



# Catchment Group Stories

Nelson/Whakatū | JULY 2024



## Maitai Catchment

Located in the Whakatū/Nelson region on the northern coast of New Zealand's South Island, the Maitai Catchment is known for its stunning natural beauty. The Maitai River meanders through native forests, scenic valleys, and the vibrant city of Nelson, creating a diverse landscape that supports rich biodiversity. This area is celebrated for its recreational opportunities and the strong sense of community among its residents.

### Collaborative Conservation: Protecting the Maitai Catchment Together

Currently, in the Maitai Catchment, there is one well-established catchment group called Friends of the Maitai, one established community group called Friends of the Haven, and many interested groups that have approached the Tasman Bay Guardians (TBG), a provider organisation of the 'Wai Connection – Tatai Ki Te Wai' project, to help them either form a community group or learn more about water monitoring and start monthly monitoring.





**PHOTO CAPTIONS – Front page:** Maitai River at the Collingwood Bridge, Nelson. **This page:** 1. Rosalie, Tasman Bay Guardians (TBG), with Steve, Friends of the Maitai, looking for inanga eggs. 2. Rick, TBG, manning the macroinvertebrate station at The Brook Waimarama Sanctuary community open day. 3. Friends of the Maitai looking at macroinvertebrates. 4. Frozen inanga eggs, Maitai River. 5. Friends of the Maitai doing eDNA testing at Clutha Bridge Site on the Maitai River. 6. The Brook Waimarama Sanctuary community open day, macroinvertebrate station. 7. Nelson Intermediate School – seed collection training at The Brook Waimarama Sanctuary. **Back page:** 8. Brook Stream, Brook Park. 9. Thalassa, Kiara, Vicki and Rick – Tasman Bay Guardians.

# Maitai Catchment & Community Groups

## Friends of the Maitai

The Friends of the Maitai conduct monthly monitoring at two sites, organise regular tree planting and maintenance days, and advocate for regulatory changes, specifically around forestry practices and harvesting methods. They always welcome extra support. To date, Tasman Bay Guardians have helped them with environmental DNA (eDNA) testing of the Maitai River. The aim is to deepen their knowledge and expand their impact, building on 20 years of collected data.

To ensure they provided the best information possible, Tasman Bay Guardians contacted Access to Experts (A2E) for advice on collating and interpreting the collected data.

The group is also interested in their local īnanga site. They are interested in holding an event to build broader local interest and awareness of that site. Members visited the last known spawning site in May (the last official egg survey was in 2015), and amazingly, īnanga eggs were found in the same spot as nine years ago. They also undertook a habitat assessment survey, finding the site needs restoration, likely degraded due to the August 2022 flooding event. Plans are underway to collaborate with the council and Friends of the Maitai for the next spawning season.



## Nelson Intermediate School

Nelson Intermediate School is currently undertaking the Nurseries in Schools programme with Tasman Bay Guardians. They are helping the school reach its goal of creating a sustainable community nursery that will service the catchment with native, eco-sourced plants for years to come. The school has a stream running through its property, inspiring them to improve the water quality of their catchment.

After a visit to The Brook Waimarama Sanctuary, students learned to eco-source seeds, and special permission was granted to collect seeds. They learned to prepare and propagate those seeds with Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology. The next stages include learning potting skills and nurturing seedlings for planting. Tasman Bay Guardians will then connect them to a planting project in the catchment, teaching tips for successful regenerative native planting. The school also plans to start monthly monitoring of their stream next term. This project has been a wonderful collaboration of many organisations in the Nelson region, inspiring today's youth to create a brighter tomorrow.



## Friends of the Haven

Tasman Bay Guardians is collaborating with the longstanding Friends of the Haven community group. For the second consecutive year, they have generously allocated funds to an **Experiencing Marine Reserves** ([www.emr.org.nz](http://www.emr.org.nz)) or **Love Rimurimu** ([www.loverimurimu.org](http://www.loverimurimu.org)) school delivery.

Tasman Bay Guardians are humbled to be given the opportunity to pass on their knowledge to the next generation to ensure water quality is looked after from the mountains to the sea. Through the development of the Love Rimurimu project, Tasman Bay Guardians aims to link a local school or community to a restoration project or monitoring program. In partnership with Cawthron and mana whenua, they are exploring the possibilities around seagrass beds in the Haven.



## The Brook Waimarama Sanctuary

The Brook Waimarama Sanctuary held a free open day for the local community this summer. Tasman Bay Guardians showcased water quality testing in the pristine waters of the upper catchment of the Brook Stream. Over 1,400 people attended, showing that interest in water monitoring is high among the general public, with macroinvertebrates being the family favourite. Watching adults and children discover the magic of tiny aquatic life was a privilege for the team. Tasman Bay Guardians learned the need for more staff to collect interested people's details for future group formation.

Tasman Bay Guardians later collaborated with Nelson City Council to hold a community event below the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary called 'Backyard Brook,' showcasing water quality testing again. The event was well attended by people who lived near Brook Park, with activities like water-themed art and an interactive eel migration game. Locals tried different testing equipment, with macroinvertebrates being the most popular station. They were enthused to see the variety of creatures living in their local awa. Twelve people expressed interest in forming a monitoring group. Tasman Bay Guardians plans to hold a workshop in June to take them through SHMAK training, help build a monitoring plan, and set up a site on NZ Water Citizens to record their data.



SHMAK training involves educating participants on how to use the Stream Health Monitoring and Assessment Kit effectively. It includes hands-on sessions on measuring water quality, identifying aquatic life, and assessing habitat conditions.



# Next Steps

**Tasman Bay Guardians** (Nelson/Tasman/Marlborough region project providers for ‘Wai Connection’) support and build community engagement by working with catchment and community groups, local council, schools and the general public to promote environmental care and sustainable practices across the Maitai Catchment.



Future events and initiatives include:



## SHMAK Training for ‘New’ Brook Community Group (June)

A workshop is planned to take the group through SHMAK training, help build a monitoring plan, and set up a site on NZ water citizens to record their data.



## Spotlight Event at The Brook Waimarama Sanctuary (July)

Nayland Primary will create freshwater-themed lamps for the pathway. The event aims to engage the public and build on knowledge shared with catchment groups.



## Nelson Central School

After participating in the Whitebait Connection programme, the school is interested in monthly monitoring. Tasman Bay Guardians will train staff and help secure funding for a SHMAK kit.

To learn more about the catchment/community groups featured in this story, or how ‘Wai Connection – Tatai Ki Te Wai’ is supporting them in the Nelson Region, please contact:

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