Join the conversation.

Three questions about Wairarapa Water

Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee

In July and August 2016 the Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee sent out a brochure 'Join the conversation - three questions about Wairarapa Water' to every household in the Ruamāhanga Whaitua. By mid-October 2016, 53 responses had been received to the three questions. These are documented below.

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

- Conserve/store winter rains/run-off in public lakes and high usage farms. Should be obligated to build own reservoirs.
- Kia kaha – share the load. Allocation on the acre and what 0.1 supports E.g. ¼ sections – 2 people house. Dairy farm on safe numbers of animals allowed for the area.
- Using alternative days by households for car washing and garden hosing. Agriculture and industry must have priority.
- As summers dictate – consultation with users as GWRC has some responsibility in granting tights. Hence infrastructure expenditure by users.
- Urban water restrictions currently prescribed in Wairarapa work well but perhaps could be better enforced by Council. We should further tighten urban water restrictions to encourage water savings. Rurally and farms especially should not be able to take water any more so than urban areas. Water meters would be a great tool as long as they apply equally to urban and rural.
- People with the least efficient utilisation should be restricted first.
- Price. The same price for all customers equally.
- Reduce bore flows and don't open the lake when it blocks.
- Don't run the cold tap when cleaning teeth, washing vegies etc. Hand held house in the garden and mulching of plants/shrubs. Keep your hands off the cold tap.
- Status quo. Educate people on how to conserve water. Encourage catching water from house roofs, especially new houses. Mandatory water tanks for general use.
- User pays, but make the price high enough to discourage over use.
- Education. Accurate, independent information published and broadcast regularly about use and excessive use.
- Water meters – per household allowance. If they go over this – charge.
- All new houses need to collect rainwater, regardless of location. Small tanks for the garden, discounts for existing. The % used by dairy farms must far outweigh any town use? Restrict them – especially when it's raining.
- Check more on those who water lawns in summer.
- Status quo.

- Allocation based on a justified water requirement application by all water – take users balance against changing water resource capacity and metered water usage for control.
- As it is managed at the moment.
- People first, business second.
- Meter water use and charge for exceptional use.
- Publish resource consents so everyone can see who is extracting and who is discharging.
- Only allow irrigation water to be used during hours of darkness e.g. 6PM-6AM. Wastage would be less.
- Water meters on all farms.
- Using more monitoring equipment on rivers at more locations and assign water users to those locations. Water that is allotted shouldn't be restricted based on river flows otherwise what is the point of using it and its credibility.
- Monitoring usage – urban and rural. More understanding/monitoring of bores, aquifers. Scientific studies with meaningful results.
- Get the dams built.
- Day on, day off.
- Too broad a question. Irrigation, gardens, household use? It seems stupid to continue to issue more rights to irrigate and then bring in restrictions not necessary based on fact e.g. at risk aquifers.
- All citizens issued a modest free daily allocation from town supply on rivers, lakes etc. Any more required (e.g. by business) should be paid for. Rain water collected on your property is free to use by those dwelling on the property.
- Reservation of water during high river flows as is currently happening. Close monitoring and restrictions where necessary in saving aquifers. Encouragement of rainwater collection in town.
- Leave management of water use to local government and stop GW from interfering in local governance.
- Encourage people to conserve and gather their own water (rain). Harsher penalties for a lot of use of rivers.
- Charge for water use (e.g. bores) when they are a commercial operator e.g. dairy farms.
- Encourage water storage. Whether excess water is our cheapest source of water - use current waterways to transport water to use in storage facilities. Hence rivers run better during summer months. Enough water storage would allow extra availability to all users.
- Do you not employ people someone or people to solve the answers to these questions and pay them a lot of money?
- Put in a big dam so you don't have to. Proportionally but primarily to ensure a swimmable river.
- Alternative days – no hosing. As we do.
- Households must come first for family. Farms only get 2nd cut as after all they are a business of their own making based on greed.
- Monitor all irrigation to crops, paddocks etc. to allow the water table throughout our river catchment to remain at the level the rivers are able to flow.
- Don't patch up – get it right! Long term planning. Restricting water should not be the aim. You must get catchment in periods when our rivers have high volume of water and hold in good

substantial dams. In the meantime ration it according to national requirements – food supply, health, then recreation.

- Either do an estimate of individuals water use or install a meter similar to power companies i.e. Genesis. That way you can pay for what you use.
- Meter and user pays.
- If people adhere to the odds and evens for water in gardens etc. Plus being economical with household use. We should continue as before. I would not be happy to have to pay for something which is god given and should be free.
- Restrict watering of lawns and gardens via a 'days' system. For irrigation, a water table habitat.
- Water meter across all Councils.
- Turn taps off properly. While working at the bench don't keep taps running. I have witnessed this. Don't have long showers.
- Give every ratepayer a credit for their water allowance that is unused. The SWDC refuses to do this and only sends bills for excessive use.
- Water meter use for each farmer and household being allowed so many liters per day.
- Ecology and recreation are the priority – encourage farmers to create dams on our own property. Allow public access to swimming holes.
- Require all urban residents with access to both bore and town water to turn one off. Limit rural bore users too much reduced use.
- By introducing for all takes, a low (river) flow trigger resulting in take reduction by an equitable amount.
- Meters with increasing charges when usage exceeds a specified amount.
- Alternate days like currently. People filling swimming pools should buy in water.
- Commercial users should pay. Farmers when water used for irrigation.
- As all water to homes is metered and restrictions put in place over the summer I think this is ample now. Agriculture – vineyards, dairy farms etc. should use best practice. Town supplies should have priority.
- Focus on limiting water use of large users such as farms, including a zero allowance if required to keep water levels high. Publicity campaigns for towns. Install water meters.

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

- Intensive soil erosion programmes. Reduce intensive agriculture on flood plains. Review consents for urban discharges.
- Change attitudes now. Clean rivers are future banking, not a tax to be avoided for today's profit. Make it an intergenerational responsibility.
- You can't in winter as the water is freezing. You can't in summer as it's stagnant and almost dry.
- They mostly are. It's only in recent times a label has been attached (how many people have been sick from swimming in our rivers?)
- Change for our rivers needs immediate action. We need to stop the discharge of both farm and urban waste into our rivers. Residents and Council need to do more to keep our rivers clean. All rivers on farm land need to be fenced off from stock and enforced.
- Prohibit any sewage entering waterways. Aware progress has been made and rivers have improved. Establish baseline of nutrient run off in rivers.
- Stop flooding them with nutrients and phosphates and will take decades to fix.
- Take a hard approach to farmers – especially their field draining into creeks.
- Encourage farmers to fence rivers. Reduce nitrogen run off. ASAP to get there.
- Stop effluent run off from farmers i.e. none.
- Reduce industries that pollute the environment, such as dairying.
- Fence off and plant all waterways – help landowners do this by supplying free native plants grown by schools/prisons/retirement homes – 5 years. This will help store carbon too.
- Not have stock using them and be vigilant about this. Having rubbish bins at popular spots and empty them in summer. Control weed that grows or introduce something to eat it. Release fish into the rivers.
- Farms need to fence off stock.
- Stop discharging town/city wastewater into waterways.
- Put stricter controls on land use to improve run off quality including point source run off. This will require a good understanding of soil run off characteristics under different usage types.
- This question implies that our rivers are not swimmable. This is nonsense. Water quality needs to be managed properly. The right source of contamination needs to be identified to fix the problem – science.
- Plant more trees to filter the water (native or plantation forest). Stop dairy farms polluting them. No reason the polluting can't stop within 1 year.
- Get stock out of waterways and rivers (problem with doing so for water races)
- Make the local councils and business's which discharge waste into waterways be accountable. The level of penalties should reflect that. Swimming will be an option then.
- Channel out swimming areas with bulldozers.
- Assertion on where exactly the pollution is and mitigate it – 10 years? How long it is going to take to get Masterton sewage scheme to be 100% effective.
- Get Council sewage systems up to the cleanest they can be. Continued support for rural initiatives already in place. All ASAP.
- They are swimmable.

- Direct farm effluent away from our rivers and plant more natives to clean (filter the water).
- Ruamahanga river – how far below town sewerage do you check? Lots of people swim at the Waihenga Bridge and there doesn't seem to be a problem.
- I want the rivers to be drinkable. Can be done by restricting industrial agricultural practices and employing permaculture techniques e.g. swales, biochem, food forests. Also connect urban wastewater systems to composting toilets.
- Investment in resources to research – police pollutants and the people who pollute.
- Reduce dairy herds that can discharge to rivers and streams.
- Surely options listed for involvement/feedback makes more sense than asking the general population to do the job of coming up with the answers to complex problems that the highly paid appear to have failed to do. These questions to get help are unimpressive.
- Every dairy shed/piggery needs to install a containment tank/dam and to aerobically /anaerobically treat effluent to the same standard as MDC. Over 5 years max.
- Fine for dumping in the river.
- Stop all effluent over flow from sewage ponds and the river will take care of itself.
- Continue with planting banks of streams, rivers etc. to help sieve out unwanted nutrients.
- Drainage must be most rigorously controlled both on land and contributing brooks and streams with good teams of chemical analysis and inspection with good authority. 10 years to do this.
- Keep upgrading the sewage ponds so there is no chance of raw sewage getting into the river. Keep up public awareness of what to flush down pipes. Install tanks to gather rainwater instead of it going into wastewater systems.
- Encourage organics far more. More fish and eels. 5-10 years.
- Keep the waterways clean and stop the pumping of household and other waste. I remember as a child, many hours of fun and picnics at the end of South Ro. Also under the Waingawa Bridge. Took us all of 5mins to get there, not so now. Make penalties harsher.
- I struggle with the swimming definition. Bugs are everywhere and our bodies learn to cope with them. We need flexibility with water standards depending on the area.
- Have the Councils stop putting sewage into our rivers, like industries and farmers have rules to abide by. Now, not in 10-20 years.
- Stop the farmers with their cows. Don't throw rubbish in the rivers.
- Five years maximum. Force all grazers to keep all stock out of waterways. Direct all wastewater to land based settings, tanks, oxidation ponds and irrigation systems.
- Identifying all point discharges carrying pathogens. Remediating such discharges to an acceptable level.
- Require all rural property owners to fence all waterways and plant alongside all drains, streams, rivers etc. 18-2 year timeframe.
- Absolutely no sewer discharge or animal effluent allowed to pollute the river.
- Clean out all weed and rubbish. Allow four years.
- Reduce dairy run off. Fence off waterways from livestock.
- Herd size limits. Waterless town sewerage systems e.g. composting or nightsoil toilets. Restrict population growth.
- Swimming a secondary consideration. River should be free of pollution at all times.

- Any progress is good progress. Identifying where the biggest polluters are and working through ways this can be mitigated but not in a draconian way. Best practice: SWDC discharge to land is excellent.
- All livestock should be fully fenced off from waterways within two years – there has been many years notice already. Further investment in sustainable water treatment systems over the longer term.

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

- Define river plains and investment activity. Restrict work in river beds – do not degrade. Plant reserves along rivers – natural flood plain.
- Community assets, income and households will not be increased in a negative environment. We have the chance to become an environmentally wealthy country.
- By building dams and weirs and controlling its flow.
- Flood and erosion control no. 1.
- The environment and water quality must come first. Every decision made by local and central government should ultimately aim to protect out natural resources. We don't get a second chance when it comes to protecting water quality and the environment.
- Continue with active management. Keeping in mind what is realistic and practical.
- Natural character be dammed. Clean rivers are a community asset, incomes and households. Dirty rivers lead to ruin and despair.
- Build stop banks and be hard on the farmers.
- Stop effluent run off from farmers i.e. none. I do not see why we need to protect farmer's income at a cost of polluting our rivers. Not a fair situation.
- Don't dam the rivers. Increase riparian planting.
- Take more gravel out of the river bed to allow better flow of the water. Less chance of flow over in floods.
- Comprehensive plan of weed control for flood mitigation.
- Needs time for affected shareholders to assimilate impacts and adjust as the impact on the private sector could be significant. Leave enough room on the river corridors to allow the river to follow some of its natural processes.
- Identifying where nutrients and silt and e-coli come from. Not by gut feel and feel good factors. Robust science and the right expectation. NZ water quality is 2nd in the world behind Iceland.
- If you look after the rivers, the rest will also benefit further down the line. Stop polluting them; help them clean themselves with riparian strips and more trees.
- Stop pussy footing around. You are the ones who can stop pollution of our waterways (i.e. GWRC). You are being too tolerant.
- Ensure no pollution from farms and factories gets into our rivers.
- We are already doing this. No need to change and add more protocols than we have already got.
- Are managed well. Don't make complicated.
- More plantings – stability. Retain wetlands.
- The GWRC do their best to do this now. If you don't live in a flood prone area you probably have a different view.
- The widespread adoption of permaculture technologies will ensure natural character and reduce our dependence on earning large ongoing income. It will ensure that the food we eat is nutrient dense and healthy for families.
- Native flora planting. Ensure tangata whenua has stronger stewardship of local rivers.

- Forget about dams and irrigation schemes that will have to take from environmental flows during dry weather.
- Consultative process by new council – regional/district continuation.
- Appoint officers or people to safe guard these subjects.
- Absolutely no stock access.
- Make sure our water table is not compromised to the stage the rivers cease to run.
- Combine both water and sewage into one organization controlling complete rivers from source to sea. Leading eventually to a national grid.
- Keep monitoring water clarity. Clean river banks of rubbish. Install cameras if necessary to stop rubbish dumping. Lower rubbish fees.
- Stop the dredging of stone and metal. The companies guilty of this have got rich at the people's expense and ruined our recreation. E.g. swimming, fishing, and picnicking.
- Continue with planting and fencing where necessary. Have a plan for adverse events, using floodways etc. Accept that floodplains are susceptible. Build storage dams.
- This question doesn't make sense. It all comes back to councils and their infrastructure, stormwater etc. All ends up in our rivers.
- Councils do a good job in containing natural character and planting.
- Clean rivers frequently. Jobs for those who need it.
- See above. Pollution will be much reduced. Pay much closer attention to factory waste disposal into the normal stormwater/wastewater systems.
- To be arranged by Masterton District Council and Wellington Regional Council.
- Maintain access for people on foot to the river and its tributaries. Not sure whose income you are referring to.
- Encourage regional council to be more pro-active and less bureaucratic in dealing with ratepayers. Use a carrot rather than a whip and report positively back to the community.
- Stock proofing. Riparian planting plus assistance in establishing and maintaining the same.
- This question is too big to answer. How about a measure of economic performance that includes degradation of the ecosystem? GDP is dumb.
- Plant more native trees by the waterways (PD workers) to encourage bees etc.
- Store water when rivers are high. If not used just goes into the sea.
- We already have communities by rivers so they cannot go back to complete natural character. We must accept this and try to improve rivers but not at the detriment of development.
- Be far stronger in limiting water use in dry months and in fencing off livestock – strong enforcement. More native planting of river banks and stream banks. Less 'grading' of river beds with diggers.