



□ The team of volunteer planters . . . the Whangawehi Catchment Management Group are thrilled with their recent recognition at the Green Ribbon Awards at Parliament.

# Successful planting day

AFTER several postponements, the Whangawehi Catchment Management Group hosted a successful planting day on Saturday.

Upping the ante in its efforts to restore water quality in the catchment, a crowd of volunteers planted 5500 trees at Okepuha Station.

Organisers thanked all who turned out, planting the trees in five hours in challenging weather.

Holes for the trees had been dug prior to the event, which saved the group a lot of energy.

Trees planted included totara, kahikatea, matai and other smaller species.

Meanwhile the group was over the moon about winning the supreme award at the Green Ribbon Awards at Parliament earlier this month.

Project manager Nic Caviale-Delzescaux said the award

meant a lot for the group, which was formed in 2010 in response to Wairoa District Council's wastewater treatment plan.

"Kathleen Mato, Rae Te Nahu, Leon Symes and former Wairoa District Council engineering manager Neil Cook were the first amongst many who initiated this initiative," Mr Caviale-Delzescaux said.

"Kathleen Mato had this vision of new ways of interacting with agencies, bringing everybody around the table.

"She managed to leverage expertise and financial support and the focus shifted quickly from the wastewater scheme to the catchment area, with key landowners joining and deciding to improve their industry practises to enhance not only water quality but also the local biodiversity.

"The group is now working on

tributaries and the hill country, which is more challenging."

The group are also running a series of programmes including a school environmental programme, riparian planting, water monitoring and insect and bird programmes, a pest control programme and a cultural health index programme, community engagement activities, a red meat brand project and a walkway project.

Mr Caviale-Delzescaux said their big focus for the next few years would be to maintain the different projects and widen their pest control work to create a buffer around their core area.

This would be done in partnership with the iwi trust board and would allow the re-introduction of native birds including the kiwi and takake, which were resident in the past at Whangawehi.

