

Opuha River Catchment Group

Monday 12th October 2015, 7pm, Fairlie Fire Station

Attendance: Tim O'Connor, Nicole Lang, Gus Lang (part of meeting), Kevin Payne, Hayden Dwyer, Greg Anderson, Evan Williams, Judy Blakemore, David Williams, Jason Grant, Kieren Guiney, Leoine Guiney (part of meeting), Julia Crossman (facilitator), Mark Webb (F&G).

Apologies: Dermott O'Sullivan, Alastair Hay, Neil Campbell

Catchment Group work

Julia reported back that following the last meeting she sought guidance from Barbara Nicholas (Zone Committee facilitator) regarding the interaction between the catchment group and the zone committee (ZC). Her response was as follows:

- 1) The Zone Committee are working to appoint a representative to each catchment group – this will be done at the next meeting
- 2) The role of the zone committee rep will be to be the conduit of info between the ZC and the catchment group
- 3) The ZC members will have the opportunity to feedback the key points from the catchment group meeting to other ZC reps at their meetings
- 4) There will be opportunities for the catchment group to engage directly with the ZC, especially heading into the sub-regional planning process
- 5) How the engagement with the zone committee will take form is not yet clear, but expectation I have at the moment is that the first step will be checking out with the catchment group the proposed 'outcomes' that the plan needs to contribute to – probably early 2016
- 6) The ZC are also establishing a working group whose role is to support catchment groups more explicitly, including working with Landcare Trust

There was general comfort among the group for this approach.

Mark Webb, ZC member, reinforced that the ZC needs ideas and information to come from the catchment group; the ZC needs to know what you are seeking to achieve for the catchment.

It was acknowledged that other areas had been through the sub-regional process and it would be valuable to have someone come and talk to the group about their experiences. Julia suggested Colin Hurst who had been involved in the South Canterbury Coastal Streams process, and there was agreement that it would be useful to get him to present at a meeting. Julia will arrange.

Purpose of catchment group and structure of discussions

Julia reminded the group of the two purposes the group had articulated at a meeting earlier on in the year (23 Feb 15):

- To improve the water quality in the river and lake to a swimmable state, while maintaining profitability, farming and recreation.

- To develop a catchment plan for water quality and water quantity, at a catchment and farm level.

A number of key topics were highlighted as key aspects of the catchment plan. The proposal was to have a dedicated meeting for each topic / sub-topic to facilitate understanding each of these.

Julia posed the question of whether this was still the desired approach and suggested that if it was, then we take the following structure at meetings.

- 1) For each of the key topic areas, we hear from the experts and share local knowledge
- 2) We then brainstorm the following:
 - What are the issues?
 - What are we trying to achieve?
 - What are the actions to achieve these things. These actions are likely to be grouped into 2 categories:
 - The actions/recommendations to be fed to the zone committee for the sub-regional process
 - The actions/recommendations for the catchment group to facilitate.

This summary will then be forwarded to the zone committee through the rep on the catchment group. The summaries from all meetings will also be collated into a larger catchment plan where the linkages / interactions between the topics will be identified. The end result will be a clear catchment plan that guides the recommendations of the catchment group to the zone committee, and also guides the other work of the catchment group.

There was agreement from the group to give this approach a go.

Election of chair

Greg Anderson, Jason Grant and Kevin Payne were nominated as Chairperson for the Opuha River Catchment Group. Ken and Greg indicated that they would not have the time to do the role justice. Jason indicated his willingness to take on the role.

Jason Grant was elected Chairperson; Kevin Payne was elected Deputy Chairperson

Recap of last meeting – dam flow regime

Please see attachment for a summary of the discussion regarding the dam flow regime.

Minimum flow regime of the North and South Opuha

Mark Webb gave a very brief overview of the origins of the minimum flows in the North and South Opuha, that being the consent hearings in 2000.

Mark stated that the sub-regional plan presented an opportunity for these flows to be reviewed. Mark also stressed the importance of ‘environmental flows’ over ‘minimum flows’ where the former also included aspects of seasonality/variability.

Julia suggested at the next meeting we talk more about the values of these rivers (environmental, economic, cultural and social) and also map out the current minimum flows with the demands (ecological and irrigation) in the rivers. This would give an idea of where there are tensions and where there may be room for movement on the current minimum flows. Julia will also ask Richard De Joux to do some work around the reliability of abstraction throughout the year.

There was agreement to park the discussion regarding North and South Opuha minimum flows until the next meeting.

Meeting closed 9.15pm.

Next meeting 9th November 2015, 7.30pm, Fairlie Fire Station