

WAIKANAЕ STREAM

The Waikanae Stream has significant natural and cultural values associated with it. It might be a small waterway but it covers the length of the city, flowing through Gisborne's industrial and commercial centre. Historically the stream and its surrounds played a unique role in the traditional economy and culture of tangata whenua.

The degradation of the Waikanae Stream to facilitate urban growth has impacted on the values inherent to iwi.

The stream also carries an important narrative of colonial discovery. Botanist Joseph Banks walked the swampy margins during the brief visit of the Endeavour in October 1769. It's believed plants in Kew Gardens, England, are growing from the samples collected at that time.



Restoring Waikanae Stream

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ECOLOGICAL DECLINE AND ITS CONTRIBUTORS

Council has identified Waikanae Stream as a particularly contaminated waterbody due to historic and current land uses in the catchment. Former municipal tip sites and informal waste disposal continue to negatively affect the waterway, even today. Neighbouring industrial and residential activities discharge contaminants through the reticulated stormwater network, surface runoff and unmapped pipes.

Work to restore the mauri of this waterway is necessary. This will involve a multi-faceted approach including streamside planting, improving on-site management of stormwater and addressing historic contamination from past landfilling activities. These measures will aim to improve habitat conditions, water quality and streamside amenity.

STORMWATER DISCHARGES

Our region's Freshwater Plan requires industrial or trade sites to provide a Stormwater Management Plan by May 2020. Stormwater is the rainfall that runs off hard surfaces such as driveways, roads, footpaths or industrial yards. Run off from trade and industrial sites can contain pollutants such as silt, bacteria, oil and grease, heavy metals, toxic substances and litter.

By having a management plan in place, trade and industrial premises can reduce the amount of contaminants entering the waterway directly or through drains and roadside gutters. This will contribute to better water quality and health of the stream for swimming, fishing and cultural value.

STREAM RESTORATION WORK

Alongside the Department of Conservation and Rongowhakaata, Gisborne District Council owns and maintains most of the reserve land that borders the stream.

We've supported community-led efforts by local organisations and volunteers since 2011 to help clean-up and re-vegetate the stream banks.

Ongoing monitoring of water quality is being undertaken so we can map the improvements in the stream's health.

We've also embarked on a wider public education programme to identify the effects of inappropriate stormwater disposal on our waterways.

