

# Catchment Group Story

Tasman/Aorere | OCTOBER 2024

## Manawhenua Ki Mohua

Mohua/Golden Bay Catchment, Waitapu

Manawhenua ki Mohua (MKM) is an umbrella entity representing three Iwi living within the Mohua/Golden Bay catchment and Kahurangi National Park:

- » Ngāti Tama
- » Ngāti Rārua
- » Te Ātiawa.

MKM is made up of whānau who whakapapa to Mohua, and includes a representative from each of the three Iwi Trusts. The group's mission is to uphold the cultural, spiritual, and environmental integrity of Mohua for past, present, and future generations.

MKM seeks to:

- » Protect and preserve Mohua's natural and cultural heritage.
- » Ensure that the mana, wairua, and mauri of important sites like Waikoropupū Springs are maintained for future generations.
- » Foster connections between people and the environment, promoting stewardship of the region.





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This was an incredible opportunity for my whanau to connect to this beautiful place. To be able to do this snorkel activity with my kids was very special. They have never snorkelled in a river before.



# Waitapu Community Guided Drift Snorkel Event

The Waitapu Community Guided Drift Snorkel event was an outstanding collaboration between Tasman Bay Guardians (TBG) and MKM. It aimed to educate the community about the health of the awa, and raise awareness of its cultural significance site under the Waitapu Bridge (adjacent to the Tākaka River) through a fun and engaging activity. This experience fostered connections between people and te taiao, bringing the community together.



## Cultural Significance

The event began with a karakia led by Syd Eru (TBG), setting the scene on a sunny, crisp morning. Local kaumatua shared stories of the tūpuna collecting mahinga kai, and explained the sacred connection to the Waikoropupū Springs, which feeds into the Waitapu awa.

These waters, known for their remarkable clarity (63 m) and healing properties, are considered a taonga for kaitiaki, Manawhenua ki Mohua. Upholding this sacred site's mana, wairua, and mauri ensures its integrity and healing properties are preserved for future generations. The stories shared by Mairangi Reiher helped deepen participants' appreciation for the river's significance and natural beauty.



## Snorkelling Experience

The event crew was well-prepared and relaxed as participants began to arrive. After a safety briefing and snorkelling instructions, families were fitted with their equipment and eagerly got into the awa, despite the chilly water. Participants explored the clear waters and were surprised at the underwater native forest, while others were focused on practising their duck dives. The tamariki were especially enthralled by the experience, and were reluctant to get out of the water at the end of the drift dive.

By providing safety, knowledge, and equipment, the event allowed participants to experience the awa in a unique and exciting way.



## Other Activities

Participants warmed up with sausages from the BBQ before exploring additional activities offered at the event.

Key educational activities:

- » Ngaire emphasised the importance of the 'Check, Clean, Dry' method to prevent the spread of pests between waterways.
- » Mel (TBG) helped participants identify local fish and macroinvertebrates.
- » Vicki (TBG) taught attendees how to spot invasive weeds.
- » Department of Conservation (DOC) shared current Whitebait regulations.

The community group Keeping Golden Bay Beautiful also involved participants in releasing trees at their culturally significant planting site along the river. The event boosted volunteer participation in the group's ongoing efforts.



## Previous Motueka Drift Snorkelling Event

The Waitapu event followed the success of another drift snorkelling event at the Motueka awa: The Motueka Catchment Collective Drift Dive. This event was a collaboration between the Motueka Catchment Collective, Tasman Environmental Trust, NZ Landcare Trust, NZ Fish & Game, Check Clean Dry, and DOC.

Participants enjoyed not only the snorkelling, but a range of activities, including:

- » invertebrate identification
- » trout counting.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many commenting on the novelty of snorkelling in a river – an opportunity made possible by the gear and know-how provided by the event organisers.



# Next Steps



Both days were a success, leaving participants with a sense of connection to their local rivers and a deeper understanding of the aquatic life beneath the surface. Participants gained insight into the importance of caring for the entire catchment, recognising the interconnectedness of river health and surrounding ecosystems.

Following the success of the drift snorkelling events, MKM is eager to:

- » Collaborate on four īnanga (whitebait) sites to further protect and restore these vital habitats.
- » Engage local schools in educational activities, helping to raise awareness among rangatahi about the importance of environmental stewardship.
- » Continue working closely with Tasman Bay Guardians and community groups to run more successful events and monitor river health.



To learn more about Manawhenua ki Mohua, or how 'Wai Connection – Tatai Ki Te Wai' is supporting them, please contact:

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