

TENDER AWARDED FOR ALMOND TREE FLAT FORD REMOVAL

The tender for the removal of Almond Tree Flat Ford, in the Maitai Valley, has been awarded, and work is expected to get underway on 13 March, with completion by 22 March.

The concrete ford was built by Council in 1986 to provide vehicle access to the reserve area beside the river. It is the last major fish barrier on the Maitai River, and its removal will give fish clear access to the headwaters of the river for spawning. Removal will also improve the health of the river bed and reduce annual maintenance requirements.

Council has consulted with the main users of the ford (mostly walkers and cyclists), and an online survey conducted in 2016 showed 76% of users supported removal of the ford for fish passage. 67% of users supported another form of crossing such as a footbridge in the area, and planning is underway for a business case for a new footbridge.

A natural river crossing will remain at the site and Council will be installing map boards at strategic sites nearby to give information about walking/cycling routes and river crossing points. Alternative bridged river crossings for this section of the Maitai Track are available at the Maitai Camp Ground Bridge (upstream) and Gibb Bridge (downstream).

Clare Barton, Group Manager Strategy and Environment said that the removal of the ford will improve water quality for fish and invertebrates.

"The removal of Almond Tree Flat Ford represents a major milestone towards achieving the goals of Project Maitai/Mahitahi – to help restore the river to its natural state so that we can all feel proud of it."

For more information about Project Maitai/Mahitahi visit www.projectmaitai.nz



Almond Tree Flat Ford will be removed in late summer to improve fish passage in the Maitai River



Grassy banks alongside our streams are a nursery for millions of inanga eggs each year

LOOKING AFTER THE LITTLE FISH

Sections of the grassy banks alongside Nelson and Stoke streams and rivers may look like they need a good mow, but Council contractors deliberately leave them long at this time of year so they can fulfil their function as nursery to millions of inanga eggs.

Co-Chair of the Strategy and Environment Committee, Councillor Brian McGurk, says it's important not to disturb streamside vegetation at this time of year so that inanga eggs are able to hatch without disturbance.

"The eggs are attached to the base of streamside vegetation and the wetter conditions this year means that spawning has started earlier than usual. Council staff have observed early movement of inanga downstream to spawning sites such as those at Shakespeare Walk on the Maitai River and Oldham Creek in Atawhai."

Spawning activity usually peaks in March and April but is influenced by

the weather, spring tides and other factors such as available spawning habitat and fish passage.

Of the five species of whitebait found in the Nelson region, four are considered to be in decline or threatened.

WHAT IS COUNCIL DOING TO PROTECT WHITEBAIT?

Council's Project Maitai/Mahitahi created the whitebait habitat extension at Shakespeare Walk. Restoration programmes in other streams are underway, supported by Nelson Nature. These include 'no-mow' zones along riparian reserves and road-side drainage channels alongside SH6 Whakatu Drive, to create a network of fish habitat and corridors between Stoke streams and the Waimea estuary.



Native inanga are spawning early in Nelson this year

WHAT DOES WORLD WATER DAY MEAN FOR YOU?

March 22 is World Water Day – an international initiative to encourage people the world over to tackle the global water crisis. Today, there are over 663 million people living without a safe water supply close to home.

Here in Nelson, we are lucky to have a safe, secure supply of fresh drinking water delivered to our taps but we still need to conserve water, especially in summer when rainfall is low. Nelson's tap water comes from the Maitai and Roding Rivers. By using less water we help to reduce the demand on the rivers and on the water treatment plant, which has both environmental and financial benefits. So how can you use less water?

AT HOME

- Check for water leaks by turning off all indoor and outdoor taps and then check the water meter – if the dials are turning there may be a leak. One leaking tap can waste up to 2,000 litres a month.
- Wash fruit and vegies in a part-filled sink instead of under running water.
- Wait until you have a full load in your dishwasher or washing machine.
- Turn the tap off while you brush your teeth.
- Use the half flush button on the toilet when possible.
- Install a low flow shower head. Your shower should take more than a minute to fill a 10 litre bucket.

IN THE GARDEN

- Water your garden in the early morning or evening to reduce water loss through evaporation.
- Water the base of your plants, not the leaves.
- Mulch your gardens to reduce moisture loss and weeds.
- Plant local native varieties and water-wise plants that need less watering.
- Cut only the top third off lawn grass, leaving it three centimetres or higher.
- Install a rainfall storage tank for watering your garden during dry periods. This can also double as an emergency water supply.



For more information go to smarterhomes.org.nz/water/collecting-and-using-rainwater/

www.worldwaterday.org