



□ The Whangawehi Catchment Management Group won the supreme award at the Trustpower Wairoa Community Awards. Pictured from left, group members Kathleen Mato and Raellen Te Nahu with project manager Nicolas Caviale-Deizescaux.

Whangawehi group proud winners of Community Award

THE Whangawehi Catchment Management Group won the Supreme Award at the Trustpower Wairoa Community Awards last Thursday.

The group received a framed certificate, trophy and \$1500 prize money. Next March they will represent the region at the 2013 Trustpower National Community Awards, in the Invercargill and Southland regions.

Whangawehi Catchment Management Group member Kathleen Mato said they didn't expect to receive any award, let alone the supreme award so early in the development of their management plan.

Trustpower community relations co-ordinator Suzi Luff said the group was pro-actively addressing the community's deep concerns about the potential effects of a wastewater treatment plant on the cultural, historical, recreational and ecological values of this natural resource.

"This group is made up of landowners, tangata whenua and agencies who are interested in protecting this resource. They're focused on a substantial number of projects including archaeological and spiritual survey of the catchment and securing funding to help landowners with their restoration work. They've set up a goat control strategy in order to protect future plantings, they've trained 15 local people to monitor their waterways and they're working hard to raise awareness of their project.

"This team has secured funding for a local co-ordinator and a team of field assistants to conduct fish and water surveys over three years, as well as funding for 22,500 plants and a fence to help protect part of this special area too.

"It doesn't stop there. The group is ensuring that knowledge gained from this project is shared. They've presented at environmental-based events on how iwi, hapu and marae can engage effectively with local government to protect and enhance their natural environment. And they've developed a programme at Te Mahia School," said Miss Luff.

Mrs Mato said they planned to create a template based on what they had done which would be available to others to use in the community.

Wairoa College prefect Rhys Egan was the winner of the Youth Community Spirit Award.

Miss Luff said Rhys was a prefect, had been part of the student council for the past three years and was now the chairperson and treasurer. He had organised fundraising mufi days for non-profit organisations and was part of the team that organised the Year 9-11 fundraising for the Red Cross.

"Rhys is a budding and talented photographer



□ Youth Community Spirit Award winner Rhys Egan, centre, with Trustpower community relations manager Graeme Purches, left, and Wairoa Mayor Craig Little, right.

and through this interest he is giving back to his community, running photo booths at different school galas with the proceeds going back to the school. We're told that Rhys is a well-respected student, who participates fully in the life of his school, across academic, cultural and sporting areas. He's proactive and uses this attribute to lead by example.

"Rhys is the chairperson of YROA YNOT Youth Voice, was involved in the BreatheLife Expo, the Whanau Wai Takaro day, and the Spawnbreeze concert, helping to organise and run these events."

Rhys said he was humbled to have received the award and thanked "the amazing" Alison Maru who inspired him to volunteer, Wairoa College principal Brian Simpson and management and his mum, who he said was the most amazing person for driving him across the district.

He received a framed certificate, a trophy and \$250, with an additional \$250 being donated to an organisation of Rhys's choice. He chose St John Wairoa.

Roger Gordon, station manager for St John Wairoa, said Rhys's donation will go towards training of the volunteers.

"We are very thankful for Rhys's donation. To have a young person think of us and make a donation is truly fantastic," said Mr Gordon.

IN TOTAL, Trustpower presented more than \$6000 to community groups through the awards.

A total of 25 entries were received for this year's Trustpower Wairoa Community Awards, up on last year.

Other award winners were: Heritage and environment, winner — Whangawehi Catchment Management Group, runner-up — Wairoa Museum Friends Trust; health and well-being, winner —

Mainly Mums Wairoa commendation — Wairoa Disability Transport Service; arts and culture, winner — Wairoa Little Theatre, runner-up — Poutaka Maori Women's Welfare League; sport and leisure, winner — Wairoa Rodeo Club, runner-up — Wairoa Swimming Club, commendation — Tapuae Sports Club, education and child/youth development, winner — YROA YNOT Youth Voice; runner-up — Turning Tides Foundation.