

Before - the Waikato regional council

In the matter of

Healthy Rivers Wai Ora Plan Change 1

The statement of Teresa Tarr

8 July 2019

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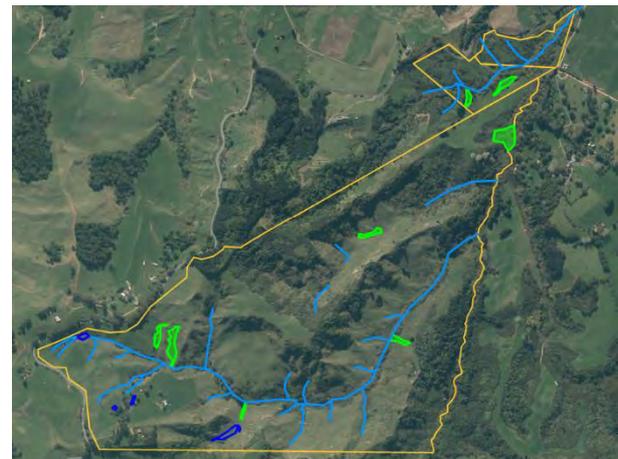
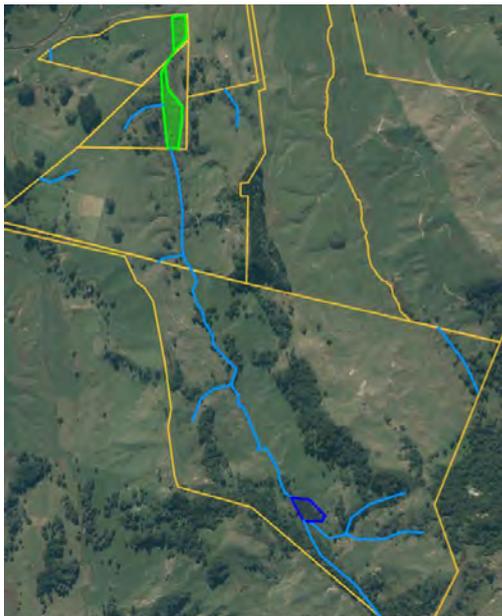
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I am Teresa Tarr, my husband Tony and I have owned 116 ha of hill country at Tapuae Rd, Honikiwi since 1992 and purchased a second block on Turitea Rd, in the same Moakurarua catchment in 2002, that is 80 ha and is farmed in conjunction with a 24ha Maori lease block. We have farmed these blocks in a low intensity fashion initially as dairy support but progressing towards ownership of a beef breeding herd over time, with some sheep in the early years of the Turitea rd property. The stock numbers are generally reduced in the winter, natural increase in spring allows us to manage spring and summer pasture growth and maintain lower stocking pressure on more fragile areas.

Both blocks have significant areas of native bush and a range of waterways and wetlands. My concerns are over the Healthy River Plan's fencing requirements. The main streams on the 2 properties have a total length of approximately 6500m which does not include the small feeder streams and seepages, this length is compounded by the location of the water within the paddocks, as in many areas this would interfere with sensible subdivision of the property for stock movement and grazing management.



Farm blocks showing streams ponds and wetland

Cost of proposed compliance requirements I acknowledge the desirability of reducing stock access to waterways but with a limited time frame of a priority 1 catchment and available finances I would prefer to prioritise the provision of troughs and improvements in crossings, these improvements would significantly reduce the likelihood of stock needing to utilise natural water sources. My plan would be to achieve these goals as the short-term target in line with the Priority 1 timeline and then continue with a staged approach to fencing over time, as laid out in a Farm Environment Plan, along with retirement of areas that will act as filters to help prevent sediment loss from our valley. Some selective steeper slopes could also be planted to reduce slippage.

Already our stream edges are mostly treed, admittedly many of these trees are crack willows but there is also significant Kahikatea, Tanekaha and smaller native species coming up amongst them both young and old which will be the core of the future protected areas, but the crack willow still do act to slow the water leaving the property, allowing some ponding when rainfall is heavy, where sediment can settle. Crack willow removal in the nearby Oamaru stream several decades ago, despite planting with better varieties, has resulted in accelerated stream bank erosion and lead to the recent insertion of limestone boulders to stabilize the vulnerable banks, a task that took much of the summer of 2017/18 and a vast number of truckloads of rock. Allowing a gradual change from undesirable to preferred species and a progressive fencing programme in line with a Farm Environmental Plan will reduce the short-term risk of sediment loss compared to a hasty change with much stream edge disturbance and will allow the work to be done within the farm income stream.



Tree edged streams in valley bottoms

Our property is not heavily stocked, and a recent LUC capability assessment and soil conservation recommendation done on the properties indicated an overall erosion degree of 1. or slight

7.4 ha of regenerating native bush has been retired with the help of funds from the Waikato regional council and Waikato river authority and a further 2ha area of bush is also committed and a 0.5 ha wetland area has just been fenced this summer and was planted last month. 1.25 ha of stream edge and wetland have also been electric fenced and some wet areas in the headwaters of the main valley have been planted under our own initiative. The cost of fully fencing this seasons 0.5ha wetland, labour and materials was approximately \$9000 inc gst for just under 400m of 8 wire fence and while 2-3 wire electrics may be appropriate in much of the rest of the farm this is still a huge commitment of funds in a short time.



EW retired and planted wetland



Tarr retired and planted wetland

Use of LUC to determine stock carrying capacity rather than grandparenting.

If the land classification in the LUC system is robust then it should assist in providing an indicated approximate stock carrying capacity for a particular slope, soil type and climatic zone. That would seem to me to be an appropriate way to help determine what is an appropriate stocking rate/farming system for a piece of land, which will reflect its ultimate value more correctly than restricting land use change as currently proposed. It may allow good quality land that is currently underused to be intensified but will moderate the over stocked land and reduce the risk associated with such farming practises. Work done by Cichota, Vogeler and Beutrais as printed in the Grasslands Publication 267, P 203- and Li, Snow and Holzworth in NZ journal of Agricultural Research 54: 331- 352 argue that these production parameters are not difficult to determine for a given region and soil/slope combination and will better place emphasis and value on wise use in keeping with the lands' potential.

Appendix: Summary of changes sort.

1. Stock Exclusion requirements in Priority 1 sub-catchments be determined on a farm by farm basis thru a Farm Environment Plan to allow most effective cost benefit mitigations and retain financial viability.
2. LUC based productivity assessments used to determine viability of land use so that such use reflects the potential and risks with the soils and slopes present rather than a grandparenting perspective.

References

Deriving pasture growth patterns for Land Use Capability classes in different regions of NZ.

R Chicota, I. Vogeler, F.Y.Beutrais. Grasslands Publication 267 P203-

Modelling seasonal and geographical patterns of pasture production in NZ validating the pasture model in APSIM

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