

Environmental Policy & Planning (Freshwater)

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Update on National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPSFM) implementation – to March 2023 – (N100-01-04-01)

Background

1. Following on from the agenda item in the November 2022 Environment and Planning Committee - Giving Effect to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management – Implementation Work Programme Update, this information package item is to provide a brief update on the first round of community engagement and the next couple of months work programme.
2. The Government's 2020 Essential Freshwater package created additional requirements for all Councils in respect of freshwater management and protecting freshwater ecosystem health. This includes substantial changes to the NPSFM that the Council is required to give effect to through the Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan.
3. The NPSFM Policies require that freshwater is managed in a way that gives effect to **Te Mana o te Wai** and upholds the hierarchy of obligations which prioritises the health and well-being of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems first, before the health needs of people (such as drinking water) and lastly the ability for people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, now and in the future.
4. The legislative timeframe requires Councils to notify a variation/plan change by 31 December 2024 to give effect to the NPSFM. Councils are required to follow the National Objectives Framework (NOF) which provides a step-by-step process to implement the NPSFM including engaging with communities and tangata whenua at each step. Three rounds of community engagement have been scheduled to be undertaken between late 2022 through to late 2024 to complete these NOF steps.
5. In tandem, engagement with tangata whenua is also ongoing with the aim of understanding and establishing tangata whenua values including, but not limited to, Te Mana o te Wai (the fundamental health of water), ki uta ki tai (from mountains to sea, integrated management) and mahinga kai in a local Marlborough context. This is being undertaken through working groups with two tangata whenua groups.
 - Te Tau Ihu Iwi where Council is involved in an initiative with Tasman District Council and Nelson District Council in a Top of South working group known as Te Puna Kōrero ki Te Tauihu (TPK).
 - Council has a separate working relationship with Ngati Kuri and Ngai Tahu.

First round of engagement - Uptake

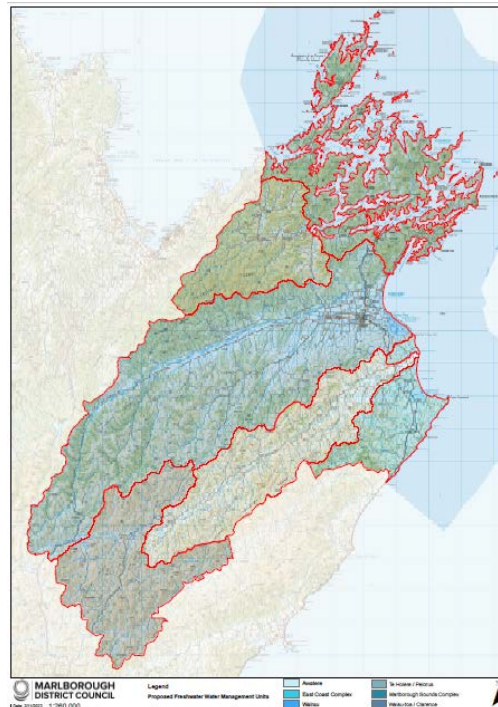
6. The first round of community engagement ran from December 2022 through to the end February 2023 which focused on the proposed Freshwater Management Units (FMUs) and sort both the community's long-term visions and their values for the region's freshwater.
7. Engagement was undertaken in a variety of ways including online surveys, community meetings across the region, online webinars with both the wider public and individual groups, provisions of hard copies of surveys, primary school webinar and library displays, and was advertised through the local papers, Facebook, Antenno and flyers.
8. Despite the length of the engagement and the different options to provide feedback, the number of submissions to date are relatively low, however some general themes have come through which are described briefly below. It is also worth noting that other regions have similarly also experienced low engagement on the NPSFM.

Type of engagement	Online GIS Map Surveys	Online detailed Visions and Values survey	Email submissions	Community Meetings	Webinars
No. of Submissions	82	14	10	N/A	N/A
No. of attendees	N/A	N/A	N/A	43	6

First round of engagement – Key themes

FMUs

- Council proposed six draft FMUs which correspond to Marlborough’s main river catchments or groups of similarly characterised catchments. These are Marlborough Sounds Complex, Te Hoihere/Pelorus, Wairau, Awatere, East Coast Complex and Waiiau toa/Clarence.



Map of the proposed draft six Freshwater Management Units for Marlborough

- The community was asked whether these draft FMU boundaries seemed suitable for the integrated management of Marlborough’s freshwater. Most of the submissions answered in the affirmative, given that the boundaries are based on a water catchment and ki uta ki tai – mountains to sea approach.
- There have however been some boundary adjustments and review suggestions; one example being integrating the “island” of the East Coast Complex north of the Awatere River into the adjoining Awatere FMU. Another requesting further consideration regarding the coastal boundary around the Havelock area which divides the Te Hoiere / Pelorus FMU and the Sounds Complex FMU.
- The idea of having sub-FMUs to manage water has also been raised, with comments at this stage being more of a general nature. For example, concerns have been raised that some of the larger FMUs, including the Wairau, are not conducive to practical values setting for freshwater where there are a range of different land uses present leading to as many different sets of priorities and values which could compete with one another.

- Tranquillity, beautiful scenery, naturalness.
- Diversity of water life and habitats, including for trout and salmon.
- Water can be sustainably used for irrigation and supplying rural activities and businesses.

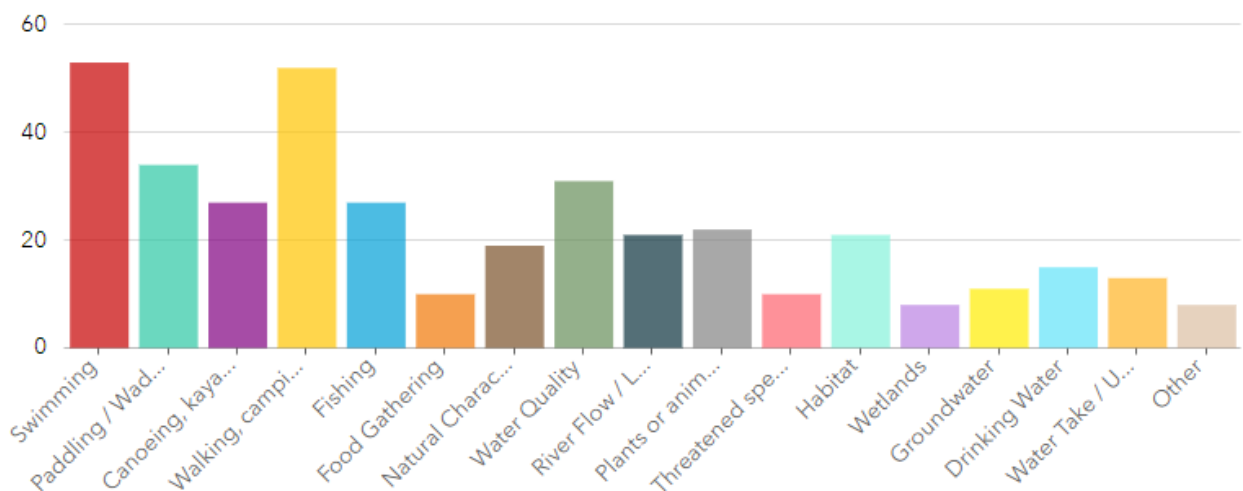
Community Concerns

20. The community also noted concerns they had with the region's freshwater and its management which include;

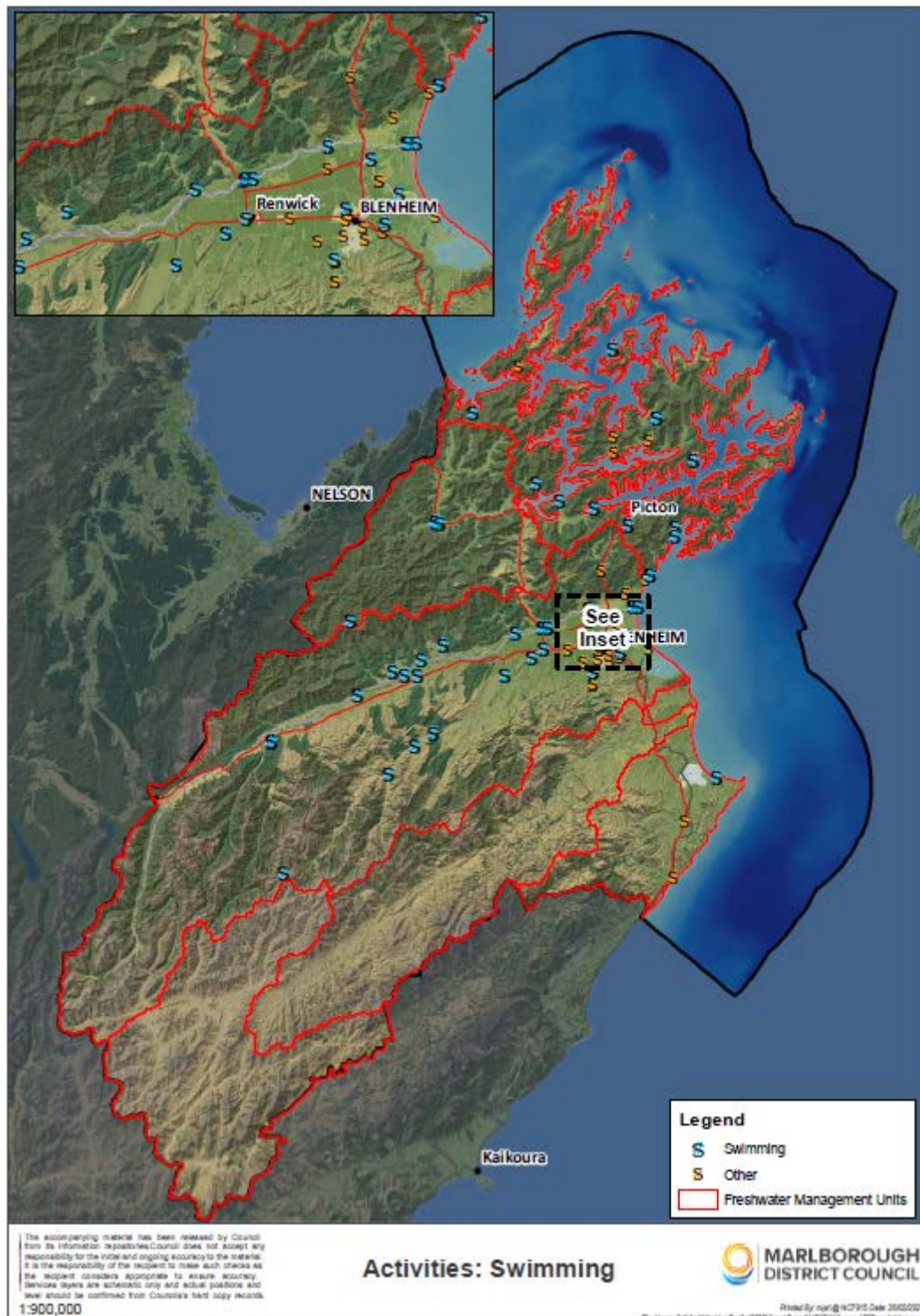
- Plantation forestry effects on water yield and quality.
- Wilding conifer infestations effects on water yield and quality.
- Waterway maintenance.
- Flooding hazard.
- Appropriate water allocation and minimum flow setting for healthy waterbodies.
- Pest management.
- Dealing with and understanding the changes to legislation and the regulation that goes with them.
- Lack of availability of important information so informed decisions can be made.

Other information

As well as the FMU boundaries, visions and values, community were also asked what activities they undertook and valued around the region that were based around freshwater and where and how often they undertook these activities. From these responses we can build up a current picture of how, when and where people are interacting with freshwater and what they value.



Activities that matter to the community associated with freshwater.



Location of where people are interacting with freshwater across the region.

What's Next

21. As a result of the low number of submissions, the engagement on the FMUs, Visions and Values will be kept open to enable the community to continue to provide feedback.
22. This can be done via the Council's freshwater management website pages through the surveys, by emailing to freshwater@marlborough.govt.nz, or by hardcopy submission delivered to the Council, attention the Policy Team.
23. Further, over the next couple of months it is proposed to hold "stakeholder" workshops with community groups and industry representatives to obtain more targeted feedback.

24. Also, the next couple of months will see a strong science focus around establishing attributes for the values currently identified and their baselines and looking at environmental outcomes for those attributes linking those to the visions and determining target attributes states, environmental levels and flows.
25. These environmental outcomes and attributes states, levels and flows will form the basis of the next community engagement round in September and October 2023.
26. During this second engagement the community will also have another chance to have a look at the proposed FMUs and also sub-FMUs that have come from further submissions and stakeholder engagement. Visions and values will also be presented which can be refined and expanded.
27. A full report of all the feedback received till mid-June and the proposed approach to environmental outcomes and attributes states, levels and flows is proposed to be presented at the next Environment and Planning Committee in July 2023.