

Ohiwia and Waitio Community Led Strategy Group

March 24 2024

Rūnanga Marae

Agreed Actions

Area	Action	Who	Status
	Collate flooding information sent by the group. Includes: Photo documentation held by: Alan Gunn, Steve Cornes, Stephen Harper, Sam Wood, others in the community	Kit	
	B2R Facebook call out to community for photographs of flooding	Steph to speak to Franzi	To go out week of April 7
	Look for old survey maps and aerial photos pre-1938 (also to see course of Okawa, Ohiwia and Waitio); 1950s without the weir	Kit	
	Oral history:	Puti and Jenny	
Pest control	B2R is holding a pest control workshop at Waiwhare on April 3. This is an opportunity to raise the issues around possums and changes to their control.	Ainsley, B2R	
Riparian Planting, Erosion Control	Ask farmers and friends what they are doing or would like to do and what assistance is needed	James	
	Workshops with landholders to be explored		
Lake Rūnanga Restoration	Build on the weir meeting: use the record of that meeting as a base		
	Press for a combined lake-restoration strategy with HRBC given current poor lake health	B2R	
	Compile Lake Rūnanga data from websites	Kit	

Attending: Puti Nuku, Carl O'Brien, James Hindmarsh, Sam Wood, Jenny Mauger, Kit Rutherford

Apologies: Julie Tangaere, Steph Howard

Flooding and flood protection

Discussion

Kit gave an overview of Ohiti Stopbank development as known, the Matapiro roading meeting on March 26 and the proposed walkabout on March 27 that will inform hydrological assessment and final design of the stopbank. Kit also mentioned the potential for WSP to attend a meeting to discuss flood modelling and landowner mitigations.

Sam said that the water is not going through Rūnanga and so is going through Okawa and will funnel to Omahu. Sam's view is that if Lake Rūnanga issues are sorted, then the Taihape Road will no longer flood and this will filter through infrastructure and farming resilience topics. Sam also said that at Shanley Road and at Dennis Gunn's the council is lagging behind clearing the channels from silt [and debris] and that the public should be made aware of this and the council presented with their liability. He suggested options include:

- Increasing the conveyance of the channel to encourage flow into Rūnanga
- Combined restoration strategy

- Farmers: There was a brief discussion about the risks floods pose for
 - Cropping
 - Trees
 - Houses
- Carl said orchardists work on a return on Investment of 7 years. Some either
 - Take a punt on a 1-in-20 year flood (stay), or
 - Can't be bothered with a flood (leave).
- Risks:
 - Roothing - car blocks, bridge damage
 - More slips (amplified by Gabrielle)
 - James said the lower catchment is not highly erodible land
 - Fencing: James said
 - Most waterways are already fenced off (especially gullies)
- Safety of road:
 - People's lives are more important than localised farming resilience
 - Removal of willows (note destabilise risks to be managed)
 - Poisoned willows when dam built - long-reach digger required.
- Shifting baselines: Lake Rūnanga-Ohiti (HBRC is now questioning whether this is a wetland rather than a shallow lake)
- Sam:
 - We know that flood waters enter Lake Rūnanga
 - He has aerials and photographs of water levels (they do not show flows)

- The inflows were underestimated when the weir was designed
- He is seeking legal advice
- Guiding flood water with the Ngaruroro [quicker through Rūnanga] In his opinion would mitigate flooding of Taihape Road
- On the proposed stopbank: Sam has approached Katie Nimon saying HBRC would be liable if the stopbank flooded Ōmahu
- James:
 - On the Okawa floodplain which is Hindmarsh land
 - The woody debris has been piled and will be burned
 - Drill with lucerne and vetch
 - Main risks, according to James, are flooding of the road (and orchards). Access is integral to resilience, as is protecting lives
 - Also Important to farmers
 - Slips and fences are also at issue
 - Inundation: cyclones Hayle and Gabrielle
 - CSA: Critical Source Areas
 - Fencing streams off (see below)
 - Sufficient support from industry bodies such as Beef and Lamb NZ for managing risks.

Actions

- Kit to collate flooding information sent by the group.
- Photo documentation held by: Alan Gunn, Steve Cornes, Stephen Harper, Sam Wood, others in the community.
- B2R Facebook call out to community for photographs of flooding: Steph to speak with Ainsley.
- Look for old survey maps and aerial photos pre-1938 (also to see course of Okawa, Ohiwia and Waitio); 1950s without the weir: Kit
- Oral history: Puti and Jenny
- Sam said that B2R should write to Catherine Wedd and Mark Mitchell about the stopbank.

Pest Control

Discussion

- Wild cats, possums, deer, mustelids and TB risk
- James noted possum numbers appear to be increasing and coordination may be required
- Change in management and responsibilities: councils are no longer taking charge of this and the responsibility and cost now falls to landholders
- At Matapiro, there is some hunting pressure from farm workers.
- Trapping: B2R could work on engaging lifestylers.
- Presence of feral deer is also more apparent: Kit and Sam both saw 3 the morning of the meeting

Actions

- B2R is holding a pest control workshop at Waiwhare on April 3. This is an opportunity to raise the issues around possums and changes to their control.

3. Riparian Actions and Erosion Control

Discussion

- James' view is that most waterways are already fenced off - particularly the steep gullies. For the Okawa floodplain, the question is whether to fence off or graze
- Timata method of regeneration - which uses manuka/kanuka and can drastically reduce the cost of planting - e.g., from 30-40K/ha to 6-7K/ha. Demonstrated elsewhere (East Coast; King Country pilot)
- Note Chris Brennan (moxi.org.nz) from Elsthorpe area is experienced working with farmers on tree plantings, ETS credits, economic return from timber, low-cost plantings
- Sam: question is what to plant? Willows and poplar were washed away; trees could block up creeks and flow paths. Flax noted to block culverts
- Sedges as edges.
- What is erosion control going to achieve? What are the costs of doing and then maintaining?

Actions

- Workshops with landholders to be explored
- James to ask farmers and friends what they are doing or would like to do and what assistance is needed

4. Lake Rūnanga-Ohiti Health and Restoration

Discussion

- Kit noted that under Te Mana o te Wai, HBRC is required to undertake several years of water sampling to establish the status of the lake. If it is in the lowest band, a catchment plan (restoration strategy) is required. He suggests that existing data should be sufficient signal the need for a catchment plan.
- National science challenge project, Lakes 380 has taken and stored a sediment core of the lake from 2019 (pollen, carbon and other analysis would help understand when the lake changed and give indications of why lake health is currently poor). The core would not quantify recent sedimentation.

Action

- Build on the weir meeting: use the record of that meeting to build on.
- Press for a combined lake-restoration strategy with HRBC given current poor lake health.
- Kit to download Lake Rūnanga data from websites.