

Update on Waikaremoana Power Scheme's effects on environmental issues

AN update on environmental activities was given at the Waikaremoana Power Scheme meeting last Wednesday.

Hosted by Genesis Energy at Whakamarino Lodge, the annual meeting welcomed representatives from the community, Fish and Game New Zealand and Genesis Energy who gave presentations to inform and update the community.

The Waikaremoana Power Scheme is located between Te Urewera National Park and Wairoa, along the upper 7km of the Waikaretaheke River.

The 138MW hydro scheme comprises three power stations, Kaitawa, Tuai and Piripaua.

Water is taken from Lake Waikaremoana via tunnels to Kaitawa Power Station, before being discharged into Lake Kaitawa.

Water is then passed through Tuai Power Station and discharged into Lake Whakamarino.

From there, water is carried by tunnel to Piripaua Power Station and is discharged into the Waikaretaheke River.

Genesis Energy maintenance manager George Drysdale shared updates on the maintenance activities and projects.

They were making plans to deal with erosion to the Kaitawa carpark and boulders rolling down the embankment deviating the water, he said.

Other areas of erosion are set to be worked on to rebuild and protect the structure after general wear and tear.

There were around 22 metres of embankment which needed to be reconstructed with locally-sourced rocks, Mr Drysdale said.

The other project the company was working on was the replacement of the Kaitawa excitation transformer foundations which were past their use-by date, he said.

Mr Drysdale said they would be replaced with different transformers to do the same function.

This would be classed as end-of-life capital investment.

The Piripaua penstock is also set to

be looked at as the original drain works were done in 1947 and have deteriorated.

"Improved drainage capability is needed here," Mr Drysdale said.

There were multiple capital projects relating to plant reliability and end-of-life replacement, he said.

Another area of

work is the Tuai generator replacement project which is being work towards.

Two of the generators were last replaced in 1963 and one was replaced in 1967.

"We have had a long period of service from the generators but it has come to the end-of-life period.

"But it is purely in the design phase at the moment."

Mr Drysdale said there is a large volume of capital projects to take place as an "ongoing evolution" of the scheme.

The Waikaremoana Power Scheme is located between Te Urewera National Park and Wairoa, along the upper 7 kilometres of the Waikaretaheke River.
