

July 2018

WHAREKAWA: HEALTHY CATCHMENT, HEALTHY HARBOUR

PŪAHA ORA, RIU WAI ORA



TĒNĀ KOUTOU!

Another year is done and dusted and in that time there has certainly been a lot of great catchment work carried out by various agencies and community groups. Our newsletters have taken a bit of a hiatus due to staff changes, but our work on the ground has continued.

Wharekawa is a focus catchment in the Coromandel Peninsula, which means we will have some exciting projects coming up in water quality and sediment management. You can find out more about what a focus catchment is inside this newsletter.

Weather patterns continuously challenge us, especially storms, and this year has been no exception. Flood events in March and April 2017 severely impacted on the catchment. Slips, debris and forestry material affected roads, properties and waterways catchment wide. We worked with Broad Spectrum, the NZ Transport Agency, Thames-Coromandel District Council and Rayonier to remediate damage as soon as practicable. We've continued to work with landowners with land and river management issues.

Please take the time to read about some of the many activities that contribute to your harbour and catchment plan. If you have any questions or comments, get in touch with one of the team. Our contact details are on the back page.

Ngā mihi

Hauraki Coromandel Integrated Catchment Management team

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WHAREKAWA HARBOUR AND CATCHMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

It's hard to believe that it's nine years since the Wharekawa Harbour and Catchment Management Plan was written and that, from this, a harbour and catchment management process would develop for the Coromandel zone.

These plans are an integral part of our works programme because they set the direction and priorities of what we do. Things that started as ideas over a map through community discussions during plan development, e.g. the region's first saltwater paspalum control project,

mangrove management and extensive river management works to make the Wharekawa River navigable once more, are now happening!

We intend to continue to deliver on the key outcomes, therefore have written implementation plans to ensure that happens. These prioritise the actions contained within your harbour and catchment plan.

Want to refresh yourself with the plans? Check out waikatoregion.govt.nz/hcmp.

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION WORKS

There's an inspiring amount of ecological restoration work being carried out in the Wharekawa catchment, which supports the work we do. Here's a snapshot.

- The Wharekawa Catchment Care Group continues its restoration efforts at Kapakapa wetland, with promising results.
- The Opoutere Residents and Ratepayers Association completed restoration planting on a large slip on Maungaruawahine. The group also continues its animal pest control efforts focused on protecting threatened bird species, particularly New Zealand dotterel.
- Last October we set up acoustic recorders to detect cryptic wetland bird species in the Kapakapa and Ohui/Waahi Tapu wetlands. We were excited to confirm a recording of the critically endangered Australasian bittern at Kapakapa. Meantime, the nationally at risk banded rail was recorded at Ohui. At both sites we picked up a

recording of the nationally at risk North Island fernbird.

- Over the next month we'll be rolling out a 'harbour scale' ecological restoration plan targeting threatened habitats around the Wharekawa Harbour. This is exciting as it will build on historic and existing restoration works, while also mapping a way forward for new works with the potential to include more predator control, pest plant control and restoration planting. While rewarding, this work requires many hands to keep it going and to ensure success. We're already talking to key community groups about opportunities for their involvement. Keen to get involved yourself? Please call catchment management officer, Rob Corkill.
- A review of the saltwater paspalum control work at Waahi Tapu Stream is underway. As part of this we are looking at trialling an alternative chemical.

SEVERE STORMS TAKE THEIR TOLL

A condition survey of the Wharekawa catchment in August last year reveals the toll a series of severe storm events has had on the land.

The survey provided a snapshot into the state of the catchment's pastoral land area and was compared to the initial baseline survey completed in 2012. This information allows staff to prioritise ongoing land and river management works.

The August survey included an assessment of stock exclusion (fencing) from waterways, vegetation types, riparian erosion, stream blockages and hill country erosion.

Thirty-seven per cent of fenced riparian margins had native vegetation, 61 per cent had exotic vegetation (including rank pasture grasses) and 2 per cent mixed native/exotic vegetation.

The survey was expanded to include nearly all natural and manmade drains in the catchment. Altogether, more than 90km of waterways were assessed.

There were some interesting comparisons:

- Stock exclusion from waterways in the pastoral catchment area has increased from 79 per cent in 2012 to 84 per cent (an increase of 4km of fencing).

- The number of in-stream blockages were considerably higher – 49 compared with six in 2012.
- The amount of riparian erosion was also considerably higher, at 2.7km (<3 per cent of riparian margins in the catchment) compared to 39m in 2012.
- Hill country erosion (soil slip) accounted for 6ha compared to 1.3ha in 2012.

It's important to note that the increased level of erosion and blockages are attributed to a number of severe weather events experienced in the catchment since the 2012 survey. All blockages have since been inspected and remedial works undertaken where necessary.

MEETING WITH FORESTRY

This coming September, a forestry field trip will be held. This has been driven by the Wharekawa Catchment Care Group with the intention of sharing concerns, increasing understanding of logging practices and strengthening the relationships between the community and Rayonier. The invite has been extended to community boards and other key community groups in the Wharekawa, Whangamatā and Tairua catchments. Thank you Rayonier for opening up your managed forests for this trip.

RIVER WORKS AND FLOOD DAMAGE

River management works were successfully undertaken during the summer of 2016/17 at several locations on the Wharekawa River and Paritu Stream. However, some works were affected by the 2017 flood events.

Along with newly identified damage, all sites were remediated including the Waahi Tapu Stream. Some river issues had to be programmed for the 2017/18 summer and during this time all works were completed. This included obstruction removal, gravel

management, live tree tying and erosion protection. At one site alone, 300 tonne of rock spall was imported!

River management and improvement is ongoing and further works will be planned for the 2018/19 summer.

We hold resource consents to undertake in-stream works, which authorise obstruction removal, gravel management and erosion protection. If you are aware of river issues, please contact your local river management officer.



Live tree tying in the catchment. Summer 2016/2017.



Groynes installed for erosion protection along the river bank. Summer 2016/2017.



Poplars across Wharekawa River were removed. Summer 2017/2018.



Rocks used to stop erosion. Summer 2017/2018.

IN FOCUS

The Wharekawa catchment was selected last year as one of two 'focus catchments' in the Coromandel to showcase best practice works in relation to water quality and sediment management.

The Coromandel Focus Catchment Project, which also includes the Whangapoua catchment, will look at key methods of minimising erosion and sedimentation in sensitive environments.

The two catchments were chosen based on risk of sediment contamination, types of land use and connections with the coast. Also, there is good community engagement in those catchments, along with demonstrable good practices.

A Wharekawa catchment condition survey carried out in August helped to identify several larger scale projects that have the potential to demonstrate best practice sediment management works across various formats. These include constructed wetlands/sediment traps, more expansive hill country soil conservation (e.g. poplar pole planting and rock groynes) and riprap for stream bank erosion remediation at severely eroded sites.

Discussions with respective landowners have been positive and a project management plan has been drafted. Some works have already started, and more is due to get underway this winter and to occur over a three-year period.

BIOSECURITY NEWS

TACKLING LANTANA

Lantana excretes toxins into the soil which suppress other plants around it. If it's not controlled, it could totally replace the native vegetation in forest areas. Lantana can also invade paddocks, reducing pasture productivity, and farmers can suffer stock losses because it's poisonous to livestock. Lantana is classified as an eradication pest in our regional rules, which makes it our responsibility to carry out control. Visit our website for identifying features of lantana, and report sightings to 0800 BIOSEC (0800 246 732).

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/lantana



TAONGA TREES UNDER THREAT

Kauri dieback is a soil-borne organism which is threatening the wellbeing of this mighty native tree.

In 2014, the disease was detected in the Coromandel Peninsula in Whangapoua and Hukarahi. A comprehensive aerial survey to check for other possible cases was completed last year, and following soil sampling confirmed a new kauri dieback site near Tairua. Our biosecurity team is working with the landowner and close neighbours to prevent the spread of this disease. While the disease is not widespread, there are lots of areas to be kept disease free to protect our kauri.

Our catchment management staff continue to work with landowners to help protect kauri. This has involved activities such as fencing off stands of kauri, while our biosecurity team helps manage feral animals and promote on-farm biosecurity such as good cleaning of machinery.

Meanwhile, the Department of Conservation has been carrying out ground truthing at priority sites on public conservation land.



BE ON THE LOOKOUT

Myrtle rust has just been found for the first time in the Coromandel Peninsula, on a pōhutukawa tree in Colville. The Ministry for Primary Industries needs your help to keep an eye out for this disease.

Myrtle rust spores are microscopic and can easily spread across large distances by wind. Symptoms of myrtle rust are harder to detect over winter but when spring arrives you may start to notice it.

The fungal disease affects plants in the myrtle family, including iconic native plants pōhutukawa, mānuka, rātā, kānuka, swamp maire and ramarama, as well as commercially-grown species such as feijoa, eucalyptus and guava.

It's not yet known how this disease will affect New Zealand species, but severe infestations can kill affected plants and have long-term impacts on the regeneration of young plants and seedlings.

Symptoms to look out for on myrtle plants are:

- bright yellow powdery eruptions appearing on the underside of the leaf (young infection)
- bright yellow powdery eruptions on both sides of the leaf (mature infection)
- brown/grey rust pustules (older spores) on older lesions.

Think you've seen the symptoms of myrtle rust? Don't touch it! Call the MPI Exotic Pest and Disease Hotline immediately on: 0800 80 99 66.

WE ALL HAVE A PART TO PLAY

It's important we all play our part protecting kauri.

Some simple things you can do when bush walking are:

- making sure you clean your gear before and after going on a track
- keeping to the tracks
- checking with landowners before accessing private property.

How you can protect kauri on your property:

- Fence stock out of bush areas.
- Ensure contractors clean their gear before coming onto and leaving your property.
- Undertake pest and pig control.
- Keep people out of your bush or off the ground near your kauri.
- The less soil you move on and off your property the better.

 kauridieback.co.nz

 0800 800 401



DIVING FOR PESTS

Marine pests are species which are not native to New Zealand and are harmful to our natural environment and our aquaculture industries.

Their principle pathway, or means of spread, is via biofouling on vessels. Unfortunately, Auckland is home to many of these marine pests and home to many of the vessels that visit the Coromandel Peninsula over summer.

Last October, a vessel was turned away from Whitianga after being found with Mediterranean fanworm on its hull. Another fanworm-infested vessel that arrived in Whangamata for Beach Hop in March was also turned away.

As part of our marine surveillance programme, we hire the Bay of Plenty Regional Council dive team to inspect a number of sites around the Coromandel each year. These sites include marinas, moorings, structures and common anchoring bays.

Earlier this year the Whangamatā, Tairua and Whitianga marinas were surveyed. The good news is that, as expected, the marinas, their structures and vessels were found to be free of marine pests. Whangamatā and



Whitianga moorings and Home Bay at Great Mercury Island were also clear.

Tairua moorings and Slipper Island were inspected in April and no marine pests were found.

If you have a vessel on a mooring or in a marina, make sure it's cleaned and anti-fouled before heading away.



MARITIME SAFETY NEWS

MARINEMATE FOR YOUR SMARTPHONE

Heading out, but not sure where the closest boat ramp is, what the local rules are, what time low tide is, or which VHF channel you should tune into! You can have all the important boating information available in the palm of your hand. MarineMate is a FREE smartphone app that gives you access to information to help you navigate safely on our waters. The app is updated regularly to take account of feedback.

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YOUR LOCAL REGIONAL COUNCIL CONTACTS: PHONE 07 866 0172

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HE TAIAO MAURIORA 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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