

Maunga ki Tai

Task underway to evaluate funding applications

THE TASK TO EVALUATE PROPOSALS SEEKING FUNDING FROM THE WAIKATO RIVER AUTHORITY IS NOW WELL UNDERWAY, WITH THE APPLICATION PROCESS CLOSING OFF AT THE END OF LAST MONTH.

A total of 52 applications were received requesting a funding total of \$17.2 millions.

There is up to \$7 million available for initiatives that help restore or protect the Waikato and Waipa Rivers.

Waikato River Authority co-chairs Hon John Luxton and Tukoroirangi Morgan say the strength and quality of applications that have been received in this funding round is extremely encouraging.

The co-chairs say the Authority is particularly pleased to see such a strong connection between the updated Funding Strategy and so many of the applications. "We've wanted to be more directive in outlining the priorities for restoration and so it is gratifying to see that direction reflected in the project proposals," says Mr Morgan.

The applications are now undergoing an independent evaluation process. The evaluation panel will make recommendations to a sub-committee of the Authority who in turn will then make the final funding recommendations to Authority's board. It is intended that successful project applicants will be announced by the end of November.

The largest of the projects in the list of applications is for a \$4 million project. Just over \$2 million is being

sought from the Waikato River Authority for this project with the balance coming from other sources. Overall the level of co-funding across all applications is \$1.20 for every funding dollar applied for.

The range of projects being considered this year includes large scale restoration at a sub catchment level through to smaller gully restoration and riparian planting. Another feature of the applications is the large number of previously successful project applicants returning with new initiatives.

In the previous three years of funding, the Waikato River Authority has allocated approximately \$16 million to 108 individual projects. The Authority advocates for an integrated and cohesive approach for clean-up activities across the river catchment, that covers 11,000 square kilometres.

MESSAGE FROM THE CE

The general election has focused attention on the quality of our country's freshwater resources. The Government's announcement of \$100m to support land purchase and retirement is a significant policy, although some would argue it is a small step albeit in the right direction. The Waikato region is unique in benefiting from the Waikato River Authority funding clean-up initiatives with a funding commitment of over \$220m. We know Waikato people and communities are passionate about cleaning up our waterways – evidenced by the level of funding sought and committed by our latest funding round applicants. We are superbly placed to play a leadership role in freshwater restoration, but this can only be achieved through collaboration and a coordinated effort. This is a key focus for the Authority in the coming years.



Bob Penter
Chief Executive



The Waikato River at Ngaruawahia where it is joined by the Waipa River. There is a significant amount of additional sediment entering the Waikato River at this point.



Landcare Research staff Rebecca Phillips and Suzanne Lambie at the floating wetland site near Taupiri. Extensive progress has been made since work started in May this year, including the creation of the floating wetland which acts as a natural water filter.



Major work completed at wetland project

A LANDCARE RESEARCH PROJECT TO REDEVELOP A WETLAND SITE ON THE BANKS OF THE MANGAWARA STREAM NEAR TAUPIRI HAS HAD SUBSTANTIVE SITE-WORKS COMPLETED.

The work has involved fencing a 2.7 hectare area, the completion of extensive planting and the building of a floating wetland bed. The Mangawara Stream feeds into the Waikato River at Taupiri and is currently quite discoloured.

The wetland project aims to reduce both nutrient and sediment entering the Mangawara by providing a natural filter with the riparian planting and floating wetland bed.

The multi year project received \$200,000 from the Waikato River Authority in the 2013 funding round. The redeveloped area is expected to become a well-populated habitat for fish and bird life in a short space of time.



Official launch of bilingual guide

The project to produce the guide was undertaken by NZ Landcare Trust with funding from the Waikato River Authority.

Pictured is Waikato River Authority co-chair John Luxton speaking at the official launch of the publication: ***Waikato River Restoration: A bilingual guide.***

The guide can be viewed or downloaded at www.landcare.org.nz/BilingualGuide

HCC's flourishing gullies programme

Hamilton City Council has been underway with its gully programme for 12 years, reflecting a strong and increasing community interest in gully restoration.

Council received 155 applications for support with gully restoration, and 142 of them were successful. On average, successful applicants received 33 plants, plus herbicide gel or eco-matting for bank stabilisation in some cases.

Council's ecological developments project leader, Leigh Cornes, says the programme would not be possible without the ongoing backing from the Waikato River Authority. "Their continued support has allowed gully owners to play a significant role in the conversion of some 750 hectares of mainly weedy gully wildernesses into native bush, bringing back native birds into the city and improving the water quality in Hamilton's streams."

The local authority support for this initiative is considered crucial: many landowners, although keen, need guidance on how to carry out restoration successfully. The educational component of the programme is essential for success. In particular the need for rigorous weed control before planting, and planting the right plant in the right place is essential.

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Graeme and Julie Blake overlooking the gully at their Frankton home - an area they now refer to as "Tui Valley"

"Going forward we are undertaking a project with Waikato University to identify where the private gullies are being restored, with this information we hope to close the gaps to create a whole gully approach, creating green corridors throughout the city and further build the communities within these gullies.

"The enthusiasm from the community for restoring their gullies is extraordinary. Residents generally put in a great deal of time and effort into restoring their gullies, and are very grateful for the support they receive," says Leigh Cornes.

Planting showing flourishing signs

The Waikato River Authority has been able to help draw public attention to a riparian planting project close to the Hamilton – Raglan road.

A project to plant the banks of the Tunaek Stream, a tributary of the Waipa River, has been undertaken by Whaingaroa Harbourcare on the property of Diana and Don Johnstone near Whatawhata.

Visible from the road, the stream has been fenced and 55,600 natives trees have planted. The project was funded by the Waikato River Authority in 2012 and has now been completed.

The Johnstone's gave permission for the Waikato River Authority sign to be erected on one of their farm buildings.



Milk plans produce nutrient reduction

THE DAIRYNZ LED PROJECT TO IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABLE MILK PLANS FOR DAIRY FARMS IN THE UPPER WAIKATO CATCHMENT IS SHOWING ENCOURAGING RESULTS.

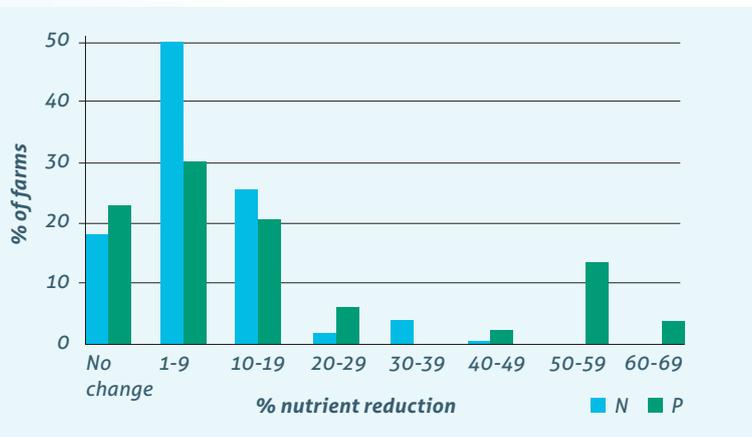
The project, which received major funding from the Waikato River Authority (\$685,000), aims to improve environmental practice on farms to ultimately improve the health of the Waikato River.

This is a 3-year project which began in June 2012.

To date there have been 650 dairy farms which have agreed to take part in the project which involves one-on-one advice and support via the development of a farm specific plan around nutrient and water management. So far 570 plans have been delivered.

DairyNZ has analysis from 436 farms that has resulted in 3610 individual on-farm actions to support more sustainable farming operations. The analysis has shown an encouraging reduction in the amount of nitrogen and phosphorous being lost from farms and potentially entering waterways.

Below is a graph of reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus loss on the first 436 farms of the SMP process.



Environment Policy Manager for DairyNZ, Dr Mike Scarsbrook says there are a number of very positive signals coming from the preliminary analysis of actions.

"Farmers are increasing their understanding of the environmental effects of farming activities, at the same time as setting out specific actions for improving performance."

The Upper Waikato sustainable milk project is the largest environmental good-practice catchment project ever undertaken by the New Zealand dairy industry. The project is funded by DairyNZ, the government's Primary Growth Partnership and the Waikato River Authority.

Online process to be extended

Work is currently underway to extend the Waikato River Authority on-line funding application process to include on-line reporting and monitoring of successful projects.

Authority chief executive Bob Penter says the web-based application system has worked well in its first year, helping to capture essential information in one place.

"We are now looking forward to enabling successful project managers to be able to report their progress on-line which will ensure a more efficient and effective monitoring process."

November AGM for Authority

The Waikato River Authority is expecting to hold its Annual General Meeting in November this year.

The time and date, once confirmed, will be advertised in the Waikato Times and publicised on www.waikatoriver.org.nz