



## HAVE YOUR SAY LONG TERM PLAN 2015-2025

Funding for emergency services, new flood protection infrastructure for Kerikeri and pest management at Whāngārei Heads are among several key issues Northland Regional Council wants your feedback on for its Long Term Plan 2015-2025.

Recent changes to the Long Term Plan process mean that, for the first time, council has been able to produce a simpler, clearer Consultation Document as the basis for seeking public feedback.

The document should give Northlanders a clear picture of key choices facing Northland Regional Council in planning for the next decade, says council Chairman Bill Shepherd.

"We're keen to inform a better debate with our communities and make it easier for people to understand and give feedback on the big decisions that face us all," says Bill.

"Rather than focusing on the work we already do – which many Northlanders are already familiar with – the Consultation Document just highlights the main changes and new initiatives we're considering."

Striking the right balance between affordability, value for money and ongoing improvement has remained a top priority for council in developing the proposals in the Consultation Document, says Bill.

"Planning what we do and how we pay for it isn't simple – it's about balancing the diverse expectations of our communities, our legal obligations, and what's affordable."

A snapshot of council's key issues for feedback is on the next page, but people who want to give feedback are urged to get the full picture first by reading the Consultation Document.

"We have some big decisions to make and we need feedback from our communities to do it," says Bill.

"I encourage everyone who's interested to read this important document, find out what we're proposing for our upcoming Long Term Plan and – most importantly – let us know what you think."

**Feedback closes Friday 24 April 2015  
– find out more inside!**



### Find out more in our Consultation Document

Before giving us your feedback, we encourage you to read our Consultation Document.

It provides more detail on the key issues listed above, and outlines how we plan to fund the work we do over the next decade.

The Consultation Document is widely available at regional council offices and public libraries, or online:

[www.nrc.govt.nz/ltpfeedback](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/ltpfeedback)



## Summer research voyage for biosecurity specialist

As a Northland Regional Council aquatic biosecurity specialist, Irene Middleton spends much of her working life under the water.

But when Irene was asked to spend her Christmas holidays as part of a biodiversity research voyage through the Pacific Islands, she jumped at the opportunity.

The voyage aboard the 39-metre research vessel 'Braveheart' was organised by Auckland War Memorial Museum with participation by Sydney's Australian Museum.

Its objective was to study linkages between fish species in the Pacific and those found on the north-east coast of New Zealand.

Over four weeks 'Braveheart' journeyed 2600 nautical miles from the Cook Islands, through Niue, Tonga, Minerva Reef and the Kermadec Islands to New Zealand, including some rarely-visited reefs and atolls.

Crew included Kiwi underwater photographer Richard Robinson, Sally Reader (Australian Museum) and expedition leader Dr Tom Trnski.

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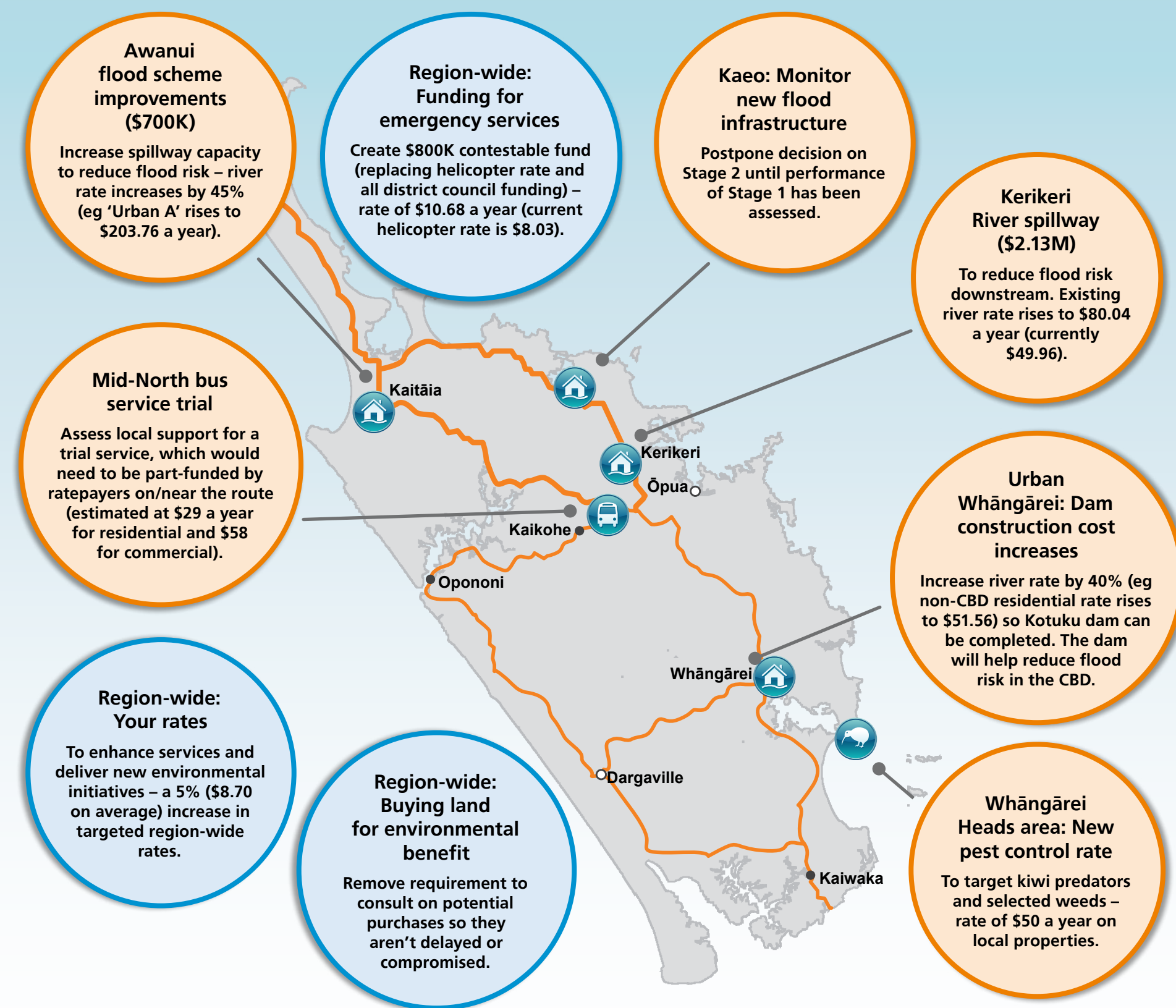
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# SNAPSHOT: KEY ISSUES FOR FEEDBACK

Below is a snapshot of the key issues we want feedback on to help shape our Long Term Plan 2015-2025. It also shows which areas are most affected by the proposals.



## HAVE YOUR SAY

Online and written  
feedback closes  
3pm Friday 24 April

# HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

You can have your say on all the key issues we're seeking feedback on, or just the ones that interest you.

It's also an opportunity for you have a say on anything we do (or don't do) – you're not limited to just what's in the Consultation Document.

There are several ways you can have your say:

- **Use our new online portal** – we encourage you to use our new consultation portal, which makes it easier to have your say online. Go to: [www.nrc.govt.nz/ltpfeedback](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/ltpfeedback)
- **Get on Facebook or Twitter** – we'll be asking and answering questions throughout the feedback period. Visit [www.facebook.com/NorthlandRegionalCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/NorthlandRegionalCouncil) or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/NRCexpress](https://twitter.com/NRCexpress)
- **Fill in a feedback form** – you can still send in your feedback via post, email or fax. You'll find a feedback form at the back of our Consultation Document.
- **Come to a feedback meeting** – if you'd like to present your views in person to councillors, feedback sessions will be held in early May in Kaitiāia, Kerikeri, Kaikohe, Whāngārei, Dargaville and Kaiwaka. You don't need to have given written feedback to speak, **but you do need to register**. Registrations close 3pm, Friday 24 April 2015. To register, phone **0800 002 004** or visit our website: [www.nrc.govt.nz/registrations](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/registrations)

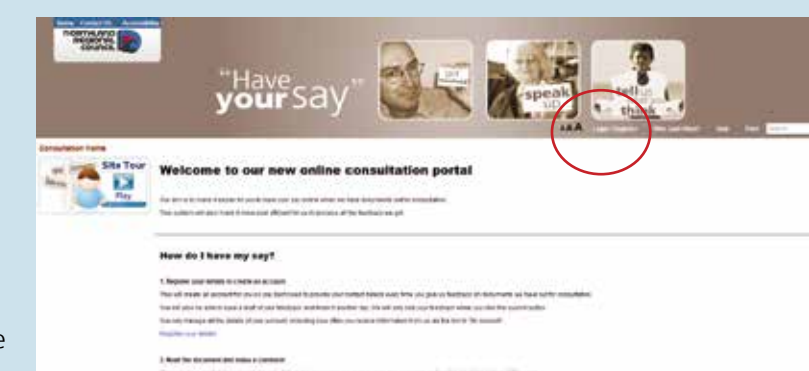
## USING OUR ONLINE FEEDBACK PORTAL

Our new online portal is a great way to give us your feedback on the Consultation Document.

It is easy to use:

- Go to: [www.nrc.govt.nz/ltpfeedback](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/ltpfeedback)
- Register your details
- Read the Consultation Document and tell us what you think!

You can still read the Consultation Document without registering, but to give feedback you'll need to register. Once registered, you can give feedback on any of our future consultations. You'll also be able to review your past feedback anytime.



# Kotuku work likely to halt for winter

Construction of Whāngārei's new multi-million dollar Kotuku stormwater detention dam is looking increasingly likely to come to a halt soon for winter.

The 18-metre high dam is one of the largest engineering projects the regional council has undertaken. When finished it will hold the equivalent of roughly two-thirds of the Whau Valley dam, which provides much of the city's drinking water.

However, David Sinclair, one of two councillors who represent the Whāngārei Urban constituency, says unlike the Whau Valley Dam, the 27 million cubic metres of water temporarily stored in the Kotuku dam will be floodwater collected during heavy rain.

"Kotuku dam is designed to trap vast amounts of stormwater and then slowly release it over just several days," David says. "In this way, it could

potentially save our Central Business District and parts of Morningside and Raumanga millions of dollars in flood-related damage."

David says this is because much of the damage caused by floods depends not only on how deep they are but, importantly, how fast they're travelling.

When finished the new dam, which sits at the ends of Raumanga Valley Road and Kotuku Street, should slow floodwaters and cut flood depths in the CBD by up to half a metre.

David says the dam is being paid for via an existing targeted rate on more than 17,000 properties in the CBD and contributing catchment areas.

It was originally scheduled for completion before winter this year, but ran into delays due to the complexity of the build and soil types in some areas. This had also pushed the dam cost up to about \$11.4M.

"Summer has been pretty kind to us weather-wise, but it's now looking increasingly likely we may soon need to stop most construction until the new construction season in October."

David says while keen to finish in the current season, unless progress reaches a certain point soon, it's just too risky to carry on and end up with a dam with a partially-completed embankment exposed to large amounts of winter rain.

A final decision on whether to continue – or halt for winter – is now expected to be made by the end of this month. For more, visit:

[www.nrc.govt.nz/kotukudam](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/kotukudam)



Determining the site for placement of a ceremonial mauri stone at the Kotuku dam site are, from left: Te Parawhau Kaumatua Fred Tito and Hona Edwards (on-site iwi monitor), Andre Hemara (Maori Engagement Officer, Whāngārei District Council) and Barney Brotherhood (River Management Engineer, Northland Regional Council).



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## Summer research voyage for biosecurity specialist

As a support diver and technician, Irene's role was to assist on collection dives, identify species and take underwater images.

The team identified a total of 470 fish species, including a number of new records for the area and some significant range extensions (existing species recorded for the first time in a new territory). Specimens were gathered for the two museums' own collections and for a number of researchers in New Zealand and further afield.

Dr Trnski, head of natural sciences at Auckland War Memorial Museum says: "Irene is fantastic at knowing when she's seen something that's out of the ordinary, and identifying fish that are quite cryptic – for example, species that are very small and might look like a strip of seaweed, a rock or rubble. On almost every dive, she brought up something that no-one else had spotted.

"Her photographic abilities are also very strong. As a result of being on the trip, she has added to her experience in identifying warm water species."

Irene says she learned a lot about fish collection techniques, fish identification and photography.



Banded krait sea snake – Niue



Clown fish – Tonga

"It was a great opportunity to network, and learn more about what makes our marine environment in Northland unique."

In her role with the council, Irene has worked with NIWA and the Ministry for Primary Industries, as a scientific diver on port surveillance dives, and has assisted on Northland marine biodiversity projects.

## NATIONAL AWARD FOR LOCAL CIVIL DEFENCE TEAM

The tireless dedication of local Civil Defence staff and volunteers during storms that battered Northland last winter has been officially recognised by the Government.

The national award to Northland Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group was presented at Parliament recently by Civil Defence Minister Nikki Kaye. It was one of just four honours given – and the sole award to a group.

The Northland team's '2015 Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) silver award' recognises its significant contribution to civil defence emergency management in New Zealand.

In her speech, Ms Kaye noted those recognised had been crucial in preventing loss of life and protecting livelihood and said she was proud to honour their efforts and achievements.

"Through their efforts, either as individuals or as a team, they have all helped make our communities safer and more resilient."

Northland's award recognised the group's efforts during a series of winter storms last July.



From left: Bill Hutchinson (Far North District Council Civil Defence Coordinator), Colin Kitchen (CDEM Group Chairman and Kaitia Fire Chief), Civil Defence Minister Nikki Kaye, and Claire Nyberg and Shona Morgan (both Civil Defence Officers for the Northland CDEM Group) at the award ceremony at Parliament.

"The award for the Civil Defence team, along with other accomplishments on the part of council staff, show that Northland is gaining national attention for all the right reasons. Congratulations to all involved – your efforts are a great reflection on our region."

Bill Shepherd  
Chairman, NRC

As well as community leaders and volunteers, group members include emergency services, local authorities, Welfare Advisory Group and Lifeline Utility Group members and agencies involved in recovery, including Northland Rural Support Trust.

The official citation details how the storms brought with them 180kph winds, heavy rainfall and power outages affecting up to 30,000 consumers and, tragically, also contributed to one death.

The CDEM Group staff and volunteers had helped stricken communities through well-coordinated and practised Civil Defence emergency management

arrangements, with the Northland group recognised nationally for its preparedness.

"The efforts put into developing community level plans, cross-agency coordination plans and response and recovery arrangements have had positive results yet again ..."

For more information about Civil Defence, visit Northland Regional Council's website:

[www.nrc.govt.nz/civildefence](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/civildefence)

Or go to Northland CDEM Group's Facebook page:

[facebook.com/civildefencenorthland](https://www.facebook.com/civildefencenorthland)

## 'RUAWAI' JOINS MARITIME FLEET

Northland Regional Council's new workboat 'Ruawai' has been officially launched in the Kaipara.

Deputy Chairman Graeme Ramsey says while the 6.7-metre vessel will be based in Whāngārei, it will carry out a large variety of work in southern areas of Northland, including Kaipara Harbour.

Graeme, who is also the council's Kaipara constituency representative, says 'Ruawai' is a fantastic addition to the council fleet and well-suited to local conditions.

"Its hull design makes it particularly useful in a wide variety of weather and seas conditions, especially the rougher ones often found in the Kaipara and Whāngārei harbours."

"'Ruawai' means 'two waters', so this boat's name is very appropriate given our council's emphasis on fresh and estuarine water systems and that the Kaipara is where it will do much of its work."

Graeme says 'Ruawai' will be used for a variety of tasks, including bylaw enforcement and patrols (especially over summer), navigation safety, oil spill response, navigation aid maintenance and water quality monitoring.

While the 6.7-metre Surtees designed-and-built vessel itself is technically an 'off-the-shelf' purchase, it has been customised for regional council requirements. It was officially launched at Ruawai recently in a low-key ceremony attended by about 30 people.



Local harbour warden Des Subritzky, left, council Deputy Chairman and Kaipara representative Graeme Ramsey, centre, and Dargaville Methodist minister Reverend Rex Nathan at Ruawai as the newly-commissioned vessel bearing the area's name is launched.

It is equipped with the latest in electronic equipment, including sonar structure scanning which will enable the Harbourmaster's Office to locate sunken items such as vessels, navigation aids and moorings.

It replaces the existing boat 'Tai Ao', which has served the council well for the past 14 years.

It joins other council vessels, including the 16-metre purpose-built catamaran 'Waikare' and six-metre catamaran 'Karetu', both of which are based in the Bay of Islands.

Meanwhile, Graeme says, in line with usual council practice 'Tai Ao' will be auctioned on TradeMe shortly.

## Oil rig operation training opportunity for spill team

Regional council maritime officer Ross Watters, pictured, was one member of the National Oil Spill Response Team standing by in the Marlborough Sounds recently as a 13,000-tonne oil rig was loaded on to a heavy lift ship, on its way to China for refit and repair work.

Two large tugs towed the rig from its position off the Taranaki coast to Admiralty Bay, near French Pass in the Marlborough Sounds, where the heavy lift ship was waiting. The ship has the ability to intentionally 'sink' until its main deck is 9-10 metres below the surface of the water, allowing the rig to be floated into position and initially secured with heavy wires.

The ship then slowly 'de-ballasts', rising back to the surface, and the rig is welded to the deck to keep it in place for the voyage to China.

Ross says such operations are relatively rare in New Zealand and require a combination of calm weather conditions and a high degree of expertise from crews of the vessels involved.

The National Oil Spill Response Team members – based on board a former naval patrol boat – were in attendance to provide an on-scene response in the event of any oil spill during the operation, along with staff from the Marlborough Regional Harbourmaster's Office and Maritime New Zealand.

The oil spill response team also took advantage of the opportunity to train together, practising the use of various types of booms and oil recovery techniques, and identifying improvements that would reduce response times in an incident.



The oil rig successfully loaded on the heavy lift ship for its voyage to China.





## NORTHLAND FIELD DAYS 2015

Council once again had a strong presence at Dargaville's Northland Field Days with hundreds of people checking out our twin themes: 'Working together' and 'Taking action'.

Our wild food treats were back via mini wild pork pies and we had a range of other activities on topics including pest plants and animals, land and lake management, and kauri dieback disease.

A photo booth for people to show their commitment to improving our environment was popular. Visitors also took the opportunity to buy traps for pests such as possums, rats and mustelids.



## BOOST TIPPED FOR ENVIRONMENT FUND

Landowners with wetlands and lakes they're keen to protect could be among the first in line to benefit from a proposed \$125,000 increase in Northland Regional Council's popular Environment Fund.

Joe Carr, chairman of the council's Environmental Management Committee, says a proposal for the upcoming Long Term Plan (LTP) would see the annual fund boosted to \$800,000. Since it was established in the mid-1990s the fund has given away almost \$6 million to help people improve and protect Northland's natural environment.

Joe says as well as the LTP proposal, fund criteria have also changed to increase the amount of money available for dry stock waterway fencing and for wetlands and lakes with high environmental values.

Okaihau-based Joe – a beef farmer and forest owner – says council is also keen to hear from those who would like a free 'Farm Water Quality Improvement Plan' done.

"These plans enable Environment Fund assistance to be provided to eligible candidates for fencing and planting waterways."

Joe says in the past several years alone the council has helped fund more than 800km of fencing.

The council is particularly keen to help protect wetlands and lakes in the region. Joe says eligible landowners with appropriate water bodies will probably be among those who stand to benefit first from the proposed funding boost.

Meanwhile, Joe, who represents council's Hokianga-Kaikohe constituency, says the council will again be providing cut-price poplar and willow poles this planting season.

"These will be available at a subsidised rate, also through the Environment Fund, so get in early to secure an order."

Joe says stabilising land – and associated reductions in both erosion and subsequent sedimentation – is essential, and poplar (and willows) are a major tool in that regard.

He says the best time to plant the trees in Northland is typically during the winter months of June to August.



Regional councillor Craig Brown with poplar poles at the council's nursery. The Flyger Road (Bream Bay) nursery is based in Craig's Coastal South constituency.

For more information on the Environment Fund, visit: [www.nrc.govt.nz/environmentfund](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/environmentfund)

For more on poplars for erosion control, visit: [www.nrc.govt.nz/poplars](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/poplars)



Doubtless Bay Working Group members at their recent meeting in Taipa. Also attending is the group's newest member, newly-elected Te Hiku constituency councillor Monty Knight (second from left).

## WAIORA NORTHLAND UPDATE WATER

Waiora Northland Water is our collaborative programme for improving the quality and management of Northland's lakes, rivers, aquifers and wetlands. Set up in 2012, it brings together a number of the council's water management responsibilities.

At the programme's heart are catchment groups, with members representing the interests in each catchment; iwi and hapu, farmers, industry (such as energy or quarrying), residents, environmental groups, recreational interests and local authorities.

Collaborative catchment groups in five priority areas – Mangere, Whāngārei, Doubtless Bay, Pouto and Waitangi – have now started developing catchment-specific objectives for freshwater management.

These are categorised according to nine national values in the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management; catchment groups then brainstorm the factors that contribute to each value.

For example, in a lake catchment boating, fishing, diving, and ecotourism are all among the values specific to that catchment.

Factors contributing to these values could include aesthetics, shade for people, parking and presence of harvestable species. (These factors are in addition to E. coli and planktonic cyanobacteria indicators, which council monitors as part of its lake monitoring programme.)

The exercise aims to identify a group of factors – common to several values – which can then be acted on. For example, if a catchment group/local community wanted to enhance swimming, a community working bee could be held to plant more native shade trees.

For more information about your local catchment group representatives and how to get involved, check out the Waiora Northland Water webpages: [www.nrc.govt.nz/waiora](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/waiora)



# INTRODUCING NEW TE HIKU COUNCILLOR MONTY KNIGHT

Far North jeweller and winemaker Monty Knight has added Northland Regional Council member to his CV, after narrowly winning the recent Te Hiku by-election.

Monty's 936 votes gave him a slender five-vote majority over nearest challenger Mike Finlayson and saw him assume the position left vacant by the death late last year of former Te Hiku councillor Dennis Bowman.

Monty – who was officially sworn in at a ceremony in Whāngārei recently – says he's grateful to those who voted for him and is looking forward to the work ahead.

A former Far North District Council member who has worked with local government at both district and regional level in various roles, Monty says that experience should stand him in good stead as he comes to terms with his new role.



Newly-elected Te Hiku councillor Monty Knight in his vineyard.

"I've learned that while I may not always agree with my fellow councillors – or the direction council is collectively heading in – at the end of the day that's the democratic process at work."

"But what I can promise is that I'll attempt to do the very best I can for the people of the Te Hiku constituency and ensure that their voices are heard and noticed in the council debating chamber."

Monty says he has already had 'positive' initial discussions with fellow Far North-based regional council members Dover Samuels and Joe Carr.

"I'm sure that with good teamwork we can present effective arguments for the good of the Far North and the wider Northland region."

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