

ORC Omnibus Plan Change - Plan Change 8

Submission Reference no: 103

Rachel Napier



Submitter Type: Not specified

Source: Email

Overall Notes:

Clause

Are you a trade competitor?

Notes

see submission

Clause

What are you submitting on? You can submit on specific parts of Plan Change 8 or the whole plan change.

Notes

see submission

Clause

What is your view on the Plan Change 8 or the specific parts listed above? Please select one, if you have multiple views state clearly in the notes box below.

Notes

see submission

Clause

What decision would you like the Environment Court to make?

Notes

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Clause

Do you wish to be heard in support of your submission? All submissions will be considered by the Environment Court. Please indicate if you wish to be heard in support of your submission.

Notes

see submission

Clause

Authority to act:

Position

I confirm I have the authority to sign this submission on behalf of the submitter

Notes

[REDACTED]

From: Napier Family Trust [REDACTED] >
Sent: Monday, 17 August 2020 3:16 pm
To: ORCplanchanges
Subject: Water plan change 8
Attachments: Water Plan Change 8.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Categories: Blue Category

Afternoon

I has attached my submission

Regards
Rachel Napier

I am seriously concerned what some proposed changes will have on the future of our sheep and beef farm. We moved to Tahakopa 11 years ago from Waikoikoi.

On 400ha we have a 70% sheep breeding and finishing, and 30% cattle finishing operation. A current stocking rate of 8.2ha, our farm is very well sheltered with native bush. On the home block we have 19 water sources that originate in DOC then flow down to the Tahakopa river, no water ways are permanently fenced. With only a dozen farms on the lower Tahakopa river, and the rest of the Tahakopa valley being DOC land, or pine and gum forests, both water tests and MCI counts done in the Tahakopa river prove it is in good health.

I don't believe we need the extreme changes being enforced upon us, when our river is already in good health. We have made changes to improve our winter crop management, by excluding all stock from waterways, and grazing in a manner to protect both our stock and our soil.

Have reduced our stocking rate.

My major concern is the cost of complying with these rules plus the possibility of also being forced to reduce stocking rate further, will make farming in the Catlin's uneconomic, resulting in more beautiful farms being planted in trees and forcing people to leave the area, closing school and business that we support. Currently there are 5 children at the Tahakopa school, we are already fighting for our community.

We operate an economically viable and sustainable business, with lamb weights of 20.7kg this season. Average annual ewe death rate of less than 4% and spring lamb loss of 14%

We are prepared to change and improve our methods to protect our environment further, but it must be balanced to ensure that people are supported too.

Where is the 1 metre width measure from, the body of water or from the top of the stream bank?

Are all dams/duck ponds that were built and are relied upon for stock water to be fenced ?

This will have a huge impact on our farm, if we are going to be required to fence off all of our water sources, it will be incredibly expensive and impractical, with only 5 of our 56 paddocks not having a waterway in them, we also do not have a water scheme for our stock, we've had no need too, due to our creeks run all year around.

We will be faced with the cost of fencing and a water scheme and extending our culverts to meet the new 5 metre rule. Then faced with either reducing our stocking rate due to the reduction of grazable area for our stock. Or increase the intensity of our farming operation, by running the same number of stock on the reduced area. Increasing the risk of stock health issues and damage to pasture and soil by the increased pressure.

Also depending on the location of the fences, it will effect my stock's ability to access shelter when required.

Most of the Tahakopa river isn't fenced either, with it regularly flooding, it is still bush covered so when it floods it leaves behind a lot of debris.

What is classed as a "wetland" once again unsure how this will impact us, we have 9HA peat swamp on our property, it's healthy and growing. We maintain the culverts around the exterior so we can control weeds. If we're restricted to what activities we can do. Who is going to spray the weeds and pay for it ?

How is "low sloped land" measured?, is it calculated solely on the lie of the land?

-Or is the stocking rate and intensity of farm operation included?

- Are current MCI counts, and surrounding catchment land uses included in the decision ?

We have 6% of our farm in swedes and chow this winter, these crops are sown with my family's original ridger which we believe to be a century old. We crop our paddocks for 2 years before sowing back into permanent pasture. We haven't completed our first rotation yet, it will be 15 years or more.

A "catch crop" isn't an option for us, due to our high rainfall of 2 metres annually, we only want to concentrate on getting our animal feed planted, not be forced to rush out when ground conditions don't suit, planting a crop we don't need which creates extra work and further soil disruption.

Once the ewes come off crop in mid-August we put our calves on, often our crops aren't finished till late October, so as soon as conditions suit, pasture is sown, or the paddock is left till late November, then when able, second crop swede and chow is sown. Sometimes it is Christmas before all paddocks are sown, if the weather has been wet and we're unable to get a tractor on the paddock.

Grazing of winter crop from top to bottom

Often is not the best option.

With our yards being in the valley floor we follow our farm track if possible to our paddocks, so to reduce damage we generally access our crop paddocks from the bottom gate. With most of our paddocks consisting of ridges to give a long enough "feeding face" for our sheep we general feed across the face, we give our sheep a daily ration, each day, filling hay and balage racks as required. Where we start on each ridge is determined by a safe access point and location of shelter for stock. Stock is far more settled if they are able to rest in sheltered spots, not fenced on top of the hill in rain and wind, this will cause them to make more mud.

Both sheep and cattle naturally graze with their heads uphill, forcing them to consume their feeding heading down a slope will roll bulbs out, possibly soil too.

We fence off our waterways, and they are protected by 6 months grass growth, which reduces the amount of sediment movement.

We had planned to erect more shelter belts and begin putting in a water scheme, but now will wait, until we can be sure we will still be able to profit from farming livestock.

I ask that the Council start issuing "A licence to farm" with a 10 year term. Giving farmers some certainty about their future, ensuring more rules aren't continually being forced on us year upon year, driving up compliance costs each time. What is the point of starting these extreme measures if there is no sustainable future for farming in the Catlins.

Once again I ask why, a catchment based approach is not the starting point for water reforms, New Zealand has more than one river, and varied climates.

Our farms here Tahakopa are completely different from those in Wedderburn.

We need rules that support each catchment and community.

Sadly we have limited science on most catchments, with water tests and MCI counts only beginning recently. But let's work with what we got, and protect the environment and those who live within them.

I would ask that the Otago Regional Council appoints a field officer to work with farmers in the Tahakopa and Maclennan catchments to ensure our future.

Regards
Rachel Napier
Tahakopa