

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 on or interest in the river: local government, iwi, 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 and 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 decided, 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 recognises the Treaty of Waitangi. The accord acknowledges iwi and hapu as indigenous peoples, and the range of interests and values connected with the river. In recognition of its significance the leaders have signed this 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 mauri (life force) and ecological health of the Manawatu River and its tributaries.
- To take ownership of the issues and their solutions.
- The rehabilitation and protection of 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.

OUR MAIN GOAL

Our goal is to improve the Manawatu River, the mauri (life force) of the Manawatu River Catchment, such that it sustains fish species, and is suitable for contact recreation, in balance with the social, cultural and economic activities of the catchment community.

This goal represents a community opportunity to develop leadership in catchment improvement and capture the social and economic benefits of such leadership.

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, lacking life and culturally compromised.

We understand that people living in and around the Manawatu River want to be able to appreciate and enjoy the river by swimming in it, taking food 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, swimmable*, 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, timeframes 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.

* Noting 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.

If the water is healthy,
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OURS.
THE MANAWATU RIVER
LEADERS' ACCORD