

Thomsons Catchment Project

NEWSLETTER from the Thomsons Catchment Committee

December 2022

There's been a lot happening in the Manuherekia!

We wanted to update you about what's been happening in the Thomsons catchment with the plans for a constructed wetland and fencing. Also we had our first planting day and a project launch event with Aquavan in October this year!

The Thomsons Catchment Project is a Manuherekia Catchment Exemplar Project and is farmer led to improve water quality in the catchment. It is being funded by the Ministry for the Environment and Jobs for Nature.



Our first planting day was Friday the 9th of September. We planted 620 carex secta with hands-on help through Jobs for Nature, community members, Thomsons Catchment Committee, farmers, Ben Sowry from Fish and Game Otago and the Fonterra Otago -Southland Sustainable Dairying Team. A big thanks to Glen Riley's Habitat Restoration team and Shelley Maccormick for the professional planting skills. Looking forward to our next planting day.



Our “What’s Happening in the Manuhereikia? event saw the official launch of the Thomsons Catchment Project in October this year.

The focus of the event was the exploration of the connection between the catchment and the sea with fun activities. Omakau and Poolburn school kids were at the creekside during the day doing water testing and electric fishing with Fish & Game, Department of Conservation and Otago Regional Council representatives. Aquavan educators from Otago University Marine Studies Centre had fun learning activities with marine tanks and touch tanks. Enviroschools staff also did an amazing session on invertebrates/bugs found in the creek. A lot of fun was had!!!



In the evening over 50 community members came along to the Omakau rugby rooms to enjoy the aquavan marine and touch tanks, see displays from local catchment areas including Ida Valley and Ben Gillespie’s native plants stall. The Otago Catchment Committee, Fish and Game Otago, ORC, DoC and Manuhereikia Catchment Group were there to share and support. There was also a plant naming competition with seeds being offered for planting from the old local Kowhai tree . Native fish caught through electric fishing during the day were put into tanks for the evening displays (including galaxiids and an eel). Omakau District Lions and Mr Whippy satisfied our tummies with a great BBQ and icecreams! What a great atmosphere with the event being enjoyed by all.





Update on wetland works

We are building a 5ha constructed wetland at the bottom of the sluice channel catchment which runs into Thomsons creek. This will capture sediment and reduce nutrients getting to Thomsons creek. The site is adjacent to the rail trail just south of Omakau. We have received the first consents which

enables us to prepare the wetland site by draining some artificial duck ponds, removing old crack willow and gravel build up. This work is happening over summer. New signage including maps is now in place on the Central Otago rail trail to keep people informed of the project.

Fencing and planting grants

A fencing grant was also obtained for fencing materials to fence off waterways, and native planting on the waterways. Fencing work is planned for next year and the planting of carex secta in the winter. Haines Battrick is co-ordinating this work. If you are a farmer in Thomsons creek catchment give Haines a call on Ph 021448001.

Monthly water testing in the creek with Omakau primary school kids and the Enviroschools educator.



Central Otago Reap Enviroschools is very happy to be supporting Omakau School and their community in their sustainability journey. Omakau School celebrated their Bronze Enviroschools reflection this year, and has many ongoing plans for action learning in their local environment. Contributing to the wetland project is one of these actions. The year seven and eight students have been taking turns coming out into the catchment to take water samples a couple of times a term this year. They have learned the importance of keeping the bottles and lids sterile and having the fun of chucking stones and sticks into the water only after taking the samples!

These results are helping us track the improvements in water quality the new wetland will provide. Keep an eye out next year - once we have a few more results there will be an opportunity to share the results with the community.



And spotted near Thomsons Gorge...

Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year!

Thanks to everyone who helped get this project underway. We couldn't have done it without you.

We welcome you to contact us to have a chat about the project and we are happy to share about the process! Check out our facebook page below. We will let you know of the progress and next stages!

Thomsons Catchment Project Committee: Hamish Stratford, Anna Gillespie, Mark Groundwater, Elliot Morgan, Roger Williams, Jan Manson, Ro McDiarmid, Andrew Paterson, Nicola McGrouther, Haines Battrick, Fiona Kissel.

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