

Funding hat-trick secures more jobs for nature

The Sustainable Business Network (SBN) has once again extended its initiative generating employment in nature restoration, with a third successful bid for government funding.

The latest round of funding is the largest yet, at \$1.2 million. This takes the investment in the initiative by the Government's Jobs for Nature Fund administered by the Department of Conservation to \$2.5 million.

The Fund was originally created to respond to pandemic driven regional unemployment and the declining health of New Zealand's waterways and landscapes.

It is estimated that the new grant to SBN will provide employment for 45 individuals over a 4-5 month period, ending in June 2021. This is set to generate more than 25,000 hours of conservation work, doubling the total so far to more than 50,000 hours.

It enables the continuation of the programme that has been running since September 2020 with community conservation partners nationwide. Together they have completed extensive planting, weeding, maintenance and even appropriate infrastructure projects like new visitor walkways. It has also enabled the project to forge new partnerships with Te Orewai o Ngāti Hine, Nga Uri o Hau Native Nursery and Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.

Matthew McClymont manages the initiative for SBN. He says: "We're delighted to be able to extend these valuable partnerships. Every day we are hearing how this is really boosting people's lives and the important projects they're working on. We hope this is just the beginning of the large scale, long term investment that's needed for New Zealand to meet these challenges."

Nic Caviale from SBN partner Whangawehi Catchment Management Group said: "The project has allowed to train a number of people who were trying to recover from Covid. We've also had a local young woman who came back on the family farm after having lost her job through the pandemic. This has allowed her to find a new direction right on her doorstep."

Kristin Busher from Waiheke Resources Trust said: "We've moved from one day per week to a full time team of more than 10 people per day. It has had a huge ecological impact on the wetlands we care for. We've been successful in securing additional restoration sites and have been able to prep sites for the 15,000 eco-sourced trees that will be planted over the next two planting seasons."

SBN support there has also assisted the local tourism sector, since the part time alternative work has tided staff over during difficult periods, avoid the need to lay them off completely.

Editors' Note:

To find out more, or arrange an interview with any of the participants, please contact:

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