

FARMING AND THE FUTURE OF OUR WATERWAYS

From its source in the Tararua Ranges the Ruamahanga River winds its way down the Wairarapa valley, through bush, farmland and towns until it meets the sea at Onoke Spit. It is joined by other rivers and streams on its journey.

The Ruamahanga River is enjoyed by swimmers, walkers and fishermen, supports town drinking and waste water needs, is used by farmers and valued for its spiritual significance.

But the river carries pollutants and sediment eroded from some of the 130kms of river banks – affecting river habitat along its length. Water quality decreases as the river reaches the lower valley and the Wairarapa Moana wetlands.

In the centre of the Ruamahanga River catchment at Gladstone, whaitua committee member Andy Duncan lives with his young

family and runs an environmental engineering business. He has a keen interest in sustainable outcomes and spends as much time in the ‘great outdoors’ as he can.

“Water is at the heart of Gladstone life, be it in rain to grow crops, pasture or fodder, or for us and our kids to enjoy and swim in. The changing climate and response of the land to the demands we are putting on it need careful thought and proactive steps to ensure that our lifestyle and the environment in which we live are not compromised,” says Andy.

“Changes to land use, river form, roads and towns have changed the way the rivers respond to rainfall. Water moves faster through the catchment giving higher peaks and lower low flows. We need to understand our catchment and climate and to collaboratively decide on the best actions to take. Your input in this is essential and

the whaitua committee is keen to hear your views.”

The Wairarapa landscape has been modified significantly by townspeople and landowners over time. Balancing the needs of our native species and human use is challenging. The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee is working to understand how the catchment community wants land and water resources managed into the future. They will bring this information together into a guiding document for the Ruamāhanga River catchment.



TALK TO US

The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee has a vision for the Ruamāhanga River catchment - a Wairarapa where water glistens.

We all want a resilient and connected community that is responsible for the water flowing through our catchment. You can help shape the future of land and water management.

The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee is asking for community feedback on a number of key questions:

- What is the fairest way of restricting water use during the summer?
- What do we need to do to make our rivers swimmable and how long should it take to get there?
- How should we manage rivers to improve natural character while safe guarding community assets, income and households?

Join the conversation online or talk to committee members at a meeting near you. In July and August meetings will be held in Whangaehu, Gladstone, Featherston, Carterton, Masterton, Martinborough and Greytown.

**Discuss land and water management with the committee:
Thursday 28 July Gladstone Sports Complex 6-8PM
Tuesday 2 August Kiwi Hall, Featherston 6:30-8:30PM**

Want to know more?

Go to: <http://haveyoursay.gw.govt.nz/ruamahanga-whaitua>