



WAIMATĀ CATCHMENT GROUP



BACKGROUND



- 23,600HA OF MODERATE AND STEEP HILL COUNTRY
 - 46% SHEEP AND BEEF FARMS, SOME MULTIGENERATIONAL
 - 32% PRODUCTION FORESTRY
 - 11% NATIVE BUSH
 - 11% EXOTIC TREES, OPEN WATER, HORTICULTURE AND URBAN AREAS
- WAIMATĀ RIVER FLOWS 38KM INTO GISBORNE CITY AND IS THE MOST USED FRESHWATER RECREATIONAL ASSET
- HEAVILY SEDIMENTED, ERODING RIVERBANKS, HIGH E.COLI
- HUGELY IMPACTED BY FORESTRY HARVEST – LOGGING DEBRIS AND SEDIMENT ARE “THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING”
- HOME TO SEVERAL MUD VOLCANOES



OUR CATCHMENT GROUP



- 50+ MEMBERS IN OUR CATCHMENT GROUP – FARMERS, SMALL BLOCK LANDOWNERS, FORESTRY COMPANIES, INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES
- REPRESENTING OVER 12,000HA OF THE CATCHMENT
- 8KM OF RIPARIAN AND WETLAND FENCING (25% Destroyed in Cyclone Gabrielle)
- ALMOST 20HA OF NATIVE BUSH AND RIPARIAN AREAS HAVE BEEN FENCED FROM LIVESTOCK (25% Destroyed in Cyclone Gabrielle)
- 60,000 NATIVES PLANTED (75% Destroyed in Cyclone Gabrielle), FURTHER 45,000 NATIVES TO BE PLANTED THIS WINTER
- PREDATOR CONTROL TRAPS FOR CATCHMENT GROUP MEMBERS TO PROTECT NATIVE PLANTING SITES AND BIRDLIFE
- 438 EROSION CONTROL TREES PLANTED, FURTHER 950 APPROVED FOR PLANTING THIS WINTER



BACKGROUND



THE GOOD



THE BAD



THE UGLY



BACKGROUND



The Waimatā Catchment is well known for its high land instability and erosion

Two landscape scale earthflows exist in the catchment as well as some gullying and very steep landslide prone land

The headwaters were planted in “protection forestry” after Cyclone Bola. Pine was used because it was fast growing – but it was not intended to be harvested.

These forests were subsequently sold by the government to Hikurangi Forest Farms – now Aratu – Wakaroa and Mangarara Forests.

Forestry has also been planted in the mid catchment – JNL Pukeakura, Forest Enterprises managed forests (numerous owners) and Aratu Waimanu Forest.

Hill country sheep and beef farms are the main other landuse in the catchment

The Waimatā River flows down through lifestyle blocks into Gisborne urban area

What happens in the Waimatā River ends up at the City bridges and on Waikanae and Midway Beaches



CLEARFELL FORESTRY IN STEEPLANDS



Forestry harvest started at Wakaroa and Mangarara forests in the 2010s. Other smaller forests on steep farmland were also been harvested over that time.

Hikurangi Forest Farms harvested Wakaroa Forest over the 2012-2015 period.

Following the 2018 storms HFF were prosecuted for their poor practice in the forest – where large scale landsliding, debris flow and landing failures were evident. There remains hundreds of thousands of tonnes of slash deposited on the slopes – or more often caught up in a birds nests in gullies.

This steep lands should never have been clearfelled – they were planted intended as protection forest – not commercial forestry. Bad decision making by central government has created this problem.

Every rain event slash is mobilised into debris flows that come down the streams destroying everything in their path and covering farms and roads with slash and sediment. The ecological values of the affected streams – and the Waimatā River have been destroyed. No stream can withstand the power of the force of slash and entrained debris that comes down.

The power of the slash scours the banks of the rivers, rips the riparian vegetation off the banks including the conservation trees planted to try and stabilise the erosion

Wakaroa Forest is identified as ORANGE in the NES – PF ESC classification. **It is a Permitted Activity to clearfell this forest.** The effects of this **are not minor**, it is destroying our streams, our farms and the Waimatā River health. It has resulted in blockages of the bridges in the City, sedimentation of the estuary and Turanganui-a-Kiwa/Poverty Bay, loss of mahinga kai, debris across the City beaches and a devastating heartache to those of us who love the river – the most heavily used recreational waterbody in our region.

Event

Easter 2014

Wakaroa Farmland covered in slash, debris on Waikanae Beach

Impacts on farmland in Waimatā River headwaters

Significant sedimentation event Turanganui Estuary

September 2015

Waimatā River impacts, Mangataikehu Stream affected. Downstream farmland fences destroyed, riparian sediment and large amounts of slash deposits.

Waikanae Beach covered in slash. Significant slash around William Pettie Bridge Gisborne City

Significant sedimentation event Turanganui Estuary

11-12 June 2018

Waimatā River extensive slash damage to banks and bed

Waimatā Valley Road culvert blocked, damage to road

Mangataikehu Stream affected. Downstream destroyed, farmland covered in slash and sediment loaded and large amounts of slash deposits.

Cyclone Hale Jan 2023

Waimatā River extensive slash damage to banks and bed

Waimatā Valley Road culvert blocked, damage to road

Mangataikehu Stream affected. Downstream destroyed, farmland covered in slash and sediment loaded and large amounts of slash deposits.

CYCLONE GABRIELLE















ECOWORKS ASSESSMENT



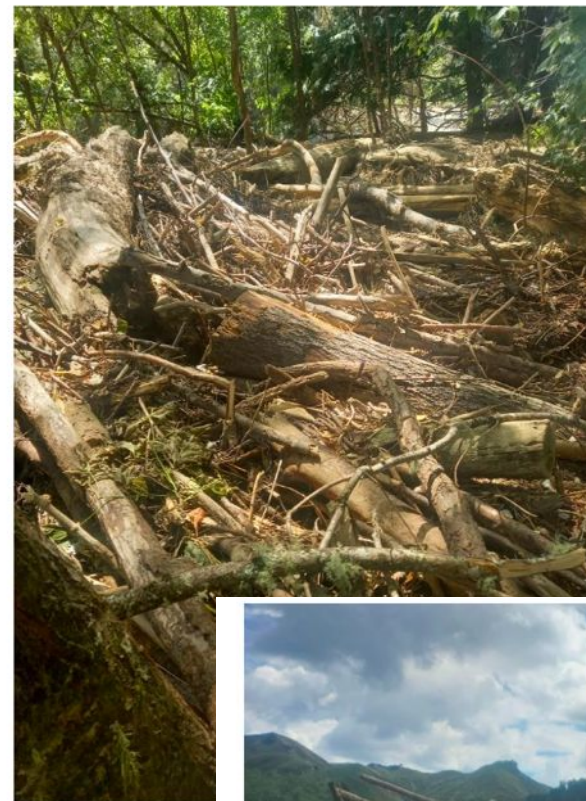
WR1 – Site one on the Waimatā River, around the 10km mark of Waimatā Valley Road. A large build-up of primarily pine debris is on the true left of the river.



WR2 – Site two on the Waimatā River, east of the 10km mark of the Waimatā Valley Road. Pine debris has been caught in kānuka and another *Pinus radiata* plantation on the true left bank of the river.



WR6 – Monowai Station, Waimatā tributary stream. Pine waste has mostly built up on the true left with some scattered on the true right.



WR7 – Monowai Station, confluence of tributary and Waimatā rivers. Debris piled up on island in between, extending out from a paddock inundated by silt.



WR9 – Waimatā River, downstream from 18km mark culvert – 2+ metres deep in slash.



WR8 – Waimatā Valley 18km culvert. Mainly on true left bank of main river channel, downstream a few metres (WR9) piles are on both banks are c.3 metres in height.



RECOMMENDATIONS



Forestry discharges to be regulated like other industries. Council to monitor and enforce. Costs falling to the landowners with the land use causing the discharge and penalties to those exceeding slash, sediment, phosphorus, etc limits

Govt to hold Gisborne District Council accountable to their responsibilities

Forestry environment plan required (including slash, sediment and nutrient management plans)

ETS to support transition to permanent native forest rather than plantation with ongoing management requirements

Govts former "Protection Forest" scheme to be reviewed: how many are no longer protected, what damage has their harvest caused to communities. Protection Forests to be actively restored and managed as permanent native forests at Govt's cost

Collaboration with community to agree reparations

Funding for science to confirm long-term land use and restoration solutions

Expand poplar and willow pole availability

East Coast specific regulations for forestry

A review of costs associated with heavy traffic and logging debris on roading and infrastructure; and implementation of a system to result in a user-pays model

Significant change requires significant Govt investment



THE LEGACY

There are hundreds of thousands more tonnes of slash to come down from Wakaroa Forest

In Cyclone Gabrielle older trees – 12-15 year olds and even older have failed on the steepplands in Wakaroa and Managarara. The soil is too thin to take the weight of the trees when we have the heavy rains. Gravity does the rest.

Steepplands have also failed in farmland – and this has also generated vast quantities of sediment smothering ecosystems and covering farmland. But the forestry slash is what destroys the fences, the culverts, the bridges, scours the banks and beds of the river and covers the beach in debris.

The East Coast is not Kaingaroa Forest. We need to stop clearfelling steep eroding land. There are large amounts of land – forest and farmland that need to be supported back into native forest.

We need to have bespoke Rules for the forestry that remains that recognises the vulnerability of our district.

We have told government ministers and officials this so many times before.

Listen to Us.

Act NOW, not in 2 years or 5 or 10...

Stop pretending there isn't a problem.