

KIUTA
KITAI

HEALTHY
CATCHMENT,
HEALTHY
HARBOUR



TĒNĀ KOUTOU!

It's been four years since the development of the Whangapoua Harbour and Catchment Management Plan so we are well into the work with landowners and care groups to protect our natural environment. This newsletter covers off some of what we're doing or that has been done. It'll also give you an idea of what you can do to support your community's vision of a healthy harbour, one we can all enjoy.

If you have any questions or comments on the stories in this newsletter, please contact a member of our team.

Ngā mihi

Harbour and Catchment Management Team

FLOODING 'NATURAL' IN FLOODPLAINS

The severe flooding in Kuaotunu in September shows the importance of being prepared.

The incoming high tide met floodwaters coming down the Kuaotunu Stream causing flooding to properties and damage to the Kuaotunu bridge, closing it to traffic for repairs.

Aniwa Tawa, the council's Hauraki Coromandel catchment management team leader, says no-one expected the volume of water received in the Kuaotunu catchment. Garages and backyards were fully submerged, streams were out of channels, paddocks disappeared underwater and major slips cut off the main road in and out of Kuaotunu.

"It's a timely reminder for everyone to be prepared because you never know what you're going to get in a particular catchment when heavy rain comes down from up there in the hills."

Aniwa says many of the properties that flooded were located next to a stream or adjacent to a floodplain.



Flooding of the Kuaotunu Stream damaged the fire station

"There's been some concern about this but the flooding wasn't due to any stream mouth blockages; the streams were running freely. And, flooding in a floodplain is natural; there's not much anyone can do about that."



Black Jack Road, Otama – flooding is natural in a floodplain.

Do you have river damage from the floods? Waikato Regional Council can help landowners maintain and protect waterways on their property. Erosion control and blockage removal are the main challenges we face following heavy rainfall events. We rely on landowners to let us know of any new problems and to check their waterways to make sure trees haven't fallen in, creating obstructions. Give river management officer Mike Theobald a call. Phone 0800 800 401.

Waikato Regional Council provides the latest updates on flood events on its Flood Room Live webpage. Information includes weather updates, river levels, rainfall levels, road closures, civil defence updates and contacts.

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/flood-room



An identified high risk area of soil loss and sedimentation in the Waitekuri catchment.

WAITEKURI FOCUS CATCHMENT PROJECT

The Whangapoua Harbour and Catchment Plan identifies the unforested eastern parts of the Waitekuri catchment as being a high sediment and erosion risk area. Waikato Regional Council is therefore working with landowners in this area to showcase soil conservation projects and wetland restoration as solutions to reduce sedimentation and improve water quality and biodiversity over three properties.

Sediment traps a simple way to improve water quality

Three sediment traps have been built as part of Waitekuri Focus Catchment works.

Senior catchment management officer Elaine Iddon says the traps – two simple designs and one constructed treatment wetland – work together and show how sediment can be filtered out from water running down steep terrain.

The simple traps include channel contouring and the planting of native vegetation to filter sediment, and the building of a small bund to create shallow ponding and trapping of sediment.

The third trap is an excavated sedimentation pond through which the flow of surface water is diverted before being returned to the main channel.

Elaine says the entrance and exit at right angles of the water into the constructed trap basically creates a whirlpool so the sediment is spun from the water.

“These are all simple techniques that farmers can apply to their own waterways to improve water quality.”

Turning paddocks into wetland habitat

Waikato Regional Council is working with landowners the Denizes to fence and plant around 13 hectares of wetland and waterways at Waitekuri near Whangapoua Harbour.

The restoration of Waitekuri Wetland is also being supported by the Million Metres Streams Project, which crowd funds for riparian restoration projects in New Zealand.



Netani Walsh-Waqaniburotu, from Te Rerenga School, lends a hand at Waitekuri Wetland.

The goal is to raise \$21,000 for 5000 plants to convert 13,600 square metres of paddock into healthy wetland habitat.

It costs \$26 to plant out one metre, and nearly \$10,000 has been raised so far.

Students from Te Rerenga School have been helping out with the planting, and at the same time learning about the importance of healthy wetland habitats.

“The Denizes are doing their bit to reverse wetland loss in the Whangapoua area, and it’s something we all benefit from,” says Elaine.

“It creates habitat for birds, fish and insects, and the wetland will act as a buffer against flood events and prevent sedimentation from getting into the harbour.”

To find out more about this project, or make a donation, go to the Million Metres Streams website: millionmetres.org.nz/waitekuri-wetland

COMMUNITY PROJECTS



Australasian bittern will benefit from pest control in Waingaro Wetland

Exterminating 'ecosystem changers'

Endangered fernbird, kiwi and Australasian bittern will be the winners from pest control in the Waingaro Wetland.

The regional council is working with forestry company Ernslaw One to get rid of invasive pest grey willow in the wetland, which is the most significant wetland area in terms of size and biodiversity in the Colville ecological district.

Ernslaw One has also contracted Project Kiwi to extensively trap the wetland.

Project manager Paula Williams says the rats in the area are "ecosystem changers" because there are so many of them.

"It's ridiculously high, like about one rat for every 5 square metres or so, as well as cats and stoats, so we've set up a trap every 60 metres around the entire wetland.

"There's not much point restoring the habitat of an amazing wetland but then ignore the predators. These pest animals aren't allowing chicks to fledge and leave the nest."

A sure plan for chenier islands' shore birds

A two-year restoration plan for Whangapoua Harbour's chenier islands will help protect the important and unique habitat of shore birds.

The islands are sandy and shelly beach ridges, about 900 metres from Whangapoua's main boat ramp, and many coastal birds nest and roost there.

Senior catchment management officer Elaine Iddon says the islands provide a safe haven for the birds from people and dogs but tracking tunnel monitoring has shown a presence of rats and mice.

"We need predator control to create a safer habitat, and because it's close to the mainland it's possible for other predators to swim there."

Birds that use the islands include Caspian tern, New Zealand dotterel, oyster catchers and pied stilts.

Exotic pest weeds which invade the shell banks and push out salt marsh wetland plant species will also be removed.

"These weed species out-compete native plant species and reduce biodiversity values. Pampas is referred to as a rat hotel and it's one of our target pest plants on the islands.

"Also, please be mindful not to visit the islands during breeding season from spring to summer. Let's leave the birds to breed in peace."

Funding boost for Rings Beach group

Matarangi Reserve is being cleared of wilding pines thanks to a \$80,000 grant given to Rings Beach Wetland Group by Waikato Regional Council.

The felling of wilding pines, part of an overall restoration project for the reserve, started in winter this year and will be completed in June 2020.

Once the established pines have been eliminated, and with pine seedlings being continuously removed for a number of years, there should be a quick return of new native growth to help improve biodiversity, says Rings Beach Wetland Group secretary Ian Patrick.



Removing wilding pines in Matarangi Reserve

In the meantime, 100 tanekaha trees (celery pine) were planted in the reserve wetland area in autumn, bringing the total of trees planted by the group to 5300. Kauri 2000 has also planted 17,000 kauri over the years, and a cleaning station was installed by DOC in December last year to help protect them from kauri dieback.

Ian says kiwi have turned up in the reserve – volunteers are seeing signs of probing and droppings – therefore predator control is another a priority.

About 50 Goodnature traps, funded by Waikato Regional Council, have been set up to target rats, possums and stoats. The group now services 350 traps in the reserve, and the long term goal is to establish a pest free forest.

Ian says the wetland group is always looking for more volunteers.

"Younger, fitter participants who want to be linked with a success story are always welcome as their enthusiasm is infectious and reassuring to us ageing members."

If you want to be involved with Rings Beach Wetland Group, please contact Carrie Parker on:  07 867 1299 or email carrie-charlie@xtra.co.nz.

BIOSECURITY



Buying time for dying kauri

Nearly 2500 kauri with kauri dieback in the Whangapoua area have been injected with phosphite to prolong their lives.

Biosecurity officer Kim Parker says phosphite manages the effects of the disease by supporting the kauri's defence system.

"It helps recover the canopy of the tree, it reduces bleeding in the tree and it supports the tree to live longer. It's not a cure but it buys time for researchers to come up with solutions to deal with the organism that's causing kauri dieback."

Kauri dieback, which is caused by the microscopic soil-borne organism *Phytophthora agathidicida*, was first detected in 2014 in the Coromandel Peninsula in Whangapoua and in the Hukarahi Forest block near Whitianga.

If you have kauri on your property, Kim has the following advice:

- Fence stock out of bush areas.
- Make sure your visitors and contractors clean their gear so it's dirt free before coming on to and leaving your property.
- Manage feral animals, including pigs.
- Keep people away from your kauri.
- The less soil you move on and off your property the less chance of infection.

 kauridieback.co.nz



Stinky lantana must be wiped out

Lantana is a pretty but stinky garden plant that must be wiped out of the Whangapoua catchment.

Benson Lockhart, biosecurity officer for pest plants, describes it as an invasive weed which was brought to New Zealand as an ornamental shrub but is now banned from sale.

"If it's not wiped out before it spreads, it has the potential to invade the coastal ecosystems in Whangapoua. It suppresses the growth of other plants, particularly natives, by secreting toxins into the soil."

If you have lantana on your property, please call the regional council on 0800 800 401 to have it removed. Benson urges landowners not to (illegally) "fly dump" lantana on the side of the road as it will only grow again and become a new problem in a new area.

OUR LOCAL TEAM, AND WAYS WE CAN HELP

Call 07 866 0172 and ask for:

Catchment management	Restoring a wetland, stream or forest area? Want to reduce erosion, run off and improve water quality? Did you know there is financial assistance, and we can draw up a programme of works specifically for you?	Elaine Iddon Catchment management officer
Rivers or flooding	Eroding stream, in-stream blockages? Issues with vegetation choking a waterway? Our river staff can help.	Mike Theobald River management officer
Pest plants	Issues with pest plants? Not sure how to control a pesky weed? Just need some advice?	Benson Lockhart Biosecurity officer (pest plants)
Navigation safety	Moorings, safety on the water, jet ski registrations, concerns about others' behaviour on the water.	Peter Head Harbourmaster

HE TAIAO MAUIRORA HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT
HE ŌHANGA PAKARI STRONG ECONOMY
HE HAPORI HIHIRI VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

For more information call Waikato Regional Council
on 0800 800 401 or visit waikatoregion.govt.nz

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Waikato
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato