

Memo

Date	14 November 2017
To	OTOP Zone Committee
CC	
From	Lyn Carmichael

High Naturalness Water Bodies within the OTOP Zone

Purpose

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

- a. Recap on the provisions regarding High Naturalness Water Bodies in the Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP) and;
- b. Outline the water bodies currently protected by this classification in the LWRP and set out draft recommendations and opportunities for further protection of hāpua and wetlands

High Naturalness Waterbodies

High naturalness waterbodies are defined in the Land and Water Regional Plan as *those hāpua, wetlands and natural state waterbodies which are considered to have outstanding or significant characteristics*. Where high naturalness water bodies are identified in the LWRP in sub region sections, their outstanding and significant characteristics are considered and protected by the relevant region wide policies and rules in Sections 4 and 5. The effects of any activities undertaken in or near the high naturalness waterbodies must not adversely affect their significant values. These values may include cultural, ecological, landscape and amenity values.

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. These waterbodies are also afforded additional protection from construction, excavation and the introduction of non-indigenous vegetation.

High Naturalness Waterbodies in the OTOP Zone

The Orari Gorge and tributaries from the mouth of the gorge to the headwaters is the only water body 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.

In addition to the Orari and tributaries above the gorge, the OTOP Zone Committee has previously recommended the inclusion of Milford Lagoon and Orakipaoa Creek in the schedule of High Naturalness Waterbodies to protect their cultural and ecological values.

Protecting additional priority areas

The Zone Committee has also raised some additional areas for protection within the OTOP Zone that do not necessarily meet the criteria for classification as high naturalness waterbodies. In particular, the Zone Committee has sought to protect hāpua and wetlands, and the protection of the habitat and biodiversity values of wetlands and coastal fresh water systems has been identified as a priority in the community outcomes.

To provide this protection the Zone Committee could recommend that all coastal wetlands and hāpua within the OTOP zone are afforded the same protection as those hāpua, wetlands and natural state waterbodies that are classified as high naturalness waterbodies.

Key decision area

- **High naturalness water bodies for inclusion in the sub region section**
 - **Confirm the Orari Gorge and tributaries and include Milford Lagoon and Orakipaoa Creek as a high naturalness waterbodies for the OTOP sub regional chapter**
 - **Identify further hāpua, wetlands and natural state waterbodies for inclusion as high naturalness waterbodies in the draft recommendations for community consultation and feedback**
- **Protection for wetlands and hāpua that do not meet the criteria for high naturalness waterbodies**
 - **Recommend the policies and rules of the OTOP sub region section provide for the protection of wetlands and hāpua, particularly in respect of water takes and land use activities that may affect their natural character or natural function.**