

Manuherikia Catchment Group

Newsletter no. 3

March 2022

MCG actions in the last 6 months

Exemplar Catchment and MfE funding

The MCG has signed agreements to handle the first \$200,000 of funds for the Thomson catchment project portion of the Exemplar Catchment. MCG has now received these funds and on the ground work starts this month with willow spraying and finalising fencing plans for Galaxiid protection.

The first meeting of the project Governance group was held on 7th March participants include, Tim Cadogan *CODC*, Ian Hadland *Otago Fish and Game*, Sandra McIntyre *Aukaha*, Edward Ellison *Kāi Tahu*, Anna Gillespie *MCG*, Rob Schick, Rachel Brown and Ilka Pelzer *MfE*, Sarah Gardner *ORC*, and a DoC representative yet to be confirmed . This Group will meet monthly and will look for other projects within the catchment and community which can be supported by this funding.

Permit applications

The permit applications are on hold and are being amended now. Irrigators can continue to operate under their old permits until new consents are issued. At that time the water permits will be for a term of 6 years without any new environmental mitigations such as new residual or minimum flows, fish screens or efficiency reductions. Included will be a maximum area of irrigation and GPS locations of storage ponds.

The schedule 10A.4 assessed take data from the ORC has been delivered to many Manuherikia permit holders and their consultants. The consultants are working through the data to check for mistakes and be sure their client's data is as good as it can be.

Amendments are being drafted and each applicant will receive copies of their amendments before they are lodged.

If any consent holders have queries about their ORC invoices, please contact your consultant.

MCG has received an invoice from the ORC which they are currently disputing.

ORC Science and TAG

The ORC multi stakeholder Technical Advisory Group meetings update: Matt Hickey reports these have not been held recently. The ORC has missed the deadline for the hydrology model to be complete. The Cawthron Drift Study is still not accepted by all of TAG. In summary ORC do not yet have the robust science to support a minimum flow recommendation.

Land and Water Regional Plan

At the ORC Dunstan Rohe meeting the ORC advised they would not be doing any more consultation for the Manuherekia on values and water quantity. On following up with the ORC they confirmed that consultation would be held on water quality provisions in the proposed plan if the ORC science report demonstrated the limits they are proposing requires more change than the adoption of best management practice. Given the water quality limits proposed are National Policy for Freshwater A Band (approx. mountain stream standard) we anticipate further consultation. There has been no advice from the ORC suggesting the notification date for the Land and Water Plan has slipped from Dec 2023.

Regional Policy Statement

The Freshwater Commission has set the Regional Policy Statement hearing to start at the end of May 2022. All evidence is due by 14 April. MCG has a brief submission focusing on the need for the irrigation companies to be able to use water outside the Rohe boundaries and the risk associated with the vague and easily misinterpreted objectives set for the Clutha Mata-au FMU. It is likely but yet to be confirmed that two or three representatives will prepare evidence for MCG. OWRUG is representing the irrigation sector across the region with the support of Landpro and Gallaway Cook Allan. The hearing evidence of MCG and OWRUG will be complementary

Public Relations support

The MCG is seeking to engage public relations support in the lead up to the Land and Water Plan. The science and other material prepared for the permit applications will be used to illustrate the farmer's and local community's reliance on water for their businesses, social and recreational needs and health of the catchment. MCG will also call on farmers to be part of good news stories and share appropriate material on social media platforms.