

7. NATURAL RESOURCES REGIONAL PLAN, CH. 8: BEDS AND MARGINS OF LAKES AND RIVERS

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The purpose of this report is to submit for the Council's approval a draft submission prepared on the discussion draft for Ch. 8 of Environment Canterbury's Draft Natural Resources Regional Plan (NRRP). This chapter deals with the beds and margins of lakes and rivers. This report was considered by the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee at its meeting on 12 February 2003. The draft submission is attached and incorporates a number of amendments requested by the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee.

BACKGROUND

This is the last chapter of the NRRP to be released in draft form. A copy of the draft document has is tabled. The Christchurch City Council has previously lodged submissions on chapters 1-7 and 9. Formal submissions on Ch.1: Overview, Ch.2: Ngai Tahu and the Management of Natural Resources, and Ch.3: Air Quality (all at the proposed stage) closed in August 2002, while informal submissions on Ch.4: Soil Conservation, Ch.5: Water Quantity, Ch.6: Impacts of Vegetation on Water Yield, Ch.7: Water Quality and Ch.9: Wetlands (all at the draft stage) closed in March 2002.

Environment Canterbury aims to have all land and water chapters (Ch.4-9) publicly notified as proposed chapters in September 2003.

MATTERS ADDRESSED IN CH.8

Chapter 8 addresses activities within the beds and margins of rivers and lakes, particularly those that could increase the risk of flooding and bank erosion, for example the planting and removal of vegetation, placement and repair of structures, gravel extraction, tunnelling, reclamation and drainage work. It includes non-regulatory measures to address situations where recreational activities cause conflict, or where activities cause ecological damage, for example disturbance of native birds breeding in gravel riverbeds.

The NRRP applies in the Waimakariri River catchment except for those matters that are explicitly addressed by objectives and policies in the Proposed Waimakariri River Regional Plan.

KEY ISSUES

The main issues addressed in the submission include clarifying some of the definitions used in the Ch.8, for example clarifying which waterways within Christchurch are covered by the definition of "river" which specifically excludes artificial water courses.

The submission encourages close co-operation between the Regional Council and City Council in managing the margins of lakes and rivers and when developing floodplain management strategies. The use of rangers to monitor activities in riverbeds is also encouraged. A more positive and proactive approach is sought for the manner in which activities within the beds and margins of lakes and rivers are covered, with a request for recognition of the beneficial effects of enhancement and restoration projects.

The submission asks for better co-ordination with other NRRP chapters, in particular Ch.6: Impacts of Vegetation on Water Yield, and Ch.7: Water Quality. The rules tend to be very focused on flood prevention and maintaining the hydraulic capacity within waterways, without consideration of other values. The submission requests that compliance with other NRRP chapters, e.g. Ch.7: Water Quality, be required as a condition for some activities.

Monitoring provisions in Ch.8 tend to rely on consents and enforcement databases and complaints and observations. A more methodical and scientifically robust approach to monitoring is encouraged.

The closing date for submissions is 28 February 2003.

Recommendation: That the Council support the attached submission.