



Sustainable Land: Nelson is a programme of work aimed at encouraging sustainable landuse in Nelson, with a focus on how we care for our soils. As well as soil health monitoring, the programme involves working in partnership and collaboration with landowners involved in forestry and farming, and with small block owners who want to manage their land better, particularly in the rural area.

Approximately 30% of Nelson's land area is in native forest, 30% is in productive forestry, and 30% under pasture. Less than 10% of our land is in urban/residential land use – but here too, it is important to sustainably manage the land we have. Limited resources like water and soil are critical for the future health of our land and our communities.

## Soil monitoring

Nelson City Council is involved in the "500 Soils" programme (a national project to collect soil quality data from approximately 500 sites across New Zealand). In Nelson we monitor 15 sites covering a range of land uses: dairy, dry stock, plantation forestry, native forestry, and smaller lifestyle blocks.

These same sites will be monitored every three to five years to track any changes over time. For instance, one of the sites is at Paremata Flats, where regular monitoring will identify changes in soil composition as a result of transitioning pasture land to native forest.

Soil health measures include:

- Amount of soil organic matter (humus)
- Soil fertility
- Beneficial soil life, such as bacteria and earthworms
- Physical condition (e.g. whether it has become too compacted).

If you want to learn more about soils in the Nelson region, including how to monitor your own soil health and how to improve or protect it, there is a lot of information on our website:



## Working with landowners

Whatever we do on our land affects the water in our streams and rivers, and ultimately the sea. Animal waste and fertilisers, soil erosion, planting along waterways and the restoration of native forest all have impacts, good or bad.

The Sustainable Land Management programme provides resources to help landowners manage land resources sustainably and minimise soil loss and nutrient overload in our rivers and streams

Over the past two years the programme has supported activities such as:

- The development of land environment plans to help lifestyle block owners manage their land sustainably
- Identifying the sources of *E.coli* in waterways
- Identifying opportunities for improved land management
- Working with owners of small forestry blocks to encourage tree planting or alternative land use
- Holding seminars on topics like mitigation of *E.coli* and the role of trees on productive land.

Recently, there has been a lot of work happening to better understand the costs and limitations, as well as the opportunities, for restoring land to native forest following retirement from plantation forestry.

If you'd like to find out more, or tap into resources such as land and forestry environment plans, visit our website, [nelson.govt.nz/sustainable-land-management](https://nelson.govt.nz/sustainable-land-management)

Nelson City Council's Environmental Grants Programme, which holds two funding rounds each year, offers landowners an opportunity to apply for contestable funding to improve their land. The grants scheme has supported improvements to land management across the region, building on the earlier efforts of landowners that have been underway for many years. Council receives funding from the Ministry for Primary Industries under the Hill Country Erosion Fund, and this is being used support the grants scheme until June 2023.

You can read about some of the projects on our website:

[nelson.govt.nz/sustainable-land-management](https://nelson.govt.nz/sustainable-land-management)