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MEDIA RELEASE (with photo)

Landcorp joins the crowd to improve environment

Crowdfunding is coming to the aid of New Zealand's waterways thanks to an innovative environmental initiative supported by Landcorp.

The Million Metres Streams Project, set up by the Sustainable Business Network in collaboration with Enspiral, is New Zealand's first conservation crowdfunding initiative.

Launched in October last year, the project gives New Zealanders the opportunity to contribute to the restoration of the country's waterways. It has already funded almost 5km of riparian restoration work. The QEII National Trust is a field partner for the project, liaising with landowners, buying plants and managing volunteers.

This week, riparian planting is being conducted along three tributaries on Landcorp's Dale Farm, near Te Anau. The tributaries feed into the upper Whitestone River. Funded by 36 donors who contributed a total of \$25,200, 1350 native trees – including manatu, makomako, manuka and kowhai – will be planted by volunteers and Dale Farm staff.

Dale Farm, is 2300ha property running deer, beef and sheep 20km from Te Anau. Farm manager Ian Matthews has a close and productive relationship with QEII Trust, working together to improve the water quality and biodiversity of the Whitestone River and the Waiau Catchment.

The catchment, on the eastern edge of Fiordland, is Southland's largest.

QEII Trust Waiau representative Mark Sutton said the national planting project, and Landcorp's commitment to it, was achieving impressive results.

"It works. Most Landcorp properties, Dale Farm included, are already working towards being ecologically intact by fencing waterways. Not only that, Landcorp has retired a lot of land to prevent nutrient runoff getting into waterways, returning them to what they were in the past.

"Landcorp as an organisation has embraced the concept and are leaders in demonstrating what can happen when you put time and effort in."

There did not have to be a "push-pull" relationship between productivity and environmental outcomes, said Mr Sutton.

"Landcorp have shown over the past 15 years that you can have the best of both worlds. They've managed to retire large of land areas near waterways while actually increasing their stocking rate.

"Landcorp's farm managers are the unsung heroes – they show that good farm management is based on sound ecological outcomes. They recognise that it does take time but it's definitely worth it. People like Ian aren't scared of it, or of putting in the hard work."

The success of the Million Metres Streams Project showed just how much New Zealanders valued the environmental integrity of the country's waterways.

“What's really impressive is that there are people sitting in offices in places like Auckland that care about our water,” said Mr Sutton. “That's the fundamental thing – people can do something special.”

People interested in getting involved in the Million Metres Streams Project can visit www.millionmetres.org.nz to find out more, including details of current and upcoming crowdfunding projects.

Attached photo (available in hi-res on request): Landcorp's Dale Farm manager Ian Matthews (left) with QEII Trust Waiau representative Mark Sutton. Photo credit: Douglas Thorne

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Notes for editors:

About Landcorp

Landcorp Farming Limited is a leader in New Zealand agriculture and strives for best practice in dairy, sheep, beef and deer farming, for sustainable use of resources and continuous improvement in livestock genetics and farm systems. Landcorp is a State Owned Enterprise and one of New Zealand's largest farming organisations, with 140 properties. Landcorp's Pāmu brand simply means “to farm” and reflects the provenance and quality of Landcorp's products and its commitment to productive partnerships.

About the Million Metres Streams Project

Launched in October 2014, the Million Metres Streams Project is a non-profit project set up to restore the health of New Zealand waterways, metre by metre, stream by stream. Its goal is to reach one million metres. Millionmetres.org.nz is New Zealand's first conservation crowdfunding website and gives all New Zealanders – individuals, businesses, schools and organisations – a way to contribute to the restoration of the nation's waterways.