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File Note – Site Visit

To:	Stephen West, Principal Consents Officer
From:	Darin Sutherland, Environmental Scientist
Date:	1 September 2026
File Reference:	REQ-1552861 & APP-20262269
Subject:	**Swale construction within a natural wetland**

Swale construction within a natural wetland by Datagrid NZ Partnership Ltd

Summary/Recommendation

- Datagrid has applied for resource consents to enable the construction of a swale within a natural and natural inland wetland (Taylor Rd etland).
- The Taylor Rd wetland has already been extensively surveyed as part of the broader datacentre application.
- In relation to the wetland delineation and congruent with the previously assessment Datagrid has adequately identified the wetland area affected by the proposal though the amount of indigenous wetland vegetation lost may be understated.
- Other effects of the swale (hydrological impacts, potential weed introduction) are likely to be minor or less than minor.

Site values and potential impacts

A site visit was conducted on 26/08/26 to assess the ecological values and the site in general within and adjacent to the swale footprint (Figure 1) in relation to the information that the applicant had provided.

Figure 1. Map of the affected wetland (yellow outline) with swale in brown from PDP Ecology (2026)

The applicant has assessed the areas impacted by the swale and associated earthworks as 381 m^2 with the majority of swale situated on farmland to the west of the Taylor Rd wetland. The applicant considered that only 21 m^2 of vegetation dominated by indigenous species (6% of the total impacted wetland) was within the footprint. It should be noted that in terms of whether an area is a wetland under the RMA, natural wetland under the pSWLP or natural inland wetland under the NPS-FM (2020) percentage of indigenous vegetation or ecological values are not taken into consideration.

In terms of assessing ecological values, it would have been useful if the areas assessed as being in indigenous vegetation had been mapped (or if mapped provided to the Council) in conjunction with mapping of the broad vegetation types in the area affected by the swale.

The site visit confirmed that the swale placement (to the west of the fenceline) was slightly elevated from the Taylor Rd wetland (e.g. see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Photo looking northwards near the southern extent of the wetland loss area.

A swale is typically shallow and therefore hydrologically effects on the wetland will be minimal. Potentially, the wetland area immediately adjacent to the swale will become drier. The wetland species immediately adjacent to the swale included endemic copper tussock (*Chionochloa rubra subsp. cuprea*), sedge (*Carex coriacea*) and *Juncus* rush (Figure 3). Wetland monitoring will be required as part of the resource consent conditions as stated by PDP Ecology (2026) and if negative changes are detected then further mitigation actions could be taken to compensate for the further loss of wetland values.

Figure 3. Looking southwards with the fenceline to the right. Copper tussock, sedges and rushes can be seen along with exotic grass and gorse.

The impacted area was dominated by the exotic pasture grass Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), with the exotic weed creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and a sedge, probably the endemic *Carex coriacea*, also evident. No mapping of the vegetation was completed during the site visit but the visual assessment suggested that more indigenous vegetation (i.e. *Carex coriacea*) will be affected than the 6% indicated by the applicant (Figure 4). The Ecology Report (PDP, 2026) does state the 6% is only for areas dominated by indigenous vegetation. No criteria are given for what dominated is, but if this was greater than 50% then presumably areas close to 50% would not be included which may account for the discrepancy. A more thorough assessment would provide approximate percentages of indigenous vegetation, and this would be more useful in assessing overall ecological value and impacts.

Figure 4. Looking northwards along the fenceline between the farmland and Talyor Rd wetland. The brown, dead looking foliage is likely to be the endemic sedge, *Carex coriacea*, which dies down in the winter.

Other potential impacts from swale construction would include sedimentation from earthworks, introduction of exotic weed species from machinery and hydrocarbon leaks from machinery. These potential impacts can be managed via standard consent conditions.

References

PDP, 2026. Request for further information on Resource Consent Application APP -20262269: Datagrid Wetland Work memorandum. Pp 3.