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# Historic Places backs saving Glenn Rd weir

Researchers to put case at TRC meeting

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THE battle to save a Taranaki hydro-electric weir has the backing of the Historic Places Trust.

The trust is building up a case for it to be given nationally important Category 1 protection.

The weir and the Kaupokonui dairy factory on Glenn Rd are thought to be the last surviving examples of a combined hydro-electric scheme and factory.

Ann Neill, central region manager for the HPT, says the Taranaki Regional Council is pre-



pared to allow a new fish bypass to be built "if we demonstrate that this weir is a nationally important structure requiring heritage protection."

The weir across Kaupokonui Stream has been earmarked for demolition because it prevents the free movement of native fish.

Ms Neill says amendments to the Resource Management Act identifying heritage values as important, mean a compromise is possible to meet the TRC's requirements and also protect the weir from destruction.

The TRC has concluded the existing stepped fish pass at the weir is too steep for small native fish, mainly cockabulies, to negotiate. It estimates a new pass will cost



Helping hands: Historic Places Trust researcher Karen Astwood and consultant engineer Bill Pitt at the Glenn Rd weir. Photo: RICHARD WOODD

\$5000 for design and \$30,000 for construction.

Ms Neill says it could be a project that involves the community in working bees.

"Our job is to research the history, design, construction, innovation and the social and cultural values of that power scheme, so the local community can decide whether the weir should be saved or demolished.

"At the end of March it goes through our internal quality assurance process and before the board. We'll be presenting to the TRC at the end of April with a positive recommendation.

**WEBextra@**

See video of the hydro-electric weir at <http://www.stuff.co.nz/dailynews>

"We are researching the whole scheme, including the dairy factory. There is always a risk that the present owner might close or move elsewhere and that could potentially threaten the future of the buildings, which were part of the power scheme."

The HPT had two contracted researchers working in the area last week, studying the Glenn Rd and a number of other similar old power schemes.

The weir diverted water down a tailrace tunnel and pipeline to a turbine and generator that powered the Kaupokonui dairy factory, west of Manaiia.

The power scheme was built in 1941 and the factory is now the home of the Pacific Natural Gut String Company.

The feasibility of recommissioning it has been investigated by the TRC and it was judged to be uneconomic.