

Water Conservation Order: Te Waikoropupū Springs and Associated Waterbodies

Submission Reference no: 1273

Amanda Clarke

Submitter Type: Individual

Source: Web Form

Overall Notes:

Clause

What is/are your view/s on the application?

Position

Neutral

Notes

In general I support the idea of preserving the Springs and the catchment that feeds them. After all, it is far, far cheaper (both to the environment and the economy) to put protection measures in place now, than it is to rehabilitate a natural resource once it has been polluted or contaminated. However, the farmers make valid points that water for irrigation will be used to do BAU better, rather than expand (or increase stock numbers). And this may mean the farmers can buy in less products like palm kernel extract. The science seems to support that some further irrigation is sustainable. If an increase in irrigation is allowed I would like to see it backed by data. Therefore rather than access to water being seen as an entitlement I think there needs to be restrictions applied that are evidence-based. These could include: 1. farmer's should only be allowed to irrigate if they can demonstrate they have a 'good' soil water holding capacity. The definition of 'good' soil water holding capacity needs to be determined and set at a level so that it encourages farmer's to improve the soil to greater depths (eg 250mm or more). Farmer's would need annual audits of their land to determine if these levels were continuing to be met. 2. Farmer's would need to prove that extra irrigation is resulting in better BAU. This means they need to have records showing things such as purchase of PKE before and after irrigation. If there is no demonstrable improvement in farm practices then irrigation rights need to be removed. 3. Annual audits need to be carried out by an independent person/organisation (perhaps funded by a levy on irrigators collected by TDC) In order to protect the waterways that feed the Springs (eg the Waingaro River), TDC needs to halt any current or future meddling in the natural flow of the river ie rock work. The current rock work has increased the flow of the river (leading to greater erosion downstream of the rockwork) and removed natural shade. Neither of these effects enhance the quality of the river.

Clause

I/we seek the following recommendation from the Special Tribunal to the Minister for the Environment

Position

Grant the order with changes

Notes

As above, I generally support the principles of the Order. However, if extra irrigation is allowed then it should be subject to restrictions such as those mentioned above. Rockwork needs to be halted on the Waingaro River (and maybe other rivers too).

Clause

Would you like to present your views on this submission to the Special Tribunal at a public hearing?

Position

I/we do not want to present my/our views at a public hearing

Notes