



APF Project Web Summary

Project Title: Aquaculture Zoning in the Southland Region

Grantee: Southland Regional Council

Grant Number: 13-02

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Summary

Environmental effects of consented activities are best managed if a strategic direction for aquaculture in the Southland region is established prior to the commencement of resource consent applications for new aquaculture space is considered. The schedule of this project is designed to make the high level strategic direction available for the critical early stages of future aquaculture development in the Southland region. This grant relates to the first two phases of the wider project and focus on the collation of the factual information to identify potential locations. A separate grant will be sought to undertake to third phase of the project that relates to the collation of the environmental aspects of the identified potential locations. This approach minimises the amount of money that will need to be spend on assessing the environmental issues of aquaculture to only the potential locations, instead of the whole Southland region. Community involvement will occur through stakeholder representatives for this project, however, broad community input on the results and what it means for the Southland region will occur after the information has been collated and publicly released at the end of Phase 2 and Phase 3 respectively.

The Opportunity

Coastal permit applications for aquaculture are assessed against the relevant statutory instruments as are applications for other activities in the coastal marine area. The operative Regional Coastal Plan for Southland prohibits aquaculture in certain areas of Southland, while all the other parts of the region can be considered through the resource consent process on a “first come first served” basis. This framework for aquaculture was developed in the mid 1990s but did not take into account a strategic planning approach for aquaculture in the Southland region; such as assessing what aquaculture could be possible where, rather leaving this to industry to determine.



A strategic planning approach is needed for the Southland region; to ensure aquaculture development in the region does not continue in an ad hoc practice. This project will provide an overall strategic planning direction for aquaculture in the Southland region by identifying areas where aquaculture and other coastal activities may be in conflict and thus support marine spatial planning, including the selection of new sites for aquaculture.

Intended Outcomes

The project will facilitate the sustainable growth and diversification of aquaculture in the Southland region within a framework focused on minimising environmental risk. The main benefit of this project is that it will make the strategic direction freely available to the public. Being able to visually display (at least through a traffic light system) what aquaculture could be possible where will assist members of the community to better understand why a potential location has been identified. This type of information may help resolve conflicts regarding allocation of space, which often contributes significantly to opposition of activities taking place in the coastal marine area. It may also promote effective communication among stakeholders, with all stakeholders utilising the same strategic direction to support their decision-making, minimising the risk of conflicting information that often leads to conflict and expensive processes.

In addition to the benefit of increasing public knowledge, the strategic direction will be beneficial for:

1. updating the Regional Coastal Plan for Southland, where appropriate;
2. giving guidance for consent processing and aquaculture sector on where aquaculture investment should be progressed to support growth;
3. giving direction for aquaculture sector and research providers on what possible new aquaculture species should be progressed to support growth; and
4. giving direction for aquaculture sector and research providers on priority research matters, which will also contribute to research and field trials being completed in a timely manner.

Methods

The Southland region aquaculture zoning work is broken down into three phases, as follows:

Phase	Description
Phase 1: Satellite view <i>(Part of this MPI grant)</i>	<p>Options paper taking following aspects into account to identify potential broad scale areas where aquaculture may be possible:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Industry needs and wants;2. Regulatory perspective;3. Cultural perspective; and4. Economic perspective. <p>Factual information will be collated to help identify potential locations. Information will be further refined during Phase 2</p>



	<p>criteria assessment.</p> <p>Stakeholder input will be from Environment Southland, Ministry for Primary Industries, Department of Conservation, Fiordland Marine Guardians, consented marine farmers, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Te Ao Mārama Inc., Venture Southland and Aquaculture New Zealand.</p>
<p>Phase 2: Helicopter view <i>(Part of this MPI grant)</i></p>	<p>Criteria for identifying potential site locations within the identified possible broad scale areas from Phase 1 developed taking into account factors such as water depth, tidal patterns, weather, feed availability, cultural matters, diversification of site location, access to site location, access to support infrastructure, presence of known significant environmental aspect (i.e. china shop, rare reef) etc.</p> <p>After criteria developed it would be utilised to identify potential site locations within the identified possible broad scale areas from Phase 1.</p> <p>Factual information will be collated to help identify potential locations. Information will be further refined during Phase 3 environmental assessment.</p> <p>Stakeholder input will be from Environment Southland, Ministry for Primary Industries, Department of Conservation, Fiordland Marine Guardians, consented marine farmers, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Te Ao Mārama Inc., Venture Southland, Aquaculture New Zealand, NIWA and Cawthron.</p>
<p>Phase 3: Site perspective <i>(NOT part of this MPI grant)</i></p>	<p>Criteria for assessing environmental suitability of the identified potential site locations from Phase 2 developed taking into account effect of aquaculture activity on the seabed, aquatic ecosystem, surrounding natural landscapes etc.</p> <p>Environmental information will be collated for possible locations identified from the factual information collated during Phase 1 and 2.</p> <p>Stakeholder input will be scoped out at the completion of Phase 2.</p>

It is unknown how many potential site locations will be identified at the end of Phase 2, therefore it is not possible to estimate at this point in time the cost to undertake Phase 3. Phase 3 costing will be scoped out at the completion of Phase 2. Undertaking the zoning approach in this manner means the high level strategic direction is completed prior to getting into the potential site perspective details.