

LIVING

WATER

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VISION: A sustainable dairy industry is part of healthy functioning ecosystems that together enrich the lives of all New Zealanders

WAITUNA LAGOON, SOUTHLAND SITE FOCUS: Designing and implementing a catchment-wide approach to nutrient and sediment management using solutions that build ecological resilience (as part of the Whakamana Te Waituna integrated freshwater improvement programme)

Critical Issues

- Significant loss of wetland and freshwater ecosystems and lowland habitat
- Poor water quality caused by high levels of suspended sediment, nutrients & phosphorus leach from hydrologically sensitive peat soil
- Modified lagoon hydrology due to inundation of agricultural land adjacent to the lagoon
- Significant modification and rebattering of Waituna creek has resulted in a major loss of fish habitat and ecological functioning within the stream
- Modification of the landscape in the catchment has impacted on cultural identity and activities
- There is a high level of community awareness about the ecological state of Waituna Lagoon, so farmers are motivated to find solutions

Inputs

- DOC & Fonterra staff
- Funding \$530k/year
- Technical input
- Network of participating farmers
- Existing partnership with key stakeholders through Whakamana Te Waituna partnership

Activities

- Whakamana Te Waituna Partnership**
- **Co-governance:** Living Water is at the table and fully supports the co-governance approach
 - **Waituna Creek Restoration:** Trialling alternative drain management approaches, improving instream habitat and function, improving and supporting access to mahinga kai
 - **Catchment contaminant intervention:** Trailing and scaling contaminant intervention at catchment scale to safeguard lagoon health
 - Monitoring progress, telling our story and championing change

Outputs

- Living Water is represented within the partnership both at operational and governance levels
- Fencing, riparian planting and bank reshaping
- Instream habitat trials scaled up
- Evidence based catchment scale contaminant intervention plan
- Farm Environment Plans complete and coordinated across agencies
- Sharing what we learn through website, social media, professional forums, community events

Outcomes/Impacts

Short term (by 2020)

- Living Water staff are utilising their partnership experience and successfully facilitating work streams within the Whakamana Te Waituna programme
- Lower Waituna creek fish habitat has increased, and the ecological functioning of the creek has improved
- There is a clear and well evidenced plan that identifies how much sediment and nutrient will be reduced from the catchment through the implementation of interventions
- Landowners understand what difference their own farm management will have on lagoon health

Medium term (by 2023)

- Living Water has successfully contributed to the governance of Whakamana Te Waituna and our legacy continues with DOC and Fonterra representation on future Waituna governance arrangements
- The area of land managed for biodiversity and ecosystem function accessible for mahinga kai and recreational uses surrounding the Waituna catchment and lagoon has increased
- Contaminant intervention plan has been implemented and is reducing the amount of sediment and nutrient originating from on farm and off farm activities
- Landowners are making the choice to change their farming practices to improve lagoon health

Long Term Outcomes

- Healthy resilient lowland freshwater ecosystems
- Profitable responsible dairying
- A shared understanding of the interdependence of agriculture, economy and environment by the broader community