

The Peninsula Project

Better river and catchment management

What it means for ratepayers



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From the Chairman

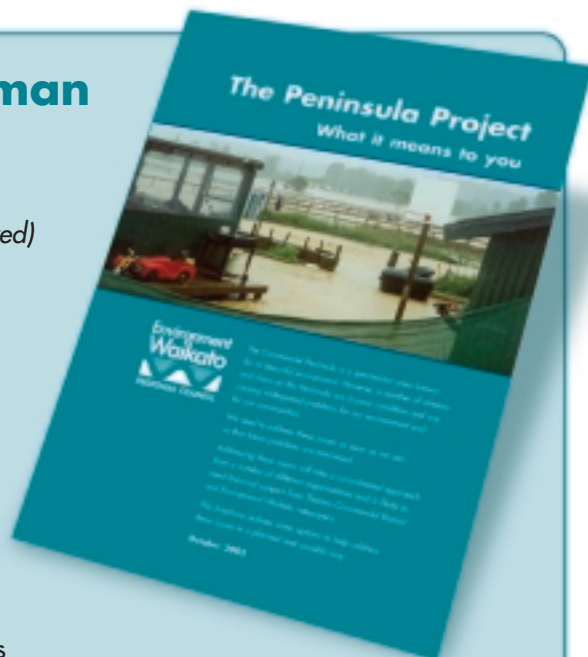
In October this year, all Thames-Coromandel District ratepayers were sent a small booklet (*pictured*) outlining concerns about rivers and streams on the Coromandel Peninsula.

Inadequate management of the rivers, streams and their catchments is resulting in damage to buildings, bridges and roads, a loss of productive land, increased flooding and damage to native bush, estuaries and harbours. On the Thames Coast, flooding puts lives at risk.

To address these concerns, Environment Waikato and Thames-Coromandel District Council launched the Peninsula Project. The Peninsula Project aims to find a way to help resolve these issues.

We have now developed and costed out a possible programme of work over the next 20 years to improve the state of Coromandel's rivers and streams.

Before any work can begin, our Council must decide how it should be paid for.



Ratepayers in the Thames-Coromandel District will be required to fund a significant part of it while other ratepayers from around the wider Environment Waikato Region will also be asked to contribute.

This brochure outlines the broad areas of work proposed and our 'first cut' at a potential funding policy to pay for work on the Coromandel Peninsula. It affects you. Please read this brochure and give us your views.

Neil Clarke, O.B.E, J.P

Chairman

Three key areas of work

There are three main areas of work required...

Possum and goat control

Goats and possums are causing major damage to the bush and forest on the Peninsula. This contributes to soil erosion and flooding. We need to get these pests under control.

River and catchment management

We can do a number of things to improve our rivers and streams. Planting along stream banks and in the upper catchment will help prevent erosion and stabilise slips. Constructing fences to keep stock

away from unstable areas will help native forest to regenerate and stabilise the land. Removing blockages such as logs from stream channels will reduce flooding and erosion caused by floodwaters.

Flood protection

Some areas on the Coromandel are at serious risk of flooding. On the Thames Coast, five communities have been identified where significant flood protection work is required. But work is also required in other parts of the Peninsula, such as Manaia and Port Charles, to protect buildings, roads, bridges and other infrastructure from river flooding.

Thames Coast

Five communities on the Thames Coast (*Tararu, Te Puru, Waiomu/Pohue, Tapu and Coromandel Township*) have been identified as priority areas for any new flood protection work.

Detailed proposals for possible work in those communities are now being worked through with each community. Decisions on what work might and might not go ahead have yet to be made.

Central Government is being asked to contribute towards the cost. Ratepayers who live in those five communities, who will benefit most from any work done, will also be expected to contribute.

Other Thames-Coromandel District ratepayers, as well as ratepayers from the wider Environment Waikato Region, will also be asked to pay a portion.

What benefits will be gained?

If we can address river and stream issues on the Coromandel Peninsula, our environment and the communities across the Coromandel Peninsula will be better off, both immediately and in the long term.

If this work goes ahead, we will:

- better protect people, property and essential services from flooding
- avoid damage to roads and avoid road closures caused by flooding
- better protect the land, including native forest
- see a reduction in pests like possums and goats



Riverbank erosion, Kaimarama River, Whangamaroro

- improve conditions for native plants and animals
- see a long-term improvement in water quality in our streams and rivers
- help rivers and streams to remain stable
- protect estuaries and harbours against a build-up of silt.

Priority areas for the work required include the Thames Coast, Manaia, Port Charles, Colville, Whangamaroro and Tairua.

Before we can do any of the work, we must find a way to pay for it which is fair and sustainable.

At Manaia we are working with the community to identify priority erosion and flooding issues in the area. Funding will be available through the Peninsula Project to assist with riverbank stabilisation and planting to reduce erosion and the effects of flooding.

Flooding along the Thames Coast

is made worse by logs, debris and sediment which are all carried downstream from the upper catchment areas in high rainfall events. It is proposed that, as part of the Peninsula Project, Environment Waikato will keep these river and



Debris and sediment blockage, Manaia River, 2003

stream channels clear of these blockages to eliminate one of the main causes of flooding.



Flooding across SH25, Ngarimu Bay, 2002



Before (above) and after (right). Stream bank erosion can be significantly reduced by fencing which prevents damage to banks caused by livestock and allows planted natives to stabilise the banks.



Existing policy

Environment Waikato has policies in place which help pay for some of this type of work in other parts of its Region.

At this stage, it is proposed that any programme of work on the Coromandel Peninsula be funded by a combination of:

- ✦ Money from Central Government, either to pay for direct works or as a contribution towards protecting the State Highways and getting goats and possums under control.
- ✦ Environment Waikato ratepayers, via the General Rate.
- ✦ A new Peninsula Project rate spread across Coromandel Peninsula ratepayers.

Debris at Te Puru during June 2000 Weather Bomb

- ✦ A local community rate which will help pay for local flood protection work.

Under existing policy, local communities and landowners are required to fund 75 percent of capital expenditure for any flood protection and river management work where engineering solutions are needed. The cost is normally spread over 20 years at market interest rates.

- ✦ A direct charge on landowners for soil conservation (erosion control) and river management.

Under existing policy, landowners who undertake soil conservation and catchment protection work would pay 65 percent of the cost of the work. The remaining 35 percent would be provided by the wider community.

Top left: Hill slope erosion, north Coromandel
Left: Flooding near Whitianga, 2002

The potential costs*

These potential costs are indicative only and are based on the capital costs of the river and catchment management and flood protection work being spread over a 20-year period.

The capital costs for possum and goat control have been spread over a 10-year period so that the pests are under control more quickly.

	Potential capital costs/initial expenditure	Potential maintenance costs (needed each year)
Base river and catchment management, including:	7,700,000	642,000
✦ Catchment oversight and information/advice	€	82,000
✦ Soil conservation work	7,700,000	160,000
✦ River management	€	400,000
Animal pest control	4,900,000	813,000
✦ Goats	1,200,000	68,000
✦ Possums	3,700,000	745,000
Flood protection	14,400,000	655,000
✦ Thames Coast	5,400,000	155,000
✦ Other areas	9,000,000	500,000
Total potential costs	\$27,000,000	\$2,110,000

* This programme does not include work to be done in Tararu and Thames as work in these areas is funded separately through existing rates (Waihou Valley Scheme) paid by ratepayers in those areas. An additional rate would be required if any new work was undertaken on the Tararu Stream.

These estimates have reduced slightly since they were first presented to the community in October 2003.





Riverbank erosion and gravel build-up, Manaia River

Potential impacts on ratepayers

In March 2004, Environment Waikato will produce a formal 'Draft Funding Policy' for the Peninsula Project.

To give Thames-Coromandel District ratepayers as much opportunity as possible to consider the implications of doing this work on rivers and streams, some preliminary figures have been produced.

These figures indicate where costs might fall, if

- a) the work outlined in this brochure goes ahead (based on the costs on page 6), and
- b) the costs are distributed in line with existing policies which cover similar work in other parts of the Environment Waikato Region.

A rate across the Coromandel Peninsula is proposed to help fund this important work. According to the indicative costs outlined in this brochure, the work would cost each Thames-Coromandel District Council ratepayer around \$14 per \$100,000 capital value of their property (based on current valuations). Samples of rating impacts are on page 8.

If flood protection work goes ahead in a local community, an additional capital and maintenance charge is likely to apply.

Again, this work would not go ahead unless the community agreed it wanted it done, and was prepared to pay.

How much might you pay?

The following tables provide an indication of what the impacts on individual rates bills might be if the work outlined in this brochure goes ahead*.

1. DESCRIPTION

A residential property with a CV (capital value) of \$150,000

Current total Environment Waikato rates bill	\$73
Potential Peninsula Project rate	\$23
Potential total rates bill	\$96

2. DESCRIPTION

A residential property with a CV of \$700,000

Current total Environment Waikato rates bill	\$341
Potential Peninsula Project rate	\$105
Potential total rates bill	\$446

3. DESCRIPTION

A rural property (21.83 hectares) with a CV of \$365,000

Current total Environment Waikato rates bill	\$200
Potential Peninsula Project rate	\$55
Potential total rates bill	\$255

4. DESCRIPTION

A rural property (254 hectares) with a CV of \$644,000

Current total Environment Waikato rates bill	\$447
Potential Peninsula Project rate	\$97
Potential total rates bill	\$544

*This does not include local community rates for local flood protection works or direct charges to landowners for erosion control works on their property.



(Above and right) Flooding at Tararu,
June 2002 'Weather Bomb'

What next?

In March 2004, Environment Waikato will produce a formal 'Draft Funding Policy' and work programme for the Coromandel Peninsula. This will outline the work proposed to address river and stream issues and how the Council believes any work done as part of the Peninsula Project should be paid for. The community will be formally invited to comment on this draft policy and suggest any changes.

In the meantime, we would like as much informal feedback as possible about the potential work programme and preliminary costs outlined in this brochure.

That feedback will be taken into account before the Draft Funding Policy is finalised.



If you would like more information about the potential work and costs outlined in this brochure, or would like to offer your view on the work and costings being considered, please:

- call Environment Waikato's Freephone **0800 800 401**
- write to Environment Waikato, Box 4010, Hamilton East
- email peninsula@ew.govt.nz

You can also get more information, including more detailed technical information, by logging onto Environment Waikato's website, www.ew.govt.nz