BACKGROUND

Early in 2010 the chairman of Horizons Regional Council invited key leaders with an interest in the Manawatu River to meet and discuss the state of the river. The leaders represent those sectors and groups that have an impact or interest in the river, local government, ie, farming, industry and environmental.

The leaders agreed that the state of the Manawatu River is unacceptable and the community wants it “cleaned up”. Leaders decided to continue to meet as a leaders’ forum to set goals that will guide a community-wide process of improvement.

The forum’s focus was agreed the whole of the Manawatu River and its Tributaries. A vision and overarching goal was developed, and key supporting goals and commitments were made, guided by a set of principles.

Together the focus, vision, goals, and commitments form an accord between the leaders. It represents a high-level commitment to take action to improve the state of the Manawatu River and to do it in a collaborative way that inspires the Treaty of Waitangi. The accord acknowledges, but also has respect for, the cultural heritage of all river users, those who are beneficiaries of the river, and those who depend on the river for cultural and spiritual values. All the leaders have signed the accord and will champion and give life to it.

OUR FOCUS

Our focus is:

• The whole of the Manawatu River Catchment as it affects the moral (Ethical) and ecological health of the Manawatu River and its Tributaries;

• To take ownership of the issues and their solutions;

• To rehabilitate and protect the health and well-being of the Manawatu River Catchment for future generations.

OUR VISION

Kei te ora te wai, kei te ora te whenua, kei te ora te tangata.
If the water is healthy, the land and the people are nourished.

ISSUES

We note that the Manawatu River flows through a developed landscape that provides important social, cultural and economic benefits.

However, we acknowledge that the community has concerns and has identified that the river is in a poor state. It has been described as dirty, unhealthy and kilometres of the Manawatu River want to be able to appreciate and enjoy the river by swimming in it, taking feed from it, using it as a water source and protecting its cultural values.

GOALS

1. The Manawatu River becomes a source of regional pride and mana.

2. Waterways in the Manawatu Catchment are safe, accessible, Sustainable* and provide good recreation and food resources.

3. The Manawatu Catchment and waterways are returned to a healthy condition.

4. Sustainable use of the land and water resources of the Manawatu Catchment continues to underpin the economic prosperity of the Region.

COMMITMENT WE WILL

1. Establish a collaboratively owned and implemented Action Plan by March 2011 ready for implementation by 1 July 2011 that will recommend targets for improvements, timelines for achieving the targets, identify actions and opportunities, and include indicators and methods of monitoring.

2. Work together positively and collaboratively towards achieving our goals and realising the vision.

3. Keep the community informed of our goals and progress towards them.

4. Advocate for our vision and goals.

5. Meet as a leaders’ forum at least twice a year to receive reports on progress and provide guidance to those implementing the Action Plan.

* Sustaining that some parts of the catchment, by their nature, are not safe for swimming.
THE MANAWATU RIVER FLOWS THROUGH ALL OF US. IT SHAPES OUR REGION AND REFLECTS OUR PEOPLE. IT IS PRECIOUS BECAUSE IT IS OURS. NOW IS THE TIME TO STAND UP AND TAKE OWNERSHIP. WE NEED TO IMPROVE AND PROTECT THE MAURI (LIFEFORCE) AND ECOLOGICAL HEALTH OF THE MANAWATU RIVER CATCHMENT FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

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kei te ora te whenua,
kei te ora te tangata.

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