

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a river restoration project. In the foreground, there is a dense field of green ferns. In the middle ground, a group of about 15 people, mostly wearing orange high-visibility vests, are working on a grassy slope. Some are using tools like shovels and rakes. In the background, there are rolling green hills under a blue sky with some clouds.

Waikato RiverCare Inc. ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

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 2019/20 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.

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, and sourcing funds and support to carry out this work. Sound science, cultural understanding, sustainability and a cooperative approach are essential to Waikato RiverCare's operation.

Sponsors

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

Major Sponsors



Sponsors



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



Te Awa River Ride: A recently completed Waikato River Authority funded project.

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. Two Advisory Members offer high level support and political advocacy.

Executive Committee

Representative

Michelle Archer - *Chairperson*

David Klee - *Deputy Chairperson*

Kathryn Duggan – *Treasurer*

Larnie Chrystall

Tuti Cooper

Nigel Goodhue / Alan Bennett

Glen Tupuhi

Wally Lee

Sarah Lealand

Nathaniel Wilson / Nolwenn Lagadec

Ben Wolf

Dawn Metcalfe

Organisation

Independent member of public

Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council

Independent member of public

Mercury

Department of Conservation

Genesis

Nga Muka Development Trust

North Waikato Federated Farmers

Waikato Regional Council

Watercare Services Ltd

Waikato District Council

Independent member of public

General Members

Hori Awa

Taroi Rawiri

Donna Barakat

Waahi Whaanui Trust

Waikato-Tainui

Genesis

Advisory Members

Peter Buckley

Don Scarlet

Fed Farmers / Lower Waikato Zone Farmer

Mercury

Staff (at end of March 2020)

Kevin Hutchinson

Sally McCarthy - *Secretary*

Operations Manager

Administrator

Chairperson's Report

This year was one of continued growth for Waikato RiverCare coupled with the challenges of an extended summer drought and a country in lockdown due to COVID-19. This unanticipated event has affected RiverCare's operation. While we were able to use the time for planning and setting out the coming years work, our ability to undertake maintenance at critical times was curtailed.

This is my second year as Chairperson and I was fortunate to welcome our past and present members to our 20th year celebration. It was amazing to look back at some of the photos from the original planting projects and see how far we have come in regards to plants in the ground per year, and the increased professionalism and cost effectiveness of project delivery. I want to thank Dawn Metcalfe for the extra effort she put into helping organise the event and her wonderful speech. We are lucky to have one of our founding members still heavily involved in our day-to-day operations.

Operations Manager, Kevin Hutchinson, has continued his great work delivering projects and I am continually appreciative of his enthusiasm for RiverCare and his drive for excellence. He has also had to spend extra time on administration this year due to staff turnover in the Secretary role. Melissa Ferguson and Kelly Stone both vacated the role during the year and we welcomed Sally McCarthy in February. I really appreciate the effort of Kevin, Kathryn Duggan and Larnie Chrystall for the additional work they undertook during the transitions of new staff.

Our funding applications to the Waikato River Authority for projects at Lake Ohinewai Recreational Reserve and on the Wai O Te Atua Stream were successful and we have now finalised all the agreements to start these projects in the new financial year. We have successfully completed another bumper year for planting with nearly 48,000 plants in the ground over 12 projects. However, it is looking like we will experience some significant plant losses at selected project sites due to drought. This, again, highlights the changing climate we have and how we need to adapt to remain effective.

Our new strategic plan is operational. The team will work to report on this annually and check in as well to see how we are going in achieving our new goals. The changing times will only continue with the Healthy Rivers plan change progressing and putting more emphasis on the types of work RiverCare has been achieving for over 20 years now.

Waikato RiverCare is always looking for new projects and areas to work in, so if you think you have a new opportunity, please check out our website or contact one of the team to discuss your ideas.

I know we will all remember this strange time of living in our lockdown bubbles. As I write this (sitting in my new home office at my dinner table), it is timely to reflect on what is important to us as individuals. For me personally, it helps solidify my volunteer involvement in an organisation that achieves so much due to the passion of our people and its track record of excellence.

Nga mihi

Michelle Archer

Chairperson, Waikato RiverCare Inc.



Michelle Archer & Dawn Metcalfe



Former and Current Chairpersons
Norm Hill, Phil Teal, Dawn Metcalfe, David Klee & Michelle Archer



Operation Manager's Report

During this time of unprecedented uncertainty, taking the opportunity during lockdown to review RiverCare's performance over the last 12 months is a welcome distraction for me. RiverCare has enjoyed another extremely successful year and is well placed to deliver a number of exciting new projects over the coming year ahead.

Over the last 12 months, there have been several changes and highlights for RiverCare. However, for many individuals and project partners, the organisations 20th anniversary was a significant milestone celebrated last year. The function held next to Hamilton's Lake Rotoroa was a great opportunity to acknowledge the efforts and commitment of so many people to get RiverCare to where it is today. The event was well attended by several past and current executive committee members, sponsors, contractors and partners. Special thanks to those foundation members and attendees that travelled from outside the region to attend this event.

Last year's planting season was one of the busiest RiverCare has had with 12 projects receiving a total of 47,785 trees, shrubs and grasses. Planting actions on projects varied from in-fill planting on some older sites to new plantings on projects like the Meremere project sponsored by Watercare. Our contractors did a great job over five weeks of planting effort with no significant health and safety incidents recorded.

RiverCare's public planting event at the Waiterimu Golf Club was well supported by local school groups and our corporate partners with 130 volunteers enjoying a beautiful spring day. Volunteers worked into the afternoon planting a total of 2,400 plants—a fantastic effort from a committed group of passionate volunteers. The day would not have been the success it was without the support of Ross Caird and members of the Waiterimu Golf Club who tirelessly transported plants and operated the BBQ to fuel our hard working planters—your efforts are greatly appreciated by RiverCare.

Unfortunately, this summer, much of the country as suffered through a significant drought with some of the worse effected areas in the Huntly-Te Kauwhata area. Preliminary assessments of planting sites indicated project losses will be greater than normal with some sites suffering up to 30% plant losses. The full extent of drought damage will not be known until later this year when soil moisture levels increase and plant regrowth can be quantified.

As our summers become hotter and drier for longer, so too does the risk of project failure. RiverCare has reviewed a number of options to reduce our exposure to climate change and will continue to

develop and refine project delivery options to mitigate for weather extremes. Options considered include investment in new irrigation assets, the application of mulch or grass products at high risk projects, use of crystal rain (or a similar project) and changes to planting periods, e.g. split planting seasons.

RiverCare recently welcomed Sally McCarthy as our new administrator, Sally brings a new set of skills and passion to RiverCare and I look forward to seeing her develop key relationships and contacts with our project partners over the coming months.

Several other key milestones and events have occurred over the last 12 months including:

- The release of Honshu white admiral butterfly caterpillars within the Mangapiko Stream catchment, this partnership project with the Waipa District Council aims to establish a tool for the long-term control of Japanese Honey Suckle. This weed threatens restoration efforts throughout the Waipa District and RiverCare is optimistic this project will provide lasting benefits catchment wide.
- RiverCare completed the last remaining actions on our WCEET funded project in the Mangawara catchment. Instrumental in establishing this project was the late Cathy Tarrant at (then) Mighty River Power. Cathy's passion for the environment and protecting areas of significance to mana whenua was instrumental in establishing this project.
- Another successful year working with the Waikato River Authority, two new projects funded by the Authority in 2019 and the completion deed milestones on the Te Awa River Ride Project located in Ngaruawahia. You can access the trail at a number of points between Ngaruawahia Golf Club and Waikato Esplanade Rd. The concrete path provides year round access to the planting project for those people wanting to collect eco source seed for their own riparian project.
- Genesis Energy Hopuhopu project completed, this five year project located on land managed by Tainui Group Holdings is now well established with day to day vegetation control actions now undertaken by their farm staff.

Given the current level of uncertainty in the post lockdown period, RiverCare's focus over the next 12 months will be in the following key areas:

- Honouring all supply and service agreements entered into by RiverCare prior to the enforced lockdown period for COVID19

- Support our trusted contractors and suppliers over the coming 12 months
- Support and maintain our iwi partners and community groups
- Support members of RiverCare's Executive Committee as and when required
- Maintain the highest standard of project delivery for our project partners
- Continue to provide opportunities for community engagement and ownership of RiverCare projects in a post pandemic environment
- Increase RiverCare's on-line profile to ensure people remain connected and part of the organisations mission during periods of isolation and restricted movement
- Maintain the financial viability of the organisation through a prolonged period of reduced economic activity and financial hardship

On behalf of Sally and I, our thanks to all those individuals, community groups and project funders and partners that have supported delivery of our projects and to the executive committee for their on-going commitment of time and energy to deliver RiverCare's mission.

Nga mihi

Kevin Hutchinson
Operations Manager



The Butler Farm is an excellent example of RiverCare's ability to bring multiple funders and land owners together delivering tangible outcomes for all parties involved.

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 organisations success in securing new funding for projects with the Waikato River Authority, Waikato District Council, Waipa District Council and Genesis Energy.

New projects with confirmed funding include two with the Waikato River Authority (Wai O Te Atua Stream and Lake Ohinewai), Genesis Energy project at Lake Whangape and Lake Waikare/Te Onetea Stream partnership project.

Waikato RiverCare has experience one of its busiest project planting seasons in recent years relying on our network of committed independent contractors to deliver project outcomes within agreed timeframes and on budget. Waikato RiverCare successfully exceed all performance measures for the last twelve months of field operations and is well placed to adopted the new reporting framework outlined in the revised strategic plan which will guide project delivery and reporting requirements for the organisation over the next three years.

The organisations online profile continues to require refinement and further development particularly in the post COVID-19 environment. People will continue to want tangible connections with nature and the outdoors. Waikato RiverCare remains committed to providing safe and enjoyable opportunities for communities, school groups, individuals and businesses to be involved in our projects.

Waikato RiverCare continues to support events and groups that promote habitat enhancement and water quality improvement within the Waikato River catchment—like the Lower Waikato River Trout Fishing Contest and the Waikato 100 event this year. Waikato RiverCare has maintained its close working relationship with the Sustainable Business Network (Million Metres programme) with infill planting actions planned later this year for the crowd funded Te Onetea Extension project and discussions continue on identifying the next collaboration project for the two organisations

Our Year in Numbers

2019-20



\$335,916
Total Spending



\$316,658
Total Funding
(grants, sponsorship and interest)



47,785
Plants Planted



63
Volunteers Helping Out



20
Current Projects



32
Hectares Planted

2018-19



\$269,148
Total Spending



\$349,719
Total Funding
(grants, sponsorship and interest)



38,735
Plants Planted



55
Volunteers Helping Out



20
Current Projects



26.51
Hectares Planted

Community Involvement

Our public planting event was held on a beautiful spring day at the Waiterimu Golf Club with 130 passionate volunteers from Kimihia School, local school groups, corporate partners and members of the Waiterimu Golf Club (thanks for transporting plants and fuelling the team with food from the barbie).

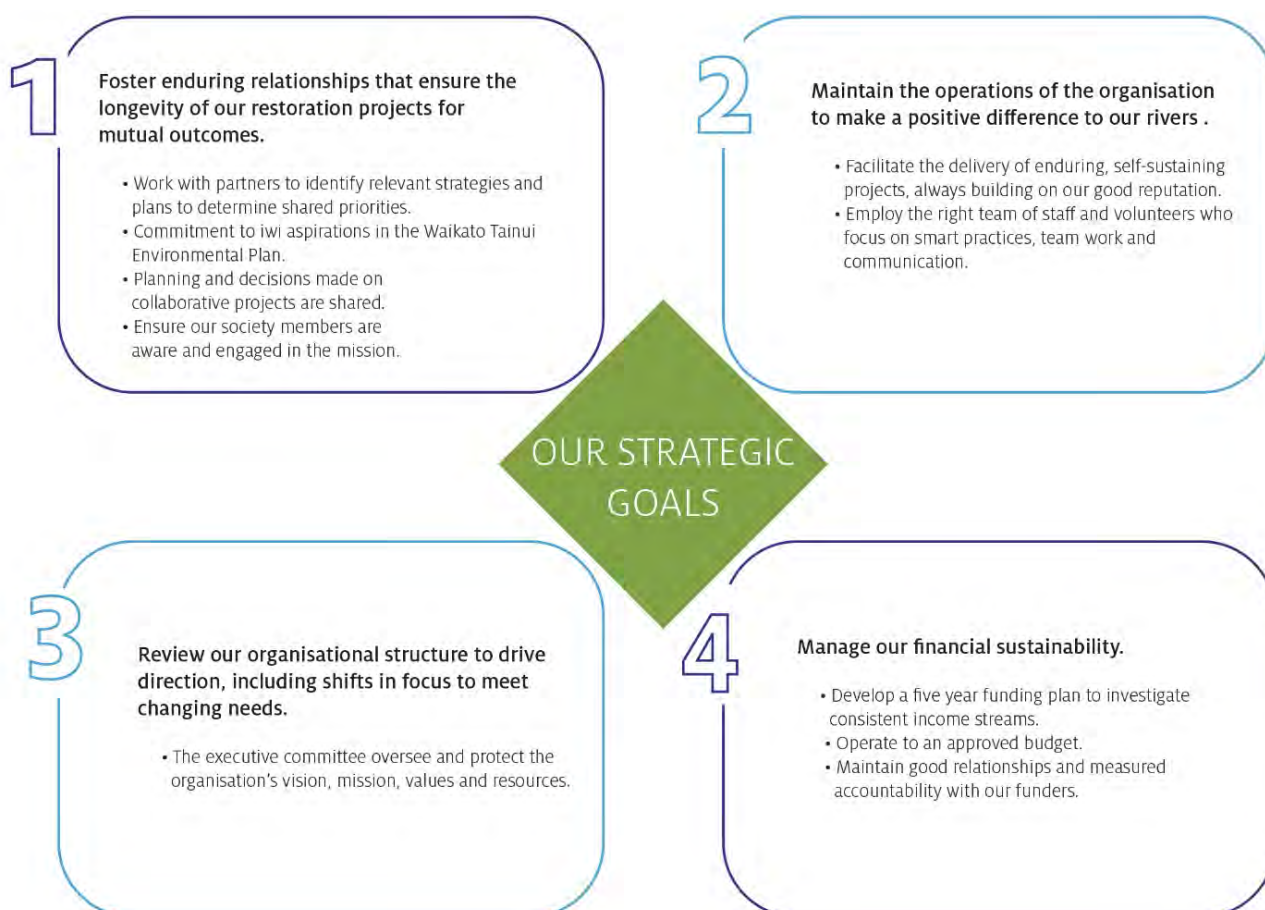
Volunteers worked into the afternoon and did a fantastic job planted a total of 2,400 plants—a successful and fun day for all involved!



Future Plans

The long-term effects of COVID-19 on New Zealand's economy and communities is yet to be known. However, during these uncertain times, Waikato RiverCare's Executive Committee remains committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the organisation. The committee's priority is to supporting our project partners, contractors and communities that work with us to deliver such great outcomes.

Waikato RiverCare has identified the following key goals for the organisation over the next three years:



Waikato RiverCare's work is underpinned by our values:

PARTNERSHIPS

Our stakeholders are as passionate and dedicated as us to supporting our mission and values.

LEADERSHIP

Our commitment to share our knowledge and skills.

TRANSPARENCY

We are transparent in our resourcing and operations.

TRUST

We are trusting of our partners, participants and our processes.

Waikato RiverCare will prioritise resources for projects that align with the following criteria or key work areas by continuing to:

- establish collaborative projects within the catchments identified by the Waikato River Authority as priority work areas.
- provide technical advice and assistance to landowners, businesses and iwi groups keen to develop partnership projects.
- maintain a diverse project portfolio to ensure the widest possible appeal to both large and small funders.
- provide value to our key supporting partners and maintain the excellent reputation the organisation has established in delivering quality outcomes.



RiverCare Projects

RiverCare's projects usually cover a 3-5 years period and involve active vegetation removal, planting and post planting care.

To view the project site locations, including projects completed prior to 2019, visit www.waikatorivercare.co.nz/planting-sites.

Project Name	Planting Area (hectares)
New Projects	
Te Tahi WTP	0.38 ha
Te Awamutu WWTP	1.43 ha
Wai O Te Atua Project	4 ha
Projects in Progress	
Butler Farm	5.2 ha
Gateway Project (SH1 Meremere)	1 ha
Hakarimata G (Candy Licence)	0.79 ha
Huntly Waterworks	1.75 ha
Koheroa Road Black Farm	14 ha
Mangawara Catchment Tuna & Wildlife	1.4 ha
Mangawara Landon Oxbow	1.1 ha
Mangawara McConnell Road Oxbow	1.7 ha
Mangawara Stream Project 1	1.26 ha
Te Onetea Extension	0.42 ha
Te Onetea Lake Waikare	12.26 ha
Te Onetea Stream "WRA Site 4"	1.58 ha
Tūhonohono	1.34 ha
Completed Projects	
Te Awa River Ride	1.15 ha
Hickey Farm	2.36 ha
34 River Road	1 ha
Hopuhopu	1.8 ha

Breakdown of Financial Statements

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

Waikato RiverCare is dependent on community funder grants and government funds in order to provide riparian restoration along the lower Waikato River and catchments.

Sponsorship agreements and in-kind support with a variety of organisations are also central to the funding of Waikato RiverCare's projects.

Revenue	2019/20
Grants/sponsorship	\$300,652
Interest	\$15,861
Other Revenue	\$145
Total	\$316,658
Expenses	2019/20
Project costs	\$211,174
Staff costs	\$106,749
Other Expenses	\$17,993
Total	\$335,916
Surplus/ (Deficit)	(\$19,258)

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
- 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

We'd like to acknowledge and thank our generous sponsors, partners, and donors for your continued support.

