

**JOBS FOR NATURE****Horowhenua Freshwater Management Unit Water Quality Interventions****Landowners community engagement meeting**

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> 2022, Te Takeretanga o Kura-hau-pō, Levin.

---

**NOTES**

**In Attendance:** Lena Berger, Jumb Garratt, Peter Apperton, Peter Cameron, Ruchir Goel, Frits Van Geldorp, Ian Lockleg, Donald Hayes, Jake Burns, Brandon Boswell, Ben Denton, Elizabeth Valatine, Micheal Poolman, Ray and Frank Myers, Deborah & Peter Feary, Eileen Leger, Viv Bold, Jacinda Ciddel, Cam Hayes, Hera McGreger, Warren Crouch, Nathan Murray, Susan Moss, Jon Procter, Sam Hayes, Deb Mann, Paul Williams, Mary Cacombe Bird, Charles Rudd, Jack Warren, Eugene Henare.

**Horizons staff:**

Logan Brown, Jon Roygard, John Foxall, Charlotte Minnis.

**Supporting:**

Cr Sam Ferguson, Cr Emma Clarke, Dean Wilson, Mayor Bernie Wanden.

**Welcome**

Dean Wilson (MTA) opened the meeting with a karakia.

Logan welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Jon stated that this meeting was for landowners to have input into the conceptual design for the Horowhenua Wetland Complex and voice their concerns. He reiterated that this will not be people's only opportunity to consult on the wetland complex and that the project team can be contacted at any time in the future with feedback but the sooner the better.

**Horowhenua Wetland Project: (Logan Brown)**

- Update on the Jobs for Nature work in the Waiopahu catchment to date.
- Background to the wetland complex project, project partners and the selection of the constructed wetland complex site.
- The phasing of the wetland complex construction and the environmental outcomes that the wetland is going to achieve for Lake Horowhenua.

**Comments/Questions**

- How does the current sediment trap work and how efficient is it?  
**Response:** There is a culvert in the Arawhata Stream that during high (flood flows) acts as a throttle and pushes high flows around it and into the sediment trap cells. Water continues to flow through the culvert during all flows including high flows. At base (low) flows all the water freely flows through the culvert.

- Will the proposed wetland act in a similar way to the current sediment trap? **Response:** No the sediment trap is designed to remove sediment, the proposed wetland is being used to remove nitrogen and sediment. The current sediment trap as part of the proposal will be converted to function as part of the wetland complex. New sediment traps are proposed to be installed higher in the Arawhata catchment where the waterways enter the property.
- Eugene: What cultural impact is being considered for the footprint of the wetland? People will not have any chance to change the footprint once it has already been put in place. Where is the cultural impact report? Where are the plants being sourced from? There appears to be some tension between the landowners in the land. The template and the footprint is from Mars and is putting a lake next to the lake and is a huge exaggeration on the historical area. Horizons is engaging the wrong hapū groups and the wrong people for this project. The land should not be owned by Horizons. Geoff Kane should have given it back to the people as it was gifted to Levin by the chief to plant a garden, so a wetland should not be planted there. The weedharvester caused the avian botulism because it stirred up the bed of the in order to cut the grass.
- There was some discussion around the connection between Lake Horowhenua and Lake Waiwiri and how this would affect the groundwater level and potential flooding. **Response:** Ensuring that the wetland does not have a detrimental impact on surrounding landowners and potential flooding has been at the forefront of the project. Due to the large land elevation difference between the two lakes water from the wetland will not be pumped uphill towards the Lake Waiwiri reserve. Although there is no evidence of present or historical surface water connection between the two lakes the project team acknowledges that there is probably a groundwater connection between the lakes. This groundwater connection is being investigated with the installation of piezometers on the Wetland complex site to gain a clearer understanding of this connection as well as a more refined understanding on groundwater movement in the area.
- Is Horizons aware that there were historically seven lakes in the area and interconnections between them? **Response:** We have a reasonably strong understanding of the historical land forms and are working with a range of resources and people including tangata whenua to cement this understanding. Historically the proposed constructed wetland complex site was a natural wetland with a mix of flax marsh, swamp and kahikatea swamp forest.
- Has Horizons had a look at the wetland that DoC has done? They have raised the area of water due to the weir? The DoC wetland is an area of concern to the Hōkio Sand road residents as they believe that it is causing flooding. There was some discussion around a weir that DoC

installed/raised to change the water level but no one was certain on the details. There was concern that the Horowhenua Wetland Complex will cause similar issues to the DoC wetland. **Response:** Horizons was not involved in the DoC wetland construction/implementation and so cannot comment as to whether the wetland is causing flooding issues. Logan stated that from what he knows about the DoC wetland is that it was for ecological restoration of an area near the Lake Waiwiri lake margin. The Horowhenua Wetland Complex is a different project with a large amount of engineering, design planning and data collection behind it so that it can be built as a contamination removal wetland.

- The level of sediment in the Hōkio Stream and behind the Lake Horowhenua weir was mentioned and the design team have noted these concerns but also acknowledge that these issues sit outside the purpose of this consultation which is focused on the conceptual design of the Horowhenua Wetland complex project. The design team understands that sediment is a major issue within the Lake Horowhenua catchment and is having detrimental impacts within the Lake and Hōkio Stream. The wetland has been designed with the reduction of sediment input from the Arawhata Stream in mind.
- There was discussion around the removal of the weir and the dredging of the lake. There was also a claim that Horizons Regional Council had changed the height of the weir on the lake recently **Response:** These two topics of discussion that are outside the scope of this meeting. Jon confirmed that the weir has not been altered recently and it still sits at the level required under the legislation.
- It was stated that the sediment trap does not work and that the wetland will not make any difference either. It was also stated that the current sediment trap is too high, as well as the Arawhata Stream and this is causing backing up and causing the Painui drain to back up. **Response:** The modelled efficiency of the wetland complex was discussed. The modelling for the wetland indicates that after phase one the wetland complex has high modelled efficiency for sediment and nitrogen removal. The size of the sediment traps up the top end of the wetland complex will be determined by the wetland/sediment trap specialists based on the flow levels and the amount of suspended sediment to ensure that they are sized appropriately to be effective.
- It was suggested the Joblin's drain should have a sediment trap. **Response:** It had always envisioned that all incoming drains would have a sediment trap near where they enter the property. These traps are not included on the conceptual design drawings and would be added to the more detail design drawings once the required sizing of the sediment traps had been confirmed.

- **Donald Hayes** – the stop bank on the western side of the Arawhata are going to cause a big lake that is going to flow back into his paddocks, everything flooded in this last winter. **Response:** This bund already exists and has done for a number of years. The proposal has a very small extension to this in Phase 1 of the project. This year there was a substantial amount of water sitting there due to the high groundwater table that rose to the surface in combination with extremely high levels of rainfall, and high lake levels. The road is raised well above the paddock surface and behaves like a bund between the Horizons and Hayes land and contained the water that sat on the Horizons property when the groundwater was surfacing.
- There was discussion around the ongoing maintenance of the wetland and how this will be paid for. **Response:** The project team acknowledged that there will be ongoing maintenance in particular for weed control, vegetation maintenance, sediment trap clearance and bioreactor maintenance. The likely costs for this will depend on the final wetland design and its on-going maintenance requirements. The project team continue to look at options on how this will be paid for.
- There was a suggestion that Woodhaven and their sediment input needs to be addressed. It was also suggested that Woodhaven should be paying to remove the sediment from the sediment traps. There was a statement that it is not right that Horizons and the government are putting restrictions on ordinary farmers and yet horticulture gets to continue unrestricted. **Response:** There are multiple contributing factors impacting freshwater in the region. Although horticultural land use is having an impact, there is also dry stock, dairy stock and urban contamination influencing water quality in the catchment. Reducing the impact that horticultural land use in the area is something that is being worked through on many levels with landowners, stakeholders and Horizons science/policy teams. There are multiple work streams to address the impact that horticulture, dry stock, dairy and urban/wastewater are having on water quality. Degraded water quality in the Horowhenua catchment has more than one contributing factor and more than one solution.
- There was a discussion around siphoning the sediment from the lake and removing the phosphorus. Putting a barge on the lake and taking the anaerobic sand phosphorus and using it as fertilizer. **Response:** This is outside the scope of the Horowhenua wetland complex project but it is something that has been investigated in other work streams. Massey, the Lake Trust and NIWA have all looked at this option for which a report is available. At this stage it is not considered viable due to multiple considerations but largely due to the ecological damage it would cause to the lake, the area you would need to dispose of the siphoned sediment and the harmful contaminants that might be in the sediment. It was also

discussed that we could bind the phosphorus in the sediment with alum but it was decided that this was not suitable.

- There was discussion around the need for hydrolytic testing. It is not clear whether the word hydrolytic was fully understood and whether the attendee meant hydrological testing as they were concerned with flooding.  
**Response:** The project has required a large amount of data to be collected in order for the wetland specialists to be able to complete the design and modelling. Flow, contaminant levels, soil profile, gradient and groundwater information is all being collected for this project among other things. The consent application requires a large amount of scientific data around the waterways and land.
- **Donald Hayes:** Why does the Painua drain have a gate on it? **Response: (John Foxall)** the floodgate was installed for flood protection when the Arawhata is in high flow.
- **Donald Hayes:** The sediment trap has caused the high ground water table. The Paenoa swamp is going to cause flooding at Peter Feary's.
- There were some complaints around the ownership of culverts and maintenance. Attendees felt that Horizons and Horowhenua District Council are passing the buck between themselves and no one is taking responsibility for culverts that have issues on Hōkio Sand Road.  
**Response:** Although this is outside the scope of the Horowhenua Wetland Complex project Jon Roygard recommended that Horizons River Management team could look into this area. Logan had looked into the ownership of the earlier mentioned culvert and they are not Horizons assets. If Horowhenua District Council also do not own these culverts then they are the responsibility of the landowner to maintain.
- **Ben Denton:** Who is going to take accountability for the capital loss on land due to the wetland? **Response:** The wetland complex is being designed with flooding and the impact on surrounding landowners at the forefront. The project will not get a consent if it is going to cause damage to surrounding land.
- **Ben Denton:** Feels as though there is not enough being done to address the flooding issues in the Hōkio area. **Response: Jon Roygard** – Jon to organise a visit to Ben's property and Cam Hayes property to gain a better understanding of the issues in the area and see if Horizons can do anything to improve these issues.
- Landowners on Hōkio Sands Road had not been approached for consultation around the Horowhenua wetland complex project.  
**Response:** (same response provided as the earlier meeting) Those neighbours directly bordering the proposed wetland complex have been sent letters. Affected landowners were identified based on proximity to the

proposed wetland location, and geological features of the area. Based on the topographic maps most of the Hōkio Sand Road community is at a higher altitude and quite a distance from the wetland complex site and were therefore not considered to be surrounding landowners. Due to the keen interest in the project from residents on Hōkio Sand Road the commitment was made that landowners on Hōkio Sand Rd will now be included in project update letter circulation (to be dropped into mailboxes along Hōkio Sand Rd).

- It is possible to pump water from Hayes drains into the wetland and does the wetland area have the capacity to take the amount of water?  
**Response:** That is something we can ask Jacobs design team to see if pumping that water is a viable option. There has been a lot of modelling done around the volume of water that wetland can hold and based on current flow data the wetland has the capacity to cope.
- How do the Waitarere community feel that the forest is going to die due to the wetland? **Response:** There is no evidence that the Waitarere forest will be impacted. The Waitarere community had a community meeting and the majority of the attendants were highly supportive of the project and no concerns were raised around the forest.
- Can we share the information from conversations we are having with landowners so that people can see that information in case they have similar questions? **Response:** We can create a frequently asked questions but we will not be sharing information from individual conversations unless those individual wish us to. Some people have chosen to meet with us individually and we would not want their private conversations relayed to the public without their permissions.
- Have we considered running the Ōhau down through the drains?  
**Response:** We are aware of the previous Ōhau water races but at this time we are not considering recommissioning the Ōhau water race through the drains to the lake.
- Have we considered keeping the farm in pasture and using the wetland function but with pasture? **Response:** this is essentially what we are doing but with native vegetation. If left to pasture then it will become overgrown with weeds as the wetland cannot be grazed.
- **Charles Rudd:** Why doesn't Horizons have permits for the Queen Street drain and the Hōkio Beach Road drain? The consents have lapsed and Horizons need to sort out new consents. **Response: (Logan)** this is outside the scope of the Horowhenua Wetland complex and I am not sure what consents you are referring to or why Horizons Regional Council would need a consent in those drains.
- **An attendee asked the landowners a series of questions:**

Who here has more water on their property then they want? Majority raised their hands.

Who here has dealt with Horizons or HDC for flooding issues? Majority raised their hands.

Who here is satisfied with the service they are receiving from HDC or HRC? No one raised their hands.

**Response: (Jon Roygard)** This year the Horowhenua area has had the most complaints around flooding and excess water around. In this past winter we have had the most flooding we have had in a long time. We can look into the drainage issues in the area further.

- **Sam Ferguson:** Reassured people that we are designing this wetland complex with consideration of the impact on neighboring properties at the forefront of the planning process. This project is about positive environmental impacts and making a real positive change for the health of Lake Horowhenua.
- Why did we buy the land without even knowing that it is going ahead?

Key issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flooding around the proposed Wetland Complex.</li><li>• Groundwater levels due to the wetland.</li><li>• Efficiency of the wetland for contaminant removal at high flows.</li><li>• The perception that the wetland design team has not done enough research/too much uncertainty around the potential impacts.</li><li>• DoC wetland and how the HRC wetland will cause similar issues.</li><li>• General concern for drainage/flooding issues in the wider area.</li></ul>