

Support Lake Rotokauri

Rotokauri reserve is a public area open for all to enjoy. To restore and enhance this valuable asset through the objectives set out in the management plan, the enthusiasm and hard work of those who have worked to develop this heritage area is not enough.

*Funding is essential
to achieve future
projects and
support the
vision for Lake
Rotokauri.*



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Lake Rotokauri

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Environmental challenges

Human activity has resulted in a number of substantial changes to the lake and its catchment, particularly over the last 150 years. Since 1997, water clarity has declined significantly and nutrient levels have shown a dramatic increase.

Agricultural, industrial and urban developments have impacted on the health of the lake. The lake is fed by a number of open drains which channel runoff directly into the lake.

These changes in catchment vegetation and drainage have resulted in greatly increased nutrient and sediment content of catchment runoff entering the lake.

Reversing these trends is a challenge and requires careful management. Some improvements have already been made, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

Lake Rotokauri Committee

The Lake Rotokauri Management Committee is responsible for implementing the Lake Rotokauri Management Plan in conjunction with Waikato District Council. The committee is made up from elected representatives from the three councils involved, residents, representatives from Fish and Game and local iwi, Ngaati Maahanga.

The Lake Rotokauri Management Committee has been working to support the reserve since 2003. The committee has been active in achieving major developments at the reserve, including the construction of access points and walkways and planting schemes.

The committee is also involved in promoting community involvement in managing the reserve and seeking funding from various sources for reserve enhancement projects.

Environmental management

The Rotokauri Lake Management Plan (2000) aims to achieve a significant environmental outcome for the restoration and enhancement of the reserve and its waterways.

The plan details management and enhancement objectives for the reserve. The committee works with the council to implement the management plan, as well as develop and source funding for projects.

The four main objectives of the plan are to:

- Enhance and maintain the ecological values of the lake and reserve
- Provide public access and recreational opportunities
- Enhance historic values
- Encourage public awareness and participation.

Achievements:

- Thousands of wetland trees, shrubs and other vegetation have been planted, including species to provide food sources for native birds
- Half of the lake margin land area (approximately 18 hectares) is managed for invasive weed control.
- The committee is working with landowners, developers and statutory bodies to ensure the best possible outcomes for lake water management and quality
- Iwi representation on the committee
- More than two kilometres of paths and wooden walkways allow access to approximately one third of the reserve.
- An earthen jetty bund allows direct access to the water edge on the southern end of the lake.

Future projects include:

- ✓ Habitat restoration
- ✓ Weed and pest control
- ✓ Development of walkways
- ✓ Educational and interpretive signage
- ✓ Recreational developments.

Lake Rotokauri is the largest of more than 40 lakes between Te Kauwhata and Te Awamutu. These lakes are of national importance as the largest remaining collection of such habitats within one area in New Zealand.

These lakes are the remnants of once widespread wetlands, which supported productive and diverse bird and fish populations. The Rotokauri reserve spans the Waikato district and Hamilton City boundaries. Lake Rotokauri is up to four metres deep, has a surface area of 77 hectares and its catchment area covers around 900 hectares.

The lake is surrounded by native and exotic wet woodland, raupo and grassed areas. Half of the lake reserve can be accessed via walkways and floating boardwalks. A basic jetty bund exists for the launching of non-motorised boats.

Waikato District Council controls and manages the reserve in partnership with the Lake Rotokauri Committee and input from Hamilton City Council and Environment Waikato. Part of the lake near its outlet remains in private ownership.