



NEWSLETTER | JULY 2025

Upper Waipoua Kaitiaki Group

We are working together to enhance our environment, our community and our economic stability.

Chair's Report

Kia ora,

It is with pleasure that I am writing to you as Chairperson in the first Newsletter for the Upper Waipoua Kaitiaki Catchment Group.

Let me introduce myself. I am Jason Christensen born and bred in Mt Bruce on the family farm, 'Fernhill'. It has been in the family since 1879 and I am the fifth generation to farm it. The farm is the only dairy farm in our catchment and I am very proud to be a dairy farmer today.

I left college at 16 to work in a wholesale/retail nursery in Masterton for six years before heading 'overseas' to work for the Department of Conservation (DOC) on Mana Island NZ.

While there I was managing the nursery growing and planting 35,000 trees a year. I then became the island manager and got involved in all things to do with conservation, from weed and animal pests to biosecurity and visitor assets.

After 11 years on Mana Island I moved to work from the Waikanae office and spent a lot of time in the Tararua Forest Park working with the DOC visitor recreation team. I stayed there for three years before coming back home to the farm.



Fernhill has always been a dairy farm, and has continued to grow in stock numbers as the farm expanded. We currently milk 153ha, the Te Mara block is approx. 180ha effective land and there is another 203ha in QE2 covenant or regenerating or retired land.

The Te Mara part of the farm is for our young replacement stock and our small beef unit. The total farm area is 536 ha including another 26ha over the hill north of Pūkaha Wildlife Centre.

The Catchment Group started in 2018 as a small group of land owners in the upper section north of the Waipoua stream.

New Committee

In November 2024 a new committee was formed and I was elected Chairperson. The first thing that the committee did was secure funding from the Wairarapa Catchment Collective for a part-time coordinator for 12 months. We secured the services of Michael Woodcock as our coordinator. Michael has been doing a fabulous job and is making great progress.

Mikimiki Stream Walk

We wanted to welcome the Mikimiki Road members of the community into the catchment and we began this in December. In March we had our catchment tour of the Mikimiki Stream. Please see Gill's report for more information on this trip.

Ballance Farm Environment Awards

Thanks to the members of the group who turned out in February to help answer questions and be part of the [Ballance Awards showcase video and photos](#). This was all done as the Upper Waipoua catchment was this year's Greater Wellington Ballance Showcase catchment group. In March the committee went along to receive the award on your behalf. There we received a number of trees which we will plant in our catchment in late July.



Waipoua Flood Resilience Project

Michael and I attended two meetings held at Greater Wellington on flood resilience on the Waipoua catchment in April and May. It was here that we found out about 17,000 trees available for the catchment. This project needed to be 'shovel ready' for this winter.

On the second meeting we presented some maps and possible sites for the trees in our catchment group.

For reasons unknown to us, other catchment groups that are within the Waipoua catchment didn't attend that meeting so our group managed to get all the plants.

Thanks to four land owners, we quickly arranged a site meeting with the GWRC team and Ahau Collective which will plant the plants. Of the four land owners, three were short listed to do more planning for the planting. We will keep you posted on this project.

As part of the above project there is potentially a further 160,000 plants available for next year which the team is working on and we hope to continue to be part of that project. The next phase might well include some nature-based solutions around wetlands or other possible areas that could hold flood waters in large rain events. We will keep you informed and let you know of any meeting dates and times via email.



CATCHMENT SHOWCASE

Upper Waipoua Kaitiaki
Group Catchment



Nature Based Solutions Workshop

Several members of the committee attended a workshop/research hui on the topic of Nature Based solutions. We will await the report on the outcomes and any possible funding from that.

Pest Animal Workshop

Trevor Thompson ran a very successful pest animal workshop on Sunday 6 July. It was well attended with people from Masterton through to Eketahuna attending. Great to see pupils from Ōpaki school keen to be there. Developing a long term environmental catchment relationship with Ōpaki is a key ambition.



Pest Weed Resource

The committee is currently working on a key weed identification and control book for the catchment. We hope this will be printed later this year now we have secured funding.

Catchment Tours

I am also hoping that we will have one catchment tour each year as it been a few years since we did the others and some catchments have changed a lot in that time.

If there is anything that you would like to see the committee look into, or help with, please don't hesitate to contact any of the committee below. Michael is the best first person to contact.

COMMITTEE

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Who are we



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Upper Waipoua Kaitiaki /
Guardians

Mikimiki Catchment Tour Report

Sunday 2nd March 2025 | Gill Murray

A total of 27 community members participated in this catchment tour. With curiosity and enthusiasm, we explored six sites along the stream.



We looked at each environment and what affects water quality. At each stop we took some water quality measurements. We looked for:

- the types of creatures living in the stream, koura, invertebrates and snails
- the amount of slime and algae present
- the amount of silt present
- water temperature
- samples of the water
- nitrogen present
- water clarity (using a tube).

As we have observed in previous stream walks we noticed the positive effects of shade over the awa.



A warm day and the warmest water temperature of 21.9 c. Marginal for aquatic life, but ideal for humans.



BJ Campbell's property. Here the awa has wider banks and spreads out over a stone bed. Although the water temp was high the team still found interesting aquatic life.

Site	Water temp	Vegetation	Shade	Stock	Observed	Clarity
1. Opposite Hella's	14.3	Good second generation forest	Yes	No	Mayfly	70-80cm
2. Lisa and Steve Merrin	15.9	Good native cover on true left	No shade down and up stream	No	Stonefly Koura Mayfly	60-70cm
3. Strawbale House	17.7	More exotics	Yes	No	Mayfly Leaves Silt	40cm
4. BJ Campbell	21.6	Farmland	No	Yes	Mayfly Silt Green algae	65-75cm
5. Chris Cumming	21.9	Farmland Willows	No, stock are excluded from river	No	Snails Mayfly Less silt Exotic weed	50-60cm
6. Marlene and Roy	21.8	Natives on high banks Papa rock base	No	No	Mayfly	53cm

We also stopped to look at a feeder stream on farmland with no trees. We discussed how planting trees would help slow the runoff from the hill and thus heavy rain effects downstream. On this trip a lot of knowledge was shared, about the stream, local history, property histories.

A few gems shared by Trevor

It is good to encourage the native system for promoting stream health

- Shade
- Riffles oxygenate water
- Freshers to clean stream

We can keep the water temperature down by planting

- Right tree in right place
- Look after them
- Eco source plants that are acclimatised to this area

Exotics (including willows) provide shade for the stream

- If you remove them, replace them with natives for shade.
- Look at what natives are already growing by the stream and in your locality to see what to plant.

We finished the day with a BBQ at Jazz O'Connor's. Great food and excellent company.