



Priority Habitats Programme

The Horizons Region now has only 23% of its original forest cover and less than 5% of its original wetlands. Many of the natural areas remaining are in poor condition and under pressure from pests and disturbance. Much of the remaining forest is found in the hill country and the ranges with only small fragments scattered throughout lower-lying and coastal areas.

What is the Priority Habitats Programme?

The goal of the programme is "to restore and maintain a representative range of the region's indigenous ecosystems to a healthy and functioning level".

The programme is voluntary and aims to preserve the most critically endangered ecosystems with funding assistance and site specific work programmes.

Works eligible for funding and assistance may include monitoring, fencing, pest plant and pest animal control, and infill planting.

What ecosystem types are being targeted?

There are 33 rare or threatened indigenous ecosystem types in the Horizon's Region. Each ecosystem type evolved to contain an intricate complexity of biodiversity, the full range of which is hard to catalogue completely let alone recreated artificially.

Therefore remnants of these rare and endangered indigenous ecosystem types need to be found and protected as the most effective means of sustaining the region's fullest range of indigenous biodiversity into the future.

Sites on private land containing one or more of these threatened ecosystems will be considered a priority for protection and funding under this programme.

Is my site eligible?

Horizons Regional Council staff can assess your site to see if it is eligible for assistance under the Priority Habitats Programme.

This may require a site visit. Landowners are notified of the outcome once the site has been assessed against the programme objectives and resources. If a number of sites are being assessed this can be a lengthy process.

If eligible, a Biodiversity Advisor will discuss with you what this involves and how they can help.

Are there other funding options?

Horizons offers a number of community grants which the public can apply for each year for projects that enhance and protect our environment.

One such grant is the Kanorau Koiora Takekete Indigenous Biodiversity Grant. This fund is for community-led projects that work to restore and protect indigenous biodiversity and support connections between nature and people.

Grant applications are sought annually, and open in April. If your site is not included in the Priority Habitats Programme you may still be eligible to apply for this grant.

For more information please visit www.horizons.govt.nz or speak to one of our advisors on freephone 0508 800 800.



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