

# Kaituna River Re-diversion and Wetland Creation Project

Issue four: May 2014



## Ready for resource consent

After 18 months of community consultation and technical investigations, the final reports are in and Regional Council staff are almost ready to apply for the consents needed to re-divert 20 percent of the Kaituna River's flow into the Ōngātoro/Maketū Estuary.

The environmental effects of the preferred re-diversion option have been assessed. Scientific, engineering, social and cultural research, and computerised predictions have found that the preferred option will achieve the project goals of maximising freshwater flow into the estuary while keeping Te Tumu cut open for flood protection and boating access. It will also create at least 20 hectares of new wetland.

"We've thoroughly assessed the likely benefits and risks, we've talked to the community and landowners about how the project might affect them and we've adapted our planning and design in response to that," said project manager Pim de Monchy.

"People will be able to keep enjoying the estuary, Te Tumu cut and the Maketū Spit in much the same way they always have," said Mr de Monchy.

"Some things like wetland habitat, walking, kayaking and fishing access will improve. Erosion and flood risk are not expected to change significantly. Current shellfish gathering risks are likely to continue and increase at first, but as bacterial concentrations in the Kaituna River continue to decline, shellfish gathering risks should reduce," he said.

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**Come along to Whakaue Marae, Maketū and find out more:**

**Saturday 3 May**

Drop in anytime between 2-4pm to find out more about project research and predicted re-diversion effects.

**Thursday 8 May, 6-7.30pm**

Public meeting about next steps for the project.

"We'll be presenting our findings to Regional Councillors in mid-May and subject to their approval, we're on track to lodge the consent applications and Notice of Requirement to designate the land needed for the project, in June," he said.

Mr de Monchy said that some of the changes and benefits of the project will take time to see. "It took 20 years for some of the changes from the 1956 Te Tumu diversion to be seen. We have to expect a similar timeframe for the estuary to stabilise after this re-diversion," he said.

Computerised predictions (modelling results) were presented to the community at a public meeting on 6 March. A further community drop-in afternoon is being held 3 May to explain the research and enable locals to chat to the experts about any concerns or questions they still have. There will also be posters on display to explain some of the likely changes in simple terms.

The next public meeting about the project will be held

at Whakaue Marae on the evening of 8 May to outline the consent process and answer any last questions before consent applications are lodged.

Copies of the Assessment of Environmental Effects Summary will be available at the public sessions on 3 and 8 May.

### Want more information?

Check out our website for important dates and information on how you can have your say. Get more detailed documents from our website [www.boprc.govt.nz/kaitunamaketu](http://www.boprc.govt.nz/kaitunamaketu) or from Project Manager Pim de Monchy at [pim.demonchy@boprc.govt.nz](mailto:pim.demonchy@boprc.govt.nz) or phone 0800 884 881 extn 8518.

# Research explained

Data and maps have been prepared using computer models to predict the effects of the project on water flows, water quality and sediment movement. Here's a simple summary of what the project might mean for you and your whanau.



## Conservation

New wetlands will provide more habitat for native plants and animals.



## Fishing - from boat

A new public boat ramp will be built at Ford Road.

Maketū Estuary channel depth will stabilise and may improve over time as infill stops and flushing improves.



## Fishing in estuary - netting and spearing

Foot access to the upper estuary from Ford Road will improve.

Fish stocks (like flounder, kahawai, snapper and whitebait) may increase in the long term as habitat and food supply improves. This depends on fishing pressure also.



## Kayaking

Access to the upper estuary and around Paphikahawai Island will improve.



## Walking

Public foot access to the upper estuary from Ford Road will be improved



## Fishing from Te Tumu cut and Maketū spit - surfcasting or kontiki/long line



## Picnicking



## Playing sport



## Power-boating



## Surfing



## Surf lifesaving



## Swimming

Bathing water quality standards will continue to be met. Shallow areas may deepen over time and some stronger currents expected during flood events.



## Vehicle access



## Shellfish collection

Bacteria levels in the waters of Ōngātoto/Maketū Estuary are currently higher than the Ministry for the Environment's shellfish gathering guideline of 43 MPN/100ml about 20 percent of the time instead of the allowable 10% of the time.

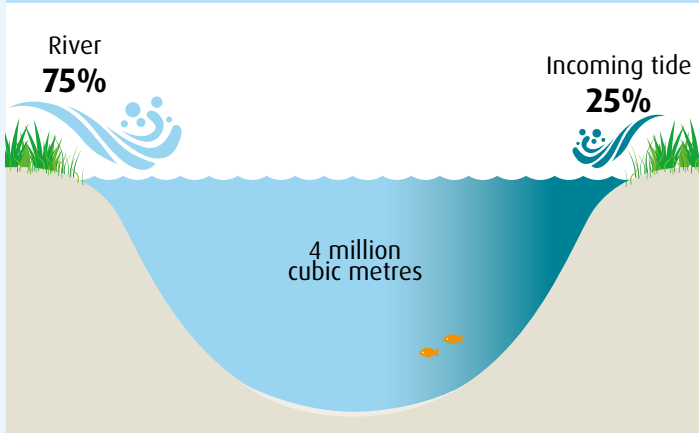
The bacteria that contaminates shellfish comes from a number of sources including rural and urban drains and streams, waterfowl, septic tanks, run-off from grazed land and directly from the Kaituna River. Shellfish bacteria contamination is highest during and after heavy rainfall. Paralytic Shellfish toxins (PSP) are currently at high levels also and the Medical Officer of Health advises against gathering or eating shellfish in Maketū estuary.

When re-diverted, bacteria levels in the Kaituna River are expected to increase shellfish gathering risk in the estuary at first. Further research is underway to clarify what proportion of bacteria load in the estuary will come from the river and quantify how that would directly affect shellfish safety.

Bacteria levels in the Kaituna have declined 500% over the last 25 years and Regional Council expects to see further reductions in bacteria levels over time as improvements are made to the way that discharges are managed. When this happens, shellfish gathering safety will also improve in the long term.

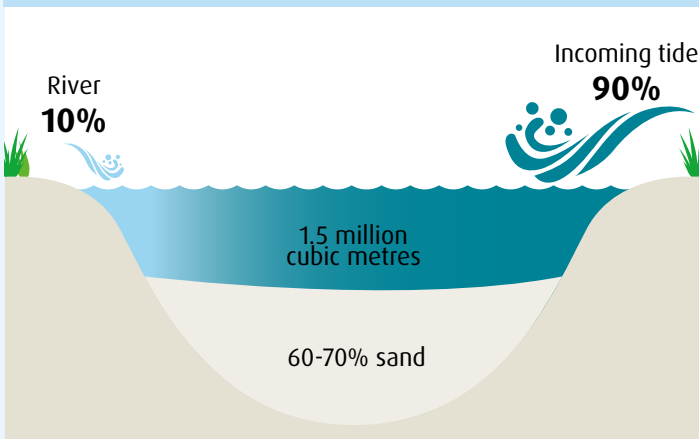
Please refer to [www.ttophs.govt.nz/shellfish](http://www.ttophs.govt.nz/shellfish) for further information regarding shellfish gathering guidelines.

## Maketū Estuary – 1955 before Te Tumu cut



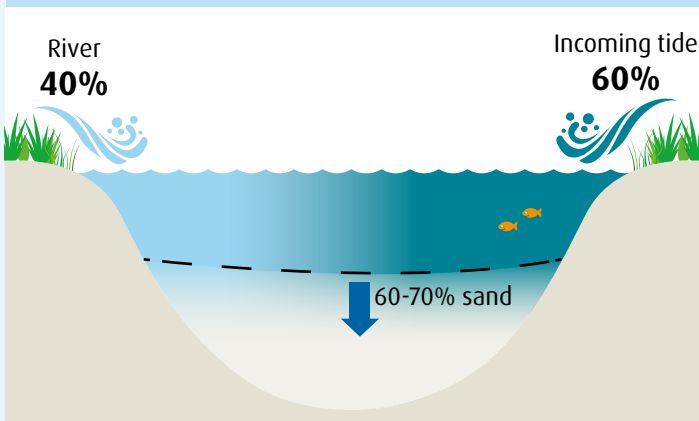
Before 1956 the estuary was mostly filled with freshwater from the Kaituna River.

## Maketū Estuary – Existing



After Te Tumu cut was built to divert the Kaituna River, the estuary filled mainly from the sea with each incoming tide. It's become saltier and more shallow without good river flows to bring in freshwater and flush away sand.

## Maketū Estuary – Proposed



More freshwater from the Kaituna River will flow into the estuary. Sand in-fill will stop and is likely to begin to flush back out to sea.

# What about water flows and currents?

## Te Tumu cut

The proposed option is not expected to impact on boat navigation or change channel depth at Te Tumu Cut. It will increase incoming tidal volumes but will not significantly change outgoing water volumes through the channel.

## Maketū Estuary entrance

The proposed re-diversion option will increase the amount of water flowing into the estuary from the river, and it will decrease the amount of water coming into the estuary from the sea, at the Maketū Estuary entrance.

This is expected to stop the lower end of Ōngātoro/ Maketū Estuary from filling in and help to flush sediment out of the estuary over time.

The changes in water source balance each other out, so no unusually high current speeds are expected to develop except for outgoing flow when there's been heavy rain and flooding.

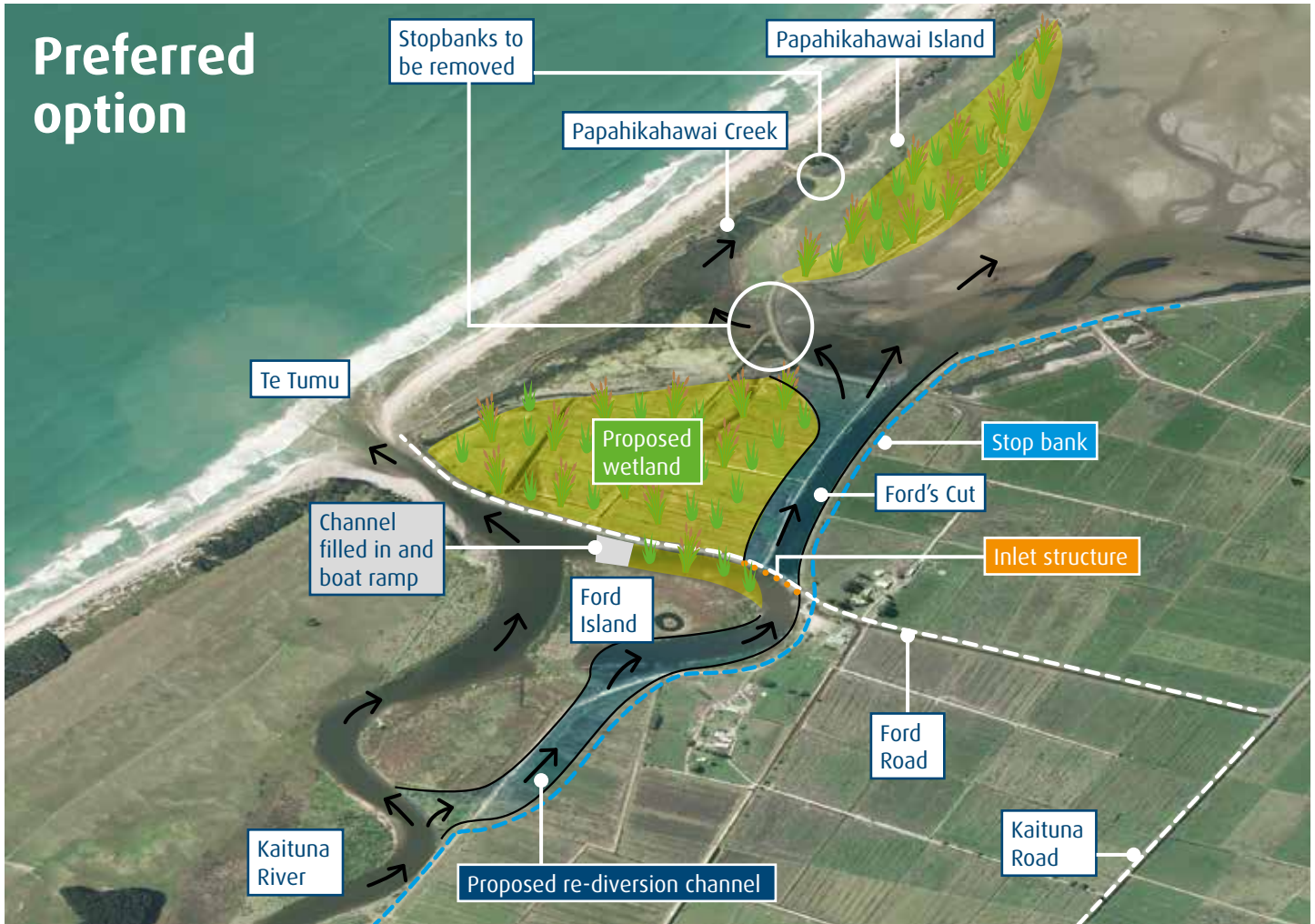
# Effects on ecology

In the upper estuary, improved flushing and at least 20 hectares of new wetlands will create better habitat for aquatic animals including shellfish. This will also increase feeding grounds for wader birds. There will be less build-up of sea lettuce and other seaweed/algae.

No significant changes for marine and other wildlife are expected in the lower estuary.

Wetland plants in the lower Kaituna River and around the estuary may die-back or change. This is because of changes in water levels, salinity and wave energy which will influence where different species can grow.

# Preferred option



## What happens next?



### Project Stage

- Project plan, data collection and concept designs
- Pre-consent consultation: Phase one
- Draft resource consent and designation applications, feasibility designs
- Final resource consent and designation applications, feasibility designs
- Resource consent and designation processing (opportunity for submissions)
- Appeals, land acquisition and detailed designs
- Construction and implementation: Phase one
- Construction and implementation: Phase two
- Implementation and monitoring



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**Come along to the community drop in on 3 May 2-4pm or the public meeting on 8 May 6-7.30pm at Whakaue Marae, Maketū and make submissions later in 2014.**