



Mangati Stream Restoration



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The project aims to support the choked and disappearing Mangati Stream, turning it once again into an important part of the biodiversity of the northern channels of the lower Waikato River.

The project aim is to open the stream channel which will restore the current that is vital to attracting spawning white bait. We will replicate the plan of our stage 1 restoration by using existing streams [in this case the old flax drains that were in use for over a hundred years up until the 1960's] to connect the Mangati as a transport route allowing us access to control the exotic weeds that are constantly threatening the channel and surrounding swamp.

We feel that this project is not only important to the natural habitat of the river but also to the history of the awa. The Mangati was once "state highway one" connecting all river and coastal travel from the Waikato to the Manukau harbour and north. The flax drains, that we will use to help inanga access the tidal ponds were an important part of the flax mill industry that thrived on the river for several generations. Ironically the Mangati was used by the dairy industry up until the late 1920's to transport goods.

Without intervention the Mangati is in grave danger of being overrun by exotic flora [alligator weed, crack willow, pampas...] silting up and literally disappearing, back in to the swamp. We have with the help of family and friends over the last decade already cleared by hand several kms of the stream but to make a real difference we need to open the channel to the river.

Fencing the top and bottom of the stop bank and planting in large swamp flax, will allow shade and shelter for the spawning inanga and their eggs. The top fence will allow grazing of the outer Stop bank [farm side] while the planting of flax will not only create the shade and shelter but also act as a buffer for any nutrient run off from the grazing cattle across the spawning environment as NIWA's studies show that long rank grass is not as attractive to whitebait as grass that has had managed grazing. We also hope it would act as an example to other farmers, that it is possible to preserve the habitat and farm at the same time.

Our vision is to work in small steps to create an area of the river free of exotic flora and fauna, so that the whitebait, tuna, matakū and Matata will once again thrive. To do it in a way that encourages other to see that by taking small but significant steps it is possible to make a difference. We have the ongoing support of NIWA who would like to start their own project that would complement the work that we are already doing in this area and have also been able to get the support of our neighbouring farmers.

A sign of success of our project is the amount of interest we are getting from many different groups wanting to view and discuss what we have done. Waikato River Care, Fish and Game, iwi groups and consultants are asking for advice.

The WRA has been a supporter of this project from the beginning and much thanks is due to them.

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