Ruamāhanga Whaitua Committee - Greytown Community Meeting

Date: 16 August 2016, 6:30-8:30PM, WBS Room – Greytown Library

Committee attendance: David Holmes, Colin Olds, Mike Ashby, Philip Palmer, Peter Gawith, Ra Smith, Rebecca Fox.

Project Team attendance: Natasha Tomic, Murray McLea, Alastair Smaill

Public: 15 members of the public were present.

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

- Horses for courses – won't happen in a week, may take a generation. 2 generations is realistic (50 years).
- People swim in the Ruamahanga River – what does swimmable mean?
- Need to protect favourite swimming holes.
- Is it point source or non-point source pollution that is the problem?
- Flows are part of the equation – how do we make sure there is sufficient water.
- Allocation of water is also an issue – there needs to be enough.
- Need to decide when you want to make it swimmable and what the contaminants are.
- Need to protect swimming holes.
- Timing – need to set direction and time is not so important.
- River is bteter to swim in than before (no dairy factories, dairy shed discharges and wastewater not treated).
- Towns are now working on sewage discharges.
- Waiohine – always swimmable, towns and cattle going further down – gets worse.
- Increase in slime in the Waiohine further down.
- 15 years ago was full of fish, but now muddy Moroa water race.
- Quantity of cattle, leaching – issues, lifestyle blocks.
- Small blocks – subdividing – people don't know what to do.
- Water races – were for stock water - major change.
- Stormwater – water races.
- Education what to do and not to do – including tourists.
- Wastewater treatment for all towns needs to be sorted – needs to be treated as a resource rather than waste.
- Controlling the amount of water people use on a daily basis – it would lead to less waste.
- Poor infrastructure between wastewater and stormwater. Fixing it would improve amounts of discharge and quality.
- More ecofriendly detergents and shampoos.
- Insinkerators – needs to be banned.
- Encourage/make it easier to have composting toilets at residential properties.
- Timeline – complex issue – quickly.
- Nutrient issues – cow urine, urine patches, leaching, complicated nutrient.
- Unintended consequences occur too.

- GMP is changing setting new levels that might be wrong in the dairy factories and sewage were historical. It might be lagging. Precision agriculture is more responsible.
- Don't want to see nutirents being lost – want to keep in the root zone. Nutrients in the water are causing algae growth.
- Low flows are mostly groundwater.
- Groundwater is mixing with surface water.
- We want waterways to look swimmable without slime.
- For children – what might make them sick.
- What makes you sick? Needs to be explicitly stated.
- Putting your head under can be checked at websites.
- There are points of progress need to be noted.
- Councils need to work together.
- Some places are historically worse.
- Whaitua can collect, analyse and report on swimmability.
- There are times of swimmable.
- National standards are optional – misrepresentation.
- Records produced swimmable standards.
- Understand where swimmability exists.
- Look at rivers that are swimmable and compare.
- Understand the current state – all year a long timeframe.

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

- Urban water users are restricted.
- Large irrigation uses a lot of water.
- Water should go to the highest value use – water should be tradable.
- Variation in water uses can mean that water is used at different times of the year.
- Farms need to be able to harvest (store their own water).
- Need to use water efficiently.
- Over time we need to get rid of grandparenting.
- Need to consider infrastructure as irrigation system is modernized its use is becoming more efficient.
- Is everybody treated the same or should takes be restricted according to localized effect.
- Frist in first served has counted against good producers.
- Good jobs – number of jobs can be part of allocation.
- Waiohine aquifer stressed.
- Need consistency for water allocation.
- Cost for water can be used.
- Some agricultural users on municipal supply have made efficiencies.
- Meters have made a difference.
- Price on water for the community.
- Community will not be paying. Cost will be paid by users.
- Nothing wrong with dam.
- Irrigation projects will need farm plans.

- Best management practice for irrigation can be fair.
- Water can lead to jobs with best practice.
- Water rich – Ruamahanga – need water accounting.
- Technology can improve efficiency.
- Water storage – expense and income.
- Consider water storage – if use efficiently.
- Prioritising water – difference needed – municipal top – others after this.
- How do you prove you need it?
- Collaborative solution is a possibility.
- Fair for efficiency.
- Some water races are closed.
- Piping water races? Efficient but expensive.
- Breaches of municipal are fined.
- Municipal flow is restricted.
- Water flow must have: stock needs, human needs, environment flow.
- Urban and rural needed. Water meters for Masterton District Council too.
- Overuse has become obvious.
- On farm storage is being used and costly.
- Monitoring take – who monitors compliance?
- All users metered – big and small users.
- Charging for how much water is used for agricultural use.
- 10 acre blocks – unmonitored bores – all bores need to be monitored.
- To reduce all users evenly.
- Deep aquifers – unrestricted – should have same rules as all water takes.
- Allocation should be based on water footprint/efficiency (some uses heaps for little output).
- Tradable/transferable from industries that need it for shorter periods to the ones that need it.
- Catchment group schemes.
- Efficiency of use.
- Encourage on site storage – rain water tanks.
- Rain water storage for new builds – greywater for the garden.
- Soil organic matter holds water better.

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

- Rivers are already highly modified.
- Wide fairways (e.g. Waiohine) have advantages over narrow stop banks (compare with southern Ruamahanga River).
- Cross blading is not really working (just moves the gravel down).
- Manage gravel as a whole of catchment resource (remove where it is building up).
- More meander means less river management is needed.
- Climate change means flooding will get worse.
- Further developments should be careful not to be allowed in floodways.

- Kahikatea puts oxygen into the water – better than willows. Move to planting swampland forest species.
- Gravel extraction.
- Flax –not good – rats nests.
- Manage – buy back places/houses that are in a place where the river naturally flows. Money for flood management is more costly than buying back properties.
- Tree Lucerne – spread all across the catchment. Can we control it? It's costing a fortune to control.
- Old man's beard – struggling poplars.
- Buffer to give river room to move more.
- Cost – benefit – how much is spent managing the river – is it better to buy back properties/land.
- Look at different management options – not just this is the way we've always done it.
- Encourage country restoration societies – ownership of rivers – looking after them – enable assistance/guidance for Councils.
- Regulations to protect native fish.
- Fruit trees – apples high value crops.
- Swimming holes – tourism and local.
- Peer group pressure and greater contact with the environment.
- Scope for a range of groups.
- Sub-catchment owning the problem and working together.
- Schools, marae – communities.
- Mangatarere group/Papawai Group
- Farm plans with good management practice.
- Soil conservation needs to be kept going.
- Minimum flows need to be seen.
- Affordable to public.
- Management of rain periods.
- Waingawa run dry underground?
- Climate change – dramatic rain events interspersed with droughts.
- Ruamahanga into Lake Wairarapa – more natural character.
- Possibility for multi-purpose flood banks e.g. cycling.
- Buffer zones for gorse?
- Buffer zones eating into productive land.
- Balancing natural character with protection.
- A need to weigh up security.
- No best management practice – affecting bird life.
- Community facility with good practice.
- Keeping flood protection but nice looking buffer zones can add to natural character.
- Some rivers are degrading.