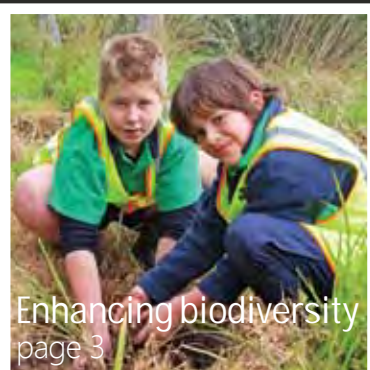




# Enviro South

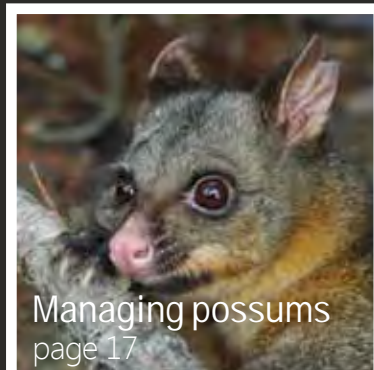
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environment  
**SOUTHLAND**

*Te Taiao Tonga*

# Working together

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## Envirosouth

*Envirosouth* is published four times a year by Environment Southland. It is delivered to every household in the region. We welcome your comments on anything published in this magazine.

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Pages 10-15 photos by James Jubb

Cover – Ali Timms, Chairman,  
Environment Southland

**S**outhlanders are good at pulling together to achieve success and the recently launched Regional Development Strategy is both a result of this ability and a blueprint for harnessing it to secure the region's long-term viability.

Our Southland councils have stepped up to lead the challenge, hand in hand with iwi, businesses and community organisations.

The vision is for an economically and socially resilient Southland.

The strategy acknowledges Southland's star economic performance during the past decade, but highlights our vulnerability with an ageing and falling population (in real terms), which will undermine our ability to weather the tough times.

Its primary focus is to increase our population by retaining young people, attracting other New Zealanders and migrants. It challenges us to replace negative external perceptions of isolation and poor climate with an increasingly positive view of a regional lifestyle people want. It means building on our economic success and developing new industry, and at the same time energising our urban centres through design, activity and culture.

But what I really like about it is that it comes with an action plan. Environment Southland has a role to play as an enabler, ensuring the sustainable use of our natural resources, particularly water, essential to our successful agricultural sector and the lifestyle we all enjoy.

There's a lot of work to do, and it will take time, but Southlanders' can-do attitudes will be a real asset in the drive to create more resilient, liveable communities.

In October Environment Southland reached a milestone with the notification of the Regional Air Plan. It followed a highly engaged consultation period and a hearing process that very much took into account people's concerns. As a result, the rules for home heating in the urban airsheds of Invercargill and Gore are different to what we started out with.



Ali Timms – Chairman,  
Environment Southland

We have pushed out the timeframes for phasing out non-compliant burners and given Gore residents a longer phase out period because Gore is closer to meeting the National Environmental Standards for Air Quality (NES). We also dropped the proposed rule to ban high sulphur coal.

We all want to breathe clean air, but we recognise that people need to keep warm and that they need time and support to change to compliant heating options. I think the revised rules, Environment Southland's education-first approach to compliance, and the development of a low-interest Clean Air loans scheme strikes a good balance as we work towards achieving the NES.

Both Environment Southland and Invercargill City Council are contributing to the low-interest loan scheme, which will be managed by the Southland Warm Homes Trust. The details are being worked through, and I am hopeful that we can achieve something similar for Gore residents. Check out [www.BreatheEasySouthland.co.nz](http://www.BreatheEasySouthland.co.nz) for more information.



# Enhancing biodiversity

**P**est-free reserves, fenced waterways, forests alive with native birdsong – does this sound like something you’d want to see more of in your community, or maybe even on your own property?

Environment Southland provides funding each year for projects that have a significant and sustainable benefit to indigenous biodiversity on private and community-owned land in Southland. Anyone can apply for funds from the Environmental Enhancement Fund, which contributes up to 50% of a project’s costs, provided it meets certain requirements.

Environment Southland biosecurity officer Shaun Cunningham often works with fund applicants. He says the fund provides an incentive for Southlanders who are thinking about doing ecological restoration work. “It’s aimed at people who are willing to put in the time and work to achieve something, but can’t shoulder all the initial costs themselves. So the fund is a hand up rather than a hand out.”

Lately, Shaun’s been working with Heddon Bush School, one of the successful applicants that has enjoyed the benefits of the fund before. In 2012 the school secured \$607, and this year they’ve been granted \$5,700 towards native plantings and weed management in a one hectare remnant kahikatea forest – one of the last remaining patches of the once great podocarp forests of the Western Plains.

The forest, which the students call their ‘donut’ because of its shape, was recognised as a rare ecosystem and put under the protection of a QEII covenant in 2008 by former landowner Gary Horner. The forest and surrounding farmland are now owned by the de Wolde family, who have fenced the area off and been instrumental in supporting Heddon Bush School’s involvement, donating plants and materials along the way.

Heddon Bush School board of trustees chairman Ken Dykes says up until now the school only had limited funding, and

it was thrilled when its fund application was accepted. “Our work has sort of been trickling along, but with the recent grant we can really get into it. Our plan is to plant 1000 native shelter plants.”

“It’s a great thing for the kids to learn, and we hope that one day they will come back and be able to see the change their work has made.”

Since its inception in 2011, the Environmental Enhancement Fund has contributed to a range of projects, from pest trapping on smaller blocks to the complete restoration of a native wetland. This year, \$40,000 is available, of which \$30,000 has already been allocated. “The demand for funding is going up, which is great news for biodiversity in Southland!” Shaun says.

*For more details and an application form go to [www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz) or call 0800 76 88 45 to discuss your plans and ideas with Shaun.*

**Above – Heddon Bush School students Rosie Dykes (11), Max Hamilton (8), Rosa Wills (10) and Jack Day (12) with some native plants.**

# Breathing easy

## *Warm homes and clean air*

**E**nsuring Southlanders have both warm homes and improving air quality was the challenge faced by the Council in developing the *Proposed Regional Air Plan*.

The decision on the Plan was released in October and includes a variety of rules to help improve air quality in line with the Government's health-inspired National Environmental Standards for Air Quality (NES).

The standards set a maximum level for the pollutant PM<sub>10</sub> which is highly concentrated in smoke. The standard is exceeded when more than 50 micrograms of PM<sub>10</sub> is measured as a 24-hour average.

Senior policy planner Gavin Gilder says the proposed rules released in September 2014 received a huge amount of feedback from the general public, concerned that they would need to sacrifice keeping warm in order to comply with the proposed rules.

With hearings held earlier in 2015, submitters had an opportunity to speak to the hearing panel and outline their concerns and suggestions.

Many hours of deliberations followed, taking into account all of the submitters' views, before the final decisions were reached.

Significant changes have been made to the proposed rules, including extended timeframes for phasing out old burners and open fires in the airsheds and the removal of the proposed ban on high-sulphur coal.

Councillors recognise that making the change to compliant forms of heating will be difficult for some people and the

extended timeframes and commitment to a low interest loan scheme to assist, are designed to help people comply.

The rules are likely to have the biggest impact for homeowners in the Invercargill and Gore airsheds, with open fires prohibited from 1 January 2017 and non-compliant burners being phased out progressively over the following 19 years. Open fires and older burners are the first to be phased out, as these are shown to have the most emissions.

Fires and burners can be replaced with heat pumps, pellet fires or a wood burner that is approved by the Ministry for the Environment ([www.mfe.govt.nz/air/home-heating-and-authorised-wood-burners/burners](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/air/home-heating-and-authorised-wood-burners/burners)).

There will be an education-first approach to the new rules and advice available about good burning practices. This will give residents the opportunity to learn what they can do to help improve air quality.



Your website for air quality information

Open fires	<b>INVERCARGILL and GORE</b> – You can use your open fire to <b>burn wood and coal</b> until 1 January 2016. After this date you can use your open fire to burn <b>wood only</b> until 1 January 2017. After 1 January 2017 all open fires in the Invercargill and Gore airsheds are <b>prohibited</b> .
Burner installed before 1 January 1997	<b>INVERCARGILL</b> – You may use your burner until 1 January 2019, however you must burn only wood from 1 January 2017. <b>GORE</b> – You may use your burner until 1 January 2020, however you must burn only wood from 1 January 2017.
Burner installed 1 January 1997 – 1 January 2001	<b>INVERCARGILL and GORE</b> – You may use your burner until 1 January 2022.
Burner installed 1 January 2001 – 1 September 2005	<b>INVERCARGILL and GORE</b> – You may use your burner until 1 January 2025.
Burner installed 1 September 2005 – 1 January 2010	<b>INVERCARGILL and GORE</b> – You may use your burner until 1 January 2030.
Burner installed 1 January 2010 – 6 September 2014	<b>INVERCARGILL and GORE</b> – You may use your burner until 1 January 2034.

# SUMARIA BEATON

## *Leading the way to warm homes*

**A**s one of the leading figures behind Awarua Synergy and the Southland Warm Homes Trust, Sumaria Beaton is committed to improving the warmth of Southlanders' homes and she sees that as going hand in hand with improving air quality.

Bluff born and bred, Sumaria didn't follow a classic path into the professional world – high school wasn't somewhere she felt comfortable and she left early, with few plans for her future.

The value of hard work had been instilled by her parents, and her drive and ambition simply needed to be ignited by something that piqued her interest.

Sent to an aunt in Australia, Sumaria had her first taste of the business world and embarked on a steep learning curve to discover what made a business successful.

At the tender age of 21, Sumaria was back in Bluff, brimming with energy and keen to do something to benefit the long-term prospects of the Bluff community.

Eventually, Awarua Synergy was born and an endless string of projects and work to improve the living conditions of the community she loves, has followed.

Getting homes insulated and assisting people to reduce their power bills has been a big part of Awarua Synergy's work over the last few years, with a more recent focus on improving people's home heating options, to be both more efficient and have less impact on air quality.

The Southland Warm Homes Trust has a major part to play in a low interest loan scheme funded by Environment Southland and the Invercargill City Council. Designed to assist people to install heating options which comply with the *Proposed Regional Air Plan*, the Southland Warm Homes Trust will be the front face of the scheme, and Sumaria is looking forward to the challenges and benefits it will bring.

"The thing about installing insulation and good heating is that it makes an immediate difference. There are lots of other projects by government and other organisations,

that have long-term effects to improve people's living conditions, but this is one of the few where you can see the real benefits immediately to every single person who has had the work done."

Sumaria is excited about what the future holds, not just for her but for all Southlanders.

She says changing technology and ongoing research and development to create a sustainable future need to be embraced.

"We need to all be on our game, be aware of what's happening and look closely at what will work for Southland."



Sumaria Beaton is a strong advocate for making insulation and adequate heating affordable for all Southlanders.



*Environment Southland and Invercargill City Council have allocated \$500,000 each per year for the next three years towards a low interest loans scheme, which will help people change to cleaner heating options. This scheme will be administered by the Southland Warm Homes Trust.*

*A low interest loan is available to homeowners within the Invercargill airshed who want to upgrade to approved heating appliances, including burners or heat pumps.*

*The ratepayer pays back the loan over a five-year period at an interest rate of 3.95%.*

*The team at Awarua Synergy (as service providers for Southland Warm Homes Trust) can talk you through the process and also assess what is needed for your home. Contact them now to see how they can help – phone 0800 927 676.*

# Ideas will *shape* new water plan

Southland has been abuzz with activity since August and it hasn't just been the bees, fresh spring growth and newborn lambs attracting attention.

**P**eople across Southland have taken the time, and made it their business, to get involved and share their views and ideas on Environment Southland's engagement document *Towards a new plan – water and land*.

Over three months from August to October, drop-in sessions were held in community RSAs and town halls to gain feedback on the proposals that aim to halt any further decline in water quality.

There are some key activities that the document focuses on because these activities can have the greatest impact on water quality. They include high intensity

farming, critical sources areas, wintering of stock, stock access to water, hill country cultivation, tile drains, on-site wastewater systems (e.g. septic tanks), water takes and biodiversity/wetlands.

Policy and planning manager Anita Dawe says despite the difficult time of year, farmers really did turn out in droves and provided some incredibly valuable feedback and ideas.

"The drop-in sessions were about councillors and staff listening to the concerns that our proposals raised, and also taking away the ideas and suggestions that came out of

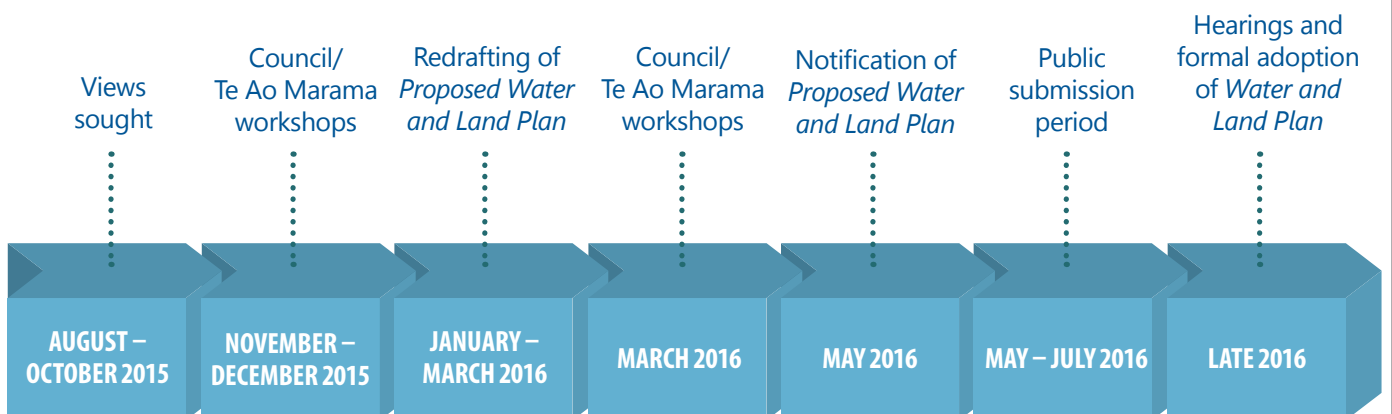
these sessions. Now, councillors and Te Ao Marama board members will workshop the feedback and staff will spend time redrafting the proposals."

As well as the drop-in sessions, staff and councillors have been meeting with businesses, industry groups and key stakeholders, and have also held two question and answer sessions live on facebook.

A summary of all the feedback received is available on our website ([www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz)) and on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/environmentsouthland](http://www.facebook.com/environmentsouthland)).

## What are the next steps?

The engagement period has come to a close, all the feedback has been collated and it is now available on the Environment Southland website. Now councillors, staff and Te Ao Marama board members will consider feedback gained via the drop-in sessions, online facebook events, written feedback forms, industry group meetings and informal conversations. A *Proposed Water and Land Plan* will be notified in May 2016.





Environment Southland policy planner Erin Hawke (right) discusses water quality issues with members of the community at a drop-in session held in Winton recently.

# How does Southland's water quality stack up?

A large number of questions received at the recent drop-in sessions were around water quality. Questions like, "What's wrong with water quality in Southland?" "Why do we need these rules?" and, "How bad is it?"

To respond to these questions, Environment Southland scientists have been involved in putting together a factsheet that provides a regional summary of water quality using both state (where it is currently at) and trends (how it has changed over time). Included is a comparison with several 'national bottom lines'. In particular, *E.coli*, nitrogen, slime algae (periphyton) and macroinvertebrates (fish food) are presented to provide an overall picture of water quality in Southland.

You can go onto Environment Southland's online mapping service, Beacon for more information about the state of each monitoring site. You can also download our *Water Quality in Southland* factsheet – go to [www.es.govt.nz/waterandland/](http://www.es.govt.nz/waterandland/).

More trend information is available from the *Land Air Water Aotearoa* website [www.lawa.org.nz](http://www.lawa.org.nz).

## WATER AND LAND 2020 & BEYOND

The *Water and Land 2020 & Beyond* project is a partnership project with Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku to address Southland's water quality and quantity issues. Southland has variable water quality; we have areas with good water quality, but we also have places where water quality is not so good and declining.

Our approach to managing Southland's water and meeting the government's requirement to set catchment limits – for discharges to and abstractions from water bodies – is different to other areas. We are taking the time to learn more about our region: engaging in a comprehensive three-year research programme and talking to communities to find Southland-specific solutions.

To stay up-to-date with the *Water and Land 2020 & Beyond* project, subscribe to our e-newsletter online at [www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz).





# *A day in the life of...* a policy planner

## Wading into Southland's water

**T**he allure of an idyllic piece of land, a lifestyle that can't be rivalled and a new role to sink his teeth into made it an easy decision for Southland-born Doyle Richardson to make the move home – packing up his young family and moving back to Southland after many years away in the North Island and Australia.

Doyle, with partner Jackie and four young children aged 10, 8, 6 and 4, moved earlier in the year and has quickly settled into life on their 19 acre farmlet at Roslyn Bush.

Doyle says it was time for them to get out of the city (Brisbane). "We wanted to come back

to Invercargill and buy a bit of land. The kids were the main reason probably. We wanted to give them a taste of something different, rather than growing up in the big city."

Having grown up in the country himself, Doyle recognises the impact this had on his career choices.

"When I grew up in the country I always liked playing in water, catching fish and bugs and different things. I always had a bit of an affinity with that sort of thing."

He decided on an environmental science degree at Otago University, where he met

Jackie, and has spent 10 years working in this area in the North Island and then Australia; working with dairy farmers and orchardists, looking at environmental impact assessments, environmental approvals for large infrastructure projects, and project management.

Doyle took on the role of Principal Planner at Environment Southland in May this year. "I knew that they were in an interesting space with water. I knew there were challenges that I was keen to be a part of."

Southland's rural economy has flourished in the last 10 years but that's put increased pressure on the environment. "Balancing that relationship to try to maintain a strong economy while dealing with potential environmental issues; that's a huge challenge."

When Doyle started, a round of public meetings for *Water and Land 2020 & Beyond* were underway and discussions were being held around how to encourage the adoption of good management practices with staff, councillors and Te Ao Marama board members. "It was just kicking off," he says.

Doyle has been heavily involved in the recent drop-in sessions, coordinating these and other meetings with a lot of industry stakeholders. The drop-in sessions were





designed to gain feedback and ideas from people around council's proposals for water and land – outlined in the engagement document 'Towards a new plan – water and land'. Following the engagement period, the feedback will be used to redraft the proposals, ultimately forming a Water and Land Plan.

Doyle says one of the discouraging things in the beginning was people's reluctance to acknowledge the situation with water quality in Southland. "You think that people are aware of what's going on, but at some of the earlier drop-in sessions we were being challenged about the need to do something."

On the other side, Doyle notes one of his highlights has been seeing how the discussion has changed. Doyle says it has really evolved from shock and outrage to 'what can we do about it?'

"The message that we have got some issues and we need to do something about it is getting out there more and more, so that's a good thing."

As well as the drop-in sessions, Doyle has spent time with industry groups like the Foundation for Arable Research, Horticulture New Zealand, the city and district councils, Bulb Growers Association, Deer Industry New Zealand, Beef + Lamb NZ and Dairy NZ.

"The bulb growers were surprising, in that they've had similar challenges over in the Netherlands where there's a lot of bulb growing. It's important to acknowledge the challenges that they've had and that they've been able to come out the other side. And they still do that sort of work over there, so that was good to hear."

One of the topics that received a lot of feedback was the proposal around fencing off waterways. Doyle says we've had comments from farmers that say 'everyone should be fencing off waterways'. "It's sort of a surprise to hear, because you hear a lot of people say that it's not possible, but there are people out there in different industries who think it is possible and that everyone should be doing it."

Over the next few months, Doyle will be working with others to use the feedback and ideas gained from the engagement period to form a Proposed Water and Land Plan for Southland.

**Right and above left – Doyle Richardson at home on his Roslyn Bush farmlet.**

**Left – With Councillor Maurice Rodway at a recent online Water and Land session.**



## Ali Timms

Chairman, Eastern–Dome

**A**li lives in Lumsden where she runs her own physiotherapist practice. She is a keen road cyclist and mountain biker.

“It’s great biking in northern Southland. There are so many ways you can go. Around the Mountain cycle trail is on our back door and there’s plenty of cafe-to-cafe riding opportunities.

“Biking’s such a good antidote to all the sitting and driving I do.

“About twelve years ago I did the Central Otago Rail Trail and it got me back on my bike. I used to be a runner but now I’m a mad keen biker.

“I like challenges of Council. Politics is all about people and I enjoy the people I engage with in Southland. They’re pragmatic, passionate.

“I see my role as ensuring the wise use of our abundant natural resources so that regional growth is sustainable, diverse and resilient.”



## Ross Cockburn

Fiordland

**R**oss and his wife Joan live alongside Lake Te Anau and have been in the bed and breakfast business for 30 years.

“We’ve met so many interesting people. When times were tough it was a good stress release. And, we’ve also had different vacations with people who’ve stayed here; it’s been a two-way thing.”

Ross is a former sheep and beef farmer who still keeps a few cattle. He’s always had particular interests in biosecurity and river management and is keen to continue advancing the Council’s River Corridor Concept Plan.

“I’ve had a long-term desire to improve flood control methods and tidy up the river berms in Southland. I’m determined to get consistent funding to eradicate gorse and broom and make the river corridors attractive for the public.”

## Nicol Horrell

Deputy Chairman – Western

**N**icol and his wife Ann farm sheep on their property of about 200 hectares. His long-time interests include politics, his local community and wine.

“I run a wine tasting group at Tuatapere. It’s one of my less stressful interests. It’s just a small group that meets once a month. Because half of us are white wine drinkers and half are red, we generally have a half and half mix.”

Nicol was on the Council when the *Water and Land 2020 & Beyond* project began.

“Water quality is an important issue, but it’s quite complex and it is going to take another term at least to get through the limit setting process. It’s all about trying to take people with you and getting a result at the end of the day.”



## Peter Jones

Eastern–Dome

**P**eter is keen on sport and plays social cricket. He is a former agricultural contractor and shepherd at the Alliance Mataura Plant.

Peter and his wife Susan farm sire bulls and sheep on their small block on the outskirts of Gore, where they have a landscaped garden.

“When we arrived there was no garden at all, it was grazed right up to the house. We’ve established it over the 30 years we’ve been here. It’s mainly rhododendrons and shrubs. It’s maybe half a hectare.”

Peter is motivated by the knowledge he gains on the Council and finds his work background helpful for finding solutions.

“We were contracting and working for farmers for many years. I’ve worked for a lot of different farmers and have been on a lot of different properties. I have a pretty good understanding of farming systems and where farmers are coming from.”

# Neville Cook

Invercargill–Rakiura

**N**eville and his wife Deirdre live in Invercargill where he is the manager of Reading Cinemas. Neville likes fishing, hunting and collecting minerals.

"I've been collecting mineral specimens since the mid-60s. I studied geology at Otago – stages one and two.

"I have hundreds from around the world. I like to collect my own specimens, but buy the ones from other countries. It has quite a following.

"Years ago I found some green copper mineral on a mountain top in Fiordland and about 20 metres away I found some fossilised sea shells. So that was interesting."

Neville finds his work on Council rewarding. "I enjoy the science and the learning that goes with that. I think Environment Southland is doing a really good job getting itself involved with its communities, responding and consulting. And, I enjoy the staff – it's a great culture."



# Marion Miller

Invercargill–Rakiura

**M**arion is an artist and she and her husband Russell run a bed and breakfast in Invercargill. Her art really picked up when she filled in for her sister at an art class.

"My husband had bought me paints and an art box when I turned 40 and it was sort of fossilizing. But I'd always drawn.

"I primarily do pastels, but I do want to get back to water colours because it's pretty challenging. And I've got acrylics in a container as well, waiting on me."

Marion finds her work on the Council inspiring.

"It's just wonderful to see that everybody's on the same page at the moment. And, the culture here is so conducive to doing a great job. I know I can't be expert in everything, but I'm excited about the new knowledge and the science."





## Rowly Currie

Invercargill–Rakiura

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**R**owly lives in Invercargill with his wife Barbara and Chessy their cat. He likes reading novels and is an avid walker who prefers to leave his car at home.

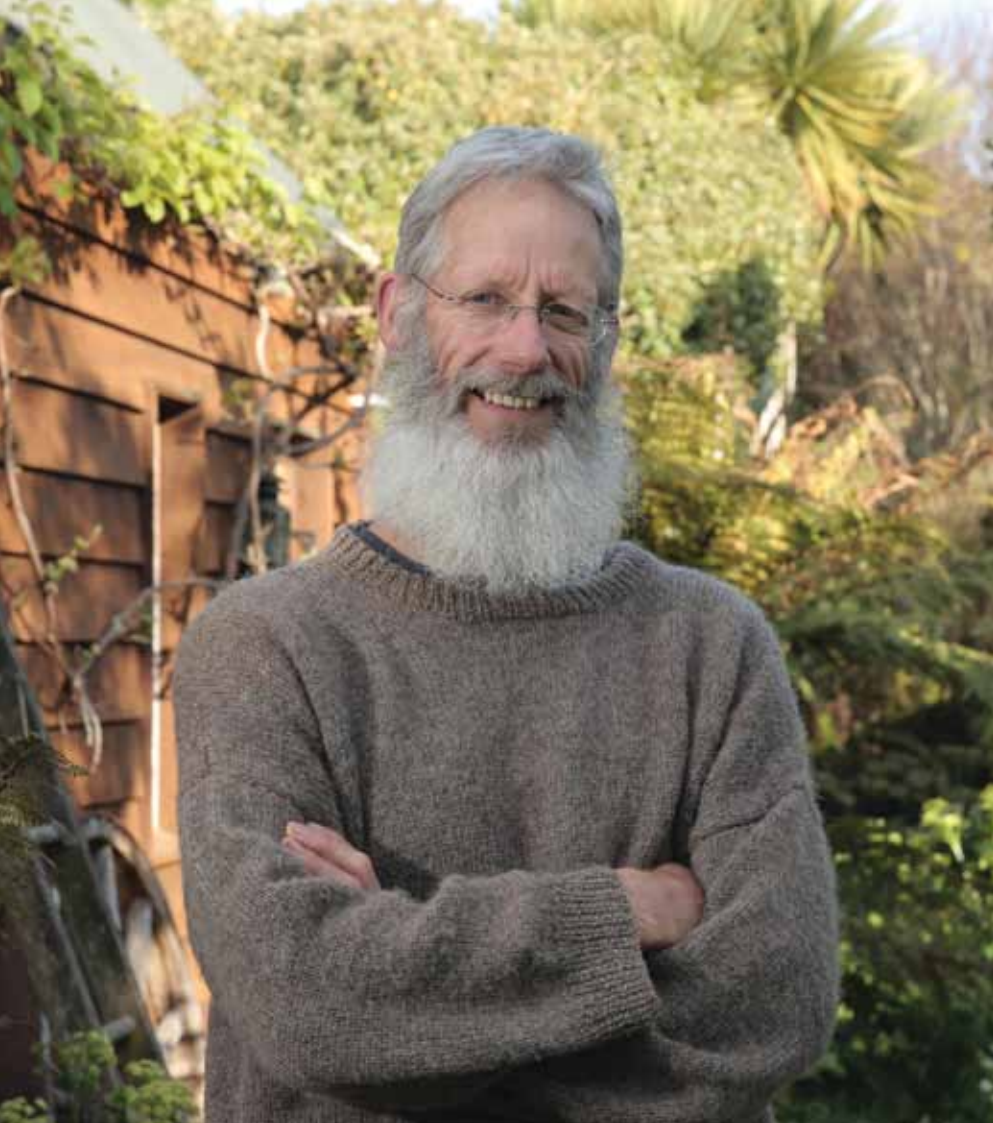
“I walk a lot, mainly by myself. It’s a chance to think and work things out.

“When I was doing a lot of running there were about five places I would go. With walking you can have 50. It keeps my fitness up. My doctor’s thrilled.”

Rowly likes the variety of the Council’s work.

“In my second and third years I spent a lot of time going out with staff and seeing first-hand what was going on.

“Our emphasis is on land and water, air and biodiversity. It’s pretty clear to me that we’re on the right track in all the major work we’re doing, and it’s a pleasure to be a part of that.”



## Robert Guyton

Invercargill–Rakiura

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**R**obert, a former teacher, and his wife Robyn live in Riverton on a property their family has transformed into a food forest.

“There’s lots of vines, berries and stone fruit and pip fruit, and perennial vegetables. It’s just full of food. But it’s in a forest structure, so it’s not an open vegetable garden in rows. And it’s full of native birds and insects and soil organisms and lately, many visitors.

“It’s also attracting international attention because it’s got that overlay of Robyn’s heritage fruit trees as well.

“What I like about being on Council, is it deals with all of those things that I’m interested in and was engaging with anyway, like water quality and soil quality and biodiversity. It’s what I have here in my own woodland garden, translated out into the wider environment.”

# Maurice Rodway

Invercargill–Rakiura

**A**s the retiring manager of Southland Fish and Game after 31 years, it is no surprise that the outdoors is what interests Maurice.

"I like kayaking and that involves rivers, but also the surf, and conservation, anything to do with the outdoors. I've done a bit of tramping, not much hunting, mainly fishing.

"The whole region is such a good place for trout fishing because there are literally hundreds of different places you can go. I probably wouldn't fish one river more than a couple of times a year, and you know I might go 20 or 30 times.

"Environment Southland has the responsibility of looking after the natural environment and maintaining a viable economic and social fabric in the community, so weaving all those things together, and getting people to work together, is quite a challenge. It's what makes the job really interesting."



# Grant Hubber

Hokonui

**G**rant and his wife Sharon farm sheep on their property alongside the Oreti River at Oporo. They have two adult sons, one's a builder and the other is dairying. On the farm, they keep a few dogs, too.

"I probably have more dogs than I need. I like to keep the old dogs. They served well, so they deserve to live their time out well. There's a huntaway, two heading dogs, a handy dog and a Jack Russell. I quite like their company.

"Being on the Council is a challenge. You've got to take a bit of the load and do your fair share. I think being a farmer is helpful. It gives me an affinity with the rural community. And I like the people aspect of the work."





## Jan Riddell

Invercargill–Rakiura

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**J**an is very busy with all her committee work. She is also a hydrologist, enjoys reading, gardening and farms sheep with her husband Dave on their 400ha property at Hokonui.

"I'm pretty keen on vegetable gardening and I'm a tree planter around the farm. I plant wetlands, shelterbelts and along the riparian margins of the rivers flowing through our property – the Otapiri River and the Lora Stream – lowland ribbonwood, cabbage tress and flaxes mainly, and pittosporum. The daffodils look after themselves.

"I've always had a huge passion for the environment and water quality issues, conservation in general, and biodiversity. All those things are important to me. On Council you try to make a difference. I'm impressed with the way the science is going in terms of the good information to back up the development of policy. That's what drives me really."



## Lloyd McCallum

Southern

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**L**loyd enjoys boating and fishing and is an elder of the Lochiel Community Church. He and his wife Kathy farm 1600 dairy cows on three properties.

"At the moment, succession planning is pretty big on our agenda. Our sons are now part owners in the business with their wives. And, we have four grandchildren. Spending time with them, watching them grow and develop, that's the fun stuff."

In Lloyd's Council work and other involvements, it is the people and the discussions that interest him most.

"I enjoyed the Council's drop-in meetings for Water and Land. That to me was doing my job; sharing information, getting confidence across, accepting that sometimes you get it wrong.

"Unless you get into the how and why of decision making, it's very easy to sit back and criticise. I would rather try and help."

# The fight against pests in Southland



**T**he community will soon be asked for their views on how pests are managed in Southland.

Environment Southland biosecurity manager Richard Bowman says engagement with Southlanders will get underway early in 2016 to review the *Regional Pest Management Plan*, a crucial document that outlines the risks and strategy for dealing with the wide range of pests that can threaten our environment and economy.

The Plan will include many different pest plants and animals, from possums, rats and rabbits through to gorse, broom and an array of marine pests. The review is driven by recent changes to the Biosecurity Act and the development of National Policy Directions, which give clearer direction and guidelines to the obligations of all regional councils for pest management.

Richard says all the councils must have a Plan which conforms to the new guidelines and there are a number of changes which will be required in Southland's plan for this to happen. These include meeting a higher level of assurance around management objectives and the costs and benefits of programmes for pests.

A collaborative approach with other regional councils across New Zealand is being taken, which will allow for a set of common management goals and rules to be developed for some key pests, which are identified as a problem across the regions.

"It's really important that we have national consistency in our plans, especially in relation to 'good neighbour' rules. This is necessary as pests don't have any regard for provincial boundaries."

Good neighbour rules are generally used to manage pests like gorse and broom in rural areas where their spread is too extensive to be eradicated. Landowners are bound by rules to ensure their pests do not impose on their neighbours' properties. Each council will also include a number of locally important pests in their plan, which are those that are either more prevalent in specific regions or have the potential to have the biggest impact (especially in ecologically significant areas).

There will be a major focus on pests where management can make the biggest difference and also on preventing new pests making it into the region.

"It's much easier and more cost effective to prevent pests getting in than to have to work to eradicate or manage them once they are here," Richard says.

Increasing pest management to help protect biodiversity will also be a major focus of the new plan. This is a priority for Environment Southland as biodiversity is one of the Council's big three priorities along with water quality and air quality.

"Pests compete with our native plants and animals and make it difficult for them to thrive, so focusing efforts on where we can make a difference will help improve all aspects of biodiversity."

Richard hopes the public will see the importance of the *Regional Pest Management Plan* and be involved in helping develop it. There will be an initial engagement period, aimed at gathering the community's views and ideas, followed by the development of a draft plan.

**Left – Biosecurity manager Richard Bowman with Darwin's barberry, one of the pest plants that will feature in the review of the *Regional Pest Management Plan*.**



# Keeping possums under control

**B**are rose bushes, eaten swede crops and decimated vegetable gardens are often early signs that possums are invading your property, but you don't need to wait until this happens to do something about it.

Environment Southland's Possum Control Areas programme (PCA) already covers about 230,000 hectares in rural Southland and this number looks set to take a huge jump, with OSPRI's TBfree programme ceasing possum control work in a large number of areas.

Southland TBfree committee chair Mike O'Brien says OSPRI has completed survey work in many parts of Southland and is confident the areas are now TBfree. With their focus on removing the TB risk, they will now stop carrying out possum control work, leaving an ideal opportunity for possums to make their way back in if landowners don't have a plan in place to manage them.

Landowners in the areas being dropped off the TBfree programme will receive notification and Mike is encouraging them to give thought to how they will manage possums in the future.

"Farmer support has been the cornerstone of the success we have seen so far and will remain critical over the coming years. We are strong supporters of Environment Southland's PCA programme and recommend people consider joining one to keep possum numbers to a minimum."


Environment Southland senior biosecurity officer Dave Burgess says although the TB work is done, the risk from possums causing both environmental and economic damage remains relatively high and the ideal time to put new plans in place is while possum numbers are still low.

The PCA programme is a good option for this, with Environment Southland staff working with landowners to coordinate effective ongoing possum control.

As part of the programme, Environment Southland carries out an initial control programme if it is required, using approved contractors and a variety of methods.

Staff then liaise with landowners about ongoing control, encouraging them to use approved contractors as this ensures the most effective work and means landowners can hand over the responsibility. Using approved contractors also means Environment Southland will supply 100% of the cost of the recommended bait.

"Under the Regional Pest Management Strategy, possum control is a landowner's responsibility and we want to help them meet their obligations," Dave says.



**PossumControlAreas**

**What is a PCA?**

*A Possum Control Area (PCA) is where a group of landowners work together to maintain low possum numbers. Environment Southland staff work and liaise with these landowners to coordinate effective ongoing possum control.*

Any area can have a PCA set up and motivated landowners within small communities are often the driving force behind them.

"We are really keen to support anybody who wants to get possums under control in their area, in many cases the effects of the possums aren't readily seen but people certainly notice a difference in their crops and home gardens once possum control gets underway."

Visit our website [www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz) for more information about PCAs. You can also click on our Beacon mapping service to see where PCAs are currently set up.

**FAST FACTS**

35 PCAs established containing **230,000** ha

Approx **8677** possums killed in 2014/2015 during initial control projects

Possums live around **9** years



# UPDATES

## New natural hazards service

A new natural hazard map is now available on Beacon, Environment Southland's online GIS mapping service.

Environment Southland's GIS team leader Ingrid Darragh says the regional map is now home to flood and earthquake information via the Environment Southland website. The map includes 7500 historical flood photos as well as information on hazards from a number of reports, so pulling it together into one easily accessible map has been a challenge.

Information on the map has always been available from the Council on request and is often provided as part of a LIM report when purchasing a house. "Now people can look up their properties on our website to get information about active faults, flood plains, flood photos, stopbanks, dams, ground shaking amplification and liquefaction risk."

To view the map, go to [www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz) and click on the Beacon GIS Mapping Service icon, then select Natural Hazards.



## Annual Report 2014–15

In October the Council approved its Annual Report. This considers Environment Southland's performance during the past financial year against the projects and work programmes we have committed to in the Annual Plan.

It was a particularly busy year. Much was achieved and our balance sheet remained strong, with no long-term debt.

We had some difficult issues to address including the *Water and Land 2020 & Beyond* project and the Air Plan Review.

We worked hard to engage with the community and stakeholders, and we formed mutually beneficial relationships with science and economic partners, while continuing to take care of our core activities.

The Annual Report 2014–15 is available online at [www.es.govt.nz/publications/plans/annual-plan-and-report](http://www.es.govt.nz/publications/plans/annual-plan-and-report)



## Strategy launched

The Southland Regional Development Strategy was launched in October. A joint initiative between Southland's councils, iwi, businesses and community organisations, its aim is to achieve economic and social resiliency for the long term. The primary method is to increase Southland's population.

The strategy acknowledges the region's good economic performance over the past decade and its ability to pull together to achieve success, e.g. SIT Free Fees. However, it identifies a falling population, relative to the rest of New Zealand, as a threat.

To entice Southlanders to stay and New Zealanders and migrants to come and live in Southland, negative perceptions will need to be outweighed by positive ones.

Pick up a copy of the strategy from the office of any Southland council or view it online at [www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz)



# Time to think about...

## DECEMBER 2015

**FIREWOOD:** It's a great time to start getting in your firewood supplies for next winter.

**DON'T LET THE CHRISTMAS GRINCH RUIN YOUR SPUDS:** While harvesting your Christmas potatoes, keep an eye out for potato wart, a nasty fungus that looks unsightly and turns your potatoes to mush. Call us if you think your potatoes are infected.

**BOATING SAFETY:** Make sure your boat and equipment have had a thorough check before the holiday season.

**NODDING THISTLE:** It's time to target nodding thistle as it's flowering now.

**DARWIN'S BARBERRY:** Heading to your holiday home this summer? Keep an eye out for Darwin's barberry and deal with any that you find.

## JANUARY 2016

**HOME FIRES:** If you have an open fire, it is prohibited in the Invercargill and Gore airsheds to burn anything but dry wood from now until 1 January 2017, when open fires are become prohibited.

**MUSTELIDS (FERRETS AND STOATS):** These little critters have just been through their annual spring/summer breeding season so now's the time to set some traps around those duck ponds, streams, bush areas or chicken coups before they do damage to other wildlife.

**RAGWORT:** With its bright yellow flowers in full bloom, ragwort is easy to identify. Now is the time to prevent it spreading, visit our website for advice on how to deal with ragwort.

## FEBRUARY 2016

**RABBITS:** These pests have been breeding all summer but the most effective time of year to control them is from autumn through to late winter before they start breeding again next spring.

**OLD MAN'S BEARD:** This invasive woody vine can cause significant damage to our forests. The flowers have white plumes that are 3-4cm long and can be seen from January to May. Contact us if you spot any Old Man's Beard.

### FOR FURTHER ADVICE AND INFORMATION

Pest plants or animals – [www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz)

Air Plan Rules – [www.BreatheEasySouthland.co.nz](http://www.BreatheEasySouthland.co.nz)

# DOWN ON THE FARM

By **GARY MORGAN** Environment Southland  
principal land sustainability officer

## Cultivation

Heavy rain at this time of the year can result in significant soil erosion on cultivated paddocks, particularly on sloping ground. Good management practices to reduce downslope soil loss include:

- Cultivating on the contour where possible
- Cultivating when soil is moist and friable to minimise the number of passes required
- Not leaving a fine seedbed. Surface roughness promotes better infiltration thus reducing roughness and erosion
- Avoiding cultivation on steep slopes and in critical source areas
- Maintaining waterways on slopes greater than 16°

## Releasing new plantings

Rapid grass growth at this time of the year can quickly smother newly planted trees. Competition for moisture and nutrients can also adversely impact the growth of young trees. Maintaining a grass and weed-free zone of at least 1m diameter around plantings is essential for good growth. Release spray using approved chemicals or use non-chemical methods such as weed mats or mulch.

## Silage making

Silage pits must be 50 metres away from a surface water body unless it is on a sealed pad with leachate capture.

There must be no discharge of silage leachate to water, no discharge within 20m of a surface water body or property boundary or within 100 metres of a water bore.

Wilt grass prior to ensiling. This will considerably reduce leachate quantity and increase feed quality.

# OUT IN THE FIELD

See what some of our staff have been up to lately.



## Boating Safety

St Patrick's School students get aboard the patrol boat *Toroa* after spending a morning learning about lifejackets and boating safety with deputy harbourmaster Lyndon Cleaver.



## Enviroschools Hui

Garston School student Loretta Steyn learns to graft heritage apple trees with senior land sustainability officer Nathan Cruickshank at the Enviroschools annual hui held in Gore in October.



## Information Management Conference

From left: Linn Murphy (Land Information New Zealand), Sean Hodges (Horizons Regional Council), Alison Stringer (Ministry for the Environment) and Neil de Jong (data management officer). Environment Southland hosted an information management conference at the Ascot Park Hotel in October. This was an important gathering as both central and local government are increasingly being asked to manage, report and share their data more openly.



## Oil Spill Exercise

Graeme McKenzie (compliance technical team leader), Noel Hinton (catchment manager) and Tim Ashton from Maritime New Zealand discuss an action plan in response to a simulated oil spill off the coast of Stewart Island. The annual exercise also brought together staff from Emergency Management Southland, Te Ao Marama, the Department of Conservation and Southland District Council.



Follow us on Facebook to get updates on the work Environment Southland staff are doing in our region.