



Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee

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WORKING TOGETHER

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 is enjoyed by swimmers, walkers and fishermen, supports town drinking and waste water needs, is used by farmers and is valued by many for its spiritual significance.

Landowners across Wairarapa value land and water, not only as their home but also in an economic sense. The Palmer family has operated a dairy farm in the Kopuaranga, a sub catchment of the Ruamahanga River catchment, for six generations. Philip Palmer is a Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee member, and well aware of the pressures that today's businesses face in maintaining a financially viable operation in a changing climate.

"The Kopuaranga catchment has six dairy farms, many sheep and

beef farms, the lime works and some forestry. These operations are largely working towards a better understanding of how their businesses affect the wider environment. We know different land uses have an impact on water quality, studies are varied and the science around the interaction of soil and water is not always clear," says Palmer.

"People have made a lot of assumptions in recent years, for example about water quality affecting trout numbers. They forget the old Acclimatisation Society, that predated Fish and Game, used to artificially stock local rivers each season. The picture is often more complex than it seems!"

"The existing Kopuaranga river management scheme has managed erosion and flood protection very well here. It is a great example of

a community working together towards a common aim and I think, as in many places I have read about in NZ, we can expand this local level thinking to work at an integrated catchment level."

"I am hoping that the work of the whaitua committee will help describe what is happening more clearly for local landusers and develop some balanced thinking about water allocation. We can work together to find solutions."

The natural Wairarapa landscape has been modified by townspeople and landowners over time. Balancing the needs of our native species and human use is challenging. The Ruamahanga 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 Ruamahanga River catchment.

TALK TO US

The Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee has a vision for the Ruamahanga 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 Ruamahanga 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 in the Kopuaranga Catchment Thursday 7 July, 6-8pm, Kopuaranga Hall

Want to know more?

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