



Waikato RiverCare Inc.

ANNUAL REPORT

2024/2025

Photo: Mangauika StreamProject

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Our Vision

Kia whakahii taatou ki ngaa awa o Waikato
Pride in our Waikato rivers



Our Mission

Ecological restoration that enhances the Waikato River catchment for the wellbeing of our communities.



Our Values

Partnerships

Our stakeholders are as passionate and dedicated as us in supporting our Mission and Values

Leadership

We are committed to share our knowledge and skills

Transparency

We are transparent in our resourcing and our operations

Trust

We are trusting of our partners, participants and our processes

Sponsors

Waikato RiverCare sincerely thanks its supporters, funders, project partners and landowners, who enable us to keep up the momentum of restoration work within the Waikato catchment.

Major Sponsors



Sponsors



BELL GULLY

Introduction

Waikato RiverCare Incorporated is pleased to present our Annual Report for the 2024/25 period, highlighting our achievements across both ongoing and newly initiated projects.

Since our inception in 1999, we have remained committed to the restoration and enhancement of the lower Waikato River and its surrounding catchments. Established as an incorporated society in 2001 and later registered as a charity in 2008, our organisation is supported by a diverse membership, including individuals and organisations united by a shared dedication to preserving this vital ecosystem.

As the leading riparian restoration charity in the region, our core activities focus on the preparation, planting, and maintenance of native vegetation along the lower Waikato River and its associated catchments.

Additionally, we continuously seek new opportunities to expand and strengthen our conservation efforts. Our work is guided by a commitment to sound scientific practices, cultural engagement, environmental sustainability, and collaborative partnerships, ensuring a long-lasting positive impact on the region's natural and cultural heritage.



“The Waikato River is a national and regional icon holding significant cultural, economic, social and environmental values. Waikato RiverCare Incorporated (trading as ‘Waikato RiverCare’) links these values with interested organisations and provides a vehicle for riparian habitat restoration using a base of native plant species.

The Structure of Waikato RiverCare Inc.

The organisation is governed by an Executive Committee. There is one category of membership of the Society, that being Members. Any person or incorporated body which agrees to be bound by the aims and by the Constitution of the Society can request to become a Member of the Society.

Executive Committee

Representative

Michelle Archer - **Chairperson**

David Klee - **Deputy Chairperson**

Simon Hill - **Treasurer**

Mandy Bathan - **Secretary**

Dawn Metcalfe

Peter Buckley

Todd Baldwin

Te Makarini Mapu

Elyse LaFace

Paula Reeves

Anita Shannon

Kelvin Tupuhi

Ben Wolf

Emma Baker

Chris Woolerton

Don Scarlet

Organisation

Independent member of the public

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council

Mercury

Administrator at Waikato RiverCare

Independent member of the public

North Waikato Federated Farmers

Mercury

Waikato Tainui

Genesis

Waikato Regional Council

Department of Conservation

Nga Muka Development Trust

Waikato District Council

Watercare Services Ltd

North Federated Farmers

Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust (Advisory Member)

Staff

Kevin Hutchinson - Operations Manager

Mandy Bathan - Administrator

Chairperson's Report

This past year has been no different from previous years, with external factors — particularly the weather (or lack of it) — putting strain on plantings. We continue to operate in tight financial times; however, we have successfully sourced projects with new landowners who remain committed to restoration initiatives. Despite the challenges, we have achieved great success on the ground, along with positive funding and project outcomes over the year.

An organisation is only as strong as the people who are passionate about its success. At Waikato RiverCare, we are continually thankful for the expertise and skill of Kevin, our Operations Manager, and Mandy, who oversees key administration tasks and keeps things running smoothly in the background. Thank you both for your ongoing commitment to RiverCare.

The support of the executive committee remains vital to RiverCare's success, with long-standing members providing invaluable advice and new members bringing fresh ideas and energy to the group. During the year, we farewelled Peter Buckley, who has been with us since RiverCare's inception, representing the Waikato Regional Council, championing the interests of rural landowners, and more recently, North Waikato Federated Farmers. We have greatly appreciated Peter's knowledge and connections in the environmental sector during his time with RiverCare. We are pleased to welcome Chris Woolerton in Peter's place and are glad to continue this important connection with the rural community.

David Klee has also had to step back at times from the committee, having taken on the Chief Executive role at Auckland Waikato Fish & Game. Danielle Lelievre has stepped in to provide support to the committee, and we are grateful for the continued use of office space at the Fish & Game office when our staff need workmates! We also said farewell to Sarah Lealand from Waikato Regional Council. I would like to thank Sarah for her commitment to Waikato RiverCare, particularly her efforts in helping us secure key projects on scheme land to improve environmental outcomes. We welcomed Paula Reeves as Sarah's replacement and are fortunate to have such knowledgeable people stepping into these important roles.

I also want to acknowledge Simon Hill, Dawn Metcalfe, and David Klee for their ongoing passion and support, all while balancing their own roles and personal responsibilities. These efforts do not go unnoticed, and I know Kevin and Mandy appreciate having reliable and supportive committee members to turn to for advice and guidance.

We look forward to the year ahead, particularly as we explore new opportunities with project partners, advance the MOU with POU, and focus on building greater resilience in our projects and the people delivering the work on the ground.



Michelle Archer
Chair

Operation's Managers Report

Like most sectors of Aotearoa's economy, the environmental sector has not escaped the economic slowdown and the negative effects of escalating project costs. During these challenging times I'm extremely grateful to work alongside a stable and committed Executive Committee dedicated to delivering meaningful outcomes for our project partners, communities and waterways. A huge thankyou to the Executive Committee for all their support over this last year from both Mandy and me.

At RiverCare our mahi is all about working with our communities throughout the Waikato River catchment. Leading our mahi with mana whenua in the Taupiri-Huntly-Te Kauwhata rohe was our koro Pat Kingi; his passing this March touched many of us at RiverCare. He leaves behind a legacy of native plantings at projects like Lake Whangape, Lake Waikare and Lake Kopuera.

Mandy and I, alongside our project partners and supporters enjoyed two excellent community planting events this planting season. One event at Huntly with Genesis Energy and a second event at the Barbour Farm in Waotu. Our teams of volunteers successfully planted more than 9,000 plants across the two projects and it's great to see so many people keen to get stuck-in and enjoy a day out on the farms.

Although RiverCare's 2024 planting season delivered some excellent project results, plant numbers were down significantly on previous planting years due to the impact of tough economic conditions. This trend is expected to continue into 2025-26 planting season with hopes for a recovery in plant numbers thereafter. A total of 52,125 native plants were planted across 12 different projects. I've previously talked about 'Climate resilience' and this summer has been another of those long dry summers we all love for the school holidays.



Pat Kingi (Centre Front) at Lake Kopuera - Nov 2023



Above: A beautiful sunny day at the Barbour Farm planting day with the children and teachers from Te Waotu School.

Our thanks go to the Barbour family, our funders Waikato Regional Council, Fonterra, WCEET and the WRA. Thanks also goes to Rabobank NZ and our community for providing all the great food!

Operation Manager’s Report continued

Unfortunately, we are now seeing some plant losses at projects as the dry weather continues well into autumn; current project losses are still at manageable levels, but some rain would be great. RiverCare is working with a project partner to develop a practical and affordable solution for planting sites evaluated as ‘high risk’ due to extremes in environmental conditions. Several key learnings have already been made and solutions applied with promising results. Highlights and key milestones over the last 12 months include:

- RiverCare successfully completed several long-term projects including, Genesis Lake Whangape project 22,700 plants, Lake Ohinewai Recreational Reserve 18,605 plants, Opuatia catchment 26,282, Smythe Farm project 23,500 plants and Wai O te Atua Stream project 25,200 plants.
- RiverCare completed our first project with Tainui Group Holdings, the site at Meremere involved the planting of 3,500 grasses and rushes to enhance land drainage corridors.
- Our MOU has been signed between the three parties and a project plan developed to guide delivery of this exciting initiative over the next 2 years.

- RiverCare has two new wetland projects in the Mangawara catchment aiming to plant 24,205 plants over the next five years, these new projects complement several projects RiverCare has undertaken in this significant catchment
- RiverCare was successful in securing new project funding from the WRA for the Mangawara Catchment LWM6/12 Tree Stand Restoration Project - \$31,988.00 and Hampton Downs Simmental: Wetland and Tree Stand Restoration Project - \$78,600.00.

Over the next twelve months I look forward to advancing RiverCare’s project with POU Ltd in partnership with our network of contractors, project co-funders and supportive project partners to deliver this exciting initiative.



A fun planting day



RiverCare's Performance Review

Waikato RiverCare Incorporated has been compliant with the objects and rules listed in its revised Constitution (2024):

The Society was established for environmental and charitable purposes within New Zealand only.

(a) **Core activities** - The enhancement of the natural water and riverside environment of the Waikato River and associated catchments to improve habitats and thereby benefit the users of the river and its environs, local communities and visitors, now and for future generations through:

(i) Providing improved plant and animal habitat in and around the Waikato River and associated catchments for general ecological benefit.

(ii) Promoting public interest and appreciation of the Waikato River and associated catchments and its environs through education and communication with local communities and other river users for the benefit of achieving awareness and support for the need to maintain and enhance the riverline environment.

(b) **Funding** - to raise, accept, accumulate and employ funds for the environmental and charitable purposes authorised by these objects.

(c) **General** - to do all such things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of the environmental and charitable purposes authorised by these objects.

Performance Measures

Performance is measured through project evaluations which monitor planting health, establishment, pest plant prevalence, fence condition and stock exclusion. The use of several photo points helps illustrate planting success and condition, and assist in identifying long term management considerations.

Project progression from active management to receiving pulse maintenance after five years is the underlying measure of project success for Waikato RiverCare.

Performance in Relation to the Strategic Business Plan

Waikato RiverCare has persistently sought out and cultivated new project opportunities within the Waikato catchment, concentrating on upper catchments, constructed wetlands, critical habitat projects, and prioritized areas for our project partners. This strategy has played a crucial role in the organization’s success in obtaining new funding for various projects.

New Projects	Funder(s)
Te Ohaki Road	Genesis
Hampton Downs	Envirowaste Services and Waikato River Authority
Mangawara Scheme Peacocke	Waikato River Authority, WCEET and Mercury and Waikato Tainui
Meremere Clay Cap Project	Tainui Group Holdings
Te Uapoto Lagoon	WCEET

Enhancing Online Presence: A Year of Progress for RiverCare

RiverCare continues to strengthen its online presence across Facebook and Instagram. By increasing activity—particularly through video content—and highlighting our projects and partnerships with sponsors, we are fostering greater engagement with our audience. Additionally, ongoing enhancements to our website’s design and content are improving accessibility and outreach. These efforts collectively support our mission to preserve and protect our rivers and waterways.



www.waikatorivercare.co.nz



facebook.com/waikatorivercare



instagram.com/waikatorivercare/

Our Year In Numbers

2024 - 2025

\$509,734
Total Expenses

\$785,240
Total Revenue
(grants, donations and sponsorship)

52,125 Plants
Planted

78
Number of volunteers

22
Current Projects

15.68
Hectares Planted

2023 - 2024

\$575,543
Total Spending

\$652,913 Total
Funding
(grants and sponsorship)

88,655 Plants
Planted

10
Number of volunteers

14
Current Projects

27.04
Hectares Planted



Breakdown of Financial Statements

Our full Financial Statements are available on on the Charities Services website <https://www.charities.govt.nz/>

Waikato RiverCare's project delivery is reliant on annual funding provided by our generous corporate supporters including local Waikato businesses and members of the public. In addition to donations, RiverCare applies to contestable funds for project funding, community grants and central government funding. RiverCare receives excellent industry support from our suppliers and contractors including significant in-kind support from a variety of organisations and individuals.

Revenue	2024/2025
Donations, koha, bequests, and other general fundraising activities	\$3,230.04
General Grants	\$96,572.54
Capital Grants	\$0.00
Government service delivery grants/contracts	\$61,873.23
Non-government service delivery grants/contracts	\$574,894.82
Interest, dividends, and other investment revenue	\$48,670.11
Other Revenue	\$0.00
Total	\$785,240.74
Expenses	2024/2025
Expenses related to fundraising	\$0.00
Employee remuneration and other related expenses	\$157,452.20
Project costs	\$340,352.59
Other expenses	\$13,896.18
Total	\$511,700.97

*Other expenses include:- Kiwi Saver, ACC, depreciation, advertising & community engagement, vehicle use, office expenses, printing & postage, website & accounting package, general expenses

RiverCare Projects

RiverCare’s projects usually cover a three to five year period and involves pre-planting, vegetation control, planting, post-planting care, infill planting and maintenance of the project.

Projects in Progress

Barbour Farm Waotu Wetland	5.77 ha	Pokaiwhenua Stream	2.75 ha
Churchill Farm	2.86 ha	Rumball Healey Farm	50.3 ha
Genesis Bone Road	5.10	Storey Farm	1.0 ha
Hamilton Farm	8.0 ha	Taupiri Cemetery	1.85
HPS Enhancement Project, Lake Whangape	4.5 ha	Te Awamutu WWTP	1.43 ha
Hampton Downs	8.0 ha	Te Kowhai WWTP	0.23 ha
Lake Kopuera	3.3 ha	Te Onetea Lake Waikare	3.79 ha
Lake Ohinewai	7.05 ha	Te Tahi WTP	0.38 ha
Mangawara Lagoons/Wetlands	2.12 ha	Te Uapoto Lagoon	0.2 ha
Meremere Clay Cap Project	11 ha	Te Tahi WTP	18.06 ha
Opuatia Catchment	7.71 ha	Wai O Te Atua Stream	4 ha

New Projects

Genesis Wetland Restoration - Te Ohaki Road	3.0 ha
Mangawara Scheme Peacocke	3.5ha
Meremere Clay Cap Project	11 ha
Hampton Downs	8 ha
Te Uapoto Lagoon	8.0 ha



Fencing completed at Mangawara Scheme Peacocke

Completed Projects

Lapwood Road (Tuakau)	2.4 ha
Lake Ohinewai reserve	7.5 ha
Lake Whangape	4.5 ha
Opuatia Catchment	7.71 ha
Smythe Farm	6.27 ha
Wai O Te Atua Stream	4 ha



Kill trap installed at Mangawara Scheme Peacocke

Community Involvement

Community engagement is at the heart of our mission and values. It's a genuine commitment to building meaningful relationships with those we work with and for. Our engagement initiatives include joining other groups on clean-up days along the Waikato River and partnering with organisations and iwi groups such as Pou Ltd, Nga Muka Development Trust, Waahi Whaanui Trust, Taupiri Marae, and Te Riu O Waikato Limited. We also host planting days with representatives from Genesis, Fonterra, Fish & Game, and the Waikato River Authority.

This interaction is more than just sharing our message; it's about listening, learning, and co-creating solutions. in its catchment.

By actively involving the community in our decision-making processes, we ensure our actions reflect diverse perspectives and respond to real needs. This approach strengthens trust, deepens relationships, and fosters a sense of ownership and pride among community members. We are extremely fortunate to have a core group of community supporters and are grateful for the project support from landowners, their families, and friends, as well as the technical advice received from individuals and groups. Our Executive Committee members regularly volunteer their time for RiverCare. Without their support, we could not operate or achieve the outcomes needed to protect and enhance our awa and the communities



Gwyneth Verkerk (WCEET) and Don Scarlet (Advisory member)



Future Plans

We are pleased to share that our relationship with our iwi partners Nga Muka Development Trust and POU Ltd, has now been formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding. We are also working with Place Group Environmental Planning to develop a strategic project plan that will guide our efforts moving forward. Trust Waikato's support of this initiative is greatly appreciated, with all parties keen to see deliverables achieved.

RiverCare's focus over the next 12 months will be in the following key areas:

- Build and support iwi capacity through our partnership with POU Ltd.
- Continue to develop a 'pipeline' of new project opportunities and alliances with project co-funders.
- Continue to deliver outcomes for our project partners, funders, and communities.
- Continue to provide industry-leading advice and support that encourages community-wide participation and buy-in for restoration plantings.

How You Can Help Us

- Please let us know if you or your organisation would like to sponsor one of our projects.
- You can donate to our Give a Little page www.givealittle.co.nz/org/waikatorivercare
- ‘Come and join us.’ Our meetings are open to the public; we’re always looking for new members to become part of the RiverCare team.
- Like and follow our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.
- We’re always interested in new project ideas, big or small.
- Tell others about the work that we are doing!
- Email us at info@waikatorivercare.co.nz.
- RiverCare acknowledges and thanks our generous sponsors, funders, and donors whose generosity makes our mahi possible. Ka mau te pai.

