

Envirosouth

Environment Southland News

March 2012



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Dairy conversion consent rule likely to be introduced


environment
SOUTHLAND
Te Taias Tonga



From the Chair

2011 was the year that water quality issues elbowed their way to the front of the queue for Environment Southland.

The State of the Environment Report, the Waituna Lagoon project and the Audit Office's assessment of our fresh water activities all showed that we needed to do more to halt and reverse the decline in water quality.

But you can't achieve that by passing a resolution or wringing your hands. Many of the contaminants that are finding their way into our rivers, streams, estuaries and lakes aren't coming out of a pipe, they're diffuse and difficult to pinpoint.

One of the programmes our Council has launched is Water and Land: 2020, a policy response designed to manage the cumulative effects that various land uses are having on surface and groundwater.

Water and Land: 2020 will help us achieve the 10% improvement in water quality by the year 2020 that is the primary goal of our community's Water Plan. That target was set after consultation with the people of Southland – it's not the Council's target, it's our community's.

We will be looking at a wide range of farming practices across all types of farming in all of our catchments. These include hill country development, the use of nutrients and winter grazing.

Every farmer will be affected by the outcomes of Water and Land: 2020, which is why we've brought together a steering group of farmers, rural industry organisations such as DairyNZ, and key agencies that have an interest in water quality. They're helping us scope out what can be done.

I believe that if farmers are prepared to change some of their traditional ways of doing things, they will not only make a real difference to our environment but they will also find there are economic benefits to their farming business. Getting smarter about keeping animal nutrients and fertilisers on the farm where they benefit production; adopting best management practices around conservation of the soil, which is every farm's most valuable – and most finite – resource.

And in case you're wondering – we're not just concentrating on the environmental impacts of farming. Other responses are underway to deal with water



Chairman Ali Timms will be leading by example in this weekend's Wai Tri, as she competes as cyclist in the Councillors' triathlon team. Cr Maurice Rodway will be in the kayak and Cr Neville Cook will be running. Come and cheer them on at 12.30pm this Sunday.

quality issues from urban and industrial activities. You'll find information about investigations into heavy metals from industrial discharges in the New River Estuary in this newsletter.

Ali Timms
Chairman
Eastern-Dome Constituency
(03) 248 7222



Hold fire on lignite questions

Environment Southland staff have been fielding questions about what the potential effects of Solid Energy's proposed lignite development plans could be on water resources in the Maitara Valley.

However it is too early to be able to provide the public with accurate information about the potential effects.

The company has not yet filed resource consents for any activities at the site and

until that point, when more would be known about the proposal, there is not enough information to have any clear indication of what the effects might be.

Once an application is with the Council it will provide more of an idea of the size and scale of the proposed operation and initiate investigations to determine how the environment, and more specifically water resources, could be impacted.

Cover picture:

Our cover photo features two-year-old Jonathan Andrews from Dipton, who was very taken with the magpies when he visited Environment Southland's display at the Southern Field Days last month.

Catch of the day could prove toxic



Wetsuit-clad Environment Southland staff who have been trudging through knee-deep mud trying to snare flounder from the Waihopai River are far from chasing their lunch – it's all in the name of science.

Council scientists have been collecting samples of aquatic animals (when they allow themselves to be caught) as part of a testing regime to investigate whether heavy metals that have been detected in the river are being absorbed by, and are affecting, fish.

Council Environmental Technical Officer Roger Hodson said the investigation was triggered by a Council Living Streams project to identify rural and urban sources of contamination and sediment in the Waihopai River.

The basis of Roger's work started when the examination of New River Estuary revealed the existence of heavy metals in sediment of the lower reaches of river, in particular zinc and nickel.

Both metals were detected at concentrations greater than the Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council (ANZECC) low trigger values near stormwater discharges in the river between North Road and Beatrice Street.

Roger says that low trigger value sounds an early warning that the contamination may be toxic to life, recommends that further monitoring be done and that careful management of waters entering the Waihopai could prevent or minimise any environmental effects.

"As a result of that we've started investigating to find out if marine life is being affected."

That's where Roger's fishing trips come in.

He's been out traipsing through lower Waihopai River mud (with fellow staff members silly enough to fall for a promise of a day's fishing) to catch specimens that can be sent away for scientific analysis.

As well as flounder, cockles are being collected to gauge the effects of the metals on them and to determine whether both species pose a risk to public health if they are eaten.

Snaring enough specimens is work that takes time, especially when Roger needs to catch enough to make sure he can draw sound conclusions from the results.

He expects that it will take at least until next summer before he can compile enough data to explain what is actually going on in the river.

When that happens, and based on the findings, the next step can be devised about what do with regard to the contamination – if anything.

But it's important work, Roger says, to ensure the river, estuary and their habitats aren't the ones that got away.



Knee-deep mud makes it difficult for staff members Greg Ryder, Roger Hodson and Dave Connor to catch flounder to test for heavy metal which may be absorbed by the fish.



Come and 'tri' this Sunday

They protect Invercargill from a river in flood, but this weekend the Waihopai River stopbanks will withstand inundation of a different kind.

Environment Southland's multisport event that traditionally attracts hundreds of participants, the Wai Tri, is just days away with the starter's gun set to fire on Sunday 18 March.

As always the stopbanks are the platform for the event that has competitors paddling, pedalling and panting in the disciplines of kayaking, mountain biking and running.

This year, the race has a fresh twist Event Manager Robin Wilson says.

To spice up the kayak leg a new course has been devised that will have competitors paddling between

the North Road bridge and midway between the bridge and Queens Drive, then downstream to the railway bridge and all the way back.

Mr Wilson said it should make the kayak leg interesting with a few U-turns to complete and the new course would also provide better vantage points for spectators along the way.

There are also a few minor tweaks to some other events including extending the walk to incorporate a new section of the Invercargill/Bluff walkway.

But the Wai Tri isn't just about those that strive to stride across the finishing line first, participation is just as important.

And with that in mind there are different categories specifically tailored to suit a broad range of different abilities.

The events on offer are:

- 11.5km recreational walk
- 10km run
- Junior duathlon – for ages 7-9 and 10-12 (mountain bike and run)
- Novice duathlon (short course mountain bike and run)
- Duathlon (mountain bike and run)
- Triathlon (kayak, mountain bike, run)

It's not too late to take part in the Wai Tri. Download the entry form from www.es.govt.nz or come into either Environment Southland's office on North Road Invercargill, or pop into H&J Smith Outdoor World.

You can also enter at the registration tent on Hollywood Tce on the day of the Wai Tri, though late entries are more expensive.



There is an event for every age and ability at the Wai Tri, to be held this Sunday, 18 March.

Living Streams project taking in new waterways



If you have waterways or wetlands on your property, are concerned about water quality and want to improve fish habitat and native biodiversity, then keep reading.

Environment Southland is looking for people living in the same river catchment who are keen to band together with the goal of improving water quality.

If that sounds like you Living Streams may be able to help achieve that goal and provide funding to enhance your waterways.

Since 2005, the Living Streams team at the Council has been helping people in both rural and urban areas to identify any environmental problems, prevent water pollution and improve the health of rivers and streams.

Projects suitable for assistance from Living Streams must clearly benefit stream health. Examples of projects we have assisted in the past include riparian fencing, planting for stream shade, provision of alternative stock water systems, improvements to stock crossings, rehabilitation of stream banks and advice for technical experts. We also visit properties, monitor water quality and provide site-specific information and advice to landowners.

Who can apply?

To find out if you are eligible, view the criteria on our website www.es.govt.nz. To apply, download an Expression of Interest form, fill it in and send it back to us before the end of May 2012.

Note: Applications must come from a group of people living in the same river catchment. We cannot consider funding applications from individuals.

For more information, speak to the Living Streams team 0800 76 88 45.



These property owners chose not to develop a chunk of native bush surrounding a tributary of the Waihopai.



Fencing, riparian planting & dairy farming working in perfect harmony.



Red tussocks do not impede digger access and look fabulous on the riparian margins.



Land Sustainability Officer Nathan Cruickshank demonstrates how to use a plant protector at a Living Streams field day in the Sandstone catchment.



Watery wonders inspire sculptor to create



Sculptor Kees Taal has been inspired by the natural world he adores, making beautiful, life-like fish and birds from sheet-aluminium.

Kees Taal's house is filled to the brim with trophy animals, but not because of his innate hunting prowess - instead an intimate respect for the environment and everything that lives in it.

In fact nothing perished in the process because the animals mounted on Mr Taal's walls are the creations of his mind and the work of his own hands.

The 78-year-old man is a sculptor - once by hobby, now by obsession.

And that fixation has translated into a catalogue of creatures, moulded from sheet-aluminium, and drawn from the natural world he adores. The former carpenter, poultry farmer and deer farmer has been reborn as something you can undoubtedly call an artist.

The artisan's life is one that appears to have been inherent for the Holland-born Mr Taal, with his father always wanting to be an artist but becoming a fisherman instead. And in almost an ironic homage to his dad, Mr Taal has

combined the two to create intricate facsimiles of predominantly fish and birds that demand a closer look just to be sure.

And it's much of what he has seen happen in his homeland that sparked his veneration for the environment because he says he can see it being gradually mirrored here - where the environment that was once safe refuge for marine life has been whittled down into an altogether more hostile place.

The path to becoming a sculptor began about five years ago when Mr Taal and his wife Sherryl bought a café and he grew bored and turned idleness into invention.

His skill has since grown, so too his reputation. Mr Taal has one exhibition under his belt that sold 18 pieces on the opening night and 31 altogether. He also has displays at the Southland Museum and Art Gallery and the Lighthouse Gallery in Bluff and continues to sell his aluminium animals via various methods.

Just as his aptitude has advanced, so too has his longing to improve, making his pieces take longer to finish with an ever more finicky eye finding faults that demand perfection. From 7am until whenever he's satisfied with the day's accomplishments, Mr Taal is busy in his workshop threshing out his next piece - sometimes at the expense of a hot dinner.

"Sometimes I look up and it's dark and I wonder where the day has gone."

It was the love of the environment that took the Taals to the Environment Southland State of the Environment display at the Southern Institute of Technology late last year.

He was enamoured by a poster depicting freshwater fish species and



the creative spark was once again blazing inside his head.

Although he seldom looks at a clock, which only serves as a disruption for an artist at work, he guesses he spent about 20 hours cutting, bending and detailing seven freshwater fish.

What came next was a generous gesture. Instead of selling the sculpture off for financial gain he gifted it to the Council and to Southland, fully mounted, to underline his desire to raise awareness about the plight of marine life, the environment and the importance of protecting them.

“It’s not only about the fish, it’s about the rivers and streams – the whole picture.”

He says if his sculpture can be used to educate and shine the spotlight on the issue, that is reward enough for him.



A poster created by Environment Southland for a report inspired Kees to re-create the fish and has generously donated the whole display to the Council.

Give way rule changing

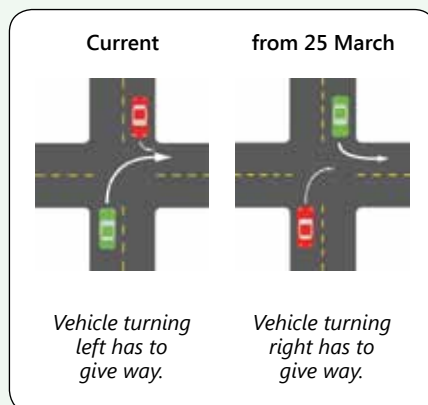


Southern drivers will be taking extra care at intersections when the give-way rules change at the end of this month.

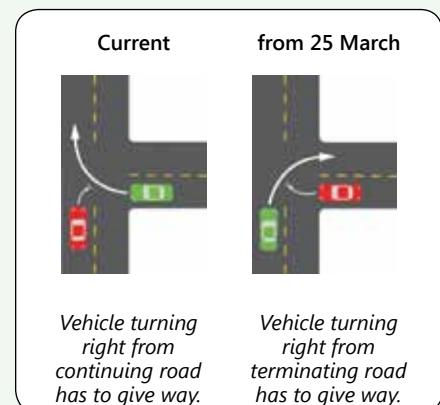
At 5am on Sunday 25 March two significant changes will be made.

The diagrams below show the existing rule and the new rule, for two kinds of intersections.

The left turn v. right turn



Uncontrolled T-intersections



What's happening at Waituna?

Regular readers will recall that we've been writing about the Waituna Lagoon to keep you updated in every issue, as Environment Southland leads an inter-agency response to prevent the lagoon from "flipping".

This time we're highlighting several projects that are critical steps in the response.

The Waituna Lagoon is part of the internationally recognised Awarua wetlands. The Lagoon is one of the best remaining examples of a natural coastal lagoon in New Zealand and is unique in Southland and New Zealand. It is highly significant to Ngai Tahu, fishermen, hunters and local landowners.

Monitoring station for lagoon

In the previous issue we detailed a monitoring platform that Environment Southland is planning to install in the Waituna Lagoon. It will provide real-time data about water quality and weather conditions.

It will provide data on dissolved oxygen levels, temperature, salinity, depth and turbidity in the lagoon, as well as wind, sun and air temperature data from the climate station.

Senior Environmental Technical Officer Karl Erikson believes this monitoring platform will be unique to New Zealand and possibly the world. "There are other platforms that monitor lakes, but they are much smaller units and do not monitor as many parameters. The monitoring platform for Waituna Lagoon is a solid structure for a greater number of measurements and for greater accuracy. Added to that, this station will be weighed down to sit on the bottom of the lagoon, which is important for measuring the lagoon water level." Karl says the platform should be complete and installed by the beginning of April, and it will need to be visited each month to confirm all the equipment is measuring accurately.

Karl says, "The platform will definitely be noticeable on the lake. It may be a sore thumb, but it's providing some really valuable information."

Clean-up fund application

Decisions have been made for the Ministry for the Environment's Fresh Start for Freshwater Clean-up fund, and Environment Southland has been successful in gaining almost \$800,000 in funding for Waituna Lagoon remediation.

The funding requires the Council to fund half of the proposed application, and is earmarked solely for physical remediation works.

Environment Southland's revised application sought funding for wetland and sediment trap trials, lagoon openings and stream rebattering and fencing along eroding banks of the Waituna Stream and tributaries that are providing sediment and nutrients to the Lagoon.

Drainage Maintenance programme

Environment Southland is responsible for the clearing of drainage channels across Southland. Drains are cleared on a three-yearly cycle, and this season it is the turn of the Waituna Stream. Clearing began several weeks ago, and is like to continue until April.

Aquatic Scientist Andy Hicks has had three turbidity loggers installed along the stream to see if suspended sediment is travelling downstream.

Scientists are concerned that there could be a high level of sediment and nutrients entering the lagoon as a result of the drain clearing programme.

Initial data suggests that sediment loads travelling downstream are higher than we would see during a flood, and lower visual clarity in the lagoon has been reported. Full analysis won't be available until the end of the clearing programme.



Myriophyllum flowers form red carpets on the surface of Waituna Lagoon.

Snapshots

- Lagoon health has been looking good, with stable nutrient levels, low phytoplankton counts and flowering Ruppia and myriophyllum.
- Sampling in the lagoon has been stepped up from fortnightly to weekly, and multiple samplings are being carried out across the catchment.
- Flux chambers, or groundwater seepage chambers are about to be installed in the lagoon to measure how much groundwater input there is in the lagoon.
- Otago PhD student, Michael Greer, has been helping out the Environment Southland scientists and furthering his PhD study by undertaking a lot of the sampling in the catchment since January.



Ruppia flower stalks uncoil like a jack-in-the-box in order to reach the surface to pollinate.

Southland Water 2010 now complete

Our Uses, the final part of the Southland Water 2010: Report on the State of Southland's Freshwater Environment has just been released, and rounds out the four-part series produced by Environment Southland and Te Ao Marama Incorporated.

All four reports, Our Health, Our Ecosystems, Our Uses and Our Threats are now available in hard copy and on the Environment Southland website.

Senior Groundwater Scientist Karen Wilson says the series is a comprehensive look at Southland's freshwater resources and the values we hold for it. "This final part, Our Uses, considered the extent of freshwater use in Southland, focusing in particular

on cultural use, water allocation and use, discharges, structures and gravel extraction."

Cultural use has been a theme running throughout the report series and there is a section devoted to what and how this is expressed by Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku.

Some of the key findings of the report are:

- Cultural use by Ngāi Tahu in Southland/Murihiku is expected to be higher than other regions and much mahinga kai gathering occurs on our lowland waters.
- The total volume of water allocated through resource consents in 2009/10 was

approximately 65.7 million cubic metres. Just over half of this was allocated from the region's groundwater resources.

- In 2009/10 the majority (75%) of consented water takes were for dairy shed supply with irrigation the next most common use.
- Between 2000/01 and 2009/10 groundwater allocation has more than trebled while surface water allocation has remained relatively stable.

Printed copies of all the reports are now available. Please call 0800 76 88 45 to request them, or email service@es.govt.nz. All four reports are also available for download from our website www.es.govt.nz.



Scanning for subterranean secrets

Sources of underground contamination will be more easily traced thanks to a new piece of equipment Environment Southland is buying this year.

In laymen's terms, the electromagnetic imaging device can take pictures underground without anyone having to even look at a shovel, let alone dig a trench.

Compliance Technical Officer Nick Ward said people may have seen the technology used on the television show *Time Team* when the ground is scanned in the search of archaeological remains, referring to the technique as "geophys".

But for the Council the device will be used to locate much less desirable targets.

Forget gold coins or an ancient ruin, Nick says; the purpose of the device is to hunt out sources of contamination, including the location of septic tanks and buried landfill.

The more technical explanation of how the machine works is that it measures the conductivity of materials underground and depending on their conductivity, signals will bounce back providing an illustration of what lies beneath.

Information will be gathered in layers at four different depths which will then be fed into a computer and – "hey presto!" – a picture appears.

Nick says the technology delivered huge advantages over traditional techniques - ie a shovel or a digger.

"It will be able to show us how a contaminant is dispersing through the ground and give us an understanding what we're dealing with."

"It's an altogether much less invasive approach to monitoring and it would be easier for a landowner to understand what was happening, if they can actually see a graphic representation of it."

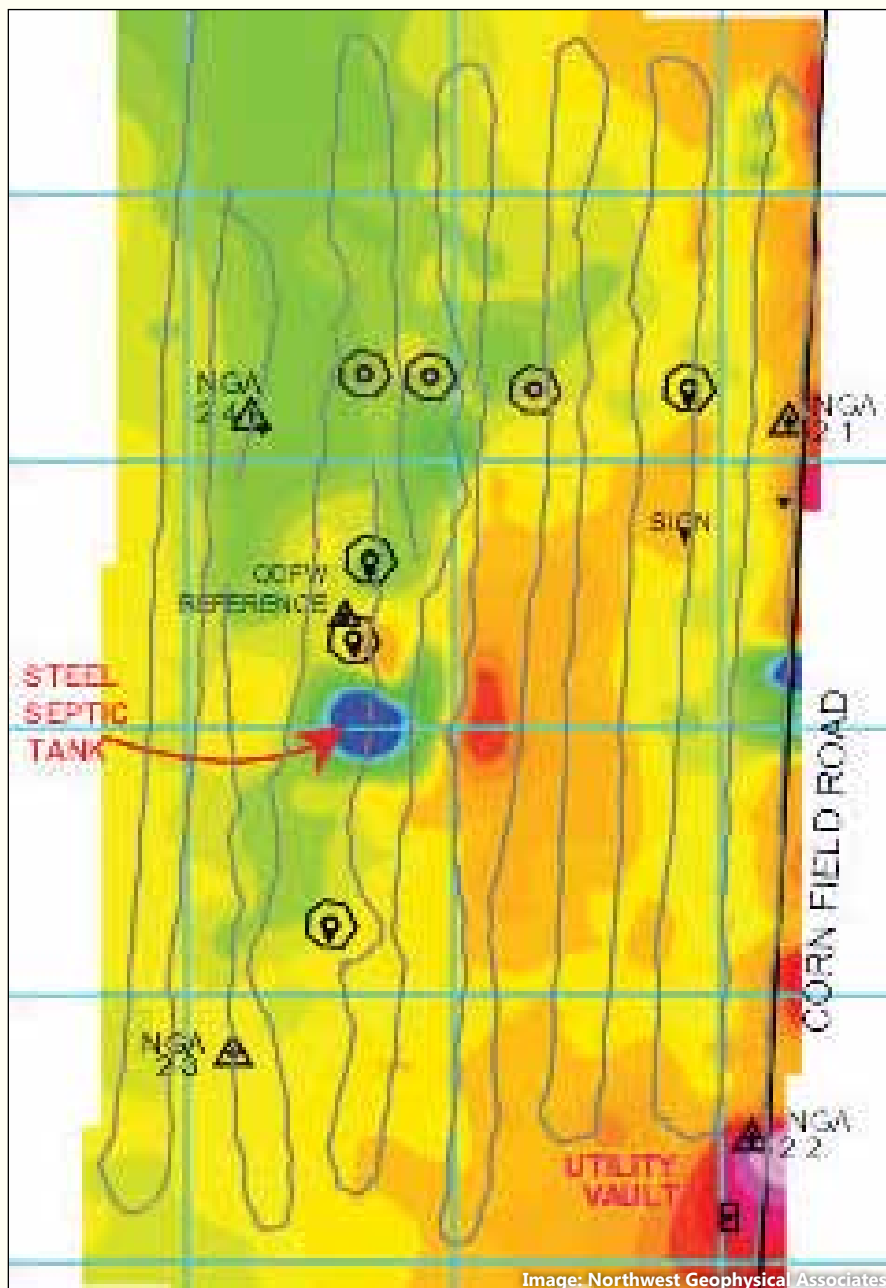


Image: Northwest Geophysical Associates

This is the kind of image that will be generated by a new electromagnetic imaging device that will help to trace the source of contamination.

There is an initial cost of about \$60,000 to buy the electromagnetic imaging device but it will save money down the line and improve the Council's ability to respond to pollution problems.

"There would be less time spent trying to pinpoint the location of a contaminant - essentially taking out the guesswork and being able to zero-in on any problems without digging any unnecessary holes."

For that reason less money would be spent on hiring digging contractors too, he says.

The apparatus would not just be a compliance tool, it could also be used across different divisions within the Council including by hydrologists, he says.

Dairy conversion consent rule likely to be introduced in April



Informal discussions are continuing with farming and dairy industry representatives about the proposed dairy conversion consent rule that Environment Southland is looking to introduce as an interim measure in April.

In brief, the new provisions would require anyone converting a property to dairy farming to first obtain a consent. The applicants would have to submit a farm environment plan as part of the consent application. The new requirements would be in addition to

the current consents for dairy effluent discharges and the construction of an effluent storage pond.

The Council initially proposed to introduce the new regime at the end of last year, but resolved to defer introducing the rule for three months to allow for further pre-consultation with farming interests. This has been occurring since mid January and some of the ideas brought forward during the pre-consultation are being incorporated into the development of the new rule.

If the Council resolves to go ahead with the new rule, it is likely to come into effect in April. Once it comes into effect there will be a period of formal submissions, which the Council will consider and decide whether changes are required.

You can find more information on the proposal on our website, www.es.govt.nz including the answers to commonly asked questions.



New dairy conversions like this may first need to obtain a consent when a new rule is introduced in April.



Transport plan up for discussion

How do you want Southland's roads to look in three years' time?

The opportunity for you to have your say has arrived with the public consultation period for the draft Regional Land Transport Programme 2012-2015 opening this month.

The document agreed upon at the Regional Transport Committee last month outlines the proposed work programme for the region in the next three years as well as the financial forecast for the following seven years.

The programme is compiled from the schedule of works proposed by the Southland District, Gore District and Invercargill City councils, Environment Southland and the New Zealand Transport Agency State Highway Network Operations.

Environment Southland Transport Policy Analyst Russell Hawkes said built into the draft programme for the next three years were proposed projects including passing lanes, high productivity/heavy vehicle route development, retrofitting safety features on roads and retrofitting bridges to meet earthquake standards.

The total funding in the National Land Transport programme to be allocated for Southland projects amounts to \$213 million.

It is the role of the New Zealand Transport Agency to allocate the available funds as directed by the Government Policy Statement on Road Funding to the projects proposed in each region.

Mr Hawkes said there was a significant shift in the thinking in the projects



The draft Regional Land Transport Programme is currently open for public consultation.

proposed by the Southland District Council and the NZTA.

Both had changed from seeking money for road renewals to a maintenance programme with particular emphasis on drainage to extend the lifespan of roads for longer.

The Gore District and Invercargill City councils were proposing a status quo approach from previous years.

Submissions will be open until the end of April but Mr Hawkes said it was important that people knew what could and could not be submitted on.

They can only be made on the ranking of State Highway work and the overall size of funding available to Southland.

The projects themselves were already drawn up by the respective local

authorities, the ICC, GDC, SDC and ES and will be consulted on during the Long-term Plan consultation process.

Mr Hawkes said larger scale projects including improvements at the Homer Tunnel near Milford Sound and an Edendale bypass had been factored in the proposed works in the next decade.

However the consultation document did not feature either project because of the large amount of work that needed to be done in planning and to secure funding for such big-ticket items, he said.

For more including the consultation document and information on how to make a submission, visit our website www.es.govt.nz.

New walkway proposed at Titiroa



Another place to stretch your legs and take in the bracing sea breeze could be on the cards with a proposal to build a walkway along the lower Titiroa Stream.

Where's that? you might ask. The stream is in eastern Southland and flows into Toetoes Harbour.

The walkway being proposed has been factored into the Council's 2012-2022 Long-term Plan which will be considered later this year.

Catchment Manager Noel Hinton says the area for the proposed walkway is regarded to be of high ecological value with unspoiled estuarine vegetation and thriving wild fowl and fish populations.

In the immediate area surrounding the proposed route of the track there were habitats that supported species including harakeke, manuka, podocarp/broadleaf forest remnants and shrublands.

Fernbirds, wading birds and wetland birds as well as estuarine and native fish were also flourishing in the area.

A link from the right bank of the Titiroa Stream to the Toetoes Harbour is the possible site for the proposed 5.5km walkway.

The total cost of the three-year project is estimated to be about \$130,000 which is proposed to come from a combination of the New Zealand Unit Allocation from pre-1990 forests in the lower Maitua and the lower Maitua lease reserves on Council-owned land.

Annual maintenance costs are also expected to be \$4000 at most.



A walkway like this is could be built along the Titiroa Stream and Toetoes Harbour if approved through the Long-term Plan.

Mr Hinton said the area has high regional significance and had the potential to become a coastal wetland showpiece in Southland.

This walkway would provide public access to one of Southland's unique habitats and could include a bird watching hide, he said.

Mr Hinton said the final form of the project and its implementation will be determined by the support or otherwise that the Council receives in the submission process to the Long-Term Plan.



Potato Wart could leave you a few chips short of a scoop

The saying goes “early detection is key” and no truer words have been spoken than when it comes to the fungus that is potato wart.

Often described as nasty, or ugly, potato wart has been detected in Invercargill on numerous occasions in the past and it’s an important time of year for potato growers to know what to look for and how to prevent the disease spreading.

The soil-borne fungus was first identified in the south in the 1970s and it’s hard to miss with infected specimens looking like a hybrid of a potato and cauliflower with pulpy warts emerging from the innards – not an attractive mix.

Environment Southland Senior Biosecurity Officer Randall Milne says potato wart is not widespread across the region but it does reappear on the radar from time to time and when it does, the Council wastes no time in organising a response to eradicate it and stop it spreading.

He says the goal is to keep the country free of the disease so we need to stamp it out whenever it raises its ugly head.

For the unsuspecting, the disease can be transmitted by simply not washing soil off your spade, machinery or footwear and by residual soil left on roots and tubers.

It can be quite difficult to rid your gardens of the disease with specialists needing to be called in to fumigate your soil, cleansing it of any trace of the fungus.

In localised areas potato wart could leave home gardeners a few chips short of a scoop. If it became widespread though, it could have serious ramifications for commercial growers, Randall says.



Keen gardeners are asked to keep an eye out for potato wart on their crop this year, which could cause serious problems for commercial growers if it spread.

“Eating an infected potato won’t do you any harm but the choice between a diseased spud and a regular one is an easy choice indeed — especially if you want top quality spuds from your patch.”

All gardeners need to keep their eyes peeled for signs of the disease and know what to do if they suspect their crop might be infected, he says.

Not only can the spread be stopped by cleaning your gardening gear, there are other ways to avoid it ever arriving on your patch – especially now when you’re harvesting your potatoes and planning a new crop for next season.

The best chances to keep free of the fungus are to use your own gardening tools and equipment, plant only certified seed potatoes and refrain from sharing or planting saved seed potatoes.

Potato wart can survive for a long time in your soil so if you discover it in your patch, it’s important you seek help as quickly as possible.

The disease will appear on all parts of the potato that are underground, except the roots, and in its earlier stages will have white pulp warts that grow darker over time,” Randall says.

What can you do to stop the spread?

- Buy certified seed potatoes, which will be free of potato wart.
- Don’t plant or share saved seed potatoes.
- If you do share machinery, footwear or garden tools, always clean all the soil off before going on to someone else’s property.
- If you’re sharing or swapping other plants, clean off all the soil before you hand them over.
- If you suspect your spuds have potato wart get in touch with Environment Southland straight away by calling (03) 2115115 or on 0800 76 88 45.

Do you have a problem with pests?

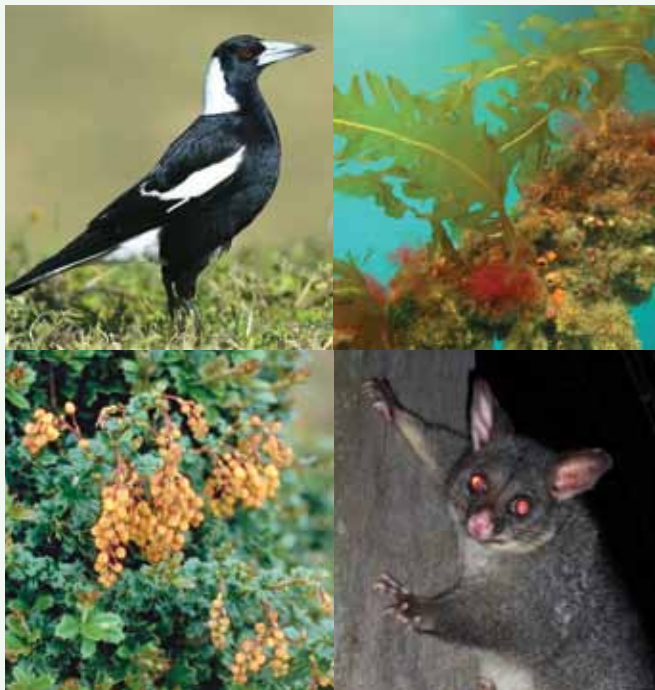


Pests affect everyone, directly or indirectly, which is why Environment Southland spends time and money making sure landowners control pests like gorse, ragwort and possums.

The review comes around every five years, and is the only opportunity you have to get new pests added to or removed from the strategy. We assess how the strategy has performed to date, and use community input to help decide if changes need to be made.

Environment Southland is currently calling for informal feedback from the community, Biosecurity Manager Richard Bowman says. "We'd like to hear from people who would like more information about pests, or who would like someone to come and speak to them or their group about the issues."

Feedback collected in this initial stage will be used to help form the proposed regional strategy, prior to formal consultation taking place. If you'd like to register your interest or find out more, please contact Richard Bowman on 0800 76 88 45 or email service@es.govt.nz with Pest Strategy in the subject line.



Informal feedback is being sought from the community in order to review the current Regional Pest Management Strategy.

These are some of the issues we think are important. Do you agree? Let us know.

How can we keep new pests out of Southland?

We know that the most cost effective way to manage a new or potential pest is not to have it in the region at all. We think that excluding potential new pests from the region must be a critical priority – what do you think?

Should we target more pests for eradication?

Our Council currently funds several targeted eradication programmes as they are cheaper and more effective with a higher probability of success in the short term. Over the last four years we've made great progress with Old man's beard, Gunnera, Potato wart, Purple loosestrife and German ivy. Plus, we have no breeding

populations of rooks in the region anymore. Can you think of other species that should be classified as eradication pests?

Should Giant Buttercup be declared a pest in Southland?

Giant buttercup is a pasture weed that can seriously reduce the profitability of dairy farming. It is present in 6 of the 17 dairying regions in New Zealand and in the 2008-09 year it was estimated to have caused the dairy industry losses of \$155 million. What priority would you place on keeping it out of Southland?

How can we prevent marine pests from invading our coastline?

A range of marine pests pose potential threats to Southland's fishing and aquaculture industry as well as to the unique and pristine marine ecosystems of our coastline. Some

of these are already present in other New Zealand ports and there is a high chance they could be carried into Southland waters. How much effort should we put into marine biosecurity?

How much effort should the Council put into pests with little likelihood of eliminating them in the long term?

We spend a considerable amount of time and money doing what we can to help landowners with traditional pests such as gorse, broom, ragwort and rabbits. They are highly invasive and are impossible to eliminate with the tools currently available. Although the community greatly dislikes these species, we have to live with them because in most cases there is no other option. How much time and effort should we continue to put into trying to manage these kinds of species?



Calling young film-makers

The glitz and the glamour of the lights and the cameras are coming, with Environment Southland's film competition about to start rolling.

The Council's Green Screen Environmental Short Film Awards aims to put Southland's environment into the limelight, through the lens of the region's young people.

There are three categories open for people in different age groups; school age Years 1 to 8, Years 9 to 13 and an open category for anyone under 25-years-old.

Coordinator Nikki Tarbutt says the competition is a great opportunity for anyone enthusiastic about filmmaking or the environment, or a combination of the two.

Making a film could be part of classroom learning at school or something you can do during the weekends, but it could be a fun project to do with your friends.

The entire film must be shot in Southland but we don't think that will be too hard with so many fantastic locations around the region that are made for the movie screen.

Even though the film must be no longer than five minutes, it will take time and effort. The hardest part could be



2011 winners of the Year 1-8 Category, Liam van Eeden and Jean-Martin Fabre took away \$1000 in cash and had their film aired on Cue TV and at the Southland Environment Awards.

dreaming up the theme of the movie but once you get it you can really get down to work.

Trial and error is all part of the process, but it does mean you have to plan well ahead. It's not like homework that you can do the night before it's due.

Last year filmmakers chose topics like air quality, marine debris, even a kayak trip on a Fiordland river – the options are endless, it just takes a bit of creativity to come up with something a little different that will catch our attention.

The winning and shortlisted entries will have their work screened publicly at the

Green Screen Awards Gala night on 19 July and the winners will receive prizes worth up to \$1000.

The best films will also be broadcast nationwide on Cue TV, as well as a special showing at the Southland Environment Awards on 25 July.

Entries for the awards must be with us by 5pm on 14 June so for more information and to download an entry form go to our website www.es.govt.nz.

To see all of last year's entries, go to www.youtube.com/environmentssouthland.

Envirosouth

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Contact Us

In person...
Cnr North Rd & Price St, Invercargill

By phone...
(03) 211 5115

Free phone...
0800 76 88 45

By fax...
(03) 211 5252

Via email...
service@es.govt.nz

Or on the net...

www.es.govt.nz

www.facebook.com/environmentssouthland

