

MINUTES

SUBJECT	Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee workshop with stakeholders on contents of WIP
WHEN	Monday 24 April, 10-4PM
WHERE	South Wairarapa Working Men's Club, Greytown
ATTENDEES – COMMITTEE	Peter Gawith, Phil Palmer, Ra Smith, Mike Birch, Esther Dijkstra, David Holmes.
INDEPENDENT FACILITATOR	Terry Parminter
ATTENDEES – GWRC PROJECT TEAM	Kat Banyard, Alastair Smaill, Mike Grace, Natasha Tomic, Paula Hammond, Caro Watson
ATTENDEES – STAKEHOLDERS	Diana Mathers (FAR), Leo Vollebregt (Water Users), Mike Williams, Jamie Falloon (Federated Farmers – First 15mins only), Jim Flack (DOC), John Pansters (Fishing Club), Phil Teal (Fish and Game – Morning Only), Adam Canning (Fish and Game – Morning Only), Peter Wilson (Fish and Game – Morning Only), Paul Shortas (Fish and Game – Morning Only), Duncan Moore (Sustainable Wairarapa), Chris Peterson (Sustainable Wairarapa), Don Bell (Sustainable Wairarapa and other local groups), Andrew Stewart (Sustainable Wairarapa), Corina Jordan (Beef and Lamb – Morning Only), Vern Brassell (Water Users), Liz McGruddy (Federated Farmers), William Beetham (Federated Farmers), Richard Allen (Fonterra), Kay Brown (DairyNZ), Neville Fisher (Water Users), George Tatham (Beef and Lamb).
APOLOGIES	Mike Ashby, Aidan Bichan, Andy Duncan, Chris Laidlaw, Colin Olds, Vanessa Tipoki, Rebecca Fox, Russell Kawana, Karen Williams, Forest and Bird, Horticulture NZ.

1. Opening questions and comments

- See this as a briefing session. Want further opportunity to see more detail.
- Want to see information on what it means for people? This seems to be missing.

2. Presentation from Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee

The Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee gave a presentation to those at the workshop on what will make up their Whaitua Implementation Programme (WIP).

[Presentation to stakeholders on WIP](#)

3. Questions from stakeholders

People split into groups to put together a list of questions they had for the whaitua committee on what they had presented.

All the questions noted are listed below:

- How are FMUs set up? What monitoring data is there for each? Is there suitable monitoring to calculate loads?
- Why was nitrogen allocation not set? What were the issues?
- How does enforcement/improvement occur at farm level to achieve the FMU target?
- Are the physiochemical targets/limits set at NPS band, current state (over what period) or some other value, and why?
- Why are “intake” methods preferred? What does this mean?
- Why are minimum flows set for torrent fish? Is it 90% of all habitat or 90% of torrent fish habitat?
- Why set bottom lines so low at NPS bands (toxicity) versus ecosystem health?
- How did you decide what physiochemical measures to set the values for?
- How did you arrive at the minimum flows?
- What is the rationale for waiting ten years to implement minimum flows?
- Can you define a structured consultation approach beyond today?
- How do we ensure the public voice is in the catchment communities?
- Why are fish objectives not set for catchments?
- What does “fair MCI” mean?
- Why a 10-year review vs 5 year review?
- Is all the research and modelling publically available, completed or non-completed, including raw data?
- Why are positive behaviours not happening by everyone now?
- Will we get a written response to these questions and right of reply?
- What is “plan B” if NOF changes?
- What is the role of water races?
- What is the life of the whaitua? Is it just here to provide a WIP? Where will it be in 5 years’ time?
- Has the values of “economic use, resilience and prosperity” been taken into account? What are these values?
- How do we fit economic values alongside environmental values? (In form of environment plans).
- Why do some of the FMUs have a big improvement planned? E.g. D to A?
- What data do we need to collect to capture the economic impacts of environmental improvements? Who gathers this data?
- Where is the incentive to keep improving?
- What plans are in place to provide options for those who will lose some/all of their water allocation? Does whaitua support storage? Yes.

- What are you doing to improve the water holding capacity of the Tararua Ranges? How would you slow water down coming off the Tararua Ranges?
- Slowing water down - how do you do it? How will it impact flood zones? Will land be less reliable (more water on it)?
- What is the cost impact of raising the level of the lake? How many properties would be affected? What effect for each property?
- Nutrient discharge data:
 - How can land use be included in this criterion?
 - How is high risk categorised? Is it the same for all classes of land?
 - Does the risk category stay set in stone?
- Does the WIP provide enough direction to the command areas, for folk to invest?
- Regulation of farm plans? Compulsory? Voluntary (non-regulation)? What is expected? The catchment community group will dictate this.
- What process directs farm plans and how does it work?
- Point source going to river - if all were stopped, what would the model be? What level would nitrate drop to?
- How can we justify the removal of a trout fishery with the protection of pest fish?
- Regulating land use change? What is the definition of intensification?
- Storm water discharge, what is the definition of storm water?
- Have cumulative effects been taken into account? Is water quality data in sub-catchment good enough to consider improvements in sub-catchment and downstream?
- Confidence in non-regulation FEP will equitably achieve reductions in over-allocated catchments?
- How widely looked at other Council experience with FEPs?
- How monitor change to permitted activities and cut off at minimum flow?
- Do we have data management strategy? Who owns data in future e.g. from catchment communities?
- How are community FMUs going to be structured? Iwi, Council or local community?
- What does GMP mean in an Environmental context?
- Where are the objectives for primary production values?
- How is the permitted activity volume determined? Title or property size etc.
- How are you only using the A,B,C,D,E framework to set limits for each attribute in each FMU?
- Are catchment groups going to have responsibility for auditing the uptake of voluntary farm plans? (Resourcing??). Who is keeping an eye on everyone?
- Have you clarified or defined what is included in farm plans?
- How do you communicate with the landowners in the catchments?
- What is the method of transferring water?
- How do new water users get access to water within a fully allocated catchment?
- Strong support from Beef and Lamb for catchment collective approach, farm environment planning. How is this built into the proposed plan and enabled?
- What are the FMU limits for E.coli, nutrients and sediment? Prefer setting instream load limits per catchment.

- Amendments to the NPS-FM 2017 require DIN and DRP freshwater attributes be set to achieve periphery attributes - has this been considered?
- Fish and Game through PNRP put forward DIN and DRP numbers to achieve MCI freshwater objectives. This highlighted land use change in dollars. MCI has been set at high levels.
- On review of whaitua recommendations MCI objectives for a number of catchments overset at levels better than current, including even when current is better than MCI80. I.e. has achievability has been assessed?
- How do the nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment reductions relate to FMU and river achievement of instream freshwater objectives?
- Have instream sediment objectives/outcomes (e.g. deposited sediment, clarity, etc) been considered (rivers)?
- Review nutrient allocation. Method? Or value, or both?
- Concern when land use changed/intensification is provided through consent, in the absence of ensuring an allowance for existing users. This acts to essentially allocate rights through consent.
- Has a s32 analysis been undertaken in looking at alternative approaches and costs at meeting current proposals.
- Is 90% habitat protection for torrent fish the minimum flow for all RMUs and rivers? Was torrent fish used to set flows in all FMUs?
- Permitted activity takes to be reduced from 20m³ to 5m³ per day and then takes are to cease at minimum flow- does this include stock drinking takes?
- Will there be more than one catchment community per FMU? If there is, how will they operate together?
- If a voluntary farm plan system, if there is a 'bad' operator, how do we pull them into line?
- How are the catchment community and farm plans being provided for in the framework?
- Will GMP achieve the objectives? Where and when can we see further detail on the freshwater objectives?
- Will the methods that you are proposing achieve the objectives? Are the objectives achievable?
- Can we change the definition of wastewater to reflect that water is often reused?
- Is whaitua asking GW to increase monitoring to track progress towards objectives?
- What approaches/methods are being used to measure cultural values?
- If moving to cease take in 10 years for Category A groundwater we need data collection to ensure that it is going to be effective in raising water levels, not just change it because we think it will.
- We need water reliability to diversify and prosper as a region.
- Where is off setting?
- The whole water allocation/minimum flows has highlighted how important it is to look at water storage.

4. Responses to questions

The Committee then responded to the key questions determined by those at the meeting.

Qu 1) Why was a nitrogen allocation not set? What were the reasons?

- The data on existing loads and the distribution of those loads is not good enough. The tool to measure compliance with allocations has some issues.
- The catchment has to make a change as a group, everyone is responsible for this.
- This decision will be reviewed in 10 years' time. If the limits are not being met then an allocation regime could be implemented.
- We can allocate load to land reliably due to the hydrological modelling, at a sub-catchment scale. We know the land systems.
- Although we're not allocating there will be a limit in place. Will also set nitrate objectives.
- Will set DRP and DIN concentrations as part of regime to meet periphyton objectives.

Qu 2) Are the physiochemical/targets/limits set at NPS band, current state, over what period or some other value and why?

- There are tables of bands for the existing and the desired state.
- Have not circulated the numbers yet – for objectives (concentrations) and limits (loads). There is a number that the committee wants to achieve. We are aiming to circulate within the next couple of weeks. Often we want to achieve more than just the bottom of the band. At FMU scale will set load limits to achieve objectives. The intention is to set the load limits as rules in the regional plan.
- Looking for 31% reduction in phosphorus for whole catchment. Contributing FMUs will vary in how much they will need to reduce. Timeframes will be attached to shifts in water quality. Will use a range of methods to shift periphyton - not just nutrients e.g. shading.
- Experts suggest that MCI can be improved by minimising habitat disturbance and sediment reduction. REQUEST FOR REFERENCES THAT INFORMED MCI WORK.
- Don't have a big nitrate toxicity problem in the whaitua.
- Where is load going to be measured? There will be a monitoring site in each FMU.
- For loads that come off the land we need information on what is happening at the land parcel scale. We need to improve data ready for next plan change in 10 years.
- What are next steps, why haven't given us all the data already? Only just received it ourselves. MCI is hard to shift and is driven by a number of things.

Qu 3) How did you arrive at the minimum flows?

- Considered what did we want to manage rivers for? Agreed it was for fish and ecosystems. The community has told us they value native fish. Torrent fish have been used elsewhere to calculate minimum flows - although not used as a habitat barometer. Work found there was already 90% habitat protection in most of the catchment.

- The Committee wanted consistency across the catchment. What is the baseline used for 90% habitat protection? Mike Thompson from GWRC has done the technical work and is currently finalising his report.
- Any link to groundwater recharge? Modelling did look at impact of groundwater abstraction on minimum flows. This fed into the Category A groundwater discussions.

Qu 4) How do we ensure the public voice is included in the catchment communities?

- Catchment communities can be anything e.g. a group that carries out riparian planting.
- How does the general public get a say in what is happening and how targets for FMUs are achieved? Levels will be set in the regional plan which people can have their say on.

Qu 5) Will the methods that you are proposing achieve/ are the objectives achievable?

- We will inevitably need to try some things and see what works. There is no one silver bullet. The Committee's approach is to leave flexibility for people to make changes.
- Will you measure water quality for cultural values? Yes. Will likely sit alongside standard monitoring. What if it doesn't tally with standard monitoring? That is an ongoing conversation and there may need to be changes in the future.
- Why are you only reviewing the limits at 10 years? GWRC will need a robust accounting system like it has for water allocation. There is a lack of information in the water quality space. Accounting requires that we'll have to report where we're at on an annual basis which provides an opportunity to review. Plan changes are expensive. There has to be a plan change at 10 years.
- Will people feel good about the sacrifices they'll need to make? The Committee is setting objectives over time -showing a direction. Data can be used to show trends. e.g. for Category A groundwater users. Can we see the advantage of water being in the river instead of being taken by water users? Support for a review of Category A takes. If we're turning them off at minimum flow we want to be sure they are definitely directly connected to the river.

Qu 6) Regulatory farm plans?

- The Committee hasn't made a decision yet.
- Those farmers who have voluntary plans, it has worked successfully.
- Others who haven't got plans, how do we get them on board? Those with inactive farm plans, how do we get them to reactivate theirs?
- So if we are not going down the regulation path how do we get people involved in them? Farm plans will revolve around what needs to be achieved in that FMU.
- With a voluntary approach, will communities need to audit each other?
- Have we looked at spatial and temporal patterns-flood flows and load? To what extent is 80% coming out in high flow from 20% of the properties? Can we understand where in our community to invest in making a change? This may mean that not everyone needs to do a farm plan. We will be looking to see how fine grained understanding has informed where effort is put. E.g. everyone can do good management practice on *E.coli* but we haven't got an issue with medians, but have an issue with spikes.

Qu 7) Do we have data management strategy? Who owns it?

- In some regions farm plans are used for data collection but the Committee believes there are better ways to collect data.
- There is an open question about what data needs to be collected? e.g. nutrients at farm scale, riparian planting-where is it happening? Then plan next steps.
- What is the best way to collect and store data?
- Has water allocation been seen as the easiest thing to target as the lowest hanging fruit as we have a good understanding of flows and take (much better than water quality information). Did the Committee consider what has the most benefit for the least effect on income? Have economic and biophysical modelled data. We also have other economic data collected for the proposed Natural Resources Plan process e.g. around water allocation. We know the changes proposed by the Committee will have a big effect economically, particularly if implemented quickly.
- What are the impediments to improving water quality? Are land managers and river engineers on opposite sides? Does the Committee have an influence on GWRC staff? What the Committee puts in their WIP, and then what goes into the regional plan will make GWRC staff change to fit the environmental model. GWRC will need to follow the RWC requirements. There is also a community responsibility. It's not up to GWRC to police all of the time. Want community to take action.
- GWRC can't implement the WIP in its current form. It's looking for partnerships to deliver implementation. Implementation is likely to look different in the future.
- Back on the community to make change. The Committee wants the proposed Natural Resources Plan to support community change.
- Who owns data? Data should be owned by the community. Data is owned by person who creates it. Privacy issues to consider. More conversation to be had.
- Will there be an overarching structure for data collection? GWRC is starting to think about accounting structure. We are quite a bit away from showing what this looks like.
- Will the WIP include a data management structure? No. It will say the kind of data it wants to collect. It could talk about structure.
- Farmers will want to know what the data would be used for. Don't want to double up databases. Fertiliser companies already collect data.
- Also opportunities around citizen science. NIWA is looking to standardize its advice. There is a lot of work going on in this area. There are ways to make private data anonymous. Is the Committee supporting the open use of data? Yes. When catchment communities start collecting data that will be great.

Qu 8) Have the values of economic use, resilience and prosperity been taken into account? What are those values, how do we put them alongside environmental values?

- The Committee has identified a range of values – economics and resilience is one of these values. The Committee looked at a range of values not just environmental vs economic e.g. mana whenua, recreation.
- Were all values converted to objectives? Requirement of Committee to set freshwater objectives. What water quality improvement is possible at least cost to other values?

- Was there an aim of having no more than 5% loss in property value? The transition timeframe is important. It gives farmers time to adjust to something different. Have to do these things under the NPS-FM.
- There is only so much you can do without water. Less irrigation may have unintended consequences especially with nutrients.
- Modelling never provides answers it only provides insights.
- Economics affects the entire community. If regulation reduces economic prosperity the entire community will feel this.
- What are the consequences of rushing decisions through in 10 years' time? We have economic data on what the effect of 100% cease take for Category A groundwater at minimum flow will mean.
- Looking at creating a living situation where you can adapt and change rather than a regulatory environment that may only change once every 10 years. How do you get agility in planning in terms of the Committee wanting to be community responsive?
- Micro economics catchment has been done for the Wairarapa (macro). Who is doing the macro? The whaitua looked at farm scale scenarios. Once recommendations are adopted by council they will require s32 analysis. Beef and Lamb have looked at how to assess economic impacts as a result of environmental changes – may be useful.
- ACTION - Link Simon Harris economic impact reports used in the development of the regional plan to the Whaitua webpage.
- Needs to be a place for the wider community to have a say. Has whaitua worked with the wider community? Strong data on how much things will cost so the community can say whether they support it or not. The Committee has held over 40 meetings with the community and the Committee has never turned down an invitation to speak.
- How do you reach the other people within the community who want to have a say on water quality? Everyone has an interest in where their water comes from- both urban and rural.

Qu 9) What data do we need to collect to capture economic impact of environmental improvement?

- Covered through answers to questions above.

Qu 10) Slowing water down- how do you do it? How will this impact the flood zones? Will land be less reliable?

- More research needs to be done. Modelling on groundwater recharge has been carried out and has shown considerable benefits. This is worth pursuing further. One option is swales. These create the opportunity to pond water.
- Need to turn attitudes around. Water needs to be slowed down. Water tanks and storm water options.
- What about machinery in rivers? The public believe machinery in rivers is bad. They wouldn't know it is for the best. This highlights the need for good communication.

- Allow the Ruamāhanga River to naturally go back to meandering. This will naturally slow down the flow of the river. Accept the river will naturally move within the margins but protect infrastructure.
- Encourage the change through GWRC's Long Term Plan. Do through every project in GWRC - look for opportunities.
- Consider soil holding water. Not just in river boundaries. This requires a mind-set change.
- Need more direction for Council to guide change better.
- Were river management groups invited to this workshop? No.
- Masterton District Council has had a presentation on Te Kauru Upper Ruamāhanga FMP. The presentation seemed in line with what whaitua is saying.

Qu 11) How is 'high risk' categorised and is it the same for all classes of land?

- How do we capture shifts in land use that may cause large shifts in contaminated loads?
- Could require some land use changes to apply for a consent or do nothing? Regulatory option is not so good for small changes or low emmitters. E.g. dairy conversion – someone who wanted to convert and increase their load would require consent. This might make sense for nitrogen but not for sediment.
- Not straight line relationship. Where is the full family of objectives? E.g. thriving, diverse, primary production area. With reductions in overall nutrient levels in the catchment small changes won't make a difference.
- Find incentives to improve farm. Where does offsetting sit?
- Looking at how off setting would work particularly in urban space.

5. What is the key thing the whaitua needs to concentrate on?

People talked about the key thing they thought the Committee needs to concentrate on in the coming months.

- Engagement - Engage closely with those involved over time. Still questions about the detail.
- Be tighter on economic side - Could put people out of business. Must look at the alternatives to survive – territorial authorities and the public.
- Want more access to background data and more time to consider.
- Want clear guidance on where policy might go. No wiggle room.
- What is the cost faced by the wider community? Show economic costs to urban. Farmers are already aware. People are already engage in the benefits.
- Put narrative policies in to explain, make it a more community document.
- Focus on innovation to drive a better future.
- You've captured the community direction well. Make sure not left to the few to innovate and evolve.
- Focus on the parts that need to be addressed first. See in step-wise process as this helps people see where to start.

- Understand design process around FMUs. How will catchment communities and the FMU framework work together?
- Most rainfall happens in the Tararua Ranges. Need to educate people. Resilience.
- The process takes as long as it takes. Timeframe pressures.
- Trying to provide more reliable information. Get everyone up to speed.
- Need to provide information to people so they know what FMU they are in, what do I need to do to achieve the outcomes? Simple description of what is needed.
- Be agile vs the need to be specific. This is an exciting time. Some options will take time.
- The Committee is looking at different approach to other parts of the country.
- Bigger backdrop. Major changes ahead. Our choice to see as an opportunity.
- What is the link between FMUs and responsible individuals? E.g. farmers and ratepayers.
- Thanks to RWC. Enjoyed hearing what individuals are trying to achieve. Not seeing at big picture. Be clear on the direction we want to take. Include innovation word. This is who we are, what trying to achieve. Acknowledge the good. Take time in next phase to bring people along with you.
- Take strong message to the Council. To work they need to change the way they do things. Council need to be innovative to support. Budget/funding and staff objectives.
- Need to see whole WIP to consider the holistic plan. More time to get right. Know it will never be ongoing and complete. Think about next steps. New way of doing things.
- Put info to council on resources needed or slip it through if they don't need detail.
- Set up the next things that need to happen to give effect to the WIP.

6. Closing comments from the Committee

- This is just the beginning of the journey.
- The Committee has community meetings organised for next week.
- 16 May is perhaps an opportunity for a further stakeholder discussion. The Committee will come back to you on this date.
- Will provide further information ahead of the next meeting.
- Thanks to Terry for facilitating and all those who attended.
- All those here have a stake in the outcomes. We're reflecting Wairarapa values and engaged communities.