

Resource Consent submission

To: The Chief Executive
Environment Southland
Private Bag 90116
DX20175
Invercargill

Date 04/09/2024 10:48
Online reference number RC240907706

Full name of submitter Lloyd Esler
Postal address Section 53
Contact phone number
Email

Applicant details

Name of applicant Te Rūnanga o Awarua, Department of Conservation,
Environment Southland
Activity location Waituna lagoon - as described in Appendix D of the application
Application number APP-20242456

Submission details

My submission relates to the whole application Yes
Details of my submission I acknowledge the importance of Waituna as a traditional food-gathering resource and a significant natural area in which I have spent much time looking at the flora and fauna. It is important for migrant waders and for a range of waterfowl. It has a cushion-bog assemblage of plants normally found at high altitude but here representing a remnant left behind after the

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las glaciation. Amongst the invertebrates there is a butterfly here, the 'Tiwai Boulder Butterfly' which has a very restricted range along this bit of the coast.

I have observed the opening regime for the lagoon, often critically.

I have identified here three options.

1 Do nothing. The lagoon is a natural habitat, subject to natural openings and closings. This was the status quo perhaps until the 1950s when artificial openings began to ease flooding pressure on the contributing waterways and farmland. Clearly leaving the openings to nature is no longer an option because of submerging of the bridge and flooding of the road and the possible build-up of anaerobic conditions in the lagoon.

2. A high level trigger point. There seems to be an obsession with taking Ruppia as a indicator species of a well-functioning lagoon. Why Ruppia and not the saltmarsh fringing the lagoon? Ruppia beds represent one of the many 'ecologies' of the lagoon, not the only one and not the 'desirable' one. Ruppia likes muddy, warm, nutrient-rich water at a range of optimal depths. The case for Ruppia is made in the Department of Conservation Blog 28.8.2014 headed Ruppia the Key to Healthy Lagoons. This is actually only one type of healthy lagoon. Many healthy lagoons lack Ruppia in any case.

Without the Ruppia issue we could look at the saltmarsh as a desirable ecology. A high lagoon level, best for Ruppia, means the flooding of the saltmarsh, loss of feeding habitat for wading birds, loss of crabs and constant worry that a sudden rise in lagoon level will overtop the bridge.

3. A low-level trigger point. This is my favoured outcome. The lagoon reaches a trigger point and the digger heads out and makes an opening. The recent opening site is readily accessible. This is desirable as offers flood protection, allows the saltmarsh to re-establish, flushes out excessive nutrients and provides an opening for migrating fish. The Ruppia bed will likely be more sparse but Ruppia will then retreat up the contributing waterways as it has done in waterways feeding the Oreti Estuary.

Submission uploaded

No

I am a trade competitor of the applicant (for the purposes of section 308B of the Resource Management Act 1991)

No

Outcome sought

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I wish Environment Southland to make the following decision

Why I wish Environment Southland to make this decision

To oppose the application.

I acknowledge the importance of Waituna as a traditional food-gathering resource and a significant natural area in which I have spent much time looking at the flora and fauna. It is important for migrant waders and for a range of waterfowl. It has a cushion-bog assemblage of plants normally found at high altitude but here representing a remnant left behind after the last glaciation. Amongst the invertebrates there is a butterfly here, the 'Tiwai Boulder Butterfly' which has a very restricted range along this bit of the coast.

I have observed the opening regime for the lagoon, often critically.

I have identified here three options.

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Hearing details

- | | |
|---|-----|
| I wish to be heard in support of my submission | Yes |
| I would consider presenting a joint case if others make a similar submission | Yes |
| I wish to be involved in any pre-hearing meeting that may be held for this application | No |

Confirmation

I will serve a copy of my submission on the applicant and I confirm all of the above information is correct

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