



7.0 Draft Tukituki Plan Change

Through the draft Tukituki Plan Change the Hawke's Bay Regional Council has some key approaches for improving water quality and quantity in the Tukituki River.

HBRC staff are working on the provisions and aim to present the final Tukituki Plan Change for adoption at Council's meeting on 30 January 2013. The plan change will then be ready for notification and the formal submission process.

What does the Tukituki Plan Change do?

The draft Tukituki Plan Change sets out the environmental bottom lines for all activities in the catchment – taking water, discharging to water and land, and now the use of the land. Diffuse discharges from farmed land must also be measured against the in-stream water quality limits.

Excessive growth of algae and slime is the biggest freshwater quality issue in the Tukituki catchment. Science investigations confirm that reducing the phosphorus load in the catchment will deliver the biggest and quickest gains for environmental improvement (see Information Sheet 2.0).

- A significant reduction in in-river phosphorus will be achieved when the discharges from Waipawa and Waipukurau oxidation ponds meet requirements of the current consent, by September 2014.
- The draft plan change includes rules for keeping stock out of the water. This will help reduce algae growth by reducing the amount of phosphorus attached to the soil entering the water. Keeping stock out of the water will also improve stream banks and habitats for native fish and trout.
- The draft plan change proposes increases in minimum flow limits to protect fish habitats. This means some consent holders will need to stop taking water earlier than they currently do.

HBRC recognises that this reduces the reliability of the water supply and so, in parallel, has been investigating harvesting and storage of higher river flows to provide an alternative supply. This plan change and the Ruataniwha Water Storage project are part of the strategic approach to managing the Tukituki catchment.

HBRC also acknowledges that time is essential for these changes to come into force, so the minimum flow restrictions will not take effect until 2018, and stock exclusion until 2017.

Farm Management Plans

The primary production sector is working with HBRC to develop industry good practice guidelines for nutrient, sediment and effluent management. The rules are designed to incentivise farmer to stay in or move into the 'permitted activity' status.

Other areas of the country are also experiencing the impact of plans that set water quality limits as required by the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

The process going forward

HBRC's investment company, Hawke's Bay Regional Investment Company Ltd (HBRIC Ltd) will be lodging the applications for the Ruataniwha water storage project, with a request to 'call in' the proposed plan change to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to enable an independent and integrated decision making process to occur through a single Board of Inquiry.



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