

# WEST COAST NEWS

HEALTHY WEST COAST ZONE CATCHMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING



## KIA ORA

**Waikato Regional Council is beginning a two year project to develop harbour and catchment management plans for Raglan/Whāingaroa, Aotea and Kāwhia. This project builds on our growing programme of catchment management works in these areas.**

Harbour and catchment management plans reflect a collective vision for our natural environment, and identify actions needed to get there.

We will be talking to partners, agencies, iwi representatives, rural landowners and local communities to understand their concerns, aspirations and ideas for the harbours and their catchments. Our conversations will focus on water, soils and biodiversity management. The plans will include information on the natural state of the environment, identify the current issues and opportunities, and guide the council's operational work to improve the management of land, sediment, erosion, water quality and plant and animal pests.

### **What is harbour and catchment management?**

For Waikato Regional Council, it's about the mountains to the sea – identifying issues that relate to our land, water and communities, and developing a grassroots approach to remedy them. We recognise the need to consider

social, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes. Importantly, we like the work to be owned and driven by the community, for the community.

We have already developed plans for several harbour catchments in the Coromandel Peninsula. In those catchments, willow clearance along stream banks, riparian and forest fragment protection, wetland restoration, stream and flood management and coastal vegetation control are some of the works well underway. It's now time to look at what we can collectively do to improve the health and wellbeing of our unique and special west coast harbour environments.

**If you live in Kāwhia, Aotea and Raglan there will be an accompanying survey with this newsletter. Please take the time to fill it out to help us develop a harbour and catchment plan for your area. We'll also be holding information days in Kāwhia, Aotea and Raglan in the New Year.**



# Preventing Hill Country Erosion

Waikato Regional Council has secured more government funding to expand its soil conservation works programme to combat hill country erosion in the West Coast Zone.



Hill country landowners attend a Hill Country Erosion Fund field day in the Awakino catchment.

Awakino, Aotea Harbour, Kāwhia Harbour, Mokau, Marokopa and Whāingaroa Harbour will benefit from the \$1.39 million that Waikato Regional Council has secured from the Ministry for Primary Industries' Hill Country Erosion Fund for 2019-2023.

The fund is a partnership between erosion-prone land owners, MPI and regional councils. Regional councils can apply for up to four years of funding at each funding round, and for the 2018 round (July 2019-June 2023) \$34 million was available.

West Coast Zone manager Jolene Francis says the grant helps reduce landowners' share of costs in a move towards more sustainable land management practices.

The funding means farmers in these catchments can get up to 70 per cent of the cost of soil conservation works on their land paid for – 35 per cent from MPI and 35 per cent from the regional council.

“This work can include fencing to retire unproductive land from grazing and the planting of natives or willow/poplar poles to help control erosion,” says Jolene. “The fund even supports forestry planting and educating owners about soil erosion risk and appropriate land use options.

“Landowners can choose to contribute their share as work in kind.”

In total, the hill country erosion programme will equate to

about \$3.98 million being spent on hill country erosion works in the West Coast Zone in the next four years.

Jolene says the council had really good uptake by landowners in the last lot of funding received from MPI for hill country works in Awakino, Mangaotaki and Lower Mokau, with demand exceeding funds available.

“Now we're able to expand our work in those areas and include the coastal harbour catchments of Aotea, Kāwhia and Whāingaroa, which we're about to start developing harbour and catchment plans for.”



A massive sediment plume at the outlets of Awakino and Mokau rivers following heavy rainfall. By preventing hill country erosion, we can reduce the amount of sediment that ends up in our waterways and coastal areas.

In the previous Hill Country funding round of 2015-2019, the regional council secured \$630,000 for a programme of works totalling \$1.58 million

In total:

- 29 farm environment plans were completed
- 654 hectares of land and 75 kilometres of streambank were permanently retired from grazing
- 3119 poplars and willows covering 128 hectares were planted for erosion control
- 50,298 natives were planted
- 119 people attended three community engagement days on water quality in the West Coast Catchments, soil conservation, farm forestry, hill country erosion and available funding, and indicators of successful catchment groups
- 460 people attended seven field days on topics including soil conservation, stream bank erosion, hill country funding, carbon farming and afforestation.



Pole planting on steep eroding hill country in the Lower Mokau catchment addresses mass land movement.

“This is a very invaluable programme as it has wide reaching impacts that extend way beyond the farm. We all benefit from improvements to the water quality of our rivers and streams and coastal areas, and increased biodiversity.

“It also helps in reducing climate change related risks to our catchments and public infrastructure such as roads and power and water supplies.”

## Biosecurity update

**Please keep an eye out for invasive pest plant sea spurge, which poses a significant environmental risk to New Zealand and our west coast beaches.**

Sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*), native to Europe, North Africa and Western Asia, is capable of invading coastal areas, displacing local species and changing patterns of sand movement.

It's become a major pest in Australia, spreading from Western Australia to the southeastern coastline, Tasmania, the Base Strait Islands and New South Wales.

It was first found in New Zealand in 2012 near Aotea Harbour, and is thought to have arrived as seeds in coastal currents from Australia. Sea spurge seeds can survive in sea water for a long time.

The site has been successfully managed by the regional council, the Ministry for Primary Industries and the Department of Conservation, and just low numbers of the plant exist. However, in April this year, a single plant was found in Mokau, about 80 kilometres from the Aotea site.

**If you are working on the west coast please keep an eye out for new sea spurge infestations.**

Sea spurge has multiple stems, and is often reddish at the base. The leaves are blue/green, 4-20 millimetres long and 1-16 millimetres wide. Green flowers bloom at the stem tips from September to May.





Raglan Harbour benefits from any environmental work by landowners in the Raglan/Whāingaroa catchment.

## Fencing Te Rahi Ngahere

**A 290-hectare regionally significant bush block within an organic sheep and beef farm west of Ngāruawāhia has now been completely fenced off.**

The landowners, who are passionate conservationists, put in the last 700 metres of stock proof fencing in June this year.

It's been a five year project to construct about 7 kilometres of fencing around Te Rahi Ngahere (The Big Bush) in mostly steep and inhospitable hill country at Te Akatea Station.

Te Rahi Ngahere is of very high ecological value and supports populations of the nationally vulnerable long-tailed bat, and North Island kākā, and is situated within the nationally significant Whāingaroa Harbour Catchment.

The majority of the project was funded by the landowners with significant contributions from Waikato Regional Council's West Coast Zone and Natural Heritage teams.



Te Rahi Ngahere, west of Ngāruawāhia, has been entirely fenced off from stock.

### Who to contact

If you have any questions about projects, funding or want to find out how we can help you, please give us a call on 0800 800 401.

NAME	ROLE	PROJECTS	EMAIL
Jolene Francis	Zone manager	Harbour and catchment management plans	<a href="mailto:jolene.francis@waikatoregion.govt.nz">jolene.francis@waikatoregion.govt.nz</a>
Adrian Jepson and Callum Bourke	Catchment management officers	Have an on-farm project? We can give a subsidy of up to 35 per cent.  Free farm plans for landowners in hill country erosion catchments.  Need hill country soil conservation work done? We can give a subsidy of up to 70 per cent.	<a href="mailto:adrian.jepson@waikatoregion.govt.nz">adrian.jepson@waikatoregion.govt.nz</a>  <a href="mailto:callum.bourke@waikatoregion.govt.nz">callum.bourke@waikatoregion.govt.nz</a>
Lyndon Stokes	River management officer	Have a blocked river or stream causing serious flooding problems? We can give a subsidy of up to 50 per cent for river management works.	<a href="mailto:lyndon.stokes@waikatoregion.govt.nz">lyndon.stokes@waikatoregion.govt.nz</a>

**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](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz).**

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**Waikato**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
*Te Kaunihara ā Rohe o Waikato*