

High Value Area QUARTERLY REPORT

October – December 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

In December we said a fond haere ra to the indomitable habitat restorer Mike Urlich, after 6 highly effective years with Weed Action. His dedication to native ecosystems and drive to work at a large scale level has made a massive impact on Reotahi, Manaia, and the reserves served by SWAT. This legacy will continue thanks to his supportive training and leadership.



Medium to long term goals:

Educate and encourage residents to remove invasive weeds from their properties

Support our seven weed removal volunteer groups and grow the volunteer base and number of groups
Seek funding to undertake large scale invasive weed removal and planting programmes on significant landscapes such as Reotahi and Manaia

The last quarter of 2025 came to a close with both our AGM and farewell party for Mike. The Trust welcomed new Trustee Louise Freckleton and farewelled Brian Waddell. The party for Mike Urlich was a wonderful opportunity for the community to acknowledge his contribution.

Supporting community habitat restoration

Landowner Assistance Oct – Dec 25

- There were 20 Landowner requests for assistance, resulting in 15 site visits
- WANHRT supported a community working bee at Arahiwi Rise, Pataua South

Making Weed Action Accessible

Full or half-size bottles of Met Gel were distributed to all of our volunteer groups and 15 landowners.

We continue to also distribute small bottles of glyphosate and metsulfuron granules, but mixing up can be a barrier to action, so the gels are an excellent complement.

WDC Grant

We were really pleased to receive a \$9k grant from Whangarei District Council to target madeira vine, moth plant, and banana passionfruit, plus traffic management, signs and bins.

Marketing Activity

Over this period WANHRT reached out via Facebook and WHCA newsletter for community reports of outlier Taiwan Cherry and Tree Privet East of Parua Bay – responses are still coming in! Jan has funds from NRC to complete this work.

The Mega Moth Plant Movement kicked back in at the start of November with sign and social media encouraging getting it early. The focus is on STOP the PODS however there are challenges in capturing people's attention and energy during this busy season. We are supporting local with Parua Bay Tavern vouchers as the prize for STOP THE PODS competition and the pod collection competition will be part of the Whangarei Heads School Funky Fish fundraiser.

In November the team and two volunteers took part in a filming day with Wendy Bown from NRC as part of our Environmental Awards prize package – [Video Here](#) – this media will be very useful for telling our story



NRC Biofunds

- WANHRT supported two Biofund applications for private properties bordering Reotahi and Manaia
- The application to remove a large jasmine infestation at Reotahi was successful and both human and drone weed control methods were deployed.

EcoNet and Data Management

The team made some progress in training on the CRM side of the system and have started to input data from July 2025 to December 2025.

Simon took on the mantle of keeping the project rolling and ensuring the data inputs are consistent and useful.

Volunteer habitat restoration in reserves

Work in Reserves and PCLs

With 7 active weed groups working across the landscape, WANHRT volunteers contributed restoration efforts at a total of 26 unique sites over this reporting period.



Data Collected	Total
Volunteer hours:	2864.5 (Landcare groups estimated)
Value (\$) of volunteer contribution (valued at \$30/hr):	\$85,935
Number of groups:	7/8
Number of core group members	45
Number of public engagement activities:	48 Weed Action Volunteer Group events, 1 x visit to Whangarei Heads School, 6 monthly newsletters, signs, 3 WHCA articles, Facebook posts
Number of landowner engagement/support:	34 landowners contacted us, 29 herbicide allocations, 15 Met Gels also given, 24 landowner site visits with 15 Hours of Power

SWAT

5 Sites: The Nook, Reotahi/Darch Point Roads jasmine, Norfolk Ave, QEII land at Parua Bay

Tamaterau

1 Site: Tamaterau Reserve

Parua Bay

4 Sites: PB Community Centre, Fenceline at Skatepark, Behind Sports Fields, Ritchie Road junction

Manaia/McLeod Bay

3 Sites: Mcleod Bay Green and Stream, Pinelands, Behind Neptune Drive

Reotahi

2 Sites: Beside Campground, Behind Lort Point Lane

Smugglers

2 Sites: Zig Zag Path, Home Bay

Ocean Beach

2 Sites: Dunelands, Carpark/Stream Reserve

Other Sites

Darch Point
Madeira Vine - 4
Planting Day - 2

Landscape level habitat restoration



Pilot Project Phase 2 and Reotahi Phase 3

Aki Tai Here have completed feedback from the first Pilot Project with hapu/iwi and consultation about the use of funding is currently in hand.

Feedback from hapu/iwi will be delivered early February and according to responses will inform the Pilot Project proceeding and application submission to Lotteries for Reotahi.

Parua Bay QEII Stephenson Fund

WANHRT's Stephenson Fund application for work on privately owned mature forest at Parua Bay was successful.

Co-funding hours will include extensive work being done in the area by SWAT and the Parua Bay Weed Action Group.

Aki Tai Here and Mike Ulrich are delivering the contractor hours, already well underway.

This project is a great opportunity to engage the school and community, with its connectivity with the Community Centre and skate park.

Tangata Whenua Engagement

In November, WANHRT (alongside Bream Head Te Whara Conservation Trust and initial planning with Manaia Landcare) held a hui with representatives from multiple hapu with ties to the landscapes we work in.

This initial hui is a step towards building relationships with tangata whenua and understanding how we can conduct meaningful consultation and engagement.

Strategic Sites

Privet and Taiwan Cherry sites beyond Parua Bay have been mapped and control efforts are underway.

Following hard work by the Manaia Bush Recovery Group, a large pile of flame tree-fall and emerging weeds was creating hazards and required the use of a large mulching machine at the stream-side in McLeod Bay.

Madeira vine work will continue during June/July 2026 and other strategic weed sites will require release of funds from the WANHRT back up fund.

DoC Threatened Species – Manaia

- We are about to begin year 3 of this 3 year project.
- We have submitted our Year 2 Milestone report along with the following great visual StoryMap report completed by Aki Tai Here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3158163b85d14d5c90fbed9ac48f6837/>
- Surveying and monitoring of threatened species occurs in upper elevations
- Invasive plant control occurs in lower elevations where high density of weeds has been identified

Photos



SWAT surveying QEII bush at Parua Bay



WANHRT and Aki Tai Here contractors on the final day of Manaia TS mahi for 2025



The Parua Bay Weed Action Group having made a positive impact on the small reserve at the start of Ritchie Road



Residents in Pataua South worked together to remove moth plant with Weed Action support

A drizzly November morning didn't deter the Smugglers Track moth plant eradicators

