

Kaituna River and Ōngātoro/ Maketū Estuary Strategy Progress Report 2009 to 2010



A message from Bill Bayfield

Chief Executive, Bay of Plenty Regional Council

I am proud to present to you the first progress report on implementing the Kaituna River and Ongātoro/Maketū Estuary Strategy. This report shows there has been strong progress made since the Strategy was adopted by the four councils by August 2009.

It is great to see the community take ownership of putting the Strategy into action. The Strategy is not just an action plan for agencies, but for the whole community. This is shown by the range of volunteer groups that have continued their good work right throughout the process.

While the current focus is on the 'big picture' items such as investigating the 100 hectares of new wetlands and re-diverting the Kaituna River, the on-going work of community groups, schools, landowners and the partner agencies continues. This is building a great platform for the Strategy to achieve its goals.

I believe the common goal for everyone in the community is to achieve the Strategy's vision, which is to:

“Celebrate and honour Kaituna River and Ōngātoro/Maketū Estuary life as taonga”

“Whakanuia, whakamawawatia te mauri o te Kaituna me Ōngātoro hei taonga”



Bill Bayfield
CHIEF EXECUTIVE





Introduction

Welcome to the first annual progress report on how the agencies and community groups are putting the Kaituna River and Ongātoro/Maketū Estuary Strategy into action. This Strategy was adopted by the four councils by August 2009.

This report is an update on the progress made towards putting the Strategy into action as at 30 June 2010. It covers what the area could look like in the future, what progress has been made to each of the four outcomes in the Strategy, and the next steps for progressing the Strategy.

Contents

| | |
|--|----------|
| Artistic Impression of what the area could look like in the future | 4 and 10 |
| Outcome 1: | |
| Improving Water Quality | 6 |
| Outcome 2: | |
| Restoring Healthy Ecosystems | 8 |
| Outcome 3: | |
| Ensuring Sustainable Resource Use | 12 |
| Outcome 4: | |
| Kaitiakitanga and Local People's Stewardship | 13 |
| Other things happening in the area | 14 |
| Next steps in progressing the Strategy | 16 |

Artistic impression of what the area could look like in the future

The partner agencies have worked together to produce the artistic impression on page 10. Its main purpose is to show how the key actions of the Strategy fit together. The picture shows a scenario of what the area could look like if the current intentions of the Strategy and SmartGrowth are carried out over time.

We will be consulting with the community on the detail of these concepts in the near future. This poster will be used as a communications tool when consulting with stakeholder groups to progress these concepts.

It is important to note that no decisions have been made on how the wetlands, regional parks, or the re-diversion may goals be carried out. It is just a concept at this stage.

The letters below relate to the bubbles on the map on page 10. Further explanatory notes for each bubble will be available during consultation in the future.

Outcomes 1 & 2:

Improving Water Quality and Restoring Healthy Ecosystems

- (A) The existing Kaituna Wildlife Management Reserve would continue to be improved, building on the ecological and recreational benefits it provides to the region.
- (B) 100 hectares of additional wetland could provide new habitats for native species to flourish as well as work to improve the water quality in the estuary.
- (C) These wetlands could be linked together along the banks of the Kaituna River to form an ecological corridor.
- (D) Most of the river flow could be restored back into the estuary through Ford's Cut using low impact construction works. This would allow the estuary's ecosystem to replenish while maintaining public use of the river.

Lower Kaituna Wildlife Management Reserve



- (E) The Papahikahawai Channel could be opened up allowing tidal flushing to help improve the estuary while maintaining public access to the popular Te Tumu Cut wharf.
- (F) Rural drains and creeks could be managed so that water discharging from them is not contaminated. Stormwater wetlands would act as natural water filters to ensure that drainage water is settled and desilted before entering the river and estuary.

Outcomes 3 & 4:

Stewardship & Sustainability

- (G) The principle of kaitiakitanga would lead a conservative approach to how resources are managed into the long-term future. Kaimoana gathering and other traditional rights would be protected.
- (H) & (I) Potential Regional or Sub-regional parks would be established at key locations such as at significant dunes (H) or wetland environments (I). Public ownership of these sites would protect the natural beauty of these sites and allow people to enjoy the local environment.

Planning for the Future

- (J) The Tauranga Eastern Link state highway (J) provides a strategic transport connection to improve travel between Tauranga, Whakatāne, and Rotorua.
- (K) The Rangiuru Business Park, a new 150 hectare area of mixed industrial uses, could provide 30% of its land for stormwater treatment and new wetlands.
- (L) Pāpāmoa East is identified as a population corridor in the SmartGrowth Strategy 2021-2051. Te Tumu itself would become a residential township of up to 20,000 inhabitants. The township could contain suitable businesses (including cafes and shops) and public amenities grouped around coastal parks and water front developments.

People fishing from the Te Tumu Cut Jetty



Outcome 1: Improving Water Quality

What it means

This outcome aims to achieve and maintain good water quality in the Kaituna River and Ōngātoro/Maketū Estuary.

Progress made towards achieving the outcome

Bay of Plenty Regional Council staff have been involved with providing advice and assistance on establishing riparian margins and their on-going management. This includes topics such as pest plant, pest animal control and re-vegetation options for individual landowners and several groups around the Maketū area.

The dairy industry led Clean Streams Accord (A Guide to Managing Waterways on Bay of Plenty Farms) has started to come into action. Dairy NZ, Fonterra, dairy farmers, and Bay of Plenty Regional Council staff have been working together to achieve beneficial goals for the community and landowners. One of the objectives of the Clean Streams Accord is to reduce stock from entering water bodies.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council closely monitors all discharges within the Kaituna Catchment that require a resource consent under the Regional Water and Land Plan. The council ensures discharges meet resource consent conditions. All monitoring is done in accordance with the Council's Compliance and Impact Monitoring Policy. This includes monitoring (and enforcing where necessary) all consented dairy discharges, the AFFCO Rangiuuru plant, and the Te Puke sewage plant. Staff also follow up complaints about illegal discharges which may or may not include carrying out enforcement action.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council is currently reviewing its Compliance and Impact Monitoring Policy. The review will cover the Impact Monitoring programme, paying specific attention to measuring the impacts of the Te Puke sewage treatment plant discharge on the water quality of the Kaituna River.

The Kaituna River





Members of the Maketū Ongātoro Wetlands Group making pest traps for the Maketū Spit

Case Study – “Maketū Ongātoro Wetlands Group”

*We are a local community group of people who are concerned to help protect and enhance the biodiversity of the Lower Kaituna, Maketū and Little Waihī Estuary area. Our initial focus has been on the colony of New Zealand Dotterel (*Charadrius obscurus*) which nests on the Maketū Spit.*

Other work we do includes protecting migrant shorebirds, controlling pest plants, educational programmes for schools and the community, and lobbying government agencies for on-going support and funding for conservation initiatives in the area to name just a few.

By early September 2010 we will have fenced off the tip of the Maketū Spit to discourage people from walking in the dotterel nesting area.

This is all done in cooperation with the local community. We have built strong relationships with the local Whakaue Marae and Maketū School. We are very aware that the project will only succeed if the community as a whole supports it.

Anyone who supports the Group’s aims can join. There are no joining fees, but donations are welcome.

Julian Fitter

MAKETŪ ONGĀTORO WETLANDS GROUP

Outcome 2: Restoring Healthy Ecosystems

What it means

This outcome aims to restore waterways and areas of robust wetland (particularly in the lower reaches):

- So the river and its tributaries provide good habitats for indigenous flora and fauna
- So fish can migrate freely along rivers and streams, and spawn in the tidal reaches of the lower Kaituna River; and,
- To provide for a balanced, nourishing, natural environment (by stabilising coastal sand dunes and the sand spit, and increasing wetland and riparian margins).

Progress on wetlands

It has been business as usual for Bay of Plenty Regional Council's land management team who have continued to provide advice and assist landowners to maintain good land management practices in a way that is beneficial to the natural environment and the landowner's business.

A key focus for the partner agencies has been to restore wetlands in the catchment and to improve links between wetland habitats. Areas within the Kaituna Wetland Wildlife Management Reserve that have previously been grazed have been retired. So far approximately three hectares of this retired land has been replanted to wetland which has involved help from local schools.

The Department of Conservation (DoC) and Fish and Game have carried out a major willow spraying operation in the Kaituna Wetland Wildlife Management Reserve that has also included the pest plant "royal fern". A three-year plan for future pest plant management in the reserve has been developed and a planting/restoration plan for the reserve will be developed over the next year. The Regional Council manages water levels in the reserve to help restore wetland habitats and to control pest plants.

Progress towards 100 ha of new wetlands

Bay of Plenty Regional Council is assessing the feasibility of creating 100 hectares of new wetlands by 2018. The study will show whether it is a viable option and it will develop steps to achieve it. It will also help identify a priority list of potential areas to reinstate land into wetlands. The study was due to be completed shortly after this report was written. Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Councillors will then consider the outcomes of the report and decide how to proceed from there.

Progress on re-diverting the Kaituna River

Work on assessing the impacts of the re-diversion has begun with modelling the effects of a full re-diversion on water quality. This will indicate whether re-diverting the Kaituna River back into the Maketū Estuary will improve the health of the Estuary. The model is based on 'Option H' which provides for river flows through Ford's Cut and the Papahikahawai Channel. The outcomes of the modelling is due to be completed in July 2010.

An ideal 'technical' option for the re-diversion is also being developed by staff. The purpose of this option is to find out the most practical and effective way to improve the health of the Estuary, while not increasing the risk of flooding to the Kaituna River Scheme. Once completed, we will be consulting with the community to decide on the preferred option before the resource consent process starts.

Timeline of the Kaituna River

- 1902:** The Kaituna River flowed into Maketū Estuary via Papahikahawai channel
- 1907:** River naturally breaks out at Te Tumu.
- 1925-28:** Ford's Cut (Twin Cut) made, most likely to divert the river back into the Estuary.
- 1928-56:** The Kaituna River flowed into the estuary through Fords Cut and the Paphikahawai Channel.
- 1956:** Te Tumu Diversion to sea to reduce flooding to surrounding land. Ford's Cut and Papahikahawai blocked.
- 1979:** Start of Kaituna Catchment Control Scheme. Kaituna River Diversion to bypass River loop.
- 1992-94:** Department of Conservation consent for re-diversion through Ford's Cut after approximately 40 years of closure.
- 1996:** Flow partially diverted through Fords Cut with culverts installed in 1995.
- 2001-09:** Kaituna River and Ōngātoro/Maketū Estuary Strategy developed and adopted.

Aerial view of the Kaituna River mouth and the Maketū Estuary



Kaituna River and Ōngātoro/Maketū Estuary:

For a description of the map and each of the bubbles please see pages 4-5



Planning for the Future

What the area could look like in the future

Improving Water Quality & Restoring Healthy Ecosystems (Outcomes 1 & 2)



Stewardship & Sustainability (Outcomes 3 & 4)

(Outcomes 3 & 4)



Outcome 3: Ensuring Sustainable Resource Use

What it means

This outcome aims to ensure resources in the Kaituna River and Ōngātoto/Maketū Estuary are managed and used in a way that protects and enhances the things the community value.

Progress made towards achieving the outcome

Planning for the Pāpāmoa East urban corridor is underway. Comprehensive resource consents have been granted to Tauranga City Council to manage the stormwater from the future Pāpāmoa East urban extension (Wairakei and Bell Road catchments). These consents have been incorporated into the new urban growth area planning for Wairakei, via Plan Change 44 to the operative district plan. Construction is planned to begin for Wairakei shortly.

The timing of when urban areas can be developed is now managed by the Regional Policy Statement – Change No. 2 which was finalised in 2008. Its purpose is to restrict ad hoc urban development.

The Western Bay of Plenty's Sub-regional Cultural Heritage Strategy was completed in 2009. It is anticipated that it will be used by iwi and the community to improve cultural heritage management.

Over the 2009/2010 summer boating season there were no volunteer wardens to enforce the rules of the Bay of Plenty Navigation Safety Bylaw. The Harbourmaster encourages suitable volunteers to receive free training to become wardens to monitor the river on a more frequent basis.

Western Bay of Plenty's District Plan had initially proposed to require any dwelling or activity within 100 metres of a significant ecological feature to need a resource consent. This buffer has now been removed as a result of the decision-making process in finalising the District Plan.

The Maketū community over viewing the Maketū Estuary



Outcome 4: Kaitiakitanga & Local People's Stewardship

What it means

Progress made towards achieving the outcome

There is a cluster of Treaty of Waitangi settlement claims between local iwi and central government agencies that initiated during 2009/2010. The common interest of ensuring the health of the Kaituna River has been identified by all parties involved. Negotiations will continue into the upcoming year which may include options for co-management of the Kaituna River.

Community groups in the area have been sharing ideas through the Maketū Project Forum which was set up in 2008. This Forum allows environmental groups to explore opportunities and options to collaborate and work together on environmental issues. Meetings are held every six weeks and they are supported by the Western Bay of Plenty District Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

Western Bay of Plenty District Council has adopted its Walking and Cycling Strategy aimed to enhance opportunities for creating walkways. One of the key ways to achieve this is to use the Kaituna stop banks for walking and/or cycling. Landowners and the Bay of Plenty Regional Council will need to be consulted before action is taken.

The Department of Conservation, Fish and Game, and the Regional Council jointly manage the Kaituna Wildlife Management Reserve. Some of the actions this year included:

- A successful water reticulation project funded by the Environmental Enhancement Fund which created a new open water area.
- Opening the public kayak trail.
- Improved public access and visitor facilities.

The Bay of Plenty Navigation Safety Bylaw is being reviewed by Bay of Plenty Regional Council. The review has considered a range of public submissions about the speed limits of boats on the Kaituna River. Council is expected to adopt the reviewed Bylaw on 15 July 2010. Please contact the Harbourmaster to find out Council's final decision.

Kai moana gathering in the Maketū Estuary



Other things happening in the area

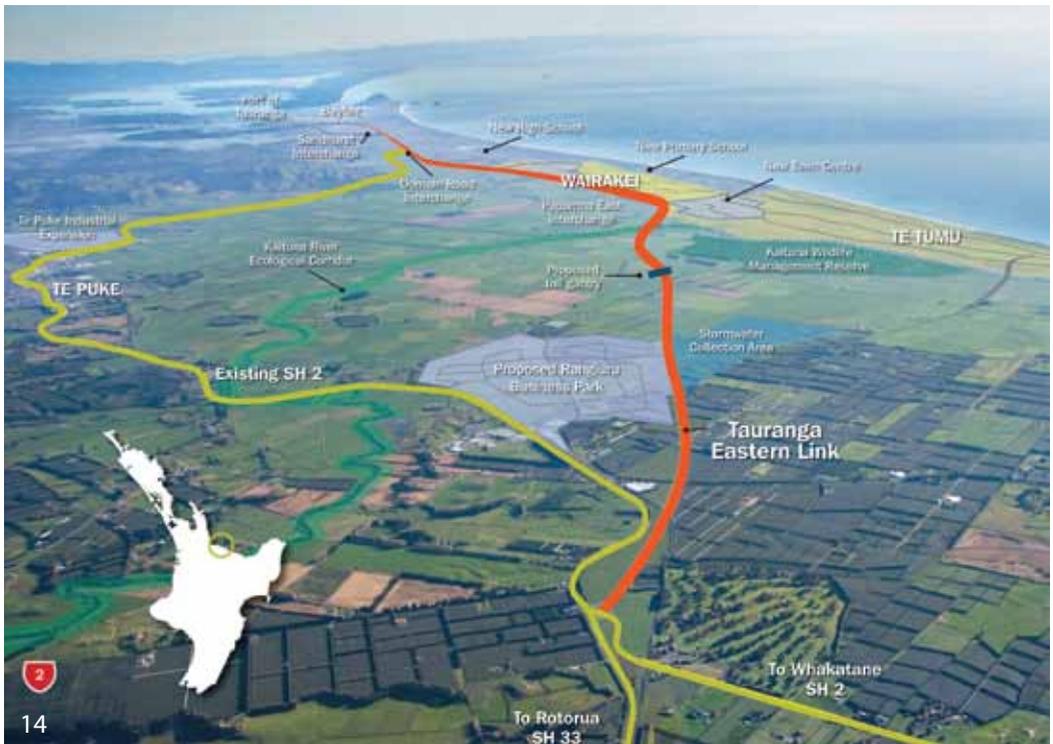
Tauranga Eastern Link (TEL)

The TEL is the western Bay of Plenty's next major roading development. The corridor for the TEL has been designated and all consents obtained. The TEL is completing the tendering phase with a view to construction contracts being let by the end of 2010.

- It is envisaged that traffic will be using the TEL when its construction is due to be completed in 2016.
- The TEL will likely be a tolled road for approximately 35 years after opening.
- The TEL will have new interchanges to ensure good access with local roads.
- Storm water mitigation measures have been built into the consents and the design.

The future need for a link from the eastern end of Te Tumu to the TEL highway and the future Rangiuuru Business Park has been discussed as part of the Western Bay of Plenty SmartGrowth Strategy.

An overview of future projects happening in the Kaituna Catchment – SOURCE NZTA



Rangiuru Business Park

The Rangiuru Business Park was zoned through a plan change to Western Bay of Plenty's District Plan a few years ago. Although the land is currently still in pastoral and horticultural use, it is zoned for industrial use. Earthworks and storm water discharge consents are in place.

The Rangiuru Business Park will provide an important employment zone for people residing in Te Puke, Paengaroa, Maketū and the future Pāpāmoa East urban development.

Pāpāmoa East Urban Development

Another important element of the approved SmartGrowth Strategy is the future development of Pāpāmoa East in order to accommodate the sub-region's projected population growth to 2051. SmartGrowth envisages development of Wairakei from 2011 to 2025 and the Te Tumu land between 2021 and 2051. Planning is already well underway transforming these areas into vibrant new towns.

Maketū/Little Waihi Wastewater Scheme

Septic tank leakage, agricultural contaminants and sediment run-off all contribute to polluting the local estuaries and the Kaituna River. Ongoing testing of water and shellfish quality in the Maketū estuary has frequently shown contamination directly linked to seepage from existing septic tanks, many of which are old and no longer up to standard. The Regional On-site Effluent Treatment Plan requires all septic tanks within this area to be updated with a wastewater system by December 2013.

Construction of the scheme is planned to be completed in November 2011 with the local Community carrying just 17% of total scheme cost. This is all dependent on the resource consent hearings scheduled for mid July 2010.

Next steps in progressing the Strategy

The next steps for the three significant actions are described below. While these big picture actions progress through to action on the ground, the agencies will continue to work with community groups to look for better ways to do the everyday tasks.

Re-diverting the River into the Estuary

The first significant action is to explore options to increase river flow from the Kaituna River to the Ōngātoto/Maketū Estuary and to assess the impacts. The results of the Water Quality Modelling as described in Outcome 2 will guide the next steps.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council is leading this work. Staff are aware of the different views on the re-diversion between community groups. Within two years the community's preferred option will have been identified and the resource consent application will have been prepared, including social, environmental and cultural impact assessments.

If the resource consent application is successful in 2013, construction could begin from 2014 onwards. The length of time for construction will depend on the final option and the consent conditions that may be imposed.

Funding for the resource consent application and construction is dependent on the priorities set by Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Ten Year Plan 2012-2022 (see Ten Year Plan Budgeting).

100 Hectares of Additional Wetlands

The wetlands feasibility study (described in Outcome 2) is the key for creating at least 100 hectares of additional wetland in the lower Kaituna Catchment by 2018. It looks at the big picture to ensure funding is put into priority areas where the community can get the best return for their investment and achieve the outcomes of the Strategy faster. The Regional Council will consider the study and it will decide how to progress forward from here.

The amount of funding and ways of establishing new wetlands is dependent on each of the councils' Ten Year Plan 2012-2022 (see Ten Year Plan Budgeting).

Regional Parks

Establishing a Regional Park or a network of sub-regional parks in the area is an action that will be investigated in the near future. It is dependent on the location of the additional 100 hectares of wetlands and the final option to re-divert the river.

The acquisition of land for these parks depends on opportunities becoming available. When opportunities become available, the process can move quite quickly. The community will have the opportunity to have their say during the formal consultation process of their council's district plans and ten year plans.

Ten Year Plan Budgeting

The speed at which the Strategy can be implemented will be determined by the amount of resources allocated to implementing the Strategy in each of the councils' Ten Year Plans (also known as long term plans). The Ten Year Plans set out what each council will do and how much funding it has been budgeted.

The next round of Ten Year Plans is due to be completed for all councils by June 2012. This includes a formal consultation (public feedback) process before the final plan is adopted. As mentioned in each of the significant actions above, the Ten Year Plan process is an important step for getting the appropriate level of public resources to implement the Strategy.

Review of the Strategy's Actions in 2013

The Bay of Plenty Regional Council will lead a review of the Strategy's Implementation Plan – Chapter 8.2 "Actions for Implementation (three years and beyond)" which is scheduled for 2013. Community groups will have an opportunity to input into this review. It will not review the whole Strategy, just the implementation plan for the next three years of action.

Whitewater rafters enjoying the upper Kaituna River when the Okere Gates Lake level control gates are opened



*“Ōngātoro” is the tangata whenua name for the Maketū Estuary.
The name comes from “Ngatoroirangi” who was the esteemed
tohunga/navigator of the Te Arawa waka.*

Contact details

If you have any questions or you would like more information on how the Strategy is being implemented, please feel free to contact Bay of Plenty Regional Council, on:

Post: PO Box 368, Whakatāne, 3158

Phone: 0800 ENV BOP (368 267)

Fax: 0800 ENV FAX (368 329)

Email: info@envbop.govt.nz

Website: www.envbop.govt.nz