

Beginning of vegetation restoration in the Kahuterawa Stream project: two years of successes and losses

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The Kahuterawa Stream Biodiversity Restoration project is a joint project between Horizons Regional Council and the surrounding land managers, Linton Military Camp and Massey University, with the focus on managing and enhancing its biodiversity and scenic values.

The project area is 70ha, along a 4km segment of the Kahuterawa Stream, abutting the high-value remnant of Keeble's Bush and its own restoration zones. The planned vegetation types are based around riparian podocarp-hardwood forest, and include wetlands, terrace forest and floodplain communities. To date over 20 000 plants have been planted, and the planting phase will run for the next decade, at least.

A number of experimental layers are being built into the project, with the long-term goal of better understanding restoration processes and improving procedures. These include aspects of ecosourcing, nurse plant use, biodiversity and community structure, some in the form of replicated experimental plots.

This talk will outline the project, briefly review its motivation, overview the baselining for the vegetation types and their functioning, outline the priorities for restoration action, and discuss the experimental design in general, and specifically for the first experimental blocks. Early examples of successes achieved and losses experienced will be overviewed, and lessons learnt shared. Opportunities for future research are extensive, and welcomed.