NZ LANDCARE TRUST
NGĀ MATAPOPORE WHENUA

beef+lamb new zealand

HOW TO START A CATCHMENT GROUP

A catchment group is a group of people, who identify with a geographical area, usually based on a river or lake catchment, working together to take actions towards a common vision. Catchment groups form to take actions to achieve a long-term vision based on a healthy environment (from water quality to biodiversity goals) and a thriving community.

Forming a shared vision and working together empowers people to have a much higher and faster impact than they would have when working on their own.

- Get a greater return on individual actions.
- Establish an authoritative voice with decision makers.
- Connect your actions to environmental and community goals.
- Get better access to funding.
- Improve community connections and ownership.

STEP 1

Get together

Get together with a few people at a local hall or pub, dairy or woolshed, to discuss why you might want to form a Catchment Group. If the decision is yes - are there other locals that would be interested in helping? Have you contacted local iwi? Who else might be missing?

STEP 2

Build support

Hold a public meeting and invite anyone you think would be interested. The more the merrier. If possible, bring in a facilitator experienced in working with catchment groups such as a NZ Landcare Trust representative or a trusted local advisor. Create an initial plan by discussing the following points:

- What are the reasons why community members want to form a Catchment Group?
- Does the health of the catchment affect more than just those living in it?
- What are some of the things you really like about your catchment and your community?
- What is your short and long-term vision?
- What actions do you need to, or could you, take?
- Who could do what? Assign tasks to those willing to take on responsibility – think beyond the traditional committee roles.
- What assistance do you need – where could you find it?

STEP 3

Undertake a catchment and community stocktake

What information do you already know about your catchment - this could include reports from regional councils; water monitoring information; your community assets, actions that have already been taken, people skills, schools and halls, tourism or simply a photo of some of the great stuff going on in your catchment. The idea with this is to brainstorm as much information as you can about your community and your catchment – appreciate what you have, identify what you don't know or have and then understand what gaps you need to fill to reach your vision or goals.

STEP 4

Define your vision and goals

Identify what your vision is for your catchment, how do you want things to look in five, 10, 20 years' time? Make sure you can generate as widespread buy-in to that as possible.

STEP 5

What actions do you want to take?

What steps are needed to fill the gaps in your knowledge or the gaps between what you have in your catchment now and what your shared vision is? Delegate and share tasks, set timeframes. Use SMART goals (specific, measurable, agreed upon, realistic and time-bound). Make an achievable plan.

STEP 6

Telling your story?

Understanding how you are going to measure your progress and asking yourselves are we on track? What is going well? What do we need to work on? This is just as important as forming a group itself. Capturing and collating progress can be as simple as recording your actions through photos.

Group Structure

Catchment groups take many forms from informal, with members sharing the coordination role and teams established for small tasks to a more formal structure, with assigned roles, such as treasurer, secretary, chairperson and a committee and often a membership subscription. Establishing a formal group either as an incorporated society or a charitable trust can support this and makes it easier to apply for funding, and collect member subscriptions.

Coordinators make a difference

Research tells us a coordinator makes a huge difference to the success of a group – think early about how you could fund someone to help you and what you need from them.

We are here for you!

We get that this can sound like a lot – that is why we are here to help!

Beef + Lamb New Zealand and NZ Landcare Trust are here to lend support, provide resources and help, and work alongside you to make a difference.

For examples of successful groups, check out our websites.