

# EnvirosOUTH

August 2022

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A lifetime of learning

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A new approach

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Collaboration is the key

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environment  
**SOUTHLAND**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Te Taiao Tonga



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## EnvirosOUTH

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

ISSN 2537-8902 (Print)  
ISSN 2537-8910 (Online)

### Contact Us

Cnr North Rd & Price St, Invercargill  
(03) 211 5115 | 0800 76 88 45  
service@es.govt.nz | www.es.govt.nz  
www.facebook.com/enviromentsouthland

### Cover

« **Heddon Bush School student Amelie Johnston celebrates the school's recent Enviroschools silver reflection. Story page 3.**



Kia ora koutou katoa. It's an honour to pick up the mantle at what is a very interesting time in local government.

Prior to becoming the chief executive in June, I had two years as the Council's general manager of strategy, planning and engagement. I relish the challenges and opportunities that working for the regional council brings.

The Council hit a milestone recently in our water and land programme, accepting the Regional Forum's report of recommendations for consideration. It is an important part of a process to determine how we are going to achieve the community's aspirations for freshwater.

Together with our treaty partners, we are taking a ki uta ki tai – mountains to the sea – approach. While we are obliged to meet the requirements of the Government's National Policy Statement for Freshwater, it is so important that we do this within a Southland context – for the region as a whole.

Like so much of the work before us and ahead of us, this will require some difficult decisions and a concerted effort across Southland, so please take the opportunities to get involved in the conversations, particularly, during the next 18 months.

We will get the best outcomes by working together to ensure our region continues to thrive well into the future.

Ngā mihi

*Wilma Falconer, Chief Executive, Environment Southland*

## Environment Southland

*A thriving Southland – te taurikura o Murihiku*



▲ Heddon Bush School teacher Sarah Guise (back) with students (left to right): Isabelle Hogg, Cora Young, Amelie Johnston, Maddison Asmore and Britt Luijten

# A lifetime of learning with Enviroschools

For Sarah Guise, Enviroschools has been part of her life from childhood to now as a teacher at Heddon Bush Primary School.

When Sarah was in Year 8 at Limehills Primary School she took a leading role in activities that helped her learn about the local environment, the impact we have on it and what we can do to help protect it.

“I remember my teacher at the time had a classroom that was based on the whole environment and a lot of projects were based on native animals and plants. We also had lots of speakers invited to talk to us which was great. It was the experience that she gave us that inspired me to become a teacher.”

Enviroschools is a nationwide programme that supports early childhood centres and schools to commit to a long-term sustainability journey. Tamariki (children) connect with and explore the environment, then plan, design and take action in their local places in collaboration with their communities.

Heddon Bush School joined the Enviroschools programme in 2016. When Sarah joined the team in 2019, she saw an opportunity to take on the challenge of helping build on the work already done.

Sarah has taken her early years' experience and tried to replicate it with her students by continuing the wide range of projects that past teachers had started, and embedding them further across the whole school.

As a result, a new native area has been created at the school with students helping to build the area from scratch.

For Sarah, witnessing the growth of knowledge amongst her students has been the most rewarding part of the programme.

“The whole experience has been great. Watching the transfer of knowledge from school to home has been the best part for me. Being able to see and hear discussions about the environment really shows the kids taking in this new knowledge and applying it to their lives.”

Heddon Bush School is celebrating their Enviroschools 'silver reflection' where the school will be able to reflect and celebrate on the past few years' achievements and look forward to new projects in the near future.

“I'm looking forward to the silver reflection, but most of all I am excited to just continue the work and create a legacy with all the projects we have going on, including the new native area that we have made.”



# Strengthening relationship with mana whenua



## STEWART BULL

Strategy and Policy Committee

Mana whenua can bring a beneficial influence to the decision-making table of Environment Southland, Stewart Bull says.

Stewart (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Māmoe, Waitaha) has been working in the community and on conservation matters in the Southland region for many years. A member of the Southland Conservation Board, a board representative on the Murihiku Kaitiaki Roopu, a member of the Whenua Hou Committee, and a founding member of the Fiordland Marine Guardians, Stewart was awarded the Queen's Service Medal for his services to conservation and Māori in 2018.

"I do not take this responsibility lightly," Stewart says. "My purpose is not about me solely. It is about having the ability and opportunity to contribute to the aspirations of the community as a whole.

"To achieve those aspirations, it must not be at the cost of the natural environment's ability to stay resilient enough to sustain the biodiversity in the most natural way it was designed to do."



## ANN WAKEFIELD

Strategy and Policy Committee

For Ann Wakefield, bringing unique perspectives and having the opportunity to be part of the solution is key to moving forward in the environmental space. Ann (Ngāi Tahu) has whakapapa links to Aparima and is the chair of Ōraka Aparima Rūnaka. She has been involved with the Rūnaka for more than 20 years, transitioning from volunteering and working for the Rūnaka to being part of the governance team. Ann has had a representative role on the Southern District Health Board and has a passion for working for the community.

Ann comes from a long line of strong wahine toa who have a deep connection to the whenua and are passionate environmental advocates. "I grew up watching my mother and people like Stewart (Bull) work in the environmental field, doing RMA (Resource Management Act) mahi and forging relationships in Southland. But we haven't always had a voice at the table.

"It is a real privilege and ground-breaking for Southland to have mana whenua representation on this committee – it is true co-governance and a reflection of the value we have as Te Tiriti partners."

# onships

In March 2022, Environment Southland strengthened its relationship with Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku, appointing four mana whenua representatives to two of its standing committees – Strategy and Policy and Regional Services. We learn more about the representatives and what inspires them to make a difference.



## GAIL THOMPSON

Regional Services Committee

Gail Thompson sees mana whenua representation as the next step in the strong relationship between mana whenua and the council.

Gail was born and raised in Bluff. She is actively involved with Te Rūnanga o Awarua and Te Rau Aroha Marae, as is her husband, who is also Ngāi Tahu. Gail has represented Awarua in a range of forums and has a particular interest in customary fisheries.

“Having mana whenua representation sitting at the table is another leadership stream,” Gail says. “We can show other areas of New Zealand the opportunity to work together and how things can work. It is visionary and it is a reflection of our enduring relationship.”



## ESTELLE PERA-LEASK

Regional Services Committee

Estelle Pera-Leask feels strongly that tangata whenua have a critical role to play in ensuring they are a voice for te taiao (the natural world) in discussions about sustainable land use.

Awarua is Estelle’s turangawaewae and her whakapapa links to Rakiura Stewart Island. Estelle has been the chairperson for the Bluff Hill Motupōhue Environment Trust for seven years, and an active volunteer for the past 10 years. Estelle is a Ngāi Tahu representative on the Southland Conservation Board and works as a Senior Environmental Advisor at Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu in Christchurch. Estelle was named a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to conservation and Māori this year.

“As a wahine Maori of Ngāi Tahu descent, born and raised in Bluff, I learnt from a young age the importance of mahinga kai to our people,” Estelle says. “A key learning was that we will only have mahinga kai in the future if we take responsibilities of kaitiakitanga seriously, today.”

# Know your wai – protecting and restoring our freshwater

Over the next few years, we have some important decisions to make about how we clean up our waterways for us and our grandchildren.

Together, Environment Southland and Te Ao Mārama Inc (the environmental arm of Ngāi Tahu Ki Murihiku) are working with farming organisations, councils, businesses and communities on a cohesive and practical plan to provide for the hauora, or healthy resilience, of our waterways.

We are doing this because Southlanders told us they want cleaner waterways for things like swimming, fishing and mahinga kai (food gathering); and because the law – the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) – requires us to have a formal plan by 2025 to protect and restore freshwater in our region within a generation (25 years).

It is a process we have been involved in for some time and it is ongoing. We developed a science programme, an economic project, the Regional Forum (tasked with

recommending methods that will get the improvements we all want) and the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan.

We're looking at what needs to happen across the region to get the significant improvements we need. The process is focused on making sure that our response is bespoke for Southland and Southlanders, and this means that how we go about it might look different from other parts of the country.

We're committed to building on the good work that's already underway and finding a way to recognise what's been done.

No decisions have been made on limits. You'll be able to share your feedback before any decisions are made.

Environment Southland intends to make decisions on limits next year. These decisions will shape a plan change to the

proposed Southland Water and Land Plan (Plan Change Tuatahi) which will include limits on how we use and manage our freshwater and land, and timeframes for meeting these limits. The development of action plans is also a key part of this plan change.

There has been scientific modelling of the gap between the current state of our waterways and where we all would like them to be. The modelling gives a sense of the scale of the challenge, but does not set limits. In considering how to reach a state of hauora, further scientific modelling will be considered alongside mātauranga Māori (knowledge), economic, cultural, and social assessments, and community input.

Dive in and find out more. Visit [www.es.govt.nz/know-your-wai](http://www.es.govt.nz/know-your-wai).

## Southland's freshwater planning timeline





# Valuing Southland's waterways for whanau

“Respect and value them for whanau,” says Evelyn Cook, chairperson of Te Ao Mārama. These are the sentiments she wants to pass onto future generations when it comes to protecting and enjoying Southland’s waterways.

“I remember at the age of seven or so going whitebaiting with my father in the lower Mataura. Around about the same age I remember days out around Lumsden with family. And that is what the waterways were for us. Time to spend with family while exploring the river bank. These are the memories I value most.”

It was at this early age that valuing and respecting the waterways was ingrained in Evelyn.

“I remember going to the same swimming spots and we would notice the changes that had taken place. We had to make sure it was still safe to swim there. It was moments like that when I realised how often our waterways change and the respect they must be given,” she says.

Evelyn is a strong advocate for working together to better our environment. Te Ao Mārama was established in 1996 and is the environmental arm of Kāi Tahu ki Murihiku. It’s an organisation Evelyn has been involved in since its inception. Environment Southland has a long, strong relationship with Te Ao Mārama, and more recently the two organisations have partnered on the People, Water and Land programme – Te Mana o te Tangata, te Wai, te Whenua.

This programme has provided the foundational work to understand and improve Southland’s water quality.

“All the work that has been done over the last three years has built on a good foundation. The region is now in a

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“Being aware of our impact on the waterways is the key to the future sustainability of them.”

EVELYN COOK

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strong position to face the challenges of addressing environmental degradation over the next couple of decades as a community.

“In my life I have seen a shift, especially from those who don’t find themselves in rural places, on the value people hold for their waterways and how important it is to maintain and improve our water quality. Water is the lifeblood of our community. We are nothing without it.”

For Evelyn, going down to her favourite spot doesn’t have to have the prerequisite of sunny weather.

“The best day I had on the Mataura was actually a day where the rain was quite torrential. For me it was never about the weather, but having those moments, whether it be fishing or swimming, with family. When I think of those times I strongly remember the smells and the atmosphere that we played around in.

“Being aware of our impact on the waterways is the key to the future sustainability of them.”



▲ Evelyn Cook

# Working to restore the Maitaura River

Like many young people growing up in a rural setting, Mollie Lyders spent a lot of time on the land and in the water. She holds a strong belief that we need to work together now to restore the water quality in our rivers and streams for future generations.



▲ Mollie Lyders

Helping out on the family sheep and beef farm near Tokanui, Mollie took advantage of being able to go fishing, whitebaiting, diving and swimming in the river and at the estuary. She ate what she caught, but now she thinks twice about that.

“I always just presumed that what we’re eating was from a nice source. But now that I’ve started working [in the environmental space] and realised what’s going into the river, all sorts of things other people don’t realise, and it was quite a shock,” Mollie says.

After her first stint at university, Mollie spent time working in the agricultural industry and travelling before beginning work for the Hokonui Rūnanga supporting a social research project.

In 2020 she decided she wanted to do more study. “I wasn’t overly into farming. I just didn’t have the passion for it. But I still wanted to do some outside work so that’s why I went down the environmental route.” Mollie began her environmental management degree at Lincoln University.

Around the same time, Hokonui Rūnanga were looking to expand their environmental projects, so Mollie took on the role of Kaitiaki Taiao (Environmental Assistant). Having found her passion, Mollie now gets to renew her connection with her awa (the Maitaura River) at work and through her studies.

“Before I started in this role and studying, I knew in the back of my mind that the river was important to my ancestors; but now I work in the area I’m more aware of that connection.



“I’m Ngāi Tahu. The river would have been a great food source for my tīpuna (ancestors), eating from the river and swimming, and it was an important trail. My nana told me she remembers her father easily catching kanakana (lamprey) for food. It’s definitely changed a lot even in that short time.

“Looking at the Falls (Te Au Nui Pihapiha Kanakana - the Mataura Falls) it’s hard to feel a connection to what my tīpuna (ancestors) would have been looking at. Now, as impressive as it still is to look at, it’s not as it once was. I know my ancestors wouldn’t recognise this place if they were standing with me today.”

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“We are all aiming for the same thing, and combining a Matāuranga Māori approach with modern ideas could be the secret to our success.”

MOLLIE LYDERS

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In the 1800s, the Mataura Falls were blasted by dynamite to support increasing industry operations with water, so they are much smaller than they originally were.

Mollie says through changes in primary production, land and recreational use, the Mataura River is not the once great food source and taonga for the people of Ngāi Tahu it used to be.

“I would like to be able to restore [the water quality and ecosystem health] to some sort of degree, to the abundance that they would have seen.”

Mollie believes it’s not only mana whenua who can feel disconnected from the environment. “It’s just making sure all whanau and community members feel that connection and want to eat from the river, swim in the river, even the whole whenua, the land, how they can feel at home in it.”

While there’s still a long way to go, Mollie does think there’s plenty of things being done that are helping to improve the environment.

“We didn’t really grow up thinking about how to preserve these natural resources. People are starting to see that it’s not about doing it the way it’s always been done. That’s where the Mātauranga Māori (traditional knowledge) can be an important part of that as well.

“People are willing to do it; they just don’t know what they’re meant to do. I think if you’re consciously trying to do the right thing, it’s always going to be better than doing the wrong thing or nothing at all.”

That’s also where the Hokonui Runanga’s Kaupapa Taiao (environment) programmes come in. “Everything we’re doing is for the river. Since I grew up on it; I’m from here, I want to be able to swim in it during the summer months at some point in my life.”

The Hokonui Rūnanga wetland project is one of their most established and well-known projects, where they’ve been restoring the low-lying areas on their property in Gore into a series of connecting wetlands.



▲ Mollie collects elver (juvenile eel) and moves them above the weir on the Mataura River as part of Hokonui Runanga's trap and transfer programme.

One of Mollie’s success stories so far has been in the trap and transfer programme, which sees elver, or juvenile eel, trapped and then transferred to above the weir and hydro tunnels near Alliance Group’s plant in Mataura, for their seasonal migration. “This year we trapped and transferred 53 kilos of elver.”

While balancing study and work, Mollie’s learnings have shown her that coming together is the way to protect and restore the awa (river) to something her tīpuna would be proud of.

“It’s about working together,” she says. “We are all aiming for the same thing, and combining a Matāuranga Māori approach with modern ideas could be the secret to our success.”



▲ Evelyn Cook (Te Ao Mārama), Nicol Horrell (Chairman, Environment Southland) and Fiona Smith (Chair, Regional Forum) at Te Rau Aroha Marae in Bluff.

# New approach for freshwater

After three years of learning, collaborating and thinking laterally, the Regional Forum has provided a suite of recommendations on how to protect and restore Southland's freshwater.

“We're proud of the result,” Fiona Smith, forum chair says. “We've designed a new approach for how Southlanders will use freshwater resources.”

The Regional Forum delivered its report and recommendations to Environment Southland and the Te Ao Mārama Inc board in July. The forum was tasked with looking at how to achieve the communities' aspirations for freshwater.

“Forum members have given hundreds of hours to this process because we all believe it is the right thing to do. Southland has a huge challenge that we need to do something about now if we are to have any hope of getting our freshwater quality back, returning Te Mana o te Wai,” Fiona says.

She says the process has been a journey of learning for herself, and she knows other forum members have also had profound shifts in their thinking.

“At the centre of our approach to our work has been our respect for our communities. We had an incredibly important task, and we've come together and delivered something every forum member supports – and we think can make a difference to Southland's future.”

Topics the Regional Forum has paid particular attention to are partnership approaches and integrated catchment management, the role of wetlands, repurposing land for greater ecological benefit, and industrial and urban water management.

“In the report we recognise the

recommendations will come at significant financial cost, collectively and individually. There is always a temptation to say ‘we can't afford it’ and delay until a time which is more suitable. The reality is that every delay will increase both the cost to the environment and the effort required to fix it.

“So the forum's challenge to the region is: ‘If not now, when?’ “We have worked our way through the huge challenges this project set us, and we firmly believe what we're recommending will give our children, grandchildren and future generations the freshwater we deserve.

“Now it's over to Environment Southland and Te Ao Mārama Inc to lead the region into a better future with freshwater that we can become proud of.”

The report will help inform a plan change to the Southland Water and Land Plan, known as Plan Change Tuatahi, which will include the setting of limits for discharges to and abstractions from waterways.

To read the report, visit the Regional Forum webpage – [www.es.govt.nz/regional-forum](http://www.es.govt.nz/regional-forum)



# Trust model effective in improving environmental outcomes

Wanting to explore how national policy played out in the regions, Ministry for the Environment staff member Wallis Greenslade headed to the deep south and found some positives she wasn't expecting.

**A** long way from her home in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Wallis has been surprised by how much she's enjoyed her month working with Environment Southland in Murihiku Southland, and how warmly Southlanders welcomed her.

Originally hailing from Te Whanganui-ā-Tara Wellington, Wallis never imagined Southland would get under her skin as it has.

"Southland as a whole has been an experience – I didn't really know anyone in this whole island.

"It's been a long time to be away from my life, but a short time to experience the region."

As sustainable food systems senior advisor within the Ministry for the Environment's Policy and Implementation Division, Wallis won the organisation's chief executive award. This gave her the opportunity build her understanding of how national policy is being implemented at a local level, and the role of regional councils.

"I wanted to see the translation of national policy at a regional level, and how that is realised out on the ground."



▲ Wallis Greenslade

There was no better region to experience that first-hand than Southland, one of the furthest places from where the national policy is developed, with a unique environmental context.

Wallis' month in Southland took her to a range of different projects and conversations with people across the region.

Two areas of the way Environment Southland operates especially grabbed her attention – the partnership with Te Ao Mārama Inc and the high trust model in which the organisation works with the community.

"Some of the mechanisms being used to connect with communities here are really interesting.

"The Thriving Southland model, having funding from central government but being somewhat independent, building trust with community members, is completely different."

It is a high trust model and it appears there are many layers behind that, she says.

"Trusting communities to make decisions, it flips the power dynamic and appears to be incredibly effective.

"The success of it though [the high trust model], is evident in the innovation in the region.

"It probably comes about through a range of different factors, across space and time. It's been fascinating to be part of."

# Measuring land management through ecological surveys

When Mike Bashford signed up for an ecological survey through Environment Southland, he wanted to reiterate what he already knew about his special patch of land.

“As a management tool, it’s been a great help so I can move forward in planning my strategy for fencing and enhancement of the property. It’s not even just a matter of enhancement it’s just a matter of doing the right thing for the environment that you’re looking after,” Mike says.

Mike farms sheep and beef on about 105 hectares in Niagara. He sold off much of his 485ha farm in the past few years, but the smaller property comes with a lot of diversity in terrain, ranging from wetlands to steep hill country. The terrain isn’t the only part of the property that’s diverse – the biology is too.

In 2021, Mike had two ecological surveys done on his property, one for the 81ha flat section of farm, which has the Waikawa River as a boundary, and another for the

24ha hill block with native forestry.

The Niagara area’s predominant land use is farming and many small areas of indigenous forest remain on public and private land.

Less than 20m away from the Bashford forest is a large QEII covenant block, with similar vegetation, which was established by Mike some years prior to selling the property.

On Mike’s farm, the native remnant forests are kamahi-podocarp and a small area of manuka forest/scrub totalling 3.1ha.

His ecological survey found the native canopy was in good condition and dominated by 8-10 metre kamahi (*Weinmannia racemosa*), with other hardwoods forming a minor part.



▲ Mike Bashford

Young native podocarps such as rimu, totara and kahikatea are present, alongside a range of native shrubs, ferns and herbs.

The report highlights that historic grazing of the forest has had an effect on the diversity and structure of the understory, but Mike has fenced the blocks from stock in recent years.

The ecological survey also collected data on fauna in the area at the time, and anecdotally, from Mike and his neighbours.

Birds seen or heard during the survey were fantail, grey warbler, kereru, tui, bellbird, silvereye, blackbird, chaffinch and harrier hawk. Kākāriki/red fronted parakeets and kārearea/New Zealand falcon have also been observed in nearby forest and farmland.

While there’s still diversity remaining in the forest blocks after logging, land intensification and grazing, Mike says there are ongoing threats to manage in order to protect the forest from further damage and to allow it to rejuvenate.

His property falls just shy of a Possum



▲ Remnant forest blocks on Mike Bashford’s Niagara farm.



Control Area and feral deer are often seen in or around the forest and neighbouring properties.

While the remnant forest blocks are fenced, they aren't deer fenced and the animals are damaging the understory by browsing, grazing, bark stripping and trampling.

"Deer are very prevalent and they're doing a lot more damage in the forest than what they were 50 years ago."

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**"You need a line somewhere to see if you're moving forward or backwards in your biodiversity."**

MIKE BASHFORD

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People come out to Mike's farm to shoot deer and he shoots them himself to try to keep the population down and they provide good food value too, he says.

Mike's ecological survey isn't the only survey happening on his farm – he's made a record of every species he's seen from birds to frogs, to diving beetles.

"Your streams and your forests, as well as the microorganisms, plants and animals that are living in them are a good indication of the health of your farm and your management of your property.

"You need a line somewhere to see if you're moving forward or backwards in your

biodiversity and with those living animals if they start disappearing it's a good indication that you're doing things wrong."

Having an ecological survey done reassured Mike that he was moving in the right direction in terms of his land management, he says.

His second ecological survey was on a section of the farm that's always been close to his heart.

"I've always played in the creeks and rivers all my life. The biodiversity of those with all the different animals that live in there is pretty amazing."

The area on the farm follows the banks of the Waikawa River in a 3.9ha strip.

The Waikawa River is special because it has largely retained its natural course and the upper reaches of the catchment are relatively unmodified. Consequently, although naturally stained brown with peat, water quality is moderately good lower in the catchment.

The river and estuary provide important habitats for freshwater fish and invertebrates.

The riparian strip on Mike's property appears to support limited indigenous biodiversity. However, there is rich flora persisting on steep banks and hidden under patches of gorse and bush lawyer.

The more intact areas of indigenous vegetation have remnant kowhai and lowland ribbonwood, some of which are relatively large and old, and a range of shrubs or small trees.

For Mike, protecting and regenerating this area has become an important project.

He plants native seedlings along the river bank, with the entire length of the river on his property fenced off.

"Land is like a body. Your fields are living parts of your body, there are the veins and arteries that lead into your river and if they aren't clean – it's like if your arteries are blocked."

He also hopes to get more involved in the pest management along the river banks, with rats, mice, possums and stoats preying on birdlife.

"There are lots of stoats living along the river and they've having a detrimental effect on the ground-laying birds, right through from the skylarks to the mallards and all the wee natives as well."

**? If you're interested in the makeup of an area on your land but don't know much about it, an ecological survey is a great way to understand more and the ways in which it can be managed in the future. Go to [www.es.govt.nz/environment/biosecurity-and-biodiversity/ecological-surveys](http://www.es.govt.nz/environment/biosecurity-and-biodiversity/ecological-surveys) to request a survey or find out more.**



▲ Looking east down the edge of one of the kamahi-podocarp forest stands.

**PossumControlAreas**

## POSSUM CONTROL AREAS

Possum control is landowner responsibility. Being part of a Possum Control Area allows landowners to work together to control possums in their area, producing a greater benefit to all involved.

To find out more go to [www.es.govt.nz/environment/biosecurity-and-biodiversity/possum-control-areas](http://www.es.govt.nz/environment/biosecurity-and-biodiversity/possum-control-areas)

# Collaboration key to winter grazing outcomes

This winter, Environment Southland and industry groups have been working collaboratively alongside farmers to improve intensive winter grazing practices across the Southland region.

**B**ad intensive winter grazing practices don't just pose risks to the environment, but also to animal welfare.

That's where the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) comes in. Its animal welfare inspectors are on the ground during winter checking on the winter plans farmers have in place to ensure their animals have sufficient and appropriate feed, access to shelter, access to clean water, and areas to lie down and rest that are free of mud.

Tony Paku, team leader MPI animal welfare lower South Island, has worked closely with local government agencies, including Environment Southland and the Otago Regional Council this winter.

While the councils are there to check good environmental land management practices are in place, MPI's focus is on potential animal welfare issues.

"We have a significant operation underway focused on intensive winter grazing. Animal welfare inspectors are proactively

visiting farms to check on wintering plans, including that contingency plans are in place to manage possible weather events that might hit the region," Tony says.

"Our staff are there to work with farmers to ensure they're well prepared and to assist with advice where necessary."

Tackling intensive winter grazing issues takes a collaborative approach, so MPI is working to be part of the discussions.

Animal welfare inspectors attend various





# better intensive comes

industry group meetings held by Beef + Lamb New Zealand, Dairy NZ and Deer Industry New Zealand, as well as catchment groups.

“These forums help us create good working relationships with industry groups and individual farmers.”

The main component when it comes to animal welfare issues during intensive winter grazing is mud.

Mud is created because stock are generally concentrated in relatively small areas while being fed grass and/or supplementary crops.

Adverse weather conditions only exacerbate this issue, and without alternative areas to move the stock

onto, the mud can lead to major welfare problems, Tony says.

“For example, the science suggests dairy cattle need to be able to lie down for a minimum of eight – 11 hours each day as it helps them with rumination, meaning they’ll get the maximum benefit from their food. This benefit has a flow-on effect into spring allowing cows to produce healthy calves and recover quickly once they have given birth.”

Tony says when there are complaints MPI take a case-by-case approach to work with farmers in the best interests of the animals.

“When we do visit farms where problems are occurring, we form a plan to work with the farmer to improve their on-farm decisions for the sake of animal welfare. Again, our advice and the action we take depends on the seriousness of the situation,” he says.

“We’re aware that this can be a stressful time for farmers who are facing a range of external challenges, including the tougher current economic situation, access to markets and meat processors and the recent drought in Southland.”

When non-compliance is found MPI has a range of compliance tools it can use, from education through to prosecution of the worst offenders.

“At the low end of the scale, it might mean talking a farmer through best practice and offering advice on how to make these changes to help animals.”

This might mean simple directives such as using a back fence behind each mob to reduce stock moving backwards and forwards on ground that is already grazed and affected by mud. In other situations, we might direct a farmer to fence off a muddy area to keep animals out, improve

the animal’s access to water or to supply more supplementary feed.

“For more serious issues we bring in veterinarians and other farming consultants to make an independent assessment that will verify what the inspectors have seen. We have compliance tools including legal powers to direct the owners or the person in charge of the animals to make changes to their farming methods to reduce the chances of welfare issues occurring.”

In the past three years, Tony has noticed positive changes each year in winter grazing practice.

The main changes include improvement around how they are grazing their land and the increased use of the formal wintering plans developed and used by farmers, he says.

“A well thought out management plan with contingencies means a farmer can anticipate challenges and be prepared in advance when issues do arise. Making staff aware of management plans is also important as it ensures the continuity of action on-farm if managers are away.”

Tony is also pleased to see more interaction between farmers, MPI and regional councils.

“This is important and will ensure we have a joined-up approach to the issue. We are also making our staff more accessible, which is building more trust from farmers with MPI.”

“We would encourage farmers who are going through tough times to seek out help from other farmers and support groups in their communities. In a lot of cases, at a local level, groups such as the Rural Support Trust can also be there to coordinate people from within networks to assist. Act early and don’t go it alone.”

◀ **Tony Paku, team leader MPI animal welfare lower South Island**



# Returning to family roots

It's the second time round for Randal Beal, who has returned to Southland to help lead the way in building greater community resilience for our region.

Randal Beal moved back to Southland in May, following a 17 year stint on the West Coast, where his last role was director of operations with the West Coast Regional Council. In that position he worked across teams responsible for biosecurity, catchment river engineers, quarries, and a business team that helped keep rates as low as possible.

"Fostering collaborative approaches to catchment management is critical, both within and across an organisation and for communities," says Randal.

"My Dad's family were from Southland. I first relocated here from Taupo to take up a biosecurity role for Environment Southland in 2002; it was the perfect opportunity to move to one of New Zealand's special regions. It's great to be back."

Randal's cooperative nature and relationship skills make him an ideal fit as Catchment Operations Manager for Environment Southland in Murihiku Southland. "This role has evolved in recent years as the Council delivers on a commitment to work across functions and specialities and provide a more integrated and holistic approach to catchment management," says Randal.

There are positives about the West Coast that Randal will miss, like easy access to the mountains and sea for hunting, diving and fishing. "And no traffic lights!"

But those benefits came with the enormous challenge of finding affordable solutions to providing community



▲ Randal Beal

resilience in his role. "The West Coast has a small rating base to fund resilience from natural hazards, which is essential to encourage and support further economic investment into the region."

Those same challenges motivate Randal today. He is equally passionate about the south and wants to help improve community resilience to current and future natural hazards and protect Southland's contribution to New Zealand's GDP.

"As an organisation, Council has positioned its internal team structure to best meet the holistic needs of the current and future communities of Southland. We are reviewing the current services and assessing them against the future requirements of the forecasted effects of climate change. We're committed to ensuring Southland communities are well prepared and continue to be protected from the natural hazards facing our region."



# Te Kāwhiringa Pāti 2022 – Local Government Elections 2022



15  
JULY

- ▶ Candidate nominations open



12  
AUG

- ▶ Candidate nominations close and roll closes



17  
AUG

- ▶ Public notice of candidates' names



16-21  
SEPT

- ▶ Voting documents delivered to your letterbox



4  
OCT

- ▶ Last day for posting your vote by mail



8  
OCT

- ▶ Election day – voting closes midday. Preliminary results



13-19  
OCT

- ▶ Declaration of results



OCT  
NOV

- ▶ Elected members' swearing-in ceremonies

## ▶ VOTE MURIHIKU

From 16 September 2022, you can vote in your local body elections to select a candidate to represent your voice in decisions made for your community.

Environment Southland councillors have a critical role to play in managing our natural resources and enhancing community resilience for a thriving Southland, now and for our future. Making good local decisions matter. Get involved in shaping our community!

Elections are conducted by postal vote and close at noon on Saturday 8 October 2022.

# Updates



## DOWNLOAD TODAY

You can now get notifications and alerts directly to your phone from Environment Southland about places or topics you care about. You can also report pollution incidents or share your ideas or thoughts with us.

Antenno is a mobile app, free to download and use, and you can opt out of topics that aren't of interest to you. The app doesn't require personal information or login details, so it's a nice, easy way to stay informed.

Find out more at [www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz) and download the app from the Apple store or Google Play.



## MY ENVIRONMENT SOUTHLAND

Environment Southland has launched our upgraded online services – My Environment Southland.

It provides you – the customer – with a one-stop shop. Features include a new look dashboard; easy access to forms, both online and downloadable; save as you go on any online form when registered and signed in; see all 'in progress' and submitted forms and applications and their status; extended payment options to include POLi along with credit card; further login options that include Facebook, Google, email, along with existing RealMe; and access to online services from any Environment Southland web page. Visit [online.es.govt.nz](http://online.es.govt.nz) to see the dashboard.



## LAWA ESTUARIES TOPIC

The Land Air Water Aotearoa (LAWA) website has released an estuaries topic to illustrate the value of estuaries in New Zealand. The data collected by Environment Southland for a range of environmental indicators for estuaries in Murihiku Southland is displayed here. Visit [lawa.org.nz](http://lawa.org.nz) to see the information.

LAWA is a partnership between Te Uru Kahika – Regional and Unitary Councils Aotearoa, Cawthron Institute, the Ministry for the Environment, the Department of Conservation, Statistics New Zealand. It aims to connect people with the environment by sharing environmental data and information.



# Time to think about...

## SEPTEMBER

**GORSE AND BROOM** – We're asking Southlanders to be good neighbours, and remove all gorse and broom within 10 metres of their property boundary. Good neighbour rules also apply to ragwort and nodding thistle. There are a range of control options, check our Southland Pest Hub or call the biosecurity team for advice.



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

**BOATING** – Now's the time to get your boat serviced and ready for the summer boating season. Check your lifejackets for fit and condition and replace any that are no longer suitable.

## OCTOBER

**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..



## NOVEMBER

**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.

**FARM WASTE** – Make sure you have a plan to dispose of your farm waste, especially baleage wrap, chemicals and plastic containers. Baleage wrap cannot be burnt, but there are disposal options through recycling contractors.



To find out more about pest animals and weeds in Southland, including control advice and the latest rules, visit our Southland Pest Hub at [www.pesthub.es.govt.nz](http://www.pesthub.es.govt.nz)

## On the farm



By **KARL ERIKSON**  
*Principal land sustainability officer*

Updated regulations for winter grazing come into effect later this year – and now's a good time to ensure your practices line-up.

Changes to the National Environmental Standard for Freshwater kick in from 1 November this year, so make sure you are planning your cultivation with these in mind.

The big changes to the regulations include how slope is measured, how pugging is dealt with and removal of the re-sowing dates.

Perhaps the most important change is how critical source areas (CSAs) need to be managed. Remember CSAs are landscape features like gullies or swales where water can move overland into waterbodies.

CSAs now have to be protected. They must not be grazed throughout the winter grazing period, have a vegetated cover within and not be cultivated in annual forage crop.

You can continue to winter graze without a consent if you meet these and other conditions. If you can't meet the conditions, then a resource consent will be necessary.

If you would like support to meet any of these new regulations, please give one of our land sustainability officers a call. We're keen to help.



# Out in the field



▲ Resource management officer Georgia Dillon collects a water sample from the wetlands.



▲ Environmental technical officer Sarah O'Neill installs a new continuous monitoring site in the reservoir in the Catlins.



▲ Regulatory administrator Linda Hayes uncovering the mystery of a safe recovered from the Oreti River near Otatara.



▲ The land sustainability team undertaking side-by-side training to work safely on farm.