

Resource Consent submission

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

Date 03/09/2024 15:43
Online reference number RC240906117

Full name of submitter
Postal address
Contact phone number
Email

Bevan Pirie

Section 53

Applicant details

Name of applicant Department of Conservation, Environment Southland and Te Runanga O Awarua
Activity location Waituna Lagoon
Application number APP - 20242456

Submission details

My submission relates to the whole application Yes
Submission uploaded Waituna submission.pdf (36 kb)
I am a trade competitor of the applicant (for the purposes of section 308B of the Resource Management Act 1991) No

For now
& our future



Outcome sought

I wish Environment Southland to make the following decision To oppose the application.

Why I wish Environment Southland to make this decision I wish the lagoon height to not be increased for the current consent and for it to mirror the immediate past consent of 2.2-2.3metres as the trigger point for opening to the sea.

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 Yes

Confirmation

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

For **now**
& **our future**



I am a sixth generation Waituna catchment farmer and have witnessed numerous environment changes during my fathers and grandfathers farming careers.

My grandfather was before his time with stock exclusion and riparian plantings on waterways as early as 1960.

My grandfather opposed the introduction of Canadian Geese as a game bird to the Waituna catchment, by the Acclimatisation Society.

During my farming career we have continued this environmental work and have worked with numerous agencies over the past 10 years trialling environmental work such as nutrient traps and bank stabilisation in an effort to improve the catchment quality. I have spent countless hours at the Waituna Lagoon in a recreational capacity and have introduced the seventh generation to the lagoons assets and our farming life.

The Waituna lagoons natural filtration system was extensively changed in the 1950's by the marginal lands projects of the then Government. The Waitunas headwaters and feeding waterways were diverted into one main waterway and the surrounding areas ditched and drained with our 250 hectare farm now having in excess of 130 underground drain outlets into the main channel. As a result of the Waitunas head water changes, the natural surface filtering system has been lost and an increased nutrient loading from land enters the lagoon.

The introduction over time of Black Swans , Canadian geese, Mallard ducks ,Brown trout and even our roading networks have all added to the degrading aspect of the lagoon from its "natural" state.

Therefore water height management of the lagoon, its nutrients and its ecosystem is critical to the long term well-being of the lagoon.

We are concerned that the proposed increased water height changes to the opening criteria of the lagoon severely limits the ability to manage this historically created nutrient build up and ignores the land owners at the lower end of the Catchment who are inundated with water during the higher level periods.

We are also concerned for the lagoon that the historic knowledge and understanding of the catchment's intricacies held through the local community is being ignored.

Over the last 10 years, We also believe several agencies are ignoring and have on occasion blocked the community from permitted activity.

For example The Department of Conservation in February 2022 excluded access to cross Conservation land with the mechanical digger to open the lagoon to the sea which in effect overruled the resource management acts authority.

Fish and Game publicly opposed the same permitted act of opening the lagoon in Sept 2021 labelling an individual as environmentally reckless for opening the lagoon to the sea and chose to ignore the impending lagoon flood.

The involvement of the regulator (Environment Southland) as a joint applicant creates an extremely unusual situation..

The loss of the "Continuous Rights" associated with the now redundant Waituna Control Associations opening consent resulted in the debacle of late 2023 when the lagoon became algal dominated. Had there been support to maintain these rights the lagoon could have been opened sooner and could still be relevant.

Subsequently the lagoon was opened (31 Jan 2024) under emergency powers for environmental reasons showing the absolute need for periodic openings under numerous criteria.

I oppose the proposed consent in its current form as any increased water height of the trigger points for the lagoon opening severely limits the ability to manage any buildup of nutrients, algal blooms or emergency scenarios which will be to the lagoons' detriment.