

MEDIA RELEASE FROM UPPER CLUTHA WATER GROUP:

14 December 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Upper Clutha Water Group: Urban, Farming and Tourism working together to achieve 30 year vision

As announced in September, the Upper Clutha Water Group (UCWG) has been allocated \$385,000 from the government's Freshwater Improvement Fund (FIF). The FIF funding combined with support from other funders (including QLDC, ORC, Sargood Bequest and the Million Metres streams project) will see more than \$875,000 spent on water initiatives managed by the UCWG over the next five years.

UCWG is a collaborative group formed in 2016 and made up of numerous community members and agencies associated with the Upper Clutha region.

UCWG's commitments under the terms of the FIF agreement relate to three key streams of work:

- The development of a community-supported water management plan;
- Riparian planting led by Te Kākano Aotearoa Trust, and
- Applied research on urban run-off impacts supported by Catchments Otago.

UCWG expects to commence its formal work program by late March 2018. UCWG spokesperson, Mandy Bell said "the FIF work streams represent an exciting opportunity to be proactive with water management so future generations can continue to enjoy our lakes and waterways."

UCWG is focused on gaining a high level of community involvement across all three work streams, which will be an essential component to the process of working out how to fix water issues and prevent any decline in water quality and ecosystem function. Mandy is clear on the benefits of community input "Our local communities include many people who have a passion for the local environment and a wide range of skills to put into community projects and citizen science. An important part of the Upper Clutha Water Group's success to date is based on connecting a wide range of water-related stakeholders, working together to understand water needs from every perspective."

UCGW has confirmed Megan Williams as project manager for the FIF projects. Megan is already working with the Million Metres streams project, which is about to kick off nationwide fundraising for riparian planting. Million Metres has set a goal to plant 24,000 native trees and plants along waterways in the Upper Clutha catchment by

2022. The plants will be propagated by Te Kāhano Aotearoa Trust in its local nursery. To donate or volunteer, visit www.millionmetres.org.nz or www.tekakano.org.nz.

In addition to the FIF funding, Mandy was delighted that the UCWG had recently received confirmation of three new grants to support its community-facing initiatives:

- ORC will provide \$22,500 from its Environmental Enhancement Fund to help the UCWG develop tools to engage with the local communities, to raise awareness of and participation in issues relevant to the future management of our alpine lakes and waterways. ORC is also providing significant administration support to the UCWG, including Legal and Communications.
- QLDC additional grant of \$22,500. QLDC has a staff member in a supporting role on the FIF steering group and will assist with data collection and analysis. QLDC will also be reviewing its stormwater management plans.
- The Sargood Bequest approved an interim grant of \$10,000 to set up a website for the UCWG, facilitate community discussion and assist with establishment activities.

UCWG will be assisting with water communications around what is happening across the region and why, for example raising the profile of biosecurity issues to help reduce the spread of the three fresh water pests in our area – Didymo, Lake Snow and Lagarosiphon. To this end, visitors and locals are reminded that all water users should treat every waterway as if an unwanted pest was present, check for green weed matter when removing a boat from a lake or river and drain all water from water craft and equipment before moving to another waterway. These checks apply equally to swimmers and kayakers – wetsuits, kayaks and paddles also need to be checked and cleaned.

ORC employs freshwater advocates around waterways over the summer months – their job is to educate and promote the “Check Clean Dry” message and answer questions on Biosecurity water quality issues.

ENDS

For more information:

Get involved with the UCWG – spokesperson Mandy Bell 027 443 4250

Support the FIF projects – Megan Williams 027 229 1607

ORC Pollution hotline - Ph 0800 800 033

Wanaka Harbourmaster - Craig Blake Ph 021 616 700

www.coastguard.nz/regions/southern-region/units/wanaka-lakes

Join Lake Wanaka Trust to receive a quarterly newsletter on water activities

<https://lakewanakatrust.org/>

UCWG member representation includes:

ORC

QLDC

Te Kāhano Aotearoa Trust

University of Otago, Catchments Otago

Wanaka Community Board

Guardians of Lake Wanaka

Guardians of Lake Hawea

Lake Wanaka Trust

Alpine Lakes Research and Education Centre

Department of Conservation

Forest & Bird

Shaping our Future

Fish and Game

MPI

Lake Wanaka Tourism

Deer Industry NZ

Criffel Station

Federated Farmers

Mt Aspiring Station

Mt Burke Station