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# Ruamahanga River future in our hands

Enjoyed the rivers over the summer? Have they changed from when you swam in them as a child? How do you want our waterways to be in the future?

The Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee (RWC) will put forward a plan for the Ruamahanga River catchment early next year. Committee members have been holding conversations with some local groups and are keen to hear from as many people in the catchment as they can.

“For a good part of last year we worked to develop our understanding of this complex catchment. Many committee members have lived here all their lives – but there is so much to know!

“We have read about, heard about and seen for ourselves how complex the natural environment is,” committee chairman Peter Gawith said.

Early discussions showed that some people have very defined opinions about the importance of water and land in their lives.

For others it was not necessarily less important but there was no context or place to form, or give, their opinion.

“We have taken our time understanding what people know and how they connect to the catchment. We want to ask them in a way that genuinely reflects their connection.

“We want to hear everybody’s ideas, stories, connections, feelings and opinions about land and water management in our catchment. We are inviting people to open discussions we are calling ‘values discussions’.

A Ruamahanga Whaitua Values Discussion will take place at Carterton Events Centre, Monday 30 March, 5.30-7.30pm. Committee members will give a brief introduction then work with small groups of people to hear more about how they value land and water.

“At the end of the day everybody drinks water and, in the Ruamahanga catchment, no-one lives too far from a river, stream or lake. I live near Carterton at Longbush and I am hoping to meet even more of our community and learn more about what makes our area special for them,” Gawith said.

■ RWC values discussions will take place across the catchment over the months ahead. Take a look at [gw.govt.nz/whaitua-committees/](http://gw.govt.nz/whaitua-committees/) to see a short video along with more information about the work of the Ruamahanga Whaitua Committee to date.