

LAKE WAIKARE AND WHANGAMARINO WETLAND CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

TE MĀHERE MŌ TE WHAKAHAERE I TE ROHE KŪKŪWAI O WAIKARE, O WHANGAMARINO



PLAN TO PROTECT THE SHALLOW LAKES AND WETLAND

Described by hapū as the lungs and kidneys of the lower Waikato, Lake Waikare and Whangamarino wetland have multiple important values and interests – cultural, ecological, recreational and economic – to community members and various organisations in the area.

Recognised under the Ramsar Convention as a wetland of international significance, Whangamarino wetland is home to rare native animals and plants. Lake Waikare and four smaller lakes in the catchment – Ohinewai, Kopuera, Rotokawau and the Penewaka lagoon – also provide habitat for a large range of rare native animals.

Many people have expressed concern about poor water quality in the area and the impact of increasing sediment and nutrient loads to the lakes and wetland. Levels of suspended sediment, especially in Lake Waikare, are high. In addition, invasive plant and animal species have invaded these environments causing further degradation, a loss of biodiversity and reduced cultural and recreational values.

Waikato Regional Council has, through its 2015-2025 Long Term Plan, committed to developing a catchment plan with farm-scale actions to address these concerns. This has been identified as the best way forward to address sediment sources impacting on the wetland and will help deal with the wider range of issues in the catchment, including the lake's water quality and biodiversity.

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- Plan to protect the lakes and wetland
- Who is involved?
- What is happening when?
- Have your say and help make a change

RARE AND AT-RISK ECOSYSTEMS

The lake and wetland contain a diverse range of plants and animals and are home to many rare and threatened species. These include the Australasian bittern, banded rail, grey duck, grey teal, marsh crake, New Zealand dabchick, New Zealand shoveler and spotless crake. Brown teal were once present, but are now believed to be regionally extinct.

Native fish found in the lakes include common smelt, grey mullet, whitebait, and longfin and shortfin eels.

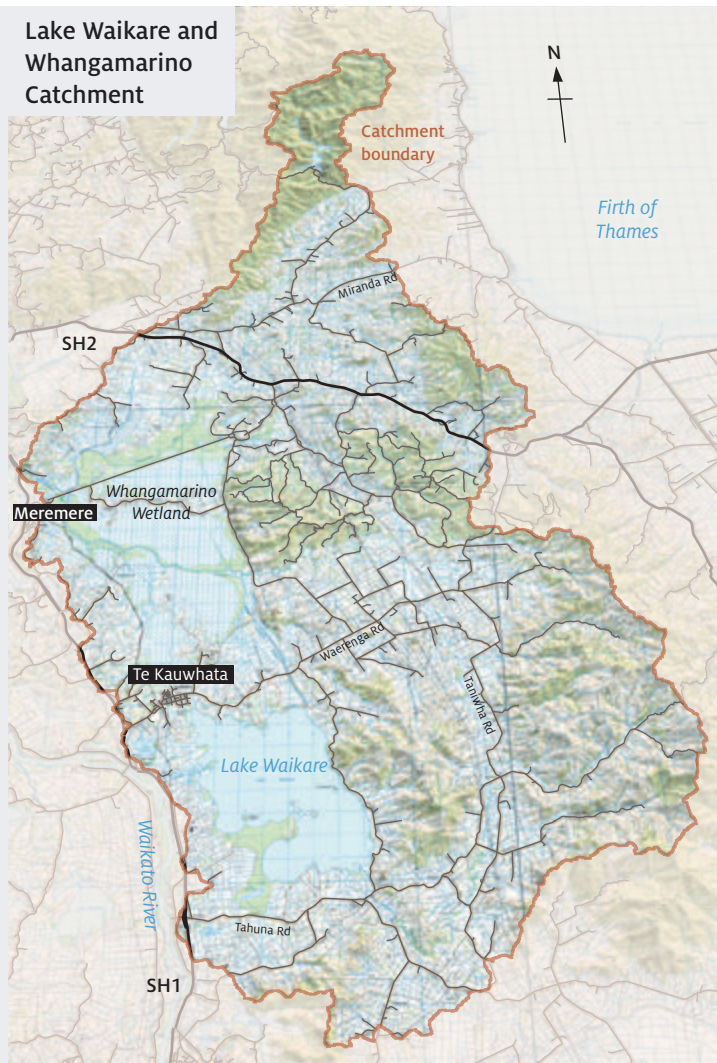
The indigenous fen and peat bog habitats at these sites are ecologically sensitive and significant habitats, along with the swamp and marshlands, which act as a refuge for these animals.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

The development of the Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Wetland Catchment Management Plan is led by Waikato Regional Council and driven by a project manager and team of technical experts. The technical team will focus on a wide range of topics, including soil and land, biodiversity, water quality, water management and cultural values.

We are working collaboratively with a group of key stakeholders, including the Lower Waikato Catchment Committee, Department of Conservation, Fish & Game New Zealand, Waikato District Council and local iwi representatives. In particular, they're sharing with us their goals and aspirations for the lakes and wetland, and any works or projects they're carrying out.

Lake Waikare and Whangamarino Catchment



WHAT IS HAPPENING WHEN?

JUNE 2016 TO
DECEMBER 2016

MAP SCOPE OF WORK AND GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS

This includes mapping:

- projects, aspirations and goals of agencies involved
- existing goals and objectives as defined in zone plans, the *Regional Policy Statement, Healthy Rivers: Plan for Change/Wai Ora: He Rautaki Whakapaipai*
- stakeholder goals and aspirations
- soil conservation and biodiversity priorities.

DECEMBER 2016

VOLUME 1 OF THE PLAN TO BE COMPLETED

This volume of the plan will outline background information on the shallow lakes in the area and the Whangamarino wetland, including information on the current state, strategic direction, visions and key matters.

SEPTEMBER 2017*

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO BE COMPLETED

Defined actions to implement the plan's strategy and goals. This will reflect key priority areas and what actions will be taken to improve these.

OCTOBER 2017*

PROPOSED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN (CMP) TO BE COMPLETED

NOVEMBER 2017*

CONSULTATION ON THE CMP

DECEMBER 2017*

CMP TO BE APPROVED

* These dates are dependent on the progress of the project and will be confirmed at a later stage.



HAVE YOUR SAY AND HELP MAKE A CHANGE

The project team and key stakeholders cannot protect and restore the lakes and wetland alone. We need the support of the entire community.

Firstly, we want to fully understand what the values and goals are for everyone with an interest in the lakes and wetland. Secondly, we want your input to help us define workable solutions and actions keeping interests and requirements of those working and living in the area in mind. Ultimately our goal is to develop a plan that is achievable and fully supported by a community that is willing to come together and make a change.

As outlined in the timeline, we are currently in the process of mapping goals and aspirations for the lakes and wetland, and we want to include your feedback too.

To share your feedback contact Michael Duffy, Lower Waikato Zone Manager, or Graeme Ridley, Project Manager, by sending an email to lakewaikareplan@waikatoregion.govt.nz. Alternatively, complete the feedback form on waikatoregion.govt.nz/lakewaikarefeedback.

We will collect feedback and present findings during community meetings, which will be held in October and November in your area. This will be your chance to hear the feedback from other community members. You'll also have another opportunity to have your say.



Graeme Ridley



Michael Duffy