

**From:** [William Gill](#)  
**To:** [Regional Plan](#)  
**Cc:** [makara1@farmside.co.nz](mailto:makara1@farmside.co.nz)  
**Subject:** FW: SUBMISSION ON GWRC Plan change 1 to the Natural Resources Plan - Draft.  
**Date:** Thursday, 14 December 2023 11:57:00 pm

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14/12/23.

My name is Maryanne Gill and My husband and I have owned and worked on our South Makara farm for the last 40 years.

Our family (Jervis ) was one of the first original families to settle in Makara back in the 1800s. I am 4<sup>th</sup> generation born Makara resident and my 3 daughters are 5<sup>th</sup> generation Makara Born.

Farming was our family's income until after 3 generations our family farm was "lost" and had to be sold. But my parents purchased a house ¼ acre section in the makara village and we grew up there, now living in Makara for over 64 years.

We wanted to continue the family tradition by "farming" in Makara – so started again from scratch ...buying a run down old villa and 100 acres of steepish hill country for a very cheap price in south Makara.

Over our lifetime my husband and I later purchased 2 neighbouring properties. Firstly 400 acres of run-down bare land next door – as they wanted to sell to us – seeing how well we farmed and improved our own land .

Much later another neighbour approached us about buying their farm (including their forestry block) as they also knew we would continue to farm it well.

We have been the farmers and care takers of those 3 adjoining blocks of land of nearly 1000 acres in total - reclaiming our land from a mess of gorse, blackberry and Darwins Barberry- transferred over from the neighbouring unkept, gorse infested overgrown Council owned land - the Mountain Bike park. It certainly was never lush native bush! But we now have decent grass growing and preserved pockets of native bush, lightly stocked with sheep , cattle and horses to try and earn a living from farming.

But Because of the recently proposed new GWRC Plan our family farm is now in jeopardy from GWRC's oppressive and over-reaching policies. These excessive restrictions being placed upon all land owners are insidious and far beyond what Councils mandates are to "clean up" the country's waterways.

Legal advice is that by trying to install some of these edicts that **deprivation of property rites** will occur, which will result in legal battles all over the

country. Just to allow us to maintain sensibly farming of our own land. !!! The stress and pressure on farmers is well recorded , and the suicide rate of its workers is disproportionately high among those who choose to try and farm and produce good healthy food for a living, using best farming practices.

This plan severely restricts farmers and farming practices- of which we are some of the best in the world. And it is the reason so many people are continually “giving up “ farming.

Makara is already an example of this. When I was a child in this valley every piece of land had some form of livestock on it. There was sheep and cattle being farmed everywhere and horses were a common sight.

Now, people find it too difficult to meet all the regulations relating to farming and land use and cant get water to their animals because of alleged “stream contamination . Not because of subdivision - as this has been severely restricted over the last 50 years. And the ridiculous obsession to plant everything into native plantations and wetlands (bogs) is comical. This produces no food or useable sustainable product such as trees for wood.

Wellington already has massive areas of overgrown native scrubby unkept areas. The boring, boring, boring “50 shades of green” that is Wellington is an embarrassment.! Shame on the Woke Green fanatics! Our capital city is colourless – restricted to only green natives everywhere.

#### Communication by Council

Communication to affected parties such as ourselves and our Makara/Ohariu neighbours was atrocious. GRWC can locate us to charge everyone rates – but cant apparently contact us for an important meeting whereby we may lose the right to farm our land! Incredibly negligent. There is an outcry in this community that insufficient information about this Plan, including meetings and deadlines to lodge submissions, have been unfair and difficult to meet. Suspicion was obvious at the meeting that Council is just trying to Ram this plan through after the election loss of a supporting woke, green Labour Government.

The GRWC meeting can only be described as hostile. Land owners were angry at what they saw as Council not contacting landowners as a form of deceit about something as important as these proposals. Lack of Support and trust of Council was evident and their intentions considered by most of the attendees as “anti farming”.

GRWC should stop wasting everyones time and money and wait until the new Govt addresses new Policies that will “undo” many of the policies directly affecting Farming. GRWC is wasting tax payers money in wages

working on a proposal that will – by their own admission - probably be overturned at national level. They are “putting the chicken before the egg”. Wasting time and more money – which is what this new government has promised to prevent.!

#### Stock exclusion from waterways:

This is an unnecessary Blanket restriction where we live. And in south Makara stream there is absolutely no evidence that this is necessary.! No one takes water from the stream for drinking purposes below our farm . Also we are not part of the makara Catchment area. Plus we are already voluntarily undertaking riparian planting. As well water tests undertaken by locals over the years show that there has not been ecoli present, nor is there evidence of nitrogen leaching. The actual contamination of our stream occurs further down the road. The council is implying stock are making the water “cloudy with sediment”, yet **the council have allowed sewage from wellington city to be leaked and dumped into the very same river a few hundred meters further down the road from us for the last 30-40 years!!! Council should be exemplars of their own land first!!!**

We do not trust that GWRC Council will not eventually change cattle exclusion to include sheep and horses - and we will have to close down our Horse Park business which services over 20 city based horse owners. Horses need access to fresh clean water. Piping” water to over 30 paddocks around 1000 acres would be uneconomical and against animal welfare codes – as any “break” in the water system would unknowingly leave animals without water.

GWRC Staff admitted at the meeting they did not even have any ongoing readings of water clarity and purity. And they didn't know if currently there are any issues with our stream water. And if there are any issues – then they had no evidence of what caused them. Yet they have recommended strong enforcement of stock exclusion throughout both Makara and Ohariu Valley. Despite there being very few farms that are actually carrying a lot of stock. Most farms are already heavily de-stocked. Straight away penalising farmers for issues not probably created by them. Just guessing lack of “clarity” could be from animals.

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#### Earthworks

I tried to read the Earthworks provisions and how they relate to farmers accessing their land with tracks for the purposes of checking live stock, doing fencing repairs, mustering calving etc.

The documentation is incredibly complicated and impossible for a “lay

person “ to adhere to or understand. How can a farmer , who owns machinery, know how to meet those complicated requirements. For us to protect our land and stock we need to have access around our land at all times . Stock welfare depends on it esp during calving and lambing etc.

But it appears council wants to put an earthworks ban for 4 months of the year. Unbelievable! Farm Safety, stock welfare and Farm tracks access have been disregarded.

### Silt contamination.

GWRC admit they don't know the source of silt contamination, yet straight away blame farmers and exclude stock from water courses. The Makara river floods. That is a fact. It is evident there is silt falling off the sides of the streams during flooding - this is fact. Its visible. That is why there is silt in the rivers. Riparian Planting, which many farmers are already undertaking without legislation may help reduce the amount of silt, but nature cannot be stopped . Consider recent big weather events. Rivers will always have silt contamination. The side of every river is dirt which gets knocked down in any flood. It is not caused by farming. Not in Makara and Ohariu anyway. There is absolutely no evidence silt contamination is caused by lightly stocked hill country farming – which is what we do. See also below regarding how silt gets in rivers in some places in Makara /Ohariu .. (but not from cattle/farming).

### The new Buzzwords/accusation...”Erosion prone land”.

The “models” used are totally erroneous relating to our alleged “erosion prone land” . Where on earth has that unfactual accusation come from.? It has just been “Made up.” This is NOT an issue in Makara and Ohariu Valley farm land.!!

And then to allege that this is the source of river sediment in Makara is just ridiculous.

Makara land is rock based. We know – we have had to dig post holes around our farm for over 40 years! Local history proves erosion problems have Not been an issue from farming this Region. Generations of farming.

Weather events do not affect these valleys by causing erosion. Nor does running cattle and sheep. Any small pockets of eroded soil on our farm is caused by feral goats and wild pigs and these come in from the Council owned Mountain bike park next door! Feral Goats create “soil camp sites ” on steep hill sides. As well, Wild pigs root up and dig up large areas of dirt and soil. Their digging creates “runs” (pathways) that then become run-offs for rain on parts of the farm. As well, rabbit populations are becoming out of

control in some areas now as land is not being farmed by most people. They also dig up loose soil. That fine soil washes down hills. It is easy to spot. A lot of makara land is fallow and not well looked after and these feral enemies of the land cause far far more damage to land and grazing paddocks ( adding to sediment run off) than cattle and sheep grazing and walking over the land ever does.! We are lucky to have a pest control officer as a friend and next door neighbour. And 40 years farming this valley and seeing no obvious erosion of pockets of land is its own evidence that the GWRC science is totally flawed and unfounded. So again , erosion is not prevalent.

We cannot describe the shock we got to receive a map that GWRC has issued completely “out of the blue. This identified a large portion of our farm as being totally erroneously identified as “erosion prone”. ??? Worse than that, then stating in documents and at the meeting that we must fence or “retire” all that land which our family has worked for the last 40 years to clear of gorse , blackberry and Barbery. Just Bizzar, and incredibly upsetting.

If Council truly believe what they allege – then buy out compensation must surely be offered to all farmers/landowners.

Pine forests/ Tree planting. After it being “compulsory” to replace pine planting with pines previously – now it appears that farmers are not allowed to clear/reclaim grazing land. And must replant in more Native.... Why do we have to????

### Submissions

We believe and hope that the new incoming Government will somehow put a halt to the progression of this plan.

GWRC themselves have told us “There has also been reference to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) being replaced.

Until then, this submission will be a summary of the portions of the draft Plan we most object to.

For our family farm , if one counts the **SNA areas** Govt says we must protect, ....plus the areas now bizarrely (and erroneously) deemed as **“erosion prone” land** which must be retired or fenced and planted in native.... plus **the Lower slopes “stock grazing exclusion zones”**, include as well the **stands/acres of native plant areas we have already voluntarily preserved and maintained** ..... then there is very little we will be allowed to graze/use of our farm!!!! we will basically lose our family

farm of 1000 acres!

We are putting all those areas together on a map for our updated later submission in February 2024– and it is heart breaking to see how much of our farm – which our family brought and paid for – which Councils are now suggesting we “retire” OR plant in more native , OR just exclude stock from! It is really devastating, and this should not be allowed to happen to landowners.

In summary .... We strongly oppose the broadbrush regulatory approach taken under Plan Change 1 and the removal of local decision making from our community. We agree with the need to improve water quality – **where it is poor and where the solutions are within our control** – but **we need some fundamental evidencethat this is required to do this effectively and equitably**. We ask council to recognise the work we have done to date and partner with us in this work rather than regulate against us.

Information required by GWRC.....

We reserve the right to add more to this submission and to speak to it at any hearing in the future.

We would consider presenting a joint case at the hearing with others who make a similar submission.

We could NOT gain an advantage in trade competition through this submission.

Many thanks for accepting this submission in this format. Please receipt this email.

Sincerely  
Maryanne Gill

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area, likely containing contact information such as a phone number and email address.