

water

• for the

waimea

basin

Newsletter 1 • January 2005

What is the future for water in the Waimea Basin?

This is an extremely important question that the Waimea Water Augmentation Committee (WWAC) is attempting to answer by undertaking feasibility studies into water augmentation for the area. The Waimea Water Augmentation Committee represents irrigator interests in the Waimea Plains but also has representation from Tasman District Council, Nelson City Council, Fish & Game Council, Department of Conservation and local iwi.

This project has obtained a Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) grant of \$240,000 representing 50% of the cash cost of the project over three years. Irrigators from the Waimea Plains including the Waimea East Irrigation

Scheme, Tasman District Council and the Fish & Game Council are meeting the other 50% of the cash cost.

The project's key aim is to complete a holistic study into the feasibility of storing water in the upper parts of the Wairoa/Lee catchments that would then be used to enhance or augment the amount of water available down stream on the Waimea Plains.

More water would certainly have benefits downstream for irrigation, environmental, community and aesthetic factors, and this project will look at the best and most cost efficient way these can be achieved.

Below: Looking out over the Waimea Plains toward Motueka.



Why do we need water augmentation?

Historically the Waimea Basin has been short of water because there's not enough to meet all demand (i.e. irrigation, urban and industrial supply). The most recent studies carried out by Tasman District Council shows water resources to be over-allocated by 22% in drought conditions.

At the moment around 3700 hectares of land has water permits for irrigation, but a further 1500 hectares could be irrigated if more water was available. With continuing growth in the district there is increasing demand for water supply to the towns and to industry as well.

All water users have had to cope with severe water restrictions over the last few years during dry seasons. This has not only caused significant production cutbacks for irrigated crops leading to economic loss, but also affected the important environmental values of the Wairoa/Waimea Rivers and the coastal springs that

are highly valued by the community and local iwi.

Another serious threat facing the area is the possible infiltration of seawater into the coastal margins and into aquifers that are used for water supply and irrigation. Should seawater make its way into the aquifer it would obviously have a devastating effect for irrigators and all water users.

Drawing off water, both from groundwater and the river has a significant detrimental effect on the low flows of the river. The Wairoa/Waimea Rivers are the water sources that recharge the aquifers supplying irrigation and urban water to the Waimea Plains and Richmond urban area.

This feasibility study will provide the community with the necessary information to make an informed decision on whether or not to proceed with planning for water storage.

Project progress

WWAC completed a detailed brief about what is required for the feasibility project and it was sent out to a range of consultants and service providers in early September 2004. Close-off date for the project proposal was 22 October 2004. WWAC received five proposals to carry out the work and two were short-listed. Those involved were interviewed by WWAC and after detailed consideration the project was awarded in mid November 2004, to a consortium led by Tonkin & Taylor Limited.

Tonkin & Taylor have considerable experience in the water resource engineering area and also have a local office in Nelson.

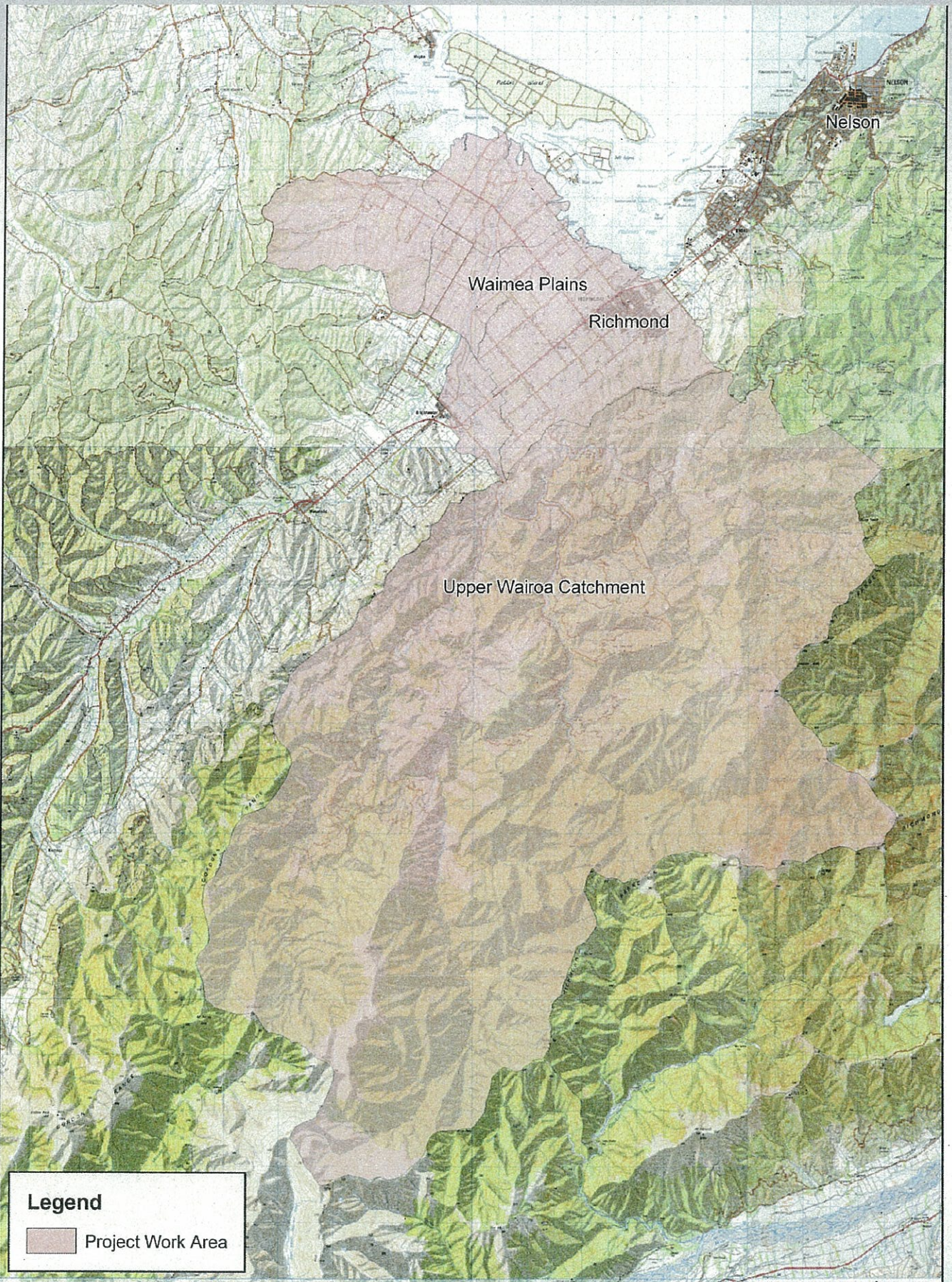
The consortium is made up of other local resources, including the expertise of the Cawthron Institute's local freshwater ecosystem specialist, John Bealing of AgFirst consultants who has considerable experience with local soils/irrigation and Dr Mike Johnston, a local geologist with considerable experience in local geology and seismicity. Local iwi will also be involved in carrying out a Cultural Impact Assessment as part of the study.

Work started as of early December 2004. WWAC intends to publish twice yearly newsletters on progress and milestones achieved which will be sent to all water users and interested parties.



Above: The Waimea River at the Appleby Bridge in flow (left) and suffering the results of no flow during drought (right).

Sourced from Land Information New Zealand data. Crown Copyright reserved. Aerial photography copyright Terralink International Limited. Rural Imagery flown December 2000 - April 2000, Urban Imagery flown January 2003. The information on this map is prepared for indicative use only and is not intended for definitive legal, location or formal reference purposes.

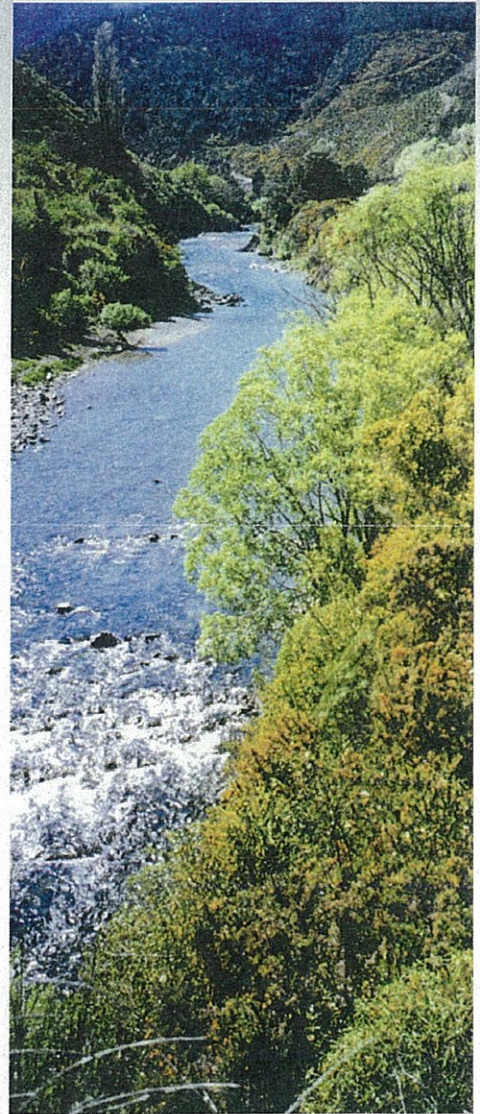


Attachment 1: Map 1 – Project Work Area Feasibility Study: Water Augmentation for the Waimea Plains

Collaborative players in the project

The ESR (Institute of Environmental Science and Research) research team are working in partnership with the Waimea Water Augmentation Committee and Tasman District Council to understand and document community values associated with the river and aquifer systems in the Waimea Basin.

The results of this work will be incorporated into the feasibility study in two ways – firstly through a report for WWAC which is due in March 2005, and secondly, through ongoing communication with the contractors carrying out the Feasibility Study to ensure all stakeholder groups have been included and consulted.



You are invited to share your views and experiences of the Waimea water in a variety of community consultation opportunities

Water permit holders are invited to a workshop to be held on **Wednesday 26 January 2005** in the Meeting Room at Seifrieds Vineyard, off Redwood Road at 7.00 pm.

There will be a further workshop for people representing other interests on **Thursday 27 January 2005** in the Meeting Room at Seifrieds Vineyard, off Redwood Road at 7.00 pm.

To attend either of the workshops please contact Ann Winstanley by Friday 7 January 2005.

If you wish to take part in the family survey or have your views recorded for inclusion in the report please contact Ann Winstanley or give your contact details to any of the committee members and one of the ESR research team will contact you.

Email ann.winstanley@esr.cri.nz

Phone 03 351 6019 or 03 352 0303

27 Creyke Road, Ilam, PO Box 29-181, Christchurch

Please contact your local zone representatives or the Project Manager if you want any further information.

The Waimea Water Augmentation Committee

Murray King (<i>Chairman</i>)	03 544 8465
Dennis Cassidy (<i>Delta Zone</i>)	03 544 2852
Kit Maling (<i>Waimea East Irrigation Co</i>)	03 544 0536
Stephen Sutton (<i>Waimea West</i>)	03 544 4026
David Easton (<i>Upper Confined Aquifer</i>)	03 526 6854
Julian Raine (<i>Golden Hills/Hope Aquifer</i>)	03 547 5338
Barney Thomas (<i>Nelson iwi</i>)	03 547 4934
Cr Tim King (<i>Tasman District Council</i>)	03 542 3849
Cr Richard Kempthorne (<i>Tasman District Council</i>)	03 544 8082
Peter Thomson (<i>Tasman District Council</i>)	03 543 8440
Neil Deans (<i>Fish and Game</i>)	03 544 6382
Dave Plant (<i>NCC</i>)	03 546 0267
Martin Heine (<i>DOC</i>)	03 546 9335

Project Manager – Joseph Thomas (Tasman District Council)

Phone 03 543 8494, fax 03 543 9524, email joseph.thomas@tdc.govt.nz