

# Real-time reports online

Customised reports and real-time data on rainfall, soil moisture, river levels and other measures monitored by Bay of Plenty Regional Council are now available from a new Environmental Data Portal at <https://envdata.boprc.govt.nz>.

“We collect a lot of really helpful information on things like rainfall, river levels, soil moisture and wave heights. That information was already online, but our new system makes it even more useful and by adding context, reporting and data download options,” said Bay of Plenty Regional Council Data Services Manager Glenn Ellery.

Mr Ellery said that a range of Council staff use the monitoring data for their flood management, water quality, consent processing and other work.

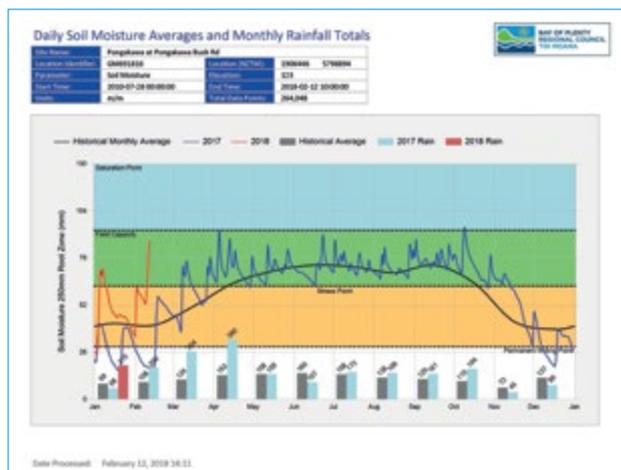
“Council also receives more than 6000 visits to its live monitoring web pages each year. And we receive regular requests from consultants, students, engineers, farmers, growers and other users for access to our monitoring information. So there’s clear public demand for good access to our data.

The new system allows people to download

the data they need straight away. They don’t have to ask us first anymore. It also lets them view the monitoring information they’re interested in on a map, graph, or as a table. They can compare multiple data sets, and create reports in different file formats. That saves time for both the public and our staff. It means we can all be more efficient in our work,” Mr Ellery said.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council is the first in New Zealand to use the Environmental Data Portal (EDP) platform. It has been sourced from Aquatic Informatics; a Vancouver based environmental software supplier.

“We’ve chosen this system because it links well with our existing databases. It’s a package that will continue to grow, expand and improve in the years to come. We’ve started by applying it to a few of our most popular datasets, and we’ll keep improving and adding



to the portal over time.

We’ll be refining the system as we get used to working with it. User feedback is a really important part of getting it right, so we’d love to hear what people think and what improvements they’d like to see. Feedback can be sent by using the enquiries link on the Environmental Data Portal dashboard page, or by direct email to [info@boprc.govt.nz](mailto:info@boprc.govt.nz),” Mr Ellery said.

# Low nitrogen farming options

A new Rotorua Land Use Directory has been launched to help famers explore options for land use change that improves lake water quality.

The directory has been launched by Te Arawa Primary Sector (TAPS) and a collective of Māori owned land trusts who own and administer more than 30,000 hectares of

land currently in primary sector use (agriculture, horticulture, forestry and geothermal).

The directory was written by Bill Young and Tatiana Kiwi-Knight and has been funded through the

\$3.3 million Low Nitrogen Land Use Fund, provided by Bay of Plenty Regional Council and Ministry for the Environment.

“The guide is based on extensive research that brings together market information and production information. It offers people some useful insights into what kind of land use would work for them and their ownership or business model,” said Mr Young.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) Chairman Doug Leeder said that the guide will be invaluable for landowners as they look at ways to reduce nitrogen leaching from their land use.

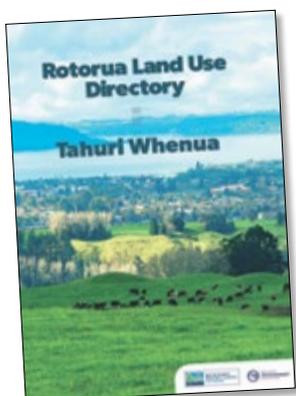
“We all want the same thing – a clean lake. And we all have a part to play in achieving that. For landowners that means making changes to the way they use their land so that lake water quality can be protected and improved. Regional Council is committed to supporting

them to do that,” said Chairman Leeder.

The Low Nitrogen Land Use Fund funds research that can assist landowners in reducing the amount of nitrogen entering Lake Rotorua and help meet water quality targets set by the community.

The ‘Rotorua Land Use Directory – Tahuri Whenua’ is available online at [www.landusenz.org.nz](http://www.landusenz.org.nz) or as a free hardcopy book from the Bay of Plenty Regional Council Rotorua office, Rotorua Library or by request to [info@landusenz.org.nz](mailto:info@landusenz.org.nz). It explores the viability of land uses for the Rotorua catchment including growing mānuka, feijoa, ginseng and more.

The second round of funding for the Low Nitrogen Land Use Fund will open in 2018. For more information on the fund and other projects visit [www.rotorualakes.co.nz/low-nitrogen-land-use-fund](http://www.rotorualakes.co.nz/low-nitrogen-land-use-fund).





# Land-use links and safer swimming

New information to help Bay of Plenty locals check the state of their waterways has been added to the Land Air Water Aotearoa (LAWA) website.

“LAWA brings together credible environmental monitoring information for 16 regional and unitary councils across the country. It allows everyone to have access to weekly information, monitoring and trends about the water, land and air quality in their region,” said Bay of Plenty Regional Council Science Manager Rob Donald.

Recent upgrades to the site mean that users can now find out more about great places to swim, and learn how land use change is impacting water quality.

A new land cover section has been added to the website at [www.lawa.org.nz/landcover](http://www.lawa.org.nz/landcover). It shows the type and extent of vegetation cover (such as pasture or forestry), water bodies, built environments, and bare natural surfaces (such as gravel and rock) throughout the country. It also shows how these have changed over time.

“This information can give people a greater understanding of what impacts water quality, and how they can help improve it,” Mr Donald said.

The ‘Can I swim here?’ section at [www.lawa.org.nz/swim](http://www.lawa.org.nz/swim) provides the latest water sampling results for more than 70 popular river, lake and coastal swimming

spots in the Bay of Plenty. New information about what picnic, toilet, fishing, boating, public transport, and other facilities and services are available at each monitored site has also been added this summer.

Mr Donald said that people can help keep their families safe and healthy by checking out their chosen swimming spot on LAWA, before they take a dip.

“During the summer months we take weekly water samples and test them for human health risks, mainly based on levels of E.coli bacteria. We also measure cyanobacteria levels (potentially toxic algae) at 11 sites around Lakes Rotorua, Rotoiti, Rotoehu, Ōkaro and below Ōkere Falls.

The sampling results are uploaded and graded on the LAWA website as green for safe or red for unsafe. An orange grading is a warning that bacteria levels are getting high, and extra monitoring is being done to check if a

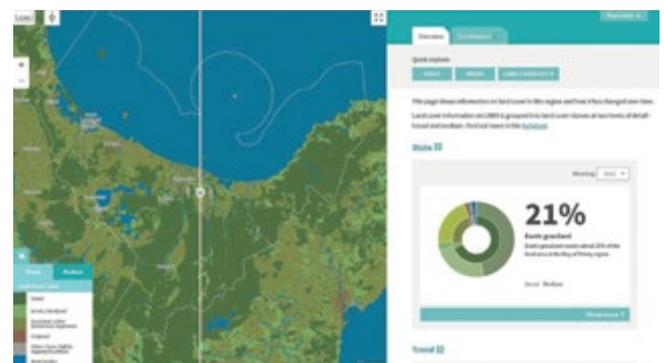
health warning is needed. Health warnings are then put in place by Toi Te Ora Public Health and noted on LAWA,” said Mr Donald.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council and Local Government New Zealand Regional Sector Chairman Doug Leeder said that it is increasingly important the public has up-to-date information on the quality of their waterways.

“Having easy access to reliable information will create a greater understanding on the state of our

waterways, help people make good choices about how they use them, and help support the changes that they want to see for their lakes and rivers,” Mr Leeder said.

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# Water use compliance on track

With most of the Bay of Plenty region's water take consents held by farmers and growers, those water users have a big role to play in water accounting and making sure their use is responsible and sustainable.

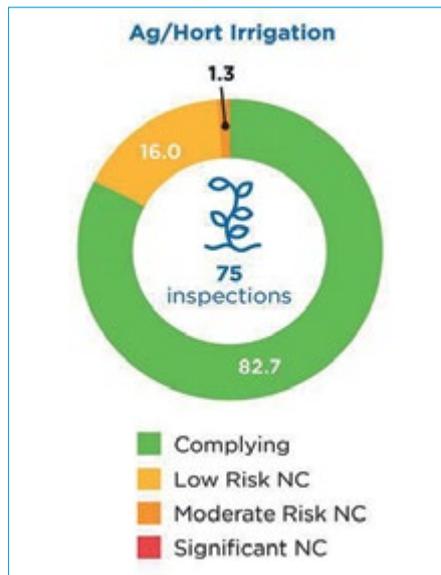
Bay of Plenty Regional Council's recently released 2016/17 compliance report has shown good overall compliance by the horticultural and agricultural industry with their water take consents.

"Where we have had compliance issues, they've mainly been the result of leaks, poor maintenance or failure to supply water use records. We encourage consent holders to work with us to address problems before they become a major issue," said Regulatory Compliance Manager Alex Miller.

Mr Miller leads the Regional Council team that's tasked with monitoring regulatory compliance for freshwater in the Bay of Plenty. His team helps to ensure consent conditions, plans, policies, rules and the Resource Management Act (RMA) are being adhered to across a range of activities. When it comes to water abstraction, the team has 1,090 consents in the agricultural and horticultural sectors to keep tabs on.

Each year the Regulatory Compliance Team produces a report which provides a snapshot of compliance, complaints, investigations and enforcement activities in the Bay of Plenty. It also includes a detailed discussion of some of the more prominent and significant activities, challenges and case studies throughout the region. The 2016/2017 Regulatory Compliance Report is available online at [www.boprc.govt.nz/compliancereports](http://www.boprc.govt.nz/compliancereports).

"Consents are currently required for the abstraction and use of water that exceeds permitted activity levels, including all takes above 15m<sup>3</sup>/day from surface water, or 35m<sup>3</sup>/day from groundwater. Consenting requirements are expected to become more stringent through the region-wide Water Quantity Plan Change (Proposed Plan



2016-17 results for Bay of Plenty water use consents that were inspected.

Change 9) which goes to a hearing in March 2018," Mr Miller said.

Further information about the region-wide Water Quantity Plan Change (Proposed Plan Change 9) is available at [www.boprc.govt.nz/waterquantity](http://www.boprc.govt.nz/waterquantity). Over the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 reporting periods, Regional Council is expecting to receive 780 new applications for water take consents, with an estimated 490 of these being water takes with abstraction rates in excess of 5 L/s.

"Approximately 85 percent of the horticultural and agricultural water take consents here in the Bay are used for avocado and kiwifruit crops. The bulk of the remaining 15 percent of consents provide irrigation for pastoral farming with a small number also supporting dairy farms," Mr Miller said.

As well as receiving monthly water use data by the majority of these consent holders, the team inspected 75 sites in the 2016/17 year. The frequency of site visits is set out in Council's Charges Policy, and takes into account the type of activity and its environmental risk profile. Other factors are also taken into account for particular consents, such as the consent holder's compliance history.

Mr Miller said that compliance with Council rules and resource consents provides an important measure of how water users are behaving around the region, and how Council, as a regulatory authority is managing the environmental impacts of people's water use.

## IN BRIEF

### GETTING TOUGH ON WATER RETURNS

Regional Council will be issuing fines for repeat offenders that have failed to supply water returns this year. Approximately 100 consent holders that have been warned and still failed to send in their water use records will receive a \$200 fine.

Water records provide the Regional Council with important information about actual water use compared with consented use, and can help identify opportunities to free up water in fully allocated catchments. See more about water metering and reporting at [www.boprc.govt.nz/watermetering](http://www.boprc.govt.nz/watermetering)

### DRINKING WATER RISK ASSESSMENT UNDERWAY

In May 2017 the Government released Stage 1 findings from its inquiry into the August 2016 campylobacter contamination of the Havelock North drinking water supply. Stage 2 findings were released on 6 December last year. See details at [www.dia.govt.nz/Government-Inquiry-into-Havelock-North-Drinking-Water](http://www.dia.govt.nz/Government-Inquiry-into-Havelock-North-Drinking-Water).

Since March this year, Bay of Plenty district, city and regional councils have been collaborating with Toi Te Ora Public Health to complete a joint risk assessment of the region's drinking water supply.

The Bay of Plenty risk assessment takes a look at high-level policies, processes, and abstraction point specifics, as well as roles, responsibilities and risk areas. The assessment findings will be reviewed alongside Government inquiry recommendations, to identify gaps and solutions for ensuring safe, reliable drinking water supplies for Bay of Plenty communities.

# River Award for Omanawa Stream

The Omanawa Stream in Tauranga was announced as the Bay of Plenty's most improved river for the in the 2017 New Zealand River Awards.

The award acknowledges a significant reduction in E.coli bacteria levels which are a key indicator of swimmability in waterways.

"Regional Council has been working proactively with landowners to improve the region's water quality for a many years. It's great to see some tangible results that show real progress is being made towards water quality we can all be proud of," said Bay of Plenty Regional Council Chairman Doug Leeder who received the award on behalf of the community.

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The Omanawa Stream is a tributary of the Wairoa River, which flows into Tauranga Harbour. The land surrounding the stream includes a mix of native bush, forestry, farming and horticulture. Fencing improvements, forest cover, and a steep gorge mean that farm animals are now excluded from 95 percent of the Omanawa Stream's margins.

Regional Council Tauranga Harbour Catchments Manager Sarah Omundsen said that her team has been helping landowners to



Bay of Plenty Regional Council Chairman, Doug Leeder (left), receiving award from DOC Director General Lou Sanson.

take care of the stream by installing run-off controls like detainment bunds and slope planting, as well as stream bank fencing.

"The land surrounding the Omanawa Stream is hilly and erosion-prone. That means lots of sediment or soil can be washed off the land, into the stream, when it rains. Land run-off can carry excess nutrients and bacteria that can degrade water quality. Good run-off

management is a key ingredient for clean, healthy waterways," Ms Omundsen said.

Regional Council scientists regularly collect and analyse samples from more than 680 water monitoring sites throughout the region as part of their work to detect environmental problems, inform solutions, and measure improvements.

See more on Regional Council's water work at [www.boprc.govt.nz/freshwaterfutures](http://www.boprc.govt.nz/freshwaterfutures)

## IN BRIEF

### WORK ON NEW WATER MANAGEMENT AREAS

As science and modelling work to inform the development of new rules for the Kaituna Maketū, Pongakawa Waitahanui and Rangitaiki Water Management Areas (WMAs) nears completion, Regional Council staff are making a start on implementing the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management

in two more Water Management Areas; Tauranga Moana and Rotorua Lakes. Public consultation on issues and options for managing water in the Kaituna/Maketū, Pongakawa/Waitahanui and Rangitāiki WMAs (Plan Change 12) will begin later this year. This will build on advice already being gathered from tangata whenua, Freshwater Futures community groups, local councils and industry groups via the Regional Water Advisory Panel.

Tauranga and Rotorua work starts with an assessment of environmental, social, economic and cultural knowledge gaps and commissioning of work to fill them. Detailed discussions with tangata whenua and community representatives will begin in those catchments in 2019/20, to refine or develop community-led water management targets.

Register to receive updates on this work at [www.boprc.govt.nz/freshwaterflash](http://www.boprc.govt.nz/freshwaterflash)