

Water Conservation Order: Te Waikoropupū Springs and Associated Waterbodies

Submission Reference no: 111

Frida Inta, **Frida Inta**

Submitter Type: Individual

Source: Web Form

Clause

The specific parts of the application that my/our submission relates to are:

Notes

All of it, especially Pupu Springs and its aquifer

Clause

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

Position

Support

Notes

I have visited Pupu Springs several times over 45 years, the first couple of times when they were off the beaten track. At that time I was amazed by the beauty of the wetland surrounds and the intense clarity of the water. I absolutely understand why the springs have been turned into an international attraction, even though it undermines to some extent the prior serenity, quiet and spiritual aura of the place. I have heard that the small animals and bugs living in the aquifer (stygo fauna) are an essential part of producing the outstandingly clear water. It is essential the aquifer remain a healthy place for the stygo fauna to live. Much of the present land use (predominantly intensive farming) above the aquifer and elsewhere in that same Takaka catchment does not complement the natural beauty and health of those springs. A WCO would hopefully protect the aquifer from any further intensification of farming and other water-polluting industries, and could possibly see de-intensification of industrial farming in the area. Evidently, most of the water rising at Pupu has been underground for 10 years or more. Of great concern is that intensive, irrigated dairying has established and expanded within a similar timeframe, so the downstream results of that industry have not been fully realized yet. However there is a history, and plethora, of scientific papers cautioning on increasing nitrate levels in groundwaters not being recorded for many years after those nitrates start sinking through soil layers. When those nitrates finally come through to surface waters again after plying the aquifers, it is far too late to reverse the damage done, although not too late to alter future trends to healthier outcomes. Damage in this case could include interfering with the stygo fauna. Already nitrate levels in Pupu Springs are rising. This is terrifically sad news. In which case pesticide and other toxic pollutant levels (e.g. hormones, antibiotics excreted in urine) will also be rising. Evidently Tasman District Council sees merit in allowing 70% more irrigation (no doubt mostly for industrial farming) in the aquifer catchment. If such intensification was realized Pupu Springs would not be on any tourist's list of must-see places except for eco-tourists looking at how nations profit at the expense of their natural wonders. By extension it seems no water body within any area capable of supporting industrial farming in NZ is exempt. As a nation we have forgotten that clean, fresh water is our lifeblood. It seems we only care for fresh water in plastic, unrecyclable bottles, water taken mostly from waterbodies high above industry. I am not recommending turning the catchment back into Gondwana forest. There are alternatives to industrial farming, where the soil is nurtured rather than raped, by building it up, using deeper-rooting pasture species, and encouraging soil micro-organisms so it can retain pasture nutrients. Evidently there are profitable farms in the Takaka area that use these methods rather than intensive irrigation, pesticide, and synthetic fertilizer use; industrial farming, in particular that with vast irrigation systems, include animal welfare issues where there is no tree shelter for stock in either the blazing sun or intensive cold, winter rain and snow events. As an aside, on a recent trip of mine I saw 2 farms, one on each side of the road; on the right cows were sitting under shade trees chewing contentedly on their cuds. On the other the cows were standing, sad heads lowered, in the blazing noonday sun. I live next door to an industrial farm and I had forgotten that cows like to chew their cud until I saw those cows sitting under the shade trees. The cows next door to me eat soft, green, synthetically enhanced grass all day long because they are pushed to their physical limit, then in the early afternoon they wait at the gate, pensively looking for those quad bikes to round them up and relieve them of their full udders; no cuds are chewed. Their excrement is a noxiously smelly diarrhoea. NIWA has advised on 5 key items to safeguard the health of the aquifer. This is the best available information and is incorporated in the WCO. 1) At the Springs, dissolved organic carbon must remain undetectable to maintain the water's extreme clarity. 2) The aquifer should be managed to ensure that water discharging from the springs contains at least 6.0 milligrammes per litre (mg/l) of dissolved oxygen. 3) The aquifer and catchments should be managed to ensure that nitrate-N concentrations in spring water do not exceed 0.4 mg/l. 4) The aquifer should be managed to maintain ammonia concentrations below 0.05 mg/l. 5) The 99% protection level concentrations provided within the ANZECC guidelines for toxicants should apply until further research gives better information. Although these safeguard recommendations are well within the guidelines provided in the NPS- Freshwater Management, they are similar to the guidelines provided to regional councils by the MfE for protection of water quality in river ecosystems prior to the NPS-FM. This url is no longer available: <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/ser/regional-council-water-quality-data-mar08/html/page2.html> Respect for, and caring for, our natural treasures is a basic tenet of life for some in New Zealand, and is incorporated in Maori folklore and culture. The first obligation is to protect and sustain natural resources, and

any use must take place within that constraint. Let us pay the homage due to kaitiaki taniwha, Huriawa, who resides within the caves and underground streams of Te Waikoropupū.

Clause

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

Position

Grant the order

Notes

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