

Project Brief

Project Title:

Improving Water Quality through Farm Environment Planning across the Sherry Catchment

Grantee: Sherry River Catchment Group

Grant Number: 07/113

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Project description *(What is your project about?)*

This project will implement a whole-catchment approach to helping landowners improve water quality in the Sherry River Catchment. This involves trialling a collaborative approach to farm environmental planning for all productive land uses in the catchment, supported by scientific information from the Motueka Integrated Catchment Management research programme and 9 partner agencies. The Sherry is expected to become a Top-of-the-South demonstration catchment for collaborative farm environmental management.

The issue/opportunity *(Briefly outline the issue/ opportunity the project seeks to address and the project objectives)*

The Sherry River Catchment Group is a landowner group within a sub-catchment of the Motueka River situated in Tasman, Nelson. Research has shown that some land uses and management practices have contributed to poor water quality. Landowners have determined to turn that around by bridging, culverting, riparian management and improved environmental planning involving all landuse types.

The context/background *(Why is this project important?)*

The Sherry River Catchment Group is important as a demonstration of landowner leadership that came about as a result of a facilitated, collaborative approach between the Science community, Council and landowners to understanding the findings of science. They also see the benefits of a catchment focus as a means to improve water quality, improved environmental planning and the value in sharing lessons with others across the region.

Methods What *(do you propose to do?)*

The Sherry River Catchment Project builds on a successful ICM project in which dairy farmers built bridges for herd crossings following a collaborative research project which showed that cow crossings degraded water quality in the river. Water quality has since improved but not consistently to swimmable standard. This project designs and begins implementing environmental practices agreed at catchment scale for further water quality improvement.

Project steps are:

Summarise appropriate farm environmental planning and best management practices

Develop template farm environmental plan

Introductory Farm Environmental Planning Day with catchment landowners

Compile plans into a Sherry River Catchment Action Plan and prioritise actions across the catchment

Identify and document circumstantial barriers that might affect adoption and implementation

Explore the appointment of a community facilitator for riparian planting and weeding days involving the school and wider community, as acceptable, to encourage landowners with action plan implementation.

Planting trials that help to identify easy care riparian options suitable for the catchments like the Sherry River.

Organise a field trip in conjunction with Motueka Integrated Catchment Management (ICM)

Project researchers to show impacts of landuse on the wider catchment and actions to reduce those.

Report learnings

Please email to: sffund@maf.govt.nz