

Smooth Hill Proposed Landfill - RM20.280

Trish Chaplin-Cheyne

Monday May 23, 2022. Block One (9.00 -10.30am)

I am speaking today in opposition to the proposed Smooth Hill Landfill RM20.280 and in support of my written submission dated 14 November 2021.

We live at 273 McIntosh Road, Brighton. Our property borders one of the tributaries that feed into Ōtokia Creek.

In my submission I focused on three main areas: Ōtokia Creek, local nesting site for the Kārearea, and bird-strike potential. My argument today focusses on the first two.

1. Ōtokia Creek Protection. The proposed Smooth Hill landfill site is located in the same area the Ōtokia Creek starts. Th potential for run-off is high based on location proximity (appendix 1.)

My husband and I live on a 30-acre lifestyle block. We responsibly farm sheep and beef. By responsible I mean we adhere to council requirement to fence the tributary boundary ensuring our stock are unable to enter and potentially contaminate the waterway. While this was an unforeseen cost, the fencing was done knowing we were contributing to the conservation of Ōtokia Creek thus mending past behaviour by previous owners. Historically known by locals as 'Poo Creek' due to effluent contamination sustained in the 90's, much work has been done since then to remedy the pollution in Ōtokia Creek, such as wastewater infrastructure and community action. Much of this work has been undertaken by the Ōtokia Creek and Marsh Trust who have improved, and continue to improve, the quality of the creek and marsh ecosystem.

At the mouth of the Ōtokia Creek is Brighton Beach. This is a busy hub used by surfers, schools, families, visitors, the surf club, and wildlife. The risk of upstream contamination has the potential to flow to the mouth of the creek and spoil the special place that Brighton Beach is.

The DCC state themselves on page one of their Second-Generation District Plan "Hazardous substances are necessary for the operation of many commercial and other activities and need to be provided for. However, if not appropriately managed, their storage and use are potential threats to the health and safety of Dunedin's people and natural environment" (DCC, p.1).

How does this potential pollution affect where we live? We have caught freshwater koura at the start of the creek on Big Stone Road, we have caught eels in the creek running through our neighbours property, we have frogs in the ponds on our land. Our neighbours child swims in the creek.

2. On McIntosh Road (and surrounding forestry), we are privileged to host nesting sites for a breeding pair of Kārearea (Native Eastern Falcons). These birds are described by the Dept of Conservation as the "country's most threatened bird of

prey” (DOC). Historically, these birds inhabited tussock grassland, or native forest, however these falcons have had to adapt to new conditions and have made the pine plantations between McIntosh and Big Stone Roads their home.

In the last two years the Kārearea have utilised forest slash (tree debris left behind after forestry operations), near the edge of the forest sites for their nests. In 2020, this was on Matt Cunningham’s land 407 McIntosh Road, and last year they nested on the border between ours and Richard Fulton's properties on part of the recently harvested forest (appendix 2 – blue dot). I reported the nest to the DOC and the DCC in November 2021 and the following is a snippet from the DCCs reply email (appendix 3):

“We followed up on your falcons sighting that you kindly reported to DOC. You’ll be happy to know that we found they are indeed nesting. Better yet, they’re banded birds from our study on falcons in the forestry of the wider coastal Otago area, so it’s really useful to find them again when they move. We’re very grateful that you reached out with your sighting - thanks to you we’ve relocated that pair again!”.

Due to their ground nesting habits, only 25% of young reach maturity – tough stats without further and future human interference.

A detailed bird management plan has been proposed as part of the Smooth Hill landfill consent. My question is, what is the potential risk of disturbance to falcons from site operation including noise and bird mitigation tactics?

Underpinning my reason for presenting today, is how my husband and I see ourselves on this land. We live off the grid, protecting the land as a taonga safeguarding this land and waterways so they are able to be enjoyed by future generations, demonstrating to the principle of manaakiwhenua. We wish to leave this land in a better state than it was, and we challenge the Dunedin City Council to do the same

References:

Department of Conservation. (n.d). New Zealand falcon/ kārearea
<https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/native-animals/birds/birds-a-z/nz-falcon-karearea/>
DCC (n.d). *Second Generation District Plan*. Retrieved
https://www.dunedin.govt.nz/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/866506/Part-C.City-wideProvisions.pdf

Appendices:

1. Map showing the start of the Otokia Creek near the Smooth Hill landfill site (circled in red). Page 3
2. Map showing tributary (red) feeding into Ōtokia creek. Blue dot karearea nesting site. Page 4
3. Email from Dunedin City Council. Page 5

1.



2.



3.

From: Kalinka Rexer-Huber <kalinka.rexerhuber@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, 8 November 2021 9:54 AM

To: Trish Chaplin-Cheyne <Trish.Chaplin-Cheyne@op.ac.nz>

Cc: Graham Parker <g.parker@parkerconservation.co.nz>; Bruce McKinlay <bmckinlay@doc.govt.nz>

Subject: Falcons

EXTERNAL EMAIL WARNING

Kia ora Trish,

We followed up on your falcons sighting that you kindly reported to DOC. You'll be happy to know that we found they are indeed nesting. Better yet, they're banded birds from our study on falcons in the forestry of the wider coastal Otago area, so it's really useful to find them again when they move.

They're nesting on Richard Fulton's part of the harvested forest. But as you found on your walk, they are certainly fiercely defending the main ridge along from your house too (your neighbour Matthew pointed out your place to me). That will continue for a good month to six weeks, but should settle down after that. I recommend a hat if you need to walk there, and a twiggy bit of broom or the like held over your head if you're getting dive bombed.

Please feel free to get in touch if you'd like to know more. We're very grateful that you reached out with your sighting - thanks to you we've relocated that pair again!

Best regards,

Kalinka and Graham

