

MAY 2021

COROMANDEL ZONE

KI UTA KI TAI

HEALTHY
CATCHMENT
HEALTHY
HARBOUR



Kia ora

Lots has been happening across the Coromandel Zone (north from Tararu on the Thames Coast to Whiritoa on the east coast of the peninsula) since our last newsletter in November 2020.

River works, fencing and planting are underway for our two Shovel Ready projects – Manaia River Restoration and Clean Streams 2020 – and we continue to work closely with landowners, other agencies and the numerous care groups who look after our unique environment.

The purpose of these newsletters is to tell you about some of the work we are doing, or are involved in with others. We encourage you to contact our team if you have a wetland, bush or stream enhancement project in mind, want to carry out river work or weed control or need help to connect with your nearest environmental care group who strive to have our native bush predator free. Please also contact our team if you have an environmental project you want to share with our readers in the next newsletter.

Your Integrated Catchment Management team is a wealth of knowledge, and we also offer financial help for restoration works, soil, and stream management and animal and plant pest control.

Hei konā mai

Coromandel Zone Integrated Catchment Management Team

MANAIA RIVER RESTORATION

A project by the haukāinga (local community) to restore the mauri of the Manaia River is well underway.

Last year, as part of the Government's response to create jobs within shovel ready environmental restoration, biosecurity and climate resilience projects, Te Uru Rākau approved funding of \$855,592 over three years towards the \$1.16 million Manaia River restoration project.

A team of five locals were hired in September to realise the aspirations of the *Manaia River Restoration Plan*, which was developed by Waikato Regional Council and the haukāinga over 2019 and 2020. To date, nearly 1 kilometre of riparian fencing has been completed and river management and erosion control works are well underway.

This work is being done by Ngāti Pukenga ki Waiarau and Ngaati Whanaunga, and builds on river management works that have been carried out by the regional council, marae, iwi and adjacent landowners since the 2002 'weather bomb'.

Riparian planting and fencing in the catchment will help improve river water quality and reduce sedimentation build-up in the harbour. The first planting season this winter will see 10,000 native plants put into the ground.

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Richard Corban, left, and Hautu Martin secured jobs as field operators (fencing, planting, etc) on the Manaia River restoration project.

SHOVEL READY

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But the project is not just about fencing and planting – it's also about training a local workforce in plant propagation, weed control, fencing, predator control, water quality monitoring and other field skills creating more employment, and using mātauranga ā-iwi.

"I am hoping the project will create more employment in this community," says project coordinator Trish Mikaere, a former teacher and education consultant who is looking forward to working with the school and others to develop a curriculum to support the project.

"I am hoping it will start the people on a journey of maintaining the work that is being done and also develop the potential of a cottage industry for each household, like getting them to consider growing trees, like an orchard, and developing a nursery."

Leading Hand Dave Hamon, who has lived in Manaia all his life and was taught the practice of kaitiakitanga by his uncle, "one of the great chiefs" of the area, says he'll be passing on his learnings to young volunteers.

"The trees, the plants, the survival aspect; medicinal plants, edible plants. Help them get an understanding of the ngahere as their home: a sense of wellness and wellbeing.

"It's like your house: the ngahere is the walls, Papatūānuku is the floor and Rangi-nui the roof."

For more information on the Manaia Restoration Project see waikatoregion.govt.nz/manaia-river-restoration.



Dave Hamon says the Manaia River restoration project is about kaitiakitanga (guardianship and protection).



CLEAN STREAMS 2020

Year one of planting as part of the Clean Streams 2020 project is yet to begin in the Coromandel Peninsula, but Waikato Regional Council is already seeking interest from eligible landowners wanting native plants in 2022.

The Clean Streams 2020 project, being piloted in the Coromandel Peninsula and the west coast harbour priority catchments, was awarded \$1.998m in funding from the One Billion Trees Fund (Te Uru Rākau – Forestry New Zealand, Ministry for Primary Industries.) as part of the Government's response to help with the economic recovery from COVID-19.

The project enables eligible landowners, who permanently retire a stream and connected wetland or seep from grazing, to have the retired area planted in appropriate native plants at no cost to them, subject to conditions and funding availability.

Clean Streams 2020 uses local community based service providers to grow the plants and plant them in the winter months.

As a landowner, you could be eligible for plants and planting if:

- your property is in a catchment identified as a priority in the Coromandel Zone Plan (with the exclusion of the Manaia Harbour catchment due to its own restoration project)
- your stream is less than 5m wide
- your fencing (preference given to 5 wire, 2 electric), with a minimum setback of 5m, has been constructed since September 2020 or will be constructed over summer 2021/22
- you are willing to undertake weed control prior to planting
- you are happy to have a local community nursery supply and plant your native plants, and sign a simple agreement to carry out maintenance until the plants are established
- you are happy for a representative of regional council to establish a couple of photo points at your planting site so that photos can be taken before and after planting (every 6 months) until plants are established (likely to be 2 years).

**Please register your interest with Leanne Lawrence.
Email leanne.lawrence@waikatoregion.govt.nz.**

WORKING WITH OTHERS

SCHOLARSHIP 'A GREAT LEARNING EXPERIENCE'

Environmental science graduate and Colville local Iris Ronald spent the summer working around the Coromandel Peninsula with Waikato Regional Council and the Department of Conservation.

Her mahi was made possible through the Arthur Hinds Scholarship, which was set up by both organisations in 2018 to honour the late Whenuakite farmer who was a dedicated conservationist.

"I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity – doing a job that I love in a place that I love," says Iris.

The work was as varied as the environments she visited, from large private farms and small lifestyle blocks to predator free island sanctuaries.

Iris says highlights of the summer were meeting landowners and hearing about their relationship with the land and their visions for it, going on site visits to rivers and understanding how they are managed to mitigate natural hazards, and monitoring seabirds on Whakau Red Mercury Island.

"Working alongside others who are passionate about the environment has been really fulfilling and a great learning experience. I definitely recommend any locals studying environmental management or conservation to apply for next summer's scholarship."

The Arthur Hinds Scholarship is available for students studying conservation or natural resource management related tertiary programmes. Students are employed for a 3-month period over summer. Applications open around late August-early September.

See waikatoregion.govt.nz/arthur-hinds-scholarship.



Iris with a petrel chick during seabird monitoring on Whakau-Red Mercury Island.

WAIOMU
community guide to emergencies

GET READY

Communities on the Coromandel Peninsula have a history of being cut off for 3 DAYS or more. You may need to take care of yourself before help arrives visit www.getready.govt.nz to help you get ready.

AM I PREPARED?

Do I have an emergency plan for the hazards in my area? getready.govt.nz

Do I have 3 days of emergency supplies? (including medicine)

Do I have an evacuation plan?
- Is my Go Bag packed?
- Do I have assistance - Identify a friend or neighbour that can help you
- Visit www.getready.govt.nz to help you get ready

BE INFORMED.

RECEIVE MOBILE ALERTS
National Emergency Management Agency: getready.govt.nz/emergency
any information/emergency mobile alert

RECEIVE E-MAIL ALERTS
Visit www.getready.govt.nz to subscribe to sign up

UPDATES VIA FACEBOOK
www.facebook.com/emergencymanagement

DOWNLOAD HAZARD APP
Red Cross Hazard App
Geomatics Geological Hazard App

RADIO STATIONS
New FM 97.2FM
The Downs 98.8FM
Radio FM National 104.9FM
101.4FM
Newstalk 2B 102.8FM
C91FM 96.9FM

CHECK YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY BROADCAST
Waikato, South-Cast

Important issues that are not life or property threatening contact Waikato Regional Council on 07 338 3220

If at any stage you remain in or property in danger pho 111 immediately

Tsunami Evacuation
- walk where possible -

IF IT'S LONG OR STRONG BE GONE
IF IT'S FAR AWAY YOU'VE GOT ALL DAY

WHERE WILL YOU WALK?

The white shaded areas are the safe zones (30m or more above sea level). If you are unable to get to the Safe Zone, use the area not shaded blue, then have a house exit of evacuation.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE PLANS

Safe zones during tsunami risk are illustrated in downloadable emergency guides for all coastal communities in the Coromandel Peninsula.

The guides, developed by Thames-Coromandel District Council Emergency Management, are specific to each community and give advice about what to do during a storm, flood, slip, earthquake, tsunami and fire.

Information from tsunami modelling by Thames-Coromandel District Council, Hauraki District Council and Waikato Regional Council was used to identify safe zones during a tsunami for each of the communities.

The guides, which can be downloaded and printed as a brochure or poster, are a valuable educational tool to help keep communities resilient during a natural disaster until help can arrive.

Download your guide at tcdc.govt.nz/emergency-management-unit/community-response-plans.

RAYONIER MATARIKI FORESTS

Earlier this year, Rayonier Matariki Forests made a surprising discovery of freshwater mussels in a waterway of a local farm block being harvested of pine in the Coromandel Peninsula. With support from Waikato Regional Council and the farm owners, the mussels were relocated upstream and are doing well in their new habitat.

It's not the first time we've worked with Rayonier. Together, we've funded traps as part of the Duck Creek Wetland predator control programme near Pauanui. Over 40 traps were put in to help protect wetland birds such as fernbird and spotless crane from possums, ferrets, rats and feral cats. The traps give additional support to Lakes Resort Pauanui's existing predator control programme and should help to greatly reduce pest numbers.

WORKING WITH YOU

HEALTHY WATERWAYS | HE ORANGA ARAWAI

Central government's Essential Freshwater package is all about stopping further degradation of New Zealand's fresh water and improving its quality within a generation.

These new freshwater regulations – announced by the coalition government last year – require very significant increases in our monitoring, policy and planning work, our regulatory activities, and our engagement with landowners and iwi.

As a result, we'll be doing a comprehensive review of the key documents for the region, the Waikato Regional Policy Statement and Waikato Regional Plan. These documents set out our vision for the region, and you are critical in helping to develop this.

The regional plan identifies how we're going to manage the natural resources we rely on within the environmental limits the Government requires us to set. We use a range of different tools to achieve this, including farm plans required under the Resource Management Act.

We're also having to expand our environmental sampling work to address gaps identified by central government, particularly around ecosystem health, threatened species and mahinga kai (freshwater food sources).

As with all policy changes, we have to help landowners comply with the new rules and we'll do this through education and support.

We absolutely support the vision of the Government because it reflects what we've been hearing from landowners, iwi and our

communities. In fact, this council has been one of the leaders in New Zealand when it comes to community-driven planning, so our waterways are safer for swimming and food gathering.

For more information on Essential Freshwater, including the stock exclusion and farm plan regulations, go to waikatoregion.govt.nz/essential-freshwater.



Cattle will be required to be excluded from wetlands, lakes and rivers with a bed width over 1m as part of the new freshwater regulations.



UPDATE ON COASTAL PLAN REVIEW

Over the last 12 months we've met with communities to find out the issues they have with the current Waikato Regional Coastal Plan. A wide range of feedback has been gathered from varied places and people, agencies, industry and coastal users and residents. We're drafting some early policy directions based on what people told us they care about and what we're required to do. We'll be testing these with the public in the next month, before completing a final draft plan for consultation.

ABOUT THE WAIKATO REGIONAL COASTAL PLAN

The coastal plan sets out the rules for activities and recognises the values in the coastal marine area – that's the 'wet' area of the coast below the high tide mark and extending out to the 12 nautical mile limit (approximately 20km). The coastal plan recognises water quality and natural hazards while managing activities like the use of resources, occupation of space, extraction of sand and other materials as well as the discharge of contaminants.

Find out more by visiting waikatoregion.govt.nz/rcp-review.

YOUR COAST

RECREATIONAL WATER QUALITY MONITORING

Waikato Regional Council has been monitoring recreational water quality during the summer months since 1985.

In total we have 34 monitoring locations at popular sites, including nine beaches, three estuaries and one river in the Coromandel Peninsula. Every week, samples are taken at the sites to test for faecal bacteria and potentially toxin-producing cyanobacteria.

Faecal bacteria are an indicator of the possible presence of disease-causing organisms such as bacteria, viruses and protozoa (giardia, salmonella or campylobacter). These can commonly cause gastroenteritis – a crook guts – but also respiratory illness and ear and skin infections. High levels of faecal bacteria can make the water unsuitable for contact recreation like swimming and surfing.

Cyanobacteria, also called blue-green algae, can be an issue when there are large numbers present because they can potentially produce toxins that can make people and animals very sick.

During the 2020/21 monitoring season, there were several exceedances, but these were mainly related to rainfall. It's normal to have high faecal bacteria levels after rain due to runoff from the land.

Grahams Stream at Tairua, a new monitoring site, had exceedances not always related to rainfall so additional DNA sampling was undertaken to locate the source, and results from this investigation are expected later this year. Hot Water Beach, Whangamatā and Tairua showed no exceedances. Other beaches showed single exceedances, but resampling did not confirm this status and no health warnings were issued. Kauaeranga River met the recreational guidelines.

We work closely with relevant district health boards and territorial authorities to deal with issues of public health that may arise from the monitoring programmes. If required, the DHB will issue a public health warning and, together with the district council, inform the public.

The results of the monitoring programmes are published on waikatoregion.govt.nz and on the Land Air Water Aotearoa website, lawa.org.nz.



COASTCARE

The Coastcare planting season is about to begin for community volunteers. In the Coromandel Peninsula, Coastcare groups will be planting 44,000 plants to restore the coastal environment.

Dunes are basically deposits of windblown sand, and therefore are vulnerable to human activity and extreme weather events. Native coastal plants spinifex and pingao bind the sand and help capture more sand to rebuild dunes after a storm.

Dunes are important because they act as a buffer between the land and sea, giving protection from coastal erosion.

Coastcare Waikato is a community partnership programme to restore coastal areas throughout the Waikato region. The programme involves local communities, iwi, the Department of Conservation, district councils and Waikato Regional Council working together to restore, protect and look after our coasts and all the species that live and grow here. Thames-Coromandel District Council leads the charge in the Coromandel Peninsula.

Planting events are planned for Thames, Port Charles, Whangapoua, Otama, Opito Bay, Kuaotunu, Wharekaho, Buffalo Beach, Flaxmill Bay, Cooks Beach, Hahei, Hot Water Beach, Pauanui, Onemana and Whangamatā. Everyone is welcome to help out. Please contact Thames-Coromandel District Council Coastal Management Coordinator Tanya Patrick for more information (email tanya.patrick@tcdc.govt.nz) or keep an eye out on the Coastcare Waikato Facebook page for event dates.

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS RED WEED?

We're interested in the arrival and accumulation of hairy basket weed (*Spyridia filamentosa*).

If you've seen this red seaweed recently arrive in large quantities at a beach near you, please take a photo, record your location and report your sighting to us by emailing hairybasketweed@waikatoregion.govt.nz.

Large quantities of hairy basket weed have been washing up with the northeasterlies on the east coast beaches, particularly Whangapoua, in the past few years. This summer, there have been some minor washups at New Chums Beach and around Rings Beach. When it decomposes onshore it really stinks and can be a nuisance for recreational users (although the sandhoppers and shorebirds have a field day).



FLOOD PROTECTION

PROTECTING TAPU



Flood protection reduces the likelihood of floods impacting on our communities. It safeguards lives and property, enables use of land, and protects services such as water supply and power. However, some people have no idea that flooding was an issue in the past, or even know they are protected by schemes.

WHY WAS THE SCHEME BUILT?

In response to the severe floods generated by the weather bomb of 2002, Waikato Regional Council established the Peninsula Project to address river and catchment issues. Tapu was a community identified as having a very high risk to life and property, and the scheme was constructed in 2009 with funds from Thames-Coromandel District Council.

WHAT'S IN THIS SCHEME?

The scheme primarily protects the campground. An overflow spillway channel about 160 metres long diverts the Tapu River around the campground rather than across the campground. The spillway is bordered on its western side by a timber floodwall structure designed to the 1% AEP flood level (the equivalent of a one in 100 year event) and a 0.5 metre freeboard. During major flood events, sandbags may be required across State Highway 25 to ensure overflows are directed into the overflow channel and prevent floodwaters from flowing south down the state highway. The lower terrace of the campground along the stream side has been raised above the flood level with 0.5 metre freeboard. This was done by constructing a stopbank 15-20 metres from the riverbank and infilling behind it.

The scheme was handed to Thames-Coromandel District Council to maintain. The main channel of the Tapu River is monitored and periodically maintained by Waikato Regional Council to remove accumulated sediment and debris. This work maintains the capacity of the Tapu River and reduces the risk to adjacent land that would otherwise be inundated more frequently.

SCHEME REVIEW

Waikato Regional Council had proposed a complete flood protection scheme to protect other at-risk portions of the community up-stream (not just the campground), however, the community did not wish to progress with this proposal at the time. If at some point in the future the community decides it requires additional protection, and is able to fund the works, then the scheme can be reviewed and completed if practicable.

RESIDUAL RISK

This is a river flood risk that exists due to the potential for greater-than-design flood events to occur. Residual flood risk applies to the Tapu community from factors such as the incomplete nature of the works, a greater than design flood event, the impact of debris during a flood event and any obstructions which may impact on the flood scheme and its service level.

RIVER MANAGEMENT AND FLOOD RESPONSE

Remedial works from the Queen's Birthday and July 2020 flood events have continued, predominantly across the east coast. Usual river management and maintenance has also continued, including keeping some stream mouths open and maintaining flood schemes.

Please call us if any river management work is required on your property and to find out how we can help.



Tree layering along the Kaimarama River helps protect the bank from erosion.



A rock revetment put in to protect a section of the Wahitapu Stream bank from eroding.

BIODIVERSITY/BIOSECURITY

COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



Dave Beatty and Roselle Gould clear DOC 200 traps on Whangamatā Peninsula. Photo: Alison Smith – HC Post

Whangamatā Harbour Care is dedicated to protecting and improving the harbour and its surrounds.

Thirteen dedicated pest control volunteers operate and maintain 14 trap and bait lines around the harbour, targeting rats, stoats and possums which eat native plants and decimate birdlife. As a result of this work, native trees are regenerating, and bird numbers have increased significantly in the last year.

This voluntary community-based organisation seeks constant support from residents, local authorities and funding to expand its pest control operations. They're always looking for new volunteers. Please visit whangamataharbourcare.com to become a member or participate.

WEED WITH BITE



It's so easy for pest plants to move to new, uninfected areas – and alligator weed is one pest plant that Waikato Regional Council wants to keep out of the Coromandel Peninsula.

Alligator weed is highly invasive and considered one of the world's worst weeds. In the Waikato, it's our most expensive and difficult to control pest plant, taking up about a third of our weeds budget.

Alligator weed can grow in water and on land and spreads by the merest of fragments. It's super-fast growing and can double in area in less than two months. On water, it forms rafts and has fine fibrous

roots up to 1m long, so easily chokes rivers and harbours. On land, it's toxic to stock, who find it quite palatable.

Most infestations are due to human activities such as the movement of contaminated soil, green waste, machinery, boating and net fishing, but alligator weed can also be moved by water.

In the Waikato, we have some 140 known sites that we actively control, including farms, market gardens, urban areas and the Waikato River from Cambridge through to Port Waikato.

If you've been away, make sure you clean all your gear and equipment before heading back to the peninsula. Please don't try to control alligator weed yourself because of the risk of accidental spread. Give us a call immediately on 0800 800 401.

What does alligator weed look like?

- Pink, soft hollow stems.
- Dark green waxy leaves (3cm-13cm x 1cm-4cm).
- Clusters of white clover like flowers from December to February.

SPOTLIGHT ON SHY BIRD

We are lucky to have moho pererū (banded rail) breeding in the Coromandel Peninsula.

The shy wetland bird is at risk and a declining species – where once they were abundant, they are now found mainly in the northern regions. The lower North Island has entirely lost these wetland birds in the last 40 years.

Banded rail are a good indicator of wetland health, requiring a diverse and high-quality environment. The main reasons for their decline have been habitat loss (90 per cent of New Zealand's wetlands have been lost) or degradation, human activities and predation.

Thames-Coromandel District Council, the Department of Conservation and Waikato Regional Council have co-funded information signs on banded rail to raise the shy bird's profile after the Cooks Beach Coastcare group expressed concern over people cutting through saltmarsh habitat where they breed.

The key message is that people should stick to designated pathways around wetlands and saltmarshes like at Cooks Beach so as not to disturb banded rail in their habitat. Dogs should also be kept under control in these areas.

To find out more about banded rail, see nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/banded-rail.



MARITIME SAFETY

OIL SPILL AT WHANGANUI ISLAND



Waikato Regional Council oil spill responders were called to Whanganui Island in the early hours of 4 February after a launch caught fire and sunk overnight. Containment booms and absorbents were used to clean up spilled oil and prevent the further spread of diesel. A 5 kilometre long and 300 metre wide diesel slick moving away from the shore eventually evaporated and dispersed. The remains of the boat also had to be removed and the shoreline cleaned up.

INCREASED SUMMER PATROLS



It was a busy summer for our maritime officers, with much higher numbers of vessels in the Coromandel Peninsula due to New Zealanders holidaying at home.

We'd kept this in mind and bolstered our number of maritime officers out on patrol and talking to fellow boaties.

For a busy season, it didn't go too badly although there were some disappointing aspects. In the Coromandel Peninsula, 73 infringement notices or formal warnings were issued. Across the region, 124 infringement notices and formal warnings were issued.

Of a regional survey of 730 recreational skippers, almost 10 per cent were not wearing lifejackets when it's a legal requirement.

Lifejackets save lives, so it's important that people wear them and, when they do, that they're the right size and they've been regularly serviced.

Communication is also an essential part of safe boating. Yet over the summer, we had 14 per cent of boaties not carrying waterproof communications and 6 per cent with no communications at all. Waterproof comms can be simple – it can be anything from a mobile phone in a waterproof bag to having a whistle. It's about having the ability to call for help if the need arises.

Another issue observed by maritime officers was speeding within restricted areas and vessels towing without observers and towing through mooring zones. If using towing access lanes, keep to the right and after taking off from shore, head out to open space to enjoy your watersport, continuing in an anticlockwise direction before returning back to the ski lane.

WAYS WE CAN HELP

Call 07 866 0172 or 0800 800 401.

Activity	For assistance with	Ask for
Catchment management	Restoring a wetland, stream or forest area? Want to reduce erosion, runoff and improve water quality? Did you know there is financial assistance, and we can draw up a programme of works specifically for you?	Catchment management officer
Rivers or flooding	Eroding stream, in-stream blockages? Issues with vegetation choking a waterway? Our river staff can help.	River management officer
Pest plants	Issues with pest plants? Not sure how to control a pesky weed? Just need some advice?	Biosecurity pest plant officer
Maritime safety	Moorings, safety on the water, jet ski registrations, concerns about others behaviour on the water.	Maritime officers

Or talk to a councillor

Thames-Coromandel constituent councillor

Denis Tegg

021 285 3743

Ngā Tai ki Uta councillor and deputy chair

Kataraina Hodge

027 450 8905

River and Catchment Management Committee co-chair

Stu Husband

027 233 0030