

Manuherikia Catchment Group

Newsletter

October 2022

Manuherikia Catchment Group(MCG) role still important

MCG was established to represent the whole catchment in achieving an outcome for water management that was practical while maintaining viable farming businesses. Initially, it was hoped our whole catchment solution would be adopted through the water permit process. But with the introduction of short-term permits, the regulations that will now dictate water management in the catchment will be introduced in the Land and Water Plan.

The farmer's River Management Plan (RMP) and the science work that was drafted for the water permits remains alive and is now the blueprint for the groups' position in the Land and Water Plan.

Keeping the whole catchment as a cohesive group through the plan change is the only way a workable solution will be found. Information can be found on our website www.mcwater.co.nz

The new Land and Water Plan

The ORC is aiming to notify the new Land and Water Plan (LWP) by December 2023. It is in that document that we will see the minimum flows, allocation blocks and many other new rules introduced.

The ORC is still completing the science for the catchment that will inform the LWP. Matt Hickey and Roger Williams were engaged in the ORC's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) which is overseeing the hydrological model development and further peer reviewing of other work. Dean Olsen is now on TAG although his field of expertise is ecology not hydrology.

It is likely the ORC will host information and consultation sessions in the next 12 months and your attendance and participation in these is encouraged.

Information regarding the MCG position for the catchment will be available in many locations including: the MCG website, information or position statements by MCG, and newsletters amongst other communication channels.

Communication and Engagement

MCG has recently engaged the assistance of Robyn Wells to develop, and project manage a Communication and Engagement Plan for MCG. We need as many community members as possible, (farmers, water users, local town people, Councilors, and any out-of-town submitters) to understand the implications of the proposed new regulations on the catchment. An unbiased, balanced and facts-driven debate has been missing in the media coverage in relation to the river and irrigation so far, and the C&E Plan will be focused on sharing facts and positive examples of sustainable farming.

Permit applications and costs

Most of the amendments have been lodged now for the catchment and some replacement permits have been issued.

If your group would like any assistance with the ORC costs please contact MCG or your consultant?

MfE funding and Manuherikia Exemplar Governance Group and Thomsons Creek Group

Recent work in the Thomsons Creek project includes the planting of 600 plus *Carrex secta* over 3 sites in the catchment; a small amount of willow clearing; and the first farms developing fencing proposals for funding. The consent applications to drain the wetland, remove willows and clean the Sluice Channels on McLeod's have been lodged. The ORC has committed to process the consents for this project at no cost. ORC have also committed \$40,000 towards the main fish barrier in Thomsons creek.

The Manuherikia Exemplar Governance Group (MEGG) has been established and has been meeting regularly over the last 6 months. MEGG is made up of representatives from DoC, F&G, ORC, CODC, COES, and Co-Chaired by Anna Gillespie (MCG) and Paulette Tamiti-Eliffe (Iwi rep). This group is working towards the development of an integrated catchment enhancement plan for the Manuherikia and you will see events coming out very soon from this group.

Proposed Regional Policy Statement (RPS)

The New Regional Policy Statement that was notified in June 2021 has now been divided into two documents and the freshwater section has been re-notified. MCG have re-lodged their small submission on the Freshwater Management Unit section of the RPS for the Manuherikia Catchment. Submissions close for the separated Freshwater section on the 29 November.

Otago Water Resource Users Group (OWRUG) have submitted a more comprehensive submission with the support of Landpro. OWRUG represent all Otago irrigators and are following up on issues common to all Otago water users.

Annual General Meeting

MCG will hold the AGM at **4pm on Friday 4th November** at the Rugby Club Rooms. Your representation in the debate on future water regulations in the catchment is being led by MCG. Nominations for committee membership close on the 28 Oct.

It is too important not to be part of this meeting, so we look forward to seeing you there!

Our secretary can be contacted on: manuherikiacatchmentgroup@gmail.com