

THE WAIAPU CATCHMENT

The Waiapu River Catchment (the “Catchment”) in the Gisborne District has the highest suspended sediment yield of any river in New Zealand. The annual suspended sediment yield of the Waiapu River is estimated at 35 million tonnes per year.

If erosion remains untreated in key areas, models suggest that there is the potential for current erosion and sedimentation damage to double by 2050. The Catchment would experience even greater physical damage, the area’s agricultural production would decline, and social deprivation would worsen.

The Catchment is of great spiritual, cultural, and economic significance to Ngāti Porou. Its health extends much further than the physical elements of the landscape. The people who depend on its resources have been subjected to a series of environmental, social and economic episodes for over a century (for example, deforestation, rural depopulation, a series of extreme weather events, the disestablishment of the New Zealand Forest Service and privatisation of the forest estate, erosion and land degradation and river sedimentation).

These episodes have been detrimental to the wellbeing of Ngāti Porou and the community and have contributed to the current low socio-economic profile of the area. The impacts of environmental degradation associated with deforestation and unsustainable land management practices in the Catchment have seriously damaged natural resources on which they rely.



Waiapu koka
huhua
– Waiapu,
mother
of many

Significance to Māori

“The river is our taonga (treasure) and our life essence.”

“The health of our river depends on the hapu that inhabit those valleys that feed into the Waiapu. And if their health is not good, neither is the health of our river”. According to traditional beliefs, Ngāti Porou have had an undisturbed relationship with the river since the time of Māui, and the river serves to unite those who live on either side of it. The valley, which they call Te Riu o Waiapu, was a place where they could live, offering safe refuge during periods of war and supplies of fresh water and various species of fish.

In the Deed of Settlement between Ngāti Porou and TRONPNui and the Crown, the Crown recognised the significance of the Waiapu River to Ngāti Porou and the impacts of erosion in the Waiapu catchment and acknowledged damage from deforestation, the exclusion of Ngāti Porou from historical erosion control and catchment management decision making, and the resulting damage to Ngāti Porou’s cultural, social and economic resources.

The deed provides for a high-level Relationship Accord signifying a new era of collaboration between Ngāti Porou and the Crown, and commits the Crown to working with iwi and landowners to “mitigate severe erosion in the Waiapu”.

TIMING AND FUNDING

Restoring the Waiapu catchment is not simple or quick. The timeframe for this programme is 100 years. The programme focuses on the first 10 years and will evolve over four phases. While the programme has a long timeframe, action is urgent. To get this work underway, the Partners have developed an 11 month action plan.

Phase I – 11 month action plan (Oct 2013 to Sept 2014)

During this period, the three Partners will:

- draw together the expertise and information within GDC, MPI, TRONPNui and externally;
- accelerate land remediation by targeting the priority A and B blocks;
- simplify and remove barriers to the ECFP funding programme;
- assist owners of land in Māori Title with land use, planning and management and in accessing finance;
- assist landowners to implement erosion control and follow-through treatment;
- encourage sustainable land use practices, and build innovative and profitable businesses.

Phase II (2014-16)

By the end of this second phase, LO3A works plans and treatments will be complete (or at least well advanced) on all Category A & B priority sites to enable as many blocks as possible to be treated before the expiry of the ECFP in 2020. Priorities will be set for all remaining priority blocks with untreated erosion-prone land in the Waiapu catchment and wider Gisborne district.

The programme will start to draw on the holistic planning processes being developed through the Waiapu River Catchment Study and subsequent research on climate change and community resilience in the Waiapu Catchment.

Phases III (2017-19) & IV (2020-22)

This phase is expected to focus on any residual priority work carried over from the last phase and maintenance of effective tree cover post 2021.

Funding

Ministry for Primary Industries – East Coast Forestry Project funding until 2020 with maintenance funding (forest thinning/stock exclusion) until 2028.

Gisborne District Council – Costs associated with the Sustainable Hill Country Project and environmental monitoring.

TRONPNui – Costs associated with assisting owners of land in Māori Title with land use, planning and management and in accessing finance.

Key dates for 2014

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|---|--------------|
| • Consultation on the proposed changes to the operation of the ECFP | Feb-Mar 2014 |
| • Information briefings to landholders with priority blocks | Mar 2014 |
| • Work plans completed for priority blocks | Mar-Sep 2014 |
| • New operating approach for the ECFP confirmed | Jul 2014 |
| • Phase II plan confirmed | Aug 2014 |

For further information contact:

www.mpi.govt.nz



Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



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RESTORING THE WAIAPU CATCHMENT

“Healthy land, healthy rivers,
healthy people.”

THE PROGRAMME

The vision for the Restoring the Waiapu Catchment Programme

“Ko te mana ko te hauora o te whenua; ko te hauora o nga awa; ko te hauora o te iwi – Healthy land, healthy rivers, healthy people.”

The outcomes we aim to achieve

HEALTHY LAND

- Erosion is managed.
- Natural forests, biodiversity and cultural values are restored.
- Wāhi tapu are protected.
- Downstream infrastructure is protected, communications and transport are more secure.
- The productive capacity of downstream land is maintained.

HEALTHY RIVERS

- Sedimentation and aggradation from hill country erosion is reduced.
- Land loss through river-bank erosion is reduced.
- Water quality is improved.
- The river is again an abundant source of food and drinking water, and useable for recreation.

HEALTHY PEOPLE

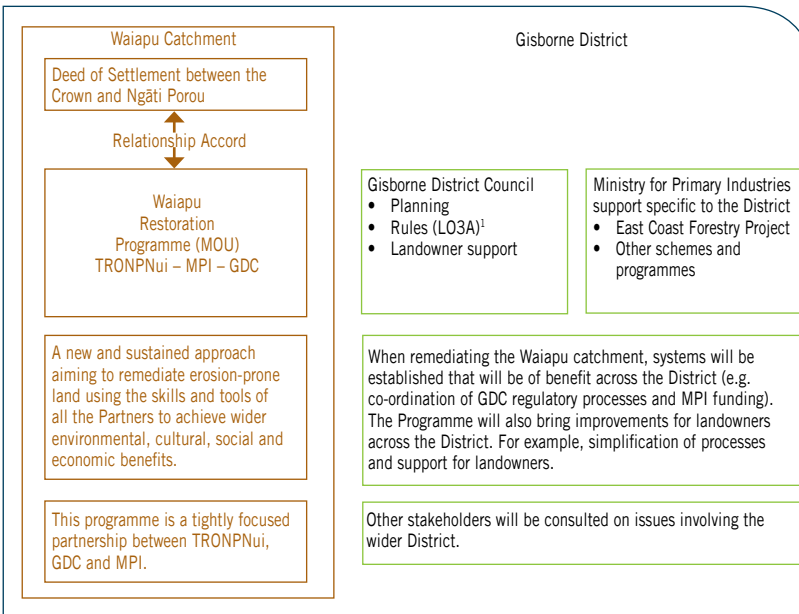
- The relationship between Ngāti Porou and the land and river is renewed.
- Damage to communities is reduced.
- Local knowledge and aspirations are central to decision-making.
- The Catchment produces high value commodities, that generate high income jobs within the area, and in turn generate prosperity for all the people.
- Economic independence and prosperity is restored for Ngāti Porou and all the people of the Catchment.

The desired outcomes are – environmental restoration, economic profitability, cultural revitalisation and social prosperity.

Who is involved

Restoring the Waiapu Catchment programme requires a partnership approach and the resources, skills and commitment of three partners – Te Runanganui O Ngāti Porou (TRONPNui), Gisborne District Council (GDC), and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) – with support from other groups. The programme is being governed by the three Partners and managed by MPI.

The table highlights the link between the restoration of the Waiapu catchment and erosion control across the Gisborne District.

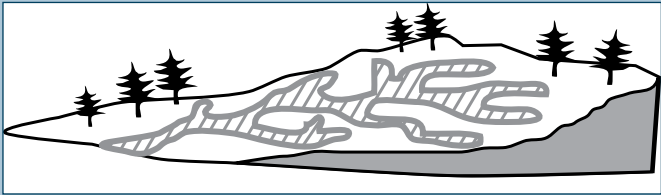


¹ Section 6.10 of the GDC Combined Regional Land and District Plan requires all landowners with Land Overlay 3A (LO3A) to have effective tree cover by 2021.

TREATMENT IMPACT

GULLY EROSION FOCUS

Gullies are incised, linear to amphitheatre-like erosion features formed by running water. While erosion is a natural process, human activities have increased by 10-40 times the rate erosion is occurring. Excessive erosion causes problems such as sedimentation of waterways, decreases in agricultural productivity due to land degradation and ecological collapse due to loss of the nutrient rich upper soil layers.



UNTREATED GULLY EROSION



TREATED GULLY EROSION



ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF EROSION



Land Impacts – The degradation of native forest and reduced protection for those areas of native forest that remain. The reduction of productive land use and opportunities for the people to grow and develop with the land.

River Impacts – There is no longer a clean river, with drinkable water that flows freely. There are fewer places to swim, play and enjoy the waters safely. The river bed is rising dramatically each year and engulfing productive lands, roads and other infrastructure.

People Impacts – Reduced guardianship over the river and its catchment as kaitiaki and being able to decide and influence the protection and sustainable use of the Waiapu. The river is no longer a place where *kapata kai* is bountiful with flora and fauna to sustain Ngāti Porou and the community.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Great progress has been made with landowners across the Gisborne District, and approximately 42 000 hectares have been treated through the East Coast Forestry Project (ECFP) and Sustainable Hill Country Project (Land Overlay 3A district plan rule). However, further erosion treatments are required. There are approximately 60 000 hectares of land eligible for ECFP funding across the Gisborne District, of which approximately 25 000 hectares is in the Waiapu catchment.

Much of this is target land includes gullies that generate very high rates of soil loss and sedimentation. Priority blocks have been identified for treatment across the Gisborne District and categorised as A, B and C. Priority blocks were identified by the severity of erosion features, the size of the land, and the presence of gullies, of which the majority are in the Waiapu catchment. Landowner relationships are being formed and the treatment of some priority blocks is already underway.

PRIORITY BLOCKS

Of the priority A&B sites, 22 of the 26 blocks are located within the Waiapu catchment area. Of the 14 priority C blocks, six (6) are within the Waiapu catchment area. Of the priority A & B blocks, six (6) Land Overlay 3A works plans have been completed, five (5) have been partially completed and the remaining 15 are not yet started. The majority of those classed as not yet started have also either not applied to the ECFP or they did receive approval but have not completed the treatments.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

PLANTATION FORESTS NATIVES AND EXOTICS

This option has a wide range of solutions from plantation forests through to speciality native timber options such as totara, beech and manuka, many of which support the honey industry.



INDIGENOUS REVERSION

Reversion option allows the native trees and scrub to repopulate erosion sites and support the surrounding areas. The advantages of reversion are the low maintenance costs and ability to dominate unwanted exotic plants such as gorse.



POLES

The options referred to as poles are predominantly willow and poplar trees and these are suitable as their root systems quickly establish and also they allow crops and pasture to be grown in close proximity.