

Te Waihora / Lake Ellesmere

OUR LAKE NEEDS YOUR DIRECTION...



Te Waihora / Lake Ellesmere is an area of cultural, natural, historic, recreational and commercial importance. To Ngai Tahu, Te Waihora represents a major mahinga kai and an important source of mana. In 2011, the existing consents that enable Te Waihora / Lake Ellesmere to continue to be opened to the sea will expire. This survey seeks your views on possible futures for the Lake.

The Lake height is controlled by a combination of natural processes and human actions. Rain and groundwater flows into the Lake and would eventually reach a height where it naturally breached the narrow end of Kaitorete Spit. For many centuries and for various reasons, Maori and subsequently Pakeha, have opened the lake before it reaches that height. Once opened the Lake drains for a period until the Spit is shut by the natural processes of waves piling shingle onto Kaitorete Spit, thereby blocking the artificial gap.

The height at which the Lake is opened is important for a number of ecosystem functions and for human use of the Lake and its surrounds. The current opening regime has been set in the context of the past practice of opening the Lake to reduce flooding of low lying land around the Lake. The opening regime is constrained by a Water Conservation Order. This sets levels at which the lake can be opened while still maintaining the quality of the Lake environment for birdlife.

The levels at which the Lake should be opened have often been controversial. Different Lake opening heights or times might better suit fish or other ecosystem values or human activities and land use. The decisions on the future Lake opening regime will be made under the Resource Management Act in 2011, so it is important

that the decision is based on an understanding of the effects of any decision. This means a need to develop good scientific information.

The Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere Trust (WET) was formed in 2003, in large part to implement the community strategy for the Lake, its tributaries and environs. There was wide consultation on the strategy with people in the Lake's catchment, which extends into both Christchurch and the foothills. The community clearly said it wants to be involved in decision-making on the Lake and that all decision-making should be based on best management practices.

Good science is a fundamental part of ensuring best management practice. WET organised the first biennial Living Lake Symposium in 2007. This brought together the current knowledge relevant to the state of the Lake. Among the major outcomes from the 2007 Symposium was the establishment of a statutory agencies group (SAG).

This group coordinates the activities of the three councils, Ngai Tahu and other central government departments activities on and around the Lake. The group works in parallel to the Ngai Tahu/DOC Te Waihora Joint Management Plan. WET is involved in the SAG forum, and is also a party on behalf of the community to the current Lake opening protocol.

The results of this survey will help drive the gathering of information and new research to decide the future Lake opening regime. Please, pass copies to friends, fill it in and return it to us, and attend one of the upcoming community days meetings or drop in sessions, where we discuss the research needed, and the future options for the Lake.

Current state of Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere

Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere sits at the foot of a largely agricultural catchment fed by climatic conditions that vary both throughout the catchment and over many years. The lake is in a mixed state of health. Some of the indicators, especially wildlife, are in predominantly good condition; others such as brown trout fishing are hugely degraded. The majority of indicators fall between these two but overall the lake, despite its highly eutrophic (enriched) status, is in reasonable health.

The current state of health is however under considerable threat from reduced inflows, enriched inflows and inappropriate management. If informed decisions are made now the potential exists to greatly improve the state of the lake.

Send us your feedback via web, email or post, by Friday June 12th, to be in the draw to win \$150 worth of native plants.

The following 3 scenarios are possible futures that operate at various scales of time, space and cost – they are all modelled on improving the current state of the lake for the widest range of values possible.

Scenario 1

Improved environmental future

Under this scenario there would likely be improvement to some values (e.g., native vegetation), but others (e.g., brown trout) would probably remain in a poor state, or improve only marginally. Key management actions involve the Regional Council continuing with its Living Streams initiative and some relatively limited but improved riparian (stream side) management. The lake level management regime would be little changed, although a criterion-driven opening could be included to encourage, for example, September fish migration.

Scenario 2

Enhanced environmental future

All values, apart from farming, would improve under this scenario. Lake level management would include fisheries' needs, and would link to restoration of the aquatic weed (macrophyte) beds. Improved riparian management, improved management of the controllable portion of inflows to the lake and some improvements in water quality throughout the catchment would be associated with these management techniques. There would be a cost to agriculture and some compensation for potential loss may be required.

Scenario 3

Strong environmental future

Agriculture would suffer significantly due to inundation and the other implications (e.g., more swamplands, and hugely increased riparian fencing) of a lake management regime designed to improve all other values. This scenario may also include a need to occasionally close the lake (assuming such action is feasible). All significant tributaries would be fenced to protect riparian values and inflows would be restored. There would be a significant need to compensate lake edge farmers for potential loss.

Want to know more?

For further information please contact:

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Waihora Ellesmere Trust
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or email: development.manager@wet.org.nz

You can check out our website at www.wet.org.nz



or... Join us at the following meetings/drop ins...

<p>Meeting Leeston Tuesday 26 May Leeston Rugby Football Club Rooms 7pm</p>	<p>Drop In Lincoln Thursday 28 May Lincoln Community Centre 12-2pm</p>
<p>Drop In Darfield Wednesday 27 May Darfield Community Centre 12-2pm</p>	<p>Meeting Christchurch Thursday 28 May Environment Canterbury 7pm</p>

Evaluation of the scenarios by value set:

Resource	Scenario 1 Improved environmental future	Scenario 2 Enhanced environmental future	Scenario 3 Strong environmental future
The Ngai Tahu Values	Moderate Ngai Tahu values	High Ngai Tahu values including improved mahinga kai access	Outstanding Ngai Tahu values including improved mahinga kai access, and restoration activities
Indigenous vegetation	High value native vegetation protected and some revegetation	High value native vegetation, including restored areas, all biodiversity retained	High value native vegetation, including restored areas, all biodiversity retained, major revegetation efforts
Indigenous fisheries	Sustainable commercial eel fishery	A sustainable eel and flounder fishery	Maintain and increase species diversity, increase eel/tuna & flounder/pataki numbers, increased customary harvest
Wildlife	High wildlife values including maintenance of species diversity	High wildlife values including maintenance of species diversity, including restoration of swamplands	High wildlife values including maintenance of species diversity, including restoration of swamplands, and reintroduction of brown teal /pateke and SI fernbird /matata
Recreational fishing	Poor value trout fishery	Regionally significant trout fishery	Nationally important trout fishery
Recreation	Moderate recreation use in terms of both level and quality	High recreation use, in terms of both level and quality, and awareness of opportunities, not conflicting with conservation and Ngai Tahu cultural values	Very high levels and quality of recreation use, not conflicting with conservation and Ngai Tahu cultural values
Farming	Individual value to farmers retained with some minor loss due to changes in lake level management	Reduced farming around edge as land purchased and more conservation grazing	Conservation grazing only around the lake edge; Fencing off stock from all inflowing streams, and supplementation of flows
Water (quality and quantity)	Minor changes to land use, water use and farm practises. Maintain existing stream flows and groundwater levels and some stream side fencing.	Major changes to land use, water use and farm practises. Major improvement in stream flows, and groundwater levels, allocation processes and increased stream side fencing.	Very significant changes to land use, water use and farm practices. Very significant improvement in stream flows, groundwater levels, and nutrient management, water quality, sustainable allocation processes and all stream sides fenced.

These scenarios reflect a summary of the potential changes in various key values associated with the future of Te Waihora / Lake Ellesmere. A research programme and subsequent results, based on the most favoured scenario, will be disseminated at the biennial Living Lake Symposium in November 2009.

Feedback form

Send us your feedback via web, email or post, by Friday June 12th, to be in the draw to win \$150 worth of native plants.



You can download further copies of this form from www.wet.org.nz

Which scenario would you choose for the future of Te Waihora Lake Ellesmere?

Which one do you choose?	Indicate your choice with a tick ✓
Scenario 1 Improved environmental future	
Scenario 2 Enhanced environmental future	
Scenario 3 Strong environmental future	

Your contact details

Name: _____
Phone Number: _____
Email Address: _____

Why did you choose this scenario?

To achieve this scenario are there any implications on you, your family and your activities in the catchment?

Further Comments:

Please continue your submission on separate pages if necessary.

When you have filled out the form, please cut it out and post to: Waihora Ellesmere Trust, PO Box 116 Lincoln or email admin@wet.org.nz