

Friends of the Maitai Comment on the Maitahi Village application

Please include all the contact details listed below with your comments and indicate whether you can receive further communications from us by email to substantive@fasttrack.govt.nz

1. Contact Details			
Please ensure that you have authority to comment on the application on behalf of those named on this form.			
Organisation name (if relevant)		Friends of the Maitai	
First name		Tom	
Last name		Kennedy	
Postal address		[REDACTED]	
Home phone / Mobile phone		[REDACTED]	Work phone
Email (a valid email address enables us to communicate efficiently with you)		info@friendsofthemaitai.org.nz	

2. We will email you draft conditions of consent for your comment			
yes	I can receive emails and my email address is correct	€	I cannot receive emails and my postal address is correct

Hon Lyn Stevens CNZM KC (Chair)
Maitahi Village Expert Panel
June 12 2025

Dear Ms Stevens and panel members,

Thank you for inviting Friends of the Maitai to submit information for your consideration.

Friends of the Maitai formed in 2014 and is made up of Nelson residents committed to maintaining and improving the health of the Maitai/Maitahi River. Our work includes advocating and educating residents on river health, monitoring river health monthly, planting and weeding in the Groom Creek wetland restoration, and actively partnering with the Nelson City Council on Project Mahitahi.

We campaigned on the impact of sediment from radiata pine harvesting, and were pleased when this issue was taken up by Council, with the outcome of their exit from this type of forestry on their own land in the valley.

As a community environment group with a strong track record in citizen science and over 300 members on our mailing list, it is heartening to be recognised as a voice for community concerns over certain environmental aspects of the proposed development.

From the announcement of plans for the Maitahi Village, Friends of the Maitai has been focussed on potential impact on the river, and with the help of Cawthron freshwater scientist Roger Young we presented our concerns at the Resource Consent hearing in June 2022. We are acknowledged as a “stakeholder” in this development.

Our current concern centres on the change to the original plans, which would see Kaka Stream re-routed through an environmentally hazardous area adjacent to a former sheep dip and current woolshed. The developer has recognized the potential hazard of contaminated soil and proposed plans to remediate the situation. We remain concerned about potential downstream impacts on the Maitai River and Nelson Haven.

We are pleased to see the panel’s request for further information focusing on this issue, and we look forward to reading the response from the applicant.

We have read the EnvironLink Remedial Action Plan (RAP). The RAP identifies the toxic chemicals (mainly dieldrin and arsenic) contaminating the site. Soil testing shows the high concentration and extent of the contamination.

Shallow groundwater in the vicinity of the sheep dip had concentrations of heavy metals and dieldrin exceeding Nelson City Council ecological standards. Downslope movement of dieldrin was detected 25m below the site. As a result, EnviroLink recommended further testing of groundwater around the site. We agree with this recommendation.

Our main concerns about the challenges of remediation are:

The two main toxins, arsenic and dieldrin, behave differently in the environment. Arsenic is soluble in water and can travel significant distances. Dieldrin binds with soil and sediment particles and is less mobile. Dieldrin is highly toxic to aquatic life and is also bio-accumulative. As most New Zealand standards are aimed at protecting human health, concentrations allowed for humans are higher than those safe for aquatic life.

There is no mention of a monitoring regime testing water and sediment in the Maitai River immediately downstream of the confluence with Kaka Stream. We believe it is necessary to know the background levels of contaminants (if any) before work begins, in order to establish whether or not there has been any contamination in the river post development. Once work commences, it will be necessary to take regular water and sediment samples from the Maitai River to detect any changes.

Because Dieldrin binds to soil and sediment particles, it is important to sample the river when it is discoloured during rainfall events (i.e. turbidity greater than 50 NTU) to establish if dieldrin has been mobilised. During heavy rainfall events, there could be overflow of water and sediment from Kaka Stream and the settling ponds (downstream of the sheep dip site). This material could migrate to the Maitai River.

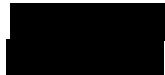
The SQEP (Suitably Qualified and Experienced Practitioner) must be impartial and independent and reports produced by the SQEP should be available to the public.

Downstream of the confluence of the Kaka Stream and the Maitai River, there are three popular swimming holes, numerous fish spawning areas, and a diverse plant and fish population. As a result, the public needs to be assured that no contamination is likely to occur and that any contamination will be detected, notified, and removed as soon as possible.

We thank you again for the opportunity to raise our concerns to ensure these challenges are addressed in a manner that provides Nelsonians with confidence that the Maitahi Village development will not adversely affect the Maitai River. Please contact us if you need any further information or clarification.

Many thanks,

Steven Gray
Tom Kennedy



Friends of the Maitai