

Whaitua Te Whanganui-a-Tara Committee Meeting 9 Notes

Monday 25 November 2019, 9:15am-4:00pm
Makara Beach Café and Terawhiti Station

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Attendees

Committee members:

Louise Askin, Roger Blakeley (morning session), Ros Connelly, Quentin Duthie, Peter Matcham, Zoe Ogilvie (morning session), Jonny Osborne, Anya Pollock, Kara Puketapu-Dentice (afternoon session), Sean Rush (morning session), Gabriel Tupou, Pat van Berkel
Apologies: Wayne Guppy, Tui Lewis, Hikitia Ropata, Naomi Solomon

Project Team:

Tim Sharp, Phill Barker, Matt Hickman, Anna Martin, Denise Young, Richard Sheild, Emily Osborne, Mark Heath, Brent King, Mike Grace, Sharyn Westlake (GWRC), Helen Bolton (WCC), David Burt (HCC), James McKibbin (UHCC), Aaria Dobson-Waitere (Taranaki Whānui)
Apologies: Kat Banyard, Onur Oktem, Rhiannon Barbour (UHCC), Angela Penfold (WWL), Grace Katene (Ngāti Toa)

Speakers and other attendees:

Jamie Peryer, Megan Oliver (GWRC), Diane Strugnell (Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee member), Guy Parkinson (Terawhiti Stations), Alice Bradley (Beef & Lamb)

Action points

Project Team:

- Follow up on a map of the piped and unpiped streams in Lower and Upper Hutt with the GW science team and GIS analysts at HCC and UHCC.
- Provide a summary of submission points on the central government freshwater proposals focussed on the key agreements and disagreements among councils in this whaitua (NB: policy subgroup agreed to defer this until the New Year).
- Provide 2020 project plan at next meeting.
- Provide a paper on peatlands including GW's current work and views on management.
- Circulate the Waiwhetu case study and Karori Wai summary report from Wellington Water.
- Set up a system for collating feedback from community engagement events.
- Provide a pack of summer engagement materials by the end of the year.
- Provide social media support as needed and circulate the Facebook guidelines.
- Connect with communications teams from TAs and Wellington Water to find out their schedule of summer events and invite them to the next C&E subgroup meeting.
- Develop the list of stakeholders and create a network map so that Committee members can identify which groups they are connected to and any gaps.
- Update the science subgroup terms of reference to include the roles of the chair and leads in advance of the next subgroup meeting for discussion and approval.
- Provide a LUC map for forestry.
- Circulate an example farm plan.

Committee members:

- Send Emily field trip ideas for 2020.
- Send Emily and Zoe requests for communications support and collateral.
- Notify Emily if they plan to attend the Sanctuary to Sea meeting on 3 December.

Meeting notes

Session 1: Open meeting

Louise Askin (co-chair)

Quentin opened the meeting with a karakia. Louise welcomed new Councillors and Committee members, Sean Rush from WCC and Ros Connelly from GWRC, followed by a brief round of introductions. The Meeting 8 notes and October 17 urban field trip notes were approved, and the Meeting 9 agenda was confirmed.

Review of current actions:

- Request for a map of the piped and unpiped streams in Lower and Upper Hutt. Project Team to follow up with GW science team and GIS analysts at HCC and UHCC.
- Project Team to provide a summary of submission points on the central government freshwater proposals focussed on the key agreements and disagreements across councils in this whaitua.
- Provide 2020 project plan at next meeting.
- Project Team to circulate the Waiwhetu case study and Karori Wai summary report from Wellington Water.

- Committee to send Emily field trip ideas for 2020.
- Committee to send Emily and Zoe requests for communications support and collateral.

Engagement updates:

- Pat recently presented a Whaitua update at Friends of Hutt River and Forest & Bird meetings.
- Project Team to set up a system for collating feedback from community engagement events.
- The Whaitua Committee has been invited to lead a session at the quarterly Sanctuary to Sea meeting on 3 December at Zealandia. Committee members to notify Emily if they plan to attend.
- Project Team to provide Committee members with Facebook support as needed. Emily to circulate the Facebook guidelines.
- Project Team to connect with communications teams from TAs and Wellington Water to find out their schedule of summer events and invite them to the next subgroup meeting.
- Project Team to further develop the list of stakeholders and create a network map so that Committee members can identify which groups they are connected to and any gaps.

Session 2: Subgroup updates

Science:

- At the science subgroup meeting on 24 October, they discussed the freshwater scenarios and science programme. The expert panels and reference library are in the process of being set up. The GW science team has prepared a paper responding to questions from subgroup members, which is available on SharePoint.
- Penny will chair the subgroup, and Anya and Pete have put their names forward as co-leads. The roles of the subgroup chair and leads are to be defined and added to the subgroup terms of reference. Project Team to draft in advance of the next science subgroup meeting for discussion and approval.
- Emily to organise a subgroup meeting prior to the 11 December Committee meeting to discuss the scenario assessments around water allocation, hydrology and the coast. Update: subgroup meeting to be held on Friday 6 December from 12-2pm at GWRC, Shed 39.
- Discussion around ensuring Mātauranga Māori input and option of enlisting support from an expert e.g., academic.

Communications & Engagement:

- The Project Team is developing a pack of summer engagement materials to be provided by the end of the year.
- Penny is now helping with Facebook and social media, including cross-posting “Tank talks” with her dog, highlighting toxic algae issues in the Hutt River.
- Committee members are encouraged to share Facebook posts with their networks and send ideas for posts to Emily or Zoe. Project Team to provide Committee members with Facebook support as needed. Emily to circulate the Facebook guidelines.
- Project Team to connect with communications teams from TAs and Wellington Water to find out their schedule of summer events and invite them to the next subgroup meeting.
- Confirmed roles of Project Team, Committee and subgroup. Subgroup to provide oversight of the communications and engagement strategy while the Project Team is to provide resourcing to carry out the projects. All Committee members are responsible for taking

ownership of engagement with their communities, and there will be an opportunity for Committee members to report on their engagement at 2020 meetings.

- Project Team to further develop the list of stakeholders and create a network map so that Committee members can identify which groups they are connected to and any gaps.

Policy:

- Subgroup to consider the impact of consultation on the central government's freshwater proposals on the whaitua process at their next meeting.

Session 3: Intro to rural land uses and current state for rural areas

Brent King (GWRC) and Mark Heath (Senior Environmental Scientist, GWRC) – [see factsheet](#)

Introduction to rural land uses:

- The rural land in this whaitua is comprised of 150 large properties that are primarily sheep and beef plus 3 dairy farms, and about 900 lifestyle blocks that cover a small area (3% of the total whaitua).
- The large properties have a mix of land cover types including grassland, gorse and broom, native vegetation and exotic forestry.
- There are small areas of highly productive land with better soil (LUC 1-3) in this whaitua, which are also in flatter areas that are desirable for development.
- Removal of vegetation from steep hill country (highly erodible land, LUC 6e-8) for the purpose of farming increases the risk of sediment ending up in waterways. Most LUC 8 in this whaitua is covered in native vegetation. Project Team to provide a LUC map for forestry.
- Although the rural population is small and the farms in this whaitua do not make a huge contribution to NZ's overall agriculture industry, it is important to consider the economic impacts on the individuals involved and engage with them as key stakeholders.

Current state of three main rural streams in the whaitua (Wainuiomata, Mangaroa, and Makara):

- Nitrogen – B grade.
- MCI (good measure of ecosystem health) – C and B grade.
- Phosphate – D and C grade due to sediment from erosion.
- E. coli – D grade. There are 4 measures for E. coli, 3 in dry weather and 1 in wet weather. E. coli is a B grade in dry conditions but fails in the 95th percentile after a rainfall event.
- Sediment – D grade. It is important to understand the underlying drivers and whether the current state is caused by natural geology or land use.
- Urban and rural streams are measured across the same indicators.
- There is a big data gap in monitoring the fish population in rural streams but there is generally greater diversity near the coast. This changes further upstream, possibly due to fish passage barriers.

Pressures from rural land use:

- Lack of vegetation cover in steep hill country, which means less stability and more erosion.
- Stream bank erosion in the riparian zone is due to stock access and lack of vegetation.
- Building roads on top of rivers and streams causes a loss of habitat. Less shade and more direct sunlight increases the amount of periphyton.

Session 4: Understanding farming and land management practices

Jamie Peryer (Land Management Advisor, GWRC) – [see slides](#)

- Good land management practices can achieve good water quality outcomes.
- This whaitua is less suited for farming due to a number of factors including the steep hill country, hard/shallow soils, active fault lines, erosion, climate, salt, wind, droughts, and storm events.
- Sediment loss can be caused by landslides, hillslope erosion, streambank erosion or critical source areas (CSAs) and are often triggered by rainfall events. CSAs are hotspots of contaminant loss but vary greatly between properties. They require onsite assessments and management on a case by case basis.
- Mitigations for erosion include pole planting, retirement/reversion of land, riparian fencing and planting, wetland restoration, and sediment traps.
- Farm environment plans (FEPs) are subsidised by GW for achieving better land management practices. The process involves consultation with farmers to do a land assessment, identify risks and opportunities, and develop an action plan over an agreed timeframe. FEPs are voluntary and currently there are no farm plans in this whaitua. Project Team to circulate an example farm plan.
- Riparian planting within 5m of the waterway is important for stabilising stream banks. There is a diminishing return for water quality beyond the 5m margin but it can have other benefits for biodiversity. From a biodiversity point of view, planting natives is the better option, however to manage short term erosion willows and poplars are the most effective as they are faster growing, have an extensive root system and are cheaper.

Session 5: Makara estuary ecology

Megan Oliver (Senior Environmental Scientist, GWRC)

- The Makara estuary is a unique part of the region due to the wave energy of the coastline, which makes it quite vulnerable. Estuaries are the kidneys of the environment and they act as a filter.
- There is relatively low human impact besides fishing and diving.
- The cobble beaches have low biodiversity and the cobble dune is well maintained.
- Monitoring takes place every 5 years and there is high sediment content in the estuary. Mud does not allow for much oxygen, which limits the organisms and invertebrates that can survive. There are about 5 species present but there would be 30+ in a healthy environment.
- The estuary has a small, constricted mouth, which is naturally high in sediment. Infill is happening over time but accelerating due to human activity such as forestry and stream bank erosion.
- Makara has a strong community group and an opportunity through better land management practices. The Makaracarpas are addressing sediment issues further up the catchment and offering support to landowners as well as riparian planting and weeding maintenance.

Session 6: Terawhiti Station field trip

Guy Parkinson (Terawhiti Farm Manager) supported by Louise Askin (co-chair) and Jamie Peryer (Land Management Advisor, GWRC)

Intro to Terawhiti Station:

- Terawhiti is 150-year-old sheep and beef farm, although it closed for 30 years when it became unprofitable due to poor governance.
- There are currently 14,000 stock and it is more sustainable and environmentally friendly but half as productive as previously.
- There are 1,600 hectares of effective farmland, which is about 2/5 of the total land area.

Stop #1 in flat area:

- Examples of stream bank erosion and poplar poles to help stabilise the slope.
- Fencing is problematic in flooding events where it is likely to get swept away.
- It costs \$20-25 per metre to build an 8-wire fence to exclude all stock or \$48-50 per metre in hill country. A 2-wire fence that excludes large stock costs \$6-8 per metre. There are about 120km of streams on Terawhiti and it would not be feasible to fence them all at a cost of \$20,000 per kilometre.
- Terawhiti has 1,600 hectares covered in manuka and kanuka. They earn about \$75/hectare/year from carbon sequestration compared to a profit of \$300-350/hectare/year from grasslands with sheep.

Stop #2 overlooking two gullies:

- Examples of two different management regimes – one is a grazing pasture using pole planting to address erosion and the other shows a managed reversion and revegetation of manuka with limited stock access.
- Wind turbines are a source of regular income but they require ongoing maintenance. They have mechanised operations on the farm due to road access. Constructing roads is a major source of sediment loss and sediment retention ponds were created during this process.
- Possums and pigs became a huge problem during the wind farm construction because firearms were not allowed on the property.
- There are 4,000-5,000 feral goats on the property. They reduce the need for weed spray, have a low impact on waterways, and produce less methane than stock.
- Terawhiti is currently undergoing a robust trapping programme in preparation for introducing kiwi through the Capital Kiwi programme. They need to prove the sustainability of their pest control for 2 years.

Alice Bradley (Beef & Lamb)

- The Catchment community programme is supported by councils but is growing organically based on community interest and initiative.
- It offers a useful way for communities to come together for social benefit and engagement among peers beyond the gains in environmental management.
- It provides an opportunity for efficiency and economies of scale, e.g., farmers can share a consultant when addressing the same challenges as their neighbours. A catchment scale approach requires collaboration to solve complex issues. They are able to learn from each other and achieve gains for the whole community.
- Success depends on community leadership and having a paid coordinator position to maintain momentum.

Diane Strugnell (beef farmer and Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Committee member)

- Rural landowners are an important stakeholder group to engage with. They operate independently of the council water supply and have to fix their own pipes.
- Diane joined the Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua because she was the only rural representative. She was sceptical of GW and reluctant to get involved.
- She gained lots of knowledge about ecological values from the Project Team, which has added a level of understanding and guardianship to her work.
- She has been working with Jamie on a farm plan, which has been an evolving process and she has felt encouraged to take small steps. It has been important to ask challenging questions to consider better options for land management.

Next meeting: Wednesday 11 December at Silverstream Retreat, Upper Hutt.