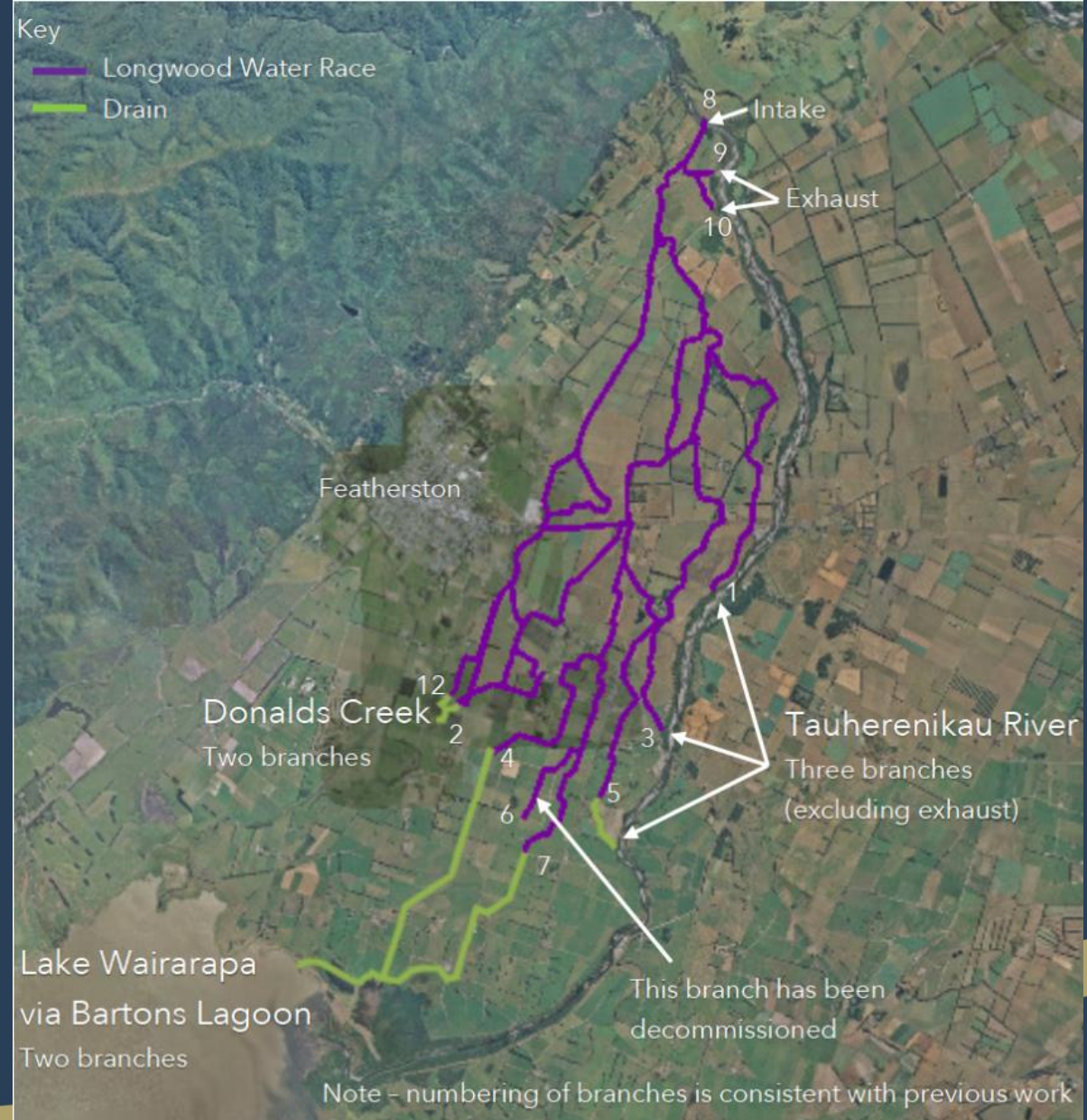


Water Races

An Introduction
June 2026



**SOUTH WAIRARAPA
DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Kia Reretahi Tātau



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DISTRICT COUNCIL**
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Moroa Water Race

The Moroa Race construction was started in the 1890's. As of 2018 it currently extends over 160km in length, through a number of branches, and services 7,350ha of land and around 291 properties.

It draws river water at a maximum rate of 500L/s, with step-downs in allowable take as the flow in the Waiohine River reduces. Under low river flows the existing consented take constitutes up to 10% of the upstream river flow.

The race has 13 main branches and numerous minor branches. The race terminates at 14 main locations; 3 into Dock Creek, 5 into the Otakura Stream, 2 into the Tauwharenikau River, 1 into the Ruamahanga River, and 3 into the Papawai Stream

Longwood Water Race

The Longwood water race is a network of open water channels taking water from the Tauwharenikau River through four main branches and has a total length of 44km and services approximately 1,800ha of farmland and around 62 properties.

The race draws at a rate of 100 - 300 litres/second depending on river flow. At this point, any excess water is routed back to the river and returns to a point approximately 880m downstream of the inlet.

Once inside the water race system, water is conveyed through farmland in a network of races, providing drinking water for livestock. The water race then terminates at 7 discharge points. The main receiving waters for the race discharge are the Tauwharenikau River (three locations), Bartons Lagoon (two branches), and Donald's Creek (two locations).

Maintenance

Landowners are responsible for their own maintenance. The Water Races Overseer is a role that carries out maintenance on intakes and public-owned stretches and points out needed maintenance to landowners. Weed removal by glyphosate-spraying or animal feeding, and culvert blockages from tree roots are common.

Moroa Water Race

Resource consent WAR 010200 is granted as follows;

- 21378 Water permit: surface water take
- 21379 Water permit: surface water diversion
- 21586 Discharge permit: water
- 21587 Land Use permit: stream works
- Expired 30th September 2025
- Renewal application lodged 30th March 2025
- Existing consent extended to 31 December 2027 by Resource Management (Duration of Consents) Amendment Act 2025

Longwood Water Race

Resource consent WAR 200185 is granted as follows;

- 36638 Water permit: surface water take
- 36639 Water permit: surface water diversion
- 36640 Discharge permit: water
- 36641 Land Use permit: stream works
- Expires 30th September 2029

The approach was that the consents would be renewed for 5 years, during which data would be gathered and analysed to enable a longer term consent that covered both Water Races. This approach was disrupted by the Resource Management (Duration of Consents) Amendment Act 2025.

- The Longwood Water Race Bylaw 1936 and the Moroa Water Race Bylaw 2007 are in effect
 - The Water Race Code of Practice was revised in 2017 and applies to both systems.
 - The South Wairarapa Water Race Users' Group is not active
 - The Water Race Subcommittee last met in June 2021
 - Greater Wellington Regional Council provides 50% funding for property owners that want to fence off their waterways, including water races. Plans are reviewed by SWDC including the Water Races Overseer
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- SWDC outsourced the Overseer position and consent monitoring to Wellington Water.
 - CityCare Water will take over the Overseer responsibilities.
 - Consent monitoring will need to be done by SWDC
 - The resource consenting has remained an in-house activity

Carterton and Masterton's approaches in contrast:

Carterton

- Code of Practice applicable
- Maintenance done by Council, not landowners, and funded by measured usage (\$1.40 - \$2.30 per m³). Refer potable water \$2.10 per m³.
- Includes industrial non-potable supply to Waingawa industrial area (\$1.25 per m³)

Masterton

- Decided in 2020 for Opaki Water Race to be closed by 30 June 2026.
- This was consulted on to be extended by 1 year in April 2026

- Status quo rather than the approach taken by Carterton and Masterton as so far as we hear it seems to work
- The last survey in 2021 (some charts below) should be redone to see if things have changed
- Keep the Moroa resource consent application going forward, as the application was accepted and conditions of consent were being negotiated
- Invest in the water take at each river. The equipment is in a poor state.
- Use alternative technology to a flume for flow measurement. Flumes are too costly.

