



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS 1 OF 2

What does the Council propose?

The Council intends to designate 14 hectares, to be known as the Water Supply and Protection Area, around Cooper's Wells. Land within this area is owned by the Council and the Crown (7.6ha), the defunct New Zealand Agricultural Co (3ha), and the Sharp Trust (3.4ha).

There is also a four metre wide strip from the wells to the Mataura River. This is the route for cables and pipes to allow for emergency water takes from the river. The strip crosses land owned by the Trust and a private landowner Margaret Palmer McKenzie.

Why a designation?

The aim is to minimise the risk to water quality because the wells are our main water source. Formal recognition of the importance and sensitivity of the site gives surety to future adjoining landowners and means the Council does not have to renegotiate each time the land changes ownership. The emergency water take route to be designated is to enable permanent pipes and cables to run from the river to the wells. The new infrastructure will make it easier for the Council to top up the wells during periods of drought, which are expected to be more common in the future.

What is a designation?

Designation is like 'spot zoning' over a site or route in a district plan. It allows a council to carry out work on the designated area without requiring land use consent. Restrictions can also be placed on what can be done in the area.

A Notice of Requirement outlines a council's intention to put a designation in its district plan. It can go through a public notification and submission process, which is the option the Council has chosen so it can get feedback from those affected and the public. Detailed information about the designation process is available on the Ministry for the Environment's website <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/rma/everyday/designations/>

Are there other designated areas in the Gore District at present?

Yes, there are areas in the District Plan that are designated. These relate to land owned by the Crown.

How will the Council look after the land?

The Council plans to fence the area and exclude any farming activities, such as grazing stock or applying fertiliser. Pasture growth will be managed, and grass cut and removed from the site. Eventually it is hoped to return the land to its natural state. The Council will look to acquire an interest in the land, either by leasing or buying it.

Why protect Cooper's Wells?

Cooper's Wells is a critical strategic asset as it is the Council's main source of water. It has been in use since 1979 and each day we pump, on average, 2,850 cubic metres of water from the wells. The Council has consents allowing up to 5,000 cubic metres a day to be extracted and is looking at ways of obtaining more water from the site. We have a legal obligation to ensure the water is clean and meets national drinking water standards. We have consistently flagged a commitment to water quality and in the last resident survey, the issue most people wanted the Council to focus on was water quality and quantity.

Why this specific area?

The 14ha to be designated has been identified as the 30 day time-of-travel zone. This means the groundwater, be it pristine or contaminated, can take 30 days to make its way from the surface to the pumping wells. Land around the wells was designated by the former Gore Borough Council but the designation lapsed when the Gore District Plan became operative.