



Project Mahitahi

PROJECT MAHITAHİ MARCH 2023 NEWSLETTER

What is Project Mahitahi?

Project Mahitahi is a collaborative project aimed at restoring the ecological health of the forest ecosystems of the Maitai River catchment. To support a thriving bio-corridor we are supplementing these areas with new planting and controlling plant and animal pest invaders, giving our native biodiversity a better chance of survival.

The Maitai Ecological Restoration Plan was the basis for the operational plan:

nelson.govt.nz/maitai-ecological-restoration-plan.

Project updates and upcoming events can be found here: [Project Mahitahi - Nelson City Council](#)

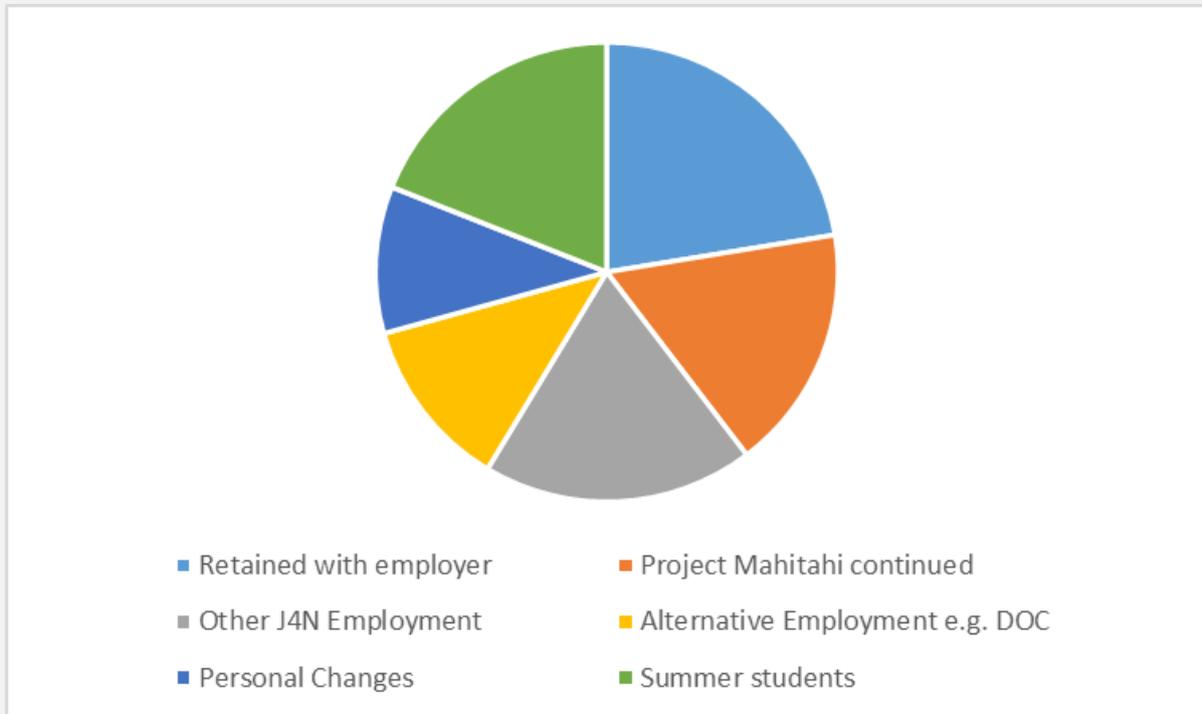
Funding for Project Mahitahi – End of Kaimahi for Nature Grant

Project Mahitahi is funded through grants from the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Ministry for the Environment (MfE), with additional support through Ministry for Primary Industries and Trees that Count. In November 2022, the \$2 million grant from DOC through the Kaimahi for Nature Fund, was completed, as were the outcomes that this grant funding required. The funding from MfE continues through to 2025, with reduced staffing numbers, and a programme of maintenance to look after what has been achieved to-date.

Work over the past two years could not have been achieved without the support of host employers, who accommodated staff and provided training and future opportunities at a time of uncertainty and instability. Gratitude goes to Fulton Hogan, Ngāti Koata Trust, Kūmānu Environmental, Easy Trails, and the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary.

These roles have offered employment and training opportunities to 59 different people, many of whom left the project to take up full time employment elsewhere. This is a good outcome for the Jobs for Nature Project, which was established to provide a career pathway for those employed.

Most of the \$2 million of Kaimahi for Nature funding was used for employment (\$1.7 million). With the ending of this funding, employment on the Project has now reduced to 5 staff. The future of the 54 people who are now not employed through Project Mahitahi are shown in the graph.



Employment opportunities for many of the staff were enhanced through an extensive training programme implemented by Kūmānu Environmental, initially for Project Mahitahi field rangers but now extended to other Jobs for Nature Projects Kūmānu are involved with. As well as external and formal qualifications, rangers train toward achieving a Kūmānu Conservation Ranger Certificate.



Jobs for Nature Staff – Kūmānu Environmental

The training involves skills including pest plant and animal control, plant identification, tool and vehicle competency, and cultural training including te reo and tikanga knowledge.

How are we tracking against our two-year targets?

Outcome	Required under Grants	Actually Achieved
Pest Plant Control	16 ha	16 ha
Animal Pest Control	24 ha	100 ha
Wetland Restoration	0.7 ha	1.29 ha
Native Restoration including Taonga Species	36 ha	36 ha
Full Time Positions	30	35

Project Mahitahi has additional targets set by the Ministry for the Environment over the next two years and these are well on track to being met. Of 125,000 trees to be planted, the team have already achieved 100,000. There was around 10% loss of plants due to the August floods (at most) and these will be replaced over the coming season in addition to approximately 28,000 to be planted over winter.



Trap data for Brook Conservation Reserve Project

Impact of the August 2022 Flooding Event

The August flooding event had a devastating impact on many landowners across the Nelson district, and the Maitai Valley received significant impacts. Remediation works are

continuing, including work to retain the riverbanks that will help reduce the impact of future events on the road, water, and fibre networks.

Many of the sites that Project Mahitahi had been working on were also impacted, in some cases with the loss of whole riverbanks and the plants along with them. However, the damage was far less than originally expected with many of the project areas showing remarkable resilience.

As most of the larger plantings had been installed away from the river, for example Venner Reserve and the Ngāti Koata Arboretum, these were untouched. Some plantings directly along the waterway such as Groom Creek have happily not been damaged.



Plantings along Groom Creek itself (above) were undamaged as were those in the wetland area and the Arboretum, including the Friends of the Maitai plantings (below)



Unfortunately, the Project Mahitahi wetland area itself was damaged quite significantly by the volume of water that charged through. The culvert is soon to be repaired along with some sculpting of undercut banks, but at this stage the upper pond will not be reinstated, instead allowing some naturalising of the stream as it enters the second pond which remains untouched. Planting of the damaged banks will be undertaken later this year.



Damage to the wetland and riverbanks around the Maitai Campground

Project Mahitahi staff were unable to access planting sites for the period following the flood but were instead deployed to assist in flood recovery including the Maitai Golf Course and assisting private landowners in their own recovery.

Oral History Project: 2022 Flooding Event Maitai Valley

The Nelson Provincial Museum are holders of the history and experiences of Nelson’s community and oral histories that capture peoples’ lived experiences are an important part of this collection. During April there will be an opportunity for people to contribute images, objects, or stories about their experience of this event, which will later be made available to be used as part of a Mahitahi storymap.

As this project is developed further, keep an eye on Council publications to see where you can view what has been contributed by other people, and how to add your own stories.

As part of our existing Maitai Oral History series, an interview with Mac Crampton about the 1970s Maitai floods can be viewed.

[Maitai Oral Histories - Nelson City Council](#)

The most recent video in this series can also be found at this link, and is the story of the Packer family who lived in the Maitai Valley in the late 1800s.

Upcoming events

It won't be long before the planting season is upon us again. This year, there are two Project Mahitahi community planting events. We are planning on delivering Matariki Planting this year through Enviroschools, and a larger scale planting will take place in partnership with Multicultural Nelson Tasman. Dates for these two events are to be confirmed, so keep an eye out on Council's publications. We expect the Matariki planting to be in June, and the community planting to be July-August.



Ahead of the planting season we have Te Ramaroa – Nelson Light Festival. Project Mahitahi will be represented here by a beautiful artwork created by artist Vicki Smith called Galaxiies. The artwork will focus on our unique galaxiid fish, shimmering like the night sky in an interactive display. The project will also include workshops with school

students and the community to co-create a school of fish for installation. The community workshop is planned for the 6/7 May 2023 so keep an eye out for further information.

Information about Project Mahitahi

You are currently signed up to our mailing list to receive early notification of any events, and any changes to these events because of weather or unforeseen circumstances.

If you have any questions about the Project, or know of others who may wish to sign up, please ask them to contact:

project.mahitahi@ncc.govt.nz