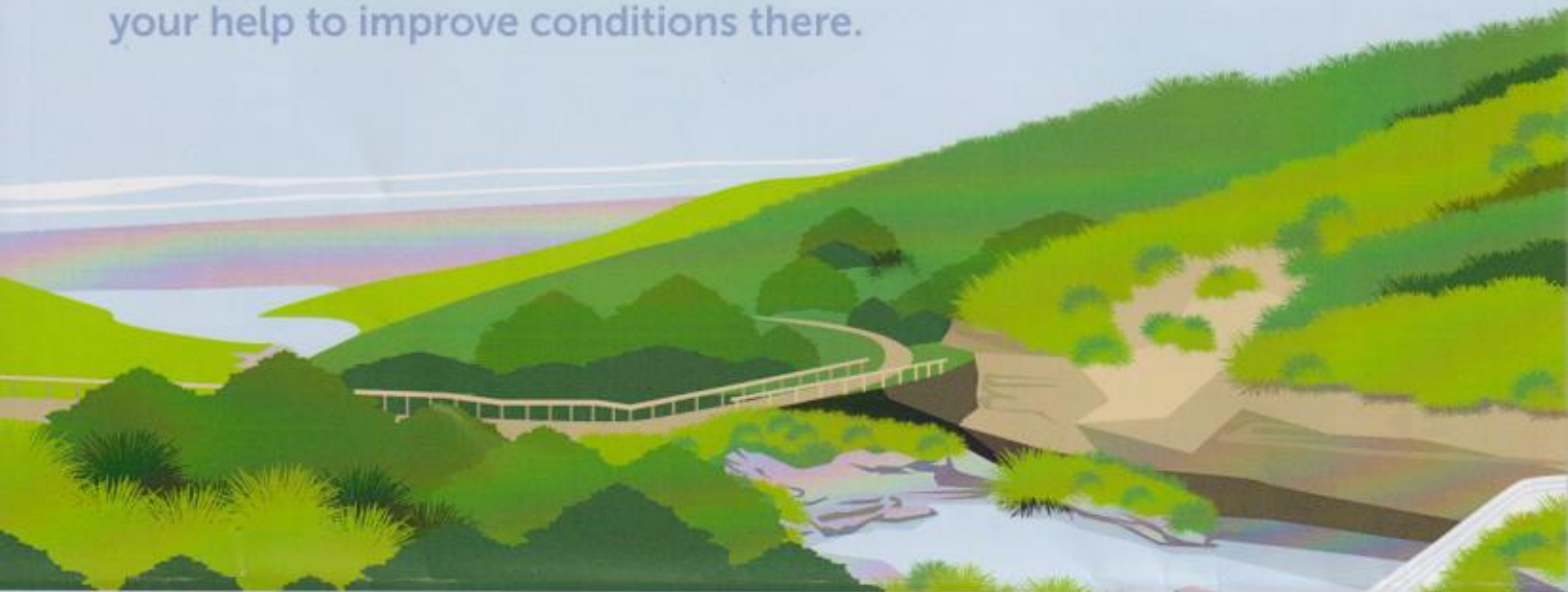


The Ototoka Stream needs your help

Horizons Regional Council has been monitoring water quality in the Ototoka Stream and we need your help to improve conditions there.



During the summer swim season (1 November – 30 April) Horizons' weekly water quality monitoring shows that consistently, high levels of *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) are found (when compared to the guidelines established by the Ministry of Health [MoH] and Ministry for the Environment [MoE]). *E. coli* levels are commonly used to assess the level of fecal contamination present in waterways and the associated risk of becoming sick if undertaking activities within the water.

Due to these results, Horizons carried out further testing north of Beach Road and at William Birch Pool to establish if there was an easily identifiable source of contamination. This included taking water samples for DNA analysis, which allows the detection of what types of organism the *E. coli* originated from (including humans). The DNA analysis showed that the majority of contamination was from cattle.

When cattle have access to waterways, especially during the hotter months, they tend to spend time within the water where it is cooler. This results in cattle readily defecating directly into the streams, increasing *E. coli* concentrations and degrading water quality. Research has proven fencing off waterways to prevent stock access has direct correlation with improving water quality. Leaving a riparian buffer between the fence and water's edge allows grasses and

plants to filter surface runoff, and helps filter sediment and associated nutrients before entering the waterway.

Current National Regulations

The recent introduction of stock exclusion rules under the National Environment Standards for Freshwater Management mean that all cattle, deer and pigs need to be excluded from waterways (both permanent and intermittent) more than 1m wide and identified on MfE's low slope map (<https://bit.ly/MFE-lowslope-map>) contained in the regulations from 1 July 2025.

How we can help

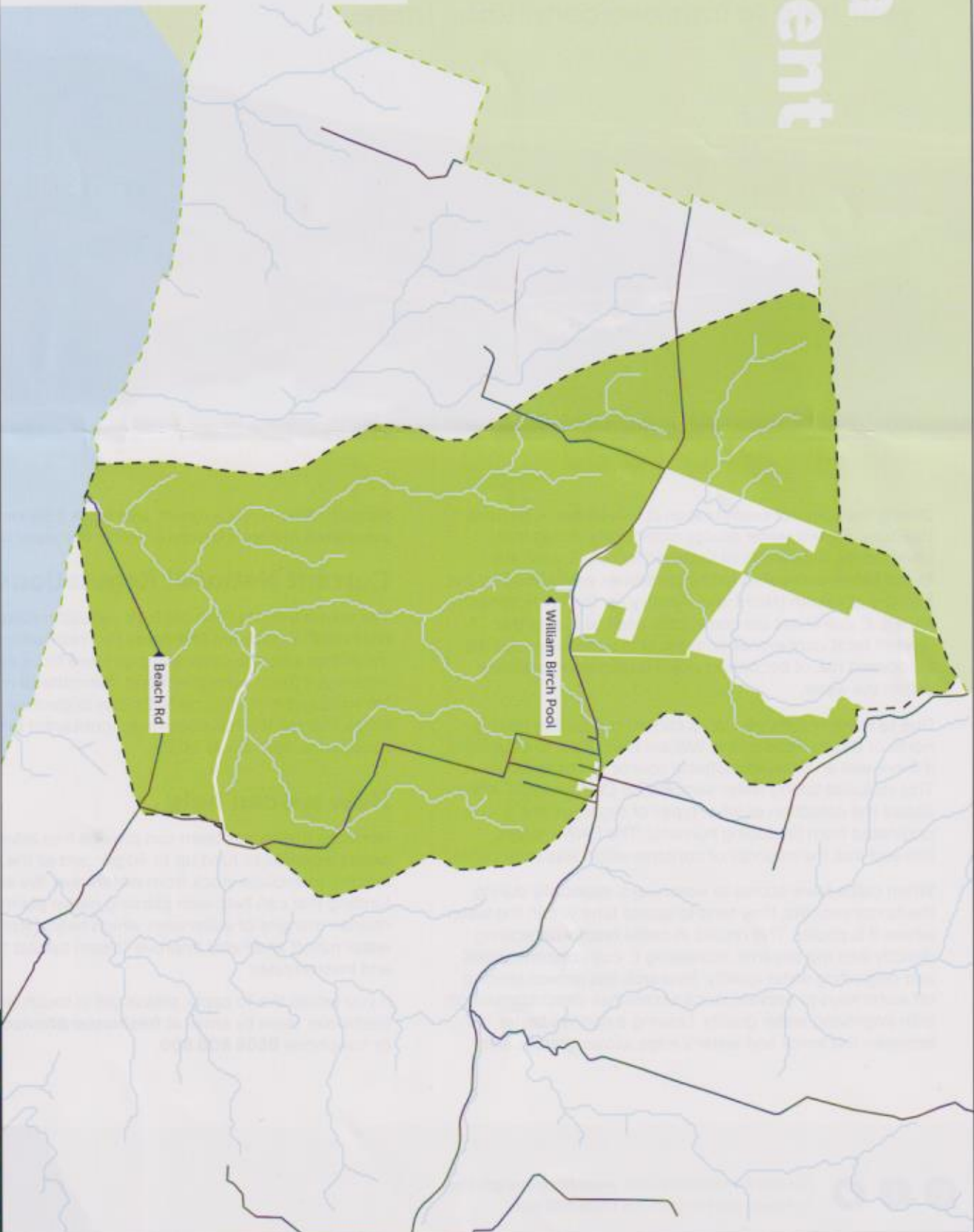
Horizons freshwater team can provide free advice and has grants available to fund up to 40 percent of the cost for fencing to exclude stock from waterways. We also have funding that can help with planting native plants along riparian margins of waterways which helps filter surface water runoff and helps improve stream habitat for native fish and invertebrates.

If you would like to apply, please get in touch with our freshwater team by email at freshwater@horizons.govt.nz or freephone 0508 800 800.



For more information visit www.horizons.govt.nz or freephone Horizons on 0508 800 800

Ototoka Catchment



Ototoka Catchment



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