



Sustainable Management Fund

HELPING MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE

Since its establishment in 1996, the Sustainable Management Fund has supported a number of valuable projects that have built on communities' enthusiasm for environmental issues.

With more and more New Zealanders becoming environmentally aware, an increasing number of groups are joining together to undertake projects that help make a positive difference to the environment. Obtaining funding support for these projects is sometimes difficult, which is where the Ministry for the Environment can help.

The Sustainable Management Fund (SMF) provides funding support to community groups, iwi, businesses and local government to take practical actions that produce long-term environmental benefits.

The annual \$3.84 million fund is administered by the Ministry on a contestable basis and is aimed at encouraging proactive partnerships and promoting community action. Applicants are able to apply for a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$200,000 each year.

Encouraging sustainable households, sustainable land and water management, supporting sustainable business practices, and meeting the challenges of climate change are the focus of the 2009/10 SMF funding round which opened in October this year.

Since its establishment in 1996, the fund has supported a number of valuable projects that have built on communities' enthusiasm for environmental issues, and continues to receive a large number of applications each year.

Many of these ambitious and beneficial projects are beginning to leave their mark on the communities involved.

Meeting the challenges of climate change

One such community-wide initiative is the Dune Restoration Trust of New Zealand's Empowering Coastal Communities to Adapt to Climate Change project, which was granted funding this year under the *Meeting the Challenges of Climate Change* category.

The Trust's mission statement is "to see the majority of New Zealand dunes restored and sustainably managed using indigenous species by 2050". In collaboration with management agencies, the project provides four local coastal communities with an adaptive approach to help mitigate the effects of sea level rise and increased storm activity resulting from climate change. The four regions targeted are Northland, New Plymouth, Wellington and Canterbury.

“The emphasis is on working with these communities to provide them with the skills to assess the state of their beach and dune systems, to understand the implications of climate change, and to restore natural dune form and function – therefore helping build resilient and sustainable coastal communities,” Project Leader Dr David Bergin says.

Encouraging sustainable households

Under the SMF category of *Encouraging Sustainable Households*, EcoMatters Environment Trust has set up its new Sustainable Homes Programme. Funding for the project began this year and will continue for the next two years.

The Sustainable Homes Programme is a community-based initiative to support and encourage householders to reduce their ecological footprint, one step at a time. The programme focuses on providing householders with the practical skills and tools they need to reduce their energy use, minimise waste, conserve water and increase walking, cycling and public transport use.

An intensive street-by-street approach will also be trialed in several communities to encourage neighbours to work alongside each other to ‘green their street’.

The programme also aims to find out what barriers people have to changing specific behaviours and what it takes to overcome those barriers.

“We’re very excited about this,” says Programme Manager Tejopala Rawls. “We’re able to really find out what it takes to get people to change, instead of simply assuming we know what will work. This is new territory for us.”

Supporting sustainable business practices

Venture Southland’s Promoting the Development of Sustainable Business in Southland project was granted funding for this year and the next under the *Supporting Sustainable Business Practices* category.

This regional project sees Venture Southland actively working with groups and organisations to develop a regional plan to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the promotion of sustainable business practices in Southland.

Regional Sustainable Business Co-ordinator Karyn Owen is in charge of co-ordinating this process and providing a central contact point

for businesses to access relevant information on resources and programmes to best fit their needs.

Owen says the funding received from the SMF has enabled Southland to take a more synchronised approach to encouraging sustainable business practices.

“The work done so far in identifying business needs has been very positive showing the majority of Southland businesses are keen to do more to address sustainability. Supporting businesses to continue on their sustainability journey will have positive flow-on effects to the economy, environment and community,” Owen says.

Sustainable land and water management

The SMF has funded some impressive sustainable land and water projects too. The Genesis Reforestation Project’s Trees for Hawke’s Bay in Schools programme, for example, was granted three years’ funding in the 2007/08 funding round.

So far, 10 schools from the Hawke’s Bay region are involved in the programme which sees pupils, teachers and parents learning how to propagate, grow and maintain native plants in a nursery environment. The majority of the plants grown in the schools’ nurseries are then planted at the Pekapeka wetland (situated 12km southwest of Hastings) with the long-term goal to improve the water quality, biodiversity and beauty of the wetland.

It is hoped the project will also impart a sense of ownership and ability to make a sustainable difference with Hawke’s Bay youth and all those involved.

Pukehou School is one of the schools involved in the project. With the help of Hastings Forest and Bird, the school transformed an old bike shed into a shade house. “The project has made a world of difference to our school,” Acting Principal Jenny Prebble says. “It has given the students pride in making a difference to the environment and it has taught them some incredible skills.”

The Ministry has been overwhelmed by the number of groups and communities like these wanting to get involved in helping to care for our environment. The SMF offers us a way to work with these enthusiastic and committed people.

Genesis Reforestation Trust and the Ministry for the Environment would like to acknowledge project co-ordinator Donna Miller’s passing. Miller worked tirelessly to raise people’s awareness and inspired so many of them to care about the environment. //



01 // The Onemana Coast Care Group – members of the Dune Restoration Trust – work to restore the sand dunes on the Coromandel Peninsula.

Photo // Jonathan Barran

02 // Checking out an old hot water cylinder as part of EcoMatters Environment Trust’s Sustainable Homes Programme.

Photo // EcoMatters Environment Trust

03 // Pupils get to learn all about growing and maintaining native plants as part of the Trees for Hawke’s Bay in Schools programme.

For more information on the Sustainable Management Fund visit www.smf.govt.nz or email funds@mf.govt.nz