Rancher CLI
Unit 4.2.2

Rancher CLI

Everything that you can do with Kubernetes you can do with Rancher, which means that you can do all of it with kubectl.

What about the benefits that Rancher provides above and beyond what kubectl can do? For those items there's the Rancher CLI.

The Rancher CLI wraps authenticated API calls in simple commands and is a great solution to use with automation or situations where a CLI is more appropriate than a UI.

You can download the Rancher CLI for your platform from a link in the bottom right corner of the UI.

Creating an API Key

The Rancher CLI works with bearer tokens derived from an API Key. Keys can be unscoped, which will work with the Rancher Server, or scoped to a particular cluster, in which case they will also work with the Authorized Cluster Endpoint for that particular cluster without being proxied through the Rancher server.

API keys can have an expiration date, which can help keep the cluster secure.

When you generate an API key, you're shown the access key and secret key. These can be combined into a bearer token for the Rancher CLI by separating them with a colon.

Selecting Projects With the CLI

Most commands in the Rancher CLI apply to a specific project. A cluster and project, when combined, are known as a "context," and before you can run commands against a project, you have to switch to the correct context.

Executing Commands With the CLI

Many of the functions from the UI are also available in the CLI. Help is available with --help or by adding --help to any of the subcommands.

Proxying Kubectl Commands

If you're using the Rancher CLI, you don't also need a kubectl config file.

After authenticating with the cluster, you can run rancher kubectl to access all of the power of kubectl directly through the API connection.

References

Using the Rancher CLI - https://rancher.com/docs/rancher/v2.x/en/cli/