Tukituki Land C

SUB-CATCHMENT PLAN: SUMMARY

UPPER TUKITUKI AT A GLANCE

The Upper Tukituki catchment spans 13,084ha. Like many rural areas, it faces significant challenges, especially following the impacts of Cyclone Gabrielle. The cyclone intensified existing problems such as erosion, sediment build-up, and changes to river courses, making it harder for farmers to manage their land and waterways.

The Tukituki River itself is heavily affected by invasive willows and shingle islands, which have altered its natural flow, leading to bank erosion and a higher sediment load in the water. This excess sediment impacts river health, smothering macroinvertebrates—an essential part of the ecosystem—and contributing to ongoing water quality issues. The region has long dealt with flood risks, and farmers actively monitor rainfall and river flows to manage these challenges. However, a lack of coordinated management and difficulties engaging with council authorities have made it difficult to get the necessary work done.





- 🔵 Pasture
- Indigenous Forest
- Indigenous Scrub
- Exotic Forest

60 percent of the catchment is in pasture, 27 percent in indigenous forest and five percent in indigenous scrub. Notably, less than three percent of landcover is in in exotic forest.

"Tukituki Land Care (TLC) is tackling the big issues sub-catchment by sub-catchment, to piece together The Big Picture."

Richard Hilson





WWW.TUKITUKILANDCARE.ORG

FACEBOOK: TUKITUKI LAND CARE

UPPER TUKITUKI: CONTEXT

RULSE - Revised Soil Loss Equation - Upper Tukituki





LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

The Tukituki River, a dynamic braided river system, has changed significantly over time, typically narrowing with more infrastructure and attempts to control the river through willows and engineering. The Tukituki is managed through a combination of formal river control schemes, consents for gravel management and improvised, short term efforts.

As a whole river, current management practices have led to inconsistencies in flood control, sediment management, and invasive species control, with some areas receiving structured support while others lack any formal intervention. As a result, landowners face significant challenges in being part of the conversation around managing flooding, erosion, and river health.

FOR MORE INFORMATION HEAD TO WWW.TUKITUKILANDCARE/UPPER-TUKITUKI

WATER QUALITY

While water quality is not the primary focus in the Upper Tukituki catchment, it remains a key challenge linked to the broader river management issues. The community recognises that without proper vegetation and gravel management, sediment will continue to degrade water quality, affecting farm operations and ecosystem health.

The table below shows Upper Tukituki catchment water quality indicators over a five-year rolling average. The standard represents water quality levels based on the Tukituki plan or national standards.

Water Quality Parameters	Upper Tukituki	Standard
Nitrogen (DIN)	0.303 mg/ L	0.8
Phosphorus (DRP)	0.006 mg/ L	0.010
Bacteria (E.coli)	30 (count)	260 (count)
Freshwater invertebrates (MCI)	105.82 (index)	120 index

AND CHALLENGES _________



RIVER MANAGEMENT

Farmers and landowners in the Upper Tukituki catchment face significant challenges with river management, particularly regarding willows and lupins in the riverbed and understanding regulations around vegetation clearance.

At an Upper Tukituki TLC workshop in December 2024, the farming community in this catchment showed a strong commitment to take a more active role in managing their river and improving water quality. They also expressed a desire to find practical solutions whether through self-management, co-management with HBRC, or securing a global consent.

A key priority for the catchment is clarifying what vegetation can and cannot be cleared, especially differentiating between willows planted for flood control and self-seeded ones causing blockages.

Recognising the need for action, farmers and landowners have gained access to expert advice and secured a TLC Demonstration Grant to support better river management. This funding enabled the short term appointment of a project manager to develop a structured plan to address the river's challenges and ensure all stakeholders, including the wider community and mana whenua, are involved. A key part of this initiative is a showcase project on a short stretch of the river, demonstrating practical steps to restore flow, remove problematic willows, and manage shingle buildup. The goal is to create a template that can be replicated elsewhere, making future river management more efficient and cost-effective.







ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES

Another major concern for landowners in the catchment is the lack of long-term planning and engagement from HBRC. Community members feel that communication with HBRC on river management is very circular and there is frustration over the difficulty in getting necessary work done.

Landowners at the December 2024 workshop were also interested in the possibility of exploring biodiversity corridor options given recent kaka sightings and existing kahikatea habitat within the catchment.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO READ THE FULL REPORT HEAD TO WWW.TUKITUKILANDCARE.ORG/UPPER-TUKUKI OR SCAN THE QR CODE



UPPER TUKITUKI: SUMMARY AND ACTIONS

Tukituki Land Care



WANT MORE DETAIL? HEAD TO WWW.TUKITUKILANDCARE/UPPER-TUKITUKI

Check out the online TLC Farmer Toolbox www.tukitukilandcare.org/toolbox

UPPER TUKITUKI CATCHMENT: NEXT STEPS

- Get involved with the Upper Tukituki Catchment Group to review The TLC Catchment Plan and build on baseline work, share knowledge and coordinate actions.
- Continue to work with TLC and other impacted sub-catchment groups within the Tukituki to resolve issues with HBRC and their administration and implementation of river management, particularly willow and shingle islands and erosion.
- Develop erosion management strategy. Consider poplar planting, oversowing with legumes, strategic fencing to retire or manage grazing, and native or exotic afforestation. Use <u>TLC's Surface Erosion Tool</u>*, <u>TLC's On-Farm Action Planning Tool</u>* and <u>TLC's Plant Selection Tool</u>*.
- Connect with <u>local advisors</u>* for tailored advice and potential funding opportunities.
- Commit to TLC's THR3E: three practical steps you can implement on your farm over the next three years.

* The TLC Toolbox and the full catchment report are now available on the TLC website www.tukitukilandcare.org