

Maunga ki Tai

A newsletter from the
 Waikato River
 Authority

Lake Rotopiko a showcase and sanctuary in the making



Chairman of the National Wetland Trust of New Zealand, Tony Roxburgh, with the important wetland plant *Sporadanthus ferrugineus*.

ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST IMPORTANT PEAT LAKES, LAKE ROTOPIKO IN WAIPA IS ON THE WAY TO BECOMING A MAJOR EDUCATIONAL SHOWCASE AND NATIVE BIRD SANCTUARY.

The project to help protect the lake and create an education and research centre is being undertaken by the National Wetland Trust of New Zealand. The project is one of the larger endeavors to be funded by the Waikato River Authority with \$600,000 of funds allocated.

The National Wetland Trust has been putting in place 1.4 kilometres of predator proof fence to help protect and enhance the native bird population. In the longer term the Trust aims to build a visitor and education centre on the site. Designs for the building are being developed currently but the construction will be dependent on further funding.

The Trust says its first priority is site restoration.

Chairman of the Trust, Waipa's Tony Roxburgh, says there have been 34 species of native birds identified living in the environs of the lake with 10 of these being threatened species.

"The only true wetland species of bird currently missing from the lake is the Brown Teal, and our aim is to reintroduce a breeding population of these birds. It is highly likely these birds would be 'free-flying' moving in and out of the protected area to feed," says Mr Roxburgh.

As well as important bird species the Wetland Trust is wanting to widely re-establish the native giant cane rush, *Sporadanthus ferrugineus*, which is an important peat building plant. The rush is also home to a rare native caterpillar larvae that lives inside its stems.

Applications open for third funding round

THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY WILL BE OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS FROM 1 JULY TO 23 OF AUGUST FOR ITS THIRD ROUND OF FUNDING FOR RIVER CLEAN-UP PROJECTS.

Up to \$7 million is available for distribution.

The annual application process has been brought forward and an additional million dollars added to this year's funding round in an effort to get increased momentum in cleaning up the Waikato River.

Waikato River Authority co-chairs Tukoroirangi Morgan and Hon John Luxton say while the two previous funding rounds have been successful; the task ahead for the Authority, and the wider community, in protecting and restoring the river is considerable and there is a need to push even harder to see more clean-up action.

"At our funding round in 2012 not all available funds were awarded. We have funded some high quality projects and we are keen to send a message that we do have funding available for more projects that meet the required standards and outcomes," says Mr Luxton.

The Authority would also like to see more funding applications from community groups.

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...Applications for funding continued.

"A large part of protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River is to ensure that people have a strong connection with the river. Even relatively small projects, for example where local community groups come together for planting programmes, can make a big environmental difference as well creating more people who are strong river advocates for the future," says Mr Morgan.

The Authority's has an updated Funding Strategy 2013 which is available from the Waikato River Authority office in Hamilton or from our website www.waikatoriver.org.nz. There is also additional information on the funding process available on the website together with an online application form. All Waikato River Authority funding is inclusive of GST.

As in past years, the Authority will be taking advice from a specially formed technical advisory group when making funding decisions, especially for projects of a more scientific and technical nature.

The Authority expects to be able to announce its funding decisions to applicants by November to enable successful projects to get underway as soon as possible.

This year, the Authority will again be keen to see a high level of co-funding and collaboration indicated from applicants, especially in the larger clean-up projects. The Waikato River Authority will need more than just the resources it has available in order to see a restored and protected river in the future. Consequently a high level of partnership and collaboration with industry, iwi and community groups will be needed for ultimate success.

The Waikato River Authority would also like to see more funding applications from community groups.

The Authority is a co-governance body established between the Crown and Waikato River Iwi to restore and protect the Waikato River. The Authority covers a catchment area of 11,000 square kilometres for New Zealand's longest river. Over the next 27 years the Authority will administer \$250 million to support the achievement of its purpose.

New Interns for WRA

The Waikato River Authority has taken on two students for temporary internships as part of a longer term programme to give work experience opportunities.

The students  Jessica Samuels with Ngāti Tuwharetoa tribal affiliations and Ashleigh Peti from Raukawa will both complete their internships in July.

Otorohanga dairy farm wins catchment improvement award



Waikato River Authority board member Jenni Vernon presented the award on behalf of the Authority and says the Davisons are a great example of farmers who are committed to land stewardship over many years.

A DAIRY FARMING OPERATION THAT BORDERS THE WAIPA RIVER FOR TWO KILOMETRES NEAR OTOROHANGA HAS WON A CATCHMENT IMPROVEMENT AWARD SPONSORED BY THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY.

The catchment improvement category was part of this year's Waikato Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

The category was won by Rosemary and Graham Davison who farm the 103 hectare Pinewood property in the Otewa district.

Graham Davison says they were delighted to win the award as a recognition of the environmental restoration work they have carried out on the farm for more than 20 years. "It is a great honour and we are thrilled", he says.

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Mr Davison says when he and his wife first started the improvement work, particularly along the edges of the Waipa River, there was very little help and no recognition for what they were doing.

Waikato University underway with lake clean-up

WAIKATO UNIVERSITY'S LAKE ORANGA IS WELL ON THE WAY TO BEING CLEANED UP THANKS TO A WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY GRANT AND LOTS OF WORK.

The 0.7 hectare lake on the grounds of the university was created in the 1960s as a storm water catchment. It eventually flows into the Waikato River.

The university has undertaken major works on the lake thanks to a \$45,000 grant from the Authority.

Work so far has included removing 1600 cubic metres of silt, a skip full of rubbish and 800 pest fish.

The university's environmental and sustainability coordinator, Rachael Goodard says the recent planting of a Maaori garden with medicinal native plants is another step forward towards the lake's remediation. The project includes an ecology education programme associated with Lake Oranga.

Next steps will include further work on the treatment of the storm water that feeds into the lake.



Waikato University student Theresa Moore (foreground) and Californian exchange student Jennifer Feinstein take part in the planting day for the new Maaori garden near Lake Oranga on the university campus.

Board members take close look at lower Waikato River



Waikato River Authority board members John Luxton, Stephanie O'Sullivan and Tukoroirangi Morgan with Michael Duffy the lower Waikato Zone Manager for the Waikato Regional Council.

Waikato River Authority board members and staff along with staff from the Department of Conservation and the Waikato Regional Council recently took to the water of the lower Waikato River.

The field trip looked at the river from Tuakau through to Port Waikato.

The lower area of the Waikato River has a particular focus for the Waikato River Authority given its significantly deteriorated water quality. The 2012 round of the Authority's funding saw a substantial amount of project funding for the lower Waikato including a comprehensive multi-year project to restore whitebait habitat and a restoration project.

Of particular interest for the Authority members was the overall water quality, plant pest species and a first hand look at land use close to the riverbanks.

As well as looking at the area of funded projects on the lower Waikato River, board members also visited Lake Waikare to see the pilot project for koi carp control.

More river ride opens



A LARGE CROWD TURNED OUT FOR THE OPENING OF THE WALK WAY OPENING WHICH BORDERS LAKE KARAPIRO

The second major section of Te Awa – the Great New Zealand River Ride – has opened featuring sweeping views of Lake Karapiro.

About 500 people cycled or walked the new 2 kilometre Karapiro cycle/walkway after its unveiling in a community opening on Sunday 7 April. The Te Awa River Ride received Waikato River Authority funding in 2011 (\$150,000) and in

2012 (\$350,000) as part of the long term project to complete a 70 kilometre pathway between Ngaruawahia and Horahora.

Board Member and Waipa Mayor Alan Livingston represented the Authority at the opening.

This is the second major section of the cycle way to be opened following on from the section linking Leamington and Karapiro.

Police dive squad helps to complete project

A RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECT TO REMOVE DUMPED MOTOR VEHICLES FROM THE RIVERBED IN THE UPPER WAIKATO RIVER WAS CARRIED OUT WITH MAJOR HELP FROM NEW ZEALAND POLICE DIVE SQUAD.

The project was managed by Landcorp Farming Limited and funded by the Waikato River Authority.

The dive squad was integral to the successful completion of the project which saw them use the project as a training exercise. Several cars and an abandoned truck were cleared from the river. The dumped vehicles were visible from Landcorp farmland in the Broadlands area north of Lake Taupo.

A video of the clean-up operation was recently broadcast through Fairfax media's Stuff Website www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/photos/vid



Snr Sgt Bruce Adams of the Police National Dive Squad presents a plaque of appreciation for funding support to the Authority co-chair Hon John Luxton.

 **Waikato River Authority**

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