

HAMURANA SPRINGS “Where Nature Comes to Sleep”

Hamurana is a Taonga (treasure) to the people of Ngati Rangiwewehi, whose association with this land goes back to the 1300's. There is an impressive grove of Redwoods, first planted in 1919 and several waterways and springs throughout Hamurana with the main spring being Te Puna-a-Hangarua named after Hangarua, a Ngati Rangiwewehi Chieftainess.

There is a story that a female ngarara (water reptile) named Hinerua who lived in the spring. Being tame she became the mokai (pet) of the chieftainess Hangarua. The "ngarara mokai" would crawl out of her cold water-hole and sun bathe or visit her mistress's kainga (home) and look at the crops. When the chieftainess died, Hinerua retired to her fountain cave and disappeared forever. The sightless kokopu (little freshwater fish) that live in the spring are said to be Hinerua's children.

It is the deepest natural fresh water spring in the North Island, it is 920 feet (280 m) above sea level and is approximately 15 metres (50 ft) deep. It produces an estimated 4.5 million litres of crystal clear water per hour at a fairly constant temperature of 10 degrees Celsius and can be easily viewed from a specially built viewing platform.

The spring water originates from the Mamaku Plateau from where it travels 70 years through underground aquifers, before reaching Hamurana, where it pushes up through volcanic (rhyolitic) rock. The spring waters meander as a stream for approximately one kilometre before joining Lake Rotorua and in the summer, is home to rainbow trout.

Originally known by Ngati Rangiwewehi as Te Kaikaitahuna the area was heavily cultivated with gardens on both sides of the river, it was a rich source of food for local inhabitants as well as Iwi from the coast who traded kai moana (seafood) for the bounties of the land and bush. The river also provided kokopu, inanga, toitoi and koura.

The name Hamurana is a transliteration of SMYRNA, as mentioned in the Bible (Revelations 2:8-11). In former times a Christian Church stood on this site. Today Smyrna is the Turkish city of Izmir.

Hamurana Springs was returned back to Ngati Rangiwewehi as part of treaty settlement in 2015 and their vision is to “Maximize the potential of our People and Land for generations to come.”

Ngāti Rangiwewehi have identified that traditionally important areas for collecting and preparing Rongoa and weaving materials and food gathering, have been significantly altered and reduced as a result of wetland drainage, conflicting land use and habitat degradation. The loss and degradation of these water resources through the removal of indigenous vegetation from stream margins, sedimentation and erosion, the controlling of lake levels, and contamination of waterways, are significant issues for Ngāti Rangiwewehi and have been identified by the iwi as having a major influence on their current economic and cultural wellbeing.

Water is the giver of life, it represents the blood of Papatuanuku (Mother Earth) and the tears of Ranginui (Sky Father). The waters that flow here at Hamurana have been central to the very existence of Ngati Rangiwewehi (the tribal owners) since time forgotten. Water is the essential element that binds the physical and the spiritual realms together.