



Restoration from willows through underplanting



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This initiative is a series of indigenous planting trials under willow canopy along the banks of the Waikato River and Waahi Stream near Huntly.

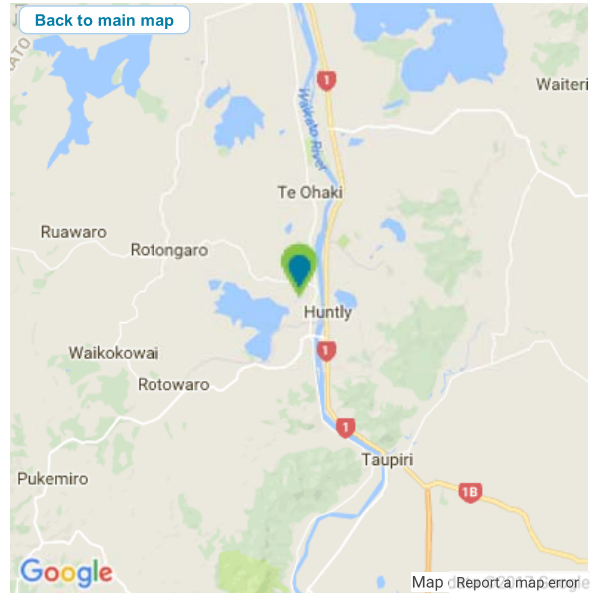
The objective is to refine low cost techniques for the replacement of willows with appropriate indigenous planting trials under willows with appropriate indigenous riparian and rongoā species and specifically:

- Trial and monitor a selection of indigenous species and management techniques to determine which work best at the restoration sites.
- Incorporate rongoā species and mātauranga Māori knowledge into the trial design.
- Train local Waahi Paa personnel in how to design objective scientific growth trials and monitor and report on these in a scientifically robust manner.

The project will apply the pioneering techniques developed by Dr Collin Meurk at Travis Wetland, Christchurch where willows have been successfully under planted with indigenous plants with minimum habitat disturbance and cost. The approach utilise the protective benefits of the willow canopy to shelter the native seedlings and minimise site disturbance that otherwise would trigger willow re-growth. Restoration of willow dominated margins of the river and some of its tributaries are problematic because the willows provide an important erosion control function and create habitat for native fish, especially tuna. The conventional approach of felling and removing willows before replanting opens the site to erosion and destroys the tuna habitat. It can also be very expensive because willow regeneration occurs vigorously and control of the re-growth requires considerable and prolonged effort.

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