

# EnviroSOUTH

August 2018

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## Raising the bar

New standards for forestry industry

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## Return of the kākāriki

Pest control work pays dividends

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environment  
**SOUTHLAND**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Te Taiao Tonga

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## EnviroSOUTH

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### Cover

◀ Chris Diack of Central Southland Logging (left) chats with One Forest harvest manager Tim Garlick and Environment Southland consents officer Kieran O'Connor about their harvesting operation at the Sandy Point forest. See story page 6.



### How much do you know about the availability and quality of the freshwater in your area?

As a regional council we're very focused on managing freshwater, including improving water quality and we've done a lot of research in recent times to understand how it behaves and what adversely affects it.

With climate change impacts starting to make themselves felt, our rivers and aquifers aren't always behaving in ways we might expect.

In early 2019 we'll be talking with communities about their freshwater and how to sustainably manage it for the long term, including the setting of limits for abstractions and discharges. It'll be an opportunity for people to learn more and to be involved in decisions that will affect their community now and into the future.

**Rob Phillips**, Chief Executive, Environment Southland



### Our winters are cold, but if we can ensure our homes are well heated it will contribute towards improving people's health.

However, in the gazetted airsheds in Gore and Invercargill we're still having too many exceedances of the national standard for air quality, meaning we are all breathing in poor quality air, which has an impact on our health too.

As a council we are doing the things we can to help improve this. Working with others, we have initiated the Breathe Easy Southland website, the Good Wood Supplier Scheme and the Clean Air Loans Scheme.

Pleasingly, we're also seeing people making positive changes to how and what they burn in their log burners.

In the recent budget, the Government significantly increased the subsidy for insulating homes, and provided additional support for winter heating costs for some. As a community, we still need to do more, and this is something the council can look into, too.

**Nicol Horrell**, Chairman, Environment Southland

## Environment Southland



*A thriving Southland – te taurikura o Murihiku*



▲ Gore Main School students (clockwise from left) Sam Copland, Taysha Chittock, Bella Moody and Mikaela McRae with their leafcutter beehouse.

# Little bees, big ideas

A box of leafcutter bees gifted to Gore Main School has the students buzzing with inspiration to achieve even more on their EnviroSchools journey.

The leafcutter bees, which were donated by the local New World supermarket in recognition of the school's environmental work, are known for their unique 'artwork' as they cut shapes from leaves.

They have proved the perfect focus for the students at the school, which recently celebrated its Green-Gold EnviroSchools status and have provided a unique link to the school's five key STAR values. They are: sustainable practice/community, taonga, actively engaged students, respect for our EnviroSchool, strong diversity.

Teacher and EnviroSchools leader Nicky Millar says the little bees quickly became stars themselves, actively helping to educate the children about each value. They learn about sustainability through seeing the bees act out their vital role as pollinators, and understand that they are to be treasured. "The kids verbalise that learning and tell you about how the bees are taonga."

Nicky says the leafcutters' gentle nature brings even the five-year-olds up close to learn about biodiversity, without the worry of being stung. Along with their unique

behaviour of cutting shapes, this inspires both curiosity and respect.

The children enjoy identifying the bees in the outdoors, and seeing them live in harmony with honey bees. Nicky says this helps symbolise the importance of diversity to the children, who now talk often about the diversity within their own school environment.

"We do a lot around diversity, accepting, enjoying and celebrating. We are trying to create good citizens."



# Southland jewel gets a makeover

Volunteers are restoring one of the region's few remaining flax wetlands to its former glory, one working bee at a time.

**T**he Castle Downs wetland 10 km northwest of Dipton is buzzing with the sounds of weed eaters and chainsaws.

About a dozen volunteers arrive to do their bit to spruce up this patch of wilderness. It's an initiative by Rural Women New Zealand, who owned the wetland for 70 years as part of an adjacent forestry block. At a public field day in 2015, somebody asked what was going to be done with the 'waste area' beside the Dipton Stream, and it all evolved from there.

One of those arriving is Sandra Prebble, who's come out with husband Lynden to clear new walking tracks, rid the area of pest plants, and re-plant seedlings of native trees and shrubs.

"We've been involved right from the start. The aim is to restore and protect this special place so people can come and enjoy it, and to have fun in the process."

The pair are local sheep farmers, and passionate about opening up the wetland – one of the few originals remaining in Southland – for others to enjoy.

"We have a fair bit of knowledge about the local history. Once upon a time, the moa would have walked through here, and it was prime hunting ground for the Haast's eagle. Remains of both have been found just up the road, and this is where they would have been," says Sandra.

Today, native birds are calling the wetland home, with kereru (wood pigeons) swooping through the canopy, feasting on wild plums. Access has been negotiated over adjoining farmland, and a well-marked track makes for a relaxing 15-20 minute loop walk – but be sure to bring some high gumboots, as the path follows a natural stream bed. The access is

◀ Local coordinator Sandra Prebble cuts and pastes weeds as husband Lynden clears branches for a new track through a forest.



▲ Rural Women forestry delegate Virginia Broughton stands next to one of the track markers while taking a short break from removing pest plants including hawthorne and muehlenbeckia.

managed by Rural Women New Zealand, as part of a formal arrangement with the New Zealand Walking Access Commission and Environment Southland.

The project's evolved in leaps and bounds, with local businesses chipping in, and work days being held every two to three months. The group is flexible and calls on the strengths of its volunteers.

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**“Once upon a time, the moa would have walked through here, and it was prime hunting ground for the Haast’s eagle.”**

**SANDRA PREBBLE**

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“Our vision for this wetland is open to what people bring to the table. A lot of them come with their own tools, some have gardening skills and plant knowledge, and others can build things. For example, a Dipton local has created a bridge for us to cross the stream.

“It would be nice to have a seating area here in future. Or if someone gets involved who knows about pest trapping, or about creating nesting areas for birds, then that’s what we can do.”

The project offers education opportunities for all ages, and is making some real gains for biodiversity. As Sandra points out, it doesn’t get much easier than this if you’re keen to help.

“People from anywhere in Southland are welcome. It’s all completely organised by Rural Women, so you don’t have to deal with forms or meetings. We can provide equipment like secateurs and gloves – all it needs is helpers.”

The group regularly advertises working bees online. To find out how you can be part of this success story, contact local coordinator Sandra Prebble on 027 270 7759 or visit the project’s Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/Diptonwetlands](http://www.facebook.com/Diptonwetlands).



▲ Lynden Prebble clears a new path with his chainsaw.

# Raising the bar

The new National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry (NES-PF) has got many in the industry buzzing about what the changes might mean for them.

Representatives from the forestry industry, from large export companies to harvesters and farm foresters, have been working with the Ministry for Primary Industries over the last few years to come up with a practical and consistent approach.

The new regulations, which came into force in May, aim to raise the bar when it comes to forestry activities and the environment. The standards include risk assessment tools to manage the environmental impacts from forestry, covering the issues of erosion, wilding conifers and fish spawnings. They will also give consistency and certainty for plantation foresters across New Zealand

while giving them the flexibility to be responsive to local conditions.

Forestry is New Zealand's third largest primary industry and up until now, many in the industry would argue that its efficiency has been hampered by the confusing mix of planning rules across New Zealand's 86 councils.

Tim Garlick and Hamish Anderson from IFS Growth Ltd and its harvesting brand, One Forest, both agree the NES-PF will lift standards. "As a company working across the country, the NES will enable us to set consistent standards and make compliance easier to monitor," Hamish says.

"It will be good to be able to work more closely with the different councils," he says.

IFS Growth was established in Southland nearly 40 years ago, and Hamish has overseen its southern harvesting operations for six years. In that time he has seen the company grow from a small Winton-based operation with five staff, to a nationwide company employing 30. One Forest is the harvesting arm of the company.

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"This will be a big change for some. It will stop some of the on-the-day requests from some to 'just pop into my block on your way down the road!'"

TIM GARLICK

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▲ Tim Garlick

# in forestry

Tim has recently joined IFS Growth working within the One Forest brand and has 35 years' experience in the industry. He's seen many changes and thinks this latest change is a positive one. "I see it as an important step in raising the environmental awareness throughout the forestry industry," he says.

"It's definitely a good thing. There's a lot of awareness around now, whether it be forestry or anything where there's going to be movement of land. Improving environmental outcomes is important for the industry with the public rightfully demanding higher standards from all land users.

"It's only going to have benefits in the future – we just have to get our heads around it really, and strive to keep those standards up."

One Forest was established as part of IFS Growth to get small forest block owners together to give them better scale when competing with the bigger companies in the market. Tim says around 80% of their clients are farmers, who together produce about 40% of the wood One Forest harvests within the region.

Small forest owners are an important part of the sector. It's where the largest growth is expected to come in the next 10 years, but at the same time they will also need to follow the new regulations. The NES-PF applies to any forest at least one hectare in size that has been planted specifically for commercial purposes and will be harvested.

Hamish and Tim agree that this will put pressure on forward planning, particularly for farm forestry, as a harvest plan will need to be in place six months prior to cutting any trees, and there are other strict timelines within the NES-PF for future works.

"This will be a big change for some. It will stop some of the on-the-day requests from some to 'just pop into my block on your way down the road'," Tim says.

"Traditionally what would happen is farmers will wait till after lambing and then ring up and say 'I want to fell some trees at Christmas time', but it's going to need a bit more thought, and more on-the-ground planning to make sure the operations are suited to the terrain or the right conditions."

## Need more info?

With the introduction of the National Environmental Standards for Plantation Forestry, there is now a matrix of rules that apply to the different forestry activities. Depending on the activity, rules in the NES or in the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan may apply.

Before harvesting you'll need to submit your harvest management plan, and you may need consents for some of your forestry activities. Environment Southland is also required to ensure compliance with the NES and your consent conditions.

There are more details and a range of free tools to help with planning and calculations available on the MPI website, [www.mpi.govt.nz](http://www.mpi.govt.nz), plus Environment Southland has prepared a handy guide to help step foresters through which rules apply (regional or the NES).

Go to [www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz) for a copy, or contact our staff for more specific information.



# Connecting people for positive change

The Three Rivers Catchment Group has a good thing growing, as it connects up its community for better environmental outcomes.

Chairman David Clarke is an avid believer that knowledge is power. Connecting people in the community to enable good environmental decision-making, he says, is incredibly rewarding, but the platform to do so hasn't always been there.

"There was a bit of fear among some a few years ago around the changes they would need to make with the coming Water and Land Plan. We felt that by setting up this group, and educating and informing the community, explaining things like cropping and setback rules and giving them practical things they could do to help improve water quality, we could allay that fear."

Three Rivers is just one of the many groups formed across Southland in the past three years to prepare for future changes to the way water and land are managed. The sub-catchment is part of the wider Matakura catchment, centred around the Wyndham and Edendale townships. Its three main waterways are the Matakura River, the Mokoreta River and the Mimihau Stream.

In mid 2015, with their community's concerns at heart, David and a dedicated group of volunteers formed the Three Rivers Catchment Group, with initial guidance from David Diprose of the Pourakino Catchment Group.

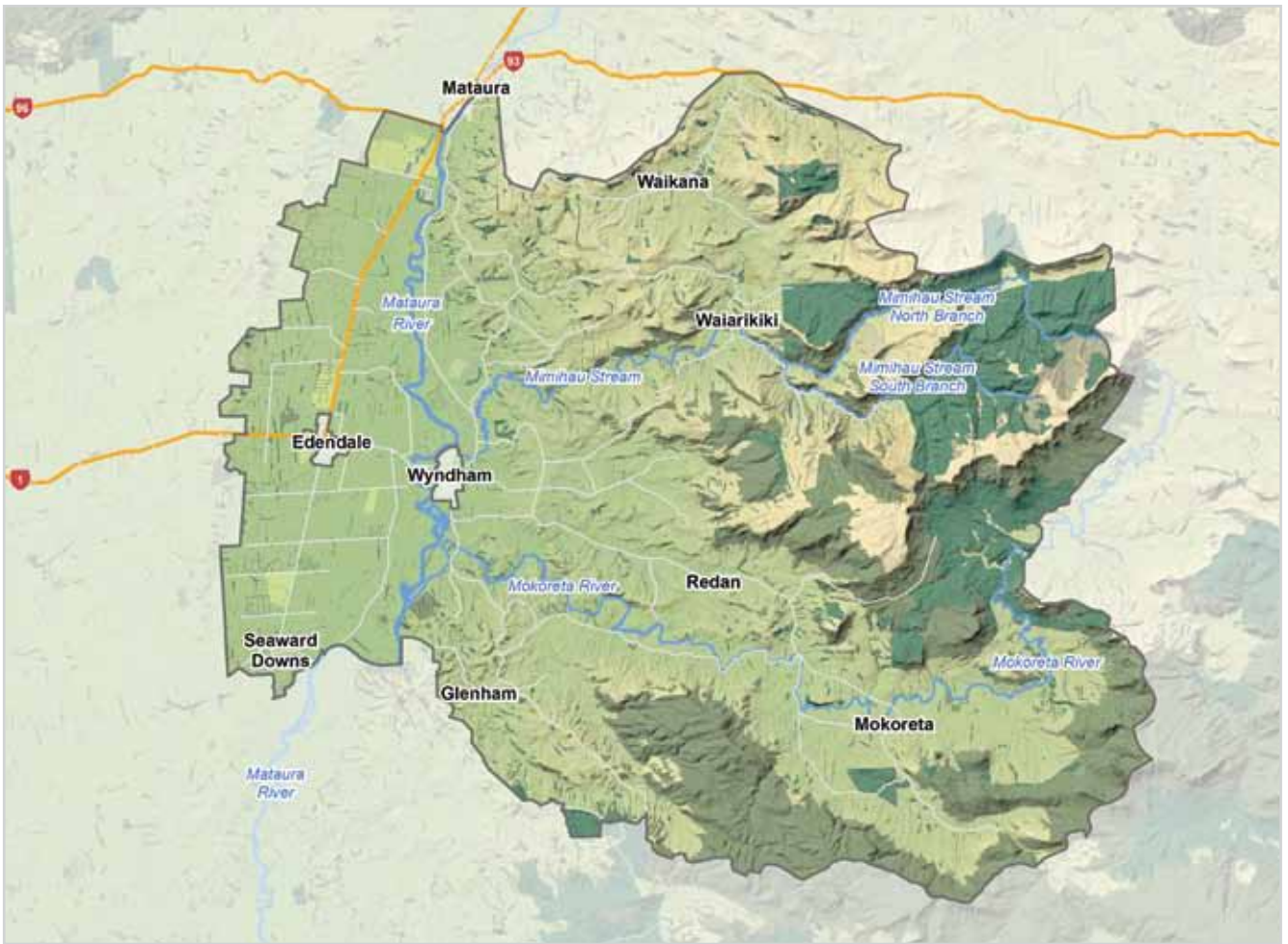
Now with a committee 30-strong, Three Rivers has gone on to host many popular field days and talks for the community on a raft of topics, from growing tulips to grey water management. With a goal of educating and informing the public on wider environmental issues in the area, David says, "The catchment group is about sharing positive stories and trying to encourage people. We all want the same thing and it's about sharing information."

An unique feature of the area is the Wyndham Wetland and Wildlife Reserve, formed by an oxbow or natural curve in the Matakura River. A field day was held in 2017 to explain the importance of the wetland



▲ Three Rivers Catchment Group chairman David Clarke with New Zealand Landcare Trust Southland Catchment Groups project coordinator Sarah Thorne.





▲ The Three Rivers Catchment encompasses the Matakura River, Mokoreta River and Mimihau Stream.

as both the kidneys of the ecosystem and a habitat for native species. David says these natural features are a rarity in the catchment as most original oxbows have been straightened and wetlands drained, so to see them being cared for is a boost.

“The great thing about catchment groups is you are starting to get in amongst certain people and organisations that are doing important things that you wouldn’t hear about otherwise. So I see the catchment group as a good way to promote the good things people are doing off their own backs too.”

Environment Southland land and water services team leader Nathan Cruickshank says land sustainability and education staff have worked closely with the Three Rivers group on a number of projects.

“It’s great to work with a motivated community who are fully focused on building knowledge and awareness, along with positive environmental outcomes.”

New Zealand Landcare Trust Southland Catchment Groups project coordinator Sarah Thorne is delighted with how the group is progressing. “Three Rivers are inspiring. They are quite a big group, they come up with big ideas, they see it through, they listen to each other. They aren’t just focused on their patch. Because they were helped by David Diprose at Pourakino, they want to help other catchment groups. Their motto is about raising awareness and education and they keep coming back to that.”

David says his biggest enjoyment is getting to meet people who have similar goals. His hope for the future is to see more urban people get involved in the group and on the committee. He wants to dispel the myth that catchment groups are just for farmers.

“We want to be community led. I’d really like to see an urban person as chairman one day.”



## Introducing Sarah Thorne

New Zealand Landcare Trust Southland Catchment Groups project coordinator Sarah Thorne was appointed in October 2017 to provide support and coordination for catchment groups like Three Rivers. For more information, or if you wish to join or start a catchment group, contact: [sarah.thorne@landcare.org.nz](mailto:sarah.thorne@landcare.org.nz)

# Working out where the water is

You could be forgiven for thinking that when it comes to water in Southland, there's enough to go around. We regularly have steady, sometimes persistent rainfall and Southland has a vast network of rivers and streams that criss-cross the region.

However, the rain doesn't always fall when and where we need it to. That reality has never been more real for some in the Edendale area who were reporting dry bores earlier this year, but it's also provided an opportunity for the community to gain a better understanding of how and where their water comes from.

Environment Southland's water resources scientist Lawrence Kees presented at a community meeting in May to explain just that. He says with two dry winters in a row, and an extremely dry 2017 as a whole, the Edendale aquifer is experiencing some of its lowest levels since records began and despite rainfall, it remains low.

"Below average rainfall in autumn and early winter has not been a good start to the recharge season. Now that we're in the winter recharge period, we are seeing

some response, but the groundwater levels in the aquifer are still well below normal, and are likely to remain low for the next couple of years if we don't get above average rainfall," Lawrence says.

The low levels in the aquifer have triggered many conversations about how groundwater is allocated and Lawrence explains that when it comes to how much groundwater people can take, a precautionary approach is used.

"Groundwater is not allocated in relation to how much water is in the aquifer, but as a proportion of how much rainfall makes it through the ground to the aquifer each year (the recharge). We then allocate only a portion (30%) of that recharge."

In the Edendale aquifer, the actual usage is also quite a bit less than that allocated.

The volume consented and that actually used by consent holders has remained fairly constant for the last few years, suggesting that the changes in water level in the aquifer are linked to rainfall rather than any overuse of water resources.

"We're learning more about our aquifers all the time. The more bores we get data from, the better we understand how the water moves through the landscape and into the aquifer," he says.

Fonterra Edendale's site manager Richard Gray acknowledges that they are the largest water user in the area, but their water take is still well within their consented limits.

And he's right. Environment Southland staff have been looking into the water levels and compliance data, and reported at the community meeting that no one had exceeded their consented water take.



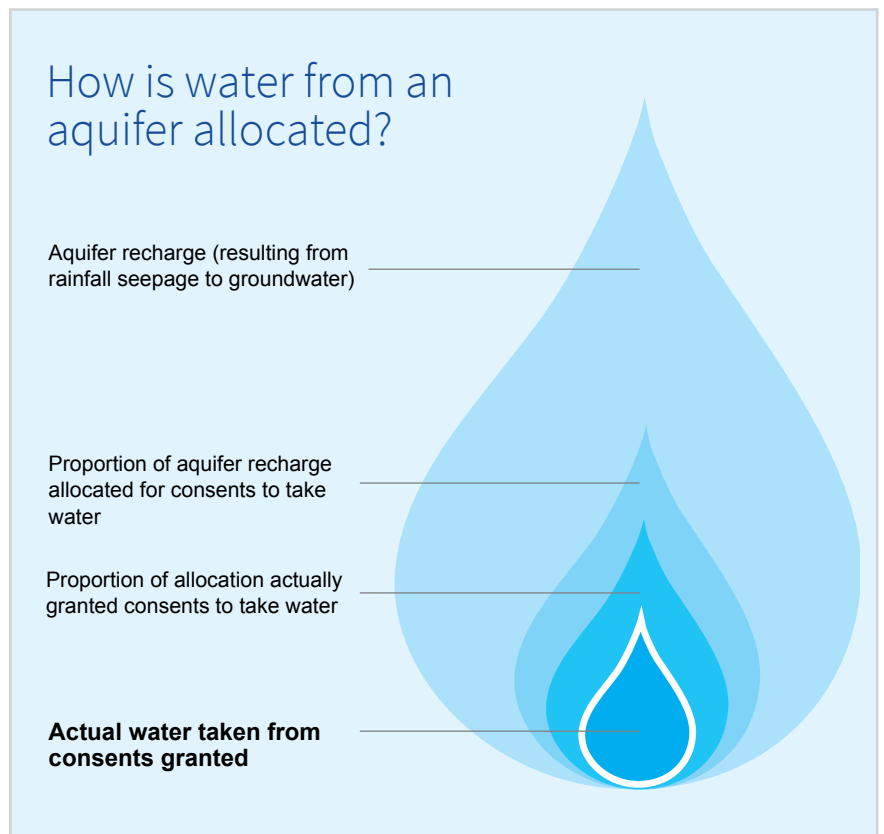
▲ Edendale township

Richard says Fonterra is committed to both their environmental goals and the local community. “Fonterra at Edendale has a strong focus on water efficiency,” Richard says. “We are the fourth most efficient Fonterra site of the 28 New Zealand sites for water used when compared to how much milk is made.”

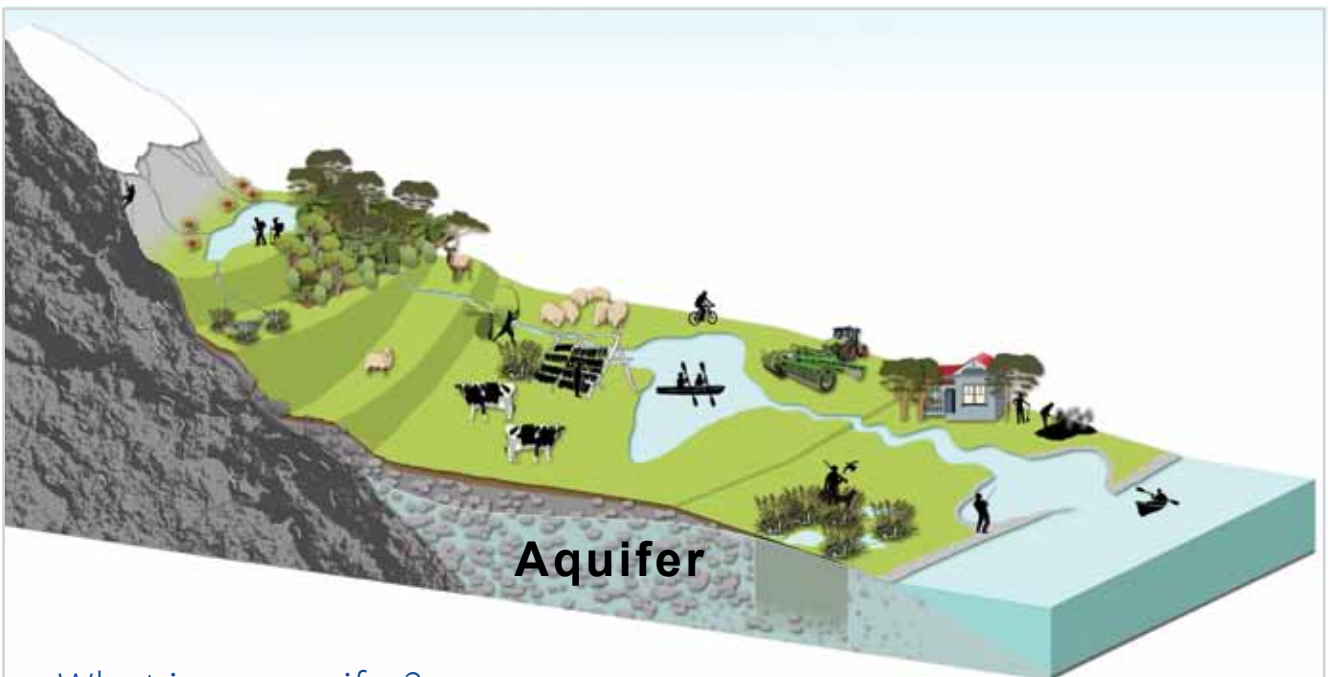
In addition, Fonterra has ambitious water targets with an aim to reduce their water use by 20% by 2020. This will be achieved by reducing the water they use in their processes and by looking at how much they can reuse.

In the next few years Fonterra’s consent will be up for renewal. “As part of the process we’ll be actively engaging with the community and key stakeholders,” Richard says. “I’m really keen for people to be involved so we can look at what’s right for the community.”

In addition to engaging on important consent decisions, Environment Southland will need communities’ help to understand what is acceptable when it comes to setting limits for water quality and quantity. Understanding your local issues, like this community now does, is an important step towards helping us shape those decisions when the time comes.



For more information about community conversations for setting limits (water quality and allocation limits) go to [es.govt.nz/waterandland](http://es.govt.nz/waterandland)



## What is an aquifer?

Aquifers hold groundwater, which is water that has made its way down through the soil. Aquifers are not like areas of surface water, such as lakes. Instead they are areas filled with silt, sand, gravel or rocks which 'hold' water. Water sits in the spaces between the gravel and rocks.

Groundwater provides an important source of drinking water for people and livestock in Southland. It's also used for irrigation, dairy shed wash down and industrial purposes, and it is the primary source of water in streams when there is no rainfall.



# Communities take charge in emergency planning

▲ Emergency Management Southland community team leader Delia Riley and response team leader Craig Sinclair with the Winton community response plan.

More than 25 Southland communities are making plans to look after themselves and others in an emergency.

Southland faces many potential emergency situations, including tsunamis, floods, earthquakes and storms, but the action taken in response can differ vastly from one community to the next.

Emergency Management Southland has recently embarked on a three-year programme to help communities carry out their own response planning.

Meetings are being held in most towns throughout the region, with several in Invercargill and Gore. Community team leader Delia Riley says the number of people wanting to get involved has been really high so far.

“In the event of an emergency, communities may need to support themselves for seven to ten days before assistance arrives. Having a response plan can make all the difference.”

Each response plan contains information about a community’s hazards, risks and key contacts, and identifies spaces where people can gather to support each other – known as community emergency hubs.

Delia says you can never underestimate the role local knowledge plays in communities being able to respond to an emergency.

“A big part of producing these plans is to make connections within the community. Each community is different, and by talking to them we get an understanding of what’s most important to them.”

The plans are developed through a series of three public meetings. At the first meeting, the community learns about their local risks and hazards. Following that, a tailored response plan is co-developed with Emergency Management Southland, and the final meeting includes a practical

walkthrough at one of the identified emergency hubs.

All community response plans are made available on Emergency Management Southland’s website [www.cdsouthland.nz](http://www.cdsouthland.nz) as they are completed.

So far, plans are available for Stewart Island, Winton, Tuatapere, Edendale and Riverton.

To get involved or for more information, contact the community team at Emergency Management Southland at [community@cdsouthland.nz](mailto:community@cdsouthland.nz), or call 0800 76 88 45.

# Warming homes for 10 years

Ensuring people live in warm, healthy homes is an investment in our future, according to Southland Warm Homes Trust chair Jim Hargest.

The Trust celebrated its 10 year anniversary in June and Jim says reflecting on the past 10 years, the goals haven't changed, although their work is probably much more targeted now.

"We know that for every dollar spent on improving the warmth of a home, there is a significant payback in terms of health, so there really is no downside to this work."

Jim says it's well known that Southland has a large portion of older, poor housing stock that is difficult to heat and needs upgraded, but "that won't happen overnight and we have to do what we can now to keep families warm and healthy".

More than 6,000 homes throughout Southland and West Otago are already feeling the benefits of insulation as a result of the Trust's work since 2008 and the addition of the Clean Air Loans Scheme, in conjunction with Environment Southland, Invercargill City Council and Gore District Council, now means families have more opportunities to upgrade to more efficient, cleaner forms of heating.

"Warm homes and clean air go together when it comes to better health and improved wellbeing. Just like there's different forms of heating, some better than others, there's also 'insulation' and 'insulation' – in Southland people need more than just the bare minimum to make a difference."

Jim credits the support of the many organisations involved with the Trust with their success and says strong working relationships and everybody wanting similar outcomes is crucial.

"At the end of the day the objective is to have everybody living in a warm, healthy environment – it's that simple."



▲ Southland Warm Homes Trust chairman Jim Hargest is proud of the work achieved by the trust over the last 10 years, but still sees plenty of challenges ahead.



If you live in the Invercargill or Gore airsheds, you may be able to get a Clean Air Loan to help you upgrade your insulation or current heating. Find out more online.

[www.BreatheEasySouthland.co.nz](http://www.BreatheEasySouthland.co.nz)

# Diverse backgrounds Waituna project

The co-chairs of a trust set up to drive a long-term vision for the Waituna Lagoon and catchment are finding they've got a lot more in common than they realised.

**W**hakamana Te Waituna Charitable Trust co-chairs Dean Whaanga and Lloyd McCallum are spearheading a five-year catchment management work programme focused on land use and improving water quality – building on the work started by the Waituna Partners Group.

The Trust is the funding and co-ordinating partnership for seven stakeholder organisations to ensure the wellbeing of the people, the land, the waters, the

ecosystem and the mauri (life-force) of the Waituna Lagoon and catchment.

Dean, who represents Te Rūnanga o Awarua, says the programme is designed to be inclusive of all people with cultural, ecological, economic and recreational roles and ties to the lagoon and catchment.

Approval and support from people living and working in the catchment will be crucial for Whakamana te Waituna to succeed, he says.

“We’re really excited about this project. This is a new direction and is about what we can do together.”

Dean grew up in Bluff, and has close whanau links to the lagoon and catchment.

“You can give to the land and look after it well, farm it well, and you can encourage biodiversity, and good things will start happening.”

Lloyd says his involvement is a natural progression from his role as an Environment Southland councillor, and previous role as Eastern Southland Fonterra Shareholders' councillor.

“I think we’re breaking new ground and it will be interesting, exciting and satisfying when it comes together.”

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**“We’re really excited about this project. This is a new direction and is about what we can do together.”**

**DEAN WHAANGA**

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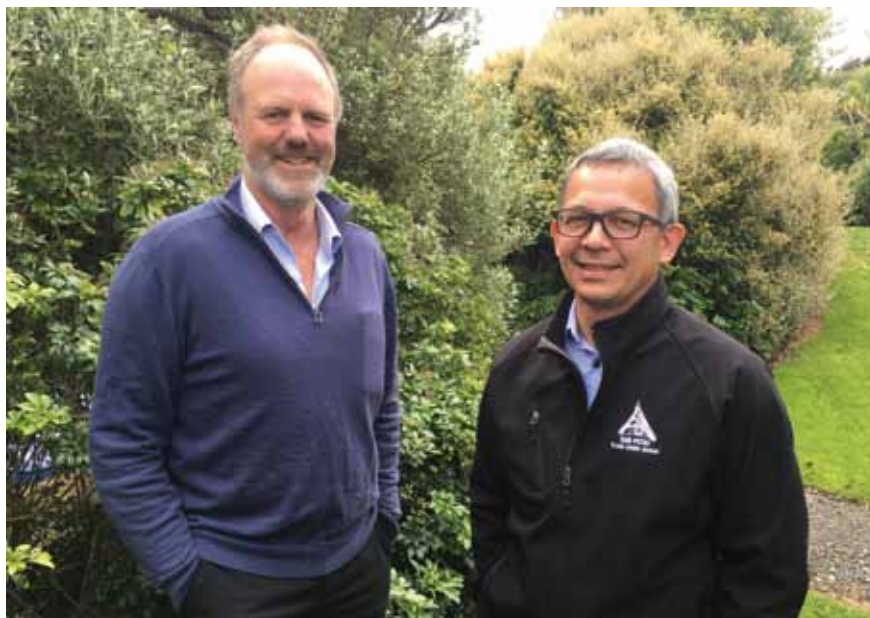
The pair have very different backgrounds but are finding they have very similar views on farming, sustainability, succession, and the need for a long-term vision, Lloyd says.

“We are probably more similar than we realise, and that’s very positive,” he says.

The five-year goals are to work with landowners and agencies to re-establish a more natural water flow in the catchment by demonstrating that more natural drainage patterns and farm management systems can improve water quality.

Central to this is the ability to provide alternative land-use options adjacent to the lagoon, while maintaining existing livelihoods in the catchment and re-establishing kaitiakitanga – including mahinga kai (food gathering and interests in other natural resources) and other customary practices.

◀ Whakamana Te Waituna Charitable Trust co-chairs Lloyd McCallum and Dean Whaanga.



# come together for

## ► Waituna

- Waituna, 40km south-east of Invercargill, is one of our country's best remaining examples of a natural coastal lagoon, and as such is unique in New Zealand. It is a taonga (treasure) to Ngāi Tahu and is part of the Awarua Wetland, a wetland of international importance.
- In 2013, a governance group (the 'Partners') was formed by organisations with a statutory role in Waituna with a view to making efficiencies and achieving more by working together towards a strategic direction and action plan. The Partners are Environment Southland, Te Rūnanga o Awarua, Te Rūnanga Ngāi Tahu, Department of Conservation, and Southland District Council.
- The Trust, formed in February, has a broader membership and allowed the partners to access significantly more funding. Programme funding includes a \$6 million grant from the Ministry for the Environment Freshwater Improvement Fund. The Partners have secured \$13.3 million in funding to date, with another \$1 million being sought.
- The Trust partners are Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Te Rūnanga o Awarua, Environment Southland, the Department of Conservation, Living Water (a partnership between DOC and Fonterra), Fonterra and the Southland District Council.

# Return of kākāriki inspires

With tears in his eyes, 78-year-old Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust volunteer Eric ‘Tracker’ Black describes the sight of two kākāriki on the Glory Track as making all the years of hard work worthwhile.

**T**he red crowned parakeets, once common on the mainland, have been largely restricted to pest-free offshore islands for many years, but have recently been recorded in Environment Southland’s bird monitoring programmes on Bluff Hill, in the Omaui area and in Mores Reserve in Riverton.

Environment Southland biosecurity officer Tom Harding says he’s aware that kākāriki, along with a number of other birds, are now being seen and heard much more often in these areas and this is a direct result of some very solid predator control work.

“It’s great to be able to see first-hand the impact the volunteers’ work is having and it is good motivation to continue with it.” The results also reinforce work nationally by regional councils who are focused on supporting on-the-ground community efforts to improve biodiversity.

Tom says it’s exciting to now have data from bird counts, which have been happening since 2006, to back up the anecdotal evidence of the birds’ return, with documented counts of kākāriki in Bluff since 2013, Omaui since 2014 and in Mores Reserve.

Bluff Hill/ Motupōhue Environment Trust chair Estelle Leask says the sight of birds like the kākāriki and the reintroduction of the kakaruai (South Island robin) are real signs of success for the trust, which have reignited and re-energised the passion for the work they do.

“The discovery of robin chicks last October was an historic occasion for Bluff Hill/ Motupōhue, the first time in over a century that South Island robins have bred on Ngāi Tahu’s sacred Topuni. I hear endless accounts of inquisitive robins engaging with our volunteers, locals and visitors on public walking tracks and throughout our trapping network.”

Local ornithologist (bird expert) Lloyd Esler carries out yearly bird monitoring in selected areas on contract for Environment Southland and is impressed to see some of the less common species reappearing.

“Birds like the kākāriki would have been quite prolific here probably 100 years ago, but they do a lot of their feeding on the ground, which make them very vulnerable to pests. The pest control work is giving them the opportunity to come back.”

Lloyd says in the last few years, bird life in general has increased where pest control work has been done, particularly places like Bluff Hill, Omaui Reserve and Mores Reserve.



◀ Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust chair Estelle Leask and volunteer Eric ‘Tracker’ Black are regulars on the Bluff Hill tracks, carrying out pest control work, which has played a major role in the return of several bird species to the area.





▲ The stunning kākāriki has made a return to several Southland locations. (PHOTO: Bush Haven)



“There’s been a noticeable big flourish in plant growth in Omaui Reserve in particular, with the decrease in rat numbers who normally eat the seeds, so this provides better opportunity for the birds.”

As if they know they have found a kindred spirit, kākāriki are even paying regular visits to Lloyd in the sanctuary of his backyard at Otatara, and he thinks there’s potential for even more bird species to be seen in places they have been driven from by pests.

“The return of saddlebacks would be a dream, but they are also very vulnerable because they nest and feed on the ground.”

◀ Local ornithologist Lloyd Esler carries out regular bird counts for Environment Southland.

# Updates



## Nominations open

Nominations for this year's Southland Community Environment Awards are open now. The 2018 awards will be the 23rd year that Environment Southland has coordinated the event, which is designed to celebrate the people who take action in their own backyards, businesses or industries to make a significant difference to their environment. There are prizes to be won and a category for everyone - schools, farmers, community groups, businesses and individuals.

Nominations close on 17 August. More details about nominating a group or individual are available at [www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz). The awards will be presented at a gala evening in early November.



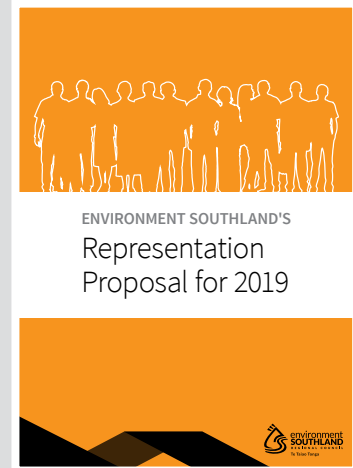
## Long-term Plan approved

The council approved our Long-term Plan 2018-2028 in June. It sets out our work programmes and budgets for the next 10 years, with particular emphasis on the next three years.

This Long-term Plan covers our core business such as flood protection and drainage management, biosecurity and biodiversity, compliance, consents and planning, scientific monitoring, environmental education, land sustainability and pollution protection activities.

It also focuses our key priorities – managing freshwater to address water quality and quantity issues, and supporting communities to be resilient particularly in the face of climate change impacts.

We recognise that this will take an investment by everyone taking responsibility and working together to get change happening on the ground. Our approach is focused on making internal efficiencies, building partnerships and working with communities to ensure a thriving Southland.



## Representation review

Councillors will meet on 15 August to discuss their final proposal on the representation review – an opportunity to review how our council is made up. The meeting will be an opportunity for any of the submitters on the initial proposal, who wish to speak to their submission, to do so.

The review takes place every six years and considers the number of councillors, names and boundaries of constituencies.

Councillors have proposed to retain the existing arrangements, which they believe provide the most fair and effective representation of our communities.

The initial proposal was open for submission until 6 July and all feedback will be considered. For more information, visit [www.es.govt.nz/repreview18](http://www.es.govt.nz/repreview18).

# Time to think about...

## 📅 AUGUST 2018

**NODDING THISTLE/RAGWORT** – By now you should have completed an early winter spray for these weeds. If you missed this opportunity, an early spring application is recommended. During mid-late winter, cold temperatures and frosts restrict plant growth, meaning weed control may be less effective.

**OUTDOOR BURNING** – Outdoor burning is not permitted within the Invercargill and Gore airsheds until 31 August. Go to [www.BreatheEasySouthland](http://www.BreatheEasySouthland) for airshed boundaries.

**FARM WASTE** – Make sure you have a plan to dispose of your farm waste, especially baleage wrap and used chemical containers. Baleage wrap cannot be burnt, but there are several options for disposal. Check out our website for more information.

## 📅 SEPTEMBER 2018

**GORSE AND BROOM** – Our annual urban gorse and broom inspections are about to get underway. Landowners are required to deal with any gorse and broom on their properties under the Regional Pest Management Strategy.

**RABBITS** – Winter is the most effective time for rabbit control before they start breeding again in spring.

## 📅 OCTOBER 2018

**ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT FUND** – Get your application in now. This fund can assist with projects to protect and enhance indigenous biodiversity on private and community-owned land in Southland. Visit [www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz) for more information on how to apply.

**MUSTELIDS, RATS AND FERAL CATS** – With the start of bird breeding season, it's essential to get good control of mustelids, feral cats and rats before they start preying on nests and vulnerable young. There are a variety of traps out there so give our biosecurity team a call for advice.

**DARWIN'S BARBERRY/COTONEASTER** – If you're heading up to your holiday home in the Manapouri/Te Anau area, it's worth keeping your eyes peeled for any signs of these nasty weeds. If you find any give us a call for advice on how to remove it.

## 📅 NOVEMBER 2018

**FIREWOOD** – Now's the perfect time to be sorting your firewood supplies for next winter. Visit [www.BreatheEasySouthland.co.nz](http://www.BreatheEasySouthland.co.nz) for a list of Good Wood approved suppliers.

## Down on the farm



By **NATHAN CRUICKSHANK**, *Environment Southland senior land sustainability officer*

We have moved into the time of year when most farmers are intensively winter grazing stock, either on fodder crop or pasture. It is timely for us to consider the good management practices (GMPs) that can be put into practice to minimise the loss of soil and contaminants to water ways. These include:

- Grazing down slopes towards your buffer zone where practical. Leaving a buffer zone of rank grass is great for intercepting and filtering overland flow.
- Back-fence stock off land that has been grazed so they do not walk back and forwards and compact the soil.
- Using portable water troughs to allow for back-fencing of stock.
- Using portable feeders for supplementary feed such as baleage. This helps minimise using a tractor in the crop paddock during wet conditions.
- Either avoiding winter grazing of critical source areas, or grazing them last when conditions are drier.

AgResearch scientists demonstrated that strategic grazing by incorporating the above GMPs can reduce sediment and nutrient losses dramatically. This results in sustainability for the farm and the environment.

*For detailed information on any of these topics visit our website.*

0800 76 88 45 | [service@es.govt.nz](mailto:service@es.govt.nz) | [www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz)

# Out in the field



▲ Environmental education officer Mark Oster demonstrates the Enviroscape model to students from South Otago High School, who visited Environment Southland in June as part of a geography trip.



▲ Senior environmental technical officer Grace Smith talks to students at Southland Girls' High School about career opportunities at Environment Southland during an event organised by Southland Youth Futures.



▲ Senior environmental technical officer Warren McNamara (left) and environmental technical officer Mitchell Harvey carry out electric fishing in the Oreti River.



▲ Environmental scientist Roger Hodson discusses Rapid Habitat Assessment with staff from Environment Southland, Otago Regional Council and NZ Landcare Trust during a field day. The tool was developed by the Cawthron Institute, and helps measure how well a waterway can sustain life.