

Maunga ki Tai

A newsletter from the

Waikato River Authority

Waipa catchment strongly supported in clean up allocation

THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY HAS ANNOUNCED IT WILL ALLOCATE \$6 MILLION TO 33 RIVER CLEAN UP PROJECTS THIS YEAR FOLLOWING ITS LATEST FUNDING DECISIONS.

Two major projects, both in the Waipa River catchment, will each receive \$1 million of funding. These include implementation work for the Waipa Catchment Plan particularly around soil conservation schemes. The work is to be coordinated by the Waikato Regional Council and the Authority's funding is subject to the Council also committing it's funding to the project as part of it's Long Term Plan.

The other \$1 million Waipa project is a partnership with DairyNZ to develop sustainable milk plans for dairy farms in the catchment. The project follows on from a similar undertaking in the Karapiro catchment that has shown improvements in the environmental effects from dairy farming around water quality and nutrient loss.

Waikato River Authority co-chairs Hon

John Luxton and Tukoroirangi Morgan say the level of collaboration between groups and organisations involved on major projects is becoming more evident every year.

"We've stated from the beginning the need for groups to coordinate resources and work together on projects. We are pleased to see the depth of this approach coming through in successful projects together with a significant level of co-funding," says Mr Luxton.

The latest funding announcements are for the 4th funding round to be carried out by the Waikato River Authority. To date 141 projects have received Authority funding of \$22 million and it is estimated that the total cost of these projects including co-funding is approaching \$50 million.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CE

A big focus for the Waikato River Authority this year has been the building of important relationships for the benefit of the river.

One of the most important of these has been the establishment of the Waikato River Restoration Forum, bringing together industry, iwi, as well as central and local government.

This strategic river leadership group has come together under the guidance of the Authority to facilitate greater collaboration, working jointly on major clean-up projects, and with an overall strategic approach to the task of restoring the Waikato River catchment.

The Authority aims to help this initiative progress further in 2015 along with other projects that were funded in the 2014 fund round.



Bob Penter
Chief Executive

Members of the Mangakotukutuku Stream group and their families have been involved in a project to restore native mudfish to a specially created wetland area beside the Mangakotukutuku Stream at Sandford Park in Melville, Hamilton.



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Tukoroirangi Morgan says the Authority’s strategic focus has been on the Upper Waipa and the Lower Waikato this year. “Clearly the Waipa has benefitted from significant funding this year but it is an area with significant need. Improvements from clean-up and restoration in this catchment will also have a

direct effect on the lower Waikato River,” says Mr Morgan.

The \$6,065,737 of funding will see 23 projects receive over \$50,000 and ten projects under that level. The smallest project to be funded is one being undertaken by the Mangakotukutuku Stream Care Group in Hamilton for riparian planting which received \$9,500.

AGM and fieldtrip

THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY HELD ITS 4TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING THIS YEAR AND FOR THE FIRST TIME OUTSIDE HAMILTON AT WAIRAKEI.

Moving the meeting to another part of the Waikato River enabled local iwi and the wider community an opportunity to attend the AGM.

Holding the AGM at Wairakei also meant the Waikato River Authority board were able to have a close-up look at the river in its upper reaches. The board were able to see the river for several kilometres by jet boat downstream from the Aratiatia rapids and power station.

In the past 24 months the Authority board has carried out field trips on the lower Waikato River, the Waipa River Catchment and now the upper river.



Waikato River Authority board members were able to inspect the upper Waikato River below the Aratiatia power station coinciding with the Authority’s AGM held in Wairakei.



Taking aim to lower koi numbers

NEW ZEALAND BOW HUNTERS DID THEIR PART IN HELPING TO CONTROL KOI CARP IN THE WAIKATO RIVER RECENTLY WHEN THEY HELD THEIR KOI CARP CLASSIC FOR THE 25TH TIME.

The Waikato River Authority helped sponsor this year’s competition.

Event organiser Allan Metcalfe says more than four tonnes of carp were pulled from river during the event held with koi being shot with bow and reel-attached arrows in waterways around the Huntly area. The largest fish shot during the competition was 8.5 kilograms.

About 60 hunters took part in the event with some coming from Australia and as far away as Germany.

The koi carp is a major pest fish in the lower Waikato River.

Event organiser Allan Metcalfe with his catch from the Annual Koi Carp Classic

Milestone Release of mudfish

A STREAM THAT CONTAINS ONE OF THE LARGEST RANGES OF THREATENED NATIVE FISH IN HAMILTON HAS BEEN GIVEN ADDED HELP BY THE MANGAKOTUKUTU STREAM CARE GROUP WITH FUNDING FROM THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY.

Stream Care Group chairman Grant Blackie says bringing the mudfish back is a key project in the group's efforts to restore native aquatic species in Hamilton area. The group is working to restore biodiversity at a range of sites in and around the stream, which runs from south of the city to join the Waikato River near Hamilton Gardens. Putting the mudfish at the Sandford Park site has created the only known current population of the fish in this catchment. "The mudfish in the catchment had previously disappeared along with their wetlands habitat, due to factors like urban encroachment on the environment and conversion of land to farming," says Grant Blackie.



The group attracted Waikato River Authority funding for the mudfish project, constructing a new wetland and planting it in conjunction with the Hamilton City Council. Tonkin and Taylor staff designed and oversaw construction of the wetland and the Department of Conservation provided the necessary permits to bring the mudfish in from Lake Komakarau near Hamilton. Many of Stream Care Group are staff members from the Waikato Regional Council. Grant says members of the group have put in many hours on the project. "These guys are passionate about protecting and enhancing the environment and November's release on the mud fish was a huge highlight."

Significant milestone for river bank restoration



River side land to be fenced between Taupiri and Huntly with the help of funding from the Waikato River Authority. Photo courtesy of Waikato RiverCare looking north towards Huntly

WAIKATO RIVERCARE HAS SECURED PERMISSION FROM THE WAIKATO DISTRICT COUNCIL AND STEVENSON PROPERTIES LIMITED TO FENCE THE LAST REMAINING SECTION OF RIVERBANK ACCESSED BY STOCK ON SH1 BETWEEN TAUPIRI AND HUNTLY TOWNSHIPS.

Waikato RiverCare's operations manager Kevin Hutchinson says the project is an excellent example of the way the Waikato River draws landowners, community groups and government agencies together to work out solutions that benefit for all parties and protect the future health and wellbeing of the awa. Waikato RiverCare is particularly pleased that the agreed fence line will protect a locally significant river back water wetland and allow for its planting and restoration within the 1100m long project.

Waikato RiverCare has been undertaking habitat restoration works on the five kilometre section of river between Taupiri and Huntly and to date has completed four major projects covering over three kilometres of riverbank which has seen stock proof fencing and weed control implemented, as well as over 24,000 plants being planted.

Kevin Hutchinson says plans to get fencing underway as soon as ground conditions allow on the new site, with the aim to have the first pre-planting preparation work completed before Christmas. The first planting of 10,500 plants will take place in August 2015.

Strategic partnership further strengthened



Chief Executives Vaughan Payne (Waikato Regional Council) and Bob Penter (Waikato River Authority). The two organisations recently celebrated the 3rd anniversary of their partnership agreement. Since the establishment of the Authority at the end of 2010 both organisations have worked in close alignment to restore and protect the Waikato River and its catchment. In the latest funding round, the Authority granted approximately \$1.6 million to projects directly or indirectly connected with the regional council.

Investment Committee oversees long-term fund



Chair of the Waikato River Authority's Investment Committee, Roger Pikia.

In the past year the long term investment fund grew by \$1.5 million and currently stands at just over \$40 million.

The Investment, Audit and Finance Committee, the sub-committee of the Waikato River Authority, has a major role in overseeing a long-term investment fund for the benefit of the river.

By creating a funding source for the future, the Authority is looking past the Crown's commitment to fund clean-up activities for a 30 year period. The Investment Committee is chaired by iwi appointee to the Authority Roger Pikia. Other members of the Investment Committee are Authority co-chairs Hon John Luxton and Tukoroirangi Morgan, along with deputy co-chair Jenni Vernon and board members Heemi Biddle and Alan Livingston.

Successful Audit

Audit New Zealand carried out an audit of the Waikato River Authority and the Waikato River Clean-up Trust this year.

Audit New Zealand has again complimented the Authority on its operations with no material issues raised.



Annual Report on-line

The Waikato River Authority's 2014 Annual Report has been presented to Parliament and is available to read on-line at www.waikatoriver.org.nz.

An audit of the Authority's 2013 – 2014 year activities were also undertaken by Audit New Zealand.