

Submission to Commissioners Plan Change 1

Trevor Simpson, Murray Twining and Matthew Dean farmer representatives of the Franklin/Waikato Drainage Subcommittee 10/07/2019

Commissioners, Waikato Regional Councillors and Staff, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Speaker to introduce himself

Up until this point in time the Drainage Districts of the Lower Waikato has been the part of the farming community most affected by environmental compliance. This puts us in a position to make comment, that should be taken seriously, on what we fear could be in store for the rest of the Waikato farming community in the years ahead with Plan Change 1. Our experience is as follows:

COMPLIANCE IS TRAPPING THE DRAINAGE DISTRICTS IN DEBT AND AN UNAFFORDABLE SPIRAL OF INCREASING COST

The Drainage Districts feel that this is being caused by the costly procedures of the Resource Management Act and compliance which needs reform to become affordable. The biggest beneficiaries of the way things are at present is not water quality, but consultants, lawyers and employment numbers in head office.

From an economic point of view this cannot be allowed to continue or else we will hollow out the provincial export economy and become a region dependant on consumer spending on imports and expensive houses to be funded by selling trophy farms and our best fast growing businesses to overseas investors. The big question that critics of the farming industry need to answer is: - with global warming, how do we as a nation afford to import the solar panels, wind turbines, electric cars and electronic communication gear that will be so necessary in a zero carbon economy if we allow the cost of red tape to smother the life out of one of this countries most important export industries.

I would now like to give a case study of another industry that was greatly damaged by compliance, from a regulatory authority that had become dictatorial, remote and out of touch with the realities of doing business. The Drainage Districts see themselves presently in a similar position to the small scale aviation industry of Australia in 1990, when a new Aviation Safety Authority was set up. The eventual outcome of an overzealous safety authority was the near collapse of the small scale Australian aircraft operator by the early 2000's, with major ramifications for the flying doctor service, air services to regional towns and the pilot training industry.

ONE OUTCOME WAS A HALVING OF THE NUMBER OF PILOTS BEING TRAINED IN AUSTRALIA OVER 10 YRS WITH THAT COUNTRY HAVING TO BRING IN OVERSEAS TRAINED PILOTS TO FILL VACANCIES.

Nobody can say that the pilot training industry of Australia at that time was a sunset industry.

It was just being smothered by costly RED TAPE that was making the industry internationally uncompetitive. The danger is that RED TAPE going hand in hand with Plan Change 1 and a Resource Management Act in need of reform to keep costs affordable, could lead to the unnecessary collapse of many farming businesses in the Waikato and the first to go will be in the Drainage Districts.

I have attached an editorial from the newspaper "THE AUSTRALIAN" dated 25/7/18 to support this submission which outlines the Australian Governments solution to the problem.

See Appendix I.

Based on the Australian Governments approach, the Plan Change 1 Vision and Strategy would be:

"TO BALANCE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WITH THE
NEED FOR AN EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE WAIKATO FARMING INDUSTRY."

Or incorporation the above concept with the existing Vision and Strategy it would read:

OUR VISION IS FOR A FUTURE WHERE A HEALTHY WAIKATO RIVER
SUSTAINS ABUNDANT AQUATIC LIFE, PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES
AND AN EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FARMING INDUSTRY, WHO
IN TURN ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR RESTORING AND PROTECTING THE HEALTH
AND WELLBEING OF THE WAIKATO RIVER AND ALL IT EMBRACES FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

Either of these two visions and strategies would give farmers confidence that their survival and welfare will still be an important consideration.

I will now hand over to Murray who will cover additional points.

PART TWO

Commissioners, Waikato Regional Councillors and Staff, Ladies and Gentleman

Speaker to introduce himself

1. SUB-CATCHMENT APPROACH.

I come from the upper reaches of the Waikato Region just south of the Bombay Hills.

Our local rivers are the Mangatangi/Maramarua and the Mangatawhiri.

Each catchment is very different. The commercial farmers on both rivers have invested heavily in effluent systems if they are dairy, as well as riparian planting and fencing, but all would agree that more can be done.

One of the differences is that with the Mangatawhiri, the river flows through only approximately 10 kilometres of farming land from the bush line of the Hunua Ranges to the wetland at Mercer and as a result, the influence of farming activity is far less than other factors. These other factors are Japanese Koi Carp, the heavy silt load that emerges from the bush line of the Hunua ranges in flood conditions and the thousands of tonnes of leaf material that is shed into wetland because of its heavy infestation with English Crack Willows, a wetland tree pest.

The Mangatangi/Maramarua flows through approximately 30 kilometres of farming land before it reaches the Waikato river and is an integral part of the Lake Waikare/Whangamarino catchment with all that entails. What the Mangatangi/Maramarua has in common with the Mangatawhiri is a very serious Japanese Koi Carp problem and water discolouration which will always exist with a silt bottomed river. Also both catchments are on heavy clay and silt soils that have totally different drainage characteristics to say the pumice soils above Lake Karapiro. It makes much more sense and will save a lot of unnecessary expenditure, if all significant sub-catchments have the chance to decide for themselves if they want to be in a blanket region wide catchment management plan or a tailor made local one. It is our view that tailor made local catchment management plans will get a lot more support than a blanket region wide one.

OUR SUBMISSION IS THAT ALL SIGNIFICANT SUB-CATCHMENTS HAVE THE CHANCE TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES IF THEY WANT TO BE IN A BLANKET REGION WIDE CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN, OR A TAILOR MADE LOCAL ONE.

SEE PHOTOGRAPH 1

2. THE 5 METER CULTIVATION SETBACK RULE.

The Franklin/Waikato Drainage Districts contain many farms that have intensive networks of drains throughout their flood protected land.

Many of these drains have water in them all year around although they cease flowing for approximately 3 months of the year over summer. Some of this flood protected land was first drained as late as the 1970's and still have a lot of stumps just under the surface of the peat. This requires deep discing or stump chipping every 8 to 10 years, a cultivation that has been necessary for a portion of most farms every year, even up to this present day. If these farmers cannot lime and deep disc or stump chip right up to the edge of their drains, they will end up with sour peat soils, and masses of stumps and elevated land around their drains, with lower waterlogged land in the centre of their paddocks.

See Photographs 2, 3 and 4.

OUR SUBMISSION IS THAT IN DRAINAGE DISTRICTS, FARMERS THAT HAVE WATER IN THEIR DRAINS ALL YEAR AROUND BUT NO FLOW FOR MANY MONTHS OVER SUMMER BE EXEMPTED FROM THE 5 METER CULTIVATION SETBACK RULE.

3. THE 1 METER AND 3 METER LIVESTOCK FENCING PASTORAL LAND SETBACK RULES.

Many farm races in Drainage Districts were formed by digging drains each side of where a race was needed and using drain cleanings to form the race. In many instances the races are already narrower than ideal. In many cases drains exist on both sides and are necessary to keep adjacent land acceptably dry in winter. It would cause some Drainage District farmers a lot of difficulty with farm machinery and stock movement if the setback was any more than 1/2 meter. It may even make some races unusable and require them to be rebuilt at considerable expense. Also with intensive networks of drains throughout most drainage district farms, an excessive amount of grazing land will be lost and become a weed control headache if livestock fencing setbacks prevent the easiest and most effective form of weed control, which is by pasture management by rotational grazing with livestock.

In addition to the above considerations, the Waikato Regional Council drainage management section has a rule that there should not be any obstacles in the way of diggers tasked with cleaning "Council" drains. This included fences along the edges of drains as well as trees and tall vegetation. Any fence over a meter high or placed 3 meters out from a drain would be considered an obstacle.

See photographs 4, 5 and 6.

OUR SUBMISSION IS THAT A 1/2 METER LIVESTOCK SETBACK BE UNIFORMLY APPLIED IN ALL DRAIN FENCING SETBACK SITUATIONS IN DRAINAGE DISTRICTS WITH INTENSIVE NETWORKS OF DRAINS.

I will leave you room here to add whatever else you want to Murray.

I WILL NOW HAND OVER TO TREVOR WHO WILL ADDRESS SOME ADDITIONAL ISSUES OF CONCERN.

PART THREE

Commissioners, Waikato Regional Councillors and Staff, Ladies and Gentleman

Speaker to introduce himself

4. JAPANESE KOI CARP.

20 years ago Japanese Koi carp observations were a rarity in the Mangatawhiri and Mangatangi/Maramarua rivers. However with a typical Koi carp female producing 300,000 eggs annually, the population in these rivers has increased exponentially since then, and will continue to do so, from a now much larger base population as they thrive in circumstances of high population density. Hicks and Ling, two Waikato Regional Council Scientists have observed at lake Ohinewai spawning populations estimated at 4000kg/ha. This is equivalent by weight to 8 adult dairy cows per hectare defecating and urinating directly into the waterway. It is our view that the contribution to waterways pollution in our local rivers, will be far greater in the future from pest fish than from land based cattle and sheep, unless something significant is done to reverse pest fish population increases. This pest fish arrived in New Zealand as a household garden pond decorative fish and thousands of Auckland households had them. As a designated pest fish it is the responsibility of the Department of Conservation to eradicate them and this should be given top priority as without their eradication billions of dollars of farmer money could be spent but wasted in the lower Waikato to improve water quality with little visual impact. See Photographs 7, 8 and 9.

OUR SUBMISSION IS THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION INITIATE A WELL FUNDED PROGRAMME TO ERADICATE JAPANESE KOI CARP FROM THE WAIKATO RIVER CATCHMENT OF SUFFICIENT SCALE THAT IT HAS AN ALMOST CERTAIN CHANCE OF SUCCESS.

5. EUROPEAN CRACK WILLOWS.

Immediately upstream of State Highway 1 just north of Mercer is a wetland of over 400 hectares heavily infested with European Crack Willows. This wetland is very visible from State Highway 1 at the top of the Bombay hills as one descends toward Pokeno. It goes without saying that they are also widespread throughout all the wetlands of the Waikato river catchment and what is about to be said about the effects of Crack Willows in the Mangatawhiri also applies to a greater or lesser extent to the Mangatangi/Maramarua river, Whangamarino wetland, Lake Waikare and elsewhere.

Crack Willows have a thick canopy of leaves over summer, only to lose those leaves in Autumn thus giving a wetland a bleak appearance over winter. It is not unreasonable to assume that the large scale annual shedding of Crack Willow leaves into the lower Mangatawhiri catchment will be adding nutrient and discolouring the water in the wetland that will eventually drain into both the Mangatawhiri and Waikato river. This phenomenon is readily observed in the streams emptying into the Sounds of Fiordland which have a deep brown stain caused by decomposing leaf material from the pristine Fiordland forests.

In addition old man Crack Willows fall into the river becoming an eyesore and cause erosion by deflecting water into riverbanks in flood conditions, collect under bridges and exacerbate flooding. If wetlands are the kidneys of a catchment, Crack Willows are a disease of those kidneys and need in the future to be considered an essential part of any plan to improve water quality.

See Photographs 10, 11, 12 and 13.

OUR SUBMISSION IS THAT SIGNIFICANTLY MORE RESOURCES IN FUTURE NEEDS TO BE PUT INTO THE CONTROL OF EUROPEAN CRACK WILLOWS BY THOSE WHO HAVE THEM GROWING ON THEIR PROPERTIES AND THAT THEIR ELIMINATION BECOME AN ESSENTIAL PART OF ANY PLAN TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS.

Most New Zealander's believe all citizens of this country should have the same human rights. The way we believe Plan Change 1 governance has been structured, Iwi leaders can be very influential in terms of determining what is expected of the wider farming community but exempt their own Treaty settlement land from the consequences of what they may be prepared to inflict on others. This does not seem fair and could have long term social and even economic consequences unless changed. We feel very uncomfortable about what happened to Tainui Maori in 1863 and the immediate and lingering suffering that it caused, but two wrongs do not make a right. We therefore do not support using Plan Change 1 compliance requirements as an instrument to settle Treaty of Waitangi issues.

OUR SUBMISSION IS THAT PLAN CHANGE 1 COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS SHOULD NOT BE USED AS AN INSTRUMENT TO SETTLE TREATY OF WAITANGI ISSUES AS THIS IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH WHAT NEW ZEALANDERS EXPECT OF OUR HUMAN RIGHTS.

25 / 7 / 18

THE AUSTRALIAN

FOR THE INFORMED AUSTRALIAN

Prioritise safety in a viable general aviation industry

Pilot training is collapsing under the burden of regulation

General aviation in Australia — charter, private and business flight operations, training, maintenance, aerial agriculture and aerial ambulance, excluding major airlines and defence — is on an alarming decline. Despite our population increasing by six million from 1990 to 2015, business and private flying hours declined 42 per cent during the same timeframe. From 2001 to 2015, the number of general aviation pilots in Australia dropped by a third, from 26,000 to 18,000. Flying training has declined by 30 per cent in five years. In December, we reported that foreign pilots were to be allowed into Australia on temporary work visas to plug shortages that had led to the cancellation of scheduled regional flights and the grounding of aircraft.

Faced with the parlous state of an essential industry, especially in regional and rural areas, Infrastructure and Transport Minister Michael McCormack should revisit the reforms his predecessor, Barnaby Joyce, had endorsed, with the backing of opposition transport spokesman Anthony Albanese, to cut regulatory costs and pointless red tape. In February, Andrew Burrell writes today, Mr Joyce and Mr Albanese agreed to remove a part of the Civil Aviation Act that requires the Civil Aviation Safety Authority to “regard safety as the most important consideration” in regulating the industry. Under the changes, CASA instead would be required to balance the “highest level of safety in air navigation” with the need for “an efficient and sustainable Australian aviation industry”. The sector supports

the proposed change and wants it legislated before the next election.

Safety, of course, must always be authorities’ main consideration. But as businessman and former CASA and Civil Aviation Authority chairman Dick Smith said at a recent aviation summit at Wagga Wagga, NSW, only a viable industry can be a safe industry. Parts of the general aviation sector, Mr Smith said, were close to collapse after years of bad decisions by bureaucrats. He cited the problems of flying schools, which were going broke under the burden of additional costs, paperwork and bureaucracy. Some had been sold at bargain rates to Chinese companies, which were training mainly Chinese nationals. China, which will need an extra 110,000 pilots by 2035, relies on other countries for training because of its heavy smog, military-controlled airspace and a lack of English-speaking instructors. A better-managed general aviation sector in Australia would be capitalising on such demand. Instead, the cost of pilot training for Australians has soared, making it unaffordable for most young people, apart from those with wealthy parents.

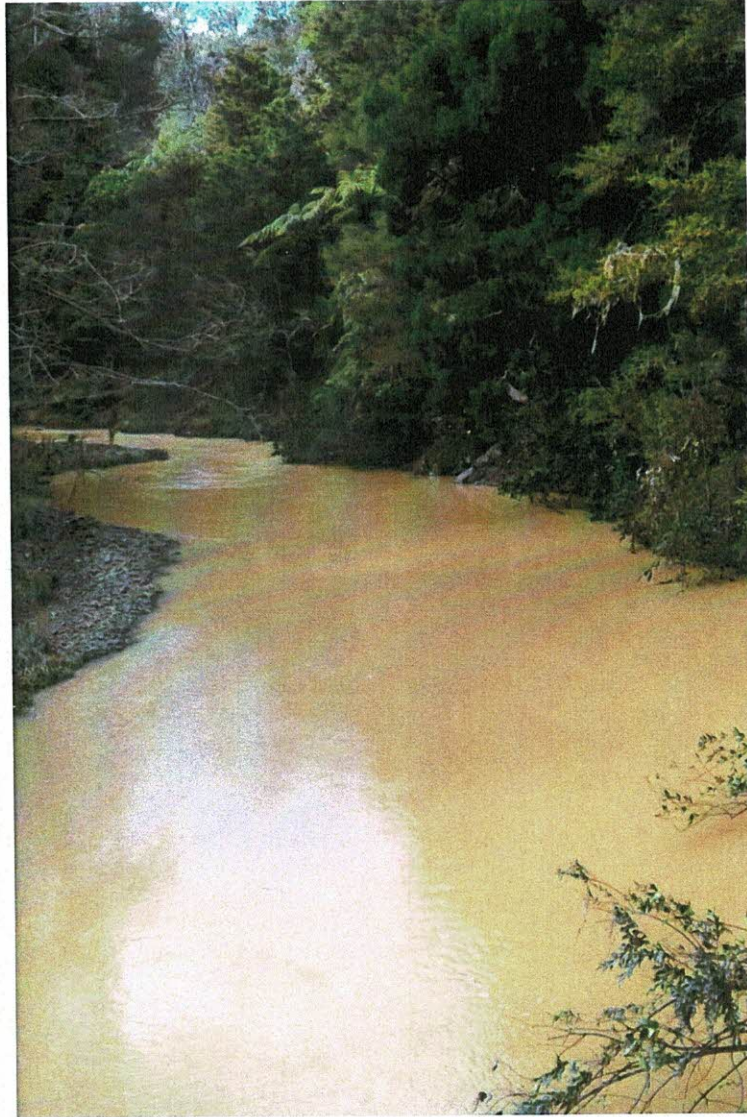
In December, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association chief executive Ben Morgan called on CASA to allow independent instructors, similar to those who train most US pilots, to play a greater role in training. To assess the situation and arrive at the best decision in the interests of taxpayers and the industry, Mr McCormack needs to look beyond bureaucrats and consult widely with experienced pilots, training school owners and companies.

APPENDIX 2. PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1.

Silt laden flood water exiting Hunua ranges bush line. There is a common misconception that this does not happen in native bush.

Mangatawhiri River.





Photograph 2.

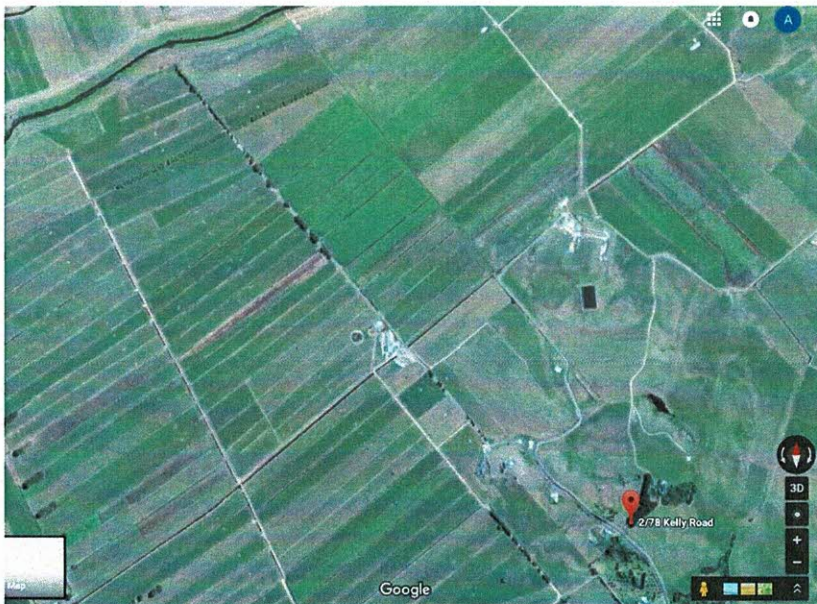
Drainage district farmland
embedded with stumps

Photograph 3.

Stump chipping is needed right up to edge of a drain. This is important not only to prevent that area of a field becoming elevated compared the middle, but also to work in lime to stop the peat soil souring.



Note Sedges. A very good plant to have along the edges of drains and streams



Photograph 4.

A lot of land would be lost to farming, if this Drainage District land had excessive fencing setback rules.

Also how can diggers clean drains if fences are set back too far and get in the way.



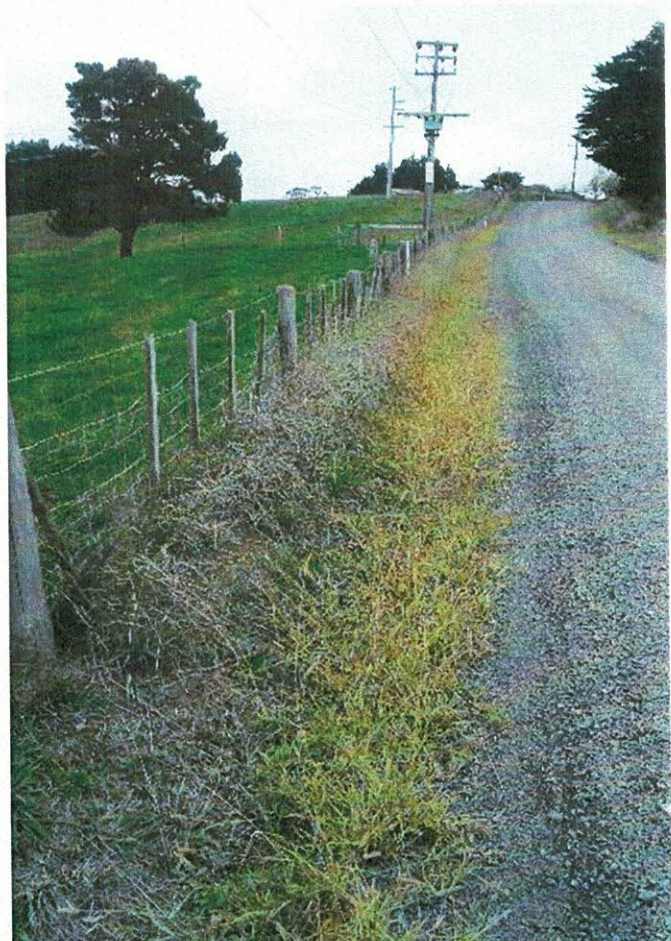
Photograph 5.

Yellow bristle grass growing between electric fence and drain where cattle cannot reach. The rest of the field is having bristle grass controlled by rotational grazing.

Half meter setback is recommended.

Photograph 6.

Yellow bristle grass growing on roadside because it cannot be controlled by livestock and is not being sprayed with an effective weed killer.



Photograph 7.

The clear water of the Mangatawhiri river adjacent to a favourite Japanese Koi carp haunt.



Photograph 8.

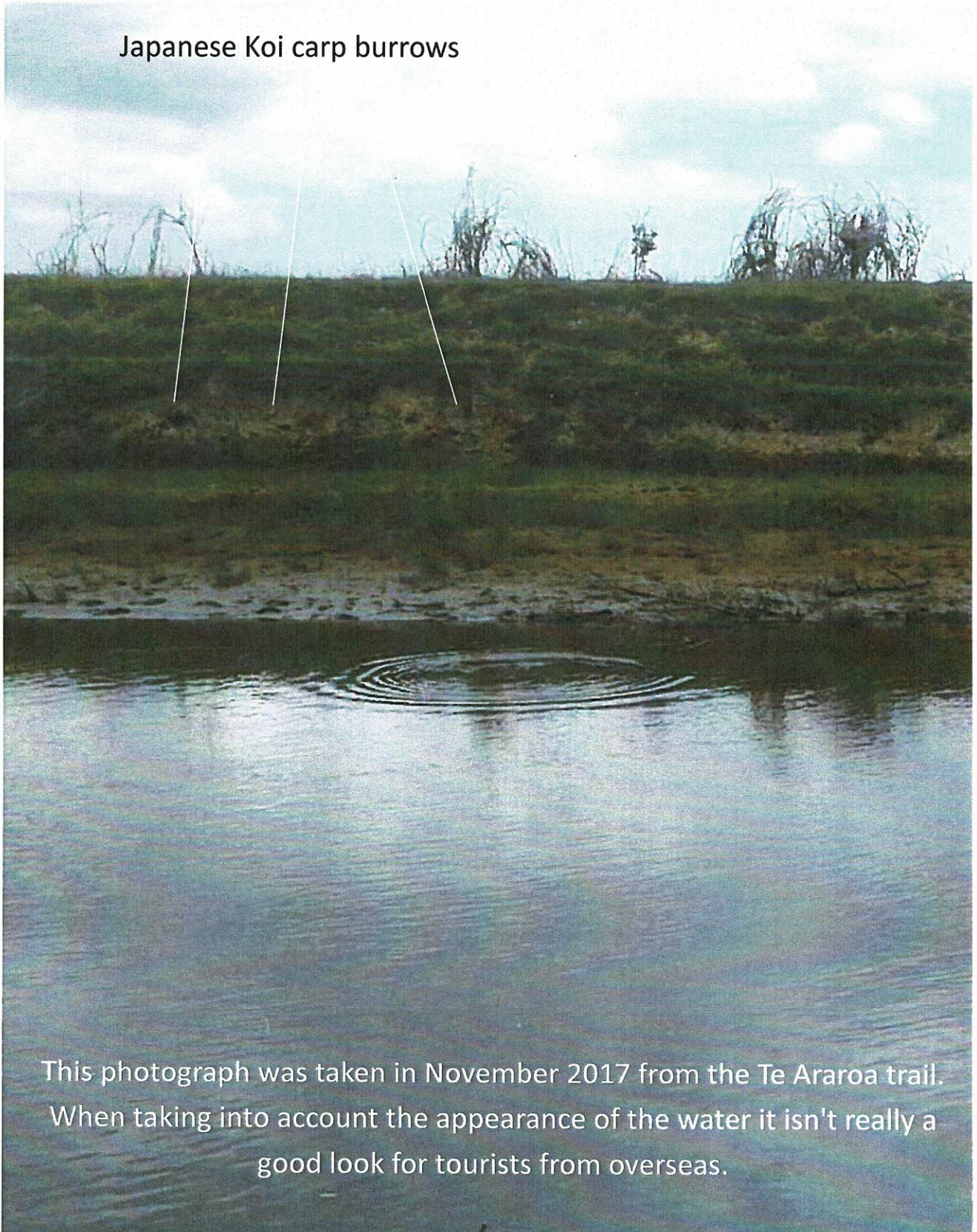
The interface between Mangatawhiri river and the favourite Japanese Koi carp haunt with water discoloured by fish activity.



Photograph 9.

Mangatawhiri Drainage District stopbanks showing damage from Japanese Koi carp feeding activity during the winter of 2017. Their numbers are not stable. They are increasing exponentially because typical females produce 300,000 eggs annually and they have few natural predators.

Japanese Koi carp burrows



This photograph was taken in November 2017 from the Te Araroa trail. When taking into account the appearance of the water it isn't really a good look for tourists from overseas.



Photograph 10.

Crack Willows in full leaf.

Photograph 11.

Crack Willows having lost their leaves.



Photograph 12.

Crack Willows caught up under a bridge.

Photograph 13.

Crack Willow deflecting river against opposite bank and causing riverbank collapse.

