

# Sherry River Catchment News

SEPTEMBER 2008

THE SHERRY RIVER CATCHMENT GROUP HAS BECOME AN EXAMPLE OF INTEGRATED CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT (ICM) THROUGH ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THE MOTUEKA ICM PROJECT AND THE COUNTRY CALENDAR PROGRAM THAT FEATURED EARLIER IN THE YEAR. LANDOWNERS THERE DESERVE HIGH PRAISE FOR THEIR EFFORTS AND PARTICULARLY NICKY BAVIN WHO FRONTED THE CAMERA ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP.





## Water Quality Monitoring

*Tasman District Council (TDC) & NIWA hope to set up a monitoring program to document expected water quality improvements as land management systems changes are made in the Sherry River Catchment.*

NIWA plans monitoring along four sites of the Sherry for bacteria, nutrients and water clarity. A flow measuring site has been established (at Blue Rock) and plans are in place to establish storm-flow. Most pollution from catchments is exported during storm events.

Over the summer and early winter TDC have monitored side streams and found high E.coli at six sites. Trevor James comments that fine sediments are also an issue and that stream temperature results show that most sites are above the criteria for ecosystem health except for the upper catchment where appropriate streamside plantings will improve this relatively easily. More information at [www.tdc.govt.nz](http://www.tdc.govt.nz) website.

The good news from Rob Davies-Colley of NIWA is that monitoring results show that water quality is now routinely improved since the four dairy herd crossing bridges were put in place.

Rob says, research elsewhere shows that unfenced streams can become run-off hotspots in rain events. Steps to improve water quality include fencing stock from side streams, creating riparian buffers, and protecting of wetlands that trap pollutants and polish water. As landowners reduce stock damage to riparian (streambank) areas overall water quality should improve.

## Environmental Plans

Over the past few months landowners in the Sherry River Valley have been working with Farm Environmental advisor Andrew Burton to develop individual farm plans aimed at reducing bacteria run-off to the river.

Andrew Burtons work schedule involves:

- Interview and Farm template development with the key aim of reducing faecal runoff to streams.
- Collating aerial maps for each farm volunteering for the farm planning
- A property visit with each landowner
- Drawing up the environmental farm plan on behalf of the property owners.
- Map preparation of planned areas for attention
- Visiting each farm to deliver and confirm the final farm plans.
- Collate a whole catchment plan involving Forestry Estate, Farmers & Lifestyler's.

Comment From Andrew Burton:

'Work with landowners on the Sherry River is going well. Landowners are very positive and have a high level of understanding of environmental objectives. The planning process confirms what people already know and helps to capture this knowledge in a practical, long term plan.'



From left Andrew's Fenemor & Burton discuss farm planning with Jocelyn & Phil Riley





Nick Ledgard (left) & Dave Henley

## Wetland Trials Recommended for the Sherry

Nick Ledgard & David Henley of Scion Research are both involved in conducting planting trials alongside the Sherry River as part of the Motueka Integrated Catchment Management Project. On his last visit Nick discussed the possibility of establishing managed wetlands where side streams join the Sherry. A constructed wetland acting as filter for water draining from intensively used pasture is an option for landowners in the Sherry to consider. Such wetlands have shown potential elsewhere, are not costly and could be used by farmers wanting to improve water quality. Even better is to protect existing wetlands – these are the ‘kidneys’ of the catchment for maintaining water quality. Ideally at least 2.5% of a catchment should be in wetland.

## NZ Association of Resource Managers Conference

This year Nelson is hosting the annual NZ Association of Resource Managers (NZARM) Conference 13–15 October.

The theme of the conference is Integrated Catchment Management, a tour of the Motueka River and a visit to the Sherry River is planned on the 15th at 9.30am to view plantings at the Matariki Bridge and hear about progress made by landowners.

If you have time to come along to help answer questions a practical landowner presence will be greatly valued.

## Greens Co-leader Visit to the Sherry

Russel Norman, co-leader for the Green Party visited the Sherry River to learn how the group is tackling water quality issues his comments to our group below.

“Water quality is one of the most important issues facing our country and it is great to see practical steps being taken to clean up and protect the Sherry River. I am impressed at the community wide buy-in to the project, the stock exclusion and riparian planting and will be telling other people around the country about your efforts. You show that we can make an income and protect our natural heritage.”

Russel Norman



Paul Benseman, Russel Norman and Roy Benseman at Bavins riparian trial block, Matariki 15th August



## Is Water Quality Just Another Craze?

*As farms look to future-proof their increasingly large investment in land and infrastructure, owners are right to ask 'is water quality a real and lasting issue, or is it just an overreaction'?*

As we dig deeper, we find that; water is indeed a very real national problem and that it is being taken very seriously. The following presents key directives that will see all New Zealanders taking a long term interest in our water quality.

### Draft National Policy Statement

[www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/central/nps/freshwater-management](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/central/nps/freshwater-management)

The draft National Policy Statement on freshwater has been released for submissions by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE). This document requires councils to review regional and district plans to improve water quality and water allocation. It will require local government to reverse the decline in water quality and to adopt integrated management of land and water (ICM). It also requires Councils to undertake land-use planning to stop the adverse effects of land-use on water quality. Comments are invited on the document which can be downloaded or requested from MfE.

### Primary Sector Water Partnership

Collaboration between key primary sector organizations has resulted in the release of a draft plan of action for water. Participants in the plan includes: Federated Farmers, DairyNZ, NZ Forest Owners Association, NZ Farm Forestry Association, Horticulture NZ, Meat & Wool NZ, Irrigation NZ, Fonterra, and Fertiliser Research. The plan includes specific actions to be undertaken by each industry over the coming years to improve waterway health and is available at

<http://www.dairynz.co.nz/page/pageid/2145836756/Sustainable%20Dairying#PrimarySectorWaterPartnershipLeaderDocument>

The Sherry River is a healthy waterway supporting a thriving ecosystem. It does, however, have problems with faecal bacteria and runoff. Local landowners are undertaking farm plans and through this process will identify faecal bacteria hotspots and discuss best management practice for dealing with these. These voluntary actions will put farmers in good stead for meeting environmental deadlines set by their sector organization in the Primary Sector Water Partnership.

The Sherry River Catchment Group has shown foresight and leadership that will make a difference, congratulations to you all for this.



## New Dairy Action Team, Leader Appointed

Congratulations to Sue Brown of the Aorere Catchment Group on her new position as 'Top of the South' Dairy Action Team (DAT) chairperson.

DATs are a DairyNZ initiative through which Sue will offer leadership in promoting constructive environmental dialogue between dairy farmers and rural professionals. She will also be involved in developing a more cohesive national approach between DATs.

Through her role she hopes to share some of the lessons she has learned from her involvement in the Aorere Catchment Project. Sue has followed the progress of the Sherry River Group and believes that the support of an independent organisation like the NZ Landcare Trust is important in helping landowners to deal with water quality. She says that landowners are proud of their land and want practical, non-judgemental assistance at a catchment/community level as well as at an individual on-farm level. She thinks this is crucial to help raise understanding of impacts and to ensure environmental management choices are wise.



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**NZ Landcare Trust**  
landcare action on the ground