



# Forest & Bird welcomes victory for Mokihinui River

## Title

Forest & Bird (BirdLife in New Zealand) recently welcomed Meridian Energy's announcement that it will abandon its plan to dam the West Coast's wild and scenic Mokihinui River. "This is a great victory for conservation, and a courageous decision by Meridian," Forest & Bird Advocacy Manager Kevin Hackwell said. "We are pleased that Meridian has made the right decision for a very special part of the West Coast, and for the future sustainability of the coast and New Zealand."

Forest & Bird Top of the South Field Officer Debs Martin said: "The Mokihinui is a wonderful wild river that is home to endangered blue ducks, eels and native fish. The forested river valley supports many native animals, including kiwi and bats. "This is one of New Zealand's largest and most pristine wild rivers, and it was critical for Forest & Bird that we save this from damming. This dam would have flooded the greatest area of conservation land in New Zealand."

Kevin Hackwell says the decision will be good for the long-term economy of the West Coast. The Mokihinui dam would have been remotely operated from outside West Coast so the area's economy would have had a merely temporary boost during construction. "The future is in adventure and eco-tourism, and a cycleway along part of the Mokihinui is already being built."

We hope this decision will be the end of big hydro proposals on the last of our remaining wild rivers, he said. Forest & Bird says it is now time to properly protect the Mokihinui River by adding it to neighbouring Kahurangi National Park. "We are keen to avoid future conflicts over high-value publicly owned land that is stewardship, or essentially unclassified, land," Debs Martin said.

Forest & Bird President Andrew Cutler said this is great news for the thousands of members and supporters of Forest & Bird, and thousands of other New Zealanders who have given time and money to fight this dam proposal. "It's great to see that grass roots campaigns can still win against developments backed by huge businesses. That gives us confidence as we now refocus on stopping the open-cast mining of the unique Denniston Plateau on the West Coast by an Australian mining company."

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