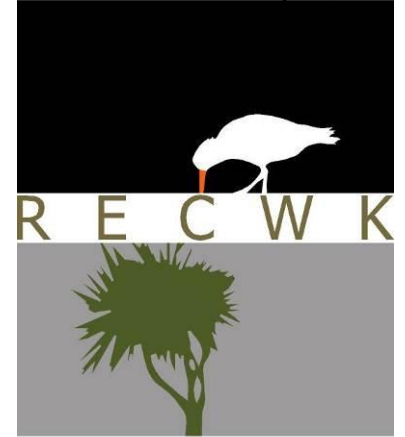


River Estuary Watch

River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti – Karitane

FEBRUARY 2015

River - Estuary Care



Waikouaiti - Karitane

Many Hands

The second Volunteer Week of the year (2014) took place 26-29 September. The David and Sarah Smith family of Mt. Watkins Farm invited the Volunteers out for a day of planting on 27 September. As we assured any and all, the day was one of beautiful weather.

Being the north branch of the Waikouaiti River this was the farthest inland that REC WK has been able to plant. This is a seriously lovely area of Otago. The Smiths and their extended family did a marvelous job of preparing for the day. Native plants were ready, tools were plenty, and 120 willing hands 'dug in' thanks to participation of the volunteers, friends, and families. Ages ranged more than 70 years assuring likewise a full range of conversations and behaviors of varying quality.

Under the banner 'Feed them and they will come' a bountiful and salubrious repast was 'laid on' at noon by the hosts. Such quality provided and such quantity consumed briefly raised the specter that the well-fed masses might find some difficulty in resuming afternoon activity of a productive nature. Rousing speeches - reminders of the intent of the exercise (along with some not so subtle prods) - soon had all 60 participants seeming to challenge even their morning's achievements. Proof was soon to come as mid-afternoon activity came to a close. Approximately 1700 plants had found a new home. What a wonderful and enjoyable effort was made by all. We offer our sincere thanks to Sarah and David Smith and family. Likewise to the Volunteers and all other participants we offer our sincere thanks.

Truly "Many hands make light work"

Joel A. Vanderburg

Habitat Restoration Project



Waikouaiti Mātaitai Update

Background

In early 2014 an application for a Mātaitai was launched, due to concerns for the survival of the Long-finned eel and the Short-finned eel populations in the Waikouaiti River .

Kāti Huirapa Runaka Ki Puketeraki was the applicant on behalf of the East Otago community.

Mātaitai allow Local people to manage their fishery.

Mātaitai do not allow commercial fishing.

The Waikouaiti Mātaitai will encompass the river from the confluence of the north and south branches downstream to the mouth and associated wetlands, but excluding the Fishermen's Wharf - 8 km in total length.

Having gone through the public submission process and public meeting consultation, the application has now been given to the Minister of Fisheries for his final decision.

If the application is successful, a management committee will be formed.

This committee will work with River Estuary Care Waikouaiti/Karitane and the East Otago Taiāpure Management Committee to support the continuing great work preserving the biodiversity of our river, our estuary and our coast.

The Application has the support of the Commercial Eel Fishers, and it is hoped that we will also be able to further support the land owners in their efforts to improve the quality of the water in our river.

While overfishing is a major contributor to the decline of eels world-wide, the destruction of habitat is probably a greater threat to this species [this goes for whitebait as well]. It is quite likely, then, that much of the initial work in the Mātaitai will be in enhancing the spawning and living areas for our fresh water fishes so that we end up with a healthy local stock that will continue thrive and meet the ever changing needs of our community.

It is expected that the Minister will find no grounds to refuse the application for the Waikouaiti Mātaitai and therefore we hope that we will hear of his decision before very long and look forward to adding another layer of protection to our small, yet very important, river.

—Brendan Flack

Ki Uta Ki Tai: From the Mountains to the Sea Volunteer Week, May 2015 (3 nights)

Volunteer opportunities with coastal community groups of Karitane and Waikouaiti working in conservation, habitat restoration and fisheries management.

Work with local projects of River-Estuary Care: Waikouaiti-Karitane, East Otago Taiapure, Hawksbury Lagoon Group, and Kati Huirapa Runaka (a short distance north of Dunedin in Coastal Otago). There will be opportunities to help with planting and maintenance of native habitat restoration areas, participate in current research work, organise and develop educational materials, etc.

Explore the lower Waikouaiti River Catchment area (hikes, waka ama paddling, traditional harekeke weaving workshop, stand up paddle board, kayak). Activities offered free by community in appreciation for your help.

If you are interested contact chanel.phillips@otago.ac.nz to put your name down and she will contact you with further information and finalised dates closer to the time.

Whites' aerial photo



Do you know of any aerial photos or historic maps of the Waikouaiti River catchment and estuary? We are hoping to be better informed for habitat restoration efforts and would like to do a proper survey of "what was" and "what could be".

Please let me know: Patti Vanderburg vburch@es.co.nz or 03 465 8113

East Otago Taiapure Research Evening

East Otago Taiapure Research Evening marks 6th year Otago students report local science finds back to the Community

Every year for 6 years running there has been a real buzz at the Puketeraki Marae as Marine Science students present concise versions of substantial research undertaken in our area. About 60 people attended this year's event - lots of locals, field supervisors who saw the students through the ups and downs of independent research, friends and family (Nam's parents came all the way from Fiji!).

The work presented was very impressive.

Matt Desmond has been doing postgraduate research in our area for several years and is currently a PhD candidate looking at the changing light environment and its effect on coastal productivity. He is comparing light available to kelp forests off Stewart Island and off Karitane. He is finding the kelp forests off Stewart Island have more than twice the light available (and 2-5 times more macroalgae) than the kelp forests off our local shores. The reduced light here may be due to sediment from land based activities.

Local student, Nicole Foote, is completing her Masters degree studying the characteristics of East Otago estuaries along a gradient of marine connectivity.

Moyna Muller, a PhD student in geology learned about the sophisticated systems of why whales strand themselves.

We learned of Georgia Moana Bell's continuing Masters study of the dynamics of rainfall induced fecal contamination in the Waikouaiti River estuary. Her field and lab studies should point to specific animal/human species for contaminants.

Namrata Chand, undergraduate student, reported on a team project from an Aquaculture & Fisheries paper looking at the physical and biological characteristics of the Waikouaiti & Pleasant River estuaries. This "snap shot" study will lead to future in depth studies of threats, human-based activities and pollutants.

Perry Subrintzky's Masters study looked at juvenile pua habitat in the East Otago Taiapure and he is going on to work in local fisheries management training.

Daniel Pritchard of Toitu te Whenua showcased the Marine Cultural Health Index (MCHI) and signalled the development of the State of the Takiwa 3.0 website, tools and monitoring.

After these presentations everyone had a chance to meet and discuss the findings with the students while having a wonderful supper. This yearly event moves from strength to strength and continues to amaze all of us. Students are thrilled that we are genuinely interested in their work and locals benefit from getting better informed about our natural world. The solid footing of local knowledge paired with academic research prepares us all for informed decision making, solid projects and future challenges.

Patti Vanderburg

Information/Education/Advocacy Project



Namrata Chand holding an eel from the Waikouaiti Estuary during surveys conducted on a University of Otago Aquaculture and Fisheries Fieldcourse 2014.



The University of Otago research vessel Beryl Brewin during surveys and tagging of reef fish in the East Otago Taiapure. Pictured Left to right, Stewart Bell (University of Otago), Gaya Gnanalingam (University of Otago, MSc student) and Joe Wakefield (Toitu Te Whenua, Ngai Tahu).



Cockle surveys in the Waikouaiti Estuary on a University of Otago Aquaculture and Fisheries Fieldcourse.

Old fish works demolished



As part of recent repairs to Coast Rd, the remains of the old shed on the wharf have been dismantled. The shed was initially a wool and wheat store but was used as a fish factory from the 1950s to the late 1960s.

Work was supervised by a representative from Historic Places Trust and the original piles were retained.

New Year's Eve Raft Race 2014







<p>To become a friend of the River and Estuary Care: Waikouaiti—Karitane</p>	<p>Phone or email Brad – 03 4658334 or brad126@xtra.co.nz</p>
<p>Should you wish to kindly make a donation</p>	<p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enter our name: Waikouaiti-Karitane Rivercare Group Inc) (this will appear on your statement) ▪ Enter our bank account number 060942 0190792 00 ▪ Enter your name and reason for payment e.g. donation to friend of Waikouaiti-Karitane Rivercare Group (Inc) (this will appear on our statement) <p>or post donation to 1333 Coast Rd Karitane</p>

River-Estuary Care Waikouaiti - Karitane

Active since 1999 – Incorporated in 2001

Coastal Otago Conservation Award for 2005

Objectives

- To restore balance to Papatuanuku (Mother Earth).
- To have a well informed community about our river and estuary.
- To have our community participating in sustainable resource practices.
- To have a healthy, productive river and estuary ecosystem (fishing, biodiversity, general health).
- To promote an understanding of the inter-relatedness of our river and estuary ecosystem with adjacent ecosystems.

Anyone interested in supporting the above objectives may join!

Would you like to help with a project this year? Then contact

- Newsletter – Hilary Yeoman ph 465 7687.
- Revegetation project – contact Andy Barratt ph 021 890 048.
- Education, information and advocacy project – contact Patti Vanderburg ph 465 8113.
- Birdwatching – contact current convener Allan Kilner, phone 465 8411.

Produced with assistance from the Otago Regional Council

