

Rivercare News

Kia Ora,

Thanks for taking the time to check in with us. This month our main focus has been our fight to get better environmental protection in the planned stormwater upgrades for Te Atatū Peninsula.

We also had some interesting water testing results and our team did some serious weeding at Tawa Esplanade. More details on this and more below.

The Peninsula Stormwater Upgrades

We know that we keep talking about this upgrade and the potential negative environmental impacts but once the upgrades go ahead they will be with us for generations, so let's get it right!

We have another meeting with Healthy Waters coming up soon and have also met with Henderson Massey Local Board members Brooke Loader and Ingrid Papua and our local MP Phil Twyford. We want to thank them for taking the time to hear our concerns and give us pointers on how to proceed.

On a positive note, we are happy to report that we have been told there has been a slight change to the plan; the infilling of the stream at Matipo Reserve which runs into Tawa Esplanade, now appears to be off the table!

This was one of the plans that we strongly objected to so we are really happy to see this section of stream saved.

Although this is a good change we still take issue with many other aspects of the stormwater upgrade.

One of our big concerns is that the stormwater collected in the new pipes isn't going through any settling pond or filtering system. This basically means that anything collected in the water on its way off roofs, down roads and through gutters will end up in the awa. We have been told that the stormwater that will go through the pipes out to Te Wai o Pareira will not be a major source of contamination and that water from upper reaches of the catchment is the main source of sediment.

If it is the case that the urban environment does not contribute to contamination why do the settling ponds that are in use have warning signs saying that "Urban stormwater contains contaminants. Without treatment the stormwater will adversely affect our streams and beach water quality".

Settling ponds require dredging periodically and the sediment that they accumulate is known to be toxic but in the new plans it is perfectly acceptable to allow this toxic sediment to enter the ecosystem; we feel that this is a contradiction.

For now we will wait until our next meeting with Healthy Waters and hope to see a plan with better environmental consideration from them. If not we will regroup and consider our next move.

A Dry Weather Overflow and a False Alarm

On the 8th of February there was a dry weather overflow caused by tree roots located at Cartmel Reserve, Massey. The overflow was quickly dealt with by Watercare but Taipari Strand and Chapman strand were put under black flags on the Safeswim website for 48 hours to be sure that the sewage had moved out of the awa. If you are getting in the water remember to check Safeswim even if the weather has been good because dry weather overflows do happen.

And on the 30th of January a sensor alarm went off at an Engineered Overflow Point (EOP) on Central Park Drive. The sensor indicated that the water level in the sewer had dropped rapidly. Thankfully this turned out to be a malfunctioning sensor and not a sewer emptying itself into the awa.

Even though this was a false alarm it shows the importance of this type of monitoring. Watercare were alerted by the alarm and were able to check the situation right away. This EOP has only recently been fitted with a sensor so it's good to know that we will be aware of overflows from this spot in future. We would love to see all EOP's monitored so overflows can be dealt with quickly and proper data can be collected on how much wastewater is entering the awa.

Further Investigation Required

In our newsletter last month we mentioned that there was some question surrounding the source of the strong sewage smell at the bottom of Flanshaw Road. We had done one round of testing in December that showed high E.coli levels. We have recently done another round of testing that has come back within acceptable levels so we are still unsure exactly what is going on at this site.

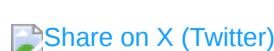
Meanwhile at Riverpark Boatramp near Universal Drive we've been seeing consistently high levels of Enterococci and E.coli. In our last test we saw E.coli levels almost 10x higher than the acceptable level. We have passed this data on to Watercare and Healthy Waters (Auckland Council) and we hope that the source of these high levels of pathogens can be found and dealt with quickly. This is an area with recreational use so there is a risk of people getting sick.

[See More](#)

Weeding Day at Tawa

Our team got stuck in at Tawa Esplanade. It was great to show some love to this spot that means so much to us. We removed lots of weeds that were trying to compete with the native seedlings and tackled some of the bigger pest plants in hard to reach areas. The stream was looking really clear on the day that we were there and we observed some little galaxiids in it too.

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