

Submitter No: ~~58~~ 265

Submitter Name: Fed Farmers .
~~Baird, Allan~~

Date Received: 26/9 /17



Southland Water and Land Plan Hearing, Allan Baird

Introduction

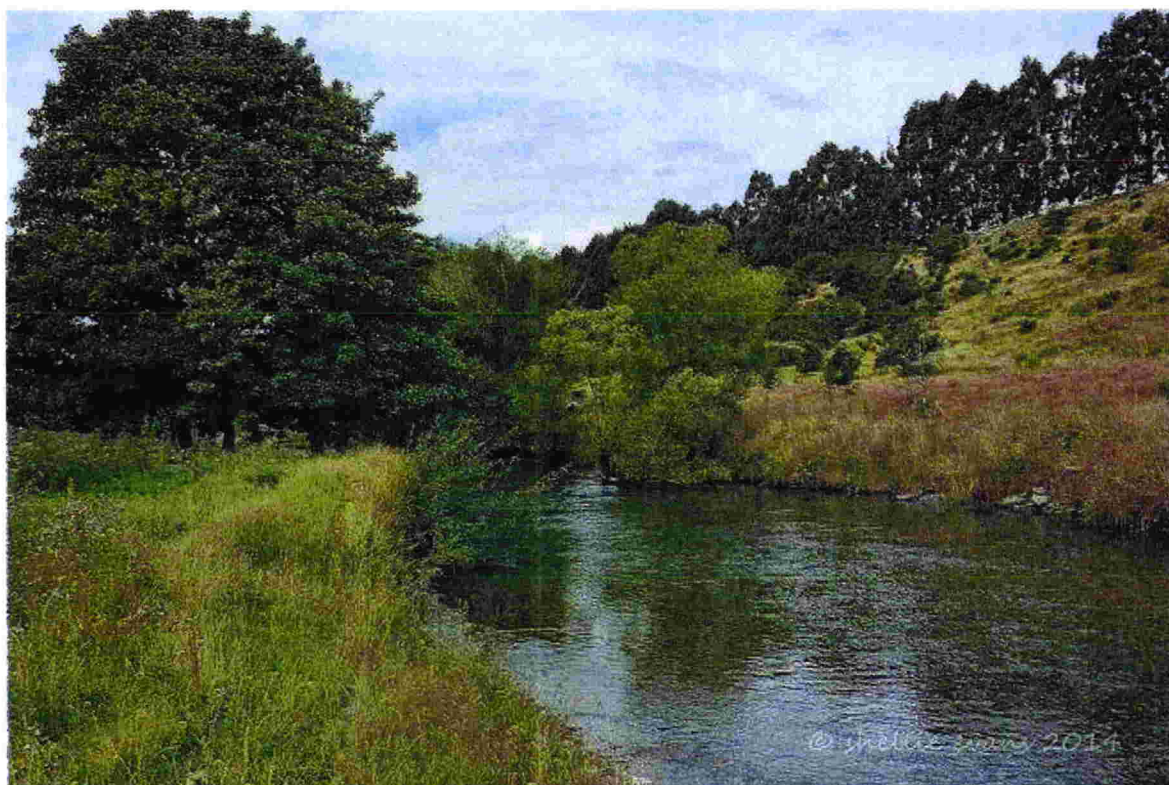
I am a fourth generation Baird who has farmed this property at Benmore. The Baird family settled in Southland in 1862.

I attended Lincoln University and on graduation worked for fifteen years in finance and accounting before returning to our farm in 2002. I hold an accounting qualification and I am also a member of the Institute of Directors. I have been on the Executive of Federated Farmers for 7 years and I am serving my third year as President.

Our family have advanced several farming systems on this flat, versatile property and currently we have an 800 cow dairy herd.

On an undulating property at Dipton West we run young stock and breeding bulls.

Success in farming can be measured in many ways, a viable business and industry to pass on to the next generation is large in my mind. Federated Farmers is a membership based organisation representing all farmers, we need to be mindful of rules that help one sector yet could be very detrimental to another. We owe it to those who will follow us to ensure that regional planning documents are fit for purpose.





Objective 1

*Land and water and associated ecosystems are **sustainably** managed as integrated natural resources, recognising the connectivity between surface water and groundwater, and between freshwater, land and the coast.*

This objective was not that well understood by submitters with only 14 responses. Thirteen submissions were in support of it, with Fish and Game seeking some amendments. After consideration of Fish and Games submission, staff have added the word sustainability (indicated in bold above) to the objective.

To provide clarity for plan users, as was the case with objectives in the RWP, Federated Farmers would ask that plain English explanations of what this objective and the other new objectives mean, could please be completed.

Objective 2

Water and land is recognised as an enabler of the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of the region.

This is a very significant objective in the plan. There were 46 submissions received on it, with 28 in support. As the regional GDP chart below shows, Southland's economy is strongly underpinned by agriculture. This is not necessarily a bad thing but it means there needs to be flexibility in the planning framework to allow land use change to follow market signals. This has been understood in the past and is illustrated in Figure 3 below. From the mid 1980's total stock units have not changed significantly - the intensification story has been over emphasised in my view. There has however been a large fall in sheep, a fall in beef and deer numbers and a significant rise in dairy related animals.

Without these changes occurring, Southland's GDP per capita would have dropped and other demographic factors would have played out. Rural schools would have closed and rural servicing towns would have reduced in size. Southlands population would have contracted by many thousands and other social problems could have developed. House prices in urban areas would have fallen as people left Southland in search of employment in other regions.

I hope the commissioners have had the opportunity to visit some of Southland's rural towns. The fall in income from sheep affected many. The revival of Gore, Edendale, Winton, Otautau, Riverton, Mossburn and others can be thanked on the land use shift to dairy and dairy support. The coal towns of Ohai and Nightcaps illustrate clearly how the cold winds of change can batter the heart out of a community.

Amendment Sought

I believe the staff who analysed the submissions received on Objective 2 have not fully considered the importance of this objective.

One hundred and fifty years of effort by our farming forbearers developed this region into a productive landscape that can feed its people and millions of others around the world; they established roading infrastructure for the mobility of the province and those who visit; they developed the landscape using a mixture of natural and exotic flora to enhance Southlands natural beauty and some also accepted the ultimate cost, with thousands of young men leaving this province during two great wars, to ensure the tenants of democracy were upheld - many never to return.

Farming counts in this province and it needs greater recognition. Recognition that will provide more certainty to current farmers and those who will be farming in the future.

This certainty is undermined by the use of the physiographic zones in the plan. This is new science that explains how the water chemistry changes as it passes through the landscape. This science has been corrupted in my view by trying to condense it into 9 zones which are then used in this plan, ultimately creating winners and losers. The full value of the physiographic science will be best achieved outside of the planning framework. Graeme will talk more on this shortly.

Farmers would support the on-going development of this science as it would enhance their understanding of their land and how their practices can impact on water quality. Their fear that this science, incorporated into the planning space could tear value and opportunity from their businesses would be allayed.

Rewrite the objective to read (new wording in bold):

Water and land is recognised as an enabler of the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of the region.

People have flexibility and choice to modify, change and develop land for farming purposes within a framework of long-term sustainable use.

Tāngata whenua values and interests are identified and reflected in the management of freshwater and associated ecosystems.

Objective 5

Ngāi Tahu have access to and sustainable customary use of, both commercial and non-commercial, mahinga kai resources, nohoanga, mātaihai and taiāpure.

Objective 15

Taonga species, as set out in Appendix M, and related habitats, are recognised and provided for.

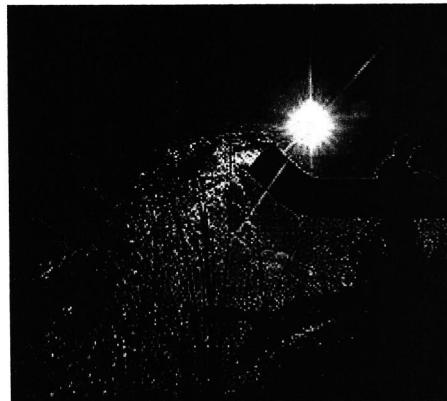
There were 11, 13, 10 and 9 submitters respectively on the above objectives. I believe this reflects the lower level of understanding of what these objective mean.

The Regional Water Plan had limited content with regard to Ngai Tahu cultural values. Objective 3 made reference to Ngai Tahu cultural values, including mahinga kai. With the inclusion of four objectives in the pSWLP, this should re-balance Iwi's need for an understanding of matters which are important to them.

I reiterate the need for a broader explanation of what these objectives intend for the plan. I believe there is a growing understanding of cultural values in Southland with a desire for this knowledge to be built further.

Iwi came to these shores over 800 years ago however migration to New Zealand has occurred over a longer period of time and it is still occurring. Other cultures and heritage are important to this province and should not go un-recognised. I re-emphasise here why the extension to Objective 2 should be made.

Objective 7



Any further over-allocation of freshwater (water quality and quantity) is avoided and existing over-allocation is phased out in accordance with timeframes established under Freshwater Management Unit processes.

There are 17 submissions on Objective 7, with four in support seeking it is retained without amendment. The officer has accepted Federated Farmers suggested amendment and the objective now reads.



values by focusing on the critical or most sensitive values for each waterbody. These “critical values” were agreed through the consultative process. Measurement and monitoring of these parameters will determine whether or not the objectives are being met. Examples of parameters and standards that are relevant to natural character and aesthetics of water quality include conditions relating to bacterial and fungal slime growths and visual clarity.

Contact recreation standards are appropriate in areas that are regularly used for bathing and also in hill and mountain lakes where water quality is high. In other water bodies, this standard is unrealistic in the short term. Protection of the instream ecosystem is a more appropriate goal. Maintaining habitat suitable for trout or native fish, as appropriate, will ensure protection of the macroinvertebrate, aquatic plant and periphyton communities on which they depend. All water should be suitable for stock to drink and to support Ngāi Tahu’s cultural values. Lowland lakes are at risk of eutrophication, hence the objective to protect against excessive enrichment and excessive sedimentation.

Several values are common to a number of different surface water body types. However, achieving the objective may require different tools or take longer, depending on the water classification of the surface water body. These goals will not be met overnight. The objective is therefore to make progress towards achieving them. Progress will be reviewed by monitoring the specified water quality parameters and trends in these parameters. A lack of progress towards the goals may result in a review of the Plan provisions to require stricter standards.

Objective 4 – Gradual improvement in surface water quality parameters

Other relevant sections: Issues 1, 5A-7, Objectives 31A-D, Policies 1, 1A, 2-4, 6-13B, 38-41, 44, Rules 1, 2, 3A-17, 49, 51, Section 2.3.

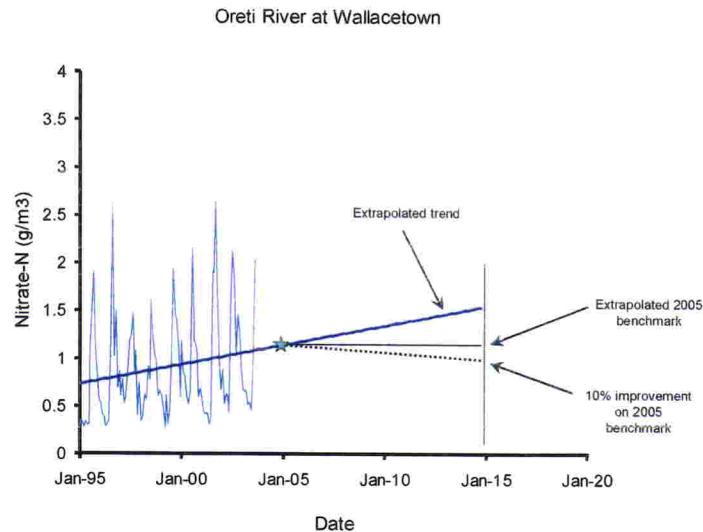
To manage the discharge of contaminants and encourage best environmental practice to improve the water quality in surface water bodies classified as hill, lowland (hard bed), lowland (soft bed) and spring fed, and in particular to achieve a minimum of 10 percent improvement in levels of the following water quality parameters over 10 years from the date this Plan became operative (January 2010):

- (a) microbiological contaminants
- (b) nitrate
- (c) phosphorus
- (d) clarity

Explanation

The quality of water in many surface water bodies does not currently meet the goals in Objective 3. Improvements in lowland streams may be hardest to achieve, due to prevalence of intensive farming in the catchments, and upstream cumulative effects. Discharges of the contaminants specified into hill, lowland and spring fed classes of water body are the most significant barrier to achieving Objective 3. Achieving





An improvement of a minimum of 10 percent over the life of the Plan is considered to be a realistic goal given that in many of the water bodies there is an increasing trend in parameter concentrations affecting water quality and the first task is to reverse this trend and then work toward implementing strategies to measure improvements. The approach taken under this objective does not curtail future options of stricter controls if the current approach to progressing toward the long-term goals through the short-term indicators is unsuccessful in achieving the objectives. At the same time however the approach should ensure the current situation does not deteriorate further.

Management and improvement of discharges to the said water bodies will require a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms. The water quality section of the Plan with associated policies and rules is but one intervention or tool to manage discharges of contaminants and recognise for point and non point sources of pollution. The Regional Effluent Land Application Plan, Regional Solid Waste Management Plan, and policies and rules in the bed disturbance section of this Plan govern management of some sources of these contaminants. A number of sites in Southland are monitored regularly for the parameters listed under Objective 4. Monitoring of these sites will determine success at meeting this objective and where necessary stricter controls on resource consents, higher standards for permitted activities, and advocacy, education and incentives to improve practices that result in the discharge of contaminants through non-point means will be implemented.

