

Next Steps for Fresh Water Consultation 2016 – submission

Attention: Ministry for the Environment

From:

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[Individual submission]

Over my lifetime I have watched with sadness as the rivers which we happily splashed, floated and swam in during my childhood have since become unsafe. When I visit my home town in summer it is difficult to find a single river in which it is safe to swim. And certainly not one which is within a short drive from town.

The rivers have been damaged by agricultural practices. Flows reduced by the demands of irrigations, and quality reduced by pollutants. Once mighty rivers are in a sorry state.

When it comes to dealing with this situation my preferences are that:

- The goal is rivers and other water bodies of a swimmable quality
- Acceptable nitrogen levels are set low enough to enable water-based ecosystems to thrive
- Māori aspirations and requirements for their awa and other water bodies are met
- Urban/town populations are also taken into account – everybody should be able to swim in and enjoy their local river, and the rivers should be safe for their pets such as dogs and horses
- Riparian planting is included as a part of managing and improving water quality
- There is an emphasis on what happens to our rivers and water bodies high inland – as the effects of human activities/farming/forestry practices start here
- Future funding of remedial and improvement activities/projects take into account the role of community groups and includes a mechanism for the funding of these.
- It would also be valuable to take a “Rivers of Significance” approach to undertaking activities to raise the quality of specific rivers well above minimum standards.

Deborah O'Connor.