



Quarter 3 Report 1 January - 31 March 2025

Our Vision:

To work with community, tangata whenua, NGOs and government agencies to restore the native habitats within the Whangārei Heads High Value Area, so indigenous ecosystems are healthy, flourishing, and free of invasive exotic plants, and the biodiversity of the area can thrive.

This report covers WANHRT's three key conservation programmes, illustrated on this map of Reotahi:



1. Engage and support the community in habitat restoration

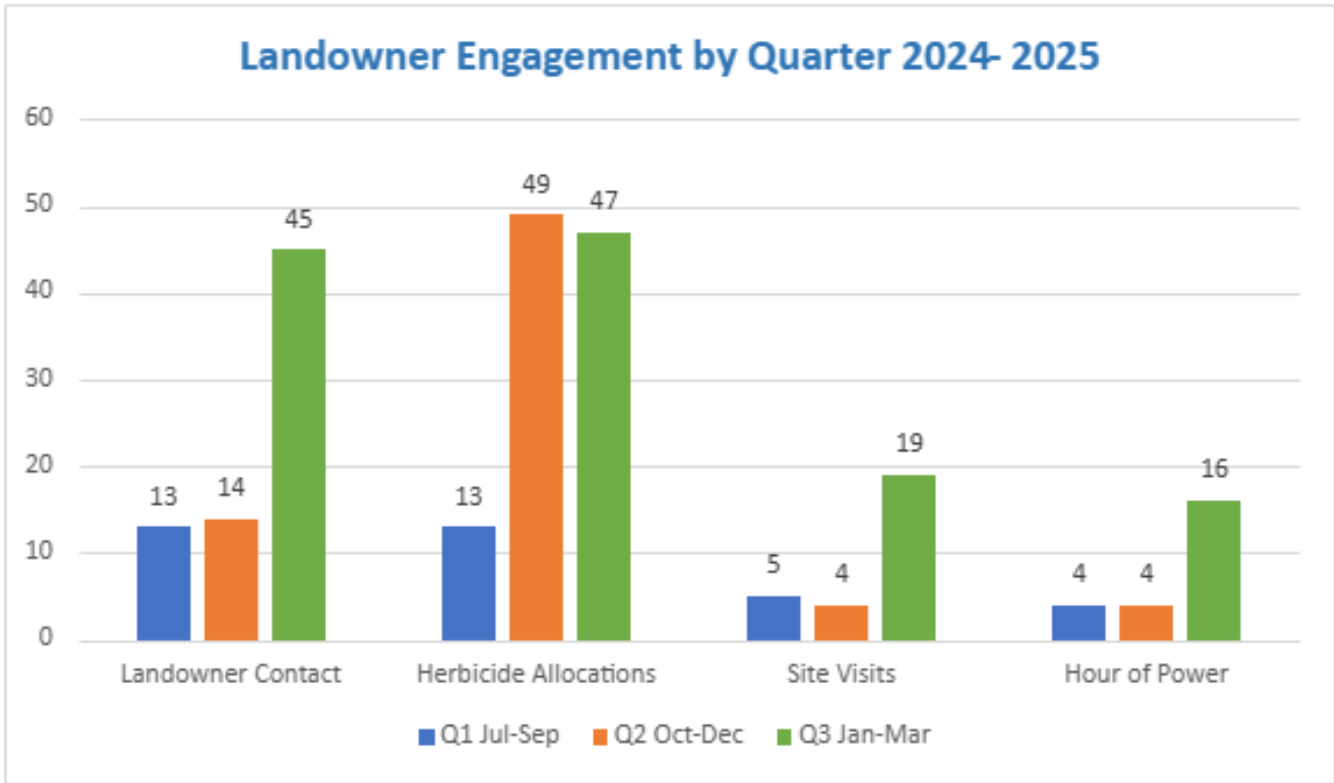
2. Volunteer habitat restoration on Reserves and Public Conservation Land

3. Landscape level habitat restoration on Reserves and Public Conservation Land

1. Engage and Support the Community in Habitat Restoration

Landowner Assistance

- The number of Whangārei Heads landowners contacting Weed Action for assistance, advice, and herbicides this quarter was by far the greatest of this Financial Year and of comparative periods for the last two years.



- In fact, more landowners contacted us in January to March 2025, than in the same period for 2024 and 2023 combined (19 and 15, respectively).
- This increased contact could be attributed to several factors: heightened awareness of weed abundance due to summer flowering; increased visibility of Weed Action as the go-to for local advice due to signs, word-of-mouth, and Facebook posting; the Mega Moth Plant Movement galvanising community members to seek help with moth plant.
- Herbicide requests were greatly increased due to our ongoing sponsorship from Cut ‘n’ Paste Weedkiller Gels, who provided enough Met Gel for 100 bottles to be distributed to the community to fight moth plant and more.

Hour of Power

- Community Engagement Coordinator Kate has made it standard practice to visit every community member who requests assistance or herbicides. This has not only ensured herbicides are allocated in the safest manner possible but allows her to give targeted advice and understand the weed problems in backyards across the Heads.
- In 16 of these cases, she has offered an hour of free weed work – the Hour of Power. The top species tackled this quarter were moth plant, elaeagnus, privet, woolly nightshade, queen of the night, wild ginger, blue passionflower, and flame trees.



Privet and queen of the night now controlled at a Taurikura property.

Recent and Upcoming Landowner Events

- **Campbell Road Landcare Group Workshop** - On Sunday 6 April Kate and Ecological Advisor Mike Ulrich met with 18 Campbell Road residents interested in furthering their knowledge and sharing experiences battling weeds. Organised by Trust member James Bellamy (wearing his Campbell Road Landcare hat), there was a wide range of topics covered and a keen audience for Mike's demonstration of effective drill-and-fill methods.
- The Weed Action Trailer will be making another Friday afternoon appearance in Parua Bay during May to allow the community to stop in and discuss their weedy issues. Utilising the trailer over the shoulder season is an effective way to keep the message out there and support locals to address weeds before they get to the flowering, berrying, or seeding stage.



Mike discusses drill-and-fill technique with Campbell Road residents.

Marketing

Mega Moth Plant Movement

- The Mega Moth Plant Movement was the focus of the majority of our marketing outreach during this period.
- New signs for the moth plant pod bin, 2 rounds of bins at the Parua Bay Community Centre, weekly Facebook posts, and a flyer delivered to over 1000 households demonstrating how easy moth plant control can be, all helped drive home the message.

**NOW'S THE TIME TO DEAL WITH MOTH PLANT!
YOU CAN HELP!**

**JOIN THE WHANGAREI HEADS
MEGA MOTH PLANT MOVEMENT!**

WEED ACTION
NATIVE HABITAT RESTORATION TRUST

Let's make it our mission to minimise
Moth Plant over the next 5 years

Contact info@weedaction.org.nz for free tools, herbicides and advice

The aim is to get moth plant under control through a consistent community effort to:

- Stop the Pods – get them now when flowering
- Gather the Pods – (Feb – July) dispose in our Weed Amnesty Bin at Parua Bay
- Ask us for advice and herbicide
- Join the WH Mega Moth Plant Movement Facebook group and share your work!

HOW TO DEAL WITH MOTH PLANT – TRY IT OUT!

- 1. IDENTIFY IT**
- 2. LOCATE THE MAIN VINE(S)**
- 3. PULL IT OUT... OR**
- 4. CUT AND TREAT IT**
- 5. COLLECT THE PODS**
and dispose safely in our bin at the Parua Bay Community Centre from mid-February)

Contact Kate at Weed Action Native Habitat Restoration Trust for Cut'n'Paste Gel or advice
Phone: 022 546 6123, Email: info@weedaction.org.nz





- Weed Action contractors controlling roadside moth plant over the month of January became our most effective billboard, as the community could witness dying moth plant between Ocean Beach and Tamaterau every day. Despite our clear instructions that locals should not attempt weed control on roadsides themselves, community members from McKenzie Bay, Ody Road, Robinson Road, Waikaraka, Taiharuru, Kerr Road and Kauri Mountain also reported a focus among roadside properties to remove moth plant from their verges.
- There have been two recent mainstream media items that dovetail perfectly with our moth plant focus and our links to S.T.A.M.P. and EcoNet (one of which states the community at the Heads is “doing very well at controlling it!”)

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/northern-advocate/news/whangarei-dad-battles-invasive-moth-plant-threatening-native-trees/TL7ZQV57JVB7VG4UWWHB4NTU2E/>

<https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/16-04-2025/stamp-it-out-waging-a-weedy-war-with-the-society-totally-against-moth-plants>

EcoNet and Data

- After nearly a full year trialing EcoNet, we will decide in June whether to proceed with this system. We have found the CRM extremely helpful and has potential to build on our data gathering and accumulate historic data. Currently we are using EcoNet as an administrative tool and have not utilised the system or have the capacity to use its multiple functions. Site and species mapping continues to be a challenge to get our head around.
- Our Health and Safety JO forms have until now been filed but we plan to add these into EcoNet CRM which will enable us to file them via site or team and hopefully accrue site specific Health and Safety data.
- We are also clarifying the data that is important for us to accumulate and meetings with EcoNet will help us establish the most effective way to do this.
- We have been operating for 10 years and the realisation that we do not have accessible accumulated data is a loss to the organisation and a significant motivating factor to keep us persevering with EcoNet ,which seems to be the only tool that is being tailored to our needs.

2. Volunteer Habitat Restoration on Reserves and Public Conservation Land

Volunteer Hours

- Weed Action groups, landowners and trust members contributed an estimated average of 2,300 volunteer hours this quarter, bringing our year total to date to approximately 7,217 hours (reported half-year hours for July to December totalled 4,917).

HVA Data Year to Date (July 2024 to March 2025)

Data Collected	Total
Volunteer hours:	7217
Value (\$) of volunteer contribution (valued at \$30/hr):	\$216,510.00
Number of groups:	7
Number of core group members:	45
Number of public engagement activities:	52 volunteer weed events, Mega Moth Plant Movement launch, 3 visits to WH School, 1 Landcare group workshop
Number of landowner engagement/support:	Comms in: 72, herbicides given out: 109, site visits w/ weed work: 24

Work in Reserves and PCLs

- There were 15 volunteer weed events for January to March 2025, with many groups electing to sit out the hot January weather.
- Manaia Bush Recovery Group held two sessions and Kate and Mike also released around 200 native plantings across the stream from the Green. They also gun sprayed a large area of pampas earmarked by MBRG for native planting in 2026.
- Ocean Beach Landcare Group also held two well-subscribed sessions. Weed Action worked with Whangārei District Council to engage contractors to spray a large area of blue morning-glory at two sites at Ocean Beach.
- Reotahi Working Bee also met twice and consolidated their work behind the freedom camping area and along the track. A WDC contractor did some knapsack spray to prepare thick kikuyu areas for restoration planting in winter 2025. WANHRT followed up with a gun and hose sprayer loaned to us from the Native Forest Restoration Trust.
- Smugglers Maintenance Crew continued to stave off moth plant in the Home Bay area across two sessions.
- SWAT supported the moth plant movement with a sweep along weed-infested areas of Lamb Road and a second sweep through Turiapua Lane Reserve, following up on a suite of weed species in this special forest-riparian-wetland-estuary continuum.

- Tamaterau Landcare Group met every month and in fact every Tuesday, with this small but committed group pushing back weeds at the boundaries of the reserve and managing fallen flame trees in their planted areas.
- An exciting development in our volunteer efforts was the formation of the Parua Bay Weed Action Group in March. 12 new and experienced volunteers turned out at the Parua Bay Community Centre car park to share ideas and plan for habitat restoration work across a range of reserves in the area. The kernel of this group has sat with Founders Robyn Bigelow and Jan Marshall for some time, so we are thrilled to see the community support for this project. A second session was held at Kiteone Reserve in early April.



Keen Parua Bay habitat restorers.

Upcoming Events

- **The Weed Action Native Habitat Restoration Trust Volunteer Workshop** is in the planning stages and will take place on Wednesday 18 June. This is an excellent opportunity for all Weed Action groups to share their achievements and challenges from the year and celebrate our common purpose.
- Planning for a **Matariki Tree Planting** event in winter is coming into focus through engaging and inviting tangata whenua to participate and help bring cultural awareness to this event and ensure our work at Reotahi and McLeod Bay/Manaia is supported. James is spearheading the planting plans and Mike has been undertaking the preparatory work.
- Objectives for this planting event include adding to the range of habitat restoration activities we can deliver, establishing first succession species to kickstart regrowth of native forest cover, engaging the local community, and celebrating Matariki through connection to te taiao and increased cultural understanding.

3. Landscape Level Habitat Restoration on Reserves & Public Conservation Land

Reotahi

- Two “around the maunga” control sweeps have now been completed by Weed Action and the Aki Tai Here team over three years. Over 30 weed species rated as having high to extreme ecological impact were controlled across the site during the two control phases. Multiple funding streams have been utilised to complete this work with the most substantial coming from two large grants from the Lotteries Environment and Heritage Fund.
- Thanks to this challenging control mahi, the weed burden on Reotahi has been reduced massively across the board, allowing greater native seedling recruitment in areas formerly thick with weeds, and more robust and resilient native plant associations formed because of a release of competition from aggressive plant invaders.
- In this quarter Mike finished off the last of Reotahi sweep in the elaeagnus/ bamboo badlands to complete the first follow up phase of habitat restoration weed control works across the 60 ha maunga.
- In limited areas - some steep rocky cliffs and difficult to access boundary edges - more work remains. In following work, on top of a full weed maintenance sweep, we would aim to ‘mop up’ these areas through drone work in the case of inaccessible areas, and on tricky boundary areas, gaining access through adjoining properties.



The last look of the last day of the second full sweep of Maunga Reotahi.

Manaia/Threatened Species Project

- The DOC Threatened Species funded control sweep across 30+ ha of the highly invaded south-eastern side of Manaia was completed in Q3, targeting some of the largest weed infestations and worst weeds on the mountain: elaeagnus, woolly nightshade, moth plant, wild ginger, monkey apple. This mahi in the buffer, in effect, provides a long-term insurance policy for the threatened species which reside mostly at the top reaches of the maunga.
- This quarter saw two important hui occur with tangata whenua and our partners at DOC. In this period Mike and delivery partner Aki Tai Here also reported on this mahi and Mike put together the project brief for the next phase of operations. This will focus more within and amongst the threatened species populations, rather than in the buffer area.



General area of the 5 threatened plant species on Manaia.

Ocean Beach – DOC contract

- In March, DOC offered us \$10,500 to do control work on the Ocean Beach dunes, an area we have worked on previously. The control plan has been developed by WANHRT

and Aki Tai Here and work will take place between April and June 2025. The top priorities are moth plant, monkey apple, lantana, cotoneaster, and Chinese privet.

Bream Head/Te Whara

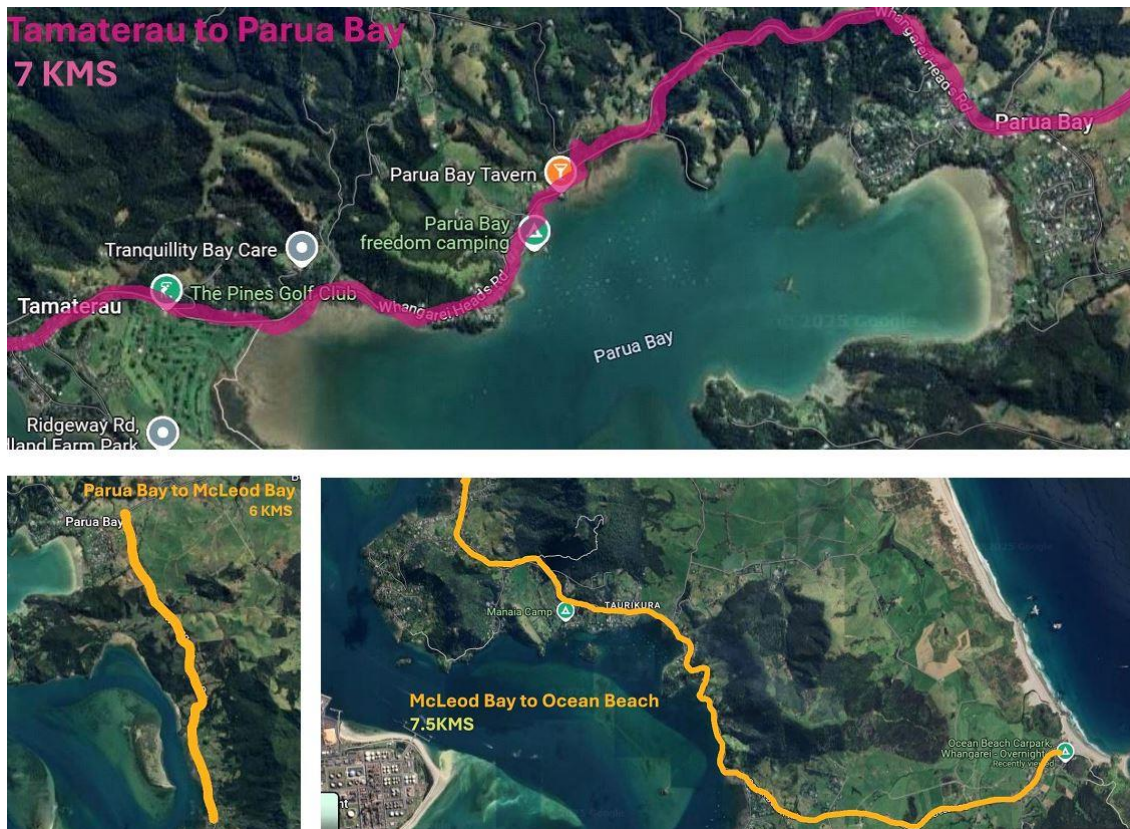
- WANHRT and BHTWCT have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to define our work together and the support we can provide. The organisations are committed to working collaboratively across weed control, community outreach, planting events, education opportunities and resource sharing.
- Weed Action and Mike's contribution to the Bream Head - Te Whara weed strategy has been appreciated. As part of this strategy WANHRT has committed to a road sweep of Ocean Beach Road to help provide a weed-free buffer to the reserve's outstanding natural landscape. Elaeagnus, wild ginger, phoenix palms and pines were all controlled in a weed sweep in January.

Strategic Sites

- Weed Action has accrued and worked on a list of sites with notable infestations that pose a significant threat to the wider ecosystem by their size, age, or proximity. Each year, we attempt to visit and work on these sites, however this year, our Strategic funds budget has been limited so all sites under management have not received input. Regardless, we have selected a few top priority sites which include:
1. Mike recently completed control of a large site of elaeagnus on private property in McLeod Bay



2. The roadside moth plant work completed by Mike, Kate, and Jan in January saw over 20 kilometres of road corridor cleared of most flowering moth plant in a combined 25 hours of work.



3. We are continuing to map and remove madeira vine from sites at the Heads, with only 3 new sites discovered so far this year and follow up visits to previously controlled sites showing a highly reduced weed load.

Tangata Whenua Engagement

- The development of our Department of Conservation 10-year Community Agreement is well underway. Changes to these agreements require full engagement with hapu/iwi and while at times a consuming and challenging process it has been extremely worthwhile.
- The DOC Threatened Species work has galvanised tangata whenua interest and created a regular forum to discuss cultural management of Threatened Species and established a valuable working group. At a recent hui we were able to ask how hapu/iwi would like to engage with conservation work in the WH's area. It was agreed that a presentation from all groups working in the area would best serve all parties. Planning for this hui is underway with Manaia Landcare, Bream Head Conservation Trust, Aki Tai Here and

Weed Action sharing their work and plans for 2025-26. This hui will hopefully form the taumata or forum for ongoing engagement.

Governance

- Chairperson succession planning hinges on funding applications that we should know about mid-June. Until Operations Management becomes a paid position, the role of Chair is unlikely to be filled as it currently requires 15 to 20 hours per week to fulfil our various obligations and hold the oversight of WANHRT. Meanwhile, the Trust is solid, and we have confidence in Financial and Health and Safety management and a recent interview with a potential Trustee was hopeful.
- If funding applications are successful, the level of landscape level work and hapu/iwi engagement will increase considerably. While much is hinging on these applications, regardless our core NRC/HVA funding is extremely effective, consolidated and ongoing.

Thanks to our funders and supporters:



Whangarei
District Council