

Funding sees bush remnant fenced

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With brand new fencing and a much loved 20 hectare patch of bush now protected from stock, Glorit farmers Scott and Phillipa Innes are beaming.

The couples farm flanking the Hoteo river is the first in an ambitious scheme to fence off all native bush remnants along its 28 kilometre course through farmland and bush from near Pakiri to Kaipara Harbour.

"The fencing is top quality and as it's come in under budget it means we can also fence off an adjoining five hectare piece of bush," Scott says.

Funds for the \$40,000 fence came from donations, Auckland Council's Regional Environment and Heritage Fund and Reconnecting Northland.

Taking four weeks to complete the hands on work has mostly been done by North Tec fencing tutor Tim O'Leary and Innes' farm worker Dan Noyer, with tec students lending a hand.

Set up by Glorit farmers and conservation stalwarts Gill and Kevin Adshead, the Forest Bridge Trust aims to raise funds to fence off bush remnants and bring back native wildlife.

CatchIT workshops teach school children and community groups how to trap for predators like stoats and rats on their own and neighbouring farms.



A 20 hectare bush remnant on a Glorit farm flanking the Hoteo river is the first to be fenced off using funds raised through the Forest Bridge Trust. Inset: Farm owners Scott and Phillipa Innes.

Most of the farms along the river have some bush, with sheep and cattle often free ranging through it, damaging the understory, eating young trees, and cutting up soil which then washes into the river.

Stock could also potentially spread the deadly kauri dieback

disease. "More farmers are starting to become involved so it is all very encouraging," Gill says.

Environmental mitigation for the Puhoi to Warkworth motorway extension has seen ecology consulting company Bioresearches involved with protection work through the trust, on

a property beside Atuanui Mt Auckland.

A small grant from Fonterra has enabled hunter and trapper Cam Rathe from Warkworth to advise farmers on trapping for pests, including at fenced off inaunga (whitebait) spawning sites beside the lower reaches of

the Hoteo.

"Other funds will soon see traps GPS tagged so DOC's Trapping app, Walk the Line, can be used to record trap catch data.

This will eventually give us a picture of trapping over the whole of the Forest Bridge Trust area," she says.