

RANGITIKEI ENVIRONMENT

Treasured Natural Environment Group

Rangitikei River Scheme News Update

By Wayne Spencer, Horizons Regional Council, Area Engineer - Northern

Two significant projects concerning the Rangitikei River are currently in the works. The first project is a continuation of the 15 year stop bank upgrade programme which will be completed in four years' time. This year, 750 metres of stopbank will be upgraded by raising the crest height by approximately one metre on the Walmac Farm near Scotts Ferry. The upgraded stopbank will increase the flood protection to farmland in the Parewanui area from a 50 year flood event to a 100 year flood event. The current contract has been awarded to Graeme Bagrie Contracts Ltd and the work is scheduled be completed by the end of January 2017.



Re-grading of the Parewanui berms adjacent to the stopbank in 2016

The second project is repairing flood damage to a rock rip-rap lining which is located approximately

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5km upstream of the Bulls Bridge on SH1 at the Wilson property. The flood damage to this asset occurred as a result of the large flood event on 21 June 2015 when widespread flooding occurred across the Manawatu, Rangitikei and Whanganui.

The flood damage repair work includes reinstating a 250 metre length of rock lining (similar to the recent rock work at Bulls Bridge) with 3,500 tonnes of rock rip-rap, creating a 10,000 cubic metre gravel platform immediately behind the rock lining so that eight rope and rail groynes, totalling 210 metres, can be constructed. The contract for this repair work has been undertaken by John Ray Ltd, who were the contractors that completed the rock work at Bulls Bridge four months ago.



Erosion Bay at Sanson Metals

Great Swim Spots in our Region

By Horizons Regional Council

A long hot summer has been predicted, and that means plenty of time to relax at our many beautiful rivers, lakes and beaches. Not only are popular sites such as Mangaweka, Vinegar Hill and Koitiata excellent for swimming, they often include picnic and camping areas, bush walks and toilets, making them a great place to spend time with family and friends.



Mangaweka – an idyllic swimming spot

Horizons Regional Council recognises the importance of being well-informed, and that is why every week during summer we will be monitoring the health of over 80 swim spots to provide the community with reliable information on the potential health risks in our waterways.

Our expanded monitoring programme commences in early December and will continue until the end of April. To find out the health of your favourite swim spot visit the Safe Swim Spots page on our [website](#) you can check out the up-to-date data either on our list of all swim spots or via our mobile friendly interactive map.

Each site is graded according to a handy traffic light system that is part of the Ministry of Health

and Ministry for the Environment guidelines. The system provides guidance to Councils and District Health Boards on how they should act when certain levels of indicator bacteria or algae are detected. For our lakes and rivers

- **Green** indicates it is safe for swimming
- **Amber** indicates it is satisfactory for swimming
- **Red** indicates that it is unsatisfactory for swimming, and this means that you should avoid swimming

If a site falls into the red category, signs are erected and information is provided to the public that the site is considered unsuitable for recreational use.

While at your favourite swim spot you can also enter our swim spot competition! Simply post a pic of your favourite swim spot to our Facebook, Instagram or Twitter accounts with #swiminourregion by 28 February 2017.

Tag the Horizons Region location too, and you're in the draw to win an adventure package for four, up to the value of \$1500. Keep any eye out on our website and Facebook page for more details over the bathing season.

#swiminourregion and WIN!

From rafting the Rangitikei and picnicking in the Pohangina, to snorkelling at Scarborough and swimming at South Beach, our Region is full of fantastic swim spots ready for you to enjoy this summer.

Plus, we're offering you the chance to swim and win. Simply post a pic of your favourite swim spot to our Facebook, Instagram or Twitter accounts with #swiminourregion by 28 February 2017. Be sure to tag the Horizons Region location too, and you're in the draw to win an adventure package for four, up to the value of \$1500. See www.horizons.govt.nz for more details.

Rangiwahia and Sunrise Hut Booking Trial

By The Department of Conservation

Two popular huts in the Ruahine Forest Park currently operate on a 'first come, first served' basis. These huts, Rangiwahia and Sunrise have a high use rate in the summer months, long weekends and summer holidays.

Both huts are located in the tussock tops of the Ruahine Forest Park. The track to each hut is well graded and easy to follow with an average walking time of 2–3 hours. This makes them ideal for young families, groups and novice trampers.



Stunning views are one of the benefits of being a volunteer hut warden at Rangiwahia Hut.

Photo: Stephen Robson ©

Feedback from users and volunteer hut wardens at both huts indicates that over-crowding and failure to use hut tickets are problems, with less confident trampers and families being put off visiting due to lack of confidence that they will have a space to sleep.

To overcome these problems, DoC will trial the use of a booking system in the coming summer. Overnight visitors will be able to secure beds from 1 December 2016–18 April 2017.

Bookings will be available via DoC's online booking system from 24 November 2016. Following the trial, the information will be assessed and shared with key recreational groups to determine whether to put the huts on the booking system permanently.

DoC hopes to have volunteer hut wardens in place periodically, particularly during high use times such as public holiday weekends and school holidays.

Wardens will help monitor use of the booking system and provide feedback to DoC. For more information on volunteering as a warden at either of these two huts, please contact manawatuvolunteers@doc.govt.nz

Parks Highlights

By Athol Sanson, Rangitikei District Council, Parks and Reserves Team Leader

The last few months have been very busy for the Parks and Reserves team. With the warmer days and longer daylight hours the lawns and weeds have really taken off.



Flowering near Queens Park, Hunterville

We have been busy undertaking a lot of topdressing and grass seeding in our cemeteries and parks. We only have a short window for grass seeding and hopefully all the important areas will be completed shortly.

We are seeing significant spring grass across the region with Taihape leading the growth rate.

The Centennial Park cricket ground renovations have been a real success with the germination of the grass seed now through and weekly mowing commencing to reduce the height of the grass by the cricket season.

The Hunterville town gardens have taken off and the roses are showing signs of the first flowers of the year. The splash of colour in the town will really lift this area.

Mistletoe

Recently I was leaving Marton Park via Maunder Street as I approached Signal Street I noticed some trees with large green balls attached to the trunks. They were really obvious due to the lack of leaves on the trees. This strange plant was identified as one of our New Zealand mistletoes.

Ileostylus micranthus is a woody many branched shrub up to 1m with green to yellow-green, leathery leaves. A partial parasite is attached to the host by ball-like masses of runner with suckers located at intervals along the host branch.

An endemic genus with this species being found on a wide variety of hosts in coastal to lowland forest throughout New Zealand.

The population of this plant, when I looked closely, was very healthy and doing well on a number of host species. To date I have identified five host species for this great little plant. The host plants cover an area of approximately 10,000m².

The plant suffers heavily in the wild with possum browsing and seeing this population doing so well indicates few of these troublesome pests are in the Marton township.

From here we will need to record with DoC where the population is and notify the landowners of this important plant growing on their properties. I was hoping to find some in Marton Park but the population hasn't spread that far yet.

Rangitikei Kowhai

While recently working in Taihape it was fantastic to see the local populations of kowhai starting to show colour. This kowhai is one of the last to flower and by all indications it's going to be a great year. The hills around Taihape are covered in this plant and it is a real treat to see them in full bloom.

Sophora godleyi, also known as Godley's kowhai, papa kowhai, or Rangitikei kowhai. Grows naturally in the west of the North Island from Te Kuiti to the Manawatu. It is one of eight recognized species of kowhai in New Zealand. Is named after Dr. Eric Godley, former Head of the Department and Industrial Research (DSIR) Botany Division.

It differs from other kowhai, that it has a more twisted juvenile appearance which grows out with time. It is an extremely hardy plant that thrives in most areas of our region.



Rangitikei Kowhai

Pittosporum Tenuifolium

This great little tree is widely planted around our towns in the region. During late September and early October this plant flowers heavily. I have

planted this at my property and for the last few nights the flowers give off an amazing scent.

Pittosporum tenuifolium is a small evergreen tree with wavy silvery green, glossy leaves (up to 10 meters) native to New Zealand. The flowers generally go unnoticed because of their colour, a very dark reddish purple, and are scented only at night. It is found growing wild in coastal and lower mountain forest areas up to an altitude of 900m.

On a nice evening walk through some of our parks and streets you will be very surprised at the scent this little tree gives off for just a few nights a year.



Pittosporum Tenuifolium

Rhododendron 'Sir Robert Peel'

In all our centers this amazing tree is in full bloom. This rhododendron is a pre-1850 hybrid and thrives in many of our varied climates. It must be one of the larger growing Rhododendrons in this country and are a highlight this time of year in many parks in New Zealand.

This tree can reach a considerable age, the specimens must be at least 70 plus years old that we have in our region. You can see them flowering in Marton Park, Hunterville (Plunket Rooms) and Memorial Park in Taihape. Recently the Parks team have been busy planting flowers at Marton Park, you should see the results of this soon.

Ngā Puna Rau Rangitīkei

By the Te Maru o Ruahine Trust

The Ngā Puna Rau Rangitīkei Project is aimed at preserving and enhancing the mauri of the Rangitīkei River and its catchment. The Project is led by a group of members of Ngā Pae o Rangitīkei (an iwi/hapu collective who have a mutual interest in the enhancing Rangitīkei River).

The Project is supported by the Ministry for the Environment, Horizons Regional Council, Rāngitīkei District Council, local landowners, and community members, and was launched publically on 2 September 2016 at Rata.

Ngā Puna Rau Rangitīkei roughly translated means....

The many water sources of the Rangitikei

The Project has received funding from the Ministry for the Environment's Te Mana o Te Wai fund (\$700,000), Horizons Regional Council (\$74,000), Rangitikei District Council (\$4,000), Ngāti Apa, Ngāti Hauiti, Ngāti Tamakōpiri, and Ngāti Whitikaupeka.

The Project aims to take a long-term, collaborative and strategic approach to **preserving and enhancing the catchment: Ki Uta, Ki Tai - Mountains to the sea.**

We have grown up with the Rangitīkei as a backdrop and playground throughout our lives, it is part of us.

The project has three objectives:

1. **To restore and improve the mauri of the Rangitīkei Awa and catchment by improving water quality, fish habitat and riparian health at specific sites important to the Ngā Pae o Rangitīkei collective.**

This objective has led to six projects throughout the catchment – Moawhango Awa restoration, Paharakeke Stream restoration, Hautapu Awa reconnection and restoration planning, Lake Oporoa and Oporoa Stream restoration, Pourewa Stream restoration and Makowhai Stream restoration.

2. Re-establishing and improving iwi/hapu connections with the Rangitikei Awa and catchment.

The objective will lead to the installation of educational/information signage at significant sites along the Rangitikei Awa; opportunities for community water quality monitoring; and targeted educational programmes.

3. Provide for the long term collaborative management of the Rangitikei Awa and catchment – Ki Uta, Ki Tai

The objective seeks to improve how iwi/hapu and all stakeholders work together to improve the health and well-being of the Rangitikei Awa and catchment from the headwaters in the Kaimanawa Ranges to the mouth of the Awa at Tangimoana: **Ki Uta, Ki Tai – Mountains to the sea.**

We must proactively work together to preserve the Rangitikei, so we can produce the best health and wellbeing outcomes for our Awa and community.

Community planting day

The Ngā Puna Rau Rangitikei Project held a community planting day at the Pourewa Stream on 2 September 2016.

The day was hosted by Ngāti Hauti and participants included iwi/hapu representatives from other parts of the catchment, children from Hunterville School, Horizons and DoC staff,

Rangitikei MP Ian McKelvie and Horizons Councillor Gordon McKellar. 1200 native plants were planted on the day.



Planting of the Pourewa Stream

We cannot let the Rangitikei become another statistic. This is a river worth preserving and improving, and the Water Conservation Order on the Rangitikei, recognises the river's uniqueness and value.

Upcoming Events/Community Contacts

Treasured Natural Environment Group Meeting

February 2017 – Marton Council Chambers

Contact Katrina Gray

katrina.gray@rangitikei.govt.nz

Bulls River Users Group Meeting

Contact Jan Harris – bulls.community@xtra.co.nz

Tutaenui Stream Restoration Group

Contact Greg Carlyon – 021 327 774

Paengaroa Road Environment Group

Contact Phyllis Leigh – 06 388 016

Hautapu Catchment Care Group

Contact Angus Gordon – angusg@xtra.co.nz

If you have any contributions to the newsletter, any questions, or wish to subscribe please contact

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