

Memo

Date	30 October 2017
To	OTOP Zone Committee
CC	Peter Constantine
From	Lyn Carmichael, Craig Davison

High Naturalness Water Bodies within the Orari, Opihi, Temuka and Pareora Zones

Purpose:

The purpose of this paper is to inform the Orari, Temuka, Opihi and Pareora (OTOP) Zone Committee on:

- a. The designation of High Naturalness Water Bodies under the Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP), and the protection afforded to these waterbodies;
- b. Outline the waterbody currently identified as a high naturalness waterbody in the OTOP Zone; and
- c. Identify a further water body that may be protected in the OTOP Zone by applying this classification.

Background:

The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2017 (NPS-FM 2017) requires that the significant values of outstanding freshwater bodies and wetlands are protected, including protection of the values and the characteristics that make the water body outstanding. Significant values and how to protect them will need to be determined according to tāngata whenua and community preferences (e.g., a wetland or water body may have a significant value related to native biodiversity, fisheries, geomorphology, culture, science, recreation or landscape).

Depending on the values of the wetland or outstanding freshwater body, limit-setting alone may not be enough to protect the significant values of the wetland or outstanding freshwater body. Other measures to address water quality, including non-regulatory measures, may be required.

Land and Water Regional Plan

High naturalness waterbodies are those hāpua, wetlands and natural state waterbodies which are considered to have outstanding or significant characteristics. These water bodies are identified in the LWRP in sub region chapters, and their outstanding and significant characteristics are recognised and protected by the relevant rules and policies in in the LWRP.

For identified high naturalness water bodies the damming, diverting, or taking of water is limited to that for individual or community stock or drinking water, and water for the operation and maintenance of existing infrastructure. High naturalness waterbodies are also afforded additional protection from construction, excavation and the introduction and clearance of non-indigenous

vegetation. Effects of any activities must not adversely affect their significant values, including cultural and ecological values.

High Naturalness Waterbodies in the OTOP ZONE

Orari Gorge

The Orari Gorge and tributaries from the mouth of the gorge to the headwaters is the only waterbody currently listed in the LWRP as a high naturalness waterbody in the OTOP zone. The outstanding and significant characteristics identified for the Orari are the high degree of naturalness and the high amenity value, including very high scenic and recreational values, and very high water clarity.

Further Identification of High Naturalness Waterbodies in the OTOP Zone

Milford Lagoon and Lower Orakipaoa Creek

Milford Lagoon and Lower Orakipaoa Creek is a coastal lagoon, stream and channel wetland system adjacent to and north of the Opihi River mouth, 7km from Temuka. It is an important coastal wetland habitat and one of very few remaining examples of a meandering coastal stream. The lagoon and surrounding wetlands is a Mahinga kai area, īnanga spawning habitat and supports migratory, wading and coastal birds. Threatened species include the banded dotterel/pohowera, black fronted tern/tarapirohe, white heron/kotuku and Caspian tern. The lagoon and wetland is a statutory acknowledgement area and part of the Opihi Mātaitai Reserve. Including the lagoon and creek in the LWRP as a high naturalness water body would provide additional protection from activities that are likely to affect the cultural and ecological values.

Key Decision Area:

- **High naturalness water bodies for inclusion in the sub region section of the LWRP**
 - **Option one - Confirm the Orari Gorge and tributaries as a high naturalness water body**
 - **Option two - Confirm the Orari Gorge and tributaries and include Milford Lagoon and Orakipaoa Creek as a high naturalness waterbody for the values identified above**
 - **Option three – Confirm the above water bodies and nominate further water bodies as high naturalness water bodies to be included in the LWRP**