

# Southland's Catchment Groups 2023



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# Introduction

Thriving Southland is a community-led group with a vision to create a prosperous Southland, healthy people, healthy environment from the mountains to the sea. By working together, Thriving Southland's communities will create a better future for all by protecting Southland's prosperity, heritage, environment and health.

We have a range of Catchment Groups here in Southland... and getting more all the time. When farmers and the community get together to discuss local issues and opportunities, great things can happen.

Thriving Southland is here to connect you with members of the farming community and to support you on this journey. We provide free resources, support great events and empower you to take ownership of local issues so they can be addressed and resolved. Our dedicated team of coordinators is here to encourage and develop groups, get projects off the ground and inspire community action.

Thank you to all the contributors to Thriving Southland, including the farmers and community members who are part of Catchment Groups driving change and environmental improvements in their backyards.



# Meet the Thriving Southland team



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# Ardlussa Catchment Group

Ardlussa Catchment Group was formed in 2020 and includes more than 40 members from a diverse range of farming, including sheep, beef, dairy, deer and arable, as well as rural professionals. This mix of expertise and experience enables the Group to draw on a variety of perspectives to address the challenges facing the Ardlussa catchment.

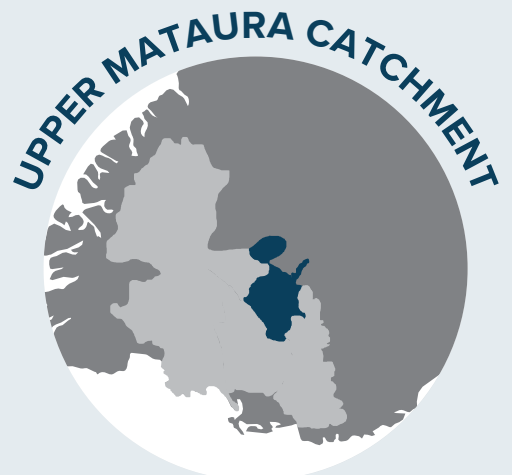


## *SUPPER AND CUPPA CATCHUP - AUGUST 2021*

Ardlussa Catchment Group invited AB Lime's environment manager Fiona Smith and environmental field officer Ainsley Adams to share their knowledge about stream health indicators and the challenges, successes and learnings from their involvement in the Mid Oreti Catchment Group.

## *FIELD DAY & BARBECUE - DECEMBER 2021*

More than 40 people visited two local farms to look at the different environmental improvements and opportunities. The field day ended at a third property for a community wellbeing barbecue – a great ending for the year for both adults and the children.



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# Balfour Catchment Group

Balfour Catchment Group was established in 2020, representing a significant effort by local farmers and other landowners to address the environmental challenges facing the area.

The Group comprises a cross-section of sheep, beef, dairy, deer, horticulture and arable farmers. This diverse membership provides a broad range of experience, enabling members to address the complex challenges facing the Balfour catchment area.

The Group is currently working on the 'Targeted Solutions to Balfour's Environmental Challenges' project.

## BEYOND REGULATION - WHOLE OF MATAURA & BALFOUR

Farmers are working with scientists to deliver a valuable tool that will benefit rural communities across New Zealand using satellite and airborne data to develop a model of landscape properties highlighting variations in soil greenhouse gas emissions and water quality at catchment, farm and paddock scales.

An online portal has been set up so that farmers and rural professionals can easily access the data.

## THE BALFOUR PROJECT

This project aims to provide land managers with science-backed information and tools so they can make decisions on-farm that will reduce groundwater nitrate levels and episodic runoff (sediment, phosphorus and e-coli).

The project has two workstreams with the first looking at nitrate challenges on the flats where well-drained, highly weathered soils result in very high groundwater and surface water nitrate levels.

The second workstream looks at run-off from hill country and lowland areas with poorly drained soils with varied land use that contributes sediment, phosphorus, and e-coli that bring about high levels of nitrate in the surface water (fed up from groundwater bodies).

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

### » Community Evening - March 2021

With members of the community, met at the local pub to talk about why they should be involved in the group and future opportunities.

### » Enviroday at Balfour School - 11 November 2021

At this event 80-plus pupils and whānau from Balfour Primary School used Thriving Southland Education Kits to learn about native plants, stream and estuary health and pest control.



## PURPOSE:

Balfour Catchment Group's purpose is to give land managers in the area information and guidance to make changes on-farm that improve the environment, are economically viable and backed by science. It is focused on taking action and working together in a strong, purposeful community Group.

UPPER MATAURA CATCHMENT



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# Between the Domes Catchment Group

Engage, educate, enhance.  
Engaging with the community  
and all those who live  
in it while increasing  
environmental  
understanding  
for positive change.

Between the Domes Catchment Group, one of the first Catchment Groups to be formed in Southland, launched in 2017. Today, more than 60 people are part of the Group, including dairy, hill country sheep and beef, deer farmers and arable cropping farmers across 77,500ha. Other members not directly linked to farming include residents of Lumsden township.



## UNDERSTANDING AND IMPROVING THE CATCHMENT WITH WETLAND DEVELOPMENT

This project was the Group's main focus for 2021/22, beginning with a survey to understand the diversity of land use in the catchment, build engagement and guide the Group's future work.

Working with NIWA, the Group is planning to restore existing wetlands and establish new ones, along with other mitigations.

A Between the Domes Catchment booklet has been produced.

Field Days have been held covering wintering, rapid habitat assessment, wetlands and winter wellbeing. Upcoming projects include sediment trap and wetland design, riparian corridors, reducing fertiliser application and bale wrap recycling.

In 2022 the Group won the Environmental Action in Water Quality Award at the Environment Southland Community Awards.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

- » A Field Day on intensive winter grazing was held in 2019 in response to new regulations focusing on the impact of nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment and E.coli in waterways.
- » A combined Catchment Group event hosting Rangitikei farmer Roger Dalrymple was a highlight in 2020. He shared his experience of building Groups with a strong purpose.
- » The Christmas Wetland Field Day held in late 2020 was another highlight with the group visiting wetlands and learning how they capture nutrients.
- » Winter Wellness events have also proved successful with guest speakers drawing much attention.

## MISSION:

Positively influencing Good Management Practices community-wide to ensure longevity of healthy landscapes, lifestyles and businesses to live and play in.

## VALUES:

- » Intergenerational and custodial thinking for living on the land
- » Transparency of farming systems and their impacts
- » Connecting communities and people
- » Pride in our surrounding and recreational opportunities
- » Safe and secure community to live and play in.



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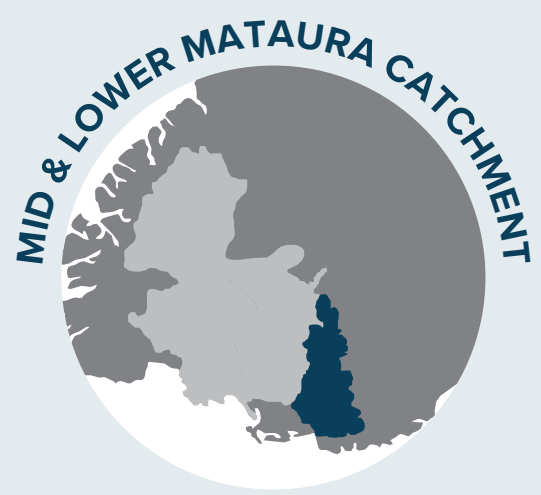
# Glenham Catchment Group

Formed recently, Glenham Catchment Group is a sub-Group to Three Rivers Catchment Group. It covers the area where Kuriwai Creek feeds into Mātaura.



## UNDERSTANDING OUR WATER QUALITY

Before Glenham Catchment Group officially got underway, a community event was held to explore streams in the catchment. DairyNZ's lead advisor and water quality expert, Justin Kitto, presented the latest water quality data for streams in the area. He talked about environmental DNA (eDNA) sample results and the importance of water quality in the Glenham catchment ecosystem.





# GORE CATCHMENT GROUP

Stewardship by people for people  
*Kaitaikitanga taro ake tangata ma tangata*

Gore Catchment Group started in 2018 and today has 80 members from Gore and Mataura towns, lifestyle blocks and deer, sheep, beef and dairy farmers.

To date, the Group has completed stream studies, water testing, a wintering event, and had information stalls at Gore Children's Day Out and Waimumu Field Days.

Further events have been held around Mataura River and farm visits have been arranged for local students.

## DISCOVERING OUR CATCHMENT AND COASTAL CONNECTIONS

Gore/Waimumu Catchment was part of the three-week Discovering Our Catchment and Coastal Connections education programme run in Southland for Year 5-8 school students, teachers and parents.

Featuring the University of Otago's New Zealand Marine Studies Centre Aquavan, the programme provided hands-on learning to increase awareness and understanding of the connection between river health and the coastal environment.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

- » **Strong Catchment Groups, Strong Communities Event**  
Rangitikei farmer and Catchment Group champion Roger Dalrymple shared his knowledge and experience of building Catchment Groups with strong purpose.

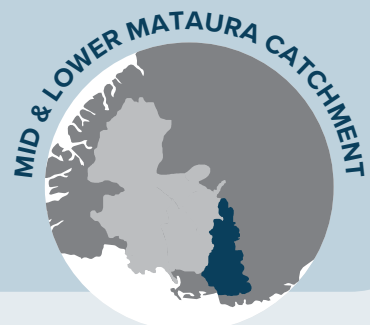
He outlined the following attributes for a successful Catchment Group:

- Catching up and getting ahead of society's expectations
- Understanding the effects of farming on the environment
- Educating and enhancing good management practices
- Having tools (data) in the toolbox
- Encouraging others to understand and tell the Group's story – not just farmers
- Connecting and enriching communities and farming businesses
- Support each other through challenging times
- Changing the model from top down to bottom up



## GOALS:

- » Support and encourage
- » Inform, educate, innovate and share
- » Take a team approach
- » Have a sizeable urban group at the heart of the catchment
- » Work with the Rūnanga to build, formally recognise and celebrate this relationship.



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# GREATER DIPTON CATCHMENT GROUP

**VISION:** Dipton is a sustainable, connected, thriving community.

**PURPOSE:** Support and encourage collaboration and adoption of new ideas.

The Greater Dipton Catchment Group consists of more than 100 people from the Dipton area. It is a strong community group covering many different farming types, and has strong links with Dipton School, Dipton Social Committee, Castlerock Wetland Restoration Team, Dipton Fire Brigade and Oreti Community Board.

## CARBON NEUTRAL DIPTON

The Greater Dipton Catchment Group is on a journey to become carbon neutral. In a six-month project the group is working with five farmers, each with buddies – neighbours and community members who share and learn at farm sessions. Together they are working on ways to reduce GHG emissions on the farms. Consultants will provide modelling and evaluate the different ideas.

The catchment group is also working with Environment Southland to trial a new way of teaching community groups how to monitor waterways using the SHMAK kit, as well as undertaking a restoration project at Castledown Wetland.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

### » Getting started community events – October & November 2020

Knowing what our community wanted from a local Catchment Group and forming a great local group full of different ideas and knowledge was a really important first step for us. So we ran two community events – a community consultation to brainstorm ideas, and Lunch Under the Willows where we heard some great speakers on the history of Dipton and the health of our waterways

### » Fantastic Field Days – May 2021 – March 2022

Our next steps were a series of on farm field days to bring people together and share ideas and knowledge. These included – Know Your Issues, Native Seed Collection and Utilising Unproductive Land. All had great discussions on keeping sediment on your farm, creating wetlands, hill country development, native plantings and good management practices.

### » Community Social Wellbeing Evenings – 2021 & 2022

Each year we run a winter wellbeing event where our community can come together, enjoy some good food and listen to an inspiring speaker. We have been really lucky to have Wayne & Tyler Langford (YOLO Farmers) and Bailley Unahi (aiming to become NZ's first female sit-skier at the 2026 Paralympics in Italy) come and share their incredible knowledge and experiences.



## OBJECTIVES:

- » Develop an understanding of land uses to build connections in the catchment
- » Share good stories of what is happening in the catchment to enhance community pride
- » Upskill community members using local experts and external specialists
- » Host events that are educational, informative and social.

## VALUES:

- » Friendly, approachable and fun
- » Act with honesty and integrity
- » Respect for all views and ideas
- » Non-confrontational and non-political
- » Stewardship
- » Trustworthy
- » Celebrate successes as a community.

LOWER & MID ORETI CATCHMENT



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# Hedgehope Makarewa Catchment Group

**VISION:** Thriving communities making informed, meaningful changes for a resilient future.

**MISSION:** Engaging and empowering the community to care about its social, economic, cultural and environmental future.

Hedgehope Makarewa Catchment Group has been caring for the local environment and community since 2014. There are 12 core members that form the steering group. Involved are dairy, sheep and beef, deer and crop farmers, rural professionals, contractors, local school representatives and others in the community. Looking after the environment and the wellbeing of each other is central to everything Hedgehope Makarewa Catchment Group undertakes.

## UNDERSTANDING OUR LAND TO DRIVE CHANGE

Working with the environmental consultancy, Land & Water Science, this project used science and local knowledge to help people better understand the catchment and how variations in landscape characteristics can impact water quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

Using airborne radiometric data to improve existing soil maps, and data from a drone survey, high resolution hydrological layers were created, and then ground-truthed – i.e. verified in situ.

A free user-friendly online platform was created to share the information and enable landowners to make the best environmental decisions.

Field Days were held on three case study farms to show how the information on landscape susceptibility and resilience could be practically used to help choose future mitigations and where to target them.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

- » **Community Hangi, Native Seed Collecting and Planting**  
Hedgehope Makarewa Catchment Group staged a community hangi and native planting session with Hedgehope School and Hokonui Runanga, and is continuing to support the school's stream health studies.
- » **Southland Catchment Groups' Christmas Competition**  
With the support of Thriving Southland and other Catchment Groups, the Christmas competition dreamt up by Hedgehope Makarewa has become a Southland-wide annual event involving many families, neighbours, communities, businesses and farms.
- » **Sharing Learnings – Two Major Projects**  
The Group's two major projects – Understanding Our Land to Drive Change and the Winter Crop Establishment Trial – have involved many people in the community over the past few years. The Group continues to share learnings with many farmers and farm teams in Southland and across New Zealand.



**Hedgehope Makarewa Catchment Group connects, inspires and supports its community to be well informed and make the best decisions.**

## GOALS:

- » Every property has a Property Environmental Management Plan
- » Using science to understand the catchment and develop practical solutions
- » The community understands the four main contaminants that impact water quality in the catchment
- » Collaborating with stakeholders and other Catchment Groups
- » Ensuring the community is fully informed of any new regulations that will or may affect the area
- » Including wellbeing in all projects.

## VALUES:

- » Friendly and approachable
- » Working together as a community
- » Integrity and respect
- » Celebrating success as a community.



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# Lower Aparima Catchment Group

Lower Aparima Catchment Group was formed in 2016. The Group has a diverse membership from deer, beef, sheep and dairy farmers to industry and community members from the Riverton township and recreational users of Aparima River.



## ANNUAL WINTERING TOUR

This popular annual event showcases different winter grazing practices, crop types and wintering systems in and around the catchment. More than 50 farmers attend, and the Catchment Group are proud of its growing success. As well as being a learning opportunity, the Wintering Tour is a chance for farmers to take a break from the farm to reconnect with old friends and meet newcomers to the district.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

### » Surfing for Farmers

The Lower Aparima is one of the Surfing for Farmers locations. The Group fully supports this initiative, designed to get farmers off-farm and have some fun while trying something new. The Group has sought funding and grants to ensure the initiative is successful locally.

### » Aparima Community Environment (ACE)

Lower Aparima Catchment Group is proud to have helped form the Aparima Community Environment (ACE) Group, who have hosted a number of events, such as stream walks, sediment trap field days and case studies.

## PURPOSE:

- » To increase awareness of water quality issues, data and policy changes.
- » To hold regular meetings involving people with relevant knowledge and expertise.
- » To engage with all land users, industry, government bodies, industry groups and the wider community.
- » To provide education and promotion of good management practices and environmentally beneficial techniques.
- » To trial practical new technology and techniques.

## VALUES:

- » Sustainable farming, industry and communities.
- » Maintaining and improving water quality and estuary health in the Lower Aparima River.
- » Maintaining relationships and communication with all people in the catchment.
- » Being able to carry out recreational activities on and in the Lower Aparima River.



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# Lower Maitaura Catchment Group

The Lower Maitaura Catchment Group was established in 2016. The 75-strong membership is a mix of dairy, sheep and beef farmers.

The Group covers an area that spans from the South of Maitaura Island Bridge, including Maitaura River, to the Titiroa and Gorge Road streams.

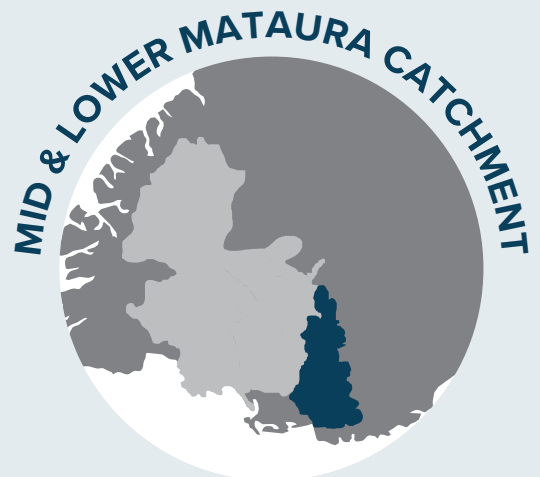


## MCI TESTING WITH CAWTHORN INSTITUTION

With little to no water testing information available for the Lower Maitaura Catchment, a project was undertaken to work with the Cawthron Institute on Macroinvertebrate Community Index (MCI) testing, including conducting two in-stream tests. In a community event, Catchment Group members were able to learn about the process of water quality sampling and discuss the benefits, gaining knowledge and insight into the unique challenges of water testing in this area.

## EVENING TOUR

With the guidance of Environment Southland's Nathan Hughes and Craig Smith, the Lower Maitaura Catchment Group explored the hidden secrets of four small streams that feed the Toetoes Estuary. Members gained insights into stream health and the surrounding environment, learning about historical flooding and the changes that have occurred to the waterways over time.



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# Lower Oreti Catchment Group

Lower Oreti Catchment Group will work on projects and events useful to the area, bringing people together to share knowledge, skills and expert advice.



Lower Oreti Catchment Group was formed in June 2021 to support farmers and our local community to come together to look after our environment and waterways. A core team of six in the catchment, run Field Days and projects to draw people in from different backgrounds and land uses. All share a passion for improving the catchment's environment and waterways.

## KNOW OUR CATCHMENT: ISSUES AND ACTIONS WORKSHOP

Lower Oreti Catchment Group initially brought in the environmental consultancy Land & Water Science to provide an understanding of the catchment, its issues and the best options to tackle them.

Information was shared with the community in a user-friendly handout, a 30-minute video and at an evening event where potential mitigations were discussed.

Lower Oreti Catchment Group is now learning about their water quality and stream health.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

### » Wintering Field Day – June 2021

More than 50 people visited two farms with different wintering systems, and managing environmental risks around wintering was discussed and tips shared.

### » Know Your Catchment Community Meeting – July 2022

This event provided locals with a better understanding of the catchment, and to plan a course of action.

### » Wonderful Wetland & Lawn Bowls Social – December 2022

Catchment Group members visited local farmer Gavin Macpherson's 2ha constructed wetland, which was created with support from Southland Fish & Game. Gavin shared top tips for constructing a successful wetland area.

## The group's goal is to help farmers and the community to:

- » Better understand the challenges of balancing farm production with sustainable land use, and improved water quality and biodiversity
- » Identify opportunities and drive farmer-led, grassroots action
- » Respond to changing environmental policies and consumer expectations

The group will also continue to work closely with other Catchment Groups throughout Southland on aligned projects and events.



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# Lower Waiau Farmers Catchment Group

Lower Waiau Catchment Group was formed in 2020 by local farmers wanting to understand more about their environment and carry out improvement work.



## MOBILE CATTLE SHELTER DEVELOPMENT

This project developed and trialled a large prototype mobile shelter during the 2022 winter. The shelter was based on irrigator spans catering for winter crop grazing of 60 to 120 cows with the aim of improving feed efficiency, animal welfare and environmental outcomes. Unfortunately, the structure was damaged by strong winds and has now been redesigned to make it more robust so it can be tested again in the 2023 winter.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

- » **Environmental DNA tests – May 2021**  
Water samples from the Lilburn and Merton streams revealed pleasing results including the presence of a number of interesting species such as kanakana (lamprey) and gollum galaxids. Members of the Catchment Group collected the water samples, filtering the water to capture the DNA. The samples were then analysed by Wilderlab.
- » **Know Your Numbers evening – October 2021**  
DairyNZ water quality specialist, Justin Kitto, presented on the current conditions of freshwater in the Waiau catchment.
- » **Family Stream Walk & Stream Health Check – January 2023**  
A fun family day out, including a BBQ, was held in the summer holidays. The Environment Southland sustainability team taught members of the community how to carry out stream health assessments. Testing was at two sites in Lilburn Stream, including on the King family farm where lots of critters were found confirming the excellent state of this section of the stream.



# Makarewa Headwaters Catchment Group

Makarewa Headwaters' purpose is to understand how to manage farming practices to better the on-farm environment, to take responsibility for water quality, comply with environmental legislation and promote the values that drive food production in the area.

Makarewa Headwaters Catchment Group is made up of a core team of 10-12 people, with a wider group of 60 people (and growing). Members include sheep, beef, dairy and deer farmers, horticulture sector, and community members.



## INVESTIGATION USING LUCI-AG

Teaming with Ravensdown, the Makarewa Headwaters Catchment Group has used the Land Utilisation Capability Indicator (LUCI-Ag) modelling tool to identify the impacts of land use on six farms in the catchment. This has pinpointed nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment (soil loss) hotspots.

The farms represent each of the different farm types in the catchment and each one is in a strategic location.

Findings have enabled each farm to explore different mitigation options to find the best solutions, both for their property and for the community and waterways in the area.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

### » National Environmental Standards for Freshwater Field Day – 27 October 2020

Makarewa Headwaters Catchment Group hosted an event to consider practical aspects of the new legislation and potential on-farm solutions.

### » Native Seed Nursery/Propagation Field Day – 26 February 2021

Malcolm and Margaret Mackenzie talked about how to propagate native seed from local sources. Attendees also saw what native shelterbelts can look like in a short period when well managed.

### » The Great Gorge Clean Up – September 2021

This competition (via Facebook) provided some fun for the community during lockdown while cleaning up roadsides in the area with participants competing for prizes.

## OBJECTIVES:

- » Be proud of what goes into the Makarewa River
- » Encourage Good Management Practices intergenerationally
- » Strive for best practice – sharing of knowledge and on-farm findings
- » Retain nutrient inputs utilising them as efficiently as possible
- » Continue to swim in our waterways, downstream and on-farm, for years to come
- » Hold community events
- » Create shared spaces
- » Provide a social, educational environment to upskill and share knowledge and connections
- » Provide a collective voice.

LOWER & MID ORETI CATCHMENT



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# Mid Aparima Catchment Group

Established in 2018, the Mid Aparima Catchment Group is an integral part of the Aparima Catchment Group and Aparima Community Environment (ACE). Many of the local farmers are working with ACE to encourage sustainable and profitable farming practices. Regular workshops and events provide farmers with an opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other.



## COLLABORATING WITH THE LOCALS

Mid Aparima Catchment Group collaborates with many other Groups and projects in and around the catchment. One example is their collaboration with the Connect Centre, working with members to help put on free meals to farmers and rural workers during calving and lambing seasons. The aim of the initiative is to provide a much-needed break off the farm, a good meal and the opportunity to catch up with other farmers and workers, bringing a good feel to the community.

The Mid Aparima Group has also helped with the decade-long restoration of braided river habitats and pest control efforts being undertaken by member Grant McGregor in the Aparima at Wreys Bush. This is a project that has the support of the Department of Conservation with many protected species being re-established.

## VIRTUAL STREAM WALK

As part of its involvement with ACE, the Mid Aparima Catchment Group created a virtual stream walk. This allowed the group to host an event during covid times which members could watch from the comfort of their homes. The virtual stream walk showcased the rich history of the Otautau stream with water quality experts providing assessments.

This virtual approach has proved popular with other Catchment Groups and farmers whose busy schedules may not have allowed time out to walk the stream in reality.

APARIMA CATCHMENT



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# Mid Oreti Catchment Group

Mid Oreti Catchment Group is all about building strong connections and supporting the local community to look after the waterways for future generations.

## VISION:

Working together as a community for better environmental outcomes.

Mid Oreti Catchment Group started in 2019, and includes a diverse group of locals with a passion for improving the environment and the health of waterways of the catchment. The group has a core team of six to eight people, and has Field Days attended by up to 60 people. Members include farmers, plus industry and community representatives from Winton township and surrounds.

## MID ORETI MINI FOREST MOVEMENT

This long-term project aims to increase the number of mini native forests in the catchment and teach people how to grow their own native plants. Locals can purchase native plants for \$1/plant with the proceeds going back to the group.

To kickstart this project, AB Lime donated 1,000 native plants, planning and planting five mini forests, some in the community and some on farms.

The Catchment Group also ran (and continues to) a series of seed collection and propagation workshops to encourage people to grow plants for their properties and the mini native forest project.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

- » **Composting Barn Field Days – 21 July 2021 and 7 July 2022**  
AB Lime General Manager, Steve Smith, hosted Field Days at the company's composting barn trial, discussing how the trial is progressing and future plans.
- » **Funding for Farmers for Better Environmental Outcomes – 15 June 2022**  
Farmers and a number of others in the community attended this event to learn about the funding opportunities available to support on-farm change to help our environment and community.
- » **Grow Your Own Natives Field Days – 10 February 2022 to present**  
The Catchment Group held practical workshops on native seed collection and growing, including how to identify native plants and determine the right plant, the right place and the right purpose.

The Group also stages monthly get-togethers to look after plants being raised for the mini native forest project.



## WHAT THE GROUP DOES:

- » Connect the community
- » Tackle projects and solve issues
- » Run events
- » Access expert advice and information
- » Share knowledge and skills.



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# Mimihau Catchment Group

Mimihau Catchment Group was formed in 2020 and is a sub-Group of Three River Catchment Group. There are 25 members in the Mimihau Catchment Group including sheep, beef and dairy farmers. The area is well known for its fishing and recreation.

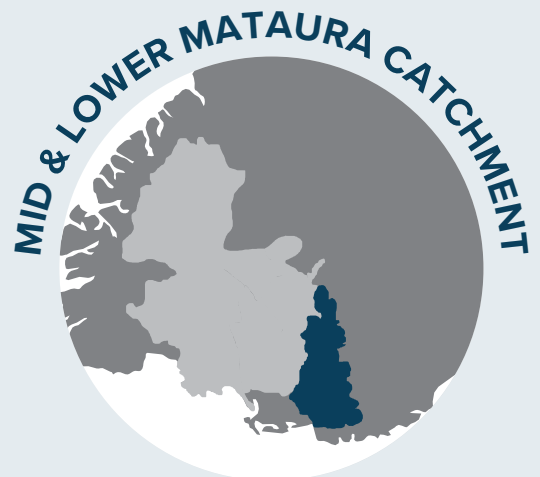


## MCI SAMPLING IN MIMIHAU RIVER

Mimihau Catchment Group carried out water sampling at a field event with freshwater ecologist Robin Holmes from the Cawthron Institute. The event included water sampling at 10 sites along Mimihau River. Community members, including Menzies College senior science class took part, learning how to do their own Macroinvertebrate Community Index (MCI) sampling for the future.

The Cawthron Institute then compiled the findings into a report, with recommendations.

Other events Mimihau Catchment Group have held include important topics such as the Emissions Trading Scheme, silt ponds and water schemes.



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# Mokoreta Catchment Group

Recently formed, Mokoreta Catchment Group is a sub-Group of the Three Rivers Catchment Group. The Mokoreta Catchment Group includes approximately 15 farmers and their aim is to understand the local stream and build better engagement by working closely with people in the catchment.

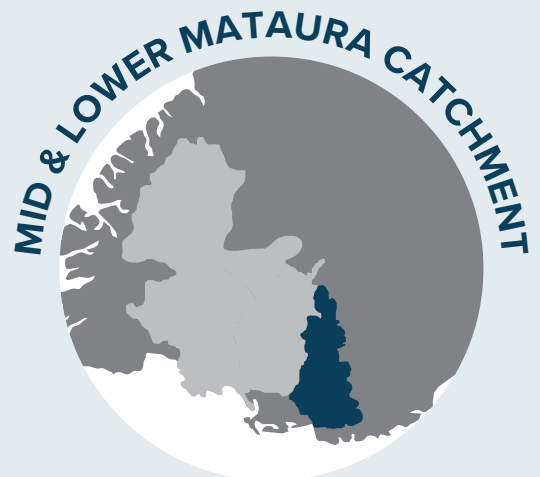


## MOKORETA'S FIRST COMMUNITY MEETING

The Group's inaugural meeting attracted 25 people and there was plenty of lively discussion, with goals set and plans made for upcoming events.

## UNDERSTANDING OUR WATER QUALITY

DairyNZ's lead advisor and water quality specialist, Justin Kitto, presented the latest data for the Mokoreta River, sharing environmental DNA (eDNA) sample results.



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# Orauea River Catchment Group

Orauea Catchment Group was formed in 2021 and covers the Orauea River Catchment, a tributary of the Waiau River.

## UNDERSTANDING ORAUEA RIVER

A key feature of Orauea catchment is the significant amount of mudstone rock in the landscape, a highly unusual feature for the Southland region.

The Group has set up a project to help landusers understand the challenges of this geology, its impact on water quality and provide a range of potential mitigations.

Land & Water Science has been engaged to complete a high-resolution stocktake of environmental data and map layers using radiometric and satellite data. From this a catchment prioritisation map will be created with Catchment Group members carrying out ground truthing.

Mitigation options will be collated into an online resource and community field days will be held to share the learnings.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

### » Establishing Orauea River Catchment Group – July 2021

With new information available about the mudstone geology in the Orauea area, a community event was held to hear from Land & Water Science’s Dr Clint Rissmann. He outlined how the mudstone in the Orauea River area was impacting sediment and E. coli in surrounding waterways. Following his presentation there was strong support from community members to establish the Orauea River Catchment Group.

### » Community meeting – October 2021

To help determine the best steps forward for the newly established Catchment Group, a community meeting was held to discuss options and hear the experiences of Lloyd McCall from Pomohaka Water Care Group and Paul Turner from the Upper Aparima Catchment Group, as well as Land & Water Science.



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# Orepuki Catchment Group

Orepuki Catchment Group was formed in 2018 and currently has around 20 members from diverse farming background, as well as others from the community. The Group is also part of the larger Aparima collective, ACE (Aparima Community Environment)



## FARM PULSE WALK

Orepuki Catchment Group teamed up with Landpro and the wider ACE to conduct a farm pulse walk, where they looked to identify practical solutions for enhancing environmental management practices while maximising resources. Through discussions, the Group explored small-scale changes that could cumulatively contribute to significant environmental improvements. These included visual soil assessments, managing high risk areas such as waterways, crossings, bridges, culverts, biodiversity on farm and potential funding and grants available.

## FARMER ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT

As part of the ACE project, Orepuki Catchment Group selected the Pahia Point area to participate in a trial programme offering farmers one-on-one support around overcoming obstacles and challenges, establish connections, and take their farm environment planning to the next level with practical strategies.

## APARIMA CATCHMENT



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# Otama Catchment Group

Otama Catchment Group was established in 2022 and now has 19 members including arable, sheep, beef and dairy farmers as well as the Otama School community. The Otama Catchment Group has hit the ground running, holding workshops, GHG and soil science evenings as well as community events that have all been well supported.



## WHAT IS INFLUENCING OUR WATER QUALITY

Clint Rissmann, from Land and Water Science, collated the water, soil and geology information about the Otama Catchment to provide the Group with an understanding of how water moves through the catchment.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

- » **Forming a community Catchment Group - potluck dinner**  
This dinner event introduced the Catchment Group concept to the Otama community. Kevin Hall from Three Rivers Catchment Group talked about how this group was formed, covering learnings and wins from past projects, and what might be next for the Group. Otama Catchment's key challenges and opportunities were discussed, as well as some potential projects.
- » **Know your number... Now What?**  
Otama was one of three Catchment Groups involved in a short workshop with prominent soil scientist Dr Ants Roberts, Ravensdown's Chief Scientific Officer. The goal was to get a handle on the science of farm greenhouse gases and make a plan of how emissions might be reduced.



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# Otamita Catchment Group

Otamita Catchment Group was formed in 2022, covering 17,000 ha and including 18 farms and the Mandeville township. Farms are primarily sheep and beef along with arable and dairy farms at the bottom of the catchment. Currently, the Group is working on building relationships and engagement.



## KOURA SEDIMENT TRAP AND CATCHMENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This two-year project improves farmers understanding about the Koura (native freshwater crayfish) and how their populations are an indication of improving water quality in the catchment.

### A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

#### » Freshwater Crayfish Farming

Earnslaw One's Aquaculture Manager, John Hollows, shared his knowledge about freshwater crayfish. John looks after the company's Keewai Project which successfully and sustainably farms freshwater crayfish in some of its South Island forests. He explained how to establish crayfish ponds on farms, discussing future markets for this unique product.

#### » Otamita Catchment Group Stream Walk

The group learnt about the unique macroinvertebrates that live in the Otamita catchment streams.

#### » MCI Stream Habitat Assessment with 4Sight Consulting

4Sight Consulting's Noah Davis presented data from MCI testing recently completed in the catchment and he also explained the eDNA – the environmental DNA – results from pond samples taken on-farm.



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# POURAKINO CATCHMENT CONSERVATION TRUST

Founded in 2014, Pourakino Catchment Conservation Trust (PCCT) is one of the longest standing Catchment Groups in Southland.

It was formed by a group of farmers who connected to have a meaningful voice and address sediment issues in the Riverton Estuary. Motivated by a shared vision they have hosted a number of projects and events to preserve native bush, rivers and streams surrounding their farms and improve the wider catchment and estuary environments while protecting their farming businesses.

## ON-GRASS WINTER TRIAL

PCCT members are acutely aware of wintering pressures and the need to revisit existing practices. While current grasses are bred for high productivity, the on-grass winter pilot trial is exploring alternative pasture and forages that are designed to be highly resistant to treading.

The trial aims to answer the questions of whether the trade-off in production is worth planting selected pasture paddocks with grasses more resilient to pugging, and could a system be designed to cope with particularly adverse weather events?

The Catchment Group completed the first year of the trial in the winter of 2022.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

### » Crack Willows in the Pourakino

Crack willows invading Pourakino River are blocking and shading the river. The Catchment Group is taking action to restore the river's glory, collaborating with locals, businesses, recreational users, the Department of Conservation and Environment Southland, to scope and remove the willows.

### » Aparima Community Environment (ACE)

Pourakino Catchment Group is proud to be a founding member of ACE - Aparima Community Environment.

Recently, ACE explored a stream that feeds both farmland and bush in Pourakino. Investigating and understanding the catchment's history, rainfall data, contamination pathways, and kanakana (lamprey) inhabiting the stream.

PCCT field days have covered the release of soil mapping programmes LUCI (Ravensdown) and MitAgator (Ballance) as well as an event at Oraka Aparima Runaka.



### The Group's immediate focus is on four key areas:

- » Minimising sediment runoff
- » Improving waterway management
- » Improving nutrient management
- » Improving the public perception of agriculture.

A longer-term goal is to ensure that local farmers are well informed and able to make the best management decisions based on good data.

Nearly all farmers in Pourakino Catchment are involved in PCCT and 85% of landholders in the area have a Farm Environment Management Plan.

PCCT is the proud winner of the 2016 Environment Southland Councillors Special Award and the 2022 Ballance Farm Environment Catchment Group Award.



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# South Coast Catchment Group

South Coast Catchment Group was formed in 2021 and has 40 members involved in drystock and dairy farming.

The catchment encompasses Tokanui in the north, down to Waipapa Point, Otara, Haldane and around the coast to Slope Point. They often join with Waikawa Catchment Group for events.

## B+LNZ - FARM ENVIRONMENT PLAN WORKSHOPS

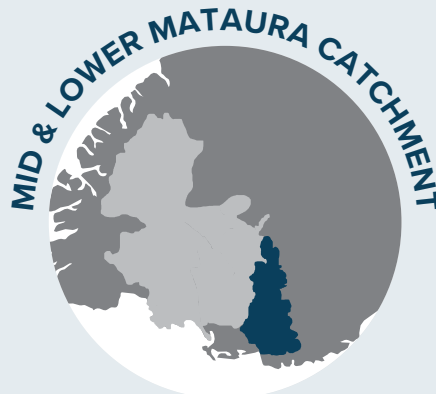
The practical on-farm focus of the Group led to working with Beef & Lamb NZ to deliver two farm environmental modules. Attended by 40 local farmers, the events covered potential mitigations and tools to reduce the environmental footprint of farming in the catchment.

Key learnings from the module included managing soil health and native biodiversity, an introduction to water quality and ecological health and winter grazing tools.

Workshop participants took home a strong base for their Farm Environment Plans.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

- » **Winter Grazing Good Practice field day**  
With the support of DairyNZ and Environment Southland, the Group hosted a field day at Darryl and Nicola Johnstone's farm to discuss all aspects of winter grazing including paddock set-up, Plan Bs, strategic grazing and winter grazing rules.
- » **Grow Your Own Native Plants**  
More than 40 people attended an event to learn how to grow native plant species.
- » **Mid-Winter Get Together**  
Hosted by the Waikawa, South Coast and Titiroa Catchment Groups, the mid-winter get together gave everyone the chance to leave behind the muddiness of daily life and enjoy a buffet meal and entertainment.



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# Te Anau Basin Catchment Group

The Te Anau Basin Catchment Group is in the development phase, with discussions about forming a Catchment Group starting in 2020.



## RULES & REGS INFO EVENING

To test the level of interest for a Catchment Group in Te Anau, a National Environmental Standards information evening was held.

The event was supported by Thriving Southland with board chair Ewen Mathieson, Kate Scott from Landpro, Fiona Young from Environment Southland, Tessa Schmidt from DairyNZ and Corina Jordan from Beef & Lamb NZ. It was a great evening, with some tough questions asked of the panel.

## DECODING WATER QUALITY

At the meeting a Landpro water quality specialist helped to decode water quality in the Te Anau region. Simon Hopcroft from the Lower Aparima Catchment Group shared his experience of being involved in a Catchment Group, and provided ideas on how to inspire and motivate the local community.



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# Three Rivers Catchment Group

Three Rivers Catchment Group was formed in 2015 and has over 50 members. The Group has a sheep, beef and dairy base. It encompasses Wyndham and Edendale townships and has close links with Menzies College. The Group engage with a range of stakeholders to lead the way in environmental practices and to educate and inform the community on environmental issues.



## BEYOND REGULATION WHOLE OF MATAURA PROJECT

The Matura Beyond Regulation Project is a collaborative project involving farmers working directly with scientists to deliver a valuable tool that will benefit rural communities across New Zealand.

Satellite and aerial data are being used to develop a model that highlights variations in soil greenhouse gas emissions and water quality at catchment, farm and paddock scales.

The data will be accessed through an online portal, providing the information in a relatable manner for rural professionals and land managers. This is critical for the environmental, social, cultural and economic wellbeing of Southland and ultimately all rural communities, as it will supply scientific landscape data that will inform carbon and water quality solutions that meet Government environmental targets.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

- » **Wintering Tour Options Field Day**  
The Group toured the catchment visiting a range of winter grazing operations including a sheep wintering system, baleage and grass, a wintering barn and a cropping business.
- » **The Good the Bad and the Mudly**  
A fun evening event was organised to bring the local community together to talk about 'The Good the Bad and the Mudly' and highlight wintering plans and what to do if the weather gets tough.

## GOALS:

Three Rivers Catchment Group aims to lead the way in environmental practices and to educate and inform the community on environmental issues.



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# Titiroa Catchment Group

Titiroa Catchment Group began in partnership with the Glenham and Lower Matura Catchment Groups. The Titiroa landscape is generally flat, including areas of swampy terrain, and is used mostly for dry stock farming with some dairy farming.

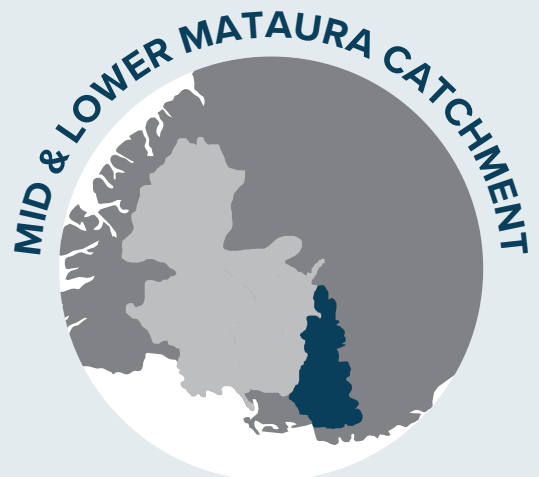


## *TITIROA CATCHMENT BUS TRIP*

Titiroa Catchment Group organised a bus trip to visit Environment Southland water quality measuring stations and stop at two local farms for stream health assessments and an environmental study. The trip got underway at Seaward Downs and ended with a debrief over coffee at Fortrose Café giving members of this new Group an opportunity to get to know each other.

## *BIODIVERSITY WORKSHOP*

Conservationist Professor David Norton shared his wide-reaching biodiversity knowledge with 30 passionate farmers and rural professionals during a workshop about the regeneration of native plants. He provided key tips for caring and maintaining plants through their life cycle.



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# Upper Aparima Catchment Group

Upper Aparima Catchment Group, formed in 2018, has growing support from local farmers. Together with the Aparima Community, the Group engages in the Aparima Community Environment (ACE) initiative to promote environmental conservation.



## TRAP THE CR\*P - SEDIMENT & WETLAND SYSTEMS

Effective wetland or sediment trap systems are a key focus for the Upper Aparima Catchment Group.

Catchment Group farmers who have installed wetlands/sediment traps provided information about the cost and work involved, offering advice for others interested in developing their own systems.

Experts in the field provided information on a range of topics including soil mapping, water and contaminant pathways and the work of the Pomahaka Water Care Group, as well as details about the Aparima Catchment's history.

Overall, the aim is to promote the benefits of well-designed wetland or sediment trap systems and encourage more widespread implementation in the community.

## FARMER ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT

As part of the ACE project, the Upper Aparima Catchment Group selected the Hamilton Burn area to participate in a trial programme offering farmers one-on-one support to overcome obstacles and challenges, establish connections, and take their farm planning to the next level with practical strategies.

APARIMA CATCHMENT



# Waihopai Catchment Group

**VISION:** Waihopai community working together to look after our waterways.

**MISSION:** Educate and work as a community to drive practical solutions to improve our waterways for future generations.



Waihopai Catchment Group was formed in 2019. With a core 10 people, the membership includes farmers, rural professionals, the local school and others in the community. Currently, efforts are focused on the Woodlands area with plans for future expansion into other parts of the catchment.

## RECYCLING: WHAT CAN YOU DO ON YOUR FARM, YOUR HOUSEHOLD AND IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Working with the Catchment Groups in Greater Dipton, Three Rivers and Waikaka Stream, Waihopai Catchment Group brought Taranaki dairy farmer and environmental champion Trish Rankin to Southland to run a series of interactive recycling and waste reduction workshops.

Everyone took away at least one easy idea to try on the farm or in the home. After the events two brochures were produced – one giving reduction ideas and the other covering top local recycling tips.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

- » **Mid-winter Calving/Lambing Get Together – September 2020**  
Despite it being a busy time of the year, this relaxed, community get together was a chance to leave gumboots at the door, be with friends and neighbours, and chat about potential events and projects.
- » **Discovering Our Catchment and Coastal Connections – March 2021**  
Waihopai and Gore-Waimumu Catchment Groups brought the New Zealand Marine Studies Centre (University of Otago) Aquavan to Southland. Over 1300 Year 5 to Year 8 students and many others from across the region learnt about their catchment and coastal connections.
- » **On Farm Recycling Field Day – July 2021**  
This field day provided information about baleage wrap, dairy shed, household and community recycling. All things recycling were discussed, and many ideas shared.

## GOALS:

- » Continue to monitor waterways and spread Good Management Practices to improve waterway health.
- » Educate the community in waterway health for generations to come
- » Share good stories of what is happening in the catchment to enhance community pride.

## VALUES:

- » Friendly and approachable
- » Work together as a community
- » Integrity and respect
- » Celebrate successes as a community.



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# Waikaia Catchment Group

The Waikaia Catchment Group was established in January 2023, made up of a diverse mix of 15 landowners and managers from various sectors including high-country stations, forestry, sheep, beef, and dairy. The Waikaia catchment is a significant land area, which also includes the township of Waikaia.

The Group aims to promote sustainable land use practices that safeguard the catchment's natural resources but also supports the prosperity and wellbeing of the community.



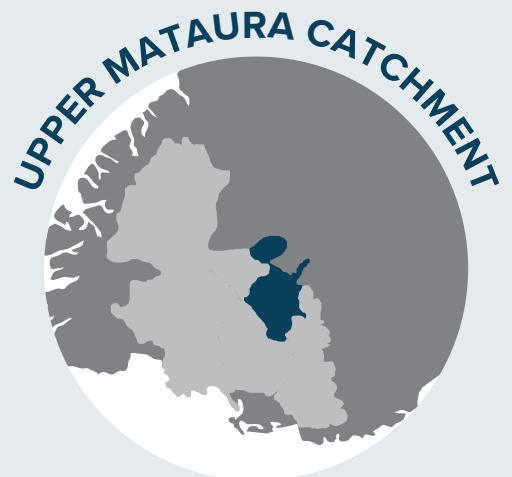
## WAIKAIA ON-FARM WATER QUALITY AFTERNOON.

The Waikaia Catchment Group held a stream health assessment afternoon to understand water quality in their catchment. They focused on three sites in the catchment, using the Environment Southland Land Sustainability team's knowledge and equipment to collect data. This included the MCI scoring and clarity of each waterway.

## SOUTHLAND'S FUTURE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

Waikaia Catchment Group invited Environment Southland to present their 'Southland's Future Environmental Challenges' presentation.

The Group heard from Councillors and TAMI about Environment Southland's focus for the next 10-years, including water and land plan changes, limit setting, and the longer-term environmental goals for Southland.



# Waikaka Stream Catchment Group

Waikaka Stream Catchment Group started in 2017 and has 90 members including sheep, beef, dairy, and crop farmers with a core team of 10 farmers. The catchment covers Waikaka and Pukerau townships, including both schools.

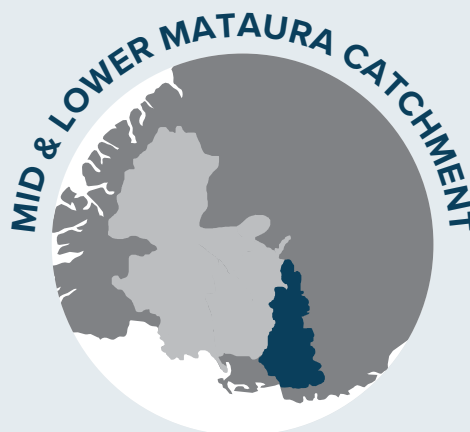


## RECYCLING - FARM, HOUSEHOLD & COMMUNITY

Working together, the Catchment Groups in Greater Dipton, Three Rivers, Waikaka Stream and Waihopai brought Taranaki dairy farmer and environmental champion Trish Rankin to Southland to run a series of interactive recycling and waste reduction workshops. Trish presented practical on-farm, household and community recycling options. Following the events two brochures were produced – one giving reduction ideas and the other covering top local recycling tips.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

- » **Water Quality Assessment of Waikaka Stream**  
An Otago University student studied the Waikaka Stream to assess the overall water quality, and the management views of the local community.
- » **SHMAK monitoring of Waikaka Stream**  
The SHMAK kit is a tool to check freshwater health measuring water quality factors like pH and temperature to identify opportunities, and help manage rivers and streams. The Waikaka Stream Catchment Group regularly uses the kit to assess water quality at three different catchment sites.



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# Waikawa Catchment Group

Waikawa Catchment Group was formed in 2009, with a desire to learn about their catchment, and what's happening in the water, bush and on the farm. There are now more than 30 in the group, consisting of a wide network of community members who work together to improve the water quality of Waikawa Stream. The Stream runs through several farms in the catchment and is used for a whole range of recreational activities, including swimming and fishing.



## MCI INTRODUCTION & ENGAGEMENT GROUP-BUILDING EVENT

At a hands-on field day visiting the Tokanui, Waipapa and Waikawa streams, Craig Simpson from Landcare Trust New Zealand shared his knowledge on Macroinvertebrate Community Index (MCI) testing and Rapid Habitat Assessments. He also spoke about what has been successful in the Otago Pomahaka Catchment, giving a range of ideas for improvement works.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

### » Pest management workshop

Environment Southland and the Department of Conservation presented a workshop covering plant and animal pests and best methods of eradicating them. They provided a range of traps, explaining how each one works and local trapper Tony Leigh also shared tips on trapping in the district.

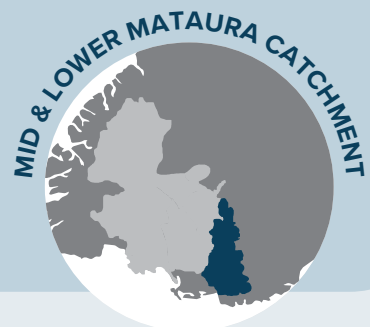
Other events included learning about the Waikawa River Restoration Plan, stream habitat assessments and on-farm management discussion groups.

## VISION:

To have a catchment the community is proud of, a river with the best water quality and a community that is committed to its environment.

## VALUES:

Long-term community commitment to care for the catchment, maintaining and enhancing the environment and working together leading by example.





# WAIMATUKU CATCHMENT GROUP

Waimatuku Catchment Group came to life at a farm kitchen table, with four of the founding members from 2016 still active on the 14-member committee.

With 76 members, the Group meets regularly to improve water quality and biodiversity, as well as enhance recreational opportunities and economic sustainability for current and future generations. The community is at the heart of all they do.

## BIODIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS

While Waimatuku Catchment has been modified from its natural state, the area is rich in biodiversity gems. To raise awareness about the area's biodiversity and how to enhance and protect it, the Catchment Group organises field days exploring and learning about their unique landscapes.

Catchment Group members took a first hand look at the Big Lagoon ecological restoration work. This used to be the second largest freshwater Lagoon on the Southern Coastal Plain. Matai and Totara Trees are now re-emerging in the restored forested areas.

Other field days included visiting the catchment's nationally rare coastal lagoons.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

### » Group Christmas Do at Thornbury

Waimatuku Catchment Group's Christmas get-together was held at Thornbury Rural Heritage Centre, where all catchment members had an opportunity to learn more about the history of farming in the area.

### » Beach Clean-up

The Group organised a fun-filled beach clean-up at the river mouth with the beachcombers finding all sorts of interesting items. There are plans to make the clean-up an annual event.

### » Planting Day

More than 30 people, including kids and folks from Invercargill, came together on a local farm to plant around 500 native species in a new sediment trap network. Plant experts shared valuable skills to inspire others to start planting projects of their own.



## PURPOSE:

- » Bring people together with a shared interest in the health of Waimatuku Catchment.
- » Collaborate with regulators and stakeholders.
- » Explore initiatives to improve the health of the catchment's streams, wetlands and estuaries.
- » Educate the Waimatuku community.
- » Celebrate water quality improvements.

## GOALS:

- » Increase community involvement in the water quality discussion.
- » Learn more about local biodiversity.
- » Explore new technologies to improve the environmental performance of Waimatuku catchment farms.
- » Build relationships with other Catchment Groups.

## APARIMA CATCHMENT



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# Wendonside Catchment Group

The proactive farming community of Wendonside formed a Catchment Group in 2019 to better understand and manage water quality challenges in the area.

The catchment spans 27,000 hectares between Dome Burn Creek and the Mataura River, with the southern boundary at the confluence of the Waikaia and Mataura rivers.

Farming is a mix of dairy, sheep, beef and arable, the land being mainly flat to moderately rolling with several hill country properties along the catchment's boundary.

Wendonside Catchment Group is an Incorporated Society that has established a model to collect funds from members to finance approved private initiatives and undertake public projects in partnership with funding partners. The Society has a management committee with seven members.



## UNDERSTANDING LAND & WATER TO EFFECT CHANGE

To better understand the physiography – the science of geography – of the area, the Wendonside Catchment Group has engaged Land & Water Science. With the findings of macroinvertebrate community index testing (MCI), they are putting in place long-term mitigation strategies at both the catchment and farm level.

The project is designed to provide findings across the catchment and at paddock scale to guide farmers when making environmental decisions on their property. Using radiometric and satellite layers, the variability in nutrient losses can be identified, including surface and groundwater quality, and the timing of aquifer recharge.

## A FEW EVENTS WE ARE PROUD OF:

### » Winter Grazing field day

Wendonside Catchment Group held a winter grazing field day to understand issues, share knowledge and discuss best practice.

### » Planting and Waterways field day

The Wendonside Catchment Group held a successful Planting and Waterways field day visiting local Dyer Native Plant Nursery to learn about growing high quality native plants. Following this, the Group visited the Dingle family property to talk about sediment traps, assessing stream health, and increasing biodiversity.

## PURPOSE:

Wendonside Catchment Group's purpose is to promote the role farmers can play in managing local water quality.

The Group promotes good environmental farm management practices, demonstrating, supporting and encouraging sound environmental stewardship amongst members.

The focus is on initiatives providing members with sound technical information about water quality and the environment in general in the catchment.

Ultimately, the aim is to ensure farmers can farm sustainably in a thriving community.

UPPER MATAURA CATCHMENT



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## Get in contact

**For more information about your catchment and to contact your local catchment coordinator**

021 466 700 | [office@thrivingsouthland.co.nz](mailto:office@thrivingsouthland.co.nz)  
[thrivingsouthland.co.nz/catchment-groups](http://thrivingsouthland.co.nz/catchment-groups)



# THRIVING SOUTHLAND

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