



# RUAPEHU RIVER MANAGEMENT

## BACKGROUND

Horizons, like most other regional councils, carries out flood protection and drainage activities using a scheme-based management approach. 34 river management schemes cover a large part of the Region providing a variety of services, each tailored to meet the needs of the particular community that receives the benefit of those activities. Those activities range from protecting people and property from flooding to minimising river/stream erosion of productive land and the provision of land drainage.

In 2014 we undertook an assessment that sought to identify all of the flood protection, river erosion and land drainage issues currently not being collectively managed by Horizons. That assessment identified 28 separate issues across the Region.

Horizons currently has three river management schemes in place across the Ruapehu district – the 2014 assessment has the potential (subject to more detailed investigation and community consultation) to more than double that number. Most of those schemes would sit adjacent to each other, with many managing very similar issues (willow control, channel and debris management) in very similar contexts.

As part of updating our Long-term Plan we've considered how we can best provide this service in the most efficient way and how we can be more responsive to issues as they arise. In our view the best outcome for the community is not more separate schemes but having a more integrated approach across the district.



## THE PROPOSAL

We're proposing to dissolve the Taringamotu Scheme and create a district-wide Ruapehu River Management (RuRM) Scheme, retaining the Upper Whanganui and Pakihi Schemes that provide flood protection to Taumarunui and the Pakihi valley between Ohakune and Raetihi. These schemes maintain stopbanking and detention dams, providing flood protection benefit to specific areas.

The new RuRM Scheme would undertake a programme of willow control, channel and debris management across the district initially focussing on the issues identified in the 2014 report – Mangaroa, Makotuku, Mangawhero and Ongarue rivers/streams. It'd also undertake follow-up maintenance work to the Taringamotu River that currently falls under the Taringamotu Scheme. Other issues would be assessed as they're identified and added to a prioritised works programme.

The new scheme would have the ability to undertake limited drain maintenance where a community (rather than one or two landowners) stood to benefit from the work. It'd provide river management advice to all ratepayers and look to undertake targeted enhancement work, particularly in areas that have high public access.

The RuRM Scheme would look to develop and regularly update a forward works programme, retaining a part of the operating budget to enable a quick response to issues and events as they arise, requiring regular reassessment of work priorities. We'd look to ensure community input on a regular basis through staff interactions with ratepayers, communications such as Horizons' Across the Region publication, and regular public meetings.

## ADVANTAGES

- More cost-effective than establishing multiple small schemes;
- A better way of managing cyclical nature of willow control/stream clearance work;
- More flexibility and better service to ratepayers across the district, rather than being largely limited to those in specific scheme areas;
- Significant benefits to district infrastructure, reducing stream debris loads and the consequent damage to the district's roading infrastructure;
- Reductions in flood extents due to clearer, less willow-choked rivers and streams; and
- Being able to achieve wider environmental outcomes. (eg. willow management along the Makotuku River reducing bank erosion).

A key challenge with this form of river management scheme will be building an understanding in the community that the intent of the scheme is not to undertake works that provide a specific benefit to an individual property. The focus is more on those things that provide a wider benefit to a community and that would require, in the absence of a scheme, a degree of coordination to achieve.



## I LIVE IN AN URBAN AREA WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO ME?

The RuRM Scheme will provide the opportunity for Horizons to take on projects such as improving popular swim spots and undertaking native riparian planting programmes, enabling people to be more connected to the district's rivers and streams. As already noted, the work programme will also, over time, make the district's roading infrastructure a little more resilient to floods. Those costs are in part shared across the district through district council rates.

## RATING IMPACT

These changes are planned to take effect from 1 July 2018. We propose to fund the new scheme by levying a uniform capital value-based rate across the district – that rate would be around \$2.90 per \$100,000 capital value. 80 percent of the operating cost would come from that rate with the balance obtained through the Region-wide river and drainage rate.

In regard to dissolving the Taringamotu Scheme, Horizons has nil-rated those within the rating classification in the current year, expending accumulated financial reserves to complete a programme of minor works in the current financial year.

## HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

Your views on this proposal are important in assisting Horizons in making a decision on whether to make the changes proposed. Horizons is hosting community meetings to discuss this. The times and locations are as follows:

- Monday 5 March, 1pm, Taumarunui War Memorial Hall
- Monday 5 March, 6pm, Te Pae Tata, Ohakune

We also welcome submissions via the options below before 16 April 2018.

- Go to [haveyoursay.horizons.govt.nz](https://haveyoursay.horizons.govt.nz) and submit online.
- Fill out the submission form in the consultation document available at our service centres and post it to **Freepost 217922, Horizons Regional Council, Private Bag 11025, Manawatu Mail Centre, Palmerston North 4442.**
- Write your submission as a normal letter and post to the same address as above.
- Email your submission to [haveyoursay@horizons.govt.nz](mailto:haveyoursay@horizons.govt.nz).
- Call freephone **0508 800 800** to have your submission noted down.

