

Lower Waitaki Zone

WORK PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE 2018/19

What is this?

This report is an update of our 'on-the-ground' work programmes which aim to improve the environment and protect ecosystems.

It shows the outcomes we set and how they align with the target areas of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy.

It summarises what we did and what was achieved over the past year.

We worked with landowners and stakeholders by providing expertise, knowledge, funding, resources, follow-ups, monitoring and measuring outcomes.

Why does it matter?

Protecting and improving the natural environment is our top priority and aligns with what our communities have asked for.

This work starts with local on-the-ground projects and actions – stream by stream and farm by farm, working towards lofty goals of clean water and healthy ecosystems.

It's important to analyse the work being done so we can put our resources and efforts into the most productive areas, aligning with wider community concerns

What has been achieved?

Progress has been made across the board in the Lower Waitaki zone. The Te Mana o Te Wai project concluded in the 2018/19 financial year. Environment Canterbury has been supporting and facilitating the Waihao rūnanga-led programme, which has focused on protecting and enhancing the values of Wainono Lagoon, an internationally significant wetland. Significant recent works have included developing and improving parking areas at both Lake Road and the Wainono Box to enhance recreational access to the lagoon.

Environment Canterbury has continued to support, along with the Lower Waitaki Zone Committee, the enhancement work at the Black Hole swimming spot. The Waihao Wainono Community Steering Group is leading the work on this important recreational area for the local community. A community planting day earlier in the year was very well attended and successfully re-engaged people with the site.



See inside for our work programme progress outcomes



See the back page for a local case study

PROGRESS OF OUTCOMES

for the Lower Waitaki work programme 2018-19

FARMING TO GOOD MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

The Lower Waitaki Zone is recognised as delivering on Zone Targets through all agricultural land being managed at good management practice.



- Local Land Management Advisors, in collaboration with the Environment Canterbury implementation team, set up and tested the Arc map template. After the template was converted onto the Environment Canterbury mapping platform, the Land Management Advisors have been using it in developing Farm Environment Plans (FEPs) with farmers in the zone.
- In another project under this milestone, South Canterbury Land Management Advisors are reviewing FEPs and Overseer (nutrient) budgets submitted with consent applications, which consent planners forward to them. The purpose of this project is to reduce farmers' risk of audit fails. Advisors have completed 12 FEP reviews since March 2019 (5 in March, 4 in May, 3 in June).
- Environment Canterbury has been following up with farmers and properties that will be affected by Plan Change 3. We sent out a series of follow-up letters to 53 farms in February, where we required an update on their current status, and to 56 property owners we had not heard from. The response rate to these letters was good.
- As at the end of June, out of a total 319 properties affected by Plan Change 3, 261 have contacted us. Of these contacts, 84 properties are listed as non-target and 141 properties as permitted activities. Twelve properties have submitted consent applications out of the 18 properties who have advised that they require consent.
- Four successful winter grazing POD days were coordinated and supported in April, where farmers hosted and led sessions on their properties in Waimate, Timaru, Fairlie, and Geraldine. These events, which attracted 46 farmers, were run in collaboration with Beef + Lamb, AgResearch and DairyNZ.
- We are working with a number of farmers in the Hakataramea regarding Plan Change 5 and other issues, such as carrying out Critical Source Area (CSA) mapping on their properties. We have also completed farm visits and updated Farm Environment Plans in the Hook catchment.
- In relation to the Critical Source Area mapping work, as at the beginning of June it appears that 4% of the properties in the total Upper Waihao catchment have been mapped.

IMPROVING RECREATIONAL AND AMENITY VALUES

High-value aquatic recreation locations in the zone that do not meet or exceed health, ecological and amenity requirements of users are steadily improved over time.



- This overall outcome is currently slightly behind schedule as one of its contributing groups of work has been on hold. The milestone has been on hold while the team has focused on completing the Te Mana o Te Wai programme.
- A second milestone – Bathing site improvement plans developed and implemented for the 'Black Hole' swimming hole – has been progressing to schedule. The Waihao Wainono Community Steering Group is leading the Black Hole project, with the support of Environment Canterbury.

WAINONO LAGOON AND CATCHMENT

The ecosystem health and mauri of Wainono Lagoon and its catchments are improved.



- Significant works have been undertaken to complete the Te Mana o Te Wai programme. Over the last quarter of the 2018/19 financial year, works have involved:
 - Fencing and willow control on significant mudfish site in the Hook catchment
 - Clearing willows on Johnstone covenant
 - Removing dead spar at McColluch's Bridge
 - Completing a plant park at Lake Road, apart from signs and picnic tables
 - Fencing 3ha of wetland on a property in the Waihao catchment
 - 2km of stream battering and sediment control in Waimate Stream
 - Amenity re-development at Waihao Box
 - Completing willow spar clearance at Black Hole
 - Draft Iwi Management Plan for Waihao Wainono.
- A steering group was formed to consider how to improve the health of Wainono Lagoon and has agreed that the best way forward is to create a management plan for Wainono. Environment Canterbury will look at the previous modelling and consider a whole system view of Wainono (considering aspects such as sea level rise, coastal erosion and lessons learnt from Te Waihora).
- Finalised protocol documents have been sent to the Environment Canterbury Chief Executive, Waihao Rūnanga, Department of Conservation and the Rating District Liaison Committee for further feedback.

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT

Priority wetlands, spring- and hill-fed streams, hāpua and dryland habitats are identified, and their ecological and cultural quality is sustained and steadily improved over time.



- All of the Immediate Steps funding for the Lower Waitaki Zone in the 2018/19 financial year has been allocated, under the oversight of the Lower Waitaki Zone Committee. The total of \$102,000 has gone to five main projects:
 1. Hakataramea spraying
 2. Wainono spraying
 3. Limestone Hills wetland and stream fencing work
 4. Oteake Springs willow control
 5. Hore Wetland Duntroon.

COMPLIANCE

All consents in the Lower Waitaki Zone that need monitoring are monitored, high-risk pollution incidents are responded to and consent holders' practices are aligned with community outcomes.



- All incident response and daily alert matters are responded to in a timely way, regular one-on-one meetings were held with Resource Management Officers and Incident Response Officers.
- Regionally significant consents and zone consents have been identified and allocated to Resource Management Officers, who have developed monitoring schedules with the relevant consent holders.
- Due to some staffing changes, the monitoring aspect of this work is slightly behind schedule. It will be brought back on schedule over the first quarter in 2019/20.

TARGETS

Canterbury Water Management Strategy



Ecosystem health and biodiversity



Environmental limits



Irrigated land area



Kaitiakitanga



Recreational & amenity opportunities

Achieving the community's vision through 10 broad target areas, developed to measure progress in protecting water and ecosystems in Canterbury now and in the future.

Improving water quality one farm at a time

Making on-farm changes to improve water quality can be simple and cost-effective, according to Jenna Hughes Games, who was Environment Canterbury's land management advisor for Waimate during the 2018-19 year.

During the year Jenna encouraged farmers to get in touch for one-on-one advice on how to improve their connection to local waterways.

"It doesn't have to be expensive or complicated to fix an issue with run-off into waterways," Jenna said.

"Taking action to fence off a sensitive area like a swale or choosing a different crop after winter grazing can make a big difference in the long run."

The advice and work to improve fresh-water quality aligns with 'Te Mana o te Wai' (the status or power of water) which is one of the ecosystem health and biodiversity goals set for 2018-19 by the Lower Waitaki Water Zone Committee.

The work to protect and improve fresh-water quality included activities such as stream fencing and battering, the construction of sediment traps, as well as the use of selected

plant species alongside rivers that take up nitrogen and reduce the amount of N escaping into the groundwater system.

Jenna joined the land management advisory team in 2018 (from her previous role in the South Canterbury biosecurity team) and was able to give advice on Farm Environment Plans, good management practices as well as help on mapping critical source areas (wet areas).

"I was also out and about in the community quite a lot with a different hat on, advising on issues like wallaby control, nassella tussock, gorse and broom," she said.

"That gave me a really good understanding of the local land and the issues farmers face."

In mid-2019 Jenna moved zone to provide advice to farmers in the Upper Waitaki – her replacement was Anna Mehrtens, based near Waimate.

As a result of the work by land management advisors providing advice and working with local farmers the Lower Waitaki Zone Water Committee anticipates another year of improving water quality.



Chris Eccleston
Zone Manager
Email: Chris.Eccleston@ecan.govt.nz
Phone: 03 387 7858