

Fact sheet

The TANK Plan - Landowners

How we plan to work with landowners on Farm Environment Plans, Catchment Collectives, Nutrient Management and Stock Exclusion

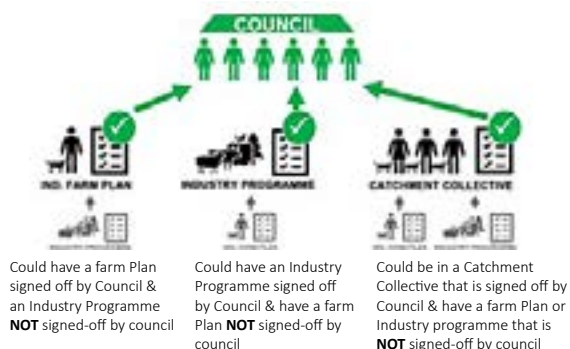
Farm Environment Plans and Catchment Collectives

Farm Environment Plans are an important part of the proposed TANK plan and a valuable tool to help meet ecosystem health outcomes. They will eventually be required for nearly all properties over 10ha in the Tūtaekurī, Ahuriri, Ngaruroro and Karamū catchments.

A new [Schedule 30](#) specifies the requirements for farm plans in the TANK catchments. A Farm Environment Plan summarises the potential risks of contaminant loss in a farming operation. It allows site-specific risks and opportunities to be identified and mitigation measures to be developed that reflect local conditions, constraints and farm systems. A Farm Environment Plan can also be provided through an industry programme

The Farm Environment Plan describes how risks will be managed and reduced over time to meet local water quality objectives. Water quality objectives are specified in [Schedule 26](#) (page 87) of the Proposed Plan.

These plans will essentially reflect good industry practice, although in some catchments, water quality problems may require additional work – either individually or collectively by several landowners.



In the TANK catchments Farm Environment Plans can be prepared as standalone plans by individuals, or property owners can work collectively to prepare a catchment plan.

A catchment plan would be based on the input from individual farms. In a collective, just one (catchment) plan is required by the Regional Council.

Both the farm plan and the catchment plan need to be prepared by people who are qualified to prepare such

a plan. The TANK Plan proposal specifies what needs to be addressed in a Farm or Catchment Plan or industry programme, with details in [Schedule 30](#) (page 98).

Industry Environmental Programmes

The Proposed Plan also allows for landowners to develop farm plans under industry programmes. The industry programme must however, meet the requirements of [Schedule 30](#). Most current industry programmes would need amending so that they include the specific outcomes required by the Proposed Plan –which include mitigation actions, information requirements and specific attention to local water quality issues. A plan – whether for a catchment or individual property – will need to collect and report on specific information.

Encouraging collective management

Cross-boundary solutions for water quality and ecosystem health might be developed to enable greater effectiveness and innovation if landowners choose to work collectively and prepare a catchment plan.



The benefits for farmers in working collectively to resolve water quality issues include:

- Cost effective – share resources, time and money
- Share knowledge – learn from each other and from experts
- Enable innovative solutions to be trialled and allow for more flexible adaptive management
- Provide opportunities to address other environmental challenges efficiently, i.e. manage biosecurity and biodiversity as a group

- Build social support systems and community resilience
- Provide opportunities to share information about farm production or any other relevant issues, such as health and safety, animal welfare, etc.
- Access more resources than individuals acting alone.



Catchment Collective Management Approach

More information

The barriers to successful implementation of this approach were examined in the *“Barriers and risks to the adoption of proposed mechanisms to coordinate management action”* report, at hbrc.govt.nz, search: [#tankreports](https://twitter.com/tankreports)

This report guided the TANK Plan content to ensure the policy and rule approach would effectively support this regime.

Key features about the TANK plan proposals for landowners

The TANK Plan has adopted a priority approach that directs resources to the places most needing attention and to the actions and practices to give the greatest benefits for aquatic ecosystems and water quality. It identifies priority places, priority actions and ensures practices are carried out according to a clear performance standards.

1. Priority places

The timing for farm plans and catchment collectives is based on where the water quality problems are the worst – according to actual and modelled information about:

- Nitrogen concentration
- Nitrogen yield
- Risk of sediment loss
- Dissolved oxygen levels

More information

The TANK Plan maps show the priority areas, at hbrc.govt.nz, search: [#tankreports](https://twitter.com/tankreports)

The TANK State and Trends of River Water Quality and Ecology 2004-13 report is at hbrc.govt.nz, search: [#documentsandforms](https://twitter.com/tankreports)

The TANK Catchment SOURCE Model Build report that helped generate the priority catchments is at hbrc.govt.nz, search: [#tankreports](https://twitter.com/tankreports)

Information about how the risk of sediment loss was developed can be found in this report SedNetNZ to estimate sediment sources from the TANK, South Coast, and Porangahau catchments, at hbrc.govt.nz, search: [#tankreports](https://twitter.com/tankreports)

The report on how the desired attribute states were developed is called Supporting Water Quality Information for the Development of Limits and Targets by the TANK Group: Rivers and Streams, at hbrc.govt.nz, search: [#documentsandforms](https://twitter.com/tankreports)

2. Priority actions	
The specific milestones for some key actions are in Policy 27 of the TANK Plan for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stock exclusion • Riparian planting • Wetland protection and creating new wetlands • Preparing nutrient management plans

These actions are already known to improve the state of aquatic ecosystems and water quality. TANK stakeholders have agreed to focus on these activities as a priority over the next 10 years.



3. Priority practices	
Some activities are higher risk to water quality. The TANK Plan includes new rules to establish minimum thresholds:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricts cultivation on sloping land • Excludes cultivation close to rivers • Protects indigenous vegetation near rivers • Excludes stock access to rivers (more detail below) • Controls land use change- that increases nutrient loss- through a consent requirement

Farm Plan Preparation

The development of farm and catchment plans needs consistent input from appropriately qualified professionals.

Landowners will be encouraged to work collectively, to resolve local water quality and ecosystem issues, to learn from each other and develop innovative solutions across property boundaries, share resources and expertise.

A farm plan will be required to focus on key risks to water quality that relate to the catchment.

Farm plans must:

- identify measures or practices to reduce risk
- specify timeframes for any mitigation activities
- include commitments to report specified information to council
- include commitments to review the plan.



Industry programmes and other sources of expertise are being developed as part of the Regional Council's work in the Tukituki catchment. Although the rules applying to Tukituki farm plans take a quite different approach to TANK, this work will also support the TANK Plan.

More information

Refer to the approved Regional Council list of people and organisations to help with environmental farm planning at hbrc.govt.nz, search: [#fempproviders](https://twitter.com/fempproviders)

The Regional Council will work with these providers to support the development of catchment-scale approaches to meet water quality objectives as well as individual farm plans.

Reporting

The TANK Plan relies on on-going involvement by landowners and industry groups to be successful. The requirements for Farm Environment Plans include reporting information to the Regional Council about regular mitigation measures and timelines for adoption as well as information about nitrogen losses in some catchments.

Reporting is not just about compliance. It also builds a record of actions taken and progress to meet water quality outcomes. It will take time for some water quality issues to be resolved, especially when solutions depend on tree planting, such as for the ecosystem health of the Karamū tributaries and for reducing soil erosion. Farm Plan reporting will also help Council, industries and landowners to build a broad, catchment-wide and long-term picture, and help us understand how individual actions are contributing towards TANK-wide progress.



Managing nutrient losses to water

Some catchments are a priority for action by landowners through Farm Plans and Collectives because of high nutrient levels – either the freshwater nitrate concentration is high or the catchment contributes high nutrient load to the estuary. In these catchments, land owners will need to include nutrient budgets in a farm or catchment plan.

The short term objective is for all landowners to be managing nutrients at a property scale according to Good Management Practice. The Farm or Catchment plan will enable this to be demonstrated and information about nutrient loss can be recorded.

Catchment collectives will also be required and encouraged to adopt additional mitigation measures

where water quality objectives require more than good practice. If local solutions can be found, it may avoid the need for more regulatory approaches to nutrient allocation in the future.

The information generated during the next ten years will feed into the development of potential future nutrient allocation regimes. During this time the Council will also be increasing its understanding about sustainable nutrient loads to the estuary. This will enable eventual development of robust nutrient allocation regimes based on good data.

Records of land use change will also be required to be maintained. Until there is a robust property scale nutrient allowance regime, the Proposed Plan intends that land use change be tracked and subject to resource consent if nitrogen losses increase above specified levels.

More information

Refer to the approved Regional Council list of people and organisations approved to carry out nutrient budgets at hbrc.govt.nz, search: [#nutrient](https://twitter.com/nutrient)

Stock access to water and riparian land

The TANK Plan follows a similar approach to the Tukituki Plan. Cattle, deer and pigs will be excluded from rivers and streams in lowland areas from 2023, to give landowners time to get the necessary work done.

The rule applies to any river which includes a continually or intermittently flowing body of fresh water, a stream or modified watercourse. It does not include any artificial watercourse (including an irrigation canal, water supply race or farm drainage canal).

The plan further says that the rule only applies where the river has an active formed channel.

In hill country, stock can have access to water but a Farm Plan or Catchment Collective Plan will need to address any potential contaminant risks.

More information

Requirements for stock exclusion are similar in the Tukituki catchment. Find out more at hbrc.govt.nz, search: [#stockexclusion](https://twitter.com/stockexclusion)

Riparian planting

The Proposed Plan encourages landowners to carry out better riparian land management to improve ecosystem health.

The plan specifies riparian planting as a major milestone because of the significant benefits of this mitigation measure.



Good riparian land management reduces the impacts of land use activities on water quality and ecosystem health. Farm Plans will be required to consider opportunities to improve riparian land management

In the Heretaunga Plains, there is an additional focus on riparian planting for shade over waterways. Shade

will improve water temperatures and reduce growth of macrophytes – plants that grow in the water. Macrophytes cause oxygen levels in the water to drop to very low levels, so reducing their growth will improve the health of aquatic species and the ecosystem as a whole.

There is a particular target for 200 kilometres of riparian planting to be carried out in the next ten years over the Heretaunga Plains streams. The additional issues around flooding and drainage functions of these waterways also need to be taken into account.

Advice about how to plant for shade and still allow for machinery access is still being developed.

More information

A joint Regional Council and Dairy NZ booklet on riparian planting is at hbrc.govt.nz, search: [#riparian](https://twitter.com/riparian)

The Regional Council's Te Karamu Enhancement Strategy 2016-2025 is online [here](#).