



**Waikato
RiverCare**



**Waikato RiverCare Inc.
ANNUAL REPORT**

2021/22

Our Vision

Kia whakahii tatou 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.

“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. Waikato RiverCare Inc. was established in 1999, incorporated in 2001 and became a registered charity in 2008. The organisation is supported by a range of community stakeholders with a common vision and mission.”



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Introduction

Waikato RiverCare Incorporated is pleased to present our Annual Report for the 2021/22 period. The report documents achievements in relation to established projects and new projects initiated in this period.

Waikato RiverCare has been operating since 1999, officially becoming an incorporated society in 2001 and a registered charity in 2008. Members include a range of organisations and people who all share a similar passion for the lower Waikato River and its catchments.

Waikato RiverCare is the leading riparian restoration charity focusing on preparing, planting and maintaining areas of native plant habitat on the banks of the lower Waikato River and associated catchments, including sourcing funds to support and carry out this work. Sound science, cultural understanding and engagement, sustainability and a partnership approach to projects is essential to Waikato RiverCare's operation.

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



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



Structure of Waikato RiverCare Inc.

The organisation is governed by an Executive Committee whose membership comprises one representative from each Foundation Member organisation. In addition, up to three general members can also be appointed to the committee. Up to three Advisory Members offer high level support and political advocacy (currently only one position filled).

Executive Committee

Representative

Michelle Archer - *Chairperson*

Dawn Metcalfe - *Deputy Chairperson*

Simon Hill – *Treasurer*

Larnie Chrystall

David Klee

Elyse LaFace

Peter Buckley

Sarah Lealand

Nathaniel Wilson

Ben Wolf

Nigel Binks

Organisation

Independent member of public

Independent member of public

Mercury

Mercury

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council

Genesis

North Waikato Federated Farmers

Waikato Regional Council

Watercare Services Ltd

Waikato District Council

Department of Conservation

General Members

Kathryn Duggan

Independent member of public

Advisory Members

Don Scarlet

Mercury

Staff (at end of March 2022)

Kevin Hutchinson

Operations Manager

Karren Vink - *Secretary*

Administrator

Chairperson's Report

Waikato RiverCare has weathered another year of uncertainty as a result of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic and another long, dry summer. Operations Manager Kevin Hutchinson has continued his fantastic work, particularly with these challenges, and the organisation continues to grow thanks to his passion and commitment. Kevin also continues to provide support and advice for many other organisations undertaking restoration works in the Waikato and he regularly impresses me with his knowledge, connections and ability to work across numerous projects.

The committee farewelled administrator Sally McCarthy after two years with RiverCare and we are currently seeking a replacement. I also want to thank Karren Vink for her support in the role while we search for a suitable candidate, a challenge at present in a flooded job market. The Executive Committee membership has remained consistent throughout this year; however, Covid-19 restrictions meant that there were fewer meetings in person. A key group of members continues to support Kevin and I want to thank Simon Hill, David Klee and Dawn Metcalfe for their dedication.

Kevin has continued to successfully deliver projects from inception to project completion, while building a profile for Waikato RiverCare around the Lower Waikato catchment. This has included attending karakia at the Lake Kopuera and Mangatea Storey Farm projects and facilitating a working agreement with Ngāti Naho Trust. A core group of committee members has worked on a Trust Waikato funding application aimed at supporting iwi capacity building in partnership with RiverCare. We look forward to seeing how this project funding progresses over the next year.

Project planting numbers were back up (62,385) after Covid-19 restrictions the previous season significantly impacted our planting activities. Looking back over previous annual reports, I note that dry weather is a constant theme and an ongoing risk to RiverCare's planting efforts. Plant losses are a fact of this mahi, and the organisation continues to adapt, including planting earlier in the season and detailed planning to ensure the right plant is in the right place.

Financial year 2022-23 will be Waikato RiverCare's biggest ever year with over 100,000 plants ordered and we look forward to working with our project partners and communities to deliver these projects. I know that the committed staff and members of Waikato RiverCare will work together to ensure successful outcomes for the restoration of the Waikato River.

Ngā mihi,

Michelle Archer

Chairperson, Waikato RiverCare Inc.



Pre-planting karakia led by kaumātua Pat Kingi at RiverCare's Genesis Energy funded Lake Whangape project

Operation Manager's Report

RiverCare has delivered outstanding results for our funders and project partners during a 12-month period of extreme volatility and uncertainty. My sincerest thanks to everyone who has assisted me in delivering project outcomes and milestones; especially members of RiverCare's Executive Committee, our many volunteers, landowners, project partners and staff from the organisations I work with daily. Thank you.

With so much going on around the world and here at home, it's easy to forget last summer was a record-breaker for much of Aotearoa. Below average rainfall compounded by above average temperatures baked the country, providing excellent holiday weather. The Waikato region wasn't spared either, experiencing one of the driest autumns ever recorded with drought conditions extending well into May.

Like many weather-dependant primary producers, extreme weather events add significant risk and challenges to the project's successful establishment and long-term success. This season's projects have endured 11 ½ weeks with no rain, a windstorm in February which generated 100km plus winds causing leaf loss, wind burn, and now a second extended period of limited rainfall with high temperatures. It's therefore unsurprising to note plant losses across many projects are well above normal with some projects experiencing 50% losses in year 1 and year 2 plantings. To provide our plantings with the best chance of success, RiverCare continues to adapt our project delivery to combat weather extremes, this season's planting activities starting in late May last year, two months earlier than forecast.

A total of 62,385 plants were planted across nine projects (a significant increase on the previous season's Covid-disrupted planting effort). RiverCare even managed to squeeze in one public planting event with Kimihia School and Bizzy Bodz Early Learning Centre in Huntly before Omicron restrictions took effect.

RiverCare has welcomed the appointment of a new administrator in 2022. Karren Vink has joined the team and is enthusiastic about growing our profile and project partners. I wish to acknowledge Sally McFarlane's excellent service to RiverCare over the last two years as our administrator, particularly in growing our social media brand; on behalf of the RiverCare

whanau, we wish her all the very best.

Other highlights or key milestones that have occurred over the last 12 months included:

- The successful completion of two long-term WRA projects on the Te Onetea Stream: the Tūhonohono project and Te Onetea site 4 project. Given the importance of the Te Onetea Stream for the lower Waikato River catchment, RiverCare has elected to keep a watching brief over these projects to ensure their long-term success.
- Waipā District Council's Natural Heritage project on the Butler Farm was successfully completed last July. This project continues to be supported by the WRA into next year; the project is now in its maintenance phase after significant contributions from several other funders, most notably WCEET.
- Genesis Energy has come on board RiverCare's culturally important Wai O te Atua Stream project located at the northern end of the Hakarimata Ranges. Genesis Energy has committed significant new co-funding which will be directed towards the planting of an additional 10,000 plants in the project.
- RiverCare was successful in securing new project funding from the Waikato River Authority in 2021. Funded projects include a site on the Mangatea Stream, a project within the Pungapunga wetland complex, and a joint initiative between Ngā Muka Development Trust involving a landowner on the foreshore of Lake Kopuera.
- RiverCare has made great progress in increasing our engagement with mana whenua over the last 12 months, holding karakia at projects, lodging joint funding applications, supporting mana whenua with technical advice and information, and developing restoration projects with iwi for iwi-administered lands.

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

- Progress RiverCare's capacity-building strategy to secure third-party funding with our chosen iwi partner
- Continue to maintain the highest standard of project delivery for our project partners and funders
- Delivering our biggest ever planting programme with over 100,000 plants going to projects

- Continue to work with landowners and administrators to develop projects and bring on new project co-funders
- Deliver key outcomes of RiverCare's three-year strategic plan

Ngā mihi

Kevin Hutchinson

Kai Whakahaere Rauemi



Planting contractors in action working on a constructed wetland located within RiverCare's Lake Waikare project

Society's Performance Review

Compliance with the Society's Objectives

Waikato RiverCare Inc. has been compliant with the objects and rules listed in its Constitution:

The Society was established for environmental and charitable objects and 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, and
 - (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 riverine 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 5 years is the underlining measure of project success for Waikato RiverCare.

Performance in Relation to the Strategic Business Plan

Waikato RiverCare has continued to actively look for and develop new project opportunities within the Waikato catchment with a focus on upper catchments, constructed wetlands, critical habitat projects and identified priority areas for our project partners. This approach has been instrumental in the organisation's success in securing new funding for the following projects:

Project	Funder(s)
Lake Kopuera	Waikato District Council, Waikato River Authority and Clune Family
Pungapunga Wetland	WCEET, Waikato River Authority, NZ Gamebird Habitat Trust, 1BT, QEII, Fish&Game Auckland/Waikato Region and Rumball/Healy Family
Mitchell Farm	WCEET, 1BT and Mitchell Family
Hazlitt Farm	1BT, Trees that Count, Fish&Game, WCEET and Hazlitt Family
Mangatea Stream	Waikato River Authority and Waikato Regional Council, Storey Family
Mangapiko Stream	Trees that Count

The organisation's online profile has continued to grow steadily as a result of Sally's determination and dedication to RiverCare's Facebook page. The increased use of video content over pictures has drawn significantly more interest from users on the social media network. Given the apparent greater impact of video content, it has been suggested opening a second social media account with Instagram maybe beneficial to the organisation's online growth.

Our Year in Numbers

2021-22

\$370,713

Total Spending

\$537,040

Total Funding

(grants, sponsorship and interest)

62,385

Plants Planted

34

Number Volunteers

23

Current Projects

28

Hectares Planted

2020-21

\$375,643

Total Spending

\$493,497

Total Funding

(grants, sponsorship and interest)

12,635

Plants Planted

0

Number Volunteers

24

Current Projects

6.5

Hectares Planted

Community Involvement

RiverCare successfully organised one public planting event just prior to Omicron restrictions coming into effect involving students from Kimihia School and pre-school children from Bizzy Bodz Early Learning Centre. The Huntly Waterworks project was selected for the planting event due to its central location to Kimihia School and all-weather access for both people and vehicles. A total of 32 children and staff attended on the day, planting 855 mixed grade plants.



Future Plans

Waikato RiverCare's recent success in securing Trust Waikato Funding to support and develop iwi capacity-building is seen as a significant step forward to address the acute shortages of skilled personnel equipped to deliver restoration outcomes for their communities and catchments. In addition to personnel shortages, the ongoing effects of Covid-19 on communities and our trusted contractors remains a concern for RiverCare, with a return to school and community planting days still extremely unlikely in the short term.

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

- Building and supporting iwi capacity in the restoration space for the lower Waikato River
- Utilising Trust Waikato funding to formalizing a working relationship with a key iwi partner to facilitate capacity-building
- Continue to develop new project opportunities and alliances with project co-funders
- Engage with landowners to develop resilient partnerships post-project completion
- Understand the effects of Covid-19 on RiverCare's strategic plan and our project partners
- Continue to deliver outstanding outcomes for the Waikato catchment, our project partners, funders and communities
- Provide industry leading advice and support that encourages community wide participation and buy-in for restoration plantings



Kaumātua Henry Morgan talks of his whanau's special connection with the Mangatea Stream at the pre-works karakia.

RiverCare Projects

RiverCare's projects usually cover a 3-5 year period and involve pre-planting vegetation control, planting, post-planting care, in-fill planting and maintenance of the project.

To view the project site locations, including projects completed, visit:

www.waikatorivercare.co.nz/planting-sites.

Project Name	Planting Area (hectares)
New Projects	
Mangatea Stream	2.0ha
Pungapunga Wetland	50ha
Lake Kopuera	3.0ha
Mitchell Farm	1.7ha
Hazlitt Farm	8.6ha
Projects in Progress	
Butler Farm	5.2 ha
Gateway Project (SH1 Meremere)	1.0 ha
Hakarimata G (Candy Licence)	0.79 ha
Lake Whangape	0.4 ha
Lake Areare	1.1 ha
Lake Ohinewai Recreational Reserve	7.05 ha
Te Onetea Lake Waikare	12.26 ha
Opuatia Catchment	7.0 ha
Te Awamutu WWTP	1.43 ha
Te Tahi WTP	0.38 ha
Smythe Farm	6.25 ha
Wai O Te Atua Project	4.0 ha
Taupiri Cemetery	2.3 ha
Completed Projects	
Huntly Waterworks	1.75 ha
Mangawara Stream Project 1	1.26 ha
Te Onetea Stream "WRA Site 4"	1.58 ha
Tūhonohono	1.79 ha
Butler Farm Extension	1.0 ha
Koheroa Road Black Farm	14 ha

Breakdown of Financial Statements

Our full Financial Statements are available on our website, www.waikatorivercare.co.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/individuals.

Revenue	2021/22
Grants/sponsorship	\$421,928
Interest	\$4,982
Other Revenue	\$112,048
Total	\$538,958

Expenses	2021/22
Project Costs	\$247,961
Staff Costs	\$99,838
Other Expenses*	\$22,914
Total	\$370,713

Surplus/(Deficit)	\$168,245
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*other expenses include the following: Kiwi Saver, ACC, depreciation, advertising & community engagement, vehicle use, office expenses, one-off general projects, printing & postage, website & accounting package, general expenses.

What Can You Do?

- You can donate to our Give-a-Little page [here](#)
- Let us know if you or your organisation would like to sponsor one of our projects
- 'Come join us' - our meetings are open to the public and we're always looking for new general members to become part of the RiverCare team
- Visit our website: www.waikatorivercare.co.nz
- Like our [Facebook page](#)
- 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.

