

SUBMISSION

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To; Water Conservation Order Team
Environment Protection Authority
Private Bag 63002
WELLINGTON 6140

Submission on proposed Water Conservation Order for Te Waikoropupu Springs and associated water bodies

Date: 14 March 2018

Submission by: Wayne and Tyler Langford

Address for Service: Tyler Langford



We wish to present our views at a public hearing

Introduction:

Te Waikoropupu is outstandingly beautiful and hughley important to our family. We welcome the Water Conservation Order and its ability to give the highest level of protection to this national and international treasure in our backyard. We see this as our generational responsibility to protect this natural wonder from any political or generational changes in the future.

However with this in mind we do strongly decline the current state in which the order to trying to achieve this protection. In the below paragraphs I will explain the flours I see in the points of the order and some of their scientific evidence or lack there of.

Highlighted points of concern:

- While we agree as stated Te Waikoropupu Springs is in itself internationally significant we believe the applicant stretches the boundaries of the law by including waters that on their own are not significant nor are they in there natural state.
- We disagree with the inclusion of Schedule 3 waters that are not hydrologically connected to the springs in any form.
- The springs and water bodies listed in the schedules are not in their natural state due to the significant changes the Cobb has on the water flow and levels.
- Consultation was not only lacking but it was not there at all.

- The applicant has failed to recognise the importance of farming to our community

Detailed legal Points:

Clause 4: There is the inclusion of waters in schedule 3 which are not hydraulically connected to Te Waikoropupu Springs. It seems pointless to include these waters and potential restrictions for no reason.

We asked for Schedule 3 to be struck from the Water Conservation Order

Clause 5: The Cobb Dam releases a substantial amount of water into the mentioned water bodies which keeps them in an artificial state of flow.

The applicant has asked for all water bodies to be kept in their natural state, as stated above this is already an artificial state and therefore is a flawed request.

We asked that the Water Conservation Order acknowledge this unnatural state and instead refer to the science around maintaining the 7 day MALF.

Clause 7: The applicant has not proven that the rivers and aquifers in Schedule 1 and 3 are nationally significant in their own right. The applicant has given insufficient evidence to show that these water bodies and changes in them show any impact on Schedule 2 water bodies.

We ask therefore that they either be struck from the order or the science be presented and or completed to show the link.

Clause 8: (a) The active floodplain of the AMA is like most rivers constantly changing and in very many cases is either incroching or taking out entirely pieces of productive land. The applicant has not allowed for the value of flood protection to be included in the order. Farmers and council alike need to be able to use current means of rock walls, gravel extraction and ebbs to curve the river to protect both farmland and urban populations.

(b/c/d) Additional abstraction from any water bodies should be based on science and maintaining current values of the water bodies, not an an outlandish statement such as made in the order. The applicant has failed to give any scientific evidence to state their reason for this clause. We propose the tribunal look at the extensive work completed by the council around maintaining 7 day MALF and the available water.

Clause 9: The applicant has failed to understand the the words “may enter waters” in this case is entirely insufficient. We have no scientific evidence to demonstrate what we do on farm is or ever will have any impact on Te Waikoropupu Springs.

We ask the tribunal to request this science be completed so everyone involved can make informed science based decisions.

Setting limits of 0.4/0.5 nitrogen on these rivers is ludicrous. These rivers are already in the NOF standard of A and we would argue have never and could never sit inside these ridiculous limits.

I will address schedule 4 as a point later.

Clause 10: This clause is completely contradictory. The order states that they permit certain acts however if those acts granted would compromise the protection it cannot be granted or completed. As mentioned earlier due to our complete lack in science we have no guarantee either way and therefore the council would have to side on the side of the order and not grant this work.

Animal health and human health around water is absolute paramount and a basic welfare right.

Our council must be able to maintain our infrastructure for our community.

We believe this clause demonstrates the lack of understanding of the science on your applicant's behalf as well as their lack of legal technicalities.

Clause 12: As I am sure you are aware most of the current resource consents expire 2019, if the order is granted in its proposed timeframe all of these current consents would become new and could not be granted by the council as it would contradict the order.

Irrigated farmers have invested millions of dollars in this infrastructure and taking the water would have catastrophic consequences for them, their family, the people they employ and our community.

I ask you as well for what?, science tells us that there is more than enough water. Science tells us that we currently have A water quality with the current practices in place.

Schedule 4: I see the testing on a monthly basis as expensive and unnecessary. My primary concern around this point is the "testing under all flows" Golden Bay receives an annual rainfall in excess of 2.5m, this flush effect is part of the reason for exceptional water quality in the bay. However this also means we have multiple 100ml plus rain events which cause runoff from our farms. Scientific testing of our waterways including the Waikoropupu over the last 20 plus years would suggest this runoff is not causing any water quality issues, however if these hard limits were put in place and tested in a high rainfall event "under all flows" it would be impossible to have any stock type?/crop/ or use for the land that met the conditions in all flows. An added note is this is not common practice throughout NZ

Why is some of the limits set to current state and others have a number with a lack of scientific evidence behind it.

Clarity would need to be retested to establish a status quo as this has not been completed for some years.

There is a lack scientific evidence to backup why these limits are set where they are. Cawthron Institute completed a science panel report with multiple scientifics from across New Zealand specialising in an array of fields. Their task was to look at the Te Waikoropupu and report back as to its state and health and threats going forward.

On most of the limits set by the applicants order the Crawthorn's report said Te Waikoropupu is exceptional and almost immeasurable in certain attributes. This is with farming at it sides for 150 years. Most of those attributes have been unchanged since testing began decades ago.

While we acknowledge their has been a change of Nitrogen it also needs to be noted that the nitrogen has gone down over the last 10 years. We also acknowledge that we lack the science to understand the on farm decisions connection to the outcomes at the springs.

We strongly ask the tribunal to listen to the science in this area (Cawthorn report) which has recommendations in place of triggers that allow further investigation and on farm management changes.

We also implore the tribunal to consider the need for further research into the connection the AMA has to the springs, the contribution on farm decisions has to the water quality and a detailed look into the ecosystem that is AMA and Te Waikoropupu.

General Points: Primary Industries is the largest single GDP earner in Golden Bay. Farming families have been woven into the fabric of this community for over 150 years. They are part of clubs, school, organisations, first responders and much much more. This order stands to not only wipe out farming in the Takaka valley but would challenge the very notion of civilisation in the valley.

The farming community is very connected and proud of both the general water quality and the exceptional water quality of Te Waikoropupu. We have been deeply hurt and troubled by the divisiveness and rhetoric that has been in our community of late.

The applicants have stated as part of their application they consulted with community. This consultation is completely insufficient. It list the applicants and an organization that one of the applicants chairs. There is no mention of the farming community who will be impacted the most by this order or our wider community in general.

We ask the tribunal for a full and fair consultation process to be seeked and we are encouraged that this process of submissions we are undertaking now is leading in that direction.

Conclusion: We are in support of a Water Conservation Order of protection of Te Waikoropupu Springs and recognise its outstanding attributes are nationally significant. We do however contest to several points of the order as mentioned above.

It needs to be noted and accepted that the water quality in Takaka is exceptional. Te Waikoropupu Springs is still the clearest water most will see in their lifetime. There seems to be a myth out there that farming and water quality are mutually exclusive. We believe our catchment tells a different story. Farming and exceptional water quality including the clearest water having been co existing side by side for 150 years!!. According to all the science we have been presented with this will remain unchanged.

We also would like it acknowledge that like many industries and urban we are on a journey to reduce our environmental impact. We have made some great leaps and changes in the last decade;

- Fencing off water channels
- Riparian planting
- Biodiversity corridors
- Upgrade of effluent systems
- Reduction in water use at cowshed
- Increase in capital for efficiency of irrigation
- Soil sampling paddocks so fertiliser is precisely used
- Soil moisture monitoring
- Fencing off wetlands and tomos
- Full farm environment plans
- Huge investment into DairyNZ for research and development into this area
- Reviewing stocking rate to match soil type
- Change in grazing patterns and winter grazing to have less impact
- Trialling multiple sediment catching ideas

This is an ever changing landscape and the current order as it stands will not allow for any of these changes or an advancement in science or technology to evolve and continue.

We fully support the collaborative community process that is currently happening (Takaka FLAG). This process has been completely volunteer based and has completed both the fieldwork and science research to make informed effective solutions that are based on a community approach of values. Te Waikoropupu sits at the heart of that process. This process has had the proper consultation with the community and has not been driven by a few selected individuals, who have paid little regard to the community now and into the future.

We would like to thank the tribunal for the opportunity to submit on the process and look forward to an outcome that protects this national treasure while working with our communities values.

Wayne and Tyler Langford