

Plan Change 1 presentation 19th March at 3:15 to 3:30---10 minutes.

My name is Matthew Dean and my family farm borders onto the Mangatawhiri River, located near Mercer. Half the farm is protected from flooding by the Mangatawhiri Drainage District.

I know the river well, used to swim in it a lot as a kid and would happily swim in the stretch of river upstream of the Fish and Game wetland today. I care enough about the river to have recently initiated the formation of a Catchment Care Group. The Catchment Care Group has undertaken two studies of the river in an attempt to focus its work on the most urgent issues.

The commercial farmers (mainly dairy) on the Mangatawhiri have over the last decade invested heavily in effluent systems, bridges, riparian planting and fencing (approximately \$300,000/farm average) and all would agree that more riparian fencing and planting needs to be done, but that isn't really going to be a game changer when it comes to river water quality.

All agree, including our advisors and the Waikato River Authority, that the rivers main problem at present is riverbank instability and water discolouration. In flood conditions high volumes of water emerge out of the bush line (Hunua ranges) with a heavy silt load and continues to erode the riverbank for some distance from the bush line even after the rivers gradient has flattened out.

Flood water exiting bush line



Collapsing Riverbank



Some Catchment Care Group landowners have had a loan approved of approximately \$80,000 from the Waikato River Authority to add to their own contribution of the same amount to undertake a river bank restoration and planting program this autumn.

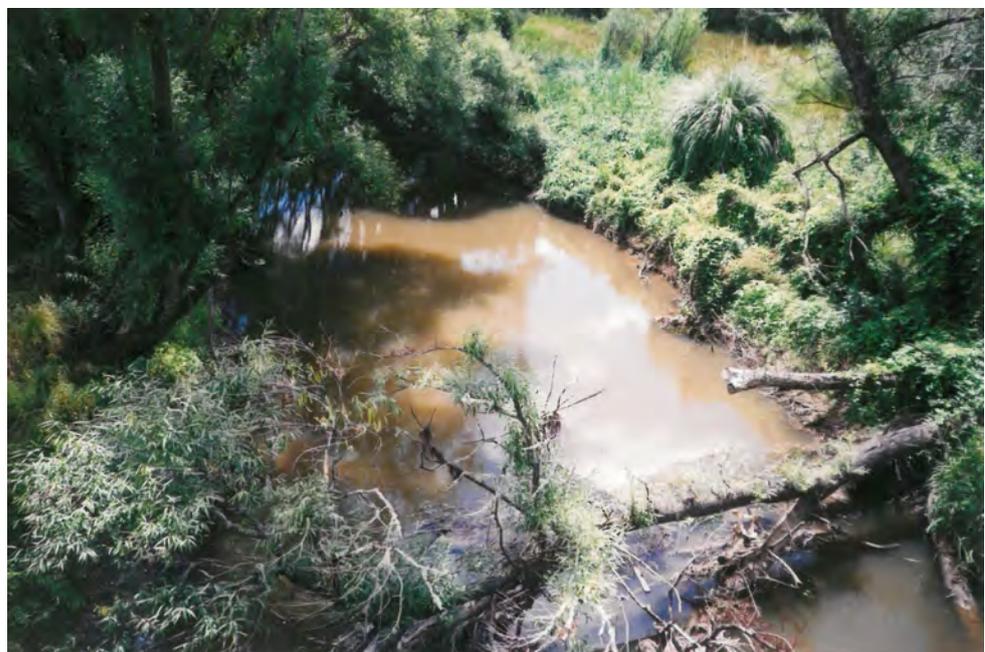
The reason all this is being mentioned is that farmers know their local waterways well and know what investments to prioritise and what investments will make very little difference. In the case of the Mangatawhiri nothing can be done to stop silt laden flood water coming out of the bush line of the Hunua ranges, although there are badly informed people who believe that river siltation only occurs on farming land not native forest.

Other major causes of siltation, discolouration and unsightliness are Japanese Koi Carp and Crack Willows. The Mangatawhiri river has an Auckland water supply dam in its headwaters and this does have an impact on flow volumes and water temperature over summer. The Mangatawhiri has a wetland of over 400 hectares in its lower reaches near Mercer. However the supposed benefits of that wetland are being diminished by a heavy infestation of Crack Willows, which not only dumps thousands of tonnes of leaf material into the wetland in late autumn, but also looks unattractive over the winter.

Summer water
quality near where
river enters wetland



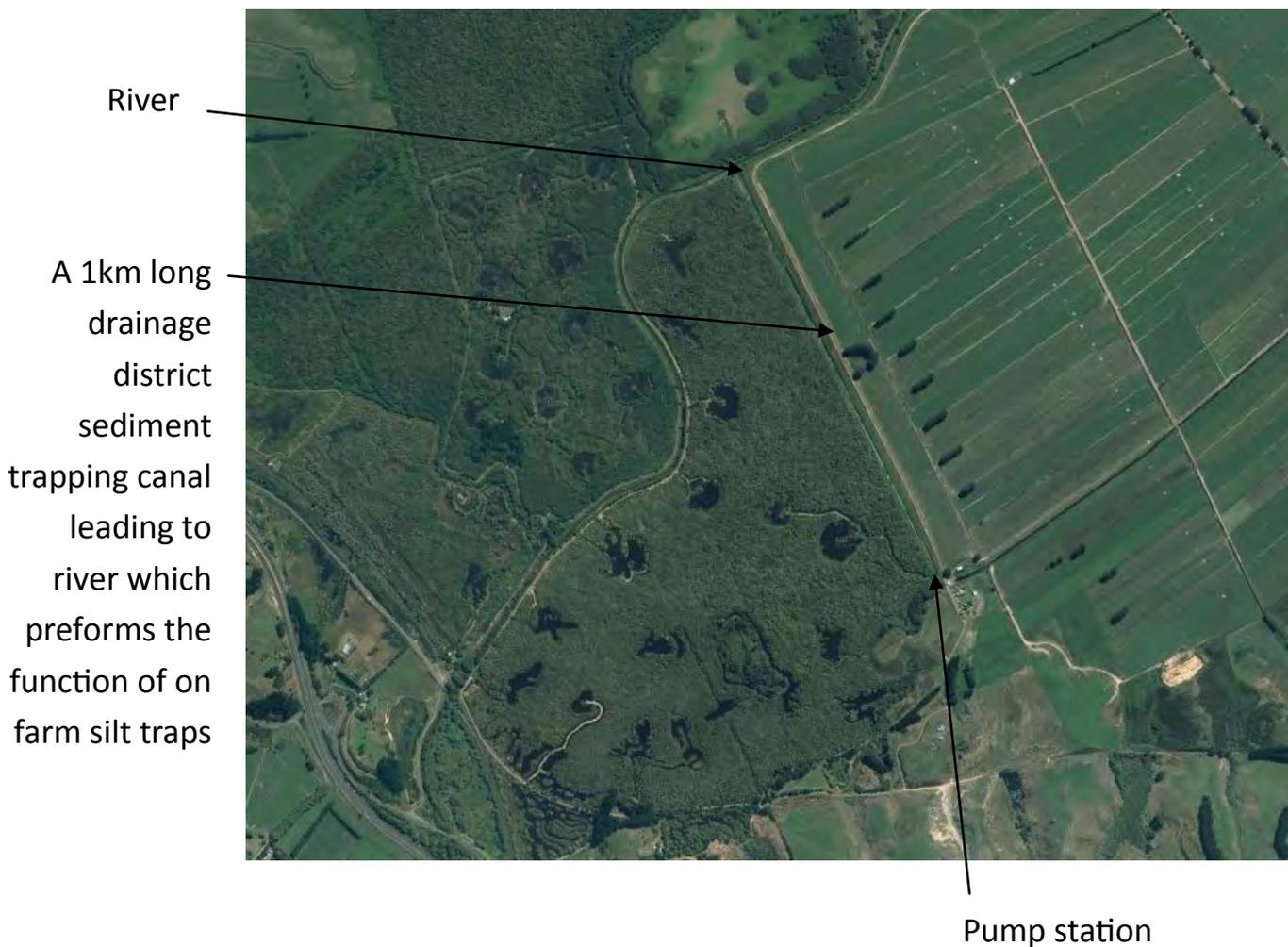
Summer water
quality near where
river exits wetland



This brings me to the issues I have a problem with in Plan Change 1.

1. A SUB CATCHMENT APPROACH.

The Mangatawhiri River flows through approximately 10 kilometres of farming land from the bush line of the Hunua ranges to the wetland at Mercer. Over that short distance farming land (including Drainage District farming land) gets very little opportunity to have an accumulating impact on water quality compared to the other factors mentioned above. It seems unnecessary to impose on the Mangatawhiri Drainage District tough and expensive compliance requirements that may be important in many parts of the Waikato River Catchment but would have little or no detectable benefit to the water quality of our local river.



MY SUBMISSION IS THAT THE MANGATAWHIRI CATCHMENT SHOULD HAVE ITS OWN BESPOKE WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN THAT RECOGNISES AND ADDRESSES ITS UNUSUAL WATER QUALITY ISSUES AND IS PREPARED WITH A LOT OF LOCAL LANDOWNER PARTICIPATION.

2. THE 5 METER CULTIVATION SETBACK RULE.

With over half my family farm being in a Drainage District I have an intensive network of drains throughout my flood protected land .



Those drains have water in them all year around although they cease flowing for approximately 3 months a year. My family farm flood protected land was first drained in 1973 and still has a lot of stumps just under the surface of the peat. This requires stump chipping every 8 to 10 years, a cultivation that has been necessary for a portion of the farm every year right up to this present day. If I cannot cultivate (stump chip) right up to the edge of the drains I will end up with masses of stumps and elevated land around the drains and lower waterlogged land in the centre of paddocks.



MY SUBMISSION IS THAT IN DRAINAGE DISTRICTS, FARMERS THAT HAVE WATER IN THEIR DRAINS ALL YEAR AROUND BUT NO FLOW FOR MANY MONTHS BE EXEMPTED FROM THE 5 METER CULTIVATION SETBACK RULE.

3. THE 1 METER AND 3 METER LIVESTOCK FENCING SETBACK RULES.

Many farm races in Drainage Districts were formed by digging drains each side of where a race was needed and using all drain cleanings to form the race. In many instances the races are already narrower than ideal. In most cases drains exist on both sides and are necessary to keep adjacent land acceptably dry in winter. It would cause some farmers in Drainage Districts a lot of difficulty with farm machinery and stock movement if the setback was any more than 1/2 meter. It may even make some races unusable and require them to be rebuilt at considerable expense.

Also with such an intensive network of drains throughout the farm an excessive amount of grazing land will be lost and become a weed control headache if livestock fencing setbacks are excessive.

MY SUBMISSION IS THAT A 1/2 METER LIVESTOCK SETBACK BE UNIFORMLY APPLIED IN ALL DRAIN FENCING SETBACK SITUATIONS IN DRAINAGE DISTRICTS WITH INTENSIVE NETWORKS OF DRAINS.

4. RED TAPE

Plan Change 1 is going to result in the farming industry having to deal with a massive increase in bureaucracy..

I have experience at trying to get a Resource Consent for projects in waterways.

It is not easy mainly because approval has to go across too many desks and with Council Officers overworked with meetings and having limited time for problem solving this can hold things up. In the nightmare situation where a Resource consent has to be notified, this will almost certainly prove expensive and becomes a hand brake on development and economic growth.

MY SUBMISSION IS THAT COUNCIL LOCATE STAFF WHO ARE GOING TO HAVE TO IMPLEMENT PLAN CHANGE 1 WITHIN THE MANY SMALLER COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE WAIKATO AND EMPOWER THEM TO MAKE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DECISIONS WITHOUT HAVING TO REFER THINGS TO HEAD OFFICE.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS.

Many New Zealanders believe we should be one people and all of us have the same human rights. The way Plan Change 1 governance has been structured an important racial group in our society can lay down the law in terms what is expected of the wider farming community but exempt themselves from the consequences of what they are prepared to inflict on others. This does not seem fair and could have long term economic consequences unless corrected.

MY SUBMISSION IS THAT PLAN CHANGE 1 COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A TOOL TO SETTLE TREATY OF WAITANGI ISSUES AS THIS IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH NEW ZEALANDER'S HUMAN RIGHTS AND WILL DAMAGE THE WAIKATO'S RURAL ECONOMY IN THE LONG TERM.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

MATTHEW DEAN.