



March 2020

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2020, where you'll find updates of the work that's been going on in the catchment

We've had several meetings and important events over the past six months or so.

Action for Healthy Waterways submission meeting

The PWCG held a submission night on 1st October to prepare a submission to the government's Action for Healthy Waterways proposals. A submission was prepared based on the outcomes of this meeting and sent on the Group's behalf.



Otago Regional Council Executive Team roadshow

In October, the ORC Executive team came to the catchment, to outline the ORC's rule changes and how they viewed the Government's Action for Healthy Waterways. It was an opportunity for farmers to meet with the new executive team at the ORC. ORC staff were also taken to two sites in the catchment to show them some of initiatives that the Group are undertaking.



Working with Schools

Throughout the year PWCG worked with several of the schools in the catchment to teach students about stream health, and what can be done to improve it. Students have been busy assessing the physical habitat, along with chemical and biological indicators of stream health. Now three of the five schools worked with have adopted a local stream, trying to make improvements to the health of the stream and to monitor their progress in stream health indicators over time.



Signs

You will have noticed several new signs going up around the catchment. The latest version was put up on the main street of Tapanui in November.



Waipahi wetland restoration

Work is ongoing to secure resource consent to reinstate a large 9 hectare wetland area in the Waipahi catchment. The PWCG have been busy dealing with affected parties and satisfying ORC requirements to ensure this project is a success. All approvals have now been given and the consent is due to be granted.

Best Practice Response Team

The farmer-led Best Practice Response team was set up just over a year ago to encourage and support farmers to instigate best practice on their farms in order to minimise their environmental footprint for the benefit of all.

Since the team's launch there have been seven referrals to the team from members of the public. The referrals have had to do with stock waste, stock access to water and stock damage beside waterways. The feedback from the responses to date have been very positive, with all referred farmers being receptive to the team's approach.

Thursday, 19 March 2020

Friendly solution to farm water issues

By Richard Davison

Rural life > Other News



Again a bit about the team:

- Referrals to the BPRT will be communicated via text or voice message to **027 POMAHAK (027 7662425)**
- When received the message is processed by an administrator who then allocates the referral to a pair of BPRT volunteers. In all cases, the identity of the person making the referral will be known only to the administrator. To ensure complete confidentiality the name of the person making the referral will not be known to the BPRT volunteers.
- The BPRT volunteers will make contact with those who are the subject of the referral and if appropriate, will offer their assistance. Those subject to referrals are under no obligation to accept help from the BPRT volunteers and a polite decline to BPRT members will end the process.
- Referrals can be related to any matter which will adversely affect water quality, and could include (but not limited to) waterway fencing and management, sediment movement, issues associated with crop establishment or winter grazing.

Tributary group meetings

Tributary group meetings continue to take place throughout the Pomahaka catchment. These are a great way to catch up with neighbours and come up with ideas as to how to continue to make improvements to the health of local streams. Keep an eye out on the Facebook page or via email for upcoming meetings.

E.Coli testing

We now have an *E.coli* testing instrument set up in Tapanui. We're offering tests for *E.coli* \$10 to members of the Group. And we'll do these for free if this is for group learning.

The Waikoikoi tributary group decided to do some *E.coli* tests early autumn and just before duck shooting on some catchment duck ponds to measure how much ducks contribute.



Mitigation Trials

We've now had over a year of testing on two of our mitigation trial sites in the catchment. The results for these two sites are looking very positive. In one wetland trial in the Waikoikoi tributary *E.coli* levels are dropping by an average of 70% as water passes through the wetland. Similar results are being seen for nitrogen and phosphorus too.



Video

Have you checked out the video on sediment mitigation done by Fish and Game yet? If not you can view it online at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxYdq17ceZY>



We've also got another short video coming soon on the wetland trial being undertaken at Waikoikoi.