

High Value Area QUARTERLY UPDATE January to March 2026



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

Weed Action is delighted to welcome Kate Davies to the team as Community Engagement Coordinator. Kate D has a passion for habitat restoration planting and lives locally in Taurikura. She will work closely alongside Kate Hardcastle to support our seven volunteer groups and local residents in removing invasive weeds from our environment.



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

With Thanks To:

Mega Moth Plant Movement
Our major community engagement activity for this period is the Mega Moth Plant Movement (MMPM). Utilising signs, social media, and events, Weed Action is encouraging locals to take control of moth plant at home and in our shared spaces.

Coming Up!

Weed Action Planting Day

Where: McLeod Bay next to The Green

Date: Sunday 28 June

Time: 10am

More details to come...

Supporting community engagement in habitat restoration

Moth Plant Pod Competition

Following the STOP THE PODS push in 2025, Weed Action returned to holding a pod collecting competition with a twist, aligning with the Whangārei Heads School's major fundraiser, the Funky Fishing and Diving Comp. Entrants had one weekend to collect and then bring their pods to the event to be "weighed in" for judging. The winners were lucky to receive prize packs from Mitre 10 Mega Whangārei.

With thanks to the school's support we will continue this initiative next year.



Media

Weed Action were featured in an April Northern Advocate article on moth plant and pod collecting competitions [Article Here](#). Articles for the WHCA Newsletter urged residents to report Taiwan cherry and Privet and explained how to tackle moth plant yourself.

We shared 18 posts and 1 Reel to the community via Facebook, reaching over 15,000 viewers.

Landowner Assistance January to March 2026

29 local landowners got in touch over this period for advice, assistance and free herbicides to tackle invasive plants.



Native Plantings at Reotahi are Thriving

At the start of the year, around 25 leaders and rangatahi from the Holyground Camp at Parua Bay came to assist Weed Action volunteers with hand-releasing our plantings at Reotahi.

We have since returned to do follow up release and the plants are thriving, with some almost a metre tall.



Roadside moth plant control along Whangārei Heads Road

For the second official year, the Weed Action team and sub-contractors have controlled moth plant along the entire 18 kms of Whangārei Heads Road reserve from Tamaterau to Taurikura.

We were pleased to have Whangārei District Council support for this, including labour costs and funding for traffic management at the most infested and hazardous section near the Pines Golf Course.

As a bonus we were able to also extend this work out to Pataua South, thanks in part to huge reductions in moth plant load in other areas.



Reotahi

Over February and March the Reotahi volunteer team made two visits to the old abattoir site to tackle multiple large wattles, wild ginger, elaeagnus, moth plant, woolly nightshade and queen of the night.



SWAT

The hard-working Strategic Weed Action Team paid visits to The Nook and Turiapua Reserve in this period. Both were follow-up sites where multiple sessions have been held before, and the health of the bush is greatly improved.

Their next location will be at Whangārei Heads School, which holds a significant bush reserve within its land.



Ocean Beach

The Ocean Beach Landcare Group have been busy keeping smothering vines including tradescantia, cape ivy, and nasturtium from threatening their 2025 plantings. There has been some land slippage from recent wet weather events, so once these plantings take hold they will help to stabilise this stream side area adjacent to the lower carpark.

Vespex at key sites

With the consent of Whangārei District Council and the Ross family, Weed Action has undertaken Vespex operations at three locations over the early autumn period. The Reotahi walkway, McLeod Bay The Green, and the surrounds of the Parua Bay Community Centre, have had bait stations and bait installed by a certified operator, to target German wasps. Wasps present an annual H&S concern for Weed Action contractors and volunteers. They are also an ecological threat to native invertebrate and bird populations.

Smugglers Track

This small but dedicated crew have made good inroads in removing moth plant infestations near to the Home Bay zig-zag track, Weed Action is focused on finding a few more locals keen to join up and build on this progress.

DoC Threatened Species – Manaia

Weed Action and contract delivery partners Aki Tai Here are approaching the final months of this 3 year project.

The strategy to balance field work across weed control days and monitoring and survey expeditions has been working well and is returning promising results.

Weed Action is applying for a further 3-year Community Fund for this project..



Strategic Sites / Weeds

The **Privet and Taiwan Cherry** programme is a continuation of the now-scaled back Parua Bay Privet Buffer. Thanks to funding from Northland Regional Council, it intends to contain the spread of these invasive species by removing them from areas east of Parua Bay, where they are not yet prevalent. To date the team have controlled approximately 30 large specimens and 100 saplings in Taurikura alone, with single outliers also contained in other areas.

Landscape level habitat restoration



Tangata Whenua Engagement

Following the November Whangārei Heads Taiao hui, WANHRT and Bream Head / Te Whara Conservation Trust have held a subsequent hui with attendance from a wide range of hapu/iwi members. Aki Tai Here also presented on feedback and consultation on the Foundation North-funded Pilot Project.

Parua Bay – QEII Stephenson Fund – Restoration Planting

The formation of the Parua Bay Weed Action volunteer group in 2025 has been a boon for weed control in the area. In recent months the team have concentrated a lot of effort around the Community Centre, Ross Family Trust Sports Fields, and the new skate park.

Weed control is being undertaken by conservation contractors in QEII land adjoining the sports fields, thanks to funding from the Stephenson Fund, and we are also formulating habitat restoration plans for planting projects in the area, including the waterways.

Alongside the sidewalk works being done to connect the skate park and village, and efforts being made by Whangārei District Council to address the wastewater issues, Weed Action is taking a holistic view of this catchment area.

Pilot Project Phase 2 and Reotahi Phase 3

Responses from the Whangārei Heads Taiao hui in April will inform the project planning and funding of the next steps of these projects.

A Message from the Weed Action Native Habitat Restoration Trust

To our incredible Whangārei Heads community — thank you. The work you're doing on your properties to remove environmental weeds is making a real difference. Every moth plant pod collected, every ginger clump dug out, every vine pulled from a canopy, helps stop these invaders from spreading further. Your efforts are protecting the native habitats we all love, and it shows.

We also want to acknowledge our own small but mighty team — the two Kates.

A warm welcome to Kate Davies, who joins us with a rich background in teaching and habitat restoration. And a big mihi to Kate Hardcastle, who many of you will have met on your driveways, in your gullies, or out on the tracks — visiting landowners, supporting volunteers, and tracking down new weed incursions like Madeira vine before they take hold.

Our Trustees are equally committed, and we're delighted to welcome Louise Freckleton to the table. Her skills and perspective add to our wonderfully eclectic mix, strengthening the Trust as we continue to grow.

As this quarter shows, restoring native habitats at Whangārei Heads isn't one big heroic effort. It's hundreds of small, determined actions carried out by people who care deeply about this place. From pods collected in buckets, to weeds cleared on steep slopes, to quiet conversations with landowners — the momentum is real.

There's still plenty to do. Weeds don't tend to take holidays. But the strength of our community, our partnerships, and our shared purpose means we're not tackling this alone. Together, we're steadily shifting the balance back in favour of native habitats and the life they support.

So here's to another season of getting stuck in, looking after what matters, and maybe — just maybe — staying one step ahead of the moth plant.

