



4.0 Improving Habitat

The use and protection of the Tukituki River has long been a topic of debate.

Since 2008 Hawke's Bay Regional Council has been working on a range of plans and actions in the catchment to provide positive environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes for the region, now and into the future.

A combination of water storage and higher minimum flows set by HBRC will release the potential for the Lower Tukituki River to be returned to more natural flows in summer, especially if current irrigators can be moved to storage.

A significant amount of work has gone into a wide range of investigations assessing the possibility of large-scale water storage in the Ruataniwha basin. The scheme, coupled with the Proposed Tukituki Plan Change provisions aims to improve water security for farmers, unlock economic potential for Hawke's Bay and improve water quality and quantity in the Tukituki River.

Improve river health and habitat - with planting and riverside fencing

Stream side (riparian) planting has a wide range of benefits for the species that live in the rivers and on land. In-stream benefits come from the reduction of contaminants and sediment to rivers.

As well as reducing phosphorus and bacteria coming into the river, planting along riverbanks has a range of benefits for river habitat and the aquatic life that lives there.

Some of our native fish (eels and kokopu) like to hang out under the vegetation which overhangs the stream banks where it is shady and cool. Planting by streams and rivers provides shade, thus keeping the water from getting too hot in summer. Shade

and lower temperatures also reduce algal growth and maintain oxygen levels to sustain life in the stream. This is not only good for fish but all life in the water.

Other native fish (bullies and some galaxiids) like to live under the gravels and cobbles in the stream. Riparian planting holds back sediment which otherwise smothers this critical stream habitat and makes the water murky. Roots, branches and leaves in the water provide more habitat and food for the stream invertebrates and are a big factor for ecosystem health and aquatic life.

Stream side planting also has benefits for the species on land. Spiders are able to spin webs in the vegetation to catch flies hatching from the rivers. This has implications as it provides food for birds and other animals further up the food chain, aiding land based biodiversity.

It is likely riparian planting will be encouraged as part of farm management planning.

A \$7million mitigation package will be included with the Ruataniwha Water Storage resource consent application, with a key focus on riparian planting and other biodiversity benefits.

Fencing in tandem with planting along river and stream banks not only excludes stock but improves stream habitat.



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