

## LAND MANAGEMENT

### **SUSTAINABLE LAND**

### **Starting a Landcare Group**

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#### ***What is a Landcare Group?***

A Landcare group is a group of people who join together to work on land management issues in their local area.

#### ***Landcare History in Hawke's Bay***

The concept of a Landcare group is not new. In some areas, local farmers have worked together on resource management problems for many years, e.g. catchment control schemes. Recently, groups have formed as concerns for the environment grow, and the benefits of working as a community are realised.

Recent legislation, such as the Resource Management Act, has also put the onus onto landowners and resource users to take responsibility for the effects their activities have on the environment.

#### ***What are the benefits of a Landcare group?***

When dealing with problems that extend beyond fences or natural boundaries, e.g. possums, weeds or water pollution, it makes sense to work together. A group working collectively can have a lot more effect than one person working on their own, because:

- Re-infestation of weeds and pests is reduced if neighbours also work on control.
- People can share ideas, knowledge, and enthusiasm.
- Groups can find it easier to get expert advice or funding.
- Group members bring a variety of perspectives to the problem, allowing a better understanding of the "big picture".

#### ***Landcare in Hawke's Bay***

Currently there are several Landcare groups operating in the region to address a variety of environmental concerns.

- **Omakere:** Hillside and gully erosion, possum control, Chilean Needle Grass control and district beautification.
- **Karituwhenua:** Urban stream protection
- **Makara:** Possum and flood control



- **Tukituki/Kahuranaki:** Possum and erosion control (including roadside stabilisation)
- **Tokatea and Waipuka:** Coastal erosion
- **Waimarama/Maraetotara:** Erosion control and preservation of the rural community
- **Waipawa:** Chilean Needle Grass
- **Huatokitoki:** Tree planting for erosion control, shelter and timber.

Examples of projects Landcare groups have been involved in elsewhere include:

- Improving water quality by fencing off and planting along the local creek.
- Collecting rainfall data and combining it to provide a seasonal pattern for the district.
- Writing a submission on a district plan.
- Organising a Grow-safe course to encourage safe application of sprays.

### ***How to start a Landcare group?***

If you think a Landcare group might be something worth setting up in your area,

1. Get a feel for what others in the community think about the idea. Talk not only to landowners, but to anyone who has an interest in the district – local businesses, schools, Women's Division of Federated Farmers, Regional Council, Federated Farmers, DOC, forest managers and local hapu, to name a few examples.
2. Once you feel there is enough interest in the idea, hold a formal meeting. It can also be helpful to have someone from an existing Landcare group attend and give the benefit of their experience.
3. Once you have commitment to form a Landcare group, it maybe helpful to set up a small steering committee to consider boundaries, membership, a name, a suitable structure, goals and objectives, and a plan of action. They can then report back to the full group for discussion/ agreement.

4. Once the goals and plan have been accepted, it is time to start putting it into action straight away. Having a concrete task will help the group come together and keep interest high.

### ***Who do I contact?***

If you would like further help in setting up a Landcare Group contact the Land Management section of the Hawke's Bay Regional Council. Our staff have knowledge and experience in co-ordinating Landcare group activities.

Much of the information in this Environment Topic has been sourced from the 'Landcare Action Guide' prepared by the Women's Division of Federated Farmers. This Kit has been written to help Landcare Groups in all stages of development – existing groups, new groups, and groups just thinking about starting.

### **For further information**

For further information on setting up a Landcare Group, contact Hawke's Bay Regional Council Land Management staff for advice.

Wairoa 0-6-838 8527

Guppy Road, Napier 0-6-844 2495

Waipukurau 0-6-858 8636

TOLL FREE 0800 108 808

OR:

More information may also be obtained from the Women's Division of Federated Farmers which has a "Landcare Action Guide".