

Report to Collaborative Stakeholder Group – Agreement and Approval

File No: 23 10 12
Date: May 2016
To: Collaborative Stakeholder Group
From: Policy Workstream
Subject: **TLG Report on Lakes Prioritisation**
Section: Agreement and Approval

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared by Waikato Regional Council policy advisors for the use of Collaborative Stakeholder Group Healthy Rivers: Wai Ora Project as a reference document and as such does not constitute Council's policy.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to summarise the Technical Leaders Group (TLG) report¹ that provides three options to Collaborative Stakeholder Group (CSG) on how to prioritise catchments within the Lakes FMUs, as part of the Farm Environment Plan implementation for Plan Change 1. A preferred option is identified for CSG approval. The report also outlines the elements for inclusion in lake catchment plans that will be prepared to inform Farm Environment Plans in their respective catchments.

Recommendations:

1. That the report [TLG Report on Lakes Prioritisation] (Doc #6289707 dated [May 2016]) be received
2. That the Collaborative Stakeholder Group agree that Option 2 (Address under representation of lakes within river sub-catchment prioritisation) is used to prioritise implementation of Farm Environment Plans in lake Freshwater Management Unit catchments
3. That the Collaborative Stakeholder Group agree that the content of lake catchments plans is guided by the elements identified in the Technical Leaders Group report and that this is included in the relevant method in the plan change.

Background

At their meeting on 7 April 2016², the Plan Drafting subgroup identified the need for technical guidance on the prioritisation of lakes catchments. Because of the special considerations around lakes, it was thought that the prioritisation used for the river catchments may not be appropriate. A request was sent to the TLG with the instructions to identify where lakes catchments fell within the prioritisation, and advise of any lakes that would benefit from being at the front of the queue for lake catchment plans and farm environment plans (e.g. high quality high vulnerability lakes).

¹ Technical Leaders Group report, May 2016. Healthy Rivers: Wai Ora – Staging of Lake Catchment Farm Plans (unpublished) Doc #6175642

² Notes of Plan drafting sub-group meeting no2 7 April 2016 Healthy Rivers Wai Ora (3763121)

At this meeting the subgroup also identified the need for technical guidance on what should be contained within lake catchment plans, as these will be used to inform the content of Farm Environment Plans in their respective catchments.

Technical Leaders Group Report on Lakes Prioritisation Options

The report (attachment 1) from the TLG outlines 3 possible approaches to prioritisation of the lakes:

- Option 1: Use proposed river sub-catchment prioritisation
- Option 2: Address under representation of lakes within river sub-catchment prioritisation
- Option 3: Treat lake catchments separately and prioritise by risk

TLG have recommended Option 2. To address the under-representation of peat lakes in the first tranche of farm plan roll outs, TLG suggests including one additional sub-catchment in the 'High' category. Two sub-catchments contain significant clusters of peat lakes – Waikato @ Huntly/Tainui Bridge (sub-catchment 20; 7 lakes) and Waipa @ SH23 bridge/Whatawhata (sub-catchment 34; 7 lakes). The rationale is that TLG see efficiency and communication benefits in coordinating the roll-out of farm property plans for lake catchments with those for the broader sub-catchments within which lakes are located. [The Technical Leaders Group] are also mindful of the capacity limits for the farm property plan development and that lake restoration is a long-term and ongoing process.

CSG should note that the Waikato Regional Policy Statement, the Waikato Regional Plan and the Waikato Shallow Lakes Management Plan contain prioritisation of lakes for different purposes (e.g. biodiversity). These documents will continue to guide the restoration of lakes, and it will be important for the implementation of Plan Change 1 to integrate with any concurrent work taking place, including implementation of any existing lake catchment plans.

Lake Catchment Plan content

CSG should note that the content of lakes management plans is also recommended in the TLG report and this has been inserted into method 3.11.4.1 in the plan change, subject to CSG approval. The content is:

- A vision for the lake and community acceptance of that vision
- Description of the desired state of lake and recognition of the challenges (e.g. costs) and opportunities (e.g. benefits) in achieving it
- Evidence-based description of the problem (i.e. what is the gap between current state and desired state) that recognises the presence of multiple stressors and uncertainty in responses and time frames
- Community engagement in defining actions that will move the lake towards its desired state
- Responsibility for achieving the agreed actions and expected timeframes is clear to everyone and accepted by those who will be undertaking work
- A monitoring regime that will provide evidence of progress towards the plan's actions and evidence of changes in the state of the values in the lake catchment

Conclusion

Interventions to support the restoration and protection of Lakes within the Lakes Freshwater Management Units requires prioritisation, and the TLG have recommended one of three options to CSG. This has been accompanied by a list of elements that are required for lake catchment plans that will be used to inform the content of Farm Environment Plans. The implementation of Plan Change 1 will need to integrate with existing lakes restoration works being undertaken by Waikato Regional Council and its partners.

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Attachments

Technical Leaders Group report, May 2016. Healthy Rivers: Wai Ora – Staging of Lake Catchment Farm Plans (unpublished) Doc #6175642