



Issue 20 Meeting 39 19 April 2018

Tutaekuri, Ahuriri Estuary, Ngaruroro, Karamū – the TANK project

The TANK Group and the TANK Plan is in the home straight, with less than a handful of meetings remaining to provide a draft plan for public consultation. There are more details on TANK Plan timing at the end of this newsletter.

This meeting saw agreement to many of the numbers that represent agreed outcomes for water quality attributes, to ensure the community values for our freshwaters can be met. Agreement was reached on how to manage nutrient and sediment losses from land. Mana Whenua treaty partners also gave an insight to their perspective and contribution to the TANK Plan.

Water Quality Attributes

Sandy Haidekker reviewed the TANK attribute states being targeted to maintain or improve water quality. This work was last covered at TANK [Meeting 33](#). Since then, she has trawled data to update her recommendations to the TANK Group. She presented a comprehensive ‘monster’ table – even more impressive than the one shown below – which will be updated based on modifications agreed by the TANK Group.

- Fill in values for ‘maintain current’
- Update: More (better) guidelines available
- Update: More recent data 2014-2016 dataset
- Update: Gap sites have 3 full years dataset

→ Monster table!

“We have got a smorgasbord of guidelines from sources like ANZECC, National Policy Statement (NPS) objectives, the HB Regional Resource Management Plan (RRMP), National Objectives Framework (NOF) and science papers,” says Sandy.

“The purpose of this session is to agree on

Attribute	Value/guideline	Zone 1 Upper catchments		Zone 2 Mid-low main stem		Zone 3 Hill country tributaries		Zone 4 Lowland tributaries		
		Ngaruroro	Tutaekuri	Ngaruroro mid - low	Tutaekuri mid - low	Ngaruroro	Tutaekuri	Ngaruroro	Karamu	Ahuriri
Sediment - turbidity	Trout fishery ANZECC	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	improve ≤ 5.6 NTU
Sediment - clarity	Trout fishery recreation	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	improve >1.6 m	improve >1.6 m	improve >1.6 m
Deposited sediment	Waitangi/Ahuriri estuaries	maintain current	maintain current	improve	improve	improve	improve	improve	improve	improve
Algae - cover	Ecosystem health	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	improve ≤ 40%	maintain ≤ 40%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Algae - cover	Recreation	maintain current	maintain current	improve < 30%	improve < 30%	improve < 30%	improve < 30%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Macrophyte volume	Ecosystem health	maintain current	maintain current	n/a	n/a	improve ≤ 50%	n/a	improve ≤ 50%	improve ≤ 50%	improve ≤ 50%
MCI	Ecosystem health	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current >100	maintain current >100	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current >80	improve ≥80	improve ≥80
DIN	Algal growth/ estuary	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	improve <0.295 mg/L	improve <0.295 mg/L	improve <0.444 mg/L	improve <0.444 mg/L	improve <0.444 mg/L
DRP	Algal growth/ estuary	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	maintain current	improve <0.0.15 mg/L	improve <0.0.15 mg/L	improve <0.0.15 mg/L	improve <0.0.15 mg/L	improve <0.0.15 mg/L

the numerical values to describe or represent the desired state that would meet the needs of all the water values. Sandy described the 'critical value' approach where the most sensitive value was used to determine the desired attribute state. If there was more than one value for an attribute then the most stringent value would be used.

Sandy took the Group through the process she has taken to interpret water quality objectives for TANK and presented the values table, then asked for a consensus decision from the TANK Group.

We noted that trout - while not a native species - are a good indicator of water quality for clarity and turbidity. A value that maintains a healthy habitat for trout sets a higher threshold than is needed by inanga/ eels, because trout are visual feeders. They need to see their food through clear water to thrive.

The Group considered whether or not to include all of the sediment related attributes – clarity, turbidity and deposited sediment. TANK members eventually agreed that objectives for all of these should be included, while understanding that there is currently limited data available for deposited sediment.

There was debate on how future-looking and aspirational the attribute values should be, and how practical it will be to achieve individual values. The Group debated this issue at length and considered:

- How the attributes table was to be used in the Plan to set priorities for action
- What the community would be looking for in long term management of freshwater
- The uncertainties around the relationships between the attributes
- The amount of information about the attribute state and the level to which a value is being provided for
- The wide range of values, including Māori values, for which there was no clear attribute or related objective
- In particular, higher attribute states were agreed by the group for MCI (MacroInvertebrate Index) in the lowland rivers and for *E. coli*.

The Group agreed that a two-stage approach to objectives should be explored. The first stage for priority actions is targeted at water bodies that don't meet specified attribute states related to agreed values. A longer term management approach would look to improve water quality to what could be considered reasonably possible for the river.

The Group is supporting a continuous improvement approach which would depend on regular monitoring, both through the Council's State of the Environment monitoring programme and also on local scale monitoring for more detail at the sub-catchment scale.

The TANK Group voted to accept Sandy's recommendations, with modifications to MCI and *E.coli*. They also agreed to further consider a two-stage approach to setting water quality objectives - a priority approach in the short term, with a view to improving water quality above that in the longer term.

Management for sediment and contaminants

A Farmer Reference Group grew out of meetings with landowners in Patoka, Sherenden and Maraekakaho to respond to the TANK Group objective to reduce sediment loss from farmland.

On behalf of the Farmer Reference Group, Peter Kay recommended a flexible sub-catchment-based approach to drive innovation, work across boundaries and support the achievement of water quality goals through collective landowner action. An alternative path would be provided to give choice to landowners, based on specific farm plans and resource consents. The proposal is for a PERMITTED collective/ industry and CONTROLLED individual approach. Key features of this approach would be collaboration, prioritisation,

specified obligations, reporting and auditing and council approval of catchment and farm plans. This approach would also be supported by rules relating to specified farming activities, to ensure minimum standards are complied with.

Many farmers are well down the road to adopting good farming practice as part of regular farming operations. Peter reported the landowner collective would work closely

with the Council to identify where meeting water quality objectives required changes to land use practices.

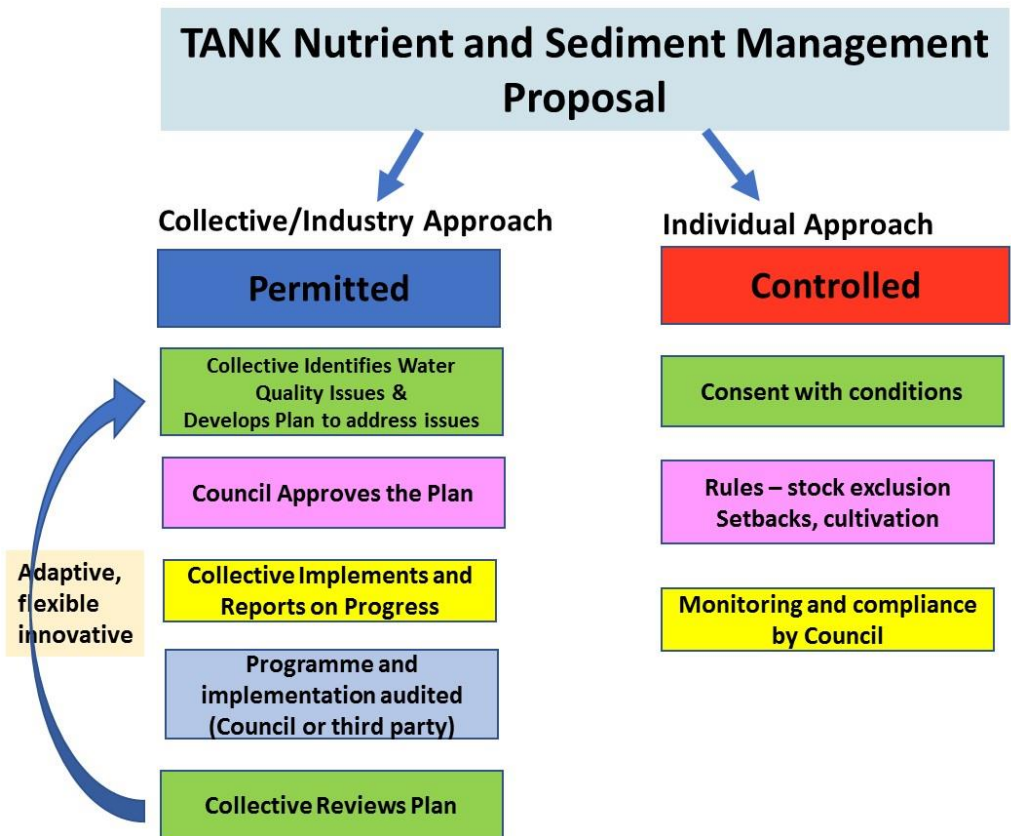
The role of the regional council will be to provide information, approve catchment management plans and ensure compliance with the rules and plan requirements. The Council will also assist in helping landowners understand local water quality issues and will work with industry groups and farmers to identify and implement the necessary mitigation measures.

Forestry landowners can be included in the catchment collective, and obligations under the new National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry will also ensure minimum standards are understood and adopted.

Corina Jordan the Environment Policy Manager from Beef + Lamb NZ, who had been supporting and advising the Farmer Reference Group, also spoke to and supported the proposal and answered the Group's questions about how this management approach would work.

This framework is also being adapted for use with other sectors including the horticultural sector and to resolve other issues. While some of the issues are relevant to all industries and land use activities, there are also specific challenges relating to land uses on the Heretaunga Plains that will also be managed through this framework. This includes reducing macrophyte growth and improving the ecosystem health of the lowland rivers and streams on the Plains as well as addressing the rates of nitrogen and phosphorous loss from the range of land use activities being carried out there.

There were some suggestions for improvements to this management framework that will be further reported on through the next steps of the plan drafting process.



The TANK Group voted in favour of the approach proposed by the Farmer Reference Group.

Mana Whenua treaty partners update

Marei Apatu gave an update on the work being done by the Mana Whenua Group. A Values and Attributes report for the Ngaruroro River has already been delivered. There are three remaining catchments to cover.

This group is working closely with the Regional Council and Dr Anthony Cole in a model of partnership, reciprocity, active participation and mutual benefit – a PRAM model. Marei emphasised ‘we are all in this together’.

This group supports setting the bar high to create the best possible community, business and environmental outcomes, reflecting Tāngata Whenua rights and interests in the TANK Plan.

Timing

HBRC’s Strategic Planning Manager Tom Skerman wrapped up the meeting, offering an insight into the workload over the coming months.

“The Group is always challenged to make decisions under uncertainty and it was fantastic to see that challenge embraced again today. To land a plan change that HBRC can defend, the reality is that we will likely produce a plan you won’t all love as individuals but will hopefully support as a group. The January to April meetings have covered an enormous amount of policy and detail which has in turn placed significant time and energy demands on TANK group members. That being the case we propose to schedule two extra meetings to give TANK members an opportunity to digest and review the full draft which we still expect to complete in June.”

May – Economic assessment, Drinking water group report back, Tutaekuri Values, Draft implementation plan, and Social & cultural impact assessment

June – Draft TANK Plan

July – Feedback and review of the draft TANK Plan

A process for the formal handover to Regional Planning Committee and a walk through of the Plan Change decisions that have been reached is still to be determined.

hbrc.govt.nz search: #tankresources

© 2018, HBRC

Please share this newsletter-panui

Mary-Anne.Baker@hbrc.govt.nz

