



Media information

1 October 2013

Water project holds community information days

People interested in finding out more about investigations into possible water storage sites throughout Wairarapa are being invited to meet with project team members at any of five community 'drop-in' days to be held over the next two weeks.

The Wairarapa Water Use Project is investigating the viability of a multi-purpose water scheme that would collect and store water then distribute it for a variety of economic and community uses during the dry season in an environmentally sustainable way.

The plan to increase the supply and reliability of water in Wairarapa moved a step closer last month when fourteen possible water storage sites were narrowed to five for further investigation. Three additional sites are being held in reserve and are not being investigated at this stage.

"The project has been communicating directly with owners of property in the footprints of the storage sites of interest and other interested parties since last year," project director Michael Bassett-Foss said. "As we move into the next stage of investigations, we want to extend this more widely."

The drop-in days will be held in community venues near each of the five sites of interest with project team members being on hand between 2pm and 8pm.

"Anyone is welcome and we particularly encourage people who live near the sites of interest to call in, find out more about the project and give us their feedback.

"We are also interested in continuing to talk with farmers who may want to use irrigation water from any scheme that might eventuate. While an initial survey of farmer demand for water has already been done, more detailed demand investigations will form part of the next stage of work.

"If people are not able to attend the day in their own area they are welcome to attend one of the other four days," Mr Bassett-Foss said.

The drop-in days will all run from 2pm until 8pm, beginning on Tuesday 8 October at the West Taratahi Hall near the Mangatarere site, followed by one at Fernridge School near the Black Creek/Kaituna site on 9 October. The day for the White Rock Road site will be held at the Mangapari Station Woolshed on 10 October. Bideford Hall will host the day for the Tivdale site in the Bideford area on Monday 14 October. Mount Bruce Hall is the venue for the Te Mara site in the Kiriwhakapapa area on Tuesday 15 October.

The Wairarapa Water Use Project has the potential to increase irrigation in the Wairarapa valley from 12,000 hectares currently to about 42,000 hectares. Other uses could include increasing low summer river flows, recreation, stock water, frost fighting, hydro-electricity generation and urban water supply.

Mr Bassett-Foss said the project was still at a conceptual stage and it was not yet known how many schemes might be viable. He said any future development may be staged over time.

The next stage of work is likely to include more detailed assessments of demand for water, potential scheme income, environmental, social and cultural impacts, geological and geotechnical aspects, available water resources, potential funding models and planning implications.

Expected to be complete by the end of 2014, the next stage of investigation will determine any schemes that are worth taking forward to a full feasibility study in 2015. Any storage sites found to be unsuitable as work progressed would be removed from the list at the time.

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