



Te Mana o te Wai Reserves Rewild opportunity

Inspiring our community to rewild these places

The Opportunity

An Aotearoa network of rewilded publicly managed rivers, lakes and wetlands flowing from the mountains down to the sea.

These freshwater taonga will flourish under integrated public management to enhance Te Mana o te Wai. They are ideal for rewilding of the riparian margin grazed areas, regeneration, and native forest along their entire length and area.

Publicly managed wetlands and river/lake beds/stratum and their riparian margins are nationally important as freshwater and native forest ecosystems. They are also important river landscapes, visitor destinations/attractions, recreation sites, and they are used extensively for mahinga kai and cultural harvest.

Over 80% of the species they contain are found nowhere else in the world. Many species are threatened or at risk and will benefit from urgent action under proactive integrated management and rewilding.

Publicly managed river/lake bed/stratum and riparian margins and wetlands amount to over 800,000 hectares, an area much larger than Kahurangi National Park.

They comprise about 90 wetlands, 300 lakes, 27,000 km of river/lake riparian margins, and 42,000 km of riverbed.

A new class of Reserve is needed to recognize the special importance of our publicly managed freshwater taonga - **Te Mana o te Wai Reserve** status under the Reserves Act. These new Reserves would form the backbone of ensuring future Te Mana o te Wai wellbeing.

Current Management

Most of the publicly managed lakebeds/stratum and riverbeds are managed by LINZ. Most of the public riparian margins of rivers and lakes are managed by DOC as Marginal Strips and various classes of Protected Area. Many of the public riparian margins of rivers and lakes are managed by Councils, as unformed Legal Road, while some are managed by KiwiRail as Railway corridor. Management is fragmented into about 50,000 areas under 89 government agencies.

Context

Rewilding the public riparian land beside our freshwater taonga now will result in immediate ecological, social and economic value. It will provide jobs through surveying, fencing, fish passage barrier removal, nursery, visitor access track construction, planting and tending. There is an associated ongoing job effort required for rubbish removal, fence maintenance, wilding willow and other weed control to protect and enhance the ecological and other values.

About 50,000 hectares of public riparian land damaged by clearance, drainage, grazing, roading, and railway can be readily rewilded.

Some of these rivers/lakes/wetlands are already recognized for their nationally important values with national Water Conservation Orders that protect recreational, wild and scenic, fisheries, wildlife habitat, and scientific values.

Any internationally or nationally important portions of these Te Mana o te Wai Reserves would warrant National Reserve or National Park legal protection status, or addition to existing ones such as Arthurs Pass National Park.

Key Benefits

The creation of 42,000 km of freshwater ecological corridors that connect native species from the mountains down to the sea, and greatly enhance Te Mana o te Wai.

50,000 hectares of public river and lake riparian margins rewilded to native forest/tussock, while creating a new carbon sink and ending current carbon emissions.

800,000 hectares of new Te Mana o te Wai Reserve integrated legal protection for publicly managed national river/lake/wetland ecosystems, mahinga kai and cultural harvest, public access, recreation, tourism, and the enhancement of natural landscape and character.

Spade-ready employment for iwi and the community throughout the regions.

Dedicated to our living freshwater, iwi, Rosemary, and Mike

Further reading

Te Mana o te Wai - <https://environment.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Files/essential-freshwater-te-mana-o-te-wai-factsheet.pdf>

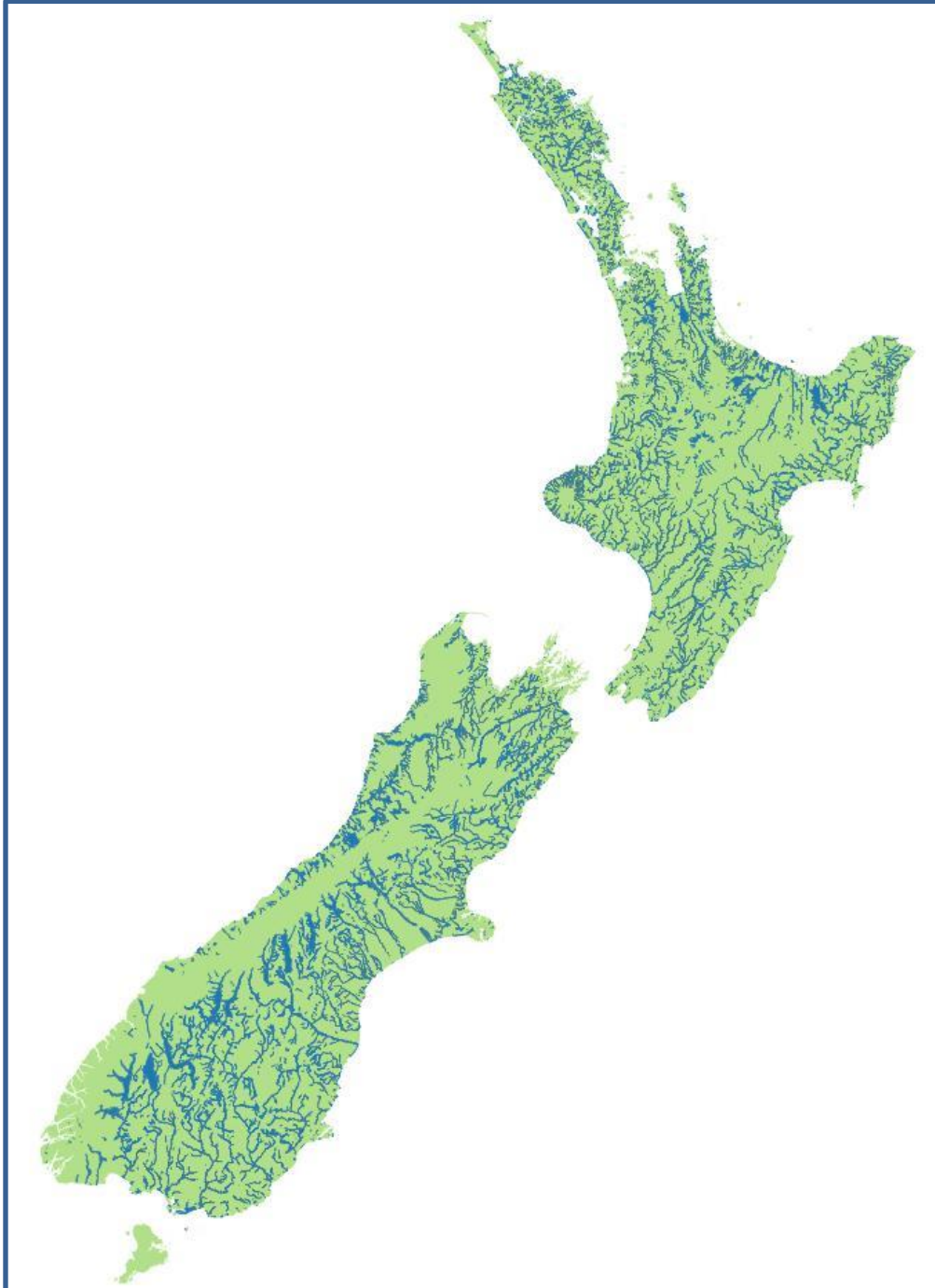
Protecting New Zealand's Rivers -

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/getting-involved/nz-conservation-authority-and-boards/nz-conservation-authority/protecting-new-zealands-rivers.pdf>

Wetlands - <http://www.environmentguide.org.nz/issues/biodiversity/new-zealands-biodiversity/wetlands/>

National Wetland Trust of New Zealand - <https://www.wetlandtrust.org.nz/>

Opportunity Location



Rewilding: to create and protect healthy ecosystem processes and functions that can sustain themselves, our society, and our economy.

