

Proposal for:

Taharoa Research Partnership

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Purpose:

To create a collective partnership which champions the essential research service to the outstanding cultural, social and ecological values of Taharoa.

Context:

- Taharoa is a taonga renowned for significant cultural, environmental and social value to the tangata whenua and wider communities of the northern Kaipara district, and it is also renowned for its outstanding natural beauty featuring pristine blue waters and thriving native aquatic flora and fauna populations.
- But in recent decades human activity has increased significantly on the lakes which offer the potential introduction of specific threats which could upset the natural balance of this unique ecosystem.
- Therefore, Taharoa demands a strategy to guide decision making and investment to deliver targeted research outcomes which consider these known and unknown threats to water quality and the ecological functions of the native aquatic flora and fauna populations.

Critical issues:

1. The long term impacts of the introduction of rainbow trout (since 1968) remain unknown. The research that has been conducted does not provide the necessary robust science to inform the impacts on the populations of native fishes and invertebrates, including a species only found in the Taharoa lake system - *Galaxias gracilis*, the dune lake galaxid.
2. The monitoring of recreational watercraft for invasive aquatic weed species is poor in relation to the impacts certain weed species could have on the native population.
3. There is an absence of a baseline understanding of aquatic vegetation, fish and invertebrate populations for the Taharoa lake system.
4. Threats from human impacts can be considered constant due to the establishment of recreational camping facilities and largely unchecked access.
5. There is no systematic monitoring or research investment procedure in place which identifies the tangata whenua and community values of Taharoa the known and unknown threats to these core values.

Requirements of the Taharoa Research Partnership:

- Activates the partnership principles of the Mana Enhancing Agreement between Te Roroa and Kaipara District Council.
- Offers a place of leadership which is inclusive of the values of tangata whenua and the wider community of the northern Kaipara.
- Provides a process to activate scientific and mātāuranga-based knowledge systems to inform future decision making for the Taharoa Domain Governance Group.
- Creates a platform to share our research and transfer the knowledge gained to our schools, marae and the wider community.