

## Meeting with hill country farmers

SUBJECT      **Meeting with hill country farmers on draft Ruamāhangā WIP recommendations**

WHEN          Tuesday 12 June 2018, 6:30-8:30PM

WHERE        Lion's Den, Martinborough

### ATTENDEES

WHAITUA COMMITTEE      Peter Gawith, Esther Dijkstra, Mike Birch, David Holmes

PROJECT TEAM SUPPORT      Paula Hammond, Kent Barrett, Tash Styles, Andrew Turnbull

COMMUNITY MEMBERS      10 community members attended

### **MEETING CONTENT**

Mike Birch and Peter Gawith talked through the freshwater objective table, the FMU map and the Committee's approach to managing contaminants.

This was followed by general discussion. Some of the key questions discussed are below:

**Q: Why is periphyton bad?**

A: At a certain level it clogs up the waterways. It consumes oxygen which is bad for fish species.

**Q: Who is encouraging innovation and who says an idea is a good one?**

Innovation is a combined effort. It is the responsibility of the catchment community, farmers and the council.

**Q: By 2040, will urban wastewater be discharged to land?**

A: Yes.

**Q: My maize contract states that it cannot be grown and sold if it has been irrigated with any form of wastewater, let alone human wastewater. This seems like a barrier to me?**

A: This is true. Trials are currently being done in New Zealand. In Australia grain and seeds can be grown using wastewater irrigation. Wastewater is a valuable commodity and hopefully the rules will change.

**Q: Would dung beetles remove the need for riparian planting?**

A: Successful colonisation of dung beetles would not remove the need for riparian planting. But they could act as a good alternative in areas where riparian planting is not possible due to the terrain. They could be a useful tool in the hill country. They would be a good way of reducing the costs associated with riparian planting in the high country. Dung beetles are a good example of innovation.

- There was a lot of support around the table. The community members are very impressed with the committees work and the process itself.

**Q: Comparative data issue.**

A: The comparison of data does provide a bit of an issue. A lot of farmers and other citizens want to get involved through citizen science initiatives. Farmers want to gather data to measure their progress. This farm scale data is of no real use when determining the overall change in the waterway/catchment. Having said this, such data still results in trends and is therefore useful at the farm scale. There are also issues with the accuracy of citizen science that need to be ironed out before the data can be compared.