

Another \$2.5 million, more jobs for nature

Dozens more jobs in nature restoration will be created in the next 12 months, after the Sustainable Business Network (SBN) won a further funding extension.

The new money doubles the overall investment in SBN initiatives by the Government's Jobs for Nature Fund, administered by the Department of Conservation. It's recognition of SBN's successful roll-out of the initiative to date.

It builds on the work of SBN's Million Metres Streams Project, which has been tackling waterway restoration since 2016. The Fund was created to respond to pandemic-driven regional unemployment and the declining health of New Zealand's waterways and landscapes.

It's estimated the latest grant to SBN will provide 100 full and part-time employment opportunities over the course of the 12 months. This adds up to the equivalent of 34 full-time, short-term jobs. It will generate more than 53,000 hours of conservation work. That doubles SBN's total work under the scheme to more than 100,000 hours since September 2020.

This latest instalment will be done by 12 different community conservation partners. The groups range from Te Orewai Te Horo Trust in Northland to Te Nohoaka o Tukiauau/Sinclair Wetland in Otago.

They will carry out extensive planting, weeding, maintenance and appropriate infrastructure projects like new visitor walkways. While they get on with the work on the ground, SBN assists with health and safety, admin and reporting. This is helping to develop communities of practice in nature regeneration up and down the country.

Matthew McClymont manages the initiative for SBN. He says: "This mahi is improving lives and regenerating priceless parts of our country. We're delighted that it can continue to expand for another year. This gives all involved more time to build the skills and resources needed to make this approach sustainable for years to come."

Glen Riley is the co-ordinator at Te Nohoaka o Tukiauau/Sinclair Trust. He explains the power of this approach: "This can be a job, it can be a long-term career path. People can have a livelihood, pay their bills and feed the family. Environmental work has always tended to be undervalued. There's been some stigma around it. There's an assumption that it's straight forward. That anyone can do it. There's been an expectation that people should do environmental enhancements for free as a volunteer. We've been able to tackle many of the things that we have wanted to do for a long time."

The SBN support to these projects has helped keep young people working in their local area. It's taken the pressure off the tourism sector. It's helped many find new career paths with greater training and work experience. It's bringing life back to our landscapes and waterways.

The organisation hopes to expand this approach further. New plans target more urban areas worst hit by the impact of the pandemic. The aim is to overturn generations of under investment in local ecology employment all over the country.

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Editors' Note:

Our community partners for this phase:

Auckland

- Matuku Link
- Waiheke Resources Trust
- Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei
- Nga Uri o Hau Native Nursery
- Piritahi Marae Trust
- Conservation Volunteers NZ
- Restore Hibiscus & Bays

Northland

- Te Orewai Te Horo Trust

Waikato

- Te Whangai Trust

Hawke's Bay

- Whangawehi Catchment Management Group

Canterbury

- Waimakiriri District Council – Silverstream

Otago

- Te Nohoaka o Tukiauau / Sinclair Wetland Trust

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

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About the Sustainable Business Network

The Sustainable Business Network (SBN) is the largest sustainable business organisation in Aotearoa New Zealand, with a network of hundreds of businesses, social enterprises and councils. SBN is transforming NZ business to meet the world's sustainability challenges, with world-class resources, professional training and deeper connections. SBN provides Kiwi businesses with the tools and connections to act on climate, design out waste and regenerate nature.

www.sustainable.org.nz

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