

Orari Temuka Opihi Pareora 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?

In the Orari, Temuka, Opihi and Pareora (OTOP) Zone work programme, the two outcomes with the biggest impacts this year have been the protection and enhancement of long-tailed bat habitats, and Saltwater Creek work.

The zone team has undertaken a great deal of background work in the Saltwater Creek catchment, and the new catchment group is developing well. We have been pleased with the public interest in and involvement with catchment meetings, as well as its support of planting and other public events. Timaru District Council, our Treaty Partners, and industry and local user groups have given strong support to the Saltwater Creek work.

▶ See inside for our work programme progress outcomes

◀ See the back page for a local case study

PROGRESS OF OUTCOMES

for the Orari Temuka Opihi Pareora work programme 2018-19

FARMING AT GMP OR BETTER

The OTOP Zone is recognised as a showcase of farming good management practice where landowners are farming at GMP or better.



- Several community sessions and activities have been held.
- A N Forage Leaching Field Day was held. Thirty farmers attended and were involved in good discussions on winter grazing.
- A Beef + Lamb NZ Freshwater Workshop on 28 March in the Saltwater Creek catchment explained the uses of the Stream Health Monitoring and Assessment Kit (SHMAK).
- During an arable farm visit in Saltwater Creek catchment on 23 May, the Foundation for Arable Research Farm Environment Plan (FEP) was discussed with the farmer.
- A Saltwater Creek Catchment Group meeting was held on 1 May. A guest speaker from Timaru District Council discussed progress with the council's stormwater management plan. A native planting session on 24 May focused on road-side swale close to Saltwater Creek mouth, near the new Eco Centre site.
- Five water monitoring sites on tributaries have been identified for seasonal visits and samples taken at three of them for Hills laboratory analysis.
- Additional work with catchment groups across the OTOP Zone also took place, as discussed above.
- Regional Council and industry groups ongoing support has involved providing information to the OTOP catchment group.
- The Waihi and Orari catchment groups held meetings in May.
- The Te Ana Wai Catchment Group meeting included a guest presentation from Ballance Agriculture on award-winning MitAgator software. Environment Canterbury's Land Management Advisor again discussed the themes of PC5, FEP and GMP, along with winter grazing good practices.
- Land Management Advisors have been following up with farmers on the land use consent campaign. The majority of these farmers have made contact and are waiting on industry for Baselines, and this has been discussed with the relevant consultants.
- Data from 31 May 2019 shows that:
 - 124 land use consents had been granted by April
 - 35 land use consents applications were in progress.
- Currently the Land Management Advisor is finalising information from Environment Canterbury systems to identify who to follow up and support next in the land use consent campaign. They have also been reviewing nutrient budgets and Farm Environment Plans (four in May) for farmers who are applying for land use consents, as well as advising them about the Environment Canterbury Equivalent Pathway.
- Information has also been through the ongoing support of the OTOP Catchment Groups,.

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 - steadily improve over time.



- Comprehensive monitoring programmes are in place for all regionally and locally significant consents.
- Work programmes have been established.
- For more information on activity for this outcome, see the report on the Zone Lead's work under the compliance outcome.

CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT ROCK ART SITES

Culturally significant sites throughout the zone are identified and protected.



- This outcome and related activities will be led by the new Southern Pou Mātai Kō (Cultural Land Management Role), which is currently under recruitment with the three local rūnanga.
- For more information on activity for this outcome, see the report on the Zone Lead's work under the compliance outcome.

COMPLIANCE

All regionally significant consents (RSC) in the OTOP Zone are monitored, and pollution events are responded to in a timely manner.



- The team uses an agreed risk matrix to manage all daily alerts relating to a breach of resource consent water permits. All incidents are prioritised and resourced on this basis.
- Activity is reviewed with the zone team's Resource Management Officers and Incident Response Officers at least once a month.
- In his report to the OTOP Zone Committee in May 2019, the Zone Lead gave an overview of the InZone reporting tool and of current compliance issues across the OTOP Zone.
- The Zone Lead is supporting the compliance team to develop its work programmes in the priority areas of: regionally significant consents, and consent holders, zone specific consents, and water data reviews.
- Work programmes have been established.

FOCUS ON WETLANDS, SPRING AND HILL-FED STREAMS, AND COASTAL LAGOONS

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



- Wetland and springhead protection has featured in a number of general GMP queries and discussions, and as an activity that may qualify for Immediate Steps funding for the 2019/20 year. The most common topics on which farmers have sought advice concern planting, weed control and waterway management.
- The Washdyke working group has been reconvened to engage with relevant stakeholders again. Funding opportunities may develop once the programme progresses.
- Initial discussions have been held to advance the possibility of sourcing funding from local business.
- Significant progress and activity has occurred in relation to the Saltwater Creek focus project.
- For more information on activity for this outcome, see the report on work under the "Farming at GMP or better" outcome.

LONG-TAILED BATS

Protect and enhance long-tailed bat populations and habitat.



- The South Canterbury Bat Working Group has been established and is operating effectively. The group includes representatives from Environment Canterbury, Department of Conservation, Land Information NZ, Timaru District Council and landowners. Its most recent quarterly meeting was held in June.
- Bats have been detected at three sites in the Otaio catchment.
- At a property in Kakahu, the group has set up detectors on willows that had been intended for removal, and has had successful input into proposed harvesting operations.
- The group has prepared a newsletter for woodlot owners and contractors with 'how to' information on bat roosting trees and Port Blakely distributed it.
- A group of willow trees near Geraldine that may be potential roosts was inspected. The landowner will delay removing them until spring, when bat detectors can be set up.
- The protection of bat roosting trees is part of the draft District Plan review, which includes a geographic area and rules to protect roosting trees. The reviewed District Plan is likely to be notified in mid to late 2020, so this project is complete for now while a watching brief for developments continues.
- Several Bat Walks have been organised with the community, which were very well received to the extent that we could not keep up with demand. We will investigate further opportunities for in-the-field sessions with the community.

TARGETS

Canterbury Water Management Strategy



Drinking water



Ecosystem health and biodiversity



Environmental limits

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.

BIODIVERSITY STEP CHANGE

A step change in biodiversity protection and enhancement is achieved by supporting landowners, district council, QEII Trust, community groups, DOC and other agencies to undertake biodiversity protection and enhancement projects.



- The following updates can be provided on the focus Immediate Steps projects in the OTOP Zone for the 2018/19 financial year:
 - Upper Rangitata Predator Control – this year’s trapping has been completed
 - Papaka Stream planting – completed
 - Bishops wetland – completed
 - Blackbirch QEII covenant fencing stage 2 – completed
 - Ellis Road wetland – planting scheduled for spring 2019
 - Milford lagoon south bank – project ongoing, weed control scheduled to end in spring 2019
 - Maze Pastures – completed
 - Old Orari Lagoon – completed
 - Geraldine downs – completed
 - Tengawai bat habitat – completed
 - Project Peel – completed
- The planned Immediate Steps project funding for 2019/20 has been presented to, and agreed with, the OTOP Zone Committee.
- The zone team’s Biodiversity Officer is a member of the Timaru District Council Biodiversity Working Group.
- A number of Immediate Steps projects in the next year aim to protect Significant Natural Areas that Timaru District Council has identified. Projects for the coming year have also been scoped with QEII representatives.
- The work being carried collaboratively for both Saltwater Creek and Washdyke/Waitarakao Lagoon also contributes to this milestone, as reported above under other outcomes.

Catchment group leads action in local waterway

The Otipua-Saltwater Creek Catchment Group was launched in October 2018 to improve water quality and flow issues at Otipua-Saltwater Creek, one of Timaru’s main urban/rural waterways.

The community group was launched last year to include members of the community in decision making and actioning positive outcomes for the waterway.

A catchment group is a voluntary bunch of people sharing a common interest in the good health of a waterway.

There are already seven catchment groups in South Canterbury working closely with the Orari Temuka Opihi Pareora (OTOP) Water Zone Committee.

Anyone with an interest in the creek is encouraged to learn what’s being planned and join the group.

The creek is a well-known spot for a walk or bike ride near Timaru; and is home to the local rowing club, as well as native plants and wildlife.

But problems with weeds, water quality and flow levels mean that it needs careful management.

Rhys Taylor, who facilitates the group on behalf of the OTOP Water Zone committee, said the catchment group provides an opportunity for local people to connect and contribute to a key waterway in their area.

“Whether you’re a cyclist, dog-walker, property owner or an interested community member – you’re welcome to find out more about the group,” he said.

“You don’t need to have a scientific or environmental background – just an interest in Otipua-Saltwater Creek’s future.”

Supporting the establishment of a rural and urban Saltwater Creek Catchment Group also ticks off a 2018-19 environmental limits target for the OTOP Water Zone Committee.

The catchment group’s activities include sharing information to landowners on good water management practices, help plantings and manage riparian planting, arranging events, and encouraging industry and households to improve urban stormwater.



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