

Helping nature at Whangawehi

EFFORTS to preserve and restore the Whangawehi catchment gained momentum with two new groups recruited and a workshop held recently.

The Whangawehi Catchment Group Inc's latest milestone was having two new members sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Grandy Lake Forest's Ken Osbourne and the Taharoa Trust's representatives Pat and Sue O'Brien have joined the shared management of the Whangawehi Catchment.

Other members of the group include the Wairoa District Council, Hawke's Bay Regional Council, Kaiuku Marae trustees representing Mahia tangata whenua, maraees from Tuahuru and Ruawhara and other landowners in the catchment.

The catchment group was formed in 2011 following the resource consent application process for a waste water treatment plant now under construction.

A shared concern to minimise the impact from the wastewater scheme on the historical, recreational and ecological values of the Whangawehi catchment saw an MoU signed in July 2011.

Tuahuru Marae hosted the first water monitoring workshop last month. A New Zealand expert on the Cultural Health

Index, Gail Tipa, ran the workshop.

The index helps Whangawehi locals to assess and understand the cultural and biological health of their catchment from a Maori perspective, and learn how it integrates into the framework of mainstream resource and management processes.

One of the goals is to train locals to carry out the water monitoring programme for a three-year period as part of a project funded by Nga Whenua Rahui and the Hawke's Bay Regional Council.

So far the catchment group have completed the first stage of a catchment management plan and are now developing an implementation plan.

A second workshop on Fish Monitoring will be held next Monday, starting at 10am, at Kaiuku Marae.

Regional council staff will run the workshop which includes a presentation on the techniques and skills for monitoring. After lunch, the attendees will go out in the field and practice what they have learned.

They will set up nets and traps and a spotlight survey will be carried out in order to better understand the populations of native fish.

If you are interested, join the group on Monday, April 8, 10 am at Kaiuku Marae.



□ Hawke's Bay Regional Council monitoring team member Shane Gilmer samples water in the Whangawehi catchment in January.