

# Accolades roll in for Whangawehi work

THE Whangawehi Catchment Management Group's year of accolades continues with the group now up for the New Zealand River Award. The group was established in 2012 with the purpose of restoring the water quality of the Whangawehi Stream and kaimoana areas around the nearby coastline.

Drawing on expertise throughout the Mahia community, local and regional councils, iwi groups and Te Mahia School community, and several farming operations, the group is seen as a model for effective environmental community action.

Reflecting on their progress, the group's project manager Nic Caviale said they had had a lot of success with the Trust Power Community award last year and being national finalists in March, the Green Ribbon Award and the Pride of New Zealand award to Kathleen Mato last month.

He said the New Zealand River Awards nomination was a significant national award which focuses on water quality.

The community group has planted around

16,000 natives on 4ha on Pat and Sue O'Brien's waterway margins and the Grandy Lake Forest. The plants were eco-sourced from local and regional nurseries and next year they will plant around 15ha of riparian margins on Pongarua Station and Taharoa Trust.

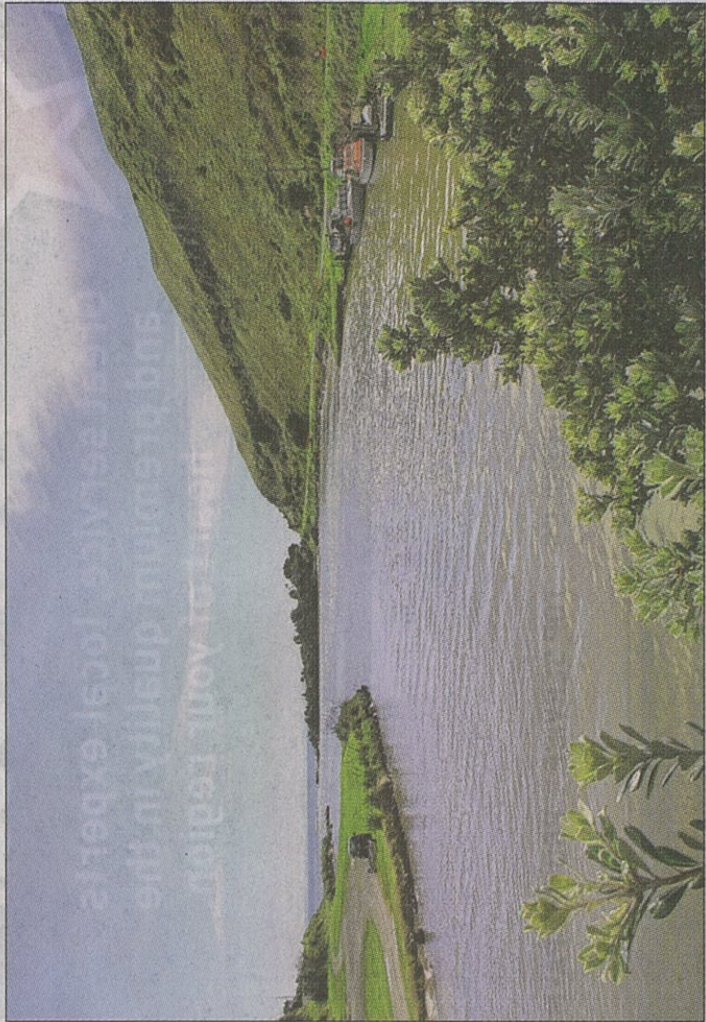
Eventually the group hopes to fence off 50ha of riparian margins along the Whangawehi stream and establish a total of 200,000 native plants by the end of the restoration project.

Pest control is well under way to allow the plantings to become established, with over 800 goats mustered or shot, and hares, rabbits, rats and possums all on a downward trajectory in numbers.

The winners of the national river award will be announced on November 27 in Wellington.

The story of the Whangawehi Catchment Management Group will screen on Maori Television in a new series called Project Whenua on November 25, at 8pm.

Another episode on October 28 features a Ngai Tahu Ruatahuna honey venture — Manawa Honey NZ.



□ The Whangawehi Catchment Management Group will plant over 200,000 plants to restore the water quality of the Whangawehi.