



## A Vision

*“Sparking shaded streams and rivers, clear lakes, wetlands rich with life, sustaining estuaries and a healthy coastal sea – all set in and around a landscape of productive, profitable farms. It is a vision of farming in New Zealand that is desired by us all. It is a vision that where it is made a reality sustains our farming economy as well as enhances our recreation, our reputation, our appreciation of our farming landscape and the mauri of our land. That vision is made a reality – or not - across rural New Zealand by the collective actions and management practices of all the landowners of each freshwater catchment. Those landowners and managers are in turn supported – or not – by a diverse range of partners including central, regional and local government, iwi, scientists and research groups, sector groups and industry, NGOs and trusts, community groups and schools.”*



Thank you NZ Landcare Trust for setting the context. Welcome to the North Otago Sustainable Land Management (NOSLaM) groups newsletter for March 2020. NOSLaM is a group driven by farmers keen to improve water quality and good pastoral management. As part of the group NOSLaM have a co-ordinator and Engagement officer. As NOSLaM co-ordinator, Robs goal is to make meaningful contribution towards improving the environmental ethos within the region by bringing together members of the agricultural industry as required to collaboratively improve land and water quality management practices.

Bridget McNally came on board as NOSLaM engagement officer in 2019. Her role is to strengthen the connection within the North Otago community by working with schools, community groups and stakeholders.

## Get Yourself Involved

Join the many farmers and residents already making a difference NOW by contacting our NOSLaM co-ordinator Rob McTague on 021 194 9597 or email [noslamoffice@gmail.com](mailto:noslamoffice@gmail.com). And if you would like to receive an electronic copy of future newsletters go to our website [www.noslam.nz](http://www.noslam.nz) and register. And there's lots more information on the website and Facebook page too – take a look.

The past 12 months have produced a very busy and productive year for NOSLaM. It has seen some fantastic collaboration with schools and community groups and increasing engagement from farmers through catchment groups. North Otago is home to great farms and great farmers and many of these people are leading the way with their environmental focus.



## Community and Education

Connecting with community is a priority for NOSLaM as they develop effective relationships between farmers, industry stakeholders and community groups.

Part of the Alps to Ocean trail winds through land farmers Duncan

and Evelyn Taylor gave access through to where it meets Cants Road. Recognising the junction as a spot where waiting riders could be at risk to passing vehicles, they made further farmland available to develop a parking / turning area and shelter which was planted out in March 2019 by students, teachers and parents from Duntroon School with the help of the Oamaru Rotary Club and members of the Tokarahi Rural Women's group.

In October students, teachers and parents from Duntroon School returned to the junction to maintain the area they helped establish.

The group of hard working efficient students and parents cleared the area of weeds and over growth allowing the plants to flourish.

Duntroon School has guardianship' of the area for three years until the plants become established. Principal Mike Turner commented that "The students were happy to be back maintaining the Cants Road part of the cycle trail. As the custodians for the area they feel ownership for it and the students were pleased to be back seeing how the plants had flourished".

The McCone family property on the Corner of Kakanui- Maheno Road and Wainakarua Road became a buzz of activity in May as 80 people from Kakanui and Maheno schools, Kakanui Ratepayers and Improvement Society,

Kakanui Volunteer Rural Fire Force, Kakanui Garden club, Wainakarua Lions Club, Stanger fencing, Specialized Services Group, Field Lab and Fonterra Farm source planted more than 1000 plants. Plants consisted of flax, cabbage trees, and a variety of wetland plants, low shrub tussock, Kahikatea, Manuka and Ribbonwood. The establishment of the wetland will be of great benefit to the environment and also the community. Participants were rewarded for their hard work by a

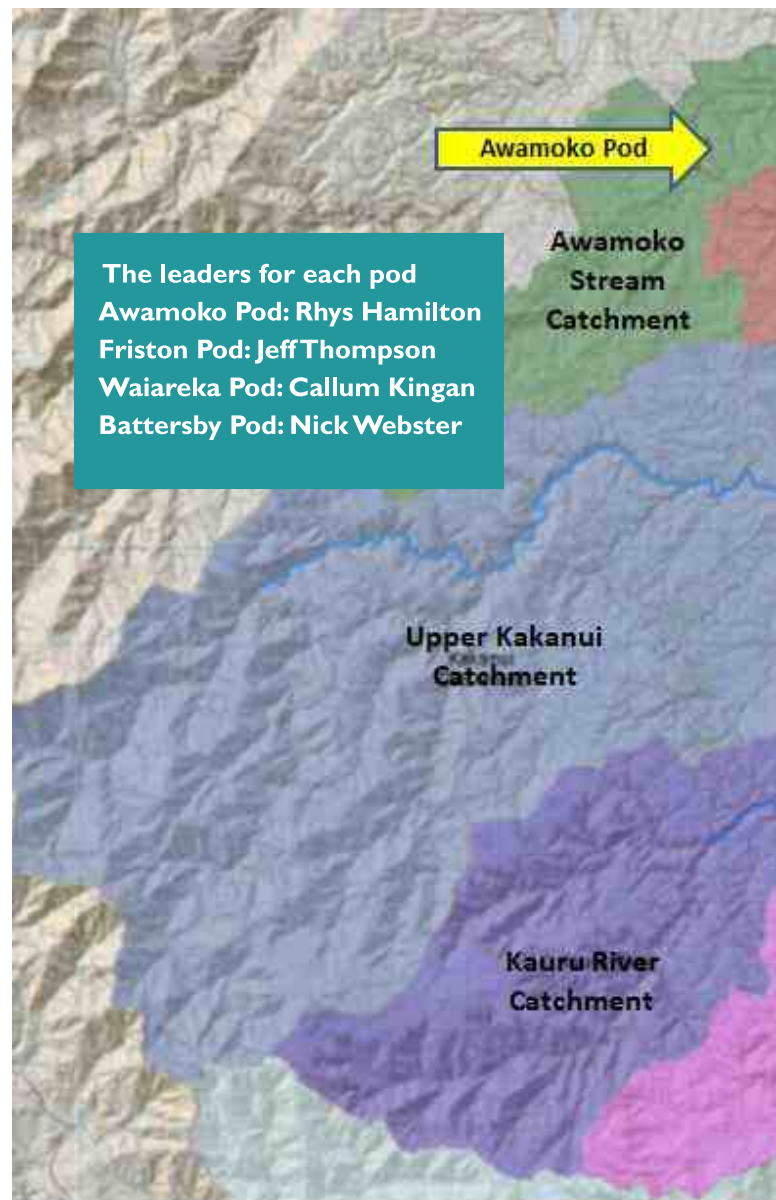


BBQ lunch provided by Fonterra.

Kakanui School has taken up the Guardianship of this area for three years until the planting is established and students returned in

December to see how their plantings were flourishing. It's great to see farmers like the McCone family leading the way, caring for the environment and collaborating with local schools and NOSLaM to make this a space that the community can learn and grow in.

2020 will see collaboration between NOSLaM, Waitaki Girls High School, Waitaki District Council and Otago University with the development of 'EnviroAg', a year 10 programme that will enable students to be taught both in and out of the classroom as they learn about the environmental issues farmers face. This hands on programme will involve the use of a range of resources and sessions with industry experts as students learn about critical source areas, good management and environmental practices. If your school would like to work with NOSLaM, please email Bridget at [noslamengagement@gmail.com](mailto:noslamengagement@gmail.com)



## On Farm Change

Because of the nature of the topography in North Otago, NOSLaM is developing a number of catchment groups known as Pods. These Pods consist of farmers within a topographical catchment area working together to identify ways to address challenges affecting the environment. You only need to take a drive to see that each of the catchment areas are diverse in their own ways. Having the farmers in each group work together collaboratively enables them to prioritise the areas that need the greatest focus and the economies of scale that come from collaboration produce greater outcomes for less cost.

For example, measuring water quality from multiple points within a catchment can identify specific catchment issues which can be addressed accordingly. By being targeted and transparent with our activity, we can remove the emotional, generalisations being splashed through the media about poor water quality in our region by actually showing where the issues are and demonstrating best practice to improve them. Some aspects of NOSLaM's work involve working with bigger groups and to do this farmers come together in a workshop environment. One such workshop in 2019 was a winter grazing workshop.

Winter grazing management is an important aspect of dairy farming and, if not carried out appropriately, can contribute to the ever present environmental concerns



of water quality impairment, soil quality degradation and reduced erosion control.

Whether it is a dairy farmer wintering on farm or a grazier wintering on behalf, wintering cows to a high standard requires a whole team approach... People, Animals and Environment.

In May a winter grazing workshop was held in the Weston Hall where over 60 people gathered to hear 4 speakers talk on compliance, animal health, nutrient management and soil management. The content focused on the challenges of winter farming in North Otago.

## Envirofolder Launch

To help farmers keep a record of their on farm planning and activity, NZ Landcare Trust and ORC joined with NOSLaM to develop an Envirofolder.

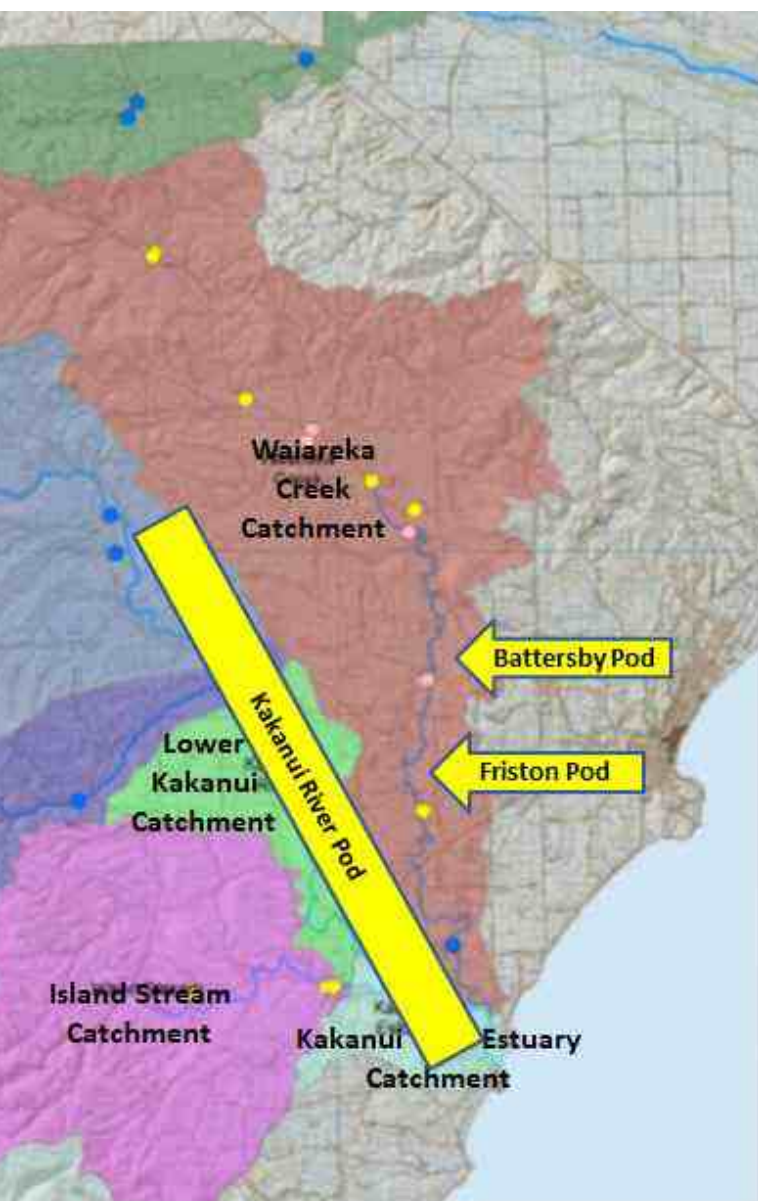
This folder provides farmers with a single collection point of farm management and environmental information enabling them to collate all their on farm data in one place for easy management and quick reference. Over 90 of these folders have made their way into farmers hands and workshops are planned on how best to utilise them. They are available by emailing Rob at noslamoffice@gmail.com

## Science and Monitoring

is foremost if we are to make a change to our water quality.

At the recent NOSLaM AGM the highlight was hearing from Guest Speaker Dr Sarah Mager (University of Otago) updating us on the Waiareka Phosphorus Study. Dr Sarah Mager presented the preliminary findings of her research study commissioned by NOSLaM into the Waiareka catchment's natural phosphorous levels. Water and soil samples have been taken from across the catchment to see if organic or inorganic phosphorous deposits in the riverbed and banks were potential sources of the phosphorous in the water.

Dr Mager said her study showed phosphorous "hot spots" in the Waiareka catchment and that the fluctuations indicate likely variability. From Enfield down, the concentration of phosphorous down the main stream keeps going up. Nitrogen, on the other hand, is going the exact opposite way which, in her opinion, means it is something other than management and practice. She said that it aligned with the different



morphology and volcanic rocks in the region and that some of the soils on top of the rocks were also high in phosphorous.

She believed the sediment samples which contained 10% to 20% soil could have arrived there through flooding.

Areas with riparian planting will help keep sediment out of the water. Dr Mager said she believed the high phosphorous levels to be a combination of things... there are some naturally phosphorous rich soils in parts of the catchment which, if they are getting into the waterway are contributing to the problem. Quarries are producing sediment too.

While there is not a lot of phosphorous in that sediment, phosphorous from other sources will bind to it chemically as it travels overland. Dr Mager said that while the research is not yet complete, she believed the solution could lie in some of the initiatives already in use by NOSLaM. Where there is critical source area protection, riparian planting and slightly wider stock exclusion zones, there is less phosphorous and better water quality.

Dr Mager and her team will be visiting the catchment again to take more samples. They will be using swatches of artificial turf anchored to the riverbed to collect sediment that will show the composition of "contemporary" material. The samples will be taken both in summer and winter to see if irrigation runoff and fodder grazing are contributing factors. (Taken from Sally Brookers article published in Central Rural Life; Date: Dec 4, 2019.)

## Celebrating our Farmers

North Otago farmers are a humble bunch; they are also very good at what they do. Here are a few farmers showing our industry proud, leading the way with their innovative thinking and environmental focus.

### Lyndon and Jane Strang

The Strang family was recently featured on TVNZ's current affairs programme 'Sunday-down on the farm'.

Lyndon spoke positively about the importance of farmers

collectively working together to create change.

He expressed the importance of communities dealing with the issues in their communities and that farmers were open to limits as long as those limits are achievable.

He stated that 'economic viability will be better for environmental outcomes and that the two go hand in hand'.



Lyndon has been active in helping farmers with water sampling, to see what issues they have in their farms and then how best to work through targeted solutions. He is also a member of NOSLaM's steering committee. The episode is still available to be viewed at TVNZ on demand and well worth a watch for farmers and urban dwellers alike.

### Jo and Ross Hay

Jo and Ross Hay have recently been showcased in numerous print and video media lately including 'Mindfood' Magazine and Farmers Weekly as



Photo Credit: Farmers Weekly

part of their 'on farm story' series which are also shown in short videos on social media.

They are fuelled with enthusiasm and determination to pursue a farming career and confident there will be opportunity among the plethora of government rules. Their vision is to 'farm a sustainable, fully integrated high performing sheep and beef breeding and finishing operation using best practice to achieve consistent profits with environmental soundness'.

Community is important to the Hays and both Jo and Ross are very involved in Maheno School and Maheno Rugby Club.

Ross is also North Otago's Federated Farmers Meat and Fibre Chairman.

Jo is active in the Agri-Women's Development Trust and with their support has set up a Regional Hub called 'Lip Gloss and Gumboots'. The group meets every couple of months to enable the development of skills, confidence and creating connections.

## Do you have a vision for NOSLaM in your area?

Pick up the phone and call either Rob, Bridget or one of our steering group members (Peter Mitchell, Jane Smith, Lyndon Strang, Callum Kingan, Daniel Isbister, Rhys Hamilton, Emily Anderson, Andrew Rodwell). NOSLaM is grateful for its ongoing support from industry specialist organizations, environmental organisations, community groups and its farmers. This collaboration clearly demonstrates the power of a collective approach.

## Proudly partnering with

