

LTCCP 2006-16 SUBMISSION

Submissions close on 5 May 2006

I wish to talk to the main points in my submission at the hearings to be held between Thursday 25 May and Wednesday 7 June 2006.

I am completing this submission:
On behalf of a group or organisation

Number of people you represent:
100's

My submission refers to:
Full Version of the LTCCP

Page Number:

I also want to respond to:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Name: | Jason Arnold |
| Organisation: | Waihora Ellesmere Trust |
| Daytime Phone: | 03 3539712 |
| Evening Phone: | |
| Email: | jason.arnold@wet.org.nz |
| Address: | PO Box 116 Lincoln |
| Your Submission: | <p>Do you have any comments on the major projects in our Draft Community Plan?</p> <p>Maintain the level of proposed funding for open spaces and Waterways capital Works programme with a proportion of that expenditure being allocated to the Lake Ellesmere-Te Waihora catchment and wetland areas.</p> <p>Do you have any comments on groups of activities (The activities and services the Council provides?)</p> <p>The Waihora Ellesmere Trust would like the Council prioritise some of its financial and research investment in the management and enhancement of Lake Ellesmere-Te Waihora and the tributaries and drainage systems that feed this iconic, internationally significant wetland as part of its Parks Open Spaces and Waterways activities and services and or the community support services specifically the community grants scheme.</p> <p>Any work to be considered should refer to the Waihora Ellesmere Trust's Community Strategy that addresses the communities concerns, vision and plan of action for improving the health of the lake. This work should be considered in light of the upcoming Bi Cultural State of the Lake research and the presentation of that research at the Living Lake Symposium to be held in April 2007. The provision of either a cash contribution or in house/in-kind research towards this project would be of enormous benefit to the success of this project. Both the Selwyn District Council and Environment Canterbury are providing financial and/or research assistance for this project.</p> <p>Please see further comments below.</p> <p>In addition the Trust seeks a contribution to the Waihora Ellesmere Trusts costs associated with the retaining the services of a full time coordinator who is employed to implement the Trust's Community Strategy plan of action. Currently Selwyn District Council and Environment Canterbury each provide a grant which the Trust uses to assist with this essential aspect of the trusts ability to remain viable.</p> |

Your Submission
(Cont'd):

Do you have any other comments or suggestions you want to make?

Bicultural State of the Lake Research and the 'Living Lake' Symposium: A bicultural state of the lake, vision and implementation strategy for Te Waihora - Lake Ellesmere

This project has been initiated and professionally lead by the Waihora Ellesmere Trust and developed by a team of individuals from most of the key stakeholders in the lakes management and use.

Project Description

The project develops a Sustainable Integrated Management strategy for Te Waihora-Lake Ellesmere. This will be achieved by undertaking a bicultural stock take of the state of the lake from which will be developed a vision and targets given the current state and understanding of the resources. An implementation strategy for achieving the targets, with broad community/ institutional commitment will then be developed. This integrated approach involves all key agencies and community groups who have either responsibility or an interest in the lake's management.

Background:

Lake Ellesmere -Te Waihora is the fourth largest lake in New Zealand and recognised nationally and internationally for its wetland and general biodiversity values even in its degraded state. It is considered a taonga by both Ngai Tahu and the papatipu runanga including Taumutu Runanga. It once provided abundant resources from tuna (eel) and patiki (flounder) to raupo and harakeke and many other sources of mahinga kai. The lake is of immense spiritual importance for tangata whenua.

Since the arrival of European migrants the development of land and water resources primarily for settlement and agricultural use the lake has been managed as part of a lowland drainage system to maintain productive agricultural landuse in the immediate surrounding areas. It is artificially opened to the marine environment to lower lake levels when specific trigger heights are reached. There is a water conservation order on the lake in part to protect wildlife and other natural values.

There is now widespread political, Environment Court, scientific and community concern that the lake is in a perilous state. But how sick is the lake and how can the multiple agencies with lake management responsibilities develop a coordinated approach to its ongoing management?

The problem:

The Lake is a degraded water body as a result of mostly human inputs and negative environmental effects from surrounding landuse. Effects include reduced water quality and quantity, removal of native vegetation and grazing right to the lake edge. Future inputs are currently undetermined however with recent levels of land use intensification, both rural and urban, further degradation of at least water quality is likely to occur. Other natural environmental effects also contribute to the eutrophic state of the lake as well as the geomorphologic influences. The degradation of the lake has been exacerbated by the artificial opening and closing of the lake for more than a century, which has generated other ecological and hydraulic pressures.

In 1996 Environment Canterbury published a substantial report 'The Natural Resources of Lake Ellesmere (Te Waihora) and its Catchment'. This well regarded report was scientifically robust and attempted to integrate the numerous attributes of the lake reported on, in an attempt to seek sustainable management outcomes. The next step of developing a strategic management plan for improvement of the lake was never undertaken. The information in this report is now more than a decade old.

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In the last decade substantial change has occurred in the catchment, not least the exponential increase in intensification of land use driven largely by groundwater abstraction. The last few months of 2005 and early 2006 have seen a distinct and unprecedented change in the water balance that makes up the hydraulic influence on the aquatic system. Daily data taken from the lowland streams that flow into the lake have shown a steady decrease in water quantity, which makes up approximately 65% of the inflows into the lake. Evaporation and other associated outflows compared to the inflows have seen the lake drop at unprecedented rates over the summer period. This event in relation to the artificial opening regime has significant implications for the future state of the lake, i.e., if the inflows are not greater than the outflows the lake would not have to be opened. Depending on the time frame the effect on the water quality, quantity, salinity, and the consequential impacts on wildlife, the commercial fishery, lake edge vegetation, weed and pest management could have significant negative ecological effects.

Modelling of the above issues, values and relationships, especially in relation to lake levels, forms the basis for being able to predict when the lake is likely to be opened. This modelling has not been done for over 15 years. Now more than ever this modelling is crucial to developing and maintaining a sustainable lake management regime.

In a nutshell there is no overall and widely accepted plan (partly because key management agencies have failed to produce such an initiative) of action for Te Waihora to address all of the above problems - herein, then, lies the opportunities.

The Opportunities

A new approach to assisting with integrated catchment management for the lake is absolutely necessary as the problems are exacerbating by the day, e.g., further large-scale irrigation schemes and urban subdivisions are planned for the catchment.

There is strong support for developing an overall vision and implementation plan from almost all key organisations because:

- . No one knows the current state of the lake and its resources;
- . There is no unifying vision for the future of the lake;
- . No one has developed a set of bicultural indicators that can be reported on now and which can be used in the future to monitor progress of management effectiveness;
- . No one is coordinating the activities of the multiple statutory and other organisations that have roles to play with lake; and
- . It is also generally agreed that a management plan that can be implemented is needed now.

If this new approach is implemented we feel certain that enduring, sustainable (including realistic) outcomes can be defined for the lake, and implemented by the responsible agencies in partnership with the broad community.

The outcomes that will result from the project include:

- Specific programmes of action, e.g. setting targets for mahinga kai enhancement such as willow control to allow native plant regrowth, related to the future vision of the lake which will lead to improved water quality, lake level management, farming activities, fisheries, etc., measured by an agreed set of bicultural indicators for the lake.
- This will be achieved by a multi-party programme of action that includes the community, tangata whenua, local and central government agencies, and QUANGOS such as Fish and Game.

**Your Submission
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- To achieve the above we propose a facilitated process (associated with an intensive workshop programme) to develop and achieve broad community (including agency) buy-in to understanding the current situation and setting realistic but desirable future options.

- All of the above programmes will be based around achieving the vision which itself will be based on our current understanding, from a bicultural perspective, of the state of the lake (which will be a widely disseminated piece of work).

Benefits from the desired environmental outcomes above will be for:

- Tangata whenua who will receive benefits in terms of having widely accepted bi-cultural indicators, improved lake water quality, lake level management in relation to mahinga kai and other values, and from closer working relationships with other management agencies and the community generally;

- Fish and Game - improvement to recreational fisheries many of which have been devastated by the continuing degradation of water quality and the aquatic and riparian environments e.g. virtual collapse of the lower Selwyn River trout fishery.

- ECan who over the next 5 years need to renew their lake management consents. ECan will also benefit from having an overall vision of the lake, which complements its other statutory planning mechanisms and having agreed set of indicators to measure and manage the change over time.

- Selwyn District Council and Christchurch City Council: In relation to their land management responsibilities under the RMA and other responsibilities under the LGA 2002 this research and opportunity to develop an integrated model for lake and catchment management will enable the reconsideration of the resource management framework that sets the permitted baseline for land management in areas around the lake that are particularly vulnerable and susceptible to intensification of certain landuses. Other areas facing the need for more sustainable management action include drainage management and weed and pest management will also benefit. It is anticipated that the information presented in an integrated form in this forum will enable the councils to consider their current management regimes in a sustainable framework. This project is timely given the ability to provide a depth of knowledge for the Christchurch City who have only recently taken part of the rural lake catchment under its jurisdiction having been involved in predominantly urban issues.

- DoC - this forum for integration and planning action will be an ideal opportunity for the department to bring their Joint Management Plan to the table to be part of the solution. A great deal of work has been done to complete this planning document parts of which should be able to be incorporated into any plan of action with the chance of joint projects and the ability to advise and learn from others participants.

- Farmers and landowners - to establish an agreed understanding of the state of the environment this group derives a living from. With a view to enable those willing landowners to manage particularly vulnerable and at risk areas of their land in a sustainable manner while encouraging others to work with the Waihora Ellesmere Trust in a non-regulatory environment.

- Recreation groups and individuals - a chance to assess the current and future requirements to improve access and facilities in the framework of a plan of action to manage increased participation and interaction with the lake environment for recreational purposes.

**Your Submission
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• Other communities of interest - the wider social community will be engaged throughout this time and into the future to enable better and clearer understanding of the lake and its current state and future improvements. Community action will be vital to maintain not only a greater understanding and appreciation of the lake but also community 'ownership' of change in management and improvements. An indicator from the community perspective will also be a valuable contribution to this management tool.

This project is the first step on the road to recovery for the lake and the initiative to work closely with the wider community to begin the process of improving the management of our natural resources such as the lake for future generations.

Trust Coordinator

Of critical importance to the trust's ability to implement the Community Strategy is having the resources to enable it to retain the services of a full time coordinator. This role ensures that the Trust alongside the considerable voluntary efforts by the community can make progress towards improving the health of the lake.