



Historic Places Trust regional committee member Nigel Ogle next to the Glenn Rd weir which the trust is trying to save from destruction.

Photo: MIKE SCOTT

Trust in race to save historic weir

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A BATTLE between history and the environment may have been narrowly avoided in South Taranaki.

The New Zealand Historic Places Trust and the Taranaki Regional Council are hopeful of working together to save both the Glenn Rd weir and the fish of the Kaipokonui River.

The issue has been festering since 1995, when the TRC began removing obstacles to fish passage in Taranaki rivers, allowing fish to move freely out to sea and back. In 2000 the TRC announced it wanted to remove the

Glenn Rd weir, drawing protest from the Historic Places Trust which says it is important to protect the weir as historically significant.

"When the old pioneer guys built that they put a lot of commitment and hard work into it, and we often forget about that sort of commitment today," Historic Places Trust regional committee member Nigel Ogle says.

The existing weir was built in 1941 to generate power for the Kaipokonui Dairy Factory and Mr Ogle says this is another reason it should be preserved.

"The dairy industry is a major one for Taranaki and New Zealand.

"On one site we've got a complete

complex, from river and weir, to the factory and all the gear is still there.

"No-one has been able to find anything like it in New Zealand, so it's significant on a Taranaki scale and possibly significant on a New Zealand scale too."

Mr Ogle says he is happy progress has now been made with the council.

"We were battling away with the TRC for some time. It was quite antagonistic for a while, but now we seem to be getting sorted and finding some common ground."

But the TRC has put a deadline in place. The Historic Places Trust has until December 31 to find about \$26,000 funding to build a fish pass or

the TRC will remove the weir.

A TRC report says removing the weir altogether would be better for fish than installing a fish pass, and TRC director resource management Fred McLay says it is a classic resource management situation.

"There are historic values and there are conservation and biodiversity values and we are trying to meld them into a win-win situation," he says. "We're trying to work through the issues and do the right thing as a council."

The TRC is contributing \$8000 to the construction of a fish pass and will assist the Historic Places Trust make applications for other funding.