

Gorse conversion

A cost effective way of reducing nitrogen inputs to Lake Rotorua.

Removing gorse in the Lake Rotorua groundwater catchment is expected to remove 30 tonnes of nitrogen per year and help achieve the 320 tonne nitrogen reduction needed.

Why target gorse?

To meet the nitrogen limit for Lake Rotorua all manageable sources of nitrogen need to be targeted.

Gorse is a legume, or nitrogen fixing plant, and research has shown it is capable of leaching significant amounts of nitrogen to groundwater which flows into the lake. It is estimated that 870 hectares of gorse in the Rotorua catchment contributes 30 tonnes of nitrogen to the lake every year.

Gorse is a weed and can be difficult for landowners to eradicate. If left unmanaged cleared gorse will most likely grow back.

As part of the integrated approach of setting nitrogen limits and providing incentives to achieve nitrogen reductions from land use, a Gorse Conversion Fund has been approved to help landowners remove gorse from their properties.

Gorse conversion and Nitrogen Discharge Allowances

Measuring nitrogen reductions from gorse conversion will be calculated on a catchment basis. It will not contribute to individual property reductions.

This is because nitrogen loss from gorse is not included in current Rule 11 benchmarks. Gorse cover is captured as “bush and shrub” with an average nitrogen loss of 3kg/ha. This is significantly lower than the potential nitrogen loss from gorse which could be as high as 38kg/ha.

Under the new draft rules, gorse will be treated the same way as in the current benchmarks. Any parts of your property in gorse will still be calculated using the forestry sector allowance of 3kg/ha to calculate your property’s Nitrogen Discharge Allowance.

About the Gorse Conversion Fund

The Gorse Conversion Project will fund the conversion of mature gorse to production forestry, native bush or other low nitrogen leaching activities.

The funding covers the initial gorse control, site preparation, fencing, planting, and weed and pest control. It also covers independent legal and forestry advice so you can be assured you are making the right decision for your property.



Ko te wai te ora o
ngā mea katoa

Water is the life giver of all things

Fact sheets in this series:

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ROTORUA TE ARAWA LAKES PROGRAMME

For more information
call 0800 884 880 or
rotorualakes.co.nz

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The options

We will work with you to develop a gorse conversion plan that suits you and your property. The options include:

1. **Gorse conversion to forestry** – Controlling gorse and replacing it with production forests is an effective long term method for removing mature gorse. Converting gorse to forestry follows proven techniques of aerial spraying and “roller-crushing” prior to planting and follow-up weed control.
This turns unproductive land into an asset that can provide financial returns in the future.
Funding will be up to a maximum of \$4,500 per hectare depending on the tree species being planted.
2. **Managed reversion to native vegetation** – Native vegetation will succeed mature gorse over time provided the site is not burnt or disturbed, there is pest control and a nearby native seed source.
3. **Pastoral land** – The gorse on your property may be on land that would better suit pasture than forestry or reverted native bush. You have the option of converting the gorse to pasture providing enough pastoral land elsewhere in the catchment is retired to reduce nitrogen losses by the same amount.
4. **New innovative land uses** – Converting gorse to new innovative land uses will be considered as long as the nitrogen leaching rate is equivalent to or less than forestry as measured by the Overseer[®] nutrient budget model or published science.

We want to make sure you are fully informed before you sign any agreement. As part of the gorse conversion funding you can access up to \$2,000 for independent legal and forestry advice.

How it works

It is easy to access the Gorse Conversion funding.

1. Contact Bay of Plenty Regional Council on 0800 884 880
2. A Land Management Officer will arrange a visit to your property to assess the amount of gorse you have, listen to what you want to do with the land and discuss the options that would suit you and your property
3. A Gorse Conversion Plan is drafted identifying what actions need to be taken
4. Independent legal and forestry advice up to \$2,000 is included in the funding
5. Agreement is signed
6. Work commences.

Who can access the funding?

To be eligible for the funding properties must have mature gorse on land in the Lake Rotorua groundwater catchment.

Other eligibility criteria include:

- Gorse conversion must provide for reductions in nitrogen leaching to the same amount as forestry (3kg N/ha/year)
- Net phosphorus losses must not exceed levels before conversion
- Landowners must be compliant with the Regional Water and Land Plan rules.

If the criteria are met, an agreement must be signed by the landowner that sets out total hectares and location of gorse to be removed, description of activities to be funded and payments that are to be made. The agreement will also include a deed that survives in perpetuity to record the land use change and secure the nitrogen reductions.

Want to know more?

For more information on the draft rules see the Have Your Say brochure or supporting information fact sheets on www.rotorualakes.co.nz