

Proposed Pomahaka River Management Strategy

Information sheet – March 2016

The Otago Regional Council (ORC) is developing a river management strategy for the Pomahaka River. This strategy will be similar to the Kakanui River management strategy which can be downloaded from the ORC website (www.orc.govt.nz).

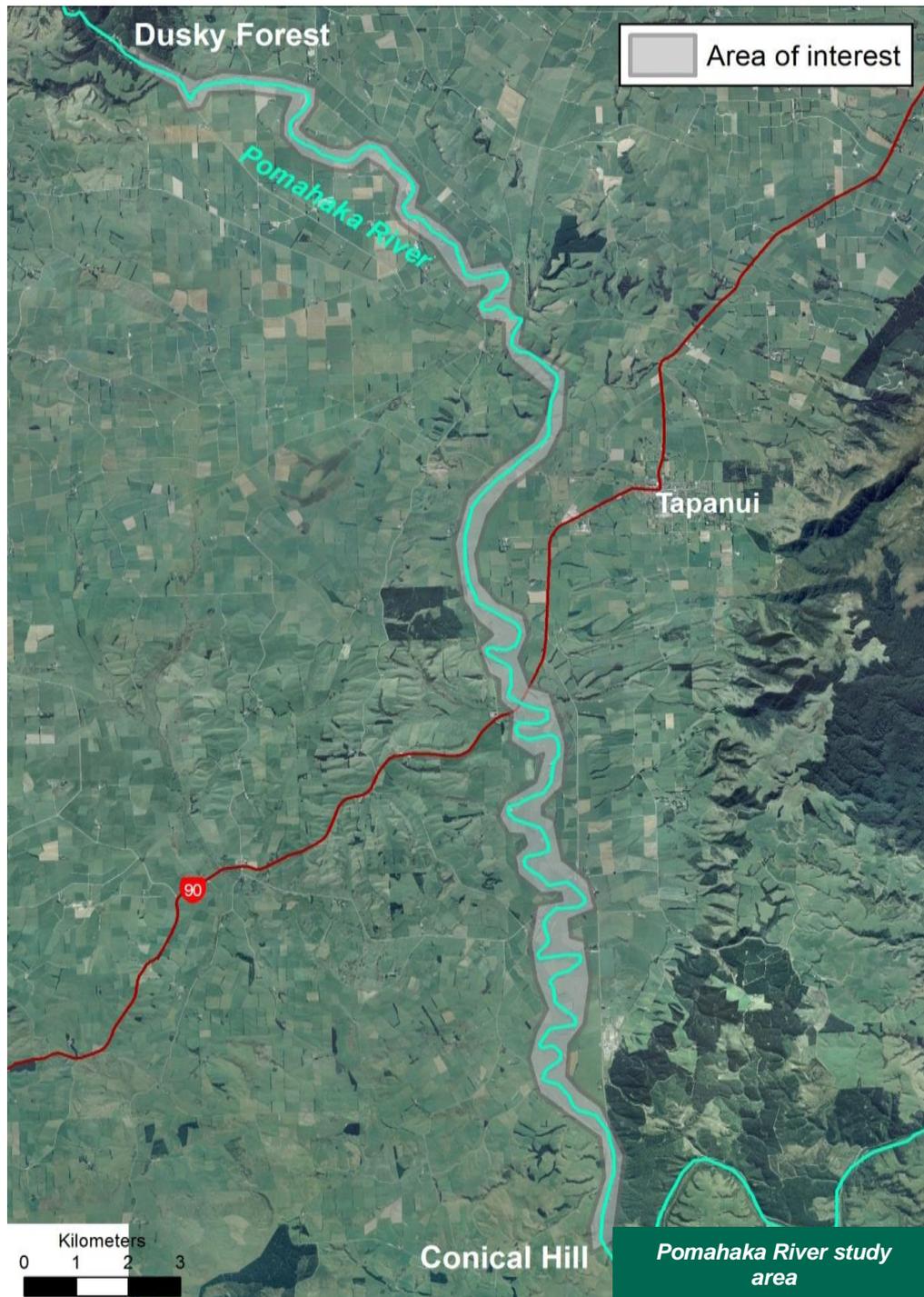
Introduction

The proposed strategy is intended to guide decisions on the style, scale, location, and type of activities occurring in the channel and the riparian margins of the Pomahaka River. Its focus is on the main stem of the Pomahaka River for the reach between Dusky Forest and Conical Hill. It will also be relevant to some activities occurring outside this area.



Bank erosion, in the Pomahaka River (Macintosh's Hole) (November 2015)

The strategy will include information about the river channel's natural tendency to migrate within the floodplain. It will also outline possible methods to reduce the effects of bank erosion and flooding, and enhancing the river environment. The strategy is intended to help maintain or enhance important community values associated with the river. It is not intended to revisit work completed as part of the minimum flow process; however this information will be used and built upon in the strategy.



Why is a river management strategy needed?

The local community and stakeholders value the Pomahaka River highly for its natural, spiritual, and recreational qualities. However, natural river processes (e.g. flooding and channel movement), and changing land use practices (e.g. vegetation removal), are having an impact on the natural, cultural, social, and economic values of the river. The Pomahaka River is coming under increasing pressure from conflicting demands which are having an effect on the values held by the community and stakeholders.



Research shows that changes in the form (or shape) of the river channels are partly driven by human activities such as gravel extraction and physical works, as well as the hydrology of the river (eg, large flood events). While the channels are generally eroding downwards (into the channel) and/or outwards (into the river bank), localised gravel accumulation is occurring in some areas.

In some situations, relocating sediment within the channel or removing it completely can help mitigate the negative effects of any changes in river form (such as bank erosion or reduced channel capacity); while in other cases it can aggravate them. An important component of the strategy will be to determine how gravel extraction and sediment movement affect river management.

What will the strategy contain?

The proposed strategy will :

- outline a common understanding of the desired form and function for the rivers and their margins.
- offer guidance on suitable methods for managing issues such as bank erosion and flooding.
- give specific guidance on the role of gravel extraction.
- identify the respective roles of landholders, ORC and other stakeholders in giving effect to the strategy.
- allow for clear and consistent communication between relevant parties.

What are the values associated with the Pomahaka River?

ORC has undertaken preliminary consultation with a number of landholders and stakeholders to determine the river features they value most. The important elements of the river system identified through this process include:

- The river should support recreational activities such as swimming, fishing, and picnicing.
- Important river for mahika kai
- Regionally important brown trout fishery
- Important habitat for native fish (longfin eel, lamprey, galaxiids)
- The habitat of existing wildlife must be maintained and enhanced.
- Access must be able to continue.
- That the river channel is able to shift laterally within an identified riparian margin, but:
 - farmland beyond that margin is not eroded, and
 - main flood flows are kept in the channel.
- Infrastructure (eg, roads, bridges and water takes) is resilient and able to be quickly reinstated following flood events.

What river management tools are available?

A range of methods are available to help achieve desired river management outcomes (i.e. to maintain or enhance the values identified by the community). These are discussed below. The proposed Strategy will provide further guidance on these methods, including where they are most appropriate, how they should be undertaken, the consenting process, and whether they are best employed by the ORC, the local community, or other stakeholders.

As a first step, the ORC has identified and mapped

- The natural river fairway (the active channel)
- The river corridor (contains a vegetated buffer within which the channel may be expected to move and the river fairway).

An example of this work is shown below. Various tools are available to guide or ‘train’ the river towards a more natural pathway through the floodplain. These include:

Vegetation planting

- Willows or other suitable species to assist with riverbank stabilisation.
- Native plantings to help stabilise and improve the appearance of the river margins and berms (e.g, within the corridor area shown on the image at right).

Physical works

- Riverbank protection.
- Fairway maintenance (vegetation spraying and removal).
- Channel re-alignment.

Sediment management may include

- Localised gravel extraction (for example, to manage bank erosion or sediment accumulation in the channel).
- Cross-blading of sediment (moving sediment from an accumulating gravel beach onto an adjacent eroding bank).
- Maintaining a specified channel shape across the river channel to help mitigate bank erosion or flooding.



Public consultation

Public consultation is planned for 9 March – 15 April 2016, to allow all interested persons to identify which elements of the river system they value, and to comment on the various methods available to manage the rivers' channel and margins. This information will be incorporated into the proposed Pomahaka River Management Strategy. Use the form attached to this document to provide your feedback.

How does the strategy fit with other regulations?

The proposed Strategy describes the desired form and function of the Pomahaka River. Any activities in or on the bed and banks of the river need to be focused on maintaining that form and function.

Activities in the Pomahaka river, and on the beds and banks require permission under the Resource Management Act. The Otago Water Plan allows activities with minor effects to occur as permitted activities. Conditions are included in the plan which seek to reduce adverse effects on the rivers' form and function.

Activities which are greater than those permitted require a resource consent. This consent is more likely to be given where the activity is implemented without any significant effect on the form and function of the river, as described in the proposed Pomahaka River Management Strategy.

Summary

The ORC is leading the development of a River Management Strategy for the Pomahaka River. The strategy will guide decisions on the style, scale, location and type of activities that occur in and adjacent to the river channels, and will identify the respective roles of landholders, ORC and other stakeholders.

A public consultation process will occur between 9 March and 15 April 2016 to present this initial work, and to allow for further feedback and comments to help develop the strategy.

It is intended that the strategy will be finalised and publicly available towards mid 2016. From then on it will be a guide for decision-making related to activities in the channel and on the riparian margins of the Pomahaka River.

Feedback Form

River Management Strategy for the Pomahaka River

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

I am writing this feedback (please tick one)

- As an individual
- On behalf of a group or organisation (please name) _____

Please note all feedback, including personal details of submitters name, address and phone numbers will be public documents.

For general enquiries, please contact Jacob Williams, Natural Hazards Analyst, Otago Regional Council, phone 0800 474 082, email jacob.williams@orc.govt.nz.

Please send your feedback to:

Pomahaka River Management Strategy, Otago Regional Council, Private Bag 1954, Dunedin

Or email it to: Pomahakastrategy@orc.govt.nz

Fax: 03 479 0015

Feedback closes at 4pm, Friday 15 April 2016.

Questions for you to consider when giving feedback

- Have we collected all the relevant values?
- Are there any other elements that could go into the strategic approach?
- What work do you want to be completed?
- How should funds be obtained for any work required?

