

MHV Planting Fund Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the objectives, terms and expectations for participation in the MHV Planting Fund.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all MHV contributions to Planting in the Hekeao Hinds Catchment.

3. Policy Overview

Water quality in the Hekeao Hinds drains is of high importance to MHV. There are two significant actions that will help improve ecological health in MHV farm waterways, being:-

- riparian planting for improved waterway shading, and
- identifying and reducing sediment sources to waterways.

Riparian planting is straightforward enough, but it needs a little ecology input, to ensure the planting will achieve sufficient shade to prevent nuisance weed and algae growth. Sufficient shade could be achieved within about three years of planting. It requires an initial investment and a 2-3 year maintenance period (the latter is essential to ensure success). For the planting we also need bylaw approval to plant ECan drains. The SOP provides guidance of how to apply for the approval, this could be applied for by MHV or we can provide this detail to the landowner/shareholder to apply.

NB: Fine sediment deposition is happening at several of the MHV monitoring sites. Identifying and eliminating critical source areas for fine sediment is also a priority. While sediment loss from farms is readily prevented, removing fine sediment from streams is costly and not always effective – therefore an effective solution is for planting drains and buffer zones.

4. Policy Objectives

- To improve water quality and biodiversity in the Hekeao Hinds Catchment
- To support landowners who carry the disproportionate weight of planting drains on their property in the Hekeao Hinds Catchment with the aim to improve water quality.
- To build relationships and support Arowhenua Native Nursery.

5. Fund Criteria

- Management can approve funding to match shareholder investment, dollar for dollar – up to \$5,000 per project

- Management can approve funding for plants and plant protection, farmers to meet any preparation, maintenance, pest control and/or fencing costs.
- Farmers to prepare area for planting and fencing in advance
- Shareholders to apply for funding where they are:-
 - Planting a waterway or buffer zone to a waterway
 - Planting and fencing off a soak hole or wet area
 - Planting a wet area/wetland
- Priority for projects are as follows:-
 1. Where planting will achieve shade of the waterway or treatment of nitrate nitrogen
 2. Priority where the plants will manage a Critical Source Area that loses fine sediment to a waterway
 3. Priority where the plants will be watered/have water
- Board approval is required to contribute greater than \$5,000 to any one project.
- Approval for MHV to take and share photos and facilitate discussion groups on the project must be provided by the landowner/shareholder
- No retrospective funding will be available
- The property must be an A audit to apply
- The planting must be in the Hekeao Hinds catchment area.
- Where an ECan drain is being planted, a bylaw approval from the Flood Protection and Bylaw team is required, see the SOP for guidance of how to apply.

For the avoidance of doubt the Board can approve up to 100% funding for a project that meets the Policy Objectives and said property may not necessarily be an A audit. Where the property is adjacent or upstream of a MHV surface water testing location the funding can be allocated to a non-shareholder with Board approval.

This fund is not intended to be utilised for roadside planting, unless the roadside has soak holes or is a wet/wetted area.

6. Fund Details

The fund will be confirmed each year as part of the budget process, no later than 31 May.

For the 2024/25 financial year there will be two funding buckets of \$25k each, where applications close 31st August 2024, and another tranche closes on 28 February 2025.

7. Review and Sign Off

Revision No.	Status	Date	Prepared by	Checked	Approved
00	Draft	Nov 24	MB	MB, JN	Board Nov 2024

8. Related Documents

DRAFT_SOP_Ops - ECan Approval to Plant Drains