

Sustainable Land Management

STRESS

South Taranaki and Regional Erosion Support Scheme (STRESS)

Number 60

Taranaki has been awarded a further \$1.2 million for the four years (1 July 2015 to 30 June 2019) from the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) Sustainable Land Management Hill Country Erosion Fund.

The funds are administered by the Taranaki Regional Council through the South Taranaki and Regional Erosion Support Scheme (STRESS) which is delivered through Council's sustainable land management programme. The programme focuses on practices that reduce erosion in the eastern hill country and the subsequent sediment that ends up in our waterways and marine environment. It's estimated that 190 million tonnes of sediment are lost to waterways in New Zealand each year, costing the country \$95 million.

Council provides free farm plans to landowners under its sustainable land management programme. 66% (June 2015) of privately-owned land in Taranaki's hill country is covered by a farm plan and Council works closely with planholders to voluntarily implement measures that reduce the risk of accelerated erosion. Scientific studies confirm that, compared to pasture, 90% less erosion occurs under bush/forestry, 80% less under scrub and 70% less where soil conservation trees are planted.

Funding is available to assist with the implementation of these measures (see details overleaf):

- Forestry establishment
- Soil conservation planting
- Fencing-off retired and reverting land
- Land use change

Over the previous five years of the STRESS programme, planholders have planted over 20,000 poplar poles, established 203 hectares of forestry and erected 116.8 km of fencing to retire 3,333 hectares of marginal land.



Marginal land suitable for reversion.



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The extreme storm and flood event in 2015 had a significant impact on the region's hill country farms. Farmers were affected financially through damage to infrastructure and lost production. However, substantial soil losses also occurred which will result in slip scars with permanently depressed dry-matter production over the long term. These events are likely to occur somewhere in Taranaki about once every five to six years and highlight the need for landowners to take preventive measures to minimise the effects of soil loss from future storms. Soil conservation measures often take six to eight years to establish before they can provide adequate root protection against erosion.

Retiring marginal land may also improve the running of the farm, including the potential for improved financial returns. In some cases where there is a high proportion of maintenance costs such as scrub clearance associated with low producing land, the financial return may improve. The Council's Land Management staff can provide advice on sustainable land management practices and assist you with applying for STRESS funding.

Contact the Council's Land Management staff on 0800 736 222 or hillcountry@trc.govt.nz

PROJECT AND FUNDING CRITERIA

Council farm planholders are able to apply for STRESS funding for forestry, fencing, reversion and/or retirement on land identified with a Council Land Management Officer as Class 6 and 7 hillcountry. All planholders are eligible, although applicants impacted by the 2015 storm events in the Waitotara, Patea and Waitara River catchments may be prioritised.

Forestry – 75% of costs up to \$1,500 per hectare

- Planting exotic forestry, soil conservation trees (poplars or willows), or native species.
- Minimum of 750 stems per hectare (typically 1,000).
- Support available for first 5 hectare; additional area at landowner cost; limit of 5 hectare per entity.
- Livestock must be excluded during the establishment period. Stocking must be maintained at more than 500 sph for 10 years.
- Payment is made upon inspection of trees planted and released during appropriate season.

Forestry fencing – up to \$8 per metre

- Eight-wire post and four battens (or agreed alternative).

Reversion – up to \$500 per hectare

- Area should have a minimum of 10-50% manuka/scrub present.
- Payment is one-off.

Reversion fencing – up to \$8 per metre

- Eight-wire post and four battens (or agreed alternative).
- Stock must be excluded.
- Retirement of erosion-prone pasture takes priority over existing scrub.
- Retired scrub might be manuka or other native, or exotic scrub (gorse, for example) if native is expected to succeed it and there are no biosecurity issues.
- \$6 per metre for eight-wire post and four battens, where QEII National Trust is also contributing funds.

Retirement fencing for existing bush – up to \$6 per metre

- Available if part of a project with substantial forestry or retirement element.
- Also available (funds permitting) if not otherwise used in forestry and reversion fencing.
- Eight-wire post and batten (or agreed alternative).
- \$4 per metre for eight-wire post and four battens where QEII National Trust is also contributing funds.

Poplar and willow poles

- 3 metre poplar/willow poles for \$2.80 (normally \$10.80 each).
- 1 metre shrub willow stakes free (normally \$1.50 each).
Landowner to protect by either buying and using sleeves, or planting in fenced, stock-excluded area.
- Must be planted for erosion control purposes on LUC 6e and 7e land.
- Strictly not for riverside planting, unless landowner enters into prescribed management regime to avoid conflicts with catchment management.
- Landowner will be invoiced for any poles received and planted for other purposes (for example, shade and shelter with no erosion control benefits).

Note: STRESS support is subject to the landowner and the Taranaki Regional Council entering into either a Memorandum of Understanding (works under \$5,000) or a contract agreement (works exceeding \$5,000). Landowners are to maintain pole plantings for a minimum of 10 years. Fences, forestry, reversion and retirement are to be maintained in perpetuity.



Taranaki Regional Council

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