Waipawa

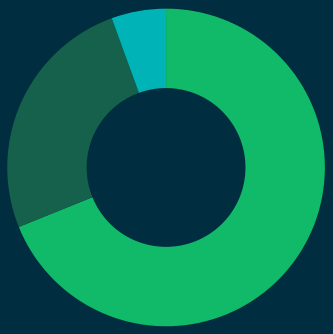
SUB-CATCHMENT PLAN: SUMMARY

WAIPAWA AT A GLANCE

The Waipawa catchment spans 22,473ha and features a diverse landscape, including rolling hills, fertile plains, and native vegetation. The Waipawa River originates in the Ruahine Ranges, collecting water from numerous tributaries as it flows through the sub-catchment.

Predominantly sheep, beef, and dairy farming country, the catchment faces challenges like phosphorus levels, pest control and risk of flooding.

At this stage, no catchment group has formed for the Waipawa sub-catchment.



62 percent of the catchment is in pasture, 23 percent in indigenous forest and 5 percent 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
Chair, Tukituki Land Care

SCAN FOR FULL REPORT

WWW.TUKITUKILANDCARE.ORG

FACEBOOK: TUKITUKI LAND CARE

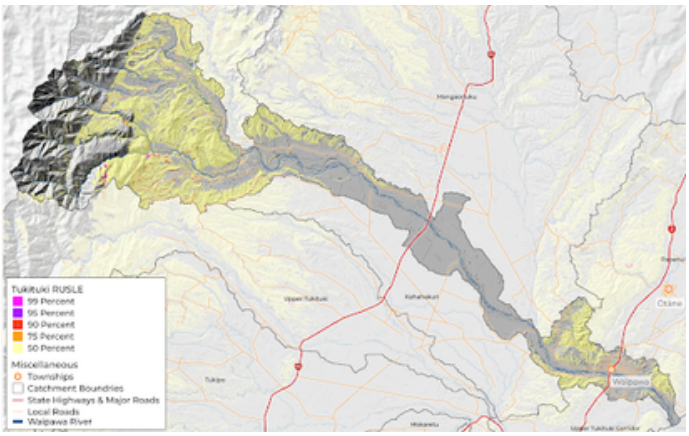
WAIPAWA CATCHMENT: CONTEXT

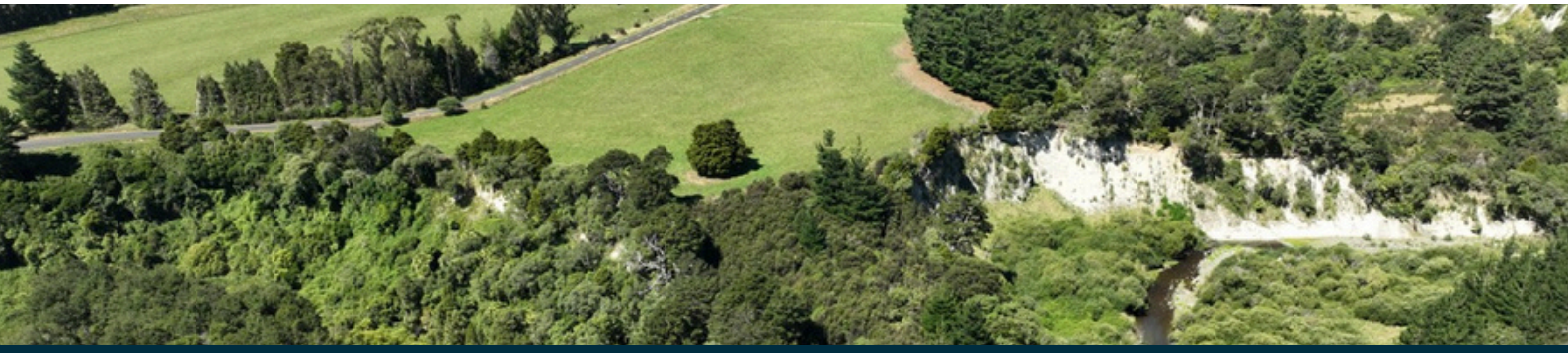
LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

The Waipawa, at the downstream end of the catchment is at risk of high flows and flooding events. The larger impacts of flooding will be challenging to alleviate by individual landowners working alone or as a single sub-catchment group.

FULL REPORT AVAILABLE AT WWW.TUKITUKILANDCARE.ORG/WAIPAWA

RUSLE - Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation - Waipawa





WATER QUALITY

Water quality in the catchment would be considered good. Water quality parameters are all below the Tukituki water quality standards noted by HBRC. The table below shows Waipawa 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 Parameter	Waipawa	Standard
Nitrogen (DIN)	0.715 mg/ L	0.8
Phosphorus (DRP)	0.011 mg/ L	0.010
Bacteria (E.coli)	34 (count)	260
Freshwater invertebrates (MCI)	102.28 (index)	120
Sediment (Turbidity)	1.65 mg/ L	5.6 FNU (light)

AND CHALLENGES

Tukituki Land Care

THE ISSUES THAT MATTER TO LOCAL FARMERS

In December 2024, TLC ran a workshop with farmers and growers in the Waipawa catchment. During the workshop there was much discussion around key challenges and opportunities related to water management, pest control, river infrastructure, and regional council engagement.

Participants also identified key concerns affecting their local environment, particularly water availability, invasive species, and perceived bureaucratic inefficiencies. A strong theme emerged around the need for better communication, collaboration, and accountability in river and land management.

Willows were identified by landowners in the catchment as a major issue in river management, noting that willows have both positive and negative impacts. During recent storm events, willows have contributed to infrastructure damage, particularly around bridges. The unchecked spread of willows has altered water flow, reduced river channel capacity, and contributed to blockages, increasing the risk of flooding. The movement of willows downstream during extreme weather events has further complicated river management, requiring more proactive intervention.

Deer were also highlighted as a major challenge, particularly in the erosion-prone hill country. The growing deer population has made poplar planting difficult, as young trees cannot withstand browsing pressure. This has significant implications for soil stability, as poplars are often planted to prevent erosion in vulnerable areas.

There was also widespread frustration with HBRC's performance in river and environmental management. High staff turnover was a key concern, with attendees noting that institutional knowledge is frequently lost, leading to inconsistent decision making and a lack of continuity in projects. Participants expressed concerns that HBRC's scope of responsibilities keeps expanding, leading to inefficiencies and a loss of focus on key priorities, such as water security and river management. Other issues with HBRC were around communication and the approval and funding process for urgent river issues.

TO SEE THE FULL CATCHMENT REPORT HEAD TO WWW.TUKITUKILANDCARE.ORG/WAIPAWA OR SCAN THE QR CODE

WAIPAWA CATCHMENT: SUMMARY AND ACTIONS

Tukituki Land Care

Objective area	Primary Objective: Improve river management	Objective: Improve resilience	Objective: Willow Management
Challenge	The community feels that river management in the catchment is out of their sphere of influence and happening without their input.	This catchment is steep and narrow, creating high velocity flows. Without integrated catchment management, landscape resilience is challenging to build in.	The catchment waterways are choked with invasive willows and control efforts inconsistent around the catchment.
Impact	Poor communication and unknown strategic objectives for the river leads to mistrust between the community, HBRC and river management contractors.	Without weather resilience measures, impacts on lives, livelihoods, infrastructure and the economy.	Without a catchment scale plan, willows will continue to cause flooding and environmental damage. They will also re- invade waterways.
Priority action	Work with TLC staff to represent the interests of Waipawa catchment residents with HBRC. Include immediate actions to improve communication, particularly around contractors and the community.	Reduce the impact flooding through: 1) Working with TLC, HBRC and DOC on whole catchment management. 2) Pest control, soil conservation planting and stabilising streambanks with planting.	Work with HBRC to develop a management strategy around pest plant control in the river, including how to enable community management of willow.

WAIPAWA CATCHMENT: NEXT STEPS

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

- Form a Waipawa catchment group, with support from TLC, to review the TLC Catchment Plan, share knowledge and coordinate actions.
- Work with TLC and other impacted sub-catchments groups within the Tukituki to resolve issues with HBRC and their administration and implementation of river management, particularly gravel accumulation and weed management.
- Improve identification and classification of flood protection willows versus self-propagated willows to enable more targeted removal efforts.
- Explore funding for a deer management program, potentially in collaboration with the Department of Conservation (DOC).
- Develop erosion management strategy. Consider poplar planting, oversowing with legumes, strategic fencing to retire or manage grazing, and native or exotic afforestation. Use TLC's Surface Erosion Tool*, TLC's On-Farm Action Planning Tool* and Plant Selection Tool*.
- Connect with local advisors* 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**