

# MANAWATŪ RIVER LEADERS' ACCORD FRESH START FOR FRESH WATER PROGRESS REPORT NOVEMBER 2014

In August 2010 the members of the Manawatū River Leaders' Forum signed an Accord to take action to improve the health of the Manawatū River.

The overall goal of the Accord is to improve the Manawatū River, the mauri (life force) of the Manawatū River Catchment, such that it sustains fish species, and is suitable for contact recreation, in balance with the social, cultural and economic activities of the catchment community.

## WHERE ARE THINGS AT?

After two years the projects undertaken as part of the fund are all but completed and the impressive results speak for themselves:

- **Wastewater treatment upgrades improve water quality at six sites**
- **208km of stream fencing completed**
- **Over 66,000 plants planted**
- **Eight fish barriers fixed**
- **11 community groups completed 14 projects**
- **98 Environmental Farm Plans completed**

## WHERE TO NOW?

A portion of the Fresh Start for Fresh Water Clean-Up Fund is yet to be spent with remaining upgrades at the Woodville, Dannevirke and Pahiatua waste water treatment plants to be completed. Some of the funding for these remaining projects has come about through savings and interest accumulated during the programme. This "additional" funding has enabled an increased amount of stream fencing to be completed and additional upgrades to be carried out at some of the treatment plants. Further community projects led by iwi are also planned. To allow time for the additional projects to be completed the Clean-Up Fund project will be extended to 30 June 2015.

In March 2012 the Manawatū River Leaders' Forum was successful in its bid to Central Government's Fresh Start for Fresh Water Clean-Up Fund; receiving \$5.2 million. This funding has assisted with over \$30 million in work programs, with funding partners including Horizons Regional Council, Tararua District Council, Manawatu District Council, Horowhenua District Council and DairyNZ. It has also led to increased levels of community involvement, particularly from iwi.

This combined funding has been spread over a suite of eight projects, selected for their capacity to make the biggest difference towards meeting the Accord's goals and to meet funding criteria.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

It is only early days but the work carried out has and will continue to improve the health of the Manawatū River. The Manawatū River is one of the most heavily monitored in New Zealand and the Accord partners are aware of the challenges faced to improve its health, ensuring funding and effort is directed to where its needed most.

An independent science report on the state and trends of water quality in the Manawatū River Catchment was produced and released in April 2013. This is available at [www.manawaturiver.co.nz](http://www.manawaturiver.co.nz).

There is plenty more work to be done across the catchment and improvements from the initiatives will take some time to show in the scientific results.

The next iteration of the Manawatū River Leaders' Accord Action Plan will also be created in 2015. The 131 tasks identified in the current Action Plan will be reviewed and updated, with the potential for new actions to be set.

That said, improving the health of the Manawatū River is not the responsibility of Accord members alone. It is something that all of us, as a community, need to work collaboratively on and take ownership of. Through this collective action we can make a lasting difference.

## CLEAN-UP FUND PROJECTS

Central Government's Fresh Start for Fresh Water Clean-Up fund has been spread over a suite of eight projects. These projects were selected for their capacity to make the biggest difference towards meeting the Accord's goals and for their ability to meet funding criteria. Many were chosen as they aim for tipping points in catchments where water quality targets are met upstream but not downstream of an activity.



## TARARUA DISTRICT COUNCIL

Woodville, Dannevirke and Pahiatua wastewater treatment plants were targeted as they are major contributors to water quality in the streams and rivers to which they discharge. The upgrades have been described as being akin to completing 10 years worth of work in just three years.

- Three pond linings completed at Woodville and Dannevirke with two more to be completed by June 2015
- Dannevirke's ponds are also being deepened to enable more effluent to be stored during periods of low flow in the river

## MANAWATU DISTRICT COUNCIL

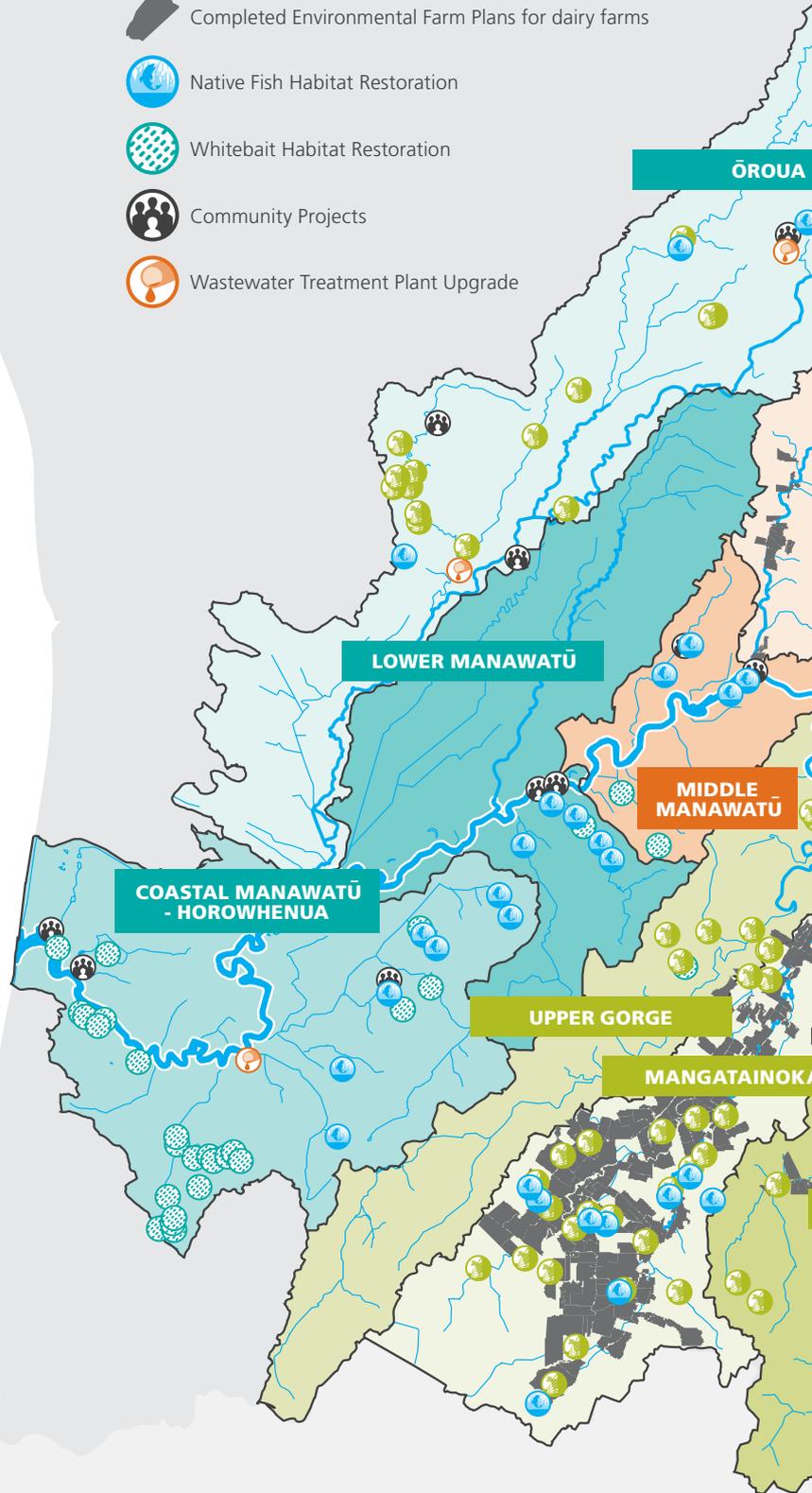
The Kimbolton and Feilding wastewater treatment plants were targeted for improvement as they are the two major point source discharges with measurable impact on water quality in the Ōroua Catchment.

- Two Actiflo clarifiers and a disc filter have been installed at the Feilding plant
- Reed beds and other treatment technologies have been installed at Kimbolton
- Hearings for the Feilding wastewater consents have been held and decisions will be out in due course
- Monitoring results show improvement in levels of treatment at both sites thanks to the work completed to date
- The Ōroua at Awahuri site downstream of these discharges was found to be the most improved site in the Region for a range of water quality measures in a recent analysis of ten year water quality trends in New Zealand (for the LAWA website)

## HOROWHENUA DISTRICT COUNCIL

This project aimed to see discharge from the Shannon wastewater treatment plant go to land during low flows.

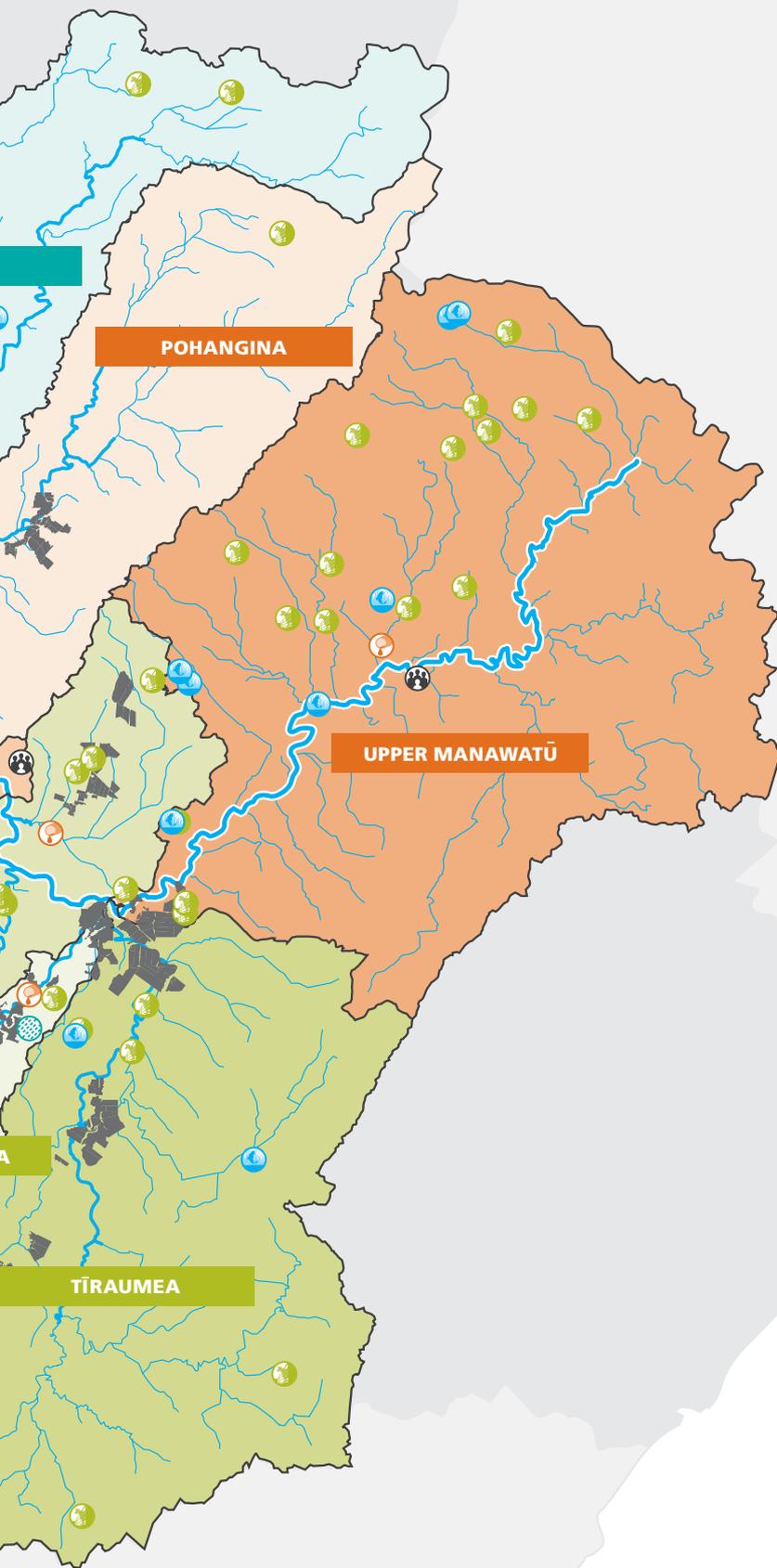
- Horowhenua District Council purchased Velvaleen Farm in 2012 for the purpose of land-based treatment
- A consent process for Shannon is to be progressed in the Environment Court in December
- The Council has committed to discharging to land during nearly all flows rather than just during low flows



## STREAM FENCING

This project aimed to exclude sheep and cattle from up to 200km of waterways, using two wire electric fencing, with the goal of lowering levels of bacteria, nutrients and sediment as well as improving native fish and trout populations.

- 208km of stream fencing across all of the Clean-Up Fund projects has been completed over 125 jobs
- Local landowners committed over \$830,000 to the project, meeting about 55% of the total cost



## NATIVE FISH HABITAT RESTORATION

The native fish habitat restoration project aimed to target at least two sub-catchments through the fencing of streams, removal of fish barriers and stream bank planting and maintenance. The project sought to improve the number of native fish living in these areas.

- 71 jobs completed with 44,500 plants planted
- 10.4km of stream fencing
- Eight fish barriers fixed

## WHITEBAIT HABITAT RESTORATION

The whitebait habitat restoration project targeted habitat in at least two sub-catchments through the fencing of streams, removal of fish barriers and stream bank planting and maintenance. The project aim was to create more abundant whitebait populations and, in turn, an increase in the number of native adult fish.

- 60 jobs completed
- 21,840 plants planted, including enhancing two spawning sites, one of which is considered to be the largest known whitebait breeding ground in NZ
- 20.9km of stream fencing
- Three fish friendly floodgates installed and one weir removal

## ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLANS

The aim of this project was to work with 60-80 dairy farmers in priority areas of the Manawatū Catchment to help farmers achieve best practice in terms of nutrient management, water efficiency and riparian management. Through the farm plans we expect to see a reduction in nutrient, bacteria and sediment loss from dairy farmers, which will lead to improved water quality in the catchment's waterways.

- 83 Environmental Farm Plans completed in the Mangatainoka Catchment
- Five Environmental Farm Plans completed in the Pohangina and nine in the Tīraumea Catchment from savings made in the original project plan
- Funding received from DairyNZ and in-kind support from landowners and fertiliser companies Ballance and Ravensdown

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This project aimed to support at least eight community projects that are working towards improving the health and mauri of the Manawatū River. These projects provide the opportunity for the community to engage in the clean-up, tap into support and advice and accelerate the Forum's progress towards achieving the goals set out in the Accord.

- 11 community groups completed 14 projects
- Over 420 people participated in these projects
- Several thousand plants planted

- This means more physical work was achieved per dollar of Ministry for the Environment and Horizons Regional Council investment
- While the project envisaged 200km of two wire electric fencing to be completed, over 75km of more substantial fencing was achieved

# THE SCENE



Manawatū River Planting



New signage completed at Awatapu



Testing a new fish pass at Kingston Road



Source of the Manawatū planting day



Dannevirke wastewater treatment plant



Hikoī at Tokomaru



The changes in water quality during the treatment process at Feilding wastewater treatment plant

Influent

Effluent before treatment

After treatment with new equipment

Tap water



Kimbolton floating wetlands

**OURS.**  
THE MANAWATŪ RIVER  
LEADERS' ACCORD

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