

**Waikato
RiverCare**



Waikato RiverCare Inc.
ANNUAL REPORT
2022/23

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.

“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 2022/23 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



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*

David Klee – *Deputy Chairperson*

Simon Hill – *Treasurer*

Dawn Metcalfe

Larnie Chrystall

Elyse LaFace

Peter Buckley

Sarah Lealand

Nathaniel Wilson

Ben Wolf

Renee Hardy-McKnight

Glen Tupuhi

Organisation

Independent member of public

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council

Mercury

Independent member of public

Mercury

Genesis

North Waikato Federated Farmers

Waikato Regional Council

Watercare Services Ltd

Waikato District Council

Department of Conservation

Nga Muka Development Trust

General Members

Emma Baker

Watercare Services Ltd

Advisory Members

Don Scarlet

Mercury

Staff (at end of March 2023)

Kevin Hutchinson

Operations Manager

Sara Fryett – *Secretary*

Administrator

Chairperson's Report

Waikato RiverCare has continued its strong performance this year, with the organisation reaching the incredible milestone of planting 500,000 plants since we formed back in 1999. From the humble beginnings of volunteers and committee members procuring and project managing planting days, to our existing staff running this, I am proud to be part of the team continuing to deliver high quality outcomes for the awa and the communities we work with.

Operations Manager Kevin Hutchinson is the backbone to the organisation and I particularly thank Kevin for this persistence and perseverance, particularly over the last couple of years with drought and then continual rain which has meant ongoing shuffling of contractors to ensure work is completed. He has even donned the knapsack himself at times when the weeds have grown and we couldn't get contractors in the field.

I would also like to acknowledge our fantastic administrator Sara Fryett, for supporting Kevin and quickly getting up to speed in the new role. Sara and Kevin continue to be supported by a core working group of committee members, Simon Hill, Dawn Metcalfe and David Klee, to ensure payments are completed on time and progressing matters to continue to meet our strategic goals.

On behalf of RiverCare's Executive Committee, I wish to acknowledge the resignation of Glen Tupuhi as Nga Muka's representative on RiverCare. Thank you, Glen, for your support, time and commitment to the Executive Committee and Operations Manager. We welcome Kelvin Tupuhi as Nga Muka's new representative and look forward to progressing more projects together.

During this year, Waikato RiverCare has liaised closely with POU, an iwi led organisation that aims to get rangatahi into paid employment. Work has progressed on formalising a MOU between the two organisations which aims to facilitate a shared working relationship to get people working in environmental restoration roles. I am excited to get this process operational to further our connections with mana whenua in the Lower Waikato and share knowledge across both organisations.

RiverCare's planting projects suffered some damage due to this summer's cyclones, and I appreciate the support of Genesis to help cover the costs to remedy damage to these projects. The nature of the work means we will continue to be impacted by weather; however, the work

we do will build resilience in the riverbanks and wetlands we restore. Another big planting year is planned for 2023 with over 85,000 plants going out to nine different initiatives. I look forward to working with our partners, landowners and communities to deliver these exciting projects.

Ngā mihi

Michelle Archer

Chairperson



Summer Cyclone's Hale and Gabrielle caused significant damage to several RiverCare projects, particularly those located in the Huntly/Te Kauwhata area. Pictured: The Mangawara catchment set new summer flooding records.

Operation Manager's Report

Over the last 12 months, RiverCare has delivered several significant milestones for our whānau of landowners, project partners/supporters and co-funders. None of these outstanding milestones would have been possible without the dedicated commitment of our executive committee and administration support staff – a massive thanks to the executive team and administrator for all your efforts.

RiverCare successfully achieved two long-term goals for the organisation this year, planting more than 100,000 plants in a single planting season, and passing our 500,000 plant milestone for plants planted on RiverCare projects. Successfully funding the planting of more than 500,000 plants is a significant achievement and a credit to all those individuals and organisations that have volunteered their time over the last 23 years to grow and develop RiverCare into a leading environmental advocate for riparian protection and habitat improvement. To commemorate this milestone RiverCare has designed a limited run of trucker style caps available for sale through our Facebook account.

This season's project planting tally of 111,618 plants across 13 projects set a new record for the organisation, nearly doubling the previous season's record effort of 62,385 plants. The diversity of projects is great to see, from small 540 plant projects to 22,000 plant projects, involving constructed wetlands, the protection and enhancement of existing natural values, fisheries habitat focused projects, through to riparian zones on small mountain streams.

The Waikato experienced yet another very dry summer in 2022 which extended into late May, delaying planned project planting by six weeks. Most planting sites coped well with the extended dry conditions. However, some RiverCare projects suffered above average plant losses from a combination of drought-related stress and accidental grazing damage (dry waterways provided opportunities for stock to access projects from neighbouring properties).

RiverCare's ability to host community planting events was again impacted by the ongoing uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic. And, for the first time in many years, no school or public events were held at any RiverCare projects, with contractors undertaking most of the work, assisted at some projects by the landowners. As RiverCare prepares for the coming planting season, I'm hopeful public planting events will return; however, a high degree of uncertainty remains and logistically events are more challenging to arrange now with both schools and corporate groups.

RiverCare's annual programme of spring/summer vegetation control and pre-planting preparation has been significantly impacted by poor weather which extended into the New Year. The La Niña weather cycle of unsettled north-easterly winds and two cyclones limited project access and options for our vegetation control contractors. Unlike Northland, Coromandel and the East Coast Regions who were hit hard, this year's summer cyclones caused only moderate damage to our projects. Fencing damage from falling trees was the major issue across several projects; however, some projects suffered significant spill damage to both plantings and fences. Of particular concern is the high number of mature trees showing hydraulic shock from sustained inundation or saturated soils, particularly in the Mangawara catchment.

Due to this summer's wet weather, RiverCare has been unable to complete scheduled project earthworks at several wetland and stream projects. This project work will be rescheduled for completion in summer 2024.

After a turbulent six months, RiverCare welcomed the appointment of Sara Fryett as our administrator in mid-2022. Sara brings a passion for sustainability, making a positive impact on the environment and community participation/engagement in nature. As Sara settles into the role, expect to see more activity on our social accounts and updates on what RiverCare's working on with our project partners.

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

- Successful completion of the WCEET funded Black Farm project (28,740 plants). At 14 ha, this is one of RiverCare's largest projects, involving establishment of diverse habitat types including lowland forest restoration, wetland creation and large-scale hill country plantings. WCEET's excellent support was instrumental in supporting RiverCare and the Black family to deliver this outstanding project.
- RiverCare's first two projects in partnership with 1BT and New Zealand Gamebird Habitat Trust successfully completed: Hazlitt Farm project (9,242 plants) and Mitchell Farm project (2,600 plants).
- The WRA funded Hakarimata G project was completed earlier this year. This challenging site requires ongoing support and RiverCare will continue to work closely with our project partners at the Waikato District Council and Waikato Regional Council.
- Waipā District Council planting project around Te Awamutu infrastructure upgrades completed. Devastating drought conditions over consecutive summers had a major impact on project outcomes and additional actions are required in the coming years.

- Last autumn, Barakat Contractors completed RiverCare's largest ever fencing project. Over 2.5 months, staff constructed 6.2 km of new fencing and fencing upgrades to make the 50 ha project stock-proof. An absolutely outstanding effort by all parties involved.
- RiverCare was successful in securing \$148,700 of new project funding from the Waikato River Authority in 2022 across three projects. They are: the Graham Farm project, Pokaiwhenua Stream; Churchill Farm project, Opuatia Wetland; and Mangawara lagoons and wetlands (site 24).

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

- Update our constitutional document to ensure compliance with legislation changes for entities operating under the Incorporated Societies Act.
- Finalise RiverCare's priority work areas for inclusion in the new three-year strategic plan and 12-month business plan.
- Continue developing the MOU with POU Ltd in partnership with Nga Muka Development Trust and Trust Waikato, aimed at building iwi capacity in the Huntly/Te Kauwhata area.
- Continue to maintain the highest standard of project delivery for our project partners and funders.
- Continue to work with landowners and administrators during this economically challenging period to develop new projects and increase our whānau of project co-funders.



Ngā mihi
Kevin Hutchinson
Kai Whakahaere Rauemi

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 five 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 organisations success in securing new funding for the following projects:

Project	Funder(s)
Churchill Farm	WCEET, Waikato Regional Council and the Waikato River Authority
Pokaiwhenua Stream	WCEET, Waikato River Authority, Waipā District Council, Pokaiwhenua Catchment Group, Alex and Courtney Graham
Mangawara lagoons (site 24)	Waikato Regional Council and the Waikato River Authority
Te Kowhai WWTP	Waikato District Council and WaterCare

RiverCare's ability to continue the organisation's growth online and on social media platforms has been significantly constrained over the last year due to a vacancy in the administrator's role. Recruitment for a new administrator took considerably longer than anticipated due to the Waikato's extremely competitive labour market; but RiverCare's Executive Committee is very pleased to have secured the services of Sara Fryett as our new administrator.

Sara joined the RiverCare team in August and has quickly settled into the role. Living on the banks of the Waipā River with her husband and two children, she says she enjoys the opportunity that the role provides to contribute towards protecting and enhancing the environment, now and for future generations.

Our Year in Numbers

2022-23

\$568,627

Total Spending

\$771,130

Total Funding

(grants, sponsorship and interest)

111,618

Plants Planted

4

Number Volunteers

24

Current Projects

35.55

Hectares Planted

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

Community Involvement

Unfortunately, RiverCare was unable to organise any public or school planting events due to the ongoing uncertainty of Covid restrictions for our schools, teachers, parent helpers and corporate partners. Community involvement remains a key element of RiverCare's mahi and we are extremely fortunate to have a core group of community supporters and Executive Committee members who regularly volunteer their time for RiverCare. Without their support, we would be unable to operate or deliver the amazing outcomes needed to protect and enhance our awa and the communities that live in its catchment.

RiverCare remains committed to providing our supporters and communities opportunities to participate in planting events and project visits during the forthcoming 2023 planting season.

Future Plans

Waikato RiverCare continues to work closely with our engagement contractor, Te Hira Consultant Ltd, on formalising a relationship with an MOU with our iwi partner POU Ltd. Trust Waikato's support of this initiative is greatly appreciated, with all parties involved keen to see deliverables achieved over the coming year.

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.
- Maintain compliance with all recent changes to Incorporated Societies legislation.
- 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.

RiverCare Projects

RiverCare's projects usually cover a three- to five-year period and involve pre-planting vegetation control, planting, post-planting care, infill 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	
Churchill Farm	2.86 ha
Mangawara wetlands	2.12 ha
Pokaiwhenua Stream	7.65 ha
Te Kowhai WTP	0.23 ha
Projects in Progress	
Mangatea Stream	2.0 ha
Gateway Project (SH1 Meremere)	1.0 ha
Pungapunga wetland	50 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
Koheroa Road Black Farm	14 ha
Lake Kopuera	3 ha
Completed Projects	
Butler Farm	5.2 ha
Hakarimata G (Candy Licence)	0.79 ha
Hazlett Farm	8.6 ha
Mitchell Farm	1.7 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	2022/23
Grants/sponsorship	\$693,696
Interest	\$ 12,513
Other Revenue	\$ 64,921
Total	\$771,130

Expenses	2022/23
Project Costs	\$404,239
Staff Costs	\$132,563
Other Expenses*	\$ 31,825
Total	\$568,627

Surplus/(Deficit)	\$202,503
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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 Givealittle 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; 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.

