



Current Overview of property

We are a family owned sheep and beef farm of 319 hectares of which 6 hectares is plantation and scrub and 1 hectare is bush.

We are on the upper Mokau River and are situated between two much larger properties.

Originally most of the property was won in a World War 2 ballot by my father in 1951 after the war. He spent years clearing scrub and fencing the property.

On one boundary we have a small Queen Elizabeth 2 covenant bush area to which we have recently added half a hectare.

So far, over the years, the land has been used for raising sheep and cattle with small amounts of cropping to improve contour and pasture of a few appropriate paddocks.

We plan to keep the farm in the family as succession to us is very important and we have a son who is very keen to develop the land further.

The specific provisions of the proposal that this submission relates to and the decisions it seeks from Council are as detailed in the following table. The outcomes sought and the wording used is as a suggestion only, where a suggestion is proposed it is with the intention of 'or words to that effect'. The outcomes sought may require consequential changes to the plan, including Objectives, Policies, or other rules, or restructuring of the Plan, or parts thereof, to give effect to the relief sought.



**WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL PROPOSED WAIKATO REGIONAL PLAN CHANGE 1
WAIKATO AND WAIPA RIVER CATCHMENTS**

Submission Form

Submission on a publically notified proposed Regional Plan prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991.

On: The Waikato Regional Councils proposed Waikato Regional Plan Change 1 - Waikato and Waipa River Catchments

To: Waikato Regional Council
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Complete the following

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I am not a trade competitor for the purposes of the submission but the proposed plan has a direct impact on my ability to farm. If changes sought in the plan are adopted they may impact on others but I am not in direct trade competition with them.

I wish to be heard in support of this submission.

S B Masters	6/03/17
M J Masters	6/03/17
B J Masters	6/03/17

Signature

date



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<p>The specific provisions my submission relates to are:</p> <p>State specifically what Objective, Policy, Rule, map, glossary, or issue you are referring to.</p>	<p>My submission is that:</p> <p>State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether you support, or oppose each provision listed in column 1; • brief reasons for your views. 	<p>The decision I would like the Waikato Regional Council to make is:</p> <p>Give:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • precise details of the outcomes you would like to see for each provision. The more specific you can be the easier it will be for the Council to understand the outcome you seek
<p><i>Provisions</i></p> <p>Objective 1 – Long Term restoration and protection of water quality for each sub-catchment and Freshwater Management Unit.</p> <p>Objective 2 – Social, economic and cultural wellbeing is maintained in the long term.</p>	<p>We support this objective as the health of our rivers is essential for every New Zealander now and in the future. As the document stands now, much more detail and information on long term proposals is needed. E.g. full land use study, nitrogen reference points and stock exclusion rates proposed covering all 80 years.</p> <p>We support this objective but fail to see how many of these changes are going to make any difference when several groups and enterprises are exempt but still use the same waterways.</p>	<p>A much more detailed Waikato Regional Plan covering all these points for the full 80 years.</p> <p><i>No one exempt at all - including urban and rural people, all Maori groups and all who border all waterways treated equally.</i></p>

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	<p>The cost of compliance for many farming properties, including our own, is astronomical and while these fences and changes are being made, employing staff and making other capital improvements will not be financially possible. This will have a huge effect on the social and economic viability of local supporting businesses in Te Kuiti as they rely on the patronage of their local farming community.</p> <p>To comply with several of these rules many farmers, including us, will have to employ tradesmen e.g. fencers. The lack of qualified and competent fencers is lacking now but with many more needed the cost, availability and time become an issue.</p> <p>Our farm is going to need over \$85,000 to complete the required fencing and we just don't have that to spare. Banks are very reticent to give out loans to anyone when there is no directly related income increase and we would find it difficult to service an extra loan.</p>	
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<p>Policy 6: Restricting land use change. Rule 3.11.5.6 Rule 3.11.5.7</p> <p>Policy 16: Flexibility for development of land returned under Te Tiriti o Waitangi settlements and multiple owned Maori land.</p>	<p>We oppose being restricted on how we can use our own land. This decreases our ability to meet our future needs and the needs of any future owners, especially our sons. Should markets change and farming sheep becomes non-economical we should be able to diversify as we have in the past, by putting on more cattle or introduce some cropping to maintain our profitability.</p> <p>We partially support this policy as the Maori people are the tangata whenua of NZ but we also feel that all owners are the tangata whenua of their own properties and should have the same rights as landowners. We had no input to the development of this plan and feel we could have added to its value and practicality had we had the opportunity.</p>	<p><i>The Farm Environmental Plan needs to be a 'living' document - able to be changed by negotiation and consent to allow for economic events and future succession.</i></p> <p><i>A review of this plan in its entirety is needed; re-writing many of the details, extending the timeframes and adhering/catering for all the issues mentioned in the submissions.</i></p>
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<p>Implementation Methods 3.11.4.3 Farm Environment Plans</p>	<p>We are in support of Farm Environment Plans but are concerned about the establishment, monitoring and flexibility of them.</p> <p>We are a small property between two large properties and have a small stretch of river on our boundary. Both properties either side do cropping at times throughout the year and also have cattle. When establishing and monitoring our property how much will the discharge of either neighbouring properties will affect us and the plan for our property? If our Nitrogen Reference point or sediment run-off is not a problem, then it should not be a limiting factor in our Farm Environment plan.</p> <p>We oppose the costs of training and employing certified assessment personnel by the Waikato Regional Council to establish these Farm Environment Plans as in the long term those costs will be passed on to the farmer.</p>	<p><i>We propose more monitoring, better science, and that proposals and requirements be specifically applicable to individualized properties and the effect they have on their local waterway. Not a covering blanket for all.</i></p> <p><i>These costs should be solely on Waikato Regional Council or the government as it is them that are requiring many unnecessary changes for many of us. Our finances should be put towards the compliance factors needed on our property.</i></p>
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<p>Schedule C – Stock Exclusion</p>	<p>We support the exclusion of stock from waterways and the fencing off of any access points.</p> <p>However, this needs to be practical and not just great in theory. Our stretch of river has been fenced off for many years and we have always struggled to control the blackberry, weeds and other rubbish plants that grow and build up along the bank behind the fence. This has proved to be a fire risk in the past especially when we try to control it by spraying Roundup etc. The spraying is not only a fire risk but is also costly and time consuming and not conducive to producing an income.</p> <p>We have also had the river scour out the bank under the grass unknown to us until a cattle beast falls through the grass on the paddock side of the fence and into the river. This is quite dangerous as we have several public fishermen use our paddocks as access to the river.</p>	<p><i>After years of trying we have no successful methods of maintaining safe fenced off riverbanks.</i></p>
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We oppose the stock exclusion on land that is 15 degrees or more. We have 3 or 4 paddocks that are steep but fine for cattle. We have used these paddocks for grazing for over 50 years and have not had any problems with land stability or sediment run-off. A good farmer will know his land and the climate conditions, knowing when and where to put stock so that paddocks are cared for and regenerate before the next grazing round. Any very steep areas on our property that are not suitable for grazing are already in trees, mainly natives.

In the establishment of the Farm Environment Plan every individual paddock should be assessed as to its viability to graze stock, not just take a figure (e.g. 15 degrees) and apply it to everything.

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Summary Statement

We are all responsible for restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of all waterways for generations to come and we, as farmers need to do our part. We want to be and have the right to be in charge of our own land and how we use it, but we also need to be in charge of how it affects others and public property i.e. rivers.

Every farm (even within the sheep and beef category) is used and developed differently and so any plan needs to be flexible for all to use, especially when considering new developments and succession of owners, whether it be family members or buyers. This plan is too limiting and will make land less saleable and less valuable due to inflexible Nitrogen Reference Points and limitations on land use and potential.

The Farm Environment Plan for individual properties is an excellent idea but it needs to be specifically written for each property and all inclusive factors thoroughly researched before implementing. It should be flexible enough to allow for future development and any plans future owners may want to make, yet still decrease future discharge of contaminants into waterways. It cannot be a general 'rule' or 'plan' for everyone as our use of land is different and our plan needs to allow for all these differences.

The costs involved in implementing this current plan i.e. fencing materials, training certified personnel, employing certified personnel, monitoring equipment and staff to install and monitor the equipment, administration costs etc. have not been considered, researched or outlined anywhere in the plan or by the Waikato Regional Council. These costs are estimated to be astronomical and who is going to pay? Most farmers are already struggling financially and compliance to this proposed plan will make many of us totally uneconomical for many years to come. Our property (by the restrictions of the proposed plan) will be devalued and become virtually worthless to both us and any potential buyer as the only way forward is forestry - a total waste of good fertile land!

The deadlines for implementing this proposed plan is too tight and we doubt very many properties (including ours) would be compliant and still profitable by those proposed dates. The development of a workable Farm Environment Plan would take at least two years with the thorough research and data gathering that is needed.

Therefore, as we are opposed to many parts of this proposed plan, we seek that, the plan in its current form, is declined.

Yours Sincerely,
Stuart Bruce Masters
Melvah Joy Masters
Brendon James Masters