



MAY 2021 NEWSLETTER

It has been a little over six months now since Project Mahitahi was formally launched, so it's a good time to let you know a bit about what has been happening in this time, and what is coming up.

What is Project Mahitahi?

Project Mahitahi is a collaborative project aimed at restoring the ecological health of the forest ecosystems of the Maitai / Mahitahi / Maitahi Catchment.



The land and the river are taonga for iwi of Te Tau Ihu, and all iwi in the region have statutory acknowledgement over this special place. You will see the area referred to by different names, as this reflects the history of the many peoples who have travelled here and made it home.

From the Dun Mountain Range at the top of the catchment, to the sea, these hills are home to a range of different plants, birds, and other fauna such as the Nelson green gecko and the giant land snail – some of which are found nowhere else but here.

Previously, Project Maitai, which is now incorporated into the Healthy Streams Project, focused on improving the health of the Maitai River. Project Mahitahi focuses on protecting existing high value ecosystems (primarily in the top of the catchment) and restoring areas for future native forests (harvested forestry blocks, grazing areas, and some urban esplanades).



Project Mahitahi began as a shovel ready project in 2020 to assist the region’s Covid recovery by employing people in conservation-focused jobs. The Ministry for the Environment and the Department of Conservation have granted \$3.7 million toward this work with a total of 54 jobs over 5 years enabled (20 in each of the first two years to get on top of the work, and then around 5 for the remaining three years).

An newly developed Maitai Ecological Restoration Plan was the basis for the operation plan and to secure the funding. If you would like to look at this plan, you can find it here:

<http://www.nelson.govt.nz/environment/project-mahitahi/maitai-ecological-restoration-plan/>

Image: Dew Lakes, one of the few remaining wetlands in the catchment.

The primary activities being undertaken through Project Mahitahi are pest plant and animal control and tree planting.

Project Mahitahi Logo

Mahitahi means to work together, which is an accurate description for this Project, the first of its kind funded under the Kamahi for Nature programme. To capture the spirit of this work, Maya Speers (Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Kuia) has designed a beautiful logo which she describes as representing “working together in a partnership to achieve a common goal. The lower half is the awa. The three lines repeated between represent the water. The image contains the mangopare - symbol of strength, courage, and will. This combines with the flax weaving and other patterns to show strength in unity. The mangopare is facing/moving up indicating progression. The upper half is the land, native plants, valley. The koru and nodes coming off the sides illustrate the life and new growth of the project and the Maitahi. Weaving of harakeke describes the collaboration between the project partners and the wider community to deliver the restoration of the mauri of the Maitahi.”

Maya, a former Nelson College for Girls student, is a second-year engineering student at Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau. Maya says, “My journey connecting with my whakapapa has been aided by an interest in mahi toi Māori, and I have recently been learning about correct context and meanings behind all the many types of designs within traditional mahi toi Māori.”

The design, which was selected by the Ngāti Koata Kaumātua Council and the Project Mahitahi Governance Group, is an inspiring visual representation of the river and what it means to all people in Whakatū Nelson.

Stories of the Maitai

A series of short videos produced last year have been popular on Council’s social media pages. If you haven’t yet seen these, you can find them here:

<http://www.nelson.govt.nz/environment/healthy-streams/maitai-oral-histories/>



Photo courtesy of Tony Shallcrass. Photo taken 1946, from left Perrine Shallcrass, Lynette Shallcrass, Gerald Hun, making rafts from airplane wings and petrol tanks at the back of the Shallcrass property. From left

We are always keen to hear from people who are willing to share their stories or memories of the Maitai River. These may be written memories, even as simple as a single recollection, or they might be photographs. We were recently contacted by the Packer family who have offered to share the stories of the generations of their family that have lived in and around the Maitai Valley. Some of this content will be uploaded onto the Prow <http://www.theprow.org.nz/places/maitai-valley/#.YJTMrmcUmUk> where you can find other information about the area. We are also planning on filming a short interview with the family.

Employment through Project Mahitahi – Jobs for Nature

Of the 20 jobs due to be recruited in the first year, most are now in place.

Jobs for Nature work can only happen through the willingness of employers to take on new recruits, and to support people through training and mentoring towards a new career pathway.



Kūmānu Environmental, a part of Nelmac, has taken on a large crew of enthusiastic field staff who are being trained as conservation rangers. Kūmānu will be undertaking most of the weed management and planting and sometimes having to pick up waste dumped along the esplanade prior to being able to begin work (see photo).

Other employers are Easy Trails working on weed management

along bike tracks, Fulton Hogan focusing on animal pest control, and the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary that is employing staff to assist in volunteer co-ordination and enhancing visitor experience.

Ngāti Koata Trust is employing field rangers to be involved in the restoration of land owned by the Trust within the catchment, some of which include mature and highly significant native forest. A key project for the Trust is the development and restoration of a wetland site for Mahinga Kai.

Pest Plant Control

You may see evidence of this work, such as the removal of pest trees including sycamore and wilding pine trees, and control of vines like old man's beard. Trees that are being removed are those which have found their way here through seed spread, or when there was less awareness of their potential to invade native habitats. This work will take time and there may be dead trees left standing to decay in situ before we start planting. The exciting part will be new plantings appearing and taking the place of invaders.

Tree Planting Programme

This upcoming planting season will see the first 26,000 of the total 125,000 being planted throughout the catchment. Almost 10,000 of these will be planted through community planting days (assisted by contractors) with another 16,000 by contractors alone. This includes 10,000 being planted in the Venner Reserve on land currently in grazing. As the forestry retirement programme on Council land continues, an approximate 20,000 more native trees will be planted on the harvested blocks – this makes a total of almost 40,000 plants going into the Maitai Catchment this season alone.

As part of this planting programme, at least 1500 trees per year for the five years will be taonga species – those unique forest species that would once have inhabited hillsides throughout the catchment. Tanekaha, Maitai, Rata, and the smaller but no less significant rare shrubs, native herbs, and climbing plants.

Community Planting Events

We have a programme of community planting events coming up this season. Mark them in your diary and share the dates with your friends and whānau. These are great events for connecting with the community and the land and sharing in creating our future forests.

Project Mahitahi is grateful for the assistance provided through the Ministry for Primary Industries Commemorative Planting Programme, but also to our community partners that are

commemorating the people and events that have helped shape the place we live in today.



Saturday 29 May 1.30-3.30 PM

Where: Maitai Mahitahi Wetland, adjacent to the Maitai Campground

What: In partnership with Multicultural Nelson Tasman and Friends of the Maitai, this planting will commemorate the journeys that many people have made to a new home in Nelson Whakatū and celebrates the vibrant community that we are today. This is year one of a three-year project.

Food will be provided by Viva la Vaca Argentinian Barbeque and there will be some games and



educational opportunities for the younger participants.

A free bus will be provided to take planters to and from the site, which will leave the Whakatu carpark at the back of the Council building, at 1.00 on Saturday.

If you would like to ensure you have a seat booked, please contact

Project.Mahitahi@ncc.govt.nz

Remaining seats will be on a first come-first seated basis.

Sunday 11 July 1.00 – 3:00 PM

Matariki Planting

Matariki is the name given to the cluster of stars, also known as Pleiades, that rise in midwinter. It is a time to remember those who have passed in the previous year, and to celebrate new beginnings. It is a time to plant for the future.

Where: Sunday Hole

What: This three-year project will commemorate Kākati, the common ancestor of six of the iwi of Te Tau Ihu, and who lived approximately 20 generations ago. Kākati is immortalised in the name of the Whareniui (Meeting House) of Whakatū Marae. This Matariki event, which will be held here over the next three years continuing the planting down the river esplanade, will commemorate this connection between people and land. This commemoration was decided by the Ngāti Koata Kaumātua Council.

Food, education, and entertainment will be provided to volunteer planters. Keep a look out for more details on this commemorative event closer to the time.

<http://www.theprow.org.nz/assets/Kakati.pdf>

Sunday 5 September 9:00am to 4:00 pm

Where: Smiths Ford

What:

Commemorating our botanical heritage, in partnership with Friends of the Maitai, join the bus tour to learn more about the Maitai / Mahitahi / Maitahi and the plants and wildlife that can be found here.

We will begin our journey near the Haven to learn about the importance of the estuarine environment for the fish and plants that live in the mixing zone. Continue up the catchment to hear about an exciting wetland project and the important role wetlands play in the environment. At the Maitai Reserve, learn about the forest canopy, and enjoy a picnic lunch (and get a rare peek inside the workings of the Maitai Dam). We will then head back downstream to Smiths Ford where 1200



plants will extend the existing riparian margins along the river here. Finish up with a warm drink at Sunday Hole. Along the way, you will hear insights and perspectives on the cultural significance of the catchment, the ecological values, and the history of botanical knowledge – there are some great stories!

The seats will be limited, so sign up and save a place. Children are welcome but note the length of the day so it may be a more suitable event for older children, who are

keen amateur naturalists.

Get in touch with Project Mahitahi and sign on for a ticket to this event!

project.mahitahi@ncc.govt.nz

Other commemorative events happening

Cawthron Institute will be undertaking a commemorative planting to celebrate 100 years of science in Nelson, and the contribution of Thomas Cawthron as part of their centennial year. Nelson College for Girls students will plant a commemorative planting near Nile Street, acknowledging the contribution of Kate Edgar, the first principal of Nelson College for Girls and the first woman in the commonwealth to receive a Bachelor of Arts – a commemoration of women in education in a place of long standing significance to the generations of students at the College.

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 know of others who may wish to sign up, please ask them to contact:

project.mahitahi@ncc.govt.nz or call Alesia on 546 0232.