



The Peninsula Project

Working together to protect our people,
property and environment

Kia mau ki te mauri o te taiao o Hauraki



Stream maintenance update for Tapu ratepayers



March 2015

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Background

In response to the devastating effect of the 2002 weather bomb, the Peninsula Project was established to improve the health of the environment and reduce flood risks on the Coromandel Peninsula.

Through this project we have been carrying out regular stream maintenance on Tapu Stream since 2004 – removing sand, gravel, built-up silt, pest plants and other obstructions from the channel so the water can flow freely, particularly during high rainfall events.

Review of the stream maintenance programme

In 2013 the Tapu Flood Mitigation Committee was set up to act as a conduit between your community and our council on stream maintenance activities, including changes in the stream channel and how work is prioritised.

In January of this year the Tapu Flood Mitigation Committee met with us to discuss the maintenance programme and associated rating. This was prompted by the fact that there are substantial funds currently held in the Tapu Stream Maintenance Reserve (more than \$50,000), and that annual expenditure on stream maintenance has fallen. It has fallen because the stream is now relatively stable and there haven't been any recent storm events.

The discussion focused on what level of funds should be held in reserve and what level of annual works is required to keep the stream stable and free flowing.

Key considerations

- Regular maintenance keeps the stream in a robust condition so it can carry high volumes of water. It also assists with the smaller more frequent rainfall events.
- Over the last 7 years the frequency of tasks like gravel removal and stream mouth opening have differed from the estimate set in 2004 when the rate was first put in place. The variance is due to the good shape the stream is now in and fewer large scale rainfall events.
- If the work programme and associated rate were removed altogether there would not be any specific funds available for Tapu Stream works. In a storm event, for example, Tapu would be subject to prioritisation alongside other rivers and streams on the peninsula.
- The current annual budget is just over \$19,000. On average, the annual spend for the last seven years has been around \$11,300.
- Of the approximate \$150,000 collected for stream maintenance (from local, peninsula and regional contributions) to date less than \$100,000 has been spent, leaving a surplus in excess of \$50,000.

Funding and the reserve

The stream maintenance programme that keeps Tapu Stream stable and free of blockages and debris that might inhibit flood flows, is funded from several sources:

- 65 per cent from the targeted local community rate
- 20 per cent from the wider Coromandel Peninsula rate
- 15 per cent from the Waikato regional rate.

The money collected from each of the rates above that is not spent on stream maintenance in a given year is held in reserves for your

community for the purpose of flood mitigation maintenance and storm event response.

The Tapu maintenance rate is assessed on the capital value of every property in the rating area, and separate budget codes for work done on the Tapu Stream are used so actual revenue and expenditure are able to be tracked.

The Tapu Flood Mitigation Committee asked us to consider whether inflation on the annual targeted rate could be recovered from the Tapu reserve funds for a period of time. As long as we have an agreed work programme and rating level, any remaining annual additional requirements can be balanced from the reserve.

Proposed changes

Since 2004 the Tapu community has accumulated a nest egg of more than \$50,000 to go towards a major flood clean up. As a result, the Tapu Flood Mitigation Committee and our council are proposing to reduce the annual work programme and associated rating.

This reduction would mean an adjustment to the level of service currently identified for Tapu (based on the 10 year programme developed in 2004) and a reduction in the rates people pay.

It's proposed that the reduced level of service would be in the following areas:

- **Gravel management following a storm event**
The channel capacity has been holding well and therefore gravel removal is not required as often as originally anticipated.
- **Stream mouth opening**
As a result of retaining the stream mouth pointing south, we haven't had to carry out work to open it.
- **Frequency of on-site meetings**
This would better reflect actual needs and still meet community expectations around service.

There would be no change to:

- pest plant control
- tree removal
- channel and consent monitoring
- information request responses as necessary.

When considering this proposed change, think about whether you would prefer to:

- continue contributing the amount you currently pay each year towards maintaining Tapu Stream, building a nest egg in reserve to respond to future events (this is the status quo)
- reduce your annual contribution.

Rating impacts

The total revised programme, including works, staff time and rate collection costs equates to a rate requirement of \$11,000 (excluding GST) or \$13,000 (including GST) per annum. This would mean that Tapu ratepayers would pay \$16.50 per \$100,000 capital value of their property for this work – a reduction of \$14.50 per \$100,000 capital value from the current year.

This is the maximum reduction in rating our council is able to recommend. Anything more would compromise our ability to keep the stream in a good condition.

It is proposed that the reserve position would be reviewed every three years, in line with our long term plan process, and the rate adjusted if needed to ensure that available reserve funds do not exceed \$50,000.

Stream maintenance programme for 2014/15

Waikato Regional Council has committed to providing a written works programme for discussion with the Tapu Flood Mitigation Committee by Christmas each year. The programme agreed with the committee for this year includes:

- monitoring a number of small stream infill and erosion sites
- notifying NZTA to remove vegetation debris and gravel from under the state highway bridge
- obtaining quotes for pest plant removal and notifying the working party
- reviewing planting when pest plants are under control.

The Tapu Flood Mitigation Committee raised with us concerns regarding notification of spraying as part of the stream maintenance programme. In response, we've agreed to erect signage at Tapu prior to spray activities relating to stream maintenance. We will also continue to place a public notice in the Hauraki Herald and drop mailers in local letter boxes.

Estimated costs and timing for 2015

Work	Cost	Timing
Infilling and erosion monitoring	\$300	Feb-June
Meetings, documentation and newsletter regarding rating	\$2,500	Feb-June
Infill under bridge (to be undertaken by the asset owner)	\$100	March
Pest plant spraying (willow, ginger, gorse, pampas)	\$2,700	March
Work supervision and consent compliance	\$800	March
Total	\$6,400	

For more information

If you need more information, please call Ryan Fergusson (Coromandel Works Supervisor) or Emily O'Donnell (Coromandel Area Manager) on 07 866 0172 or freephone 0800 800 401.

