

Photo story

Manuherekia Community planting day exceeds expectations

25 August 2023

The sun shone, and the smiles grew, at a community planting day on Thursday 24 August 2023.

Over 500 native plants were planted around the Gillespie wetland site, on a tributary of the Manuherekia River, by the whole of Omakau School (60 children), with another 35-adults from the school and community.



The Gillespie Farm wetland

The planting day with wetland assessment was arranged by Anna and Ben Gillespie, local farmers, and is in its fourth year.

The planting was supported by the Otago Catchment Communities through the Manuherekia Catchment Group and by Thomsons Catchment Project. A range of people from across the community also joined the planting fun, including Nicola McGrouther (Thomsons Project), Jo Wakelin, Nicole Foote (NZ Landcare Trust), Dean Sinnamon (B+LNZ), Simon Parks and Becky Clements (Otago Regional Council), Anna Robinson (OCC), Lucy Francke (Enviroschools), and staff from CMLaw in Alexandra.



The planting team

Anna Gillespie, local farmer and co-owner of Two Farmers Farming said, “what a fantastic day and it was great to have so much community support. We started planting with the school on farm in 2019 and we got the school involved to help the kids learn how and what to plant - and the kids love it”.

Kirsten Knights, CM Law, said “we’ve brought our crew out from Alexandra because we love supporting local and helping the kids out. Obviously, this is a great way to support the water in our region too.”

Nicole Foote, South Island team leader Landcare Trust NZ said, “it’s awesome to get out with the kids, get hands on with the plants and mix with a large group of supporters. Anna and Ben have done an amazing job and there are lots of happy tired kids from this fun day out”.



Nicole Foote, NZLT

Simon Park, ORC catchment advice team said, “the team are doing a great job of riparian planting and establishing a wetland to create a biodiversity hotspot on this productive farm. It’s great to see collaboration between agencies, the school, the Council, catchment group and expert ecologists to tell us where to put the different species. It’s a great learning curve for the young kids for hands on appreciation of creating a wetland”.



Simon Park, ORC

When asked what they enjoyed about the planting day, Sophie, aged 12, said, “I really enjoyed digging out the holes and doing something good for the environment. Jesse, aged 10, enjoyed pulling out the weeds, which he found hard on hands, yet felt good. Charlotte, aged 11, said “it’s quite fun getting muddy, and your hands dirty. We enjoyed running across the bogs and getting water in our gumboots and having to help each other not get wet”.



(Left to right) Sophie, Charlotte and Jesse from Omakau School

You can find out about future community planting days by checking out the Thomsons Project [website](#) or signing up to the newsletter.

Ends

For more information contact Lee Cowan 021930836

More photos available:

High res version of all photos, plus a 30-sec drone video can be found

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/thijduryau0g69b/AACwUQiMTbD9Wktv8CJcYceSa?dl=0>



Fun getting muddy!



500 plants ready to be planted



Simon Park (ORC) and Dean Sinnamon (B+LNZ)