

Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee - Carterton Community Meeting

Date: 4 August 2016, 6:30-8:30PM, Carterton Events Centre

Committee attendance: Esther Dijkstra, Mike Ashby, Rebecca Fox, Russell Kawana, Vanessa Tipoki, David Holmes

Project Team attendance: Natasha Tomic, Hayley Vujcich

Public: 26 members of the public were present.

Q1: How should we manage rivers to improve natural character while safe guarding community assets, income and households?

- Improve the impacts of the old diversion and barrage gates through re-routing the river back into the lake.
- Make cultural values central to the way the lake and land is managed. Recognition of potential economic value in alternative land uses (e.g. tuna harvesting).
- Retire farm areas with very high water tables around lake – rates rebate to encourage farmers to walk away.
- Schemes to get youth out planting.
- Prevent further loss of low land forest fragments and wetlands. Protect low land remnants from stock grazing. Education how important the remaining fragments are.
- Extend more natural areas around rivers.
- Create eco-corridors from the Tararuas into the valleys – recognise the opportunities for bird corridors into the valley.
- Celebrate the unique opportunity in towns by planting natives that frame mountain range view along river corridors. Stop planting exotics. Access the opportunity of more native values and tourism (kayaking under native vegetation) and identity.
- Value amenity as a tourism value.
- Improve how the Waingawa River looks at the bridge – this is a reflection of how we treat all our rivers – can we groom our rivers differently.
- Change river management to reflect environmental/natural/cultural values within 5 years. Break the cycle of practice.
- Willow – successively replace strategically with native plants.
- Akura nursery – grow natives for erosion purposes. Look at options to replace willows and poplars.
- Willows.
- River good at getting rid of flood water but lost pools – better for us but not the fish.
- Stop taking gravel from rivers so rivers can go back to how they were before.
- Willows, fencing, planting.
- Weeds and pests – river banks.
- Education.
- Carterton WWT good model.
- Taking away the fees from dumping to stop illegal dumping.
- Making regulators responsible.
- Action on the river by the community – more iwi monitoring.
- We need to fix how we think about water.

- Not all gravel areas need to be extracted.
- River engineers manage separately top, middle, bottom. No unified policy how it is done. Bulldozer is the cheapest – sediment – down the river. Someone else’s problem.
- Putting big groins, boulders for water to bounce around. Need to look at how we spend flood management money.
- Last thing farmers/people want to see are bulldozers.
- More innovation how to do flood management. Want flood protection but also natural character.
- Land management – Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee – what it will do for more sustainable land management?
- What about the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee being an advocate for land use that slows water management down the river. This is not good flood/river management but land management.
- Wetlands – increasing wetland areas. Improving balance – riparian plantings correct willows.
- Blading in rivers – how can GWRC do this when Horizons don’t?
- No invertebrates in river – not natural character.
- Stop banks too close to edge of river. Wider buffer areas.
- How do you balance the area?
- District plan rules for development.
- Look at Lower Valley diversion etc.
- Taking away some of the islands to stop vegetation growth.
- Gravel extraction used as a tool.
- Encourage more use of native trees.
- Minimum flows should be monitored more closely.
- Higher minimum flows – Western hills rain.
- Education.
- River management committees, sub-catchment groups – North/South.
- Bird corridors as part of natural character.
- Extend remnant forest.
- Wetlands of special value.

Q2: What do we need to do to make our rivers swimmable and how long should it take to get there?

- What’s swimmable?
- Barriers – levels of water/flow, slime and algae, natural character (dead trees etc., forestry), bacteria, nutrients, illegal dumping, stock access, misinformation/spin/TA records.
- All consents for water withdrawn (lifestyle blocks)
- Outfall above your intake (as in Europe)
- Other ways on efficiency.
- Price on water.
- 35 year consents for too long – discharge to water.
- To be swimmable :
 - No discharge to river by MDC.
 - Encourage use of nutrient management.
 - Stormwater needs to be monitored.
 - Education, land use management.

- Get the wastewater working properly – discharge to land, 5 years to change, no discharges during flood flows.
- Riparian planting on class 1-4 land as easier/likely more successful than steep land.
- Needs to have a reasonable set back (depends on water flows/flood risks) – 15m – use species that have other uses e.g. native timber plantings.
- What sort of waterways should be fenced? Water races?
- Different fencing distance for different stock.
- Depend on use of river e.g. larger areas for places around water holes.
- Recognise benefit of shading on weeds in drains.
- Farm plans – work in landowners and seek subsidies – 50:50 is current and suitable.
- Manage field/tile/mole drains – treat via charcoal.
- Should the water races be piped? But recognize natural values and recharge of ground water – no consensus.
- Prevent dumping of waste in waterways by providing accessible and affordable facilities.
- Make farm plans available to all landowners who have waterways on property – rates to subsidise.
- Concerns re: low flows – establish minimum flows suitable for swimming.
- Encourage landowners to provide access to rivers for swimming, such as through paper roads.
- Greater shelter and shade on rivers- also benefits for eco system health.
- What issues or what solutions should be?
- Less fish, small size.
- Slime, low flows, WWTP
- Wardells – sewage into the river.
- Way we live changes. We need to change how we look at things.
- Kayaked down The Ruamahanga river- Te Ore Ore Bridge – Seen slime on the bottom – passed Wardells – river was very low.
- Swimming is a good baseline – if water is good enough, trout will be seen.
- Plenty of people swim but 'I' (community member) wouldn't because of the wastewater treatment plant.
- Fish population up and down – rainbow trout almost disappeared. Small fish (trout) size – is it drought or is it something else.
- Ruamahanga – lots of variation – looking from towns farmers trying to do their bit/planting most of their life – riparian planting and setbacks.
- (Silt, run off in winter). Lots of parts to the jigsaw.
- The worst part is the Cliffs – people scared to swim after the publicity – rivers are not as dirty as the media portray it.
- Over emphasising what the issue is – we need to know how to fix it – we need to attack the cause.
- Swim occasionally.
- Swim more at the beach or pool.
- At diversion – was nice because it is deep.
- 20 years ago the diversion was clean – no weeds.
- Warning over radio – warning people not to go during flush. Perception what the issues are or state of rivers (how good or how bad). Rivers are not monitored enough.
- River engineers– how to get the water from the top to the bottom as fast as possible.
- Wastewater treatment – Masterton WWTP needs to be sorted.

Q3: What's the fairest way of restricting water use during the summer?

- Grandparenting – needs to be looked at:
- Higher use value – irrigation on light soils.
- Irrigation tied to land classes.
- Water stays in catchment (no export).
- Water efficiency.
- All water must be metered.
- Price on water?
- Allocate based on carbon admissions. Encourage conservation tillage.
- Water meters (towns).
- Water races good/bad?
- Regulation.
- Has to be a balance of water use.
- All irrigators under one rule (river, bores).
- On land storage.
- Trading in water/ballots/tenders.
- Encourage water tanks – all new buildings must have storage.
- Education.
- Diverse storage.
- Encourage wetlands.
- Making fully allocated water available to different people at different times depending on their needs and availability – sharing water. Making unused water available to others.
- Reduce takes from bores during summer.
- Chase up users who are not currently metered.
- Minimum flows should provide for healthy ecosystems and all water takes should only take up that.
- Better enforcement of water take consents – better information on what takes are having effects where.
- Transparency around how people are using the water.
- Metering households and encouraging rainwater tanks – all new builds need water tanks under district plans.
- Future proof how we manage water supply to increasing urban areas into the future.
- Difference of opinion over whether a large dam would be welcome.
- Acknowledge climate change impacts.
- Improve efficiency of water for all.
- Dry flows in smaller rivers/streams of concern e.g. Kaipatangata.
- Whether we want to store water.
- Farmers would like to have storage dams on their properties if the consenting cost wasn't too burdensome.
- Existing water vs new water – paying for water over a quota incentivises people to be more efficient.

- Water trade.
- Maybe rural users are not paying for the environmental costs.
- Locally encouraged growth.
- Incentive system – to make water use more efficient.
- First in, first served – serves well – we are short of water at certain times of the year.
- Dam – on farms have a better cost/benefit.
- Big dams – questionable cost/benefit.
- On farm dams would be community stored dams.
- Equity – farmers using deep aquifers vs shallow or surface water.
- Restrictions based on monitoring – not when it is taken.
- Equity needs to be looked at.
- Education about aquifer depth, monitoring – will we run out of water.
- Looking at land used – what is water used for – change the land use – we change the allocation.
- Treated wastewater that is reused.
- Is the industry that uses X amount of water sustainable?
- Need to understand how system can be sustainable.

Follow up community questions:

- Modellers – What does external modelers mean?
- How does the CMP link with whitua?
- Wider process – Values to attributes to objectives to limits to methods. Are we doing objectives?
- If there are 30 scientists involved, are they on the same page?
- Affordable to community – is that the whitua reason for being?
- Recognise nutrient contaminants into water contribute to algal growth.
- Lots of support for view that Ruamahanga River is not swimmable in low flows.
- Co-operative group water takes and management is possible such as a Hawkes Bay example.
- Set aside FMUs for wetlands that are of special value – another class of management unit.
- Recognise special management units for bird habitat.
- Bring neighbours together in catchment groups to look after streams together. Could the Council offer facilitation?