

TE HOIERE/PELORUS PROJECT

February 2022 Newsletter

Doom Creek, photo: Wayne Stronach

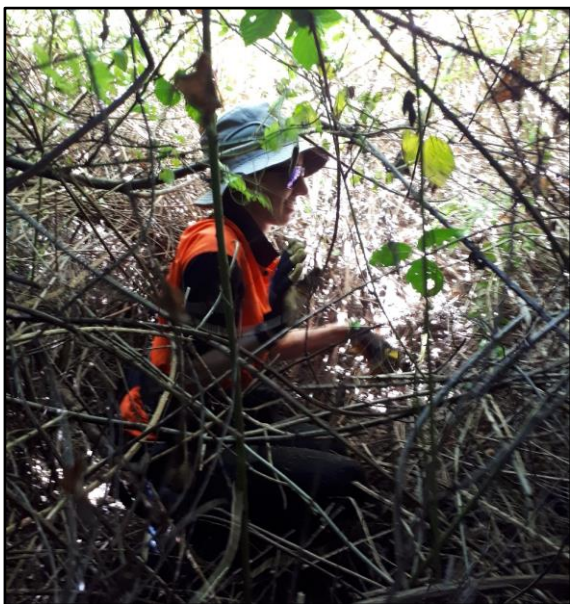
Funding flows through for restoration experts

Funding for jobs restoring nature is starting to flow through into Te Hoiere Restoration Project.

“The big wheel is slowly beginning to turn,” says Environmental Contracts Manager, Sioban Harnett. After months of finalising processes and pricing, positions and opportunities for contractors are being advertised.

“Work will kick off this season and run for the four-year life of the fund.”

Contractors with planting and weed control experience and skills are invited to register interest in restoring Te Hoiere wetlands and riparian areas, by February 10.



Old mans beard control, Brown Reserve. Photo by Aubrey Tai

“We are looking for operators who are excited by the restoration project and have positive working relationships with rural property owners,” says Sioban. “They’ll be committed to hiring and training keen locals, open to learning about the imminent freshwater standards for waterways and able to administrate in a way that meets the requirements of the government funding bodies.”

A similar opportunity for fencing contractors drew a good response and predator pest control opportunities will also be advertised.

For landowners, the jobs open restoration opportunities starting with a “hot offer” for fencing before the end of June, says Sioban. Anyone wanting to restore wetlands and riparian margins should ask Catchment Care Coordinators (see contacts below) if their site qualifies.

“Get in quick as this great deal for a fixed length of fencing expires at the end of this financial year, so we’d like work completed by June 20.”

An added bonus is the opportunity to build skills and employment opportunities in the catchment.

“Fixed term, semi-permanent or as a holiday job ... got a cousin interested in combining a holiday on your farm and income? You might be able to arrange a part-time job doing some planting.”

And Forest & Bird is looking for a fulltime Te Hoiere Bat Recovery Project Manager. The role includes overseeing predator and weed control and restoration planting as well as bat monitoring work along with planning, budgeting and managing staff and volunteers.

Interested?

To find out if your site qualifies for funded restoration or if someone you know is seeking employment, contact Catchment Care Coordinators

Aubrey Tai 027 201 4527
Aubrey.Tai@marlborough.govt.nz or

Rachel Russell 027 212 8041
Rachel.Russell@marlborough.govt.nz

The Marlborough District Council Request for Information and Pricing offers [planting](#) and [pest plant control](#) opportunities to contractors with experience and skills working around riparian margins and wetlands. Must have positive relationships with rural property owners and other

stakeholders and an excellent record as an employer. Includes commitment to hiring and training local community members. Applications for both task-based contracts close Thursday, 10 February, 5pm. Contact Sioban Harnett, Marlborough District Council 027 6435 361

[Te Hoiere Bat Recovery Project Manager](#) – full-time for three years. Contact Dani Guy d.guy@forestandbird.org.nz for more information. Applications close Sunday, 6 February, 5pm. Opportunities for a Team Leader and crew will also be advertised.



Planting contractors are sought for Te Hoiere Project. Photo by Rachel Russell

Te Hoiere funding will overcome obstacles

It's good to see Te Hoiere Pelorus Restoration Project getting traction, says Rai Valley farmer Hamish Morrison.

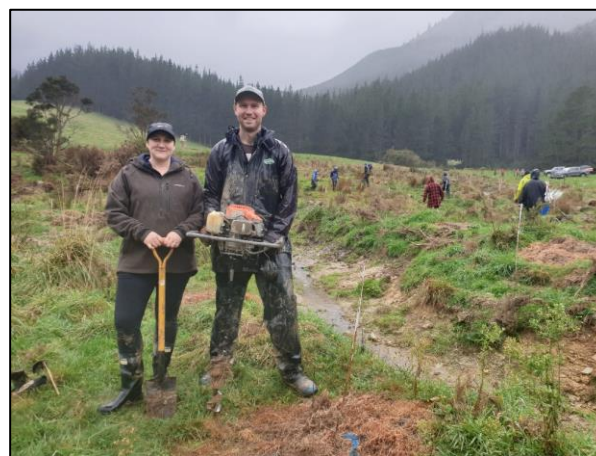
With farm surveys now complete and funding through DOC's Ngā Awa Project coming onstream, restoration efforts could now be concentrated where benefits would be greatest.

Lack of time, money and labour has been the main obstacle to improving water quality in rivers and streams, says Hamish who co-coordinates the Rai Valley catchment restoration group with Antonia O'Donnell. With contracts on offer for fencing, planting and weed control alongside rivers, streams and in wetlands, significant progress will be made across Te Hoiere catchments.

"I think the funding will be a big factor in getting things moving and a professional job done. With contractors out-and-about, people will soon know this is really happening."

Jobs for locals doing on-the-ground work or picking up new contracts would be an added benefit. Plus non-farming residents, children and conservation volunteers would have opportunities to learn about life on the land while giving a helping hand at community volunteer days.

"I reckon there'll be some easy wins in reducing nitrate and phosphate run-off into waterways," says Hamish. "Sediment runoff, mostly from eroding riverbanks will be harder to fix."



Rai Valley Catchment Group Coordinators Antonia and Hamish. Photo by Antonia O'Donnell

Hamish's family has a dairy farm in Rai Valley and Rimu Gully and runoff blocks in the Opouri and Ronga catchments. With three staff members, they've been in a position to keep up with new fencing regulations. He acknowledges, though, that the typical owner-operator lacks the time and resources to keep on top of requirements.

The Morrisons aim to plant over 1000 seedlings each winter. This year they engaged the Department of Corrections and community service workers got the bulk of this year's planting in a couple of days.

"We were stoked with that".

Once landowners have catchment survey results and recommendations, they should talk to their Catchment Care Coordinator about where to get help with protecting at-risk rivers, streams and coast, Hamish advises.



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Bat stats captured

The capture of 20 bats in a breeding roost in a large rimu has so far been the highlight this monitoring season at Titiraukawa/Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve.

Bat scientist Dr Gillian Dennis who leads the Te Hoiere Pelorus Bat Recovery Project says monitoring long-tailed bats is a challenging job. The team works day and night to collect information that will help guide management of these critically endangered bats to ensure they thrive into the future.



Gillian and bat team volunteer Shelley keep captured bats safe in soft bags (on the right) as others are tagged. Photo by Nick Eade

The bats captured in the rimu this fourth monitoring season were a mix of juveniles and breeding and non-breeding adult females.

“Some were already sporting wing bands showing they had been captured in previous summers.”

This was the second largest roost trapped so far, said Gillian. The largest was trapped two

summers ago with 55 captured and 20 avoiding the trap and escaping into the night.

Each summer when bats gather together to breed, the team uses “harp traps” – frames that support rows of fine thread with a catching bag at the base – to capture them at night. Tiny radio-transmitters are fitted, staying in place for about a week. This enables bats to be tracked back to their breeding roosts, usually small cavities high in the tops of majestic trees like mataī and rimu.

“By discovering where bats roost we learn what sites to protect and can assess whether the population is benefitting from the pest control work that Forest & Bird volunteers have been carrying out at Pelorus Bridge Scenic Reserve for more than 10 years.”

Gillian has been working with New Zealand’s two native bat species for 18 years. The team has expanded to include two local trainee batters, Siobain Finlow-Bates of Picton and Nick Eade of Mahakipawa. The team also relies on volunteers from the community and others who travel from all over New Zealand to protect these precious little creatures.



What’s happened? The Integrated Catchment Enhancement Project is released. Check out the story maps and other resources [here](#).

What’s happening? Funding is being released to hire contractors for catchment restoration work. To talk through plans to restore wetlands, rivers, streams and coast on or alongside your land contact catchment coordinators Aubrey Tai 027 201 4527 Aubrey.Tai@marlborough.govt.nz

What’s next? The Omicron variant of Covid and the red light system has stalled planned events including the Fish Fest planned for February 13. The day has tentatively been re-set for Saturday, May 21 2022.



The Te Hoiere Project brings together the community and the supporting partner agencies to look after Pelorus-Te Hoiere catchments from bush-clad tops to the sea – ki uta ki tai.