



# WCEET Funding Guidelines

## Background

The Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust was formed in 2003 as a result of Mighty River Power's (now Mercury) consultation process during re-consenting of its Waikato hydro system. The Trust - comprising the Department of Conservation, Fish and Game NZ and Forest and Bird representatives – administers a mitigation fund that provides grants to a variety of groups seeking to carry out ecological remediation or rehabilitation projects within the Waikato River catchment.

## Aim of the Fund

To assist organisations, agencies and individuals with projects which foster and enhance the sustainable management of ecological resources in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments.

## Funds Available

The Trust may allocate any amount of funds in a given year, usually up to a maximum of around \$500,000. Most projects are expected to be in the \$5000 to \$30,000 range but larger applications will be considered. Preference is given to projects that have other additional funding sources. The Trust may fund single or multi-year projects (up to 3-5 years).

## Eligibility – Who Can Apply

Applications for funding are welcomed from community groups and individuals, as well as organisations such as Department of Conservation, Fish & Game, district/regional councils and local iwi. Projects on public or private land within the Waikato River and Lake Taupo catchments that are consistent with the Trust's purpose, and that meet one or more of the following Trust objectives are eligible:

### Trust Purpose

1. To foster and enhance the sustainable management of the ecological resources in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments;
2. To mitigate adverse effects of the operation of the Hydro Scheme on the ecological environments in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments;
3. To maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity, the sports fishery and game bird populations in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments through appropriate and sustainable species and habitat management by:
  - (i) identifying important habitats and/or species;
  - (ii) identifying risks and threats to those identified habitats and/or species;

- (iii) identifying most practicable means to ameliorate or resolve risks and threats to habitats and species in the catchment;
- (iv) identifying practical means to enhance important habitats and/or species;
- (v) establishing an enduring and beneficial working partnership between Mercury and the Trust.

## Trust Objectives

1. Enhancement of wetland values in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments.
2. Enhancement of indigenous biodiversity in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments.
3. Enhancement of the sports fishery and game bird population in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments.
4. Mitigation of any adverse effects of the operation of the Waikato Hydro System on the ecological environments in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments.

Grants will be made for charitable purposes only. Applications for funding will require a statement from a referee.

## Priorities

At present the areas of **highest priority** for the Trust are:

- Protection and enhancement of wetlands in general – high priority wetlands include:
  - The Waikato River delta;
  - The extensive complex of wetlands in the Meremere Ecological District;
  - Lake Ohakuri, particularly wetland restoration in the Whirinaki Arm;
  - Protection and enhancement of small remnant wetlands in the upper Waikato River catchment;
  - Large wetlands associated with the lower reaches of streams and rivers flowing into Lake Taupo.
- Riparian fencing and planting.
- Maintenance or enhancement of ecological connectivity (e.g. fish passage).
- More intensive and focussed control of ecologically significant plant and animal pests.
- Identification of key information deficiencies or requirements.

## What we do fund

The Trust will fund projects that achieve its **purpose and objectives**. The Trust will generally give priority to funding projects which:

- are cost effective;
- focus on ecological deliverables i.e. practical projects that protect, manage and enhance the natural and physical environment of the Waikato River catchment;
- have a high degree of community support;
- show clear evidence of wider and sustainable ecological benefits over time;
- are not fully funded by the Trust (i.e. have contributions from other sources, which could include “in kind” actions);
- raise environmental awareness and/or increase environmental knowledge.

Projects that have been funded in the past include:

- wetland, stream and riparian restoration
- restoration of shallow lakes and peat lakes
- pest animal control and monitoring
- predator proof fencing and control
- weed control and planting
- environmental education projects
- projects that benefit game species as well as indigenous species.

## What we don't fund

The Trust **will not** generally fund:

- activities which are outside the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments;
- activities which the Trust considers are priority responsibilities or obligations of other agencies;
- overseas travel or conference expenses;
- administration expenses;
- completed or retrospective projects;
- repayment of loans or meeting loan repayments;
- activities that result in direct personal or economic gain;
- purchase of large capital items of equipment (e.g. trailers, chainsaws, vehicles etc.);
- activities or work that is required as a condition of a resource consent or district council subdivision consent.

## How to Apply

Application forms can be downloaded from the WCEET website [www.wceet.org.nz/funding](http://www.wceet.org.nz/funding).

Please complete all applications for funding on the Application Form. Handwritten or electronic submissions are both acceptable. The form has been provided in MS Word format to enable you to type your responses directly into the document prior to printing, or it can be downloaded as a pdf.

The Trust Secretary, Larnie Chrystall, is available to assist you in completing your funding application ([enquiries@wceet.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@wceet.org.nz)).

When you have completed your application form, please sign and post to:

Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust  
PO Box 445  
Hamilton

Or email as an attachment to: [enquiries@wceet.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@wceet.org.nz)

All applications must be accompanied by at least one referee statement. Supporting documentation may be submitted along with the completed application form.

## Section A – Applicant Information

This section provides WCEET with information about the organisation or applicant. Please ensure that you complete all sections.

## Section B – Project Location/Site Description

Ensure that you describe the location and size of your project area accurately, accompanied by relevant maps.

- **Existing Features**

Describe the landforms, topography, hydrology, dominant vegetation and fauna of your site.

- **Special Features & Significance of the Site**

List any threatened species and describe any historic or cultural features. Explain the local/regional/national significance of habitats and/or ecological units, communities or ecosystems and the characteristics of the site's indigenous biodiversity and/or sports fish or game birds.

- **Other Habitats or Natural Areas Within Vicinity**

Describe surrounding areas in terms of the site's ecological connectivity.

- **Site History/Current Condition/Threats**

Describe the ecological threats to the integrity of the site and indicate the urgency for management intervention or action e.g. in the case of a weed infestation what is its extent, and how rapidly is it spreading?

## Section C – Project Plan

A well prepared project plan can make the difference between success and failure. It helps focus your thoughts on what you wish to achieve and how you will do this. It also helps the Trust understand what you are proposing and to assess your proposal's merits fairly. It also means you will be "up and running" sooner if funding is approved. Where necessary please seek advice or assistance from organisations or individuals with the appropriate expertise to answer the more technical questions.

You may wish to append a project plan separately (however, ensure that you address all of the sections in the application form). Your plan need not be lengthy, but we should be able to understand the what, how and when, and as a minimum should address the following aspects:

- **Vision, Goals & Management Approach**

What do you want to ultimately achieve with this project, and what are the goals or steps along the way to get you there?

What is the management approach that this project comprises? Note that this will vary enormously subject to the nature of works proposed, but should be broken down with a reasonably detailed description of each step involved, e.g. for a wetland revegetation/habitat restoration project you might need to provide information on:

- any physical/hydrological works, how and when these would be undertaken;
- fencing – type, length, materials;
- plant pest control – species involved, methods to be employed;
- site preparation for planting – how, when;
- pre- and post-planting animal pest control;
- plants and planting – species, numbers, spacing, source, timing, labour;
- maintenance of plantings – nature, frequency and timing of releases;
- predator control – species, methods, operational targets (see comments below also).

- **How your project meets WCEET objectives**

This section is designed to answer some key questions about how your project meets the purposes and objectives of the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust, and the extent of involvement from the community and other parties.

In determining how your project meets Trust objectives, it is suggested that you expand on Section B and describe in further detail the following aspects of your project:

- how your project will enhance wetland values and indigenous biodiversity;
- how your project will enhance the site, its ecological networks, creation of buffers and restoration of ecological sequences;
- the urgency for management action;
- practical means of enhancing habitats for indigenous or game species;
- mitigation of adverse effects of the hydro system

**The ways in which your project delivers on the Trust’s objectives will be a primary consideration in whether your project is funded by the Trust, and the level of funding. it is recommended that you focus on these outcomes and take time to describe the specific nature of those outcomes as part of your application.**

**Note regarding Resource Consents: Please note that there are new national regulations (through Government’s Essential Freshwater package of reforms Sept 2020) for working in wetlands which means that activities previously permitted may now require a resource consent. Please contact Waikato Regional Council for advice 0800 800 401. Funding is contingent upon securing the necessary approvals for your project.**

- **Work Plan & Timeline**

Provide a schedule showing tasks in step by step order and months in which these are to be undertaken, and what you intend to achieve with each task.

- **Project Monitoring & Evaluation**

Describe how you will measure the success of your project? What are the project’s key deliverables? What will you be monitoring, how are you going to do this and when?

Some examples of key deliverables to monitor include:

- monthly bird counts
- numbers of plants
- hectares restored
- metres of stream fenced
- increase in species populations.

Projects involving the control of predators or competitors need to identify very clearly not only what species are being targeted and how, but what the operational targets are in terms of residual population levels e.g. <5% RTC index for rats, <0.5% for stoats during summer, or <1% for possums. They should explain the rationale for the targets that have been set, and what features are to be monitored to determine the effectiveness of the control regime e.g. tunnel tracking rates or number of fledged young of a preyed on species or number of plants flowering/fruited. Particular emphasis will need to be placed on how benefits arising from the programme will be sustained if ongoing funding from the Trust is not available.

It is a good idea to set up annual photo points to track visually the success of your project.

#### **NOTES:**

Some of these headings are unlikely to be relevant for proposals of an investigative or interpretive nature, or for setting up a facility such as a nursery, but project plans outlining objectives and approach, and providing a schedule of tasks, timing and costs will still be required.

And finally, don't forget to include photos, drawings, or any other supporting information with your project plan that might assist us to more fully appreciate what you intend to accomplish.

## **Section D - Project Budget**

A comprehensive budget for your project should be supplied with your funding application, clearly showing all relevant costs and contributions from other parties in the form of cash, materials, labour and in-kind time. List all of the costs associated with your project including GST. **Please supply quotes to substantiate the costs for which you are applying.**

The application form contains a suggested table format which you may choose to use to itemise these costs.

All project costs need to include GST of 15%. All grants approved by Trustees and paid to recipients are inclusive of GST. Costs need to be considered carefully – should your organisation not be registered for GST, this may have implications for your project budget.

The Trust has a particular focus on forming partnerships in projects and will often "seed" funding as a catalyst for obtaining support from other parties. In this case, Trust funding may be conditional on this additional support.

It is Trust policy to reimburse retrospectively as work is carried out and project costs are incurred. Forward payments may be able to be made in some circumstances but this needs to be discussed with WCEET and approved in advance.

## Section E - Application Checklist

This section allows you to check that all sections of the form are complete and that all additional attachments are included with your application form before you submit it. Make sure that you look through this checklist and attach any information requested, as incomplete applications could result in your application being returned and deferred until the next funding round. Note that all applications must be accompanied by at least one referee's statement.

### Application Deadline

Applications must be received by 31 March of each year. Applicants will be advised on the outcome of their application in May.

### Assessment Criteria

Project applications that meet the basic eligibility requirements will be assessed against the following criteria. In the response to the application form questions, applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how the project would meet the following criteria. While applications do not need to meet all criteria to be eligible for funding, priority is given to applications that score highly overall.

- **Ecological Significance within the Lake Taupo/Waikato River catchment:** What is the significance of the natural area and the ecological values present within it?
- **Restoration, maintenance or enhancement of indigenous biodiversity, sports fisheries/ gamebird populations and/or wetland values:** What is the direct contribution of the project to improving catchment habitat and biodiversity, wetland values and/or game populations including representativeness, threats/urgency for action etc.?
- **Other ecological benefits:** E.g. restoration of ecological sequences, creation of buffers.
- **Comprehensiveness & cost-effectiveness:** has the project been well thought out, tasked, scheduled and costed with an appropriate monitoring regime? Is the application well presented and does it demonstrate good value for money?
- **Project feasibility & necessity of funding:** How likely is the project to achieve its stated objectives and to be successfully completed? What are the contributions from other parties and how important is WCEET funding to the project's success? How sustainable is the project over time?
- **Security & legal approvals:** Where applicable, what level of commitment or security has been made to protect the works in perpetuity (e.g. through a covenant or similar mechanism)? Are resource consents for the works required? Note that if consents are required, funding may be approved but will not be disbursed until it is clear that consents will be granted.
- **Community involvement, education and partnership:** What is the potential for the applicant to connect with the local community and form strategic partnerships with others?

### Decision Process

Trustees generally meet in late April/early May to consider all of the funding applications for that year. Each application is evaluated on set criteria and recommendations for funding made. In some cases, it will be necessary

to seek further information from applicants prior to a decision being made. Applicants will be informed of the final funding decisions in May. Funding will be available once funding agreements have been signed.

A list of successful applicants and grants made in each year is published on the WCEET website.

## **Responsibilities for successful applicants**

### **WCEET Project Manager**

You will be assigned a WCEET Project Manager (a Trust representative). They are your first point of contact for any issues relating to your project.

### **Funding Agreement**

A funding agreement will be created which outlines WCEET expectations and conditions related to its commitment to fund your project. Funds will be made available on receipt of a signed copy of this agreement by the Trust.

Grant money must only be used for those purposes specified and you must obtain authorisation from WCEET in the event of any changes. This includes any project delays resulting in an extension of the grant period.

### **Reporting**

Reports on the status of your project are required by 31 March each year. Where projects are completed within one year, this should be a Project Completion Report. Multi-year projects will require an Interim Report in each year.

The Project Completion Report is expected to include a summary of project outputs, people involved, actions undertaken, ecological outcomes, photographs and a summary of costs for those parts funded by WCEET.

An Interim Report should cover progress to date including expenditure, outcomes of other funding applications, plans for the next period, problems or issues and a summary of costs with relevant invoices.

### **Publicity & Acknowledgement of WCEET**

Information about your grant will be publicly available, and further information may be sought in relation to your project for publicity purposes.

The Trust expects that acknowledgement of its support will be included in any publicity that you undertake about your project.