



Bay of Plenty Conservancy.
August 2006e



Upper Kaituna Scenic Reserve

Bay of Plenty Electricity's concession application

What is the concession application for?

- Bay of Plenty Electricity Limited has made a concession application to the Minister of Conservation to site part of a hydroelectric scheme on the Upper Kaituna Scenic Reserve. Scenic Reserves are managed under the Reserves Act 1977 in order to protect scenic and natural values. This Reserve is approximately 54 ha in size on the true left bank of the Kaituna River. The Reserve is mainly steep and contains dense native forest of high botanical value, including threatened king ferns.
- Bay of Plenty Electricity Limited's application involves:

- (i) Removal of trees and other vegetation to allow construction and siting of the left abutment of a 12 metre high dam (also referred to as a weir) on part of the Reserve (0.05 ha approx);
- (ii) Inundation of approximately 0.5 – 1.0 ha of the Reserve. This will flood the forested river margin of the Reserve, approximately 1.2 kilometres in length. The water level will increase by approximately 7 metres at the dam, and will reduce progressively upstream of the dam and will not affect the Trout Pool;
- (iii) Reduced flow in a 2.5 kilometre section of the Kaituna River below the dam. Water will travel via a canal to the power station before re-entering the river 2.5 km downstream. The canal and power station will be located on private land. This section of the river adjoins the Reserve. The flow will be reduced and water levels may reduce by 2.6 metres. This final residual flow will be determined by resource consent which will be determined separately from this concession application;
- (iv) The ongoing maintenance and operation of the proposed dam and the proposed inundation for a term of 60 years.



What is a concession?

- The design of the dam is for an earth embankment with a rock channel to maintain a residual flow in the Kaituna River. The central section will have a surface of rocks set in concrete with indistinct edges to help create the look of the natural channel. The embankment sections will be planted in native plants and will have isolated boulders to help minimise the effect on the natural environment.
- The purpose of the application is to enable the construction of a hydroelectric scheme. This scheme will generate approximately 13.5 MW and provide enough power for approximately 10,000 homes or 15% of Rotorua's demand.
- A concession application needs to be made by any individual or business that wants to use public conservation land for commercial purposes. A concession, if granted, would provide Bay of Plenty Electricity Limited with a land access right to use the Reserve. Concessionaires must pay a fee to the Crown, at market rates, for their usage of public conservation land.
- This application for a concession is confined to the impact of the proposed dam and inundation on the Upper Kaituna Scenic Reserve. It does not include an assessment of the entire hydroelectric scheme and its effects on the Kaituna River, or private land.



- In considering the application for a concession the Department of Conservation on behalf of the Minister of Conservation is only considering effects on the Upper Kaituna Scenic Reserve.
- If a concession is granted, the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (Environment BOP) will consider all the effects of the hydroelectric scheme including those on the Kaituna River under the Resource Management Act 1991 as resource consent will also be necessary for this proposal.

How will the Reserve be affected?



- The Department of Conservation has identified a number of adverse effects on the Reserve that it considers to be significant. These include the effects of construction (temporary), the loss of trees and other native vegetation, an increase in the water level and a change in the natural character/landscape values of the Reserve.
- It is considered that some of the Reserve's natural character is derived from its interface with the fast flowing and turbulent Kaituna River. This will be affected with the creation of a slow moving lake 1.2 km in length.
- Bay of Plenty Electricity Limited has proposed mitigation measures in order to reduce these adverse effects. These measures include reducing the visual impact of the dam, the replanting of disturbed areas and undertaking pest control in the Reserve.
- The effects on the Kaituna River itself, including fish and other aquatic life will be dealt with by Environment Bay of Plenty under the Resource Management Act.

What has been recommended?

- An interim decision has been made on behalf of the Minister of Conservation that the application is approved in principle. This requires the application to be publicly notified so that the public can make submissions before a final decision is made.
- Before granting the application, the Minister of Conservation must give public notice of the intention to do so, and invite submissions.

Why does this process take place?

- As a steward of public land the Department of Conservation has a statutory obligation to assess applications made to use public conservation land that it manages on behalf of all New Zealanders.
- The Department of Conservation is often faced with complex situations where development is sought on land that has been set aside to protect and preserve conservation values.
- This application is of considerable interest and significance to the community. By publicly notifying the application there will be public input into the final decision.

For more information

- Contact the Bay of Plenty Conservancy Office, Phone: 07 349-7400 or visit the Department of Conservation website www.doc.govt.nz
- Submissions close on the 12th March 2007 at 4 pm and should be addressed to the Department of Conservation, PO Box 1146, Rotorua or email kaituna@doc.govt.nz