



❑ The crisp wintry weather doesn't bother Annabelle Bowen who is hard at work planting trees in the freshly-dug holes.



❑ Volunteer planters resting their feet and enjoying a spot of lunch before digging deep for the rest of the afternoon.

# Working wonders at Whangawehi

## Volunteers put in a big effort planting another 6000 trees



ANOTHER big step has been taken towards restoring the Whangawehi awa.

Almost 6000 trees have been planted along the banks of a stream on Pongaroa Station as part of the latest effort in the Whangawehi Catchment Management Group's restorative project.

Around 50 volunteers from around the country, and the world, donated their time on Saturday, July 16, to help.

With the weather on side, the day started at 8.30am, with a break for lunch and continued until 3.30pm.

Group community engagement officer Oha Mannuel said it was a "wonderful and successful day".

She said there was an overwhelming number in support and said they were all amazing — "like one big machine".

"The turnout was beyond our expectations, given the cancellation of the first planting day on July 9, due to the wet weather.

"Volunteers came from San Rafael, California; Wellington, Paradale, Napier, Gisborne, Fraserstown, Wairoa, Mahanga,

and Mahia.

"Their time and effort was most appreciated," she said.

Mrs Mannuel said it was "beautiful" to witness the passion that went into the planting.

"It was lovely to meet everyone, and to have them all share their energy and skills with the group.

"Another big step has now been completed towards restoring the Whangawehi awa to its pristine condition," she said.

With the restorative project, the group aims to maintain or improve the different cultural, ecological, recreational and economical values of the Whangawehi Catchment.

Central to the aim is the need to address water quality issues and the loss of habitat for important freshwater and estuarine species.

The group identified in their catchment management plan that the lower seven kilometres of the Whangawehi river was a priority in terms of habitat restoration.

The group has been working with landowners to fence off the lower reaches of the Whangawehi stream, retire 45 hectares of riparian margins and establish over 16,8000 native trees.



❑ Passionate planter Mark Bowen gets digging holes for the native trees which are planted as part of the groups' restorative project.



❑ Just a few of the almost 6000 trees that were planted by volunteers from around the country on Saturday.