

Catchment Group Story

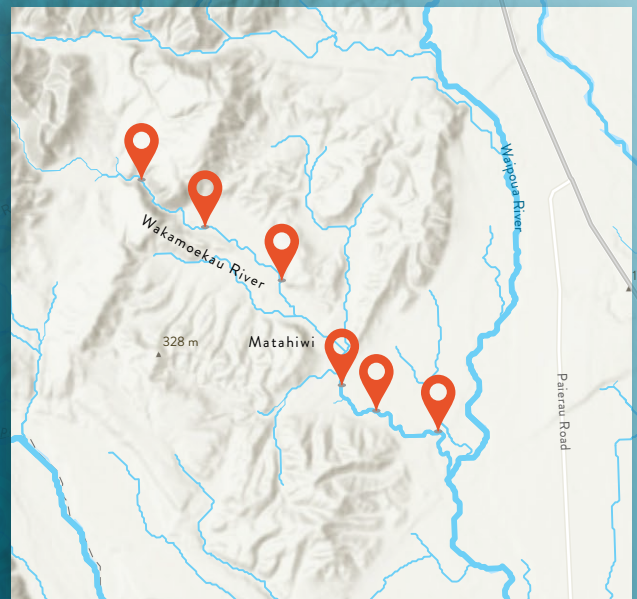
Wellington/Te Upoko-o-te-Ika | NOVEMBER 2024

Wakamoekau Community Catchment Group

Wakamoekau Catchment, Matahiwi

Wakamoekau Community Catchment Group is a small rural community of small block holders and farmers. Although the group only formed in 2020 – under the Catchment Communities project – for many years they've been an active community, focused on taking action for the health of the Wakamoekau River.

The catchment group covers 3,887 ha and is located approximately 10 km northwest of Masterton. The creek itself starts in the Tararua foothills just south of the Mikimiki Stream, winds its way along the upper part of Matahiwi Road, and ends where it joins the Waipoua River – approximately three kilometres from the start of the road.





2



3



4

PHOTO CAPTIONS – Front page: 1. Juvenile tuna kūwharuwharu (longfin eel) in the Wakamoekau. **Page left:** 2. Members of the Wakamoekau Group measuring temperature and conductivity, while trialling the QA/QC survey. 3. Measuring the clarity of the water in the Wakamoekau River. 4. Checking the condition of the tuna kūwharuwharu. **Page right:** 5. Monitoring Nitrate levels in the Wakamoekau. 6. What Fish Am I? Fish identification in the Wakamoekau. **Back page:** 7. Finding large mayflies and stoneflies on the rocks. 8. Wakamoekau restoration planting trial.

Community-led Conservation in the Wairarapa



Water Quality Monitoring & Fish Surveys



The Wakamoekau Catchment Group has many members who use the awa recreationally for swimming and fishing, as well as supporting farming practices. It's important to them to understand the current state of their awa, so they can take actions to improve the water quality.

Mountains to Sea Wellington has been working with the Wakamoekau Catchment Group to better understand the quality of the Wakamoekau River as it flows from the Tararua foothills. All monitoring is being done trialling the new Community-based Monitoring (CBM) tool.

The group's completed three sampling rounds, including a fish survey during spring, across six sites from the catchment head to the Waipoua River confluence.

Greater Wellington Regional Council supported the set up of the sites and conducted four bottle sampling rounds from 2020 to 2023. Ongoing monitoring aims to establish a baseline of the awa's health to guide future actions, which'll help inform the actions taken for future generations.



Healthier & more sustainable community, environment for future generations.



Enhancing Biodiversity

The group aims to have an eco-corridor along the Wakamoekau, with aspirations of fencing and planting the riverbanks. The 4 ha site, recently retired from previous land use, has become the focus of a restoration project across six sites and supported by Greater Wellington. One section will use permaculture planting in small circles of about 25 trees each, and another section will be planted using a traditional grid method to allow for comparison.

These permaculture circles will be temporarily fenced, with water tanks placed to support the plantings during dry spells, and pest animals will be trapped in the area. In two years, the group plans to reuse the fencing, watering equipment, and other resources for another round of planting, making this a sustainable and ongoing restoration effort.



Pest Monitoring & Control

The Group has 17 ha of QEII National Trust bush, which they have been trapping in with QEII for the past five years. This has resulted in a significant increase in birdlife in the area, which neighbours have been commenting on.

They are now looking to grow their capability and network of traps to build on the amazing work that is already underway. They aim to increase the pest control area to approximately 42 ha, including the planting area, by utilising Trap.nz and a community volunteer roster.



Farmers & communities are enabled to embrace sustainability through innovation & smart regulation – creating a balance between economic viability & environmental stewardship.



5



6

Next Steps



The Wakamoekau Community group is just beginning a multi-generational project to better understand their catchment and improve it.

Next steps for the Group are to:

- » continue monitoring water quality and biodiversity
- » undertake native planting projects to create an eco-corridor along the Wakamoekau River
- » ensure the project is a reflection of the community by involving all landowners in the catchment.



In 20, 50, and 100 years, we imagine the Wakamoekau catchment to be an active, united community that is prosperous and sustainable. With pests, pollution, and erosion under control, the creek will support a native tree corridor with clean water – a habitat for fish and other animals, and also support recreational use.

WAKAMOEKAU CATCHMENT GROUP VISION



To learn more about the Wakamoekau Community Catchment Group, or how 'Wai Connection – Tatai Ki Te Wai' is supporting them, please contact:

RICHARD & TANIA WHITE

WAKAMOEKAU CATCHMENT GROUP

Wakamoekau Catchment Group

info@wairarapacc.nz

 www.wairarapacc.nz

MADDY GLOVER | Mountains to Sea Wellington

'Wai Connection' Catchment Coordinator

Maddy.glover@mtsw.org.nz

 www.mountaintoseawellington.org

All images © Rebecca Jamieson



7



8