



Paringa River,
South Westland

Message from the Chair

Last month marked the beginning of a new framework for freshwater regulations for New Zealand. While we generally have good water quality here on the West Coast, we are still required to comply with the new regulations which came into force on 3 September 2020.

These regulations will have a significant effect on our communities and we have provided more information in this newsletter to help make sense of these. As always, our Consents and Compliance teams are here to help, and I would encourage you to make contact with them if you have any concerns over what these changes mean for you.

The impacts of Covid-19 have been felt around the country. As part of the response, Government has allocated \$1.3 billion to get the economy moving again. We have received a portion of this funding to go towards flood and erosion infrastructure projects, provided we are able to raise the local share component through the relevant community. For some of these projects, this is a once in a life time funding opportunity which we will be unlikely to see again. If you own a property in one of these areas and are yet to return your consultation form, I would recommend that you do so as soon as you can.

If you are struggling to be able to pay your Regional Council Rates owing to the impact of Covid-19, please contact Council Rates staff to discuss payment options.



Allan Birchfield
CHAIRMAN



Action for healthy waterways

New national policy and standards for freshwater management

Last month the Government introduced a new national framework and regulations for freshwater management in New Zealand. There is a new National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management as well as new National Environmental Standards for Freshwater and new stock exclusion regulations, all of which came into effect on 3 September 2020.

These regulations will affect many activities across the West Coast. A summary of these is included here. For more information on what *Action for Healthy Waterways* might mean to you, or the full suite of regulations, refer to: www.mfe.govt.nz/action-for-healthy-waterways

The aim of the new regulations

The Government's new *Action for Healthy Waterways* package sets out the objectives and regulations to reduce further degradation of New Zealand's freshwater resources and improve water quality within the next five years. It also seeks to reverse past damage and bring New Zealand's freshwater resources, waterways and ecosystems to a healthy state within a generation. The Freshwater National Environmental Standards will set requirements for carrying out certain activities that pose risk to freshwater and freshwater ecosystems.

What do these regulations mean for the Council and you?

We are currently working through what these new regulations mean for Council, and understand that there may be a lot of confusion and anxiety about the changes, and the effect they may have on you and your activities. For now, we are encouraging landowners to get in touch if they need to, especially if you have a genuine concern that you will be unable to meet the new regulations. It is important to start to implement those that have come into force from 3 September 2020, as well as to consider the other regulations as you plan for the future. We don't have all the answers yet and our intent is to work with landowners to understand the implications and how we can make it work for the West Coast.



Activities may now need consent

Previously permitted activities may now need consent. This includes, but is not limited to, activities in and around wetlands, structures in rivers relating to fish passage, winter cropping, stock holding areas, farm intensification and nitrogen fertiliser use where it is above the permitted activity levels.



Excluding stock from lakes and rivers

These regulations apply to lakes and rivers with a bed width over 1m and do not have a minimum land holding. This means that lifestyle blocks and large scale river run type properties, as well as other farming operations, will also be captured. Existing permanent fences as at 3 September 2020 will not need to be moved. New fences must provide for a 3m setback.



What about wetlands?

Due to our climate, topography and land use, the West Coast has a relative abundance of wetland areas compared to other regions. The new regulations include a number of provisions which will affect activities in these areas including stock grazing, earthworks and the diversion of water. The regulations will apply to 'natural wetlands' which means that they will include areas other than those already identified in our Regional Land and Water Plan.

National Policy Statement – Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) Regional Council freshwater planning		Dates
Council to notify amended Regional Policy Statement and Regional Land and Water Plan that implements the new NPS-FM. This is to include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New water quality monitoring requirements including fish, sediment, macroinvertebrates, dissolved oxygen, ecosystem metabolism and submerged plants in lakes. Mapping of all natural wetlands within 10 years. 	31 December 2024
Broaden Freshwater Management Unit Group work.		3 September 2020

Resource Management (Measurement and Reporting of Water Takes) Regulations 2010		Dates
Water permit holders must provide electronic records for water takes more than 20 litres per second.		3 September 2022
Water permit holders must provide electronic records for water takes between 10 and 20 litres per second.		3 September 2024
Water permit holders must provide electronic records for water takes between 5-10 litres per second.		3 September 2026

National Environmental Standards for Freshwater	Dates
Interim restrictions on major agricultural intensification apply for a change in land use, e.g. increase in dairy farm area, from woody vegetation to any form of pastoral farming, increase in irrigated pasture for dairy farming, increase in dairy support area.	3 September 2020
<p>New wetland regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permitted activity rules relate to minor activities (restoration, scientific research, maintenance of wetland utility structures) subject to conditions, including that the effects are no more than minor. Resource consents are required for most earthworks, vegetation clearance, drainage or taking, damming or diverting water within or around (10m and 100m setbacks apply for different provisions) wetlands. Consents granted will need conditions to minimise and offset damage. 	3 September 2020
<p>For the harvesting of sphagnum moss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current sustainable sphagnum moss harvesting is permitted subject to conditions, including that the effects are no more than minor. Resource consent is required for new sphagnum moss harvesting. 	3 September 2020
To provide for fish passage, some structures in rivers, e.g. culverts and weirs, will need to meet permitted activity regulations or consent may be required. This does not apply to river protection works.	3 September 2020
Intensive winter grazing on forage crops will require resource consent where the activity does not meet the permitted activity standards.	1 May 2021
Stock-holding areas e.g. feed pads, winter pads, standoff pads, loafing pads, require consent where the activity does not meet the permitted activity standards.	Winter 2021
<p>Synthetic nitrogen fertiliser:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent required for synthetic nitrogen fertiliser use of more than 190/kg N/ha/year on all farms. 	31 July 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dairy farmers must report synthetic fertiliser use for the previous year to Council. 	31 July 2022

Stock exclusion provisions	Dates
<p>For wetlands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All cattle, deer and pigs in a new pastoral system, must be excluded from wetlands. 	3 September 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All cattle, deer and pigs must be excluded from wetlands identified in a regional or district plan. 	By 1 July 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All cattle, deer and pigs must be excluded from wetlands identified in a regional plan that gives effect to the new NPS-FM. 	By 1 July 2025
<p>For lakes and rivers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All cattle and deer excluded from lakes and rivers, on land used for fodder-cropping, break-feeding, or grazing, and on irrigated pasture regardless of land slope. 	1 July 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All dairy cattle (except dairy support cattle) and pigs must be excluded from rivers wider than 1m regardless of land slope. 	1 July 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All beef cattle and deer must be excluded when the land is less than or equal to 10 degrees. 	1 July 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All dairy support cattle must be excluded regardless of land slope. 	1 July 2025

Come see us at



Want to see some of the creepy crawlies that live in our waterways, find out how a rain gauge works, or even what sort of careers are available at a Regional Council? You're in luck!

We will be at AgFest on 13 and 14 November 2020.



Whitebait Season 2020

The 2020 whitebait season is underway on the West Coast with 657 resource consented whitebait stands on 23 rivers from the Little Wanganui River north of Westport to the Cascade River in South Westland.

Every stand holder pays an annual fee to the Council which pays for compliance staff to monitor their resource consents, investigate complaints and resolve disputes between stand holders. This user pays approach will alleviate the cost of the activity on the rate payer.

Compliance staff recently marked out the stand locations on five of the rivers. This is done yearly, and prior to the season starting, so there is no dispute regarding stand locations. Inspections will be undertaken during the fishing season, as well as after the season closes to ensure that stands are removed from riverbeds.

Want to receive your rates invoice by email?



If this sounds like you, follow the links on our website to register your email against your properties.

Predator Free Te Kinga

The refuge of treasured birds belonging to Kotuku Whakaoho/Lake Brunner



A new five-year project aims to completely remove possums from 3,700ha of Mt Te Kinga as part of a coordinated predator control programme across the wider Lake Brunner basin. Not only will this benefit biodiversity, but it will also boost regional development and tourism in the area attracting people to experience the richness of wildlife in the area. Protecting and restoring Te Kinga has been a long-held vision for the local community and builds on previous water quality and pest control work in the area.

QUICK FACTS

First Predator Free project on the West Coast

Total project area
38,751ha

Total community trapping area
9,742ha

Total investment
\$15.7M

including \$4.4M from the Provincial Growth Fund through Predator Free 2050 Limited.

Will benefit a range of threatened or endangered species

including kea, kaka, whio, fernbird, bittern, blackbilled gulls, kakariki, parakeet, rifleman, brown creeper and recently confirmed raroa (great spotted kiwi).



How can I find out more?

Go to wrc.govt.nz and follow the links from our homepage.



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