



Healthy Farms Healthy Rivers

NEWS

Technical experts line up to help water quality

A high-calibre group of experts has been appointed to help provide crucial information on the way forward for managing water quality in the Waikato and Waipa river catchments.

The appointments to the Technical Leaders Group (TLG) are part of the Healthy Rivers: Plan for Change/Wai Ora: He Rautaki Whakapaipai project's Technical Alliance.

The Technical Alliance will play a key role in helping the project's Collaborative Stakeholder Group come up with recommendations for the way ahead for water in the two catchments.

The Technical Alliance comprises the core TLG that will call upon a second wider group of around 80 experts, the Technical Support Group, as required.

Members of the TLG are:

- Dr Bryce Cooper, General Manager – Strategy, NIWA
- Dr Liz Wedderburn, Portfolio Leader Agriculture Policy and Maori Agribusiness Principal Scientist, AgResearch
- Mr Antoine Coffin, Principal, Boffa Miskell Limited
- Dr Graeme Doole, Associate Professor, University of Waikato
- Dr Mike Scarsbrook, Environment Policy Manager, DairyNZ
- Dr John Quinn, Principal Scientist Freshwater Ecology; Programme Leader Aquatic Rehabilitation, NIWA
- Dr Tony Petch, Group Manager, Resource Information, Waikato Regional Council.

The TLG will be chaired by Dr Cooper.

Under the Healthy Rivers/Wai Ora project, the Technical Alliance, an advisory group of specialists with a range of areas of expertise, will provide information to the Collaborative Stakeholder Group and decision makers on a proposed plan change for the Waikato and Waipa river catchments.

The Technical Alliance will deal with environmental, social, cultural and economic information about the catchments, and the consequences of different land management scenarios.

The plan change will help to restore and protect the health of the Waikato and Waipa rivers, as required by the Vision and Strategy for the rivers, and will set targets and limits for land-based activities, as required by the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.



Three generations getting the best advice on effluent design from a rural professional

Effluent Expo

Over 650 people visited Waikato Regional Council's fourth Effluent Expo at Mystery Creek in March.

Over 50 exhibitors were on show indoors and outside, and included a live display of effluent irrigators.

A range of seminars ran throughout the day, including one on farm dairy effluent storage ponds presented by Rex Corlett from Opus and Theresa Wilson from DairyNZ.

The seminar outlined two guiding principles for the design and construction of effluent ponds: 1. Keep effluent out of waterways and 2. Utilize the nutrients. The catchcry was: "Do it once, do it right".

Rex's practical, well illustrated talk showed the problems with poorly designed and constructed ponds. Contrary to popular belief, there is no such thing as a minimum storage size or a standard pond as effluent ponds must be matched to the farming system. Cow numbers, feed or loafing pad, effluent irrigation system and many other aspects of the farm need to be considered. Rex recommended getting good professional technical advice due to the complexities.

Theresa talked about siting the pond well away from waterways and dwellings. Consideration needs to be given to odours. Effluent solids cause odours when a pond goes anaerobic and releases hydrogen sulphide. She advised keeping solids out of the pond. If this is not possible aeration and daily dosing of lime can help with nuisance odours.

A new perspective on cleaning drains

NIWA have been researching how to best reduce the impact of drain cleaning on water quality.

Drain cleaning can release large amounts of sediment and phosphorus and affect waterways downstream.

Planting trees next to drains creates shade and reduces vegetation growth, and also the need for regular cleaning.

NIWA's recent research work in the Waituna catchment has focused on reshaping drains to lessen the risk of bank erosion. A two-to-one slope can achieve this.

NIWA are also trialling clearing half the length of a drain at a time. They are interested to find out if the uncleared section will filter out any sediment and nutrients released during drain cleaning.

They are also investigating whether raking weeds, rather than using diggers with buckets, will prevent the shape of the drain changing.

It is worth remembering that many drains on farms in the Waikato region are modified streams. While removing vegetation

from these streams is a permitted activity, other work on modified streams needs a resource consent. For more information about work on modified streams call 0800 800 402.



A waterway filtering sediment

Dairy shed water consents

Dairy farmers are reminded to get their consent applications for dairy shed water in by the end of this year.

Applications are due by 1 January 2015. After this date it will be more difficult and costly to obtain consent, with no guarantee of water.

You can submit your application anytime before 1 January 2015.

Water consent forms are available at www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/watertakes or on freephone 0800 800 401.

If you have any questions email farmwater@waikatoregion.govt.nz or freephone 0800 800 402.

Introducing two new team members



Jon Palmer **Sustainable Agriculture** **Advisor, Upper Waikato**

Jon joined the Healthy Farms Healthy Rivers team in early 2014, replacing Ross Abercrombie. His main focus is on working with primary sector partners to prepare farmers in the catchment for working within future limits and targets.

At present he is working on a study of dairy support systems to understand their footprint and how it can be managed and a Ministry of Primary Industries drystock joint venture study examining the economic impacts of farming to limits in the drystock sector.

He is also supporting the Healthy Rivers: Plan for Change/Wai Ora: He Rautaki Whakapaipai project's Collaborative Stakeholder Group as they come to grips with the task of recommending water quality solutions for the Waikato and Waipa river catchments.

Jon is married and has two small children. In his spare time he enjoys mountain biking, cycling, fishing, tramping and sharing adventures with his family.

John Vosper **Sustainable Agriculture** **Advisor, Waipa**

John has recently joined the team to work in the Waipa catchment.

John is focusing on preparing the Waipa catchment's farming community for working within limits. This is similar to the Healthy Farms Healthy Rivers

team's work in the Upper Waikato. However in the Waipa the issues are primarily related to erosion and sediment.

John has a strong background in dairy farming systems, having worked for DairyNZ and as a dairy farmer for many years. When John is not milking cows on the weekend he is cycling and kayaking.

