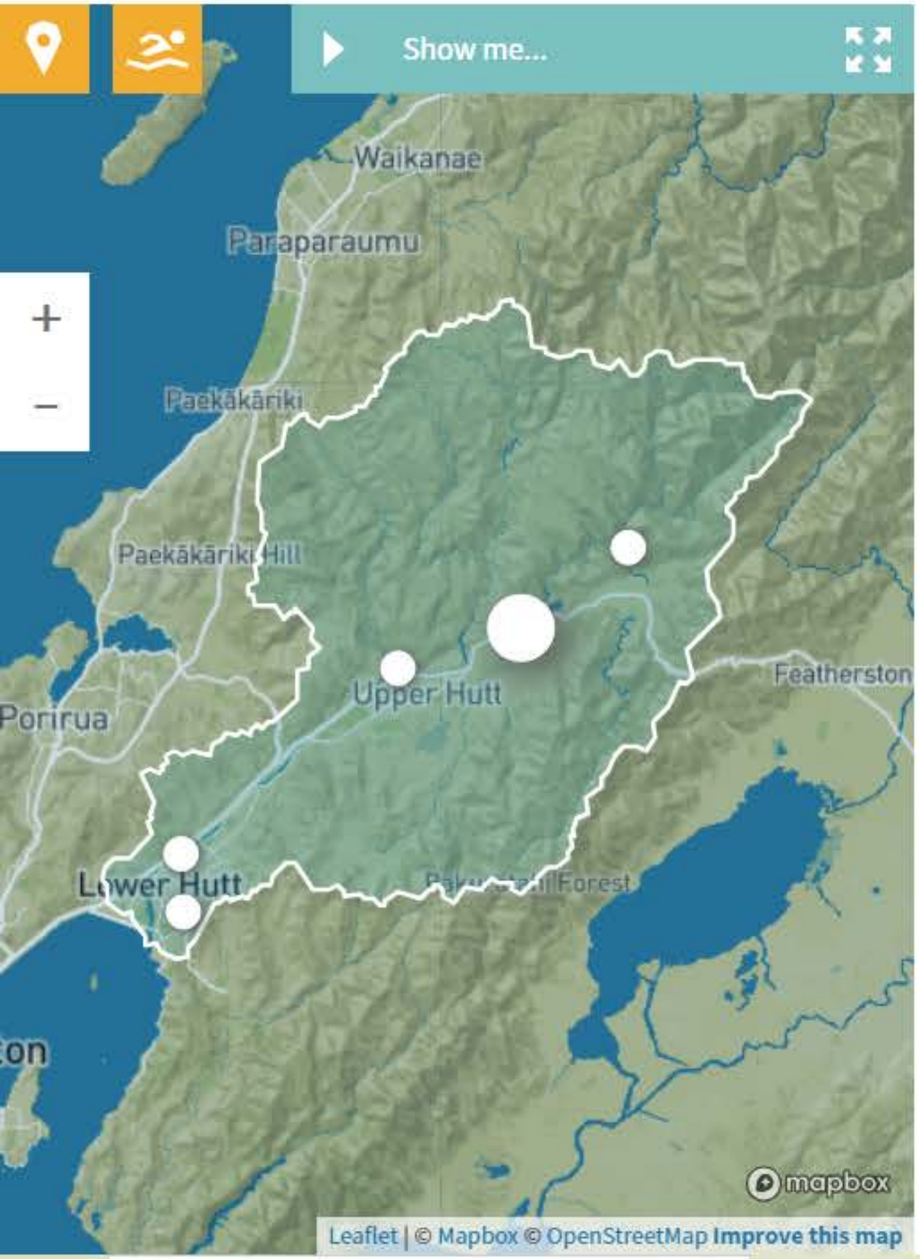
HIDE

Water Quality | Ecology

Water quality data for this site

Can I trust this data?

This dashboard shows information on the data collected by the regional councils and unitary authorities for water quality indicators, analysed as state and trend. Select an indicator to see the historical monitoring data.



All sites in New Zealand

Showing ten year trend

The state is also represented by attribute bands in the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 for some indicators.

Bacteria

E. coli

5-year median: 330 n/100ml

STATE	STATE	TREND
In the worst 25% of all sites	Attribute Band	Very Likely Degrading

HIDE