

Terawhiti Station / Long Gully Station SNA Opposition Evidence Hearing 12th September 2024

We are Stephen and Christine Watson, Trustees of Long Gully Station Trust. We purchased the 830ha farm station for our family in 1993. LG is still managed as 11 parcels of land within the one farm station being 82, 98, 209, 391, 370, 510, 692 Southernthread Road and 380, 500, 700, 720, 721 Hawkins Hill Road.

Long Gully Station, Kinnoull Station and Terawhiti Station whose original SNA submission we support today, make up the entire southwestern coastal peninsula of Wellington. All privately owned rural properties. All oppose mandatory SNAs without landowner agreement. We are here today to support Terawhiti Station's original submission opposing SNA on Private Rural Properties.

We vehemently oppose SNAs being imposed on private rural land

We as landowners were not properly consulted, if at all, in the drafting and the implications of both SNAs and PDP. Any questions we did ask were ignored. The PDP was written over Covid lockdowns without any requested and might we add promised, consultation.

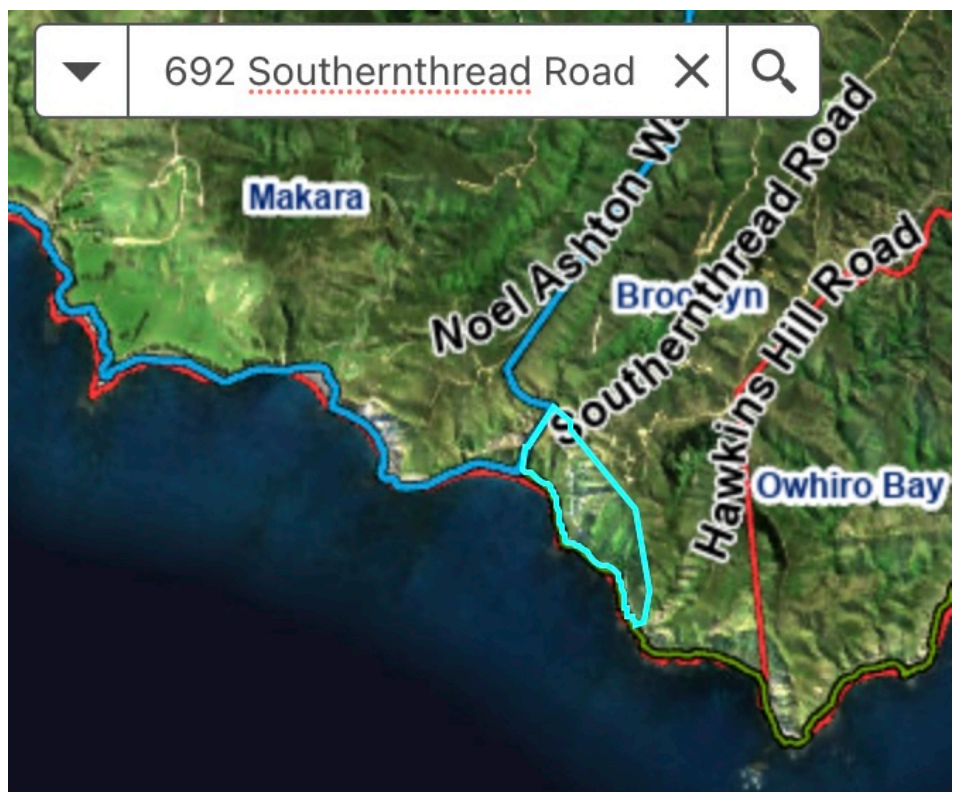
This council is intentionally destroying the social fabric of our rural community with both PDP and SNA planning overreach and must be stopped.

The "purple haze" SNA overlay is a blanket, subjective, unscientific, unsubstantiated desktop exercise that in the very least should require substantive expert evidence given the gravity of its effects on the rural community.

As case in point evidence, the SNA overlay WC 144 includes almost all of our property, 692 Southernthread Road Brooklyn resulting in 94% of that 49ha property being confiscated.

Lazy mapping has not even removed the physical Southernthread road that runs through the property. There is no way this road could ever be described as significantly natural. SNA will make the ongoing maintenance of this road impossible without first obtaining resource consents

WC 144



This new SNA grab of almost our total land parcel is in spite of us (previously under Consent SR No: 146415) voluntarily protecting what was then identified as being truly "significant" within a QEII land Covenant.

We are the ones who have chosen to allow the regeneration and restoration, for 30 years in some cases, to take place by removing stock, culling goats and not clearing regeneration when we legally could have done so. This has made the land what it is today but in all fairness we must be allowed to adapt and utilise our private rural land in ways that enable us to remain economically viable.

We privately manage a combined land parcel larger than the whole Wellington CBD including Island Bay but do not have the luxury of rates based funding. In fact the exact opposite, we pay rates to our wasteful, incompetent Council that burdens us with rules that they dare not apply to themselves and continues to spend money on SNAs when our government has suspended requirements for councils to identify them.

SNAs on our private rural land are craftily drafted legal documents that are specifically designed to further cripple our rural community by limiting new activities and development that can take place on that land. In their current form they represent a confiscation of property rights and undermine conservation efforts by the people who care most about the environment: the people who make a living from it.

SNA adds further layers of arbitrary, nonsensical rules that blatantly rob property owners of their right to utilise, maintain and enjoy their freehold land

Both the PDP and SNAs are blatant Marxist, communist, private land confiscation tools, that are the tip of the iceberg for what is coming and democracy needs to wake up.

In our minds all the snouts in the trough including this hearing are complicit in this land theft if they do not uphold private property rights.

Sadly the Crown's same deceitful intent that stole indigenous land in 1840 is being repeated in this SNA policy in 2024. Council has not learned from our shameful colonial history by its current behaviour in not removing SNAs from private rural land, this mirrors the Treaty's failure to protect sacred property rights resulting in land confiscation

The irony now being, that the rural landowner is also required to pay oppressive property rates that are then used to fund this crown theft.

Look at the multi injustice of this SNA overlay process

Rural land owners were not properly consulted in the drafting of either the PDP nor SNA, the fact that we are even allowed to be present here today and speak at the mercy of the Commissioners is an injustice. Shouldn't landowner's voices be sought out throughout the whole process of their land confiscation?

The SNA land was confiscated based on a subjective desktop exercise.

Rural land owners are the only ones attending this hearing who have anything and everything to lose.

We are the only ones whose property rights and freehold land is being stolen by these proposed SNA and PDP rules.

Rural land owners are the only ones in this room today not being paid to attend this hearing.

Rural land owners are the only ones in this room today that do not have funded legal representation.

The removal by SNA of rural landowner's rights to use and enjoy their freehold land is unjust and undemocratic and we believe the only reason SNAs were removed from private urban land was recognition of the massive opposition that would have resulted.

We also believe rural landowners are viewed as easy picking because we are fewer in number and too busy trying to survive to be able to successfully oppose this theft. Anyone who is complicit in this SNA land theft is morally bankrupt and at the very least should be ashamed of themselves.

Regards costs

The proposed SNA cripples our private land options while leaving us to pay the rates. This proposed SNA reduces our multimillion dollar property to unproductive conservation value. The true cost to the landowner is the difference between the value of 1 hectare offered for sale on the open market without the incumbrance of SNA as opposed to the same hectare offered with the SNA overlay.

Should Council be required to pay this compensation for all private rural SNA land they would undoubtedly re-examine its significance or perhaps that is their end game - buy our rural land for next to nothing.

30% of our working day as rural landowners are spent in addressing oppressive, unpaid, unproductive WCC compliance, that does not produce or create anything additional of value. These battles are to simply maintain freehold property rights New Zealanders believe are innate, yet they are being constantly eroded by socialist policy planners. The full financial loss, detrimental physical and mental cost to private landowners is at times unbearable and is certainly not measurable.

What are some practical day to day implications of SNA and PDP overlay you might ask?

Compliance officers now issue non compliance notices
See attached Appendix "A"

Requiring all water tanks, firewood splitting, firewood storage, storage containers, maintenance of farm tracks and access-ways and most importantly fire breaks to all now require resource consents. (The average resource consent costs us \$6,000 to \$20,000 not the \$2500 non notified application fee often quoted) this is not financially sustainable for the rural community and certainly not for our family.

Interestingly however when we asked if the recently maintained access-ways and firebreaks on council land adjoining our land had first obtained a Resource consent we were told "Council does not need Resource Consent as it is public land"

This is happening right now in real time, our time.

Over the 30 years we have owned Long Gully Station these changes have been insidious and creeping making living in the rural area and maintaining rural land a nightmare. It has been brought about by successive weasel wording changes to "Permitted Activities in the Rural Area" This latest Wellington PDP has reduced Permitted Activities in the rural area to nonsensical definitions that now are being applied subjectively by Wellington City compliance officers.

The average person might argue this could not happen in our sacred democracy but yes compliance officers are already enforcing it with abatement notices.

This is nothing less than socialist oppression of private land owners. We don't believe this has happened accidentally, it is not conspiracy theory, this is happening in plain sight aided by an army of complicit socialist planners and compliance enforcement.

Clearly SNA is designed to make private land ownership so hard private ownership will be given up.

For humanity's sake we need to stop this socialist engineering of mankind off the land, of which we have no shortage, into lifelong state-farmed dependency.

SNA is a private land confiscation that Klaus Schwab, Marx, Stalin and Mao would applaud.

New Zealanders need to wake up!!

Given SNA is a NZ Forest and Bird driven policy can the commissioners of this hearing please confirm they have no conflict of interest being either members or associated to this society in any way?

Finally

As Commissioners you will be aware that in March 2024 Associate Environment Minister Andrew Hoggard made the announcement to suspend the need to comply with SNA rules.

In his press release statement he said..

"As it stands, SNAs identified on private property limit new activities and development that can take place on that property. ***In their current form they represent a confiscation of property rights*** and undermine conservation efforts by the people who care most about the environment: the people who make a living from it," .

Given Government's policy agrees with us that

"In their current form they (SNAs on private land) represent a confiscation of property rights" they must be removed by the recommendation of the Commissioners of this hearing or by further appeal to the Environment Court.

In support of Terawhiti Station submission we therefore ask that the Commissioners of this hearing recommend that all SNAs be removed from private rural land unless that private landowner consents to its overlay.

Thankyou, we value the opportunity to answer any questions you may have now.

Appendix A

One of many WCC compliance emails (Referencing SNA) as evidence of subjective compliance overreach

18/06/2024

Hi Steve & Christine,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us at your property on 11 March 2024.

As you are aware, the inspection was part of our wider investigation into non-compliances in the Long Gully area.

This property is zoned rural, ***and has SNA's as well.*** It is noted that ***there are no rural activities currently being undertaken on this property. ????????***

Several breaches of the Wellington City District Plan were identified during this inspection, which were:

1. Two dwellings (residential buildings containing household units) were observed on the property.
 - Resource consent is required for the placement of a dwelling on a rural property. As there is more than one dwelling present, consent is required for both dwellings as a non-complying activity under [rule 15.5](#).
 - We do not consider these buildings to be temporary or portable, however this is not a relevant factor when applying these district plan rules, and consent is required regardless.
 - There are no resource consents for these buildings as at the date of this email.
2. ***Firewood business.***
 - ***Resource consent is required for this business as a non-rural activity under district plan rule 15.4.1.***
 - The buildings/structures require resource consent as per point 3 below.
3. ***Other non-rural buildings and structures (shipping containers used for storage, water tanks, etc).***
 - ***These buildings/structures require resource consent as non-rural buildings/structures under rule 15.4.1 of the district plan.***
 - They cannot be considered accessory buildings/structures because they are not ancillary to a lawful activity.

In order to address all of these breaches, resource consent will need to be obtained for these buildings/activities. Alternatively, you may choose to remove the building(s) and disestablish the firewood business.

You are required to submit the resource consent application as soon as possible, and no later than 18 September 2024. If you are intending to remove the buildings, then this must also be done by 18 September 2024. Please confirm which approach you will take.

Our approach is to initially seek voluntary compliance, however if this is not forthcoming, then further enforcement under the Resource Management Act 1991 will be considered.

My manager, Matthew Borich, and I, are available for a meeting at Council offices should you require further clarification about any of the matters that have been raised, or alternatively you may email me these.

We would like to organise site inspections to your other properties, including 692 Southernthread Road, 720 Hawkins Hill Road, 721 Hawkins Hill Road, 98 Southernthread Road, and 500 Hawkins Hill Road. Please advise some days over the next fortnight that suit you to meet at these properties.

Regards,

Ben Brown

Snr Environmental Enforcement Officer | City
Consenting & Compliance | Wellington City
Council

LONG GULLY STATION Brooklyn

