

FISHING, 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.

At the northern end of the catchment Mike Birch farms on a hill country property beside the Tauweru River, a place

he grew up and returned to after university and working in adventure tourism. Being part of the whaitua committee has helped him appreciate that everyone downstream is affected by actions upstream— all the way to Lake Onoke and the sea.

Mike is a keen angler and kayaker and particularly interested in the recreational opportunities our waterways offer. “These days, hardly anyone goes fishing and very few swim in the Tauweru River,” he says. “The issues for the Tauweru include flood control, giant aphids, crack willows, stock access and soil erosion resulting in increased sediment and phosphorus in the river. It will be challenging to find solutions, but we want to hear from members of our local communities who have ideas for improving waterways in their catchments.”

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:
Tuesday 26 July Whangaehu Hall 6-8PM
Thursday 28 July Gladstone Sports Complex 6-8PM**

Want to know more?

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