

Waikato Regional Council

Hauraki Gulf Forum
Strategic issue

Policy and Plan Development, Regulation and Compliance

Coromandel Marine Farming Zone

In January 2017 Waikato Regional Council opened the tender round for 240 hectares of the Coromandel Marine Farming Zone for fish farming.

The space is in the Coromandel Marine Farming Zone about 10 kilometres to the west of Coromandel Town.

The criteria for selection focus on the socio-economic benefits to the local community as well as to New Zealand, and the environmental practices of the applicant. Any successful tenderer(s) granted authorisation will have two years to apply for a resource consent to commencing fish farming within the zone.

It is anticipated that Council will consider the tender evaluation at its August or September meeting.

Regional Coastal Plan review

Preliminary scoping and phasing of the review of Waikato Regional Coastal Plan is underway. It is intended that the Regional Coastal Plan and Regional Plan be reviewed concurrently and merged into a single plan: 'Healthy Environments – He Taiao Mauriora'. It is expected that the first phase of the plan will be notified from late 2019.

Active land management

Investigation and Monitoring

Coromandel streams investigation

In January and February 2015, WRC investigated the water quality at several stream mouths throughout the Coromandel and found that some of these water bodies were particularly susceptible to contaminants (excess nutrients and faecal bacteria) that are washed from the surrounding land, particularly 24 to 48 hours after heavy rainfall.

In January to February 2017 follow up studies were undertaken in four catchments (Stewart Stream (Opito), Kuaotunu Stream, Taputapuatea Stream (Whitianga), Pepe Stream (Tairua]) to further identify potential causes of contamination. The study is designed to identify the source of contamination within the catchment and whether it is human or ruminant animal derived. It will also investigate how the concentration and source of contamination might change during dry and wet weather and during spring and neap tides.

The findings from this investigation will soon be published (on the WRC website) and will help us to better understand the range and source of contamination at these locations following different weather and tide events. This will help us to develop targeted investigations and responses to coastal water quality issues throughout the Waikato region. It may also inform the development of catchment management initiatives if there are opportunities to reduce contamination into these streams.

Coromandel Focus Catchment Project

The Coromandel Focus Catchment Project is a primary outcome of Harbour and Catchment Management Plans. It looks at key methods of minimising erosion and resultant sediment deposition to sensitive receiving environments. The project focuses on a sub catchment scale, looking at a range of at risk areas and identifying land management actions. These include actions such as retiring vulnerable areas from grazing, riparian retirement and enhancement, wetland creation and restoration and enhanced sediment trapping.

Two catchments have been chosen, Wharekawa River, in the Wharekawa catchment and Waitekuri Stream, in the Whangapoua catchment, based on risk of sediment contamination, types of land use, and connections with the coast, community engagement and ability to view/demonstrate good practice.

WRC staff are working with local landowners/managers and the Coromandel Catchment Committee to identify potential management options. Project plans are expected to be completed in early 2018.

Operations and Asset Management

Mangrove removal at Whangamata

Mangrove clearance work in Whangamata started in early August to remove around two hectares of the plant from the Moana Anu Anu estuary.

To date 18 hectares has been cleared from the harbour leaving four hectares to be removed under the existing resource consent and clearance programme.

The removal is being done through an existing consent by the Waikato Regional Council, which will see the mangroves removed and then taken out by helicopter or barge for mulching. This work is weather and tide dependent; however the expected timeframe is two to three weeks. The remaining removal will occur next year subject to monitoring requirements under the resource consent.