

## Upper Waitaki - Work Programme Progress Update for FY2019/20

### *Upper Waitaki Work Programme Summary:*

*Much as the vast majority of New Zealand, Environment Canterbury's ability to undertake or support work on the ground during the latter half of the 2019/2020 year was significantly effected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and lockdown. Even taking that into consideration, there was excellent progress across a range of focus areas during the year, and recently the Environment Canterbury team has been supporting and developing applications for possible additional central government funding for environmental projects in the Upper Waitaki post Covid.*

*The Upper Waitaki Zone Committee supported the allocation of 97% of the available Immediate Steps Funding to support biodiversity projects across the zone. These projects included the protection of wetland habitat, and significant weed control work, including the ground and aerial control of willow, elderberry, Russell Lupin, buddleia, cotoneaster and an assortment of smaller garden escapees.*

*Following on from last year, there was further collaborative activity with the likes of the Ministry of Defence, Department of Conservation and local community to relocate trout away from native fish habitat in the Hook Stream, again ensuring that our native fish continue to be protected.*

*One of the main focus areas for this year has been working closely with the farming community in the Ahuriri catchment area, following the Trophic Level Index (TLI) for the Ahuriri Arm of Lake Benmore exceeding warning limits in some consent in the 2019/2020 year. This work has centred around supporting a community led approach to enabling farmers to meet or exceed Good Management Practice (GMP) and has already seen education sessions such as and Irrigation Field day being well received and attended by the local farmers. There has also been a compliance component in that all consented farms in the catchment were monitored within the year.*

*Waihao, Arowhenua and Moeraki rūnanga, alongside Environment Canterbury, completed the recruitment process for our new Southern Pou Mātai Kō (Cultural Land Management) role. It is a great achievement that together we have managed to secure such a knowledgeable and experience person to this role, and they have commenced working in conjunction with our Land Management Advisory team, in developing further Mahinga Kai awareness across the zone and within Farm Environment Plans (FEPs).*

*In the Compliance field, Environment Canterbury have secured a Resource Management Officer to be based within the Upper Waitaki zone full time. Activity wise, there was a full investigation of the intermittent higher E coli water quality results in Lake Ruitaniwha over the Christmas and New Year period. With the support and guidance of the Upper Waitaki Zone Committee, there have been a number of subsequent follow up actions, including increased monitoring, development of an education programme, and investigation of long term solutions to reduce potential causes.*

*The Upper Waitaki Zone Committee's "Love Your Lakes" campaign has continued this year, under a slightly changed name of "Love Our Lakes." The "Love Our Lakes" campaign information posters have been placed in each of main townships, and include location specific data, updates and information. The posters are updated seasonally and are supported through social media with competitions and other activities to raise awareness of how everyone can contribute. The "Love Our Lakes" campaign was nominated for a Local Government award this year, but unfortunately, although well received, it did not come away with a prize..*

Outcome	Status	Progress Update
<p><b>UW-O-83</b>  <b>Farming at GMP or better</b>  Farmers in the Upper Waitaki zone support and apply innovative good management practice including recognition of mahinga kai values</p>	<p><b>On Schedule</b></p>	<p><b>Achievements:</b>  Over the course of the 2019/2020 year, all farmers in the Upper Waitaki and Mackenzie areas either have received their Farming Land Use (FLU) consent, or are in the process of lodging their applications via their advisors. The Environment Canterbury Zone Delivery team, comprising Land Management Advisors, Biodiversity officers, and our Pou Mātai Kō (Cultural Land Manager) are fully engaged in reviewing Farm Environment Plans (FEPs) as part of the consent application process, and are working with farmers in the area to support their working at Good Management Practice (GMP) levels, or better.</p> <p>The main area of focus for this activity during the past year has been in the Ahuriri catchment, as the Trophic Level Index (TLI), an annual water quality measure, exceeded its warning limit in a number of consents. Initially action was required from a small number of consent holders, but following a full catchment meeting in December, there was an agreement that this was an issue that should involve the whole of catchment/community .</p> <p>The community led Ahuriri Catchment Collective was set up, now renamed Omarama Catchment Collective was formed after the December meeting, and has made contact with all farmers in the catchment, outlining their role and aim for delivering GMP through range of events over the next year. They held a well-received and attended Irrigation Field Day in March, which provided education on how good irrigation efficiency could be achieved. Other work will focus on winter feed management, in association with Beef +Lamb NZ and Dairy NZ; and a focus on dryland intensification, which will bring in the dryland farmers into the catchment programme.</p> <p>The group is also creating a better understanding to help manage the response by all farmers if the TLI in the Ahuriri Arm exceeds the trigger limits or levels in Ahuriri Arm of Lake Benmore in future years.</p> <p>GMP guides are currently being written for Intensive Dryland Farming and Waterway management, with a view to developing further guides in collaboration with the Omarama Catchment Collective.</p>
<p><b>UW-O-84</b>  <b>Improving recreational and amenity values</b>  Environmental impacts of recreational activities are sustainably and appropriately managed</p>	<p><b>On Schedule</b></p>	<p><b>Achievements:</b>  The Environment Canterbury Science team has continued with its water quality monitoring programme, which is schedule to run year on year. Specifics on the results for each year's testing are released by the Science group.</p> <p>As covered in the previous Outcome commentary, the last year has seen a significant amount of activity</p>

		<p>related to the Torphic Level Index (TLI) level reported in the Ahuriri Arm of Lake Benmore.</p> <p>Another area of focus has been in the response to a couple of higher than expected E. coli results seen in Lake Ruataniwha over the Christmas and New Year period. Environment Canterbury completed an investigation into possible causes of this intermittent contamination. The investigation was inconclusive as to the root cause of the contamination, but working closely with, and with guidance from the Upper Waitaki Zone Committee, the follow up actions include the development of an education and awareness programme for recreational users of the lake, and a supporting role in identifying and aligning possible longer term solutions.</p> <p>The Upper Waitaki Zone Committee's "Love Your Lakes" campaign has continued this year, under a slightly changed name of "Love Our Lakes." The "Love Our Lakes" campaign information posters have been updated for each of the key townships, with location specific updates and information. The posters are updated twice a year and are supported through social media with competitions and other activities to raise awareness of how everyone can contribute. The "Love Our Lakes" campaign was nominated for a Local Government award.</p>
<p><b>UW-O-85</b>  <b>Focus on wetlands, spring-fed and hill-fed streams</b>  Priority wetlands, spring-fed and hill-fed streams are identified, and their ecological and cultural quality is maintained and steadily improved over time</p>	<p><b>On Schedule</b></p>	<p><b>Achievements:</b>  As part of the Immediate Steps Funding (IMS) projects that are approved by the Upper Waitaki Zone Committee, and other programmes of work, there has been a continued focus on wetlands, and the spring-fed and hill-fed streams. These pieces of work align closely with the Biodiversity focus on the following Outcome, and have included:  Further Wetland protection in Omarama  Working closely with the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Te Manahuna Aoraki on the removal of trout up the Fork stream., to better protect the environment for native species.</p> <p>A collaborative process of ensuring wetlands and streams are suitably identified during the Farm Environment Plan (FEP) and consent application processes has commenced, where the Land Management Advisor, Biodiversity Officer and Pou Mātai Kō (Cultural Land Management Advisor) work alongside industry consultants and consents staff to ensure important sites are protected.</p>
<p><b>UW-O-86</b>  <b>Biodiversity step change</b>  A step change in biodiversity protection and</p>	<p><b>On Schedule</b></p>	<p><b>Achievements:</b>  This year has seen significant, collaborative weed control projects being supported by the Immediate Step (IMS) fund allocated by the Upper Waitaki Zone Committee. These projects have included:</p>

<p>enhancement is achieved by supporting landowners, District Council, QEII trust, community groups, DOC and other agencies to undertake biodiversity protection and enhancement projects.</p>		<p>-Birchwood Cotoneaster control project. This project is a collaboration, working with the Department of Conservation, who are the project managers in this space. On the ground activities have been completed for this year, with some funding will be carried over until next financial year</p> <p>-The Dobson River Weed control project work has been completed for the year.</p> <p>-The Rowan control programme, in association with Land Information NZ (LINZ,) Department of Conservation and landowners on west side of Lake Pukaki has commenced but was stalled due to lockdown and not complete yet. Funds are being re-allocated into next years budget to ensure completion of this work.</p> <p>In addition to these IMS funded projects, the Environment Zone Delivery team have also been involved in significant collaborative works with treaty partners, and other agencies and stakeholders within the Upper Waitaki zone with a view to protecting and enhancing the biodiversity values within this very special area. This includes:</p> <p>Work closely with the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Te Manahuna Aoraki on the removal of trout up the Fork stream., to better protect the environment for native species.</p> <p>Again, working with the Department of Conservation and local farmers, and also with Land Information NZ (LINZ,) farmers, various Environment Canterbury sections are working on a rowan control programme up the west side of Lake Pukaki.</p> <p>A further major weed control programme is being undertaken up the Dobson Valley, working with DOC, LINZ, and Glen Lyon Station. This involved the ground and aerial control of willow, elderberry, Russell Lupin, buddleia, cotoneaster and an assortment of smaller garden escapees.</p>
<p><b>UW-O-87</b>  <b>Quality, affordable drinking water</b>  Safe drinking water is available for all.</p>	<p><b>On Hold</b></p>	<p><b>Achievements:</b></p> <p>This Outcome has been on hold this year whilst Environment Canterbury completed the recruitment of a Resource Management Officer based within the Upper Waitaki and Mackenzie basin. This new officer, based in Twizel, started with Environment Canterbury in May 2020, during lock down, and is initiating his work programme to include this work stream.</p> <p>Also coming on line in the 2020/2021 year will be a working group including team members from Environment Canterbury and Mackenzie District Council, to raise awareness, work with and support landowners in the transition from non-compliant to compliant septic tanks</p>
<p><b>UW-O-88</b>  <b>Compliance</b>  All consents in the Upper Waitaki Zone that need</p>	<p><b>On Schedule</b></p>	<p><b>Achievements:</b></p> <p>Compliance activity can take one of two forms: planned (monitoring) or unplanned.</p>

monitoring are monitored, high risk pollution incidents are responded to and consent holder's practices are aligned with community outcomes.

Unplanned activity consists of complaints or issues raised with Environment Canterbury by the community, other agencies or by Environment Canterbury's own staff whilst undertaking other work. Over the last year, those incidents reported were responded to within our agreed timescales - more details of the number and type of issues raised will be reported in the Annual Compliance Report.

A comprehensive monitoring programme for the Upper Waitaki over the last year has been supported by a Technical Expert, and other Senior compliance roles within Environment Canterbury .

This monitoring programme was prioritized by specific criteria drawn up from reference to historic performance, change in practice and scientific information.

A specific monitoring priority for the 2019/2020 year has been to monitor all consented farms in the Ahuriri catchment of the Upper Waitaki as a response to the elevated Trophic Level Index in Lake Benmore last year. The work concentrated on the consented properties holding irrigation and/or land use consents plus those dairy farms sitting on the fringe of the catchment. The project was successful in that all consented properties were formally monitored. Most were found to be compliant with their consents however a few had minor non-compliance.

In May Environment Canterbury secured the services of a Resource Management Officer who will be based within the Upper Waitaki / Mackenzie area full time.

The full annual compliance report from Environment Canterbury for the 2019/2020 year will be presented at the Upper Waitaki Zone Committee when it is available. This is usually around September or October.