
1 Introduction

1.1 Citation

This regional plan may be cited as the *Regional Plan for the Tarawera River Catchment*, and is referred to as “this regional plan” or “the regional plan” or “Tarawera River Catchment Plan” throughout this document.

Any reference in this regional plan to Environment Bay of Plenty is to be read as a reference to the Bay of Plenty Regional Council. Any reference to “the Council” refers, unless the context requires otherwise, to Environment Bay of Plenty.

1.2 Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this regional plan is to assist Environment Bay of Plenty to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources within the Tarawera River catchment. The definition of “sustainable management” is contained within section 5 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (the Act) as meaning:

Managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while-

- (a) *Sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and*
- (b) *Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and*
- (c) *Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.*

The aim of this regional plan is to achieve the purpose by ensuring that:

- (a) There is integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the Tarawera River catchment;**
- (b) The high quality water in the catchment of the Upper Reach of the Tarawera River is maintained, and improved where appropriate;**
- (c) The water quality in the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River is managed to ensure that the effects of industrial discharges are substantially reduced;**
- (d) The community remains involved in the management process;**
- (e) There is reduction in the discharge of contaminants into the Tarawera River;**
- (f) The Mauri of the Tarawera River is restored and the balance maintained.**

1.3 Justification for the Regional Plan for the Tarawera River Catchment

The preparation of this regional plan was considered desirable because a number of circumstances or conditions, as listed in section 65(3) of the Resource Management Act 1991, were present or likely to arise. The circumstances or conditions listed in section 65(3) are as follows, not all of which relate to the preparation of this regional plan:

- (a) *Any significant conflict between the use, development, or protection of natural and physical resources or the avoidance or mitigation of such conflict:*
- (b) *Significant community demand for the protection of the Tarawera River by reduction in the discharge of contaminants into the river.*
- (c) *Significant tangata whenua demand for the elimination of discharges of contaminants into the river.*
- (d) *Any foreseeable demand for or on natural and physical resources;*
- (e) *Any significant concerns of tangata whenua for their cultural heritage in relation to natural and physical resources:*
- (f) *The restoration or enhancement of any natural and physical resources in a deteriorated state or the avoidance or mitigation of any such deterioration:*
- (g) *The implementation of a national policy statement or New Zealand coastal policy statement:*
- (h) *Any use of land or water that has actual or potential adverse effects on soil conservation or air quality or water quality:*
- (i) *Any other significant issue relating to any function of the regional council under this Act.*

After assessing all the issues raised in consultation with the community, Environment Bay of Plenty decided that with respect to the criteria set out in section 65(3) of the Resource Management Act, it was desirable to proceed with the preparation of the regional plan for the Tarawera River catchment. In reaching this decision Environment Bay of Plenty identified:

- (a) *Significant conflicts in terms of differences in attitude between industry and community groups as to the level of protection required for Tarawera River water quality.*
- (b) *Significant community demand for the protection of the Tarawera River by a continued reduction in the discharge of contaminants into the river.*
- (c) *Significant concerns expressed by tangata whenua on the effects of contaminant discharge to the river.*
- (d) *The need expressed by community survey to actively restore the deteriorated state of water quality in the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River.*

1.4 Area Coverage

This regional plan covers the area of the Tarawera River and all its sub-catchments, including the lakes in the Tarawera Lakes and their catchments, but excluding Lake Rerewhakaaitu and its catchment¹.

In the catchment of the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River the eastern margin of the regional plan area is the western bank of the Rangitaiki River. The western margin of the regional plan is the watershed of the Manawahe hills and includes the Matata Lagoon and its catchment.

This regional plan extends to the landward edge of the line of mean high water springs. In the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River the line of mean high water springs is the Thornton Road Bridge just east of the settlement of Matata.

For the purposes of description and discussion, this regional plan is divided into three distinct areas, referred to as:

- The Tarawera Lakes and their catchments
- The catchment of the Upper Reach of the Tarawera River
- The catchment of the Lower Reach of the Tarawera River

1.5 Topic Coverage

The following resource management issues are addressed in this regional plan:

- (a) Surface water and groundwater quality parameters, including odour, colour, temperature, dissolved oxygen and chemistry, including geothermal discharges;
- (b) Surface and groundwater quantity;
- (c) Land Management, more specific to matters covered in the *Operative Regional Land Management Plan* including sludge and spoil disposal to land;
- (d) Freshwater ecology and wetlands;
- (e) Public access;
- (f) Issues of particular significance to tangata whenua;
- (g) River and lake beds management.

Associated resource management issues also covered include:

- (h) Community attitudes and perceptions;
- (i) Matters of resource management significance to iwi authorities.

In addition, the plan deals with matters of process including, but not limited to:

- (j) Information to be submitted with applications for resource consent;
- (k) Integrated management;

¹ Lake Rerewhakaaitu is thought to have a subsurface flow to Lake Rotomahana, it was not considered to be an integral part of the wider catchment. Resource management issues associated with Lake Rerewhakaaitu and its catchment are likely to be the subject of a separate catchment plan.

- (l) Cross-boundary issues;
- (m) Monitoring and review of the plan.

The plan excludes a range of resource management issues, some of which will be dealt with in other regional or district plans. These include:

- (n) Air management;
- (o) Geothermal field management;
- (p) On-site effluent treatment;
- (q) Coastal marine area and environment management;
- (r) Contaminated sites management;
- (s) Sand, shingle and mineral extraction;
- (t) Hazardous substances management;
- (u) Direct land use control (such as zoning), except on the beds of rivers and lakes;
- (v) Subdivision control;
- (w) Noise control;
- (x) Drainage and flood control on the Rangitaiki Plains;
- (y) Animal and Plant Pest control;
- (z) Natural hazards avoidance and mitigation.
- (aa) Heritage values of the Upper Tarawera Lakes.

1.6

Duration of the Regional Plan for the Tarawera River Catchment

This regional plan will have a life of ten years. A full review of the regional plan will begin nine years from the date it became operative. The plan may be changed, under the process laid down in the Resource Management Act 1991, at any stage in the intervening period.



Map 1

Regional Plan for the Tarawera River Catchment

Regional Overview



LEGEND

- ● Town, Locality
- State Highway
- Environment Bay of Plenty Regional Boundary
- Regional Catchment Boundary
- █ Tarawera River Catchment

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Total Area (A)	
1. Bay of Plenty Region	12,480 km ²
2. Tarawera River Catchment	984 km ²
Total Population (B)	
1. Bay of Plenty Region	224,571
2. Tarawera River Catchment	14,652



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