

9 Waikato at Mercer Bridge West

Use these insights to develop a farm environment plan that reduces impacts on fresh water and protects what matters in your catchment. For more details or support, call 0800 800 401 or visit waikatoregion.govt.nz/farm-environment-planning.

Prioritise these actions in your farm plan to improve water quality:

- Retire marginal steep land.
- Stabilise steep land through space-planting.
- Select appropriate livestock and timing to graze steep land.
- Manage livestock around critical source areas.

 **Actions to include in a farm environment plan**

 **Farm menus**

The Waikato at Mercer Bridge – West catchment including the Opuatia stream and wetland, Lake Rotongaro wildlife reserve, and Pungapunga wetlands, Hampton Downs and Meremere township provide recreational opportunities and support community wellbeing. These community and natural features are interconnected with the Waikato River, contributing to its health and supporting a range of native species. While the catchment has been shaped by land use, flood control and pest fish such as koi carp, these features continue to provide important ecological, recreational and cultural values, making care for our waterways critical.

The Waikato River and surrounding environments holds deep cultural and spiritual significance for Waikato-Tainui, the primary iwi for this region. Waikato-Tainui regards the Waikato River as a tupuna (ancestor) that has mana (prestige) and in turn represents the mana and mauri (life force) of the tribe. Respect for te mana o te awa (the spiritual authority, protective power and prestige of the Waikato River) must be actively protected and restored. Hapū and marae act as kaitiaki (guardians) at a local level to safeguard and preserve the catchment including its taonga (treasured) species ensuring they are sustained for future generations.

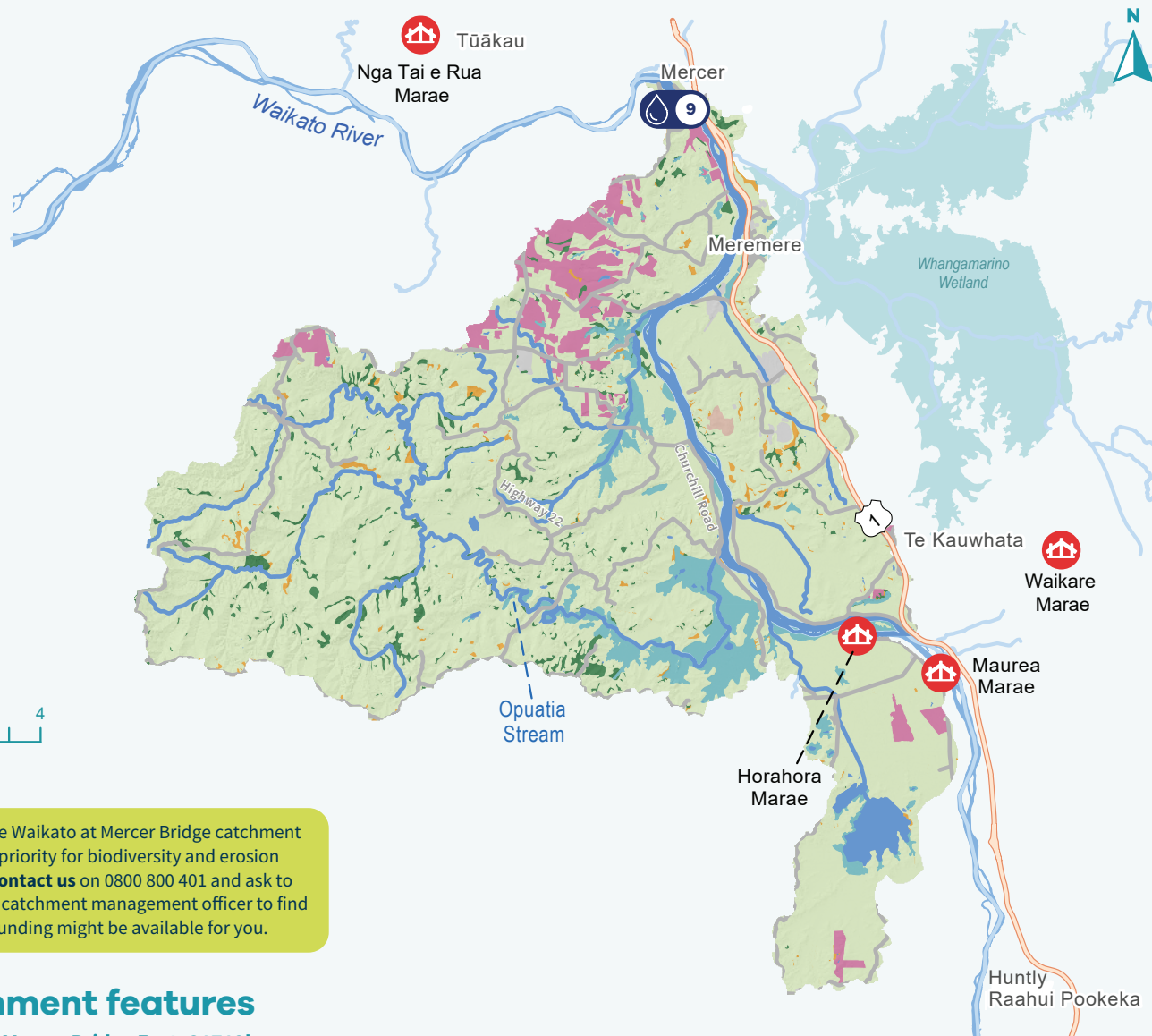
Taonga (treasured) species found in the Waikato at Mercer Bridge catchment



Consider your farm's location in the catchment

The table shows how landform and soil characteristics shape primary risks and contaminant losses specific to the Waikato at Mercer Bridge catchment.

Landform	Main soils + properties	Primary risks	Primary contaminant loss
Flat to undulating land (0-7 degrees) 48% of catchment	Pumice: Very well drained loamy sand	High drought vulnerability	<i>E. coli</i>
	Granular: Moderately to well drained clay loam	May have slight wetness limitation	Nitrogen
	Gley: Poorly drained and clayey	Pugging if wet and soil compaction, continuing wetness limitation after drainage	Sediment Phosphorus <i>E. coli</i>
Rolling land (8-20 degrees) 35% of catchment	Brown: Imperfectly drained and clayey	Slight to moderate rill or sheet erosion when cultivated and pugging when wet	Sediment Phosphorus <i>E. coli</i>
	Ultic: Imperfectly drained and silty		
	Allophanic: Well drained silt loam		
Steep land (>20 degrees) 17% of catchment	Brown: Imperfectly to well drained clay loam	Moderate to severe potential for slip erosion	Sediment Phosphorus
	Recent: Moderately to well drained		



Parts of the Waikato at Mercer Bridge catchment are a high priority for biodiversity and erosion funding. **Contact us** on 0800 800 401 and ask to speak to a catchment management officer to find out what funding might be available for you.

Catchment features

Waikato at Mercer Bridge East: 31712ha

Exotic forest (2%)	Orchard or cropland (5%)	Roads
Native forest (5%)	Wetlands (5%)	Marae
Pasture (80%)	Waterbodies (3%)	Water quality monitoring point

The national land cover database (LCDB, version 6) was used to define land cover in this catchment.

Water quality improvement for the four contaminants

This diagram shows the level of collective effort needed to positively impact water quality in the Waikato at Mercer Bridge catchment and further downstream. Upstream land activities strongly influence water quality in this catchment, which is part of the Waikato River's main stem. Focus on best practices within your farm and catchment, while keeping your neighbours in mind.

