

## The Guardians of the Ruakituri river

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2021, landowners, tangata whenua, Marae representatives and agency gathered at the local Ruakituri school to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This MoU is a historical milestone in the groups journey and marks the beginning of a long term community commitment towards the enhancement of the Ruakituri River.



Nuku Hadfield, group's Chair and local farmer, welcomed everybody and thanked the group for the work delivered during the past few months. She read the mission statement developed by the group "Ka ora te whenua me te hāpori i te oranga o te awa" – "If the river is thriving so too will the land and the people" and acknowledged the support received from local farmers, tangata whenua and local Marae.



Nuku announced the formal creation of an Incorporated Society "The Guardians of the Ruakituri river Inc" which gives the group the ability to apply for public funding and benefit from a Charity status.

Nuku also announced the launch of the group's website accessible from any browser on : [ruakituriguardians.com](http://ruakituriguardians.com). This website will be the groups official platform to communicate with whanau and the wider public.



The Erepeti Marae was well represented and Matiu Bartlett was thanked for taking the time to attend this hui and sign the MoU on behalf of the Erepeti Marae.

Abby Miller signed the MoU on behalf of Hawkes Bay Regional Council.



The school children are part of this journey with the Guardians and took an active part of the ceremony by singing waiata. A big thank you for their contribution! The Guardians of the Ruakituri river group are all working together to leave their Tamariki a legacy they can be proud of.

**"20 landowners out of 24 farms have signed the Guardians of the Ruakituri Rivers' Memorandum of Understanding. 2/3 of the land mass is in Maori ownership"**



## Landowners gathering



On the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 2021, 34 landowners representing over 20 properties gathered at the school to discuss the next step for the catchment group.

All landowners agreed with the approach and saw the benefit of working collaboratively to progress an ambitious community vision.



The next step for the group will be to become a legal entity which they are in the process of creating.



## Presentation at HBRC

On the 3d of February 2021, Nuku Hadfield, Peter Mac Carthy, Pat O'Brien and Nic Caviale Delzescaux presented their community vision at the HBRC Integrated Catchment Management Committee Chaired by Hinewai Ormsby in Napier. Both groups are seeking co funding to leverage support from the Fresh Water Improvement Fund. This meeting was a great opportunity to raise the profile of both organisations and signal that both groups had significant community leadership and support as well as a long term commitment to protect the Ruakituri river.



## Mapping sessions

In February and March 2021, a couple of mapping session took place at the Ruakituri school in order to capture each landowner's plan moving forward. The momentum is growing, and the Guardians are building a comprehensive and large scale community lead catchment management plan. A big thank you to all the landowners who have made the time to work collectively towards the same vision



## Water monitoring

The Ruakituri Guardians have tapped into a new water testing technology developed by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). EPA has launched a new water monitoring technique called EDNA that consists in sampling the DNA present in the water. This technique is extremely powerful as it indicates the species present not only in the streams but also on land. This tool could be quite valuable as the Guardians embark on a large scale restoration programme. This one-off project was free of charge and kindly facilitated by HBRC. The data collected so far mentioned the presence of several wild species but luckily enough not humans which is great.

## Funding update

Between February and March 2021, the Guardians of the Ruakituri River lodged three applications for funding, two with the Ministry for the Environment and one with DOC. Unfortunately, Two of our applications have been declined so far. We are working with MFE to see how we can better tailor our application to their funding criteria. We will keep you updated.

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