



Rescuers help eels up river

Last week, a team of ecologists and engineers gave eels in the Maitai River a helping hand to migrate to the Maitai River's North Branch.

More than 60 eels were collected from below the dam and released above the spillway so they could continue upstream to the headwaters to grow to maturity and live their adult lives, before their return migration to spawn at sea.

As one of the conditions of the council's resource consent to take water from the dam for the city's water supply, the eel transfer is carried out annually.

The dam spillway currently restricts fish passage when river flows are low. Plans are underway as part of Project Maitai/Mahitahi to provide a continuous flow down the reservoir spillway and install a fish ladder to allow eels to climb up into the dam.

Meanwhile, fish surveys in tributaries and at the fords and spillway along the Maitai River have been carried out to assess the extent of eel migration and the numbers of other native fish species.

Last year, Cawthron scientists improved fish passage at the dam's South Branch weir by increasing the available smooth-wetted area for fish to climb. The Project Maitai/Mahitahi research programme has involved four honours students, assisted by Cawthron scientists and Council staff. By using an infra-red camera, one of the students was able to confirm that elvers (juvenile eels) were successfully climbing the spillway and South Branch weir after the improvements were made.

New video on river restoration

National website LAWA (Land, Air, Water Aotearoa) has produced a three-minute documen-

tary about Project Maitai/Mahitahi, showcasing how the community, Nelson City Council and various agencies are working together to improve the water quality of the Maitai River.

With interviews from Friends of the Maitai, Cawthron and the

council, the video gives a snapshot about what's being done for one of New Zealand's most treasured waterways.

To view this inspiring local story, visit lawa.org.nz

From the Friends of the Maitai – Tending the plants

Helping with planting days is a great winter activity – it takes you

outdoors, spending time with like-minded people, doing the satisfying job of planting trees for posterity, and rounding it all off with a sausage!

Once that's over we tend to focus on our home gardens, leaving the new little trees and grasses to 'trust in nature'. Nature this summer has been hot and dry, and last winter's plantings could do with a helping hand: they need water, weeding and mulch.

Friends of the Maitai have had a few working bees on plant tending, and we would love to see more of you there. Just look for Friends of the Maitai on Facebook for details or let us know if you'd like an email reminder at info@friendsofthemaitai.org.nz

Meantime, feel free to visit planting sites at the Sharlands Creek turn-off, Waahi Taakaro Golf Course (avoid golfers by going in the very early morning or late evening) and Groom Creek (just past the golf course). Take your clippers to clear around the trees, and leave the clippings as mulch. If you're very keen you

could even take a couple of

buckets to carry water. The trees will thank you for it!

Mulching Bee

A few weeks ago the Friends of the Maitai held a mulching rescue mission at the Waahi Taakaro Golf Course site that was planted last winter. Nelmac provided a large pile of mulch and we wheel-

barrowed it to the plants. Meantime some of the team tackled the old man's beard to prevent another year's seed drift down the valley. There have been some losses at this site but there are still an impressive number of plants surviving the dry summer. A second delivery of mulch has arrived and needs spreading, time and date to be advertised on Facebook.



Mulchers: Ami Kennedy and Fran Tui Mitchell from Friends of the Maitai community group take part in a mulching day.



Star is born: Councillor Brian McGurk takes a starring role in a new video about the Maitai River.



Eel rescue: Ricky Olley, of Fish and Wildlife Services, and Paul Fisher, a Nelson City Council environmental scientist, collect eels in the Maitai River to be transferred to the Maitai's North Branch.