

## Te Aratia walkway update

- In December 2020, the construction of the walkway was launched after a formal blessing organised by Reta Pohe. Since then, a lot of things have happened. The key milestones are recorded below:

- March 2021 The gravelling of the walkway started.

- April 2021 The work was very slow and stopped abruptly because soil conditions were too dangerous for heavy machines to operate.



- June 2021 Whangawehi and Kinikini car parks were upgraded with red metal and signage was installed to formally identify those areas.

- July 2021 The first tables created by Chris Wilson were installed just before winter.

- Winter 2021 : This first winter saw a lot of slips across the track caused by a lot of rain. This was to be expected as the soil needed to settle down. The Whangawehi committee had to pull up their sleeves and organise fixing of the track for the first time (but not last).

- October 2021 Repair work started and was completed reasonably quickly. The idea was to prepare the ground for the gravelling operation that was to start in November 2021.

- November 2021 This first storm hit Mahia with some light but consistent rain over a period of a week. 350 mm was enough to seriously damage several key parts of the track on the farmland but also in the Forest. The Committee was back to square one.

- February 2022 Repair work resumed in with the construction of a retaining wall, the clearing of several slips and the installation of bigger culverts.



- March 2021 The gravelling team resumed work. It was already late as the windows of opportunities in Mahia with consistent dry weather are limited. The same

month, several picnic tables were installed and the toilets.

- April 2022 storm : This was a more intense rain event in a short period of time that destroyed again key parts of the track. This event challenging all our infrastructures that had been upgraded after the first storm.



- 2022 just before winter The repair work started and the idea was to protect our infrastructure and avoid any further degradation. Todd Murphy from Tip Truck Lt did wonders just before the first winters rains.



- August 2022, Malcolm Westerlund established 3000 native trees at the entrance of the walkway on Pongaroa Station. This planting will enhance the first stretch of the river and offer shade and shelter to the visitors.

- Spring 2022 : with the return of the good weather the track became a hive of activity. Several interpretative and direction signs went in.

- December 2022. Interpretative signs, gates and railings went up while the gravelling work resumed in December 2022.



## Opening ceremony

Thursday the 8th of December 2022, the Whangawehi Catchment Committee was proud to be able to officially open the walkway to the world!

Pat O'Brien WCMG Chair and Eva Coop cut the ribbon with support from Ministers Nash and Whaitiri. After many years in the making, the holiday makers have been able to enjoy this new asset for the district.



A big thank you to our sponsors who have helped financially and to our amazing local community members who have done wonders to make this day happen.

- 11th December 2022 **Walk the wai:** Hannah Coop organised a very successful community walk on the as part of a Te Mana o te Wai bid to develop a community vision for the management of the fresh water in Mahia. During this 12 km walk, 60 locals walked from the waharoa to the whare where a picnic was organised. This event gave the opportunity for our local community to discover the beautiful plantings established by the Whangawehi Catchment Group. We





hope this initiative will encourage community leaders to work collaboratively to protect and enhance our freshwater resources.

## Jobs for Nature

In September 2020, the WCMG was officially made the recipient of a government scheme initiated to stimulate the economy post COVID 19. After several

days of work on Health and Safety, the WCMG was allowed to induct 6 FTE. Through the scheme, 6 FTE have been funded for 18 months. The group carried out environmental work



in Mahia with a focus on the Whangawehi catchment. All staff have followed a series of training to be able to carry out their work. Well done to the Sustainable Business Network team for their ongoing support.

## Jeff Hamilton's visit

In April 2021, the WCMG invited Jeff Hamilton to visit the project and meet with the catchment farmers. Jeff is part of a group of farmers that opened the famous and popular private walking track in Banks Peninsula. This was the first private track to be opened in New Zealand and became more popular than any of the farmers could have imagined. Jeff openly shared some of his learnings and pitfalls when



developing his own venture in Akaroa and offered ideas about how something similar could be started around the catchment.

## Give a little

To support the maintenance and enhancement work along the river a fundraising page was set up with **Give a Little** in December 2022

To support our work please follow :

<https://givealittle.co.nz/donate/org/whangawehi-catchment-management-group-inc>



Or scan the QR code:

A big thank you to all our sponsors, volunteers, and local marae for their support during these last 2 years. Despite the challenges we faced, we managed to deliver together a fantastic asset for the district.

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