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Pokaiwhenua

CATCHMENT GROUP

Newsletter - August 2023

Hi everyone, the last few months has seen a few changes within the Pokaiwhenua Catchment Group. The founder of our group, Andrew Lennox had been in the coordinators role for a bit over a year, and wanted to step back from the day to day operations. Meanwhile I (Hadleigh) had expressed some interest in the role after being involved on the board since we started. Long story short, Andrew stepped down as coordinator, and was voted back onto our board as chairperson, with me stepping down as chairperson and being contracted as our new coordinator! I started in the role at the start of July.

So, a bit about Hadleigh...

I grew up on a family dairy farm which bounds the Pokaiwhenua Stream. Growing up on the farm, I spent many hours in or near the stream fishing, rafting, swimming, exploring, dam building and many family BBQ's. My family and I still enjoy visiting the stream for these activities, and camping in the summer months.

I am passionate about the strength of catchment groups in bringing people together to achieve multiple objectives.

I previously worked for Fonterra as a Sustainable Dairying Adviser for 6 years, covering the South Waikato region providing individually tailored, farm-specific sustainability support and advice to Fonterra farmers via Farm Environment Plans (FEP's).

Prior to Fonterra, I was a Field Consultant with Ballance Agri-Nutrients in the South Waikato for 11 years, where I developed close relationships with many farmers in the region.

Recent events:

On Monday 17th July we held a Wetland (natural and constructed) fieldday with Nathan Burkpile from Landcare Trust on Mary-Ann Mathis' Jack Henry Road farm. This was a successful and informative day, with 18 people in attendance. Nathan is a wealth of knowledge on the topic of wetlands, and well worth getting involved in any wetland project.



On Thursday 20th July we held an information evening on Freshwater Farm Plans with speakers from the Waikato Regional Council and dairy processors. Around 40 people attended. It was a tough topic as farmers are feeling under pressure from increased regulation, however they went home better informed, and for the dairy farmers in attendance, they have reassurance that their milk company will support them through the changes.

These two events were made possible through funding we receive from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). Look out for future events on our website, Facebook page, or by email.



On Thursday 27th July we had a planting day with SWIFT on the Whakauru Stream (a tributary to the Pokaiwhenua Stream), alongside the Tokoroa trades centre (Pūkenga Rau) and Manulife Buildings.

This was an amazing day with people showing up in force to help out. The day was within orientation week at the Toi Ohomai site, so was incorporated into the week's activities, and we had plenty of students helping out, as well as staff from Manulife/Hancock Forest Management, SWIFT and SWDC. The day received good publicity, with articles on NZ Herald online and Stuff. Link: <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/waikato-news/news/south-waikato-stream-restoration-reveals-long-lost-walking-track-near-tokoroa/VWNC5RFVLCQDFF334WALUZPII/>

This was a good event in respect to so many urban folks in attendance to see what the Pokaiwhenua Catchment Group are all about.



DairyNZ/Raukawa/PCG community project:

A Sustainable Catchments programme was launched on 12 May 2023, where DairyNZ, Raukawa Charitable Trust, the Pokaiwhenua Catchment Group and local farmers will work together to build healthier waterways in the Pokaiwhenua catchments. DairyNZ has received \$3.4M in Government funding for the programme. (Note this is not farmer levy funds. DairyNZ is acting as the coordinator of this funding).

It was decided that the first project would focus on a length of the Whakauru stream (a tributary to the Pokaiwhenua) where it passes the Tokoroa cricket grounds and rugby grounds, and the southern entrance to the mountain biking area, Cougar Park. The land on the southern side of the stream is administered by the South Waikato District Council (SWDC).

SWDC are progressively clearing Willow from this side of the stream, where in places the Willow is extremely dense within and beside the stream. Further downstream, historic plantings of native species along the edges of the stream have taken place, and a planting day to mark the launch of the programme took place here to bolster an area planted historically. This is a 1.9ha area from the entrance to Cougar Park downstream to the end of Giles Street.

The removal of the Willows, and replacing these with suitable native species will provide a much enhanced habitat for native species, and a corridor along/beside the stream, as well as better prevention of stream-bank erosion through appropriate plant species holding stream banks. Being a community project, members of the community will be invited to every planting day and information event that is held. The project group are looking at making this space somewhere where the community can come and interact with the natural environment as much as possible.



Image on left showing general location, east of Tokoroa township. Image on right showing the project area, looking east. On southern side of stream (right hand side of image), are the Tokoroa Cricket/Soccer fields, and the location of the community project on the banks of the Whakauru Stream (SWDC administered).

Water monitoring sites:

As part of the DairyNZ/Raukawa/PCG project, we are also working with Mercury Energy & Adroit in installing two real-time 24/7 water monitoring sites on streams within the catchment. These will monitor nitrates, dissolved oxygen, turbidity and pH. The measurements/readings will be accessible via the web and mobile app. We will let you know when this becomes available.



Waikato River Authority funded projects:

This winter, we have had seven landowners within the catchment fencing waterways and seeps on their farms, and planting these areas with over 15,000 native plants. This has been made possible through funding we have received from the Waikato River Authority (WRA), and a contribution from the landowners. The Pokaiwhenua Catchment Group prepared an application for this funding on behalf of these landowners who expressed an interest in this type of work. Be in touch if you would like to discuss a similar project on your own land as we are seeking keen landowners for winter 2024 projects.

Lancaster Reserve:

On the 24th July, Andrew and I assisted SWDC staff planting next to the Matarawa Stream alongside Lancaster Reserve. Again, another great day, demonstrating our involvement in the urban environment.



Signs!

Andrew and I were out and about this week putting up some very flash signs we have had made around the area. Where we have done work in conjunction with other parties, their name is also mentioned on the sign, along with a QR code one can scan to check out our

website! We are keen to hear from anyone who would be happy to have a sign on their property to assist us with a little bit of advertising.



Till the next time,

Hadleigh Putt