



Catchment Group Story

Canterbury/Waitaha | JANUARY 2025



Wairewa Mahinga Kai Catchment Group

Te Roto o Wairewa/Lake Forsyth, Little River, Banks Peninsula, Canterbury

The Wairewa Mahinga Kai Catchment Group (WMKCG) is made up of 20 landowners who live in the Te Roto o Wairewa catchment, Little River, Banks Peninsula. WMKCG is focussed on promoting sustainable land use, improving water quality, and building upon the progress already achieved in the Te Roto o Wairewa catchment.

All rivers in the catchment flow into Te Roto o Wairewa/Lake Forsyth. The lake catchment is of great significance as it is regarded as the central food basket of Ngāi Tahu in the Waitaha/Canterbury region.

Wairewa Rūnanga are members of the WMKCG, and with Te Roto o Wairewa catchment being part of the takiwā this means they can work collaboratively. Wairewa Rūnanga is leading several mana whenua-driven initiatives within the catchment, one which involves collaborating with the University of Canterbury on the development of a catchment model.





EOS Ecology has been incredible in supporting the WMKCG's efforts to establish a water monitoring programme. The guidance, training, and ongoing support they have provided have been invaluable to our success. We truly appreciate their dedication and expertise in helping us achieve our goals.

TRACEY WRIGHT – WMKCG Coordinator



Building a Clearer Picture of Te Roto o Wairewa Catchment



Monitoring for a Better Understanding

The group is currently focused on understanding their catchment to inform on-the-ground mitigation measures.

There are three temporary Christchurch City Council stormwater sampling sites around the Little River township, and three long-term Environment Canterbury surface water quality monitoring sites at lower Okuti River, Okana River, and Te Roto o Wairewa.

Environment Canterbury data shows that phosphorus, *E. coli*, and sediment are the dominant contaminants in this catchment. However, they can't yet determine which parts of the catchment contribute most to contamination, making it difficult for the group to focus mitigation efforts.

Furthermore, there are no water quality monitoring sites for the Western, Puaha, and Upper Okuti subcatchments, and therefore, the group strives to better understand sediment, nutrient, and bacterial loads from these areas.



Water Quality Monitoring Plan

Since the group's formation in August 2023, they have been awarded funding from the Banks Peninsula Water Zone Committee, which has supported three water quality sampling rounds in 2024.

The group has developed a three-year Water Quality Monitoring Plan, guided by EOS Ecology's 'Wai Connection – Tātai Ki Te Wai' project, using the nationally derived Community-Based Monitoring Quality Assurance Framework. Collecting water quality data will help guide the group and empower key stakeholders to allocate resources effectively, and make informed decisions.

In November 2024, the group was awarded funding from the Waitaha Action to Impact Fund to support water quality sampling for another year (2025).



September 2024 – Water quality monitoring workshop. The group was taught how to take laboratory samples, along with the importance and methods of recording relevant metadata. A follow-up presentation taught the basics of data interpretation and water quality guideline values.

December 2024 – Water quality and habitat workshop. This time, the group learned to use the nationally derived Community-Based Monitoring Survey123 forms, and how to conduct their annual stream habitat survey. Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust (BPCT) attended to ensure continuity post the 'Wai Connection' project, and they are providing a data portal to help the group to easily visualise their data.

December 2024 – Banks Peninsula Water Zone Committee (BPWZC) field trip. The BPWZC organised a field trip around the catchment. The trip included talks from Wairewa Rūnanga about Te Roto o Wairewa, the WMKCG chair on current issues, and EOS Ecology on the Water Quality Monitoring Plan.

Next Steps

- » WMKCG will receive a Focus Catchment Map Series in early 2025 under the 'Wai Connection' project, to help further their knowledge of the catchment.
- » Farm Biodiversity advisors from BPCT will continue with biodiversity surveys on some of the WMKCG members land.
- » Rural Coach will continue their work in early 2025 with the group on developing their values, visions and strategic planning to ensure succession into the future.
- » WMKCG will implement mitigations measures for known erosion issues, recognising the potential effect this is having on Te Roto o Wairewa.



The Group would like to thank all their supporters, including New Zealand Landcare Trust and Environment Canterbury, who have assisted them in getting off the ground and providing valuable knowledge and assistance to allow them to continue. A huge thanks to the funding they have received so far. The Group hope to continue to receive funding to allow them to carry on looking after this special catchment.


To learn more about the project, or how 'Wai Connection – Tatai Ki Te Wai' is contributing, please contact:

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