

Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee - Kopuaranga Community Meeting

Date: 7 July 2016, 6-8PM, Kopuaranga Hall

Committee attendance: Esther Dijkstra, Colin Olds, Phillip Palmer, Mike Ashby, Mike Birch, David Holmes, Ra Smith, Russell Kawana

Project Team attendance: Kat Banyard, Mike Grace, Natasha Tomic, Horipo Rimene

Public: 8 members of the public were present

Notes:

Q1: What do we need to do to make our rivers swimmable and how long should it take to get there?

- Lost deep pools due to flood protection although less rubbish.
- Major weed problems.
- Waipoua – Ruamāhanga confluence not swimmable.
- Don't get deep pools anymore.
- If it wasn't for the media a lot more people would still be swimming.
- Education – people need to clean their septic tanks every 3 years.
- Community could be more aware of their use of chemicals. What they use ends up in the waterways – Education.
- Wastewater treatment plant – Masterton – need regular monitoring that the public has access to – can see when reaching limit.
- Chemical run off needs to be controlled.
- Encourage reticulation of water along ridges to keep cattle out of the water – education for farmers to do this. Publicity.
- We should agree principles, not fight detail.
- Focus on accessible points where people are/do swim.
- Resolve MDC discharge matters – more definition.
- River management is making the water run faster and shallower.
- Too many nutrients and the shallower water mean cyanobacteria proliferate. At Te Ore Ore. bridge people are swimming. 50m down the river full of cyanobacteria.
- Remove willows – GWRC is responsible for this. Contacted M.Kawana on 15 March and had no response. Stock getting stuck in the rivers, junk in the rivers. Opaki, Dryers Rock. David Holmes to follow up. Power lines go through willows.
- How do we fence if flood protection need to access the river for their diggers.
- Improve flow to flush silt.
- Removal of willows is the most important thing. Removing the trees will make the river more swimmable.
- Are we trying to achieve perfect water quality for swimming?
- Flooding across the road – runoff into the river? – washes chemicals to the river.
- What is the number we should aim for regarding swimmability, for e-coli?
- Old man's beard – GWRC should do something about it. GWRC has to do something to get them onside.
- At our place you'll swim in mud (North of Mauriceville). In places where willows have been removed you can now see the stones in the river – rivers moving quickly.

- Coming to a general agreement at country meetings ‘this is not good’, ‘this is good’. We spend too much time arguing over small things.
- The spots we go to are important. Focus on them.
- Swimming everywhere all the time is a bold statement.
- We are good but have some spots where it could be better.

Key points:

- Use of chemicals.
- Removal of willows.
- Support improved farm practices (hill country reticulation).
- Community work together.
- Focus on places where people swim.
- MDC discharge.
- Flood protection practices – shallow, speed of rivers.
- More regular monitoring.
- Weed control (old man’s beard).
- Access to the river – improve.
- Clarity – what makes water not suitable for swimming – what is meant by swimmability?

Q2: What is the fairest way of restricting water use during the summer?

- Some people might prefer using water every 2nd day rather than total cut off.
- Urban NZ – some people are already paying for water and waste water.
- When you are managing a resource that is scarce – people that get an economic return from it, how will they contribute?
- National direction is to separate land from the water – that is a risk - it can end up as running it as fisheries quota.
- Water needs to be linked to land.
- How to relocate water?
- Simple solutions about how to manage if a pump is working efficiently (putting a light on the pump so you can see when it’s going).
- Stealing of irrigation water – is there any stealing of water in the Wairarapa?
- Urban meters – have a significant effect on people’s perception and use of water.
- Water meters for irrigation.
- Everyone living on a river is entitled to water – even distribution of water.
- Having smaller user groups would be good so people can ‘swap’ and share their water. Some people only need it at a certain time. Current rules don’t allow this.
- Need to consider cause and effect when making decisions. Some things have other purposes. E.g. water races recharging aquifers.
- More equitable/even use of water.
- Spread use night/day.
- Efficient crop type use should be tied to allocation.
- Should users pay for water?

Key points:

- More equity in use.
- Small group water share supported.
- Spread use night/day.
- Water should be linked to: efficiency of use, crop type, land – take and soil type.
- Payment?

Q3: How should we manage rivers to improve natural character while safe guarding community assets, income and households?

- Bulldozing has been done to excess. Criminal destruction. All the way from Double Bridges to Martinborough.
- Swimming holes have been destroyed by bull dozing.
- Discussion from flood protection will be that the bull dozing works and that is why they keep doing it.
- If it's man-made then it's not natural.
- Kākahi (freshwater mussels) are being pushed onto the shingle at every fresh. At Landcorp Wairio. The bed is being scoured because the river is moving so fast. This is also affecting the trout that live in the shallows.
- In Masterton islands form which divert the river around them and need to be bulldozed regularly.
- In Carterton there is good flood protection but not a lot of pools which affects the swimming.
- Important to have pools at a regular distance for the fish. Flood protection is aware of this and tries to manage the different values.
- Waiohine FMP is about protecting Greytown. Becoming more aware of fish and bird needs and the need for seasonal work in the river.
- Wetlands can help water retention.
- Committee should look at soft engineering techniques – working with nature.
- Wider stock banks to allow more flooding like at Waiohine.
- What does 'natural' look like? Need to communicate that to people.
- Want clear flowing water.
- Plant trees on the banks instead of willows. Who would pay for this?
- Would pay for own planting if provided with help for fencing stock and knew bulldozers weren't going to break the fence to access the river.
- Community need to agree what natural character means in their spots.
- Committee need to get behind farmers who are doing a lot in this area. Media focuses on bad examples.
- Flood protection is pulling out willows above bridges but it's important to maintain infrastructure.
- Will flood protection listen to discussions about fish habitat?
- Communities should agree who does what where.
- Weed clearing out of drains and small streams is important management.
- What is a stream? What is a drain?

Key points:

- Excessive flood protection works in the bed.
- Excessive speed of water is affecting natural character and native fish.
- Retain pools at regular intervals to support fish.
- Look at how natural systems can be used to support natural character.
- Local committees for natural character.
- Community need to agree natural character – how far they can/want to go.
- Plant trees on banks.
- Protect infrastructure e.g. bridges.