

## 12 Water Bodies

### 12.1 Significant Issues

Inappropriate subdivision, use and development on, or adjoining, water bodies can adversely affect the natural character of these areas and their margins.

The potential for land use activities on, or adjoining, water bodies to diminish the amenity, ecological, cultural and natural values, including the quantity and quality of water.

The actual and potential adverse effects generated by activities on the surface of water bodies.

### 12.2 Overview

Rivers and lakes are a valuable landscape and ecological resource, and are valued for recreation activities. Some activities on the surface of water bodies, or land adjoining water bodies, have few adverse effects. Other activities have the potential to compromise important water values by generating effects on amenity, cultural and ecological values, and on water quality and quantity. Past extractions from, and modifications to, these water bodies, have already significantly altered their natural character. Water bodies include springs and groundwater, both of which can become polluted from various land use activities. Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of water is an important part of sustainable management and is of cultural importance to tangata whenua.

Both the District and Regional Councils have responsibilities under the Resource Management Act 1991 relating to water bodies and the need to achieve integrated management (refer also to Chapter 27: Local Authority Cross-Boundary Issues).

The District Council has primary responsibility for the control of any actual or potential effects of the use, development, or protection of land and associated natural and physical resources (which includes water), the control of subdivision of land and the control of any actual or potential effects of activities in relation to the surface of water in rivers and lakes.

The Northland Regional Council has primary responsibility for controlling the use of water, and water quantity, and the control of land for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing water quality. The Regional Water and Soil Plan for Northland controls discharges into water and onto land, the taking, damming and diverting of water, and the use of land that has actual and potential effects on soil conservation and water quality.

### 12.3 Objectives

#### 12.3.1

The preservation of the natural character of water bodies and their margins, and the protection of them from the adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development.

### 12.3.2

Activities on the surface of water bodies do not result in adverse environmental effects.

*Explanation and Reasons: Water bodies have many environmental values and are sensitive to the effects of activities. The Council will minimise possible adverse effects upon water bodies by controlling public access, the location and scale of land use activities, and activities on the surface of the water.*

## 12.4 Policies

### 12.4.1 Adverse Effects

To ensure that the adverse effects of subdivision, use and development adjoining water bodies or the coastal marine area, or activities on the surface of water bodies or the coastal marine area, on water quality and quantity (including ground water), natural character, and cultural and ecological values of water bodies and the coastal marine area, are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

*Explanation and Reasons: The quality of water bodies can be affected by adjoining land use activities and activities on the surface of water. Contamination and changes to flow regimes can result from runoff from the surface of roads, storage areas, disposal of storm water and from industrial processes. Such activities must be assessed in terms of measures to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects on the water resource.*

### 12.4.2 Water Margins

To ensure that land use activities avoid, remedy or mitigate more than minor adverse effects on water quality, by means which may include separating land use activities from water bodies and coastal waters and by encouraging the retention and enhancement of riparian vegetation as buffer areas.

*Explanation and Reasons: Land use activities such as filling and excavation, roading and buildings close to water bodies can affect the amenity, cultural, ecological and natural character values of the water body. This policy is intended to ensure that the margins of water bodies are managed in a manner that retains these values, both adjacent to and within the water body. Separating land use activities from the margins of water bodies enables planting, possible public access and retention of an unmodified environment. In suitable locations, however, the provision of structures necessary for water-based recreation pursuits, or conservation purposes, and bridges is recognised. The management of water bodies is closely related to the functions of the Northland Regional Council.*

### 12.4.3 Surface of Water

To ensure that activities on the surface of water do not result in adverse effects on the natural character, ecological and amenity values of the surrounding environment, or on other users.

*Explanation and Reasons: Given the important values that rivers have as publicly available resources, it is important that activities on the surface of water bodies are carefully managed. Activities which use the surface of water bodies, and promote public access to rivers, should be encouraged, provided they do not*

*compromise the amenity values of adjacent land uses, Maori cultural values, or create conflict between users.*

## **12.5 Methods**

### **12.5.1 Regulatory Methods**

- Water bodies are assessed within the same Environment rules as the land that surrounds them (Policy 12.4.3).
- Environment rules relating to setbacks from the banks of rivers, and performance conditions to control adverse effects of activities, including activities on the surface of water bodies (Policy 12.4.3).
- Subdivision rules relating to the taking of esplanade reserves (Policy 12.4.1).

### **12.5.2 Other Plans and Legislation**

- The Regional Policy Statement for Northland (Policies 12.4.1 to 12.4.3).
- The Northland Regional Water and Soil Plan (Policies 12.4.1 to 12.4.3).
- Iwi/Hapu Environmental Management Plans (Policies 12.4.1 to 12.4.3).

### **12.5.3 Information, Education and Advocacy**

- Liaison with the Northland Regional Council (Policy 12.4.2).
- Liaison with the Department of Conservation (Policy 12.4.1).
- Liaison with non-statutory organisations that have an active involvement in the management of water bodies and their margins (Policy 12.4.1).
- Liaison with iwi authorities and tangata whenua (Policy 12.4.1).

### **12.5.4 Anticipated Environmental Results**

The following results are expected to be achieved by the foregoing Objectives, Policies and Methods. The means of monitoring whether the Plan achieves the expected outcomes are set out in the Whangarei District Council Monitoring Strategy.

- The preservation and/or enhancement of the natural character (including water quality) of lakes, rivers, indigenous wetlands and groundwater and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
- Adverse effects of activities on the surface of water bodies are avoided, mitigated or remedied. These include effects on natural character (including water quality), ecological values, cultural and historic heritage, recreational and amenity values.
- The functions of water bodies in transporting and dispersing flood waters is maintained and/or enhanced.
- The cultural and spiritual values tangata whenua attach to water bodies is recognised and provided for.