

Catchment Group Activity in the Zone

The Zone's original eight Catchment Groups became seven, on merger of the Upper Opihi and Opuha groups in 2017, but could grow if a prospective group starts up for Saltwater Creek.

Most of the groups have been closely involved in public consultations on the draft ZIPa, which has tended to displace other activity for about nine months, given limited discretionary time for the participants.

They have proved able and well-informed participants with varied opinions, demonstrating the value to the Zone Committee of maintaining Catchment Group community-level activity alongside other channels of communication, such as farming industry sectoral groups. *Zone Committee appointed members include active Catchment Group participants, able to comment on the usefulness of the Catchment Groups.*

Notes from groups' meetings are, in most cases, being posted to the Landcare Trust website to provide a public record, and they will also be archived by ECan.

The groups and current facilitators are:

Opuha & Upper Opihi - Julia Crossman from Opuha Water

Lower Opihi – Nicki Pridham from Rabobank

Te Ana Wai – Rhys Taylor from ECan

Kakahu – Martin (Marty) O'Connor from Ravensdown

Pareora – Angela Darke from Ballance

Waihi & Te Moana – Rhys Taylor from ECan

Lower Orari – Rhys Taylor from ECan

Otipua-Saltwater Creek has an inter-agency working group, facilitated by Rhys Taylor, which reported to the Zone Committee in August 2017. Many of its recommendations are adopted in the draft ZIPa. One of these is formation of an urban/rural catchment group, which will require facilitation and publicity to get it launched. *The Zone Committee may now wish to suggest ways of achieving this, to include ECan, TDC and runanga participation?*

Otipua-Saltwater Creek Working group met in February to oversee research proposed in the Working Group's Report and is gathering additional information from other interested parties, such as a forthcoming meeting with KiwiRail engineers on 17 April to discuss coastal erosion. A stream walk is proposed this autumn to begin farmer and smallholder contact.

The Waihi and Te Moana Group has publicised ZIPA input opportunities, met in Geraldine in July to make ZIPA proposals and in November (15 attended) to begin looking at flow and allocation, soil erosion, and community drinking water supplies and again on 23 January to look at the ZIPa and learn more about groundwater. They held a public field day on a Saturday morning 17 March at two locations in the Te Moana catchment: Downlands Deer Farm (Orange family, Woodside Rd) and Barkers Food Processors (Shaw Rd). Guest contributors included Janet Gregory, Helen Risk and two staff from Barkers.

	
<p>Catchment Group visit to Downlands Deer farm, hosted by Kris Orange and family.</p>	<p>A newly-fenced creek, to which deer previously had access, causing erosion.</p>

This event successfully linked townspeople and farmers to consider, firstly, impacts of deer on sediment loss and farm management responses including waterway fencing; and secondly the water use and discharges from fruit processing. Our hosts were generous with time and candid in tackling questions – the event had good participant feedback and generated interested media coverage. A second field trip is proposed for May 2018 to include some hill and valley biodiversity projects along the Waihi.

The Pareora Group next meets on 26 April to consider forming an incorporated society, which would help it to be able to raise funds and become self-organising. Jim Anderson and Phil Driver have led this initiative. The group have also been active ZIPa participants.

Since Christmas, the **Kakahu** and **Upper Opihi/Opuha** and **Lower Opihi** groups have just been working on ZIPa submissions and publicising OTOP public consultation opportunities.

The **Upper Orari** farmers were supported with a visit to their informal group, made by Rhys Taylor and two ECan colleagues to discuss ZIPa inputs.

Lower Orari Group met in August on the ZIPa (15 attended) and in November to learn about Community Groundwater Protection Zones and farming practices that help protect drinking water, with help from Ian Lyttle, ECan Land Management Advisor. Dates proposed for the Group to meet early in 2018 could not attract sufficient support nor ECan specialist staff input, so were rescheduled to May 15th. Members have however been active ZIPA submitters.

The **TeAna Wai Group** met in July, in November and again on 8 February (34 attended). They have learned about the ZIPa, Farm Environment Plans, fish screens, protection of drinking water, the local Water Users Group, winter grazing good practices (Charlotte Irving presented), and the Group's next session is on Weds 11th April at Albury, when the focus will be on GMP and discussion of farming practices with ECan land management Advisor Helen Risk. They are also planning a stream walk.

The current part-time contract with Rhys Taylor for ECan support to Catchment Groups (about one day a week) ends mid-June 2018.

The Zone Committee may wish to discuss and advise Environment Canterbury from this meeting on what value they place on this contracted facilitator role and thus whether some Catchment Groups should continue to be supported from the OTOP Zone Team budget in 2018-2019, if overall resources permit.

They may also wish to record appreciation of the input by rural businesses (Rabobank, Ballance, Ravensdown and Opuha Water) in providing salaried staff time, plus personal volunteering, in facilitating some of the Catchment Groups; support which has generously continued beyond the three-year pilot period managed by The Landcare Trust.