

Report No.	25-04
Information Only - No Decision Required	

CATCHMENT OPERATIONS GROUP REGIONAL SUMMARY REPORT

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This item is to update Council on activity by the Catchment Operations Group of Horizons Regional Council during the 2024-25 financial year with a focus on activity over October and November 2024. The report includes updates for the biosecurity, biodiversity, freshwater, land and river management and flood protection activities.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1. This report updates on activity of the Catchment Operations Group including progress against the Long-term Plan targets for the year.

Annual Plan Targets

- 2.2. Overall, the Catchment Operations Group has 46 Long-term Plan targets (Table 1). Five targets (11%) have been achieved, 39 other targets (85%) are on track for delivery and 2 (4%) remain uncertain/at-risk. The at-risk target for Land Management is erosion control works targets for SLUI i.e. hectares of work to be completed. The River Management target that is at-risk of not being achieved is the environmental grant target.

Table 1: Summary of progress on Long-term plan targets 2024-25.

Activity	Achieved	On track	Uncertain	Unlikely	Will not achieve	Total applicable
Land Management	1	2	1			4
Freshwater and Partnerships		9				9
Biodiversity and Biosecurity		13				13
River Management	4	15	1			20
Catchment Operations Group Total	5 (11%)	39 (85%)	2 (4%)			46 (100%)

Funding Contract Targets

- 2.3. The Catchment Operations Group has \$16.9M of budgeted external funding in 2025. This includes Central Government co-funding that establishes additional contract targets. Achieving some of the Central Government contract targets is at risk as discussed further in the Freshwater, Land and River Management sections below.

Biodiversity

- 2.4. The biodiversity programme is on track to achieve all of its Long-term Plan targets for the year. Progress is being made across a range of projects. The Priority Habitats programme has planned maintenance or restoration work at 86 of the 95 sites with the majority of this to be delivered over summer/autumn. The six icon sites and two targeted rate projects are progressing well. The Te Āpiti Governance Group held their six-monthly meeting in October. Some positive changes have been noted in monitoring results for pest animals at Te Āpiti following switching bait types. The Contestable Biodiversity Fund has funded 27 new projects in 2024-25, along with eight projects in their second or third year. Overall these projects are considered 25% complete. The Tōtara Reserve work programme has been quite active with the camping season underway, an open day held in October, a

Reserve Management Plan review process underway and work including Council items on flood resilience at the site being progressed.

Biosecurity

- 2.5. Work on the Regional Pest Management Plan Review has been initiated following two workshops and a Council item. As a continuation of that work a Council workshop about the pressures on the possum programme is planned for mid-March. An update on progress against the Regional Pest Management Plan for pest plants was provided to Council via a workshop in late 2024. This highlighted some of the challenges in meeting the objectives of the Regional Pest Management Plan for a range of pest plant species.

Biosecurity Animals

- 2.6. The possum control programme is targeting control over 88 operational areas covering 877,800 hectares (about 45% of the region) over the 2024-25 year. At the end of November, 40% of planned operational areas and 50% of the planned bait station fills were completed. Rook control was completed through October and November. Overall there were more active nests (up from 72 to 167), but with a continuation of the decline in the number of active rookeries (now at 43, from 55 last year).

Biosecurity Plants

- 2.7. Activity over the period to address Annual Plan targets included early season surveillance for target species at historical sites and other likely locations by ground and by using drones in harder to access locations. Social media alerts were used to prompt surveillance for exclusion pest species when they are most noticeable.
- 2.8. Instream surveys for alligator weed took place in Palmerston North's Mangaone Stream, with no plants found at historical or new sites. Biosecurity planning was completed for the river works conducted by Horizons Regional Council's River Management Team conducting works within risk infection zones of the Mangaone Stream. These require machinery hygiene once leaving the site and controlled storage of ex-site material at a secure location to enable surveillance and control of any plant material that may develop.
- 2.9. The National Wilding Conifer Control Programme with the **Central North Island (CNI) Partners** has been re-contracted for another year, with all partners prepped for another season. Horizons received \$170k of the \$509k available to the CNI Partners this year.
- 2.10. Awareness material has also been produced around the Check Clean Dry freshwater pest awareness programme, especially focusing on the risk of gold clam to our lakes and rivers. Along with social media posts and press, Horizons has produced a Whanganui River Catchment Invasive Clam Response Plan with Ngā Tāngata Tiaki, Genesis Energy Limited, Whanganui District Council, Ruapehu District Council and the **Department of Conservation (DOC)**.

Land Management

- 2.11. During the October to December period, effort shifted from winter planting programmes to inspecting completed works and claims. The SLUI programme has completed 1,683 ha of claims for the year being around 51% of the annual target for erosion control works (3,285 ha). Based on the current allocation amount of 3,531 ha of work, it is considered SLUI will unlikely meet the overall target for the year. Typically 60% to 70% of the allocated work is completed each year. All other land management targets are on track for completion. A SLUI Advisory Group meeting is being planned for May with topics including allocation levels, programme projections and settings, as well as preparing for a further application to the Government funded Hill Country Erosion Fund.

Freshwater and Partnerships

- 2.12. The freshwater and partnerships programme is on track to meet its Long-term Plan targets for the year. With the extension to the Jobs for Nature Riparian Fencing and Planting project to the end of this financial year there are additional contract targets. Of these three out of four are on track. The stream fencing target is at risk of non-completion with 40.84 km of work allocated for a target of 64 km. The next Manawatū River Leaders' Forum Meeting has been set for March with a focus on the water quality trends alongside biodiversity and other natural resources reporting to inform actions for the next action plan. The Lake Horowhenua weed harvesting operation has been informed by survey work in December and harvesting began in January. The consent decision for the Arawhata Wetland has been appealed and staff are working through the appeal process with a court date set in March. The contract for the Horowhenua Jobs for Nature project has been extended by a further year to end in June 2026.

River Management and Flood Protection

- 2.13. The river management and flood protection activity is on track to achieve 19 out of 20 of the Long-term Plan targets. At the end of December, scheme operations are progressing with 39% of the maintenance budget and 41% of the repairs budget having been spent. Activity has been slower than planned. This has been in-part due to staff capacity and in-part due to an abatement notice being received in October 2024. More information on the abatement notice and the response to that is provided within this report.
- 2.14. The capital programme has grown from the Long-term Plan budgeted \$17.1M to \$28.4M via Council decisions. Large projects at Moutoa Gates and Tremaine Avenue are progressing. Work on the Te Pūwaha project has continued with Council decisions in December 2024 supporting lodging a further application to Central Government for further funding. The application was lodged in December. Te Pūwaha project delivery this year has been delayed as consenting, design and procurement are being finalised. Consents were granted for the South Mole and Tanea Groyne in late 2024 and procurement is planned to initiate in February. Work on Feilding flood resilience has also progressed with Council committing to further land purchases in December 2024. Overall the capital programme is predicting to spend approximately \$21M in the current year, being approximately double the expenditure in the previous year \$10.6M. A separate paper on the Foxton Flood Resilience programme is provided as a part of this agenda.
- 2.15. The asset management work has been spread across the revaluations of assets, the single Asset Management Plan development, developing and applying a framework to prioritise repairs and responding to the abatement notice. Asset inspections are on track for the financial year. The Regional Flood Vulnerability Assessment is progressing with some draft parts of the report having been received for review. The current project tracking places this study as 35% complete and on track for completion within the financial year.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 25-04.

4. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 4.1. There is no financial impact associated with this paper. The item does provide updates on a range of financial matters in relation to the delivery of the work programme.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1. This is a public item and therefore Council may deem this sufficient to inform the public.

6. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 6.1. It is considered that there is no significant risk impact of this item.

7. CLIMATE IMPACT STATEMENT

- 7.1. This item reports on Horizons' activity in relation to the Annual Plan targets for the Catchment Operations Group and is not considered to have a climate change impact. Some of the activities included in the item will have some climate impact as part of operational delivery, e.g. travel to undertake the activity, and some activities will have a positive climate change impact. An overall assessment of the impact of these individual activities on climate change has not been undertaken, however these will be included in the overall organisational assessment of Horizons activity and emission.

8. BACKGROUND

- 8.1. This regional summary report provides Council with reporting for the Catchment Operations Group activity across the biodiversity and biosecurity, land, water and flood protection activities of the Long-term Plan and Annual Plan.
- 8.2. The majority of the Catchment Operations Group work programme is non-regulatory, being one part of the combined non-regulatory and regulatory activity to deliver on outcomes defined by legislation e.g. the One Plan or **National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FW)**. For example, the **Sustainable Land Use Initiative (SLUI)** is a non-regulatory method of the One Plan and combines with the regulatory management of sediment management in catchments to contribute to the sediment outcomes in-river. SLUI also contributes to other goals e.g. increased resilience to weather events.
- 8.3. The work programme includes the regulatory component of biosecurity management via the Regional Pest Management Plan. The programme also includes the river and drainage work of Horizons that is primarily delivered within the area covered by the 34 River and Drainage Schemes.
- 8.4. This regional report is arranged in sections for Biodiversity (Section 9), Biosecurity Animals (Section 10), Biosecurity Plants (Section 11), Land Management (Section 12), Freshwater and Partnerships (Section 13) and River and Drainage (Section 14).

9. BIODIVERSITY

Overview

- 9.1. The non-regulatory biodiversity programme is designed to implement part of Horizons' overarching biodiversity strategy as contained in the One Plan. The programme is structured to complete work to protect rare and threatened ecosystems in the region and support community biodiversity through five icon sites, two targeted rate projects and a Contestable Biodiversity Fund. The programme also includes management of Tōtara Reserve Regional Park.

Annual Targets 2024-25

- 9.2. The non-regulatory biodiversity programme targets are to continue increasing the number of sites being actively managed, to support community biodiversity projects and to maintain and promote Tōtara Reserve, Horizons' only regional park. All targets are on track to be met in 2024-25 (Table 2). Further information is provided in the sections below.

Table 2: Result against the biodiversity Annual Plan targets for 2024-25, 1 July through 30 November.

Long-term Plan Target	Target	Allocated	Completed or supported	Percentage of target completed
Protect/enhance priority habitat remnants				
At least one representative site of each of the 30 known and priority ecosystem types in the region are found and protected in the priority habitats active management programme.	93%	93%	96.6%	104%
The number of sites in the priority habitats programme is sustained or increased.	>80	95	95	119%
Support biodiversity protection and improvement projects at identified biodiversity icon sites and specified targeted rate projects				
Support Icon and target rate biodiversity projects.	7	8	8	114%
Support communities to manage their own biodiversity improvement projects				
Private individuals, organisations, and community groups are supported and enabled to improve and protect biodiversity across the region.	>12	27	35	Underway
Tōtara Reserve Regional Park				
Annual report on the management of Tōtara Reserve Regional Park for biodiversity and recreational values, including managing the camping facility.	Achieve	1	0	0%

Priority Habitats

Programme and goals

9.3. Council’s goal for this programme is “to maintain or restore the full range of the region’s priority indigenous ecosystems to a healthy and functioning level” in order to protect the full suite of remaining indigenous biodiversity in the region.

9.4. To deliver on the programme’s goal, the work has two components:

1. Maintenance of sites in the programme to retain their actively managed status and align with the pursuit of these ecosystems being at a healthy and functional level; and
2. The addition of new sites to the programme to add to the coverage of the full range of the region’s rare and threatened indigenous ecosystems that Horizons has prioritised for protection.

Activity in 2024-25, 1 October to 30 November

9.5. The total number of sites in the priority habitats programme being actively managed is 95. A map showing the site distributions across the region can be found on page 6 of the [July-September report](#). These sites contain representative remnants of 29 of the region’s 30 most threatened and rare ecosystem types, which Horizons has identified as priorities for protection.

9.6. Programmed site management work carried out on these sites can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of priority habitats programme activity in 2024-25.

Area	Work	Progress
Existing site management	<p>During 2024-25, maintenance or restoration work has been scheduled at 86 of the 95 sites, with 80 (93%) receiving planned works this year in the form of pest control (72 sites), planting (3 sites), or fencing (8 sites). Biodiversity monitoring is also planned for a number of sites. The majority of this work will take place over summer and autumn. Highlights of work completed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figures 1-3 show photos of some of the priority habitats programme activity in this first quarter. • The spring weather has continued in the northern half of the region, 	30% completed

Area	Work	Progress
	<p>making spraying weeds at multiple sites difficult, causing delays to contractors starting their weed control season and preventing works from being conducted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horo49w Perawitis Wetland – new site, set up six DOC250 traps, three AT220 traps and established a tracking tunnel line. Animal pest staff have been adding cyanide to bait stations with great success. Tracking tunnel monitor done with no rats tracked and only one card showing mouse prints. Photopoints have been established at this site to visually track change. 1232 metres of three-wire electric fencing was completed around the northern side, and extra wire added to the southern side to fully stock proof the site. • Horo67w Ōhau Estuary – Pest Plant Management Plan finalised and control of marram, coastal wattle, lupin and gorse on the foredunes undertaken. • Horo69w Taupunga Bush – New site, weed survey was completed. • Horo47w Ransfield Wetland - released plantings done over winter. Most looking really good although a small number were frost-damaged. Another 60 manuka were planted. • HoroX Kaikai Wetland – 800 manuka were planted. • Horo109 McErlean Snail Gully – site was surveyed and new clusters of live snails found. • Man12W Broadlands Wetland - initial weed control done for season. Pink ragwort pulled, and traps serviced. • Man164 Linklater Bush – Large Jerusalem cherry plants that were sprayed with a knapsack in September, were followed up in November with further areas sprayed, as well as hand-pulling of seedlings. • Man158 Hopkins Bush E – An adult old man’s beard plant was discovered and treated during a weed survey in February this year. A check-up in November showed the adult old man’s beard plant completely dead (Figure 1), and there were no further plants found. Elderberry was also controlled. • Rua54 Ohorea Homestead Bush - Trap service carried out on the DOC200 traps. • Rua12W Dobles Wetland - Trap service carried out on AT220 traps • Rua98W Nga Wai o Taketake Wetlands - Reengaged with Ngā Whenua Rāhui after staff departure to progress the kawenata. • Rua10 Kawautahi Stream Forest - Further engagement was carried out with Ātīhau-Whanganui Inc. to commence willow control around the culturally significant wetland. • Rang116 Sutherlands-Puriri Reserve – bat recorders were set up and recorded long-tail bat activity. Rare <i>Gratiola concinna</i> species was discovered that had previously only been found at Tara52. • Tara03 Pukewhinau Trig Bush - REA update and weed check complete. Site is still weed-free. Larger area of remnant to be included in deer fence this summer being paid for by QEII (Figure 2). This area includes the small population of <i>Pittosporum divaricata</i> – the only known population in the Tararua District. • Tara09 Mangahao South Road Scout Camp bush weed control done. Old man’s beard seed bank is reducing and fewer seedlings are present each visit. Banana passionfruit in the buffer area is also reducing following years of control. • Tara18 Groenendijk Bush - weed control done. Old man’s beard at the site has reduced overall, but seed rain continues from nearby infestations. • Tara17 Mangaone Stream Bush - weed control done. • Tara41B Rātā tū wa o ki Tautane – check done on new fence, and huge new population of <i>Drymoanthus adversus</i> found within the newly retired part of the covenant. • Tara52 Turnberry Flats - initial weed control done during team training day. Also found a new site of <i>Gratiola concinna</i> boosting the known population at the site (Figure 3). 	

Area	Work	Progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Biodiversity Team took part in the nationwide Matuku Muster in October. Nine priority habitat wetlands were monitored for the endangered matuku-hūrepo (Australasian bittern) at sunset on the same night to try to better estimate numbers and distribution of this highly mobile species. Bittern were only detected at one site. Spotless crane detected at six sites; fernbird detected at one site. 	
	<p>Five-yearly Rapid Ecological Assessments (REAs) are due at fifteen sites in 2024-25. The following sites received their repeat REA this reporting period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rang72A - McNeill's Bush; Rang221 - Gilbert's Bush; and Tara03 - Pukewhinau Trig Bush. 	13% completed
	<p>There is \$25,000 capex budget this year. Only a small amount has been spent on planting spades while the team plans the best use of the remainder for trap purchases and monitoring equipment.</p>	1% completed



Figure 1: Man158 Hopkins Bush E – adult old man’s beard plant successfully killed with no further plants found.



Figure 2: Tara03 Pukewhinau Trig Bush – heavily deer-browsed reserve with no understory, about to be deer fenced this summer by QEII.



Figure 3: Tara52 Turnberry Flats - Exciting discovery of second site of very rare *Gratiola* species at site during team weed control work.

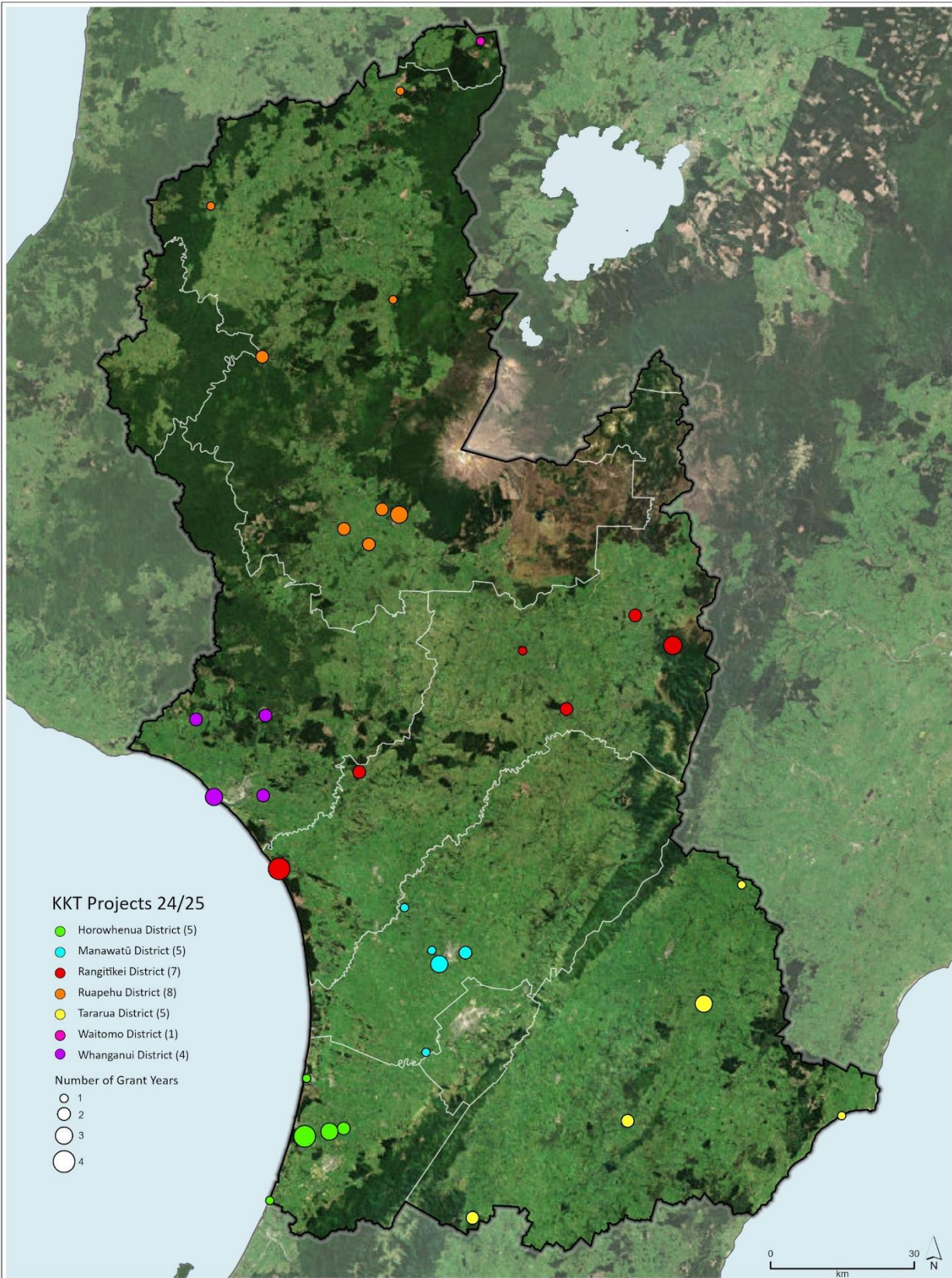
Biodiversity Partnerships

Goals, programme and updates from 1 October to 30 November

- 9.7. The biodiversity partnerships programme has a goal of “*Empowering communities to reconnect with and improve biodiversity*”.
- 9.8. In the 2024-25 year, this programme included:
- Six icon projects (Table 4), two targeted rate projects (Table 5); and
 - A contestable fund for community biodiversity projects (Table 6).
- 9.9. A map showing the location of the icon sites and targeted rate projects can be found in page 11 of the [July-September report 2024-25](#).
- 9.10. Map 1 shows the locations of the contestable fund projects across the region in 2024-25.
- 9.11. As well as the targeted biodiversity partnership programmes, the Community Biodiversity Team also supported other biodiversity initiatives across the region, including:
- A propagation workshop for the Manawatū Catchment Collective. These are proving popular with, typically, 25 people attending each time. The October workshop was held at Waitahora (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Sian, from the Biodiversity Team, delivering a Native Plant Propagation Workshop at Waitahora.



Kanorau Koiora Taketake - Indigenous Biodiversity Community Grants 2024-25

Map 1: Kanorau Koiora Taketake project locations across the region for 2024-25.

Table 4: Biodiversity partnerships activity on the Icon sites 1 October to 30 November.

Project	Comments	Progress
Bushy Park Tarapurui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bushy Park Tarapurui also carried out their annual Hihi (Stitchbird) monitoring and banding, which is the third year of their project supported with funding from Horizons Kanorau Koiara Taketake Indigenous Biodiversity Fund (Figure 5). This activity was assisted by Zoe Stone, from the Biodiversity Team, who had assisted with this work prior to joining Horizons this year. Mandy Brooke, who resigned from the Forest Manager role at Bushy Park after 10 years, had her farewell in late October. The event was well attended by 20 regular volunteers who had the opportunity to celebrate Mandy’s significant contribution and meet her replacement, Rosi Merz. The Bushy Park Forest Committee met monthly to discuss maintenance and long-term planning issues for the sanctuary. Aside from routine maintenance of the sanctuary’s fixed assets and forest health, they are considering the feasibility of mouse eradication from within the predator-proof fence. 	Work programme 50% complete
Te Āpiti Manawatū Gorge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Te Āpiti Governance Group held their six-monthly meeting on 18 October. Agenda items included an update on the Te Ahu a Turanga highway construction, track upgrades by DOC and volunteers, Te Āpiti Forum update on Masterplan project development, signage strategy development and a pest animal control update and exploration of Te Āpiti’s potential as an unfenced sanctuary for bird reintroductions. 	Work programme 42% complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pest plant control contractors continued their annual programme in Te Āpiti, and during this reporting period, they carried on targeting old man’s beard and Japanese honeysuckle. The bulk of the budgeted control has now been carried out, including some spray trials on tradescantia at the Ballance end of Te Āpiti (Figure 6). Remaining budget will wait until after the annual weed survey to locate the key areas that will be worked on before end of financial year. Animal pest control progressed with monthly checks of predator traps in all management areas. DOC contractors carried out a bait station fill in October in the Southern Forest using 1080 instead of Doubletapp in the hopes of further reducing both possum and rat populations toward the target of <5% Residual Trap Catch Index (RTCI) and Wax Tag Index (WTI). Monitoring of possum and rodent populations was carried out in November and returned a very pleasing result of 4% rats and 4.55% possums in the Southern Forest successfully meeting targets. The Northern Forest returned results of 3% rats and 18% possums following their Double-tap baiting operation in September. 	
Kia Whārite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular predator trapping was carried out in the Rētāruke and Whanganui River Catchments for whio (blue duck) protection, and in the Waimarino area for kiwi protection, according to schedule. Horizons meet with DOC on the 18th November to discuss the Rētāruke/ Manganui o te Ao security site status. Some trap data collection and communication issues were identified that were impacting the ability to effectively gauge trapping effort vs results. Resolutions were made to fix these. A whio survey was conducted in late October, with early results confirming there are 50 pairs across the two rivers this season. DOC is still invested in species protection in the area, having just completed an aerial 1080 operation across 32,530 ha of the Wanganui National Park, at a cost of \$1.2M. Trapping has continued with 3028 trap checks over the two-month period. 	Work programme 42% complete
Papangaio Te Wharangi Manawatū Estuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Manawatū Estuary Management Team (MEMT) completed the content of their 10-year management plan. It is now being formatted by Horowhenua District Council (HDC) ready for its launch in March. The Manawatū Estuary is now identified as Papangaio Te Wharangi Manawatū Estuary. This acknowledges two pa that were located at the Estuary. In short, it is referred to as ‘The Estuary’. The Fernbird Flat trap network (Five DOC250 traps, 31 DOC200 traps and three A24 traps) was checked monthly by Pest Animal Team staff. Over Oct/Nov a total of 8 pests were caught (six stoats, one rat and one hedgehog). Many activities are already underway that are included in the new draft Management Plan. New and upgraded activities include the inaugural Manawatū Estuary newsletter, website and Facebook development, pest animal plan prepared, and step one of the plan implemented with traps being built by Levin Menz Shed for installation at the Estuary and at homes at Foxton Beach. Weed control contractors were employed to progress areas controlled last year and 	Management Plan not complete Work programme 25% complete

Project	Comments	Progress
	according to the newly revised Weed Control Plan for the Estuary. This year, the contractor will concentrate on the wetland area next to Pinewood Road and white pine control that is quickly establishing in a similar area. Additional funds have been given by DOC to extend this contract a little further.	
Pūkaha Mt Bruce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pūkaha Mt Bruce buffer trap network (136 DOC250 traps and 50 Timms traps) was checked monthly during this reporting period by Horizons' Pest Animal Team. Over the two months, a total of 104 animals were caught (two cats, 24 hedgehogs, 53 rats, 18 rabbits, six stoats and one weasel). Pukaha have claimed half their annual grant of \$22,400 to support their biodiversity and biosecurity programme. As part of this, they have engaged Supplejack Contracting to conduct track-clearing works to maintain access to their trapping network. Progress to the plant nursery, construction funded by the Kanorau Koiora Taketake grant, was delayed due to consenting requirements. 	Work programme 40% complete
Ruahine Kiwi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The agreement with Horizons has been signed. A work plan has been prepared. 	0% completed



Figure 5: Zoe from Biodiversity Team assisted with banding hihi chicks at Bushy Park.



Figure 6: Te Āpiti - Before (left) and after (right) - pest plant contractors had some success with *Tradescantia* spray trials.

Table 5: Targeted rate partnerships activity 1 October to 30 November.

Project	Comments	Progress
Rangitikei Environment Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Rangitikei Environment Group (REG) carries out old man’s beard control in thirteen Rangitikei public bush reserves as required and in some urban areas and public walkways in response to enquiries from the public. REG has received 50% of its annual grant, which is funding its spring programme. 	Work programme 50% complete
Waitarere Beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waitarere Beach targeted rate received an increase to \$20k this financial year through the LTP process. This will be used to significantly boost pest plant control along the beach. An annual agreement between Horizons and the Waitarere Beach Progressive Ratepayers Association was drafted and signed, outlining the commitment and how this year’s funding was expected to be spent. The planting trial will have two further measurements in December 2024 and June 2025. The weed control contractor will continue the work carried out at the north end of the beachfront in December, but by community request, will then continue work from the south and support the newly planted area and the plant trial. 	Work programme 15% complete

Table 6: Kanorau Koiora Taketake Contestable Biodiversity Fund project updates for the first quarter of 2024-25.

Project	Comments	Progress
2024-25 projects	<p>Twenty-seven new projects were allocated from the fund in 2024-25, along with 8 projects in their second or third year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Otiranui Guardians – Trapping has continued with a further 6 feral cats removed from the Puketawa Bush between Ohakune and Raetihi, bringing the group’s total to 12 cats removed since the group received their live capture cage traps. On 14 November they caught their largest rat to date weighing at 744 g and was longer than 40 cm snout to tail. Pikariki Restoration Rat Control Project – Over Labour weekend a team of 14 volunteers cleared approx. 20.5 km of tracks. The extensive track clearance has allowed trap installation to begin earlier than planned in early December. Raetihi School – Working to get plants in the ground by end of the school year. Te Waro A Ngahere Trust – The groups trapping programme over 1000 ha has been delayed until the start of 2025 due to the DOC 1080 operation that took place over 49,592 ha. Upper Ōngarue Catchment Group – The group has purchased 16 double-set DOC200s, five ATT220s and two feral cat traps so far with their grant money. They will install their trap lines along the Okauaka Stream in coming months. The Horizons Biodiversity Advisor in Tamarunui facilitated a “How to use Trap.NZ” workshop with 17 members of the catchment group to prepare them for trap catch data capture and to inform them of biodiversity monitoring techniques landowners can undertake themselves to track the progress they are making on their properties. 	25% completed

Project	Comments	Progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue Duck Station –100 double-set DOC200 traps were ordered and a working bee is organised for the last week of December to deploy them, replacing worn-out fifteen-year-old traps. Maata Kotahi – the project has purchased 27 Good Nature A24 traps, 15 Timms traps, 60 bait stations and bait. These materials are for use trapping in preparation for kiwi release. Mataroa School – Nursery build project received partial payment, works on nursery project are underway, and staff and school children are already using the partial facilities to raise native seedlings, with particular successes raising flax, pittosporum and kowhai. Ōhaumoko Family Trust have engaged Kahikatea Contractors to complete the grant funded old man’s beard control, this work is scheduled for early December. All native planting projects have plants ordered in preparation for an autumn planting; all pest plant control projects have engaged and scheduled contractors ready for control. Manawatū Catchment Collective received bat monitors and had them installed at the first site for bat identification. 	

Tōtara Reserve Regional Park Management

Programme and goals

9.12. Management of Horizons’ Regional Park at Tōtara Reserve involves looking after forest health, campground management, walking track maintenance and community engagement with the park and its unique qualities.

Activity in 2024-25 1 October to 30 November

9.13. Activity in the Tōtara Reserve Regional Park is reported in Table 7.

Table 7: Tōtara Reserve Regional Park Activity.

Project	Comments	Progress
Forest health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The network of 156 traps (47 DOC250 traps, 85 DOC200 traps and 24 Timms traps) was checked monthly. Bait stations were last filled in August, targeting rats and possums. Rats were monitored by tracking tunnels, returning a pre-op result of 22% in early August and a follow-up monitor in November recorded 0% TTI. This monitoring generally takes place four times per year. Possum monitoring with wax tags occurs as part of the surrounding PCO operation and is scheduled for 2026-27. Pest plant control by contractors Kaitiaki o Ngahere in the third year of their three-year contract expect to carry out their seasonal work programme between late November and early April. The priority species continue to be old man’s beard, banana passionfruit, gunnera, and cathedral bells. Work-start was delayed until December by weather. Wasp control is generally carried out over summer via Waspex bait station network when numbers are high enough and wasps are eating protein. So far, wasp numbers have been minimal. 	Work programme 30% complete
Campground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campground maintenance contractors carried out their monthly mowing and maintenance of facilities in line with the contract schedule. The campground reopened for camping from 25 October. Weed control works have been undertaken in the forest buffer surrounding Kererū Campground, releasing native trees planted in previous years. The water treatment plant has been serviced, filters replaced, and the system flushed in time for the campground opening. Routine weekly drinking water testing has restarted. 	
Tracks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracks were cleared of windfalls. All information signage across the walking tracks were cleaned and maintained (Figure 7). The two 2.5-tonne concrete blocks that had been placed at the entrance of the 	

Project	Comments	Progress
	Gilchrist/ Pettifar Tracks in September to prevent vehicle access to the forest and river were vandalised. The blocks were dragged aside by a vehicle, the gate damaged, and vegetation alongside the track entrance hacked back to force access. A Facebook post was published explaining the need for restricted access.	
Cultural engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report 'Thematic Analysis of Appropriate Tikanga' has been prepared by Venessa Pokaia. This will be used to inform activity with mana whenua at Tōtara Reserve. A hui to discuss the outcomes of the report is planned for January. 	
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Tōtara Reserve Open Day was held on 12 October, including stalls from four community groups (Figures 8 and 9). Interactive activities included guided walks, swim-safety throw rope challenge, biosecurity games, a 'have your say' kiosk and a sausage sizzle. Attendees also helped plant 760 manuka trees along the riverbank, which will assist with bank stabilisation and weed suppression. The weather was great, and a pleasing number of 350 people attended. Two coaches provided transport to members of the community, with 85 passengers arriving by bus. A Friends of Tōtara Reserve volunteer opportunity has been initiated by the biodiversity team, with planned activities to engage community members with the forest at Tōtara Reserve. The first volunteer day is scheduled for 10 December. 	
Management Plan review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first draft of the new Tōtara Reserve Management Plan was completed and presented to the Council in November. The second phase of public engagement was due to open on 5 December; a two-month submission and hearing process on the draft management plan. Submissions will mostly be captured online. 	
Advisory Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tōtara Reserve Advisory Board meeting and site visit was held at Tōtara Reserve on 10 October. 	
Flood Resilience Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The investigation into flood resilience options at Tōtara Reserve determined that stopbank construction by raising the road was not feasible with the time and budget available. Council workshopped the alternative options, including recommended closure of Kahikatea Campground following the next flood, detailed investigation work into an alternative campground and work toward expanding the track network to make up for the loss of the Gilchrist Track in Cyclone Gabrielle. Council voted to delay decision-making until after the Tōtara Reserve Management Plan had been finalised. 	



Figure 7: Tōtara Reserve track information signage pre (left) and post (right) cleaning.



Figure 8: Tōtara Reserve Open Day 2024.



Figure 9: Tōtara Reserve Open Day visitors helped plant 900 manuka seedlings along the riverbank.

12 February 2025

10. BIOSECURITY ANIMALS

Overview

- 10.1. The biosecurity animals programme delivers on Horizons' Regional Pest Management Plan objectives, focusing on the following animal pests: possums, rooks, wallabies and rabbits.
- 10.2. The **Possum Control Operation (PCO)** programme currently comprises 153 operational areas, and more areas may be added into the programme as OSPRI ceases working in them. Typically, approximately 90 of these PCOs are worked each year, with about two-thirds worked by the Horizons team and the remainder by contractors. Each PCO is monitored every four years using wax tags, with the result converted to a **Residual Trap Catch Index (RTC)** which is used to measure success and plan the programme.
- 10.3. Other programmes include: rook eradication, where staff undertake annual aerial nest baiting of all known rookeries; responding to sightings of wallabies as per the national surveillance protocol; providing a pest advisory and assistance programme to ratepayers; and monitoring rabbit numbers periodically as well as responding to boundary complaints.

Annual Targets in 2024-25

- 10.4. The biosecurity animals programme is currently on target to achieve the three Annual Plan targets, and no new hectares required control following release from OSPRI control in 2024-25 (Table 8).

Table 8: Progress reporting for the Biosecurity Animals Annual Plan targets as at 30th November 2024.

Performance measure/ contract target	Target	Progress
Possum densities are maintained at/below 10% RTC in all existing and new possum control operations. This is to enhance production, biodiversity, disease protection, and amenity values.	<10% RTC	On track. The results across the 19 monitors completed this year range from 0% to 6% RTC, average 1.1% RTC (+/- 0.5%).
All additional hectares released from OSPRI control are included in the PCO programme.	N/A	There are no new hectares in the 2024-25 year.
All known rookeries are treated annually to reduce crop losses and damage.	100%	100% all 43 known rookeries treated.
Provide an urban/peri-urban animal pest management service to assist ratepayers with specialist advice and equipment. All enquiries responded to within two working days.	100%	On track. 268 enquiries have been received during the 2024-25 year so far, and all were followed up within the agreed timeframes.

Possoms

- 10.5. The possum control programme is on target, with many of the PCOs that couldn't be completed due to lambing now finished. A total of 40% of planned PCOs and 50% of the target bait station fills were completed during the period 1 July 2024 and 30 November 2024 (Table in Map 2). The possum control programme plans to control possums over 88 operational areas with an estimated 109,300 bait stations programmed to be visited and refilled. The total area of the 88 PCOs planned to be worked in 2024-25 year, is 877,800 hectares (about 45% of the region, Map 2).
- 10.6. In the last two months of 2024, the Horizons Pest Animal Team had completed control work in 16 PCOs and work is underway in 10 others. The external contractors completed control work in four PCOs, with seven PCOs underway.
- 10.7. Nine PCO monitors were completed during the period October and November the results ranging from 0.1% to 5.1% RTC. The average was 1.6% RTC (+/- 0.7%) and all monitors were under the target of 10%. The monitor results can be seen in Map 3.

12 February 2025

PCO Pressures

- 10.8. The internal team is under capacity; currently down one position, this has been covered by casual staff. If it is not possible to retain casual staff, we do have extra capacity in our panel of contractors compared to previous years.
- 10.9. Work is under way preparing future options and costs for the PCO programme for a Council workshop in late March. This works in with the Regional Pest Management Plan review that is underway.

Rooks

- 10.10. Rook control was carried out between 11 October and 8 November (Map 4). Forty three rookeries were visited twice, with none needing a second treatment this year. This was most likely due to the timing of first treatment and consistent nesting across the region.
- 10.11. While there was an increase in active nests this year from 72 to 167, the number of active rookeries (breeding) continues to decline and is now at 43 from 55 in 2023-2024.
- 10.12. As part of the work, the team undertook tracking of rooks from just north of Marton to a new rookery on Mangahoe Road near the Turakina Valley.

Amenity Pests

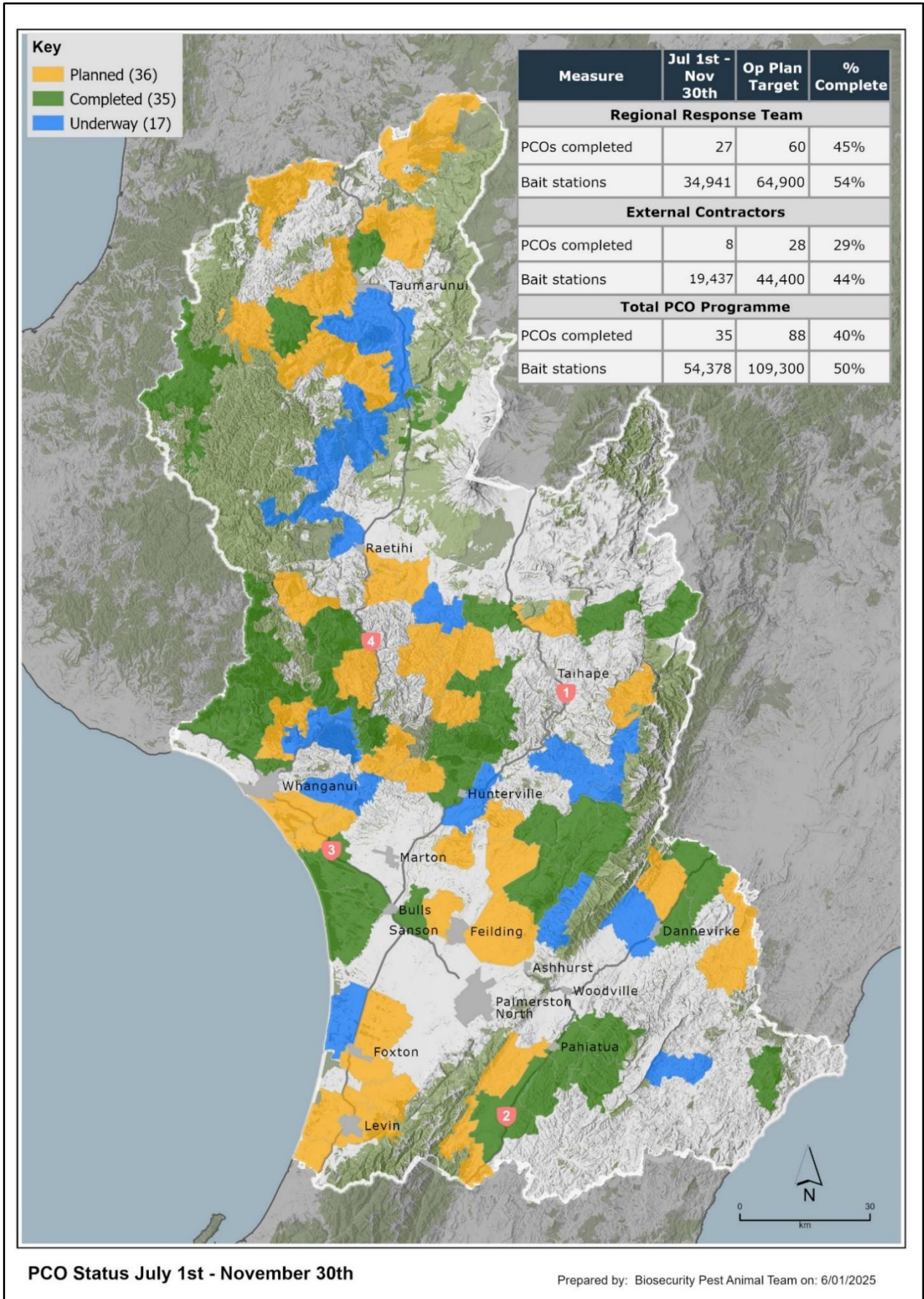
- 10.13. The amenity pest programme responded to 158 enquiries from 1 July to 30 November. The highest number of calls received were about possum (107), followed by rooks (41) and rabbits (52). All landowners making enquiries were contacted within the prescribed timeframes and provided with advice and in some cases equipment such as traps and small amounts of toxins to help them deal with their pest issues. Distributions of enquiries across the region for the year-to-date are shown in Map 5.

Biodiversity Support Animal Pest Control

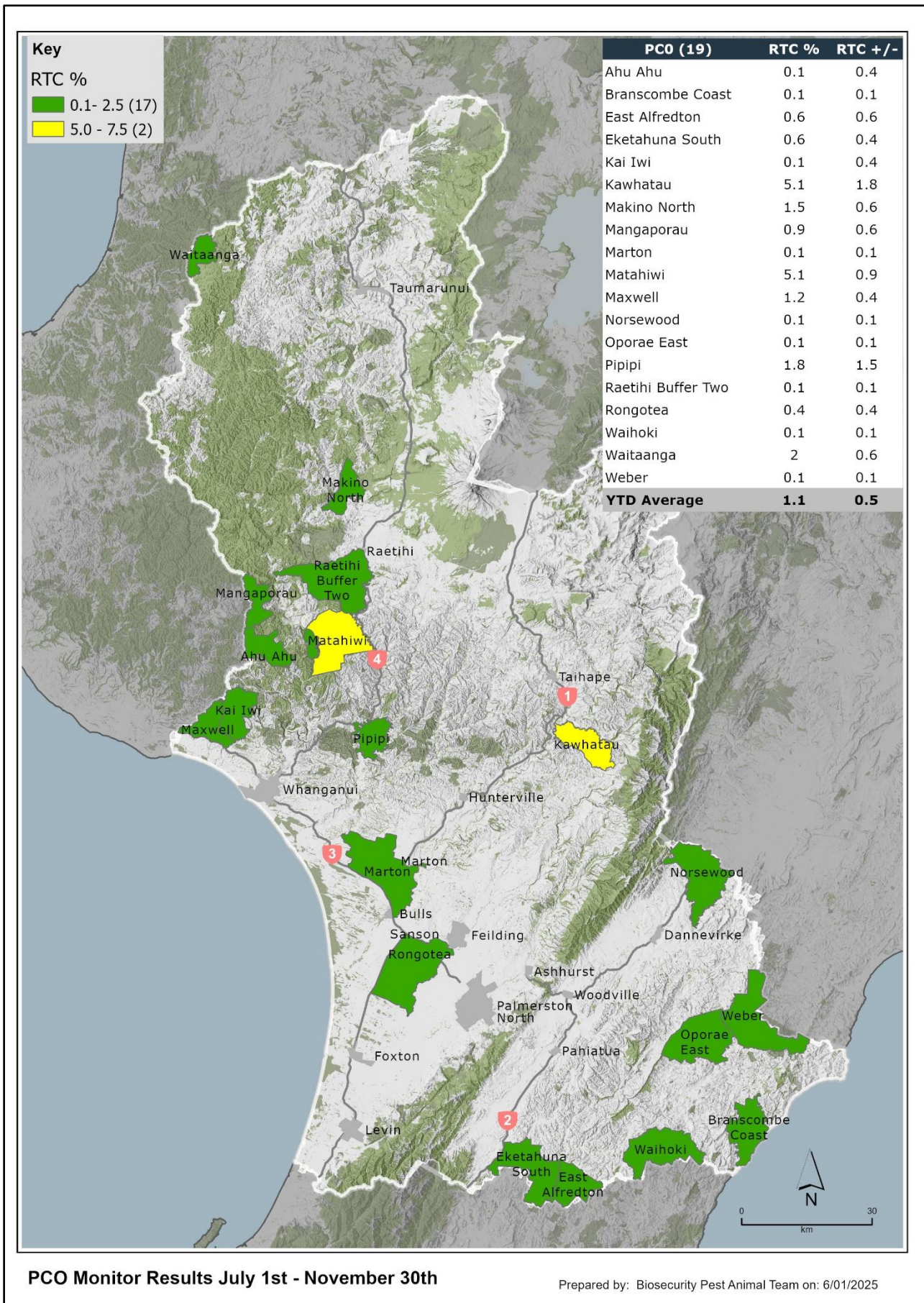
- 10.14. Horizons staff have carried out 2,334 trap checks at selected priority habitat and icon sites in the first three months of this year the catches are shown in Table 9.
- 10.15. Horizons staff are adding to the bait station network around managed priority habitat sites while carrying out their possum control operation work. To date there are a total 2,349 stations in and within 200 metres these sites.

Table 9: Trapping results at various biodiversity sites in 2024-25 as at 30th November 2024.

Operation	Trap numbers	Cat	Ferret	Hedgehog	Possum	Rat	Stoat	Weasel	Total result
Blake's Bush	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Broadlands	15	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	6
Christie's Lake	39	0	0	3	0	6	1	0	10
Manawatū Estuary	39	0	0	0	0	4	4	1	9
McErlean	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Pukaha Buffer	186	0	0	3	0	32	4	4	43
Te Āpiti Buffer South	253	0	0	0	0	8	0	4	12
Tōtara Reserve	207	0	0	1	0	19	3	5	28
FW Horowhenua Wetland	24	0	0	0	0	7	2	0	9
Total	780	0	0	8	0	81	16	15	120



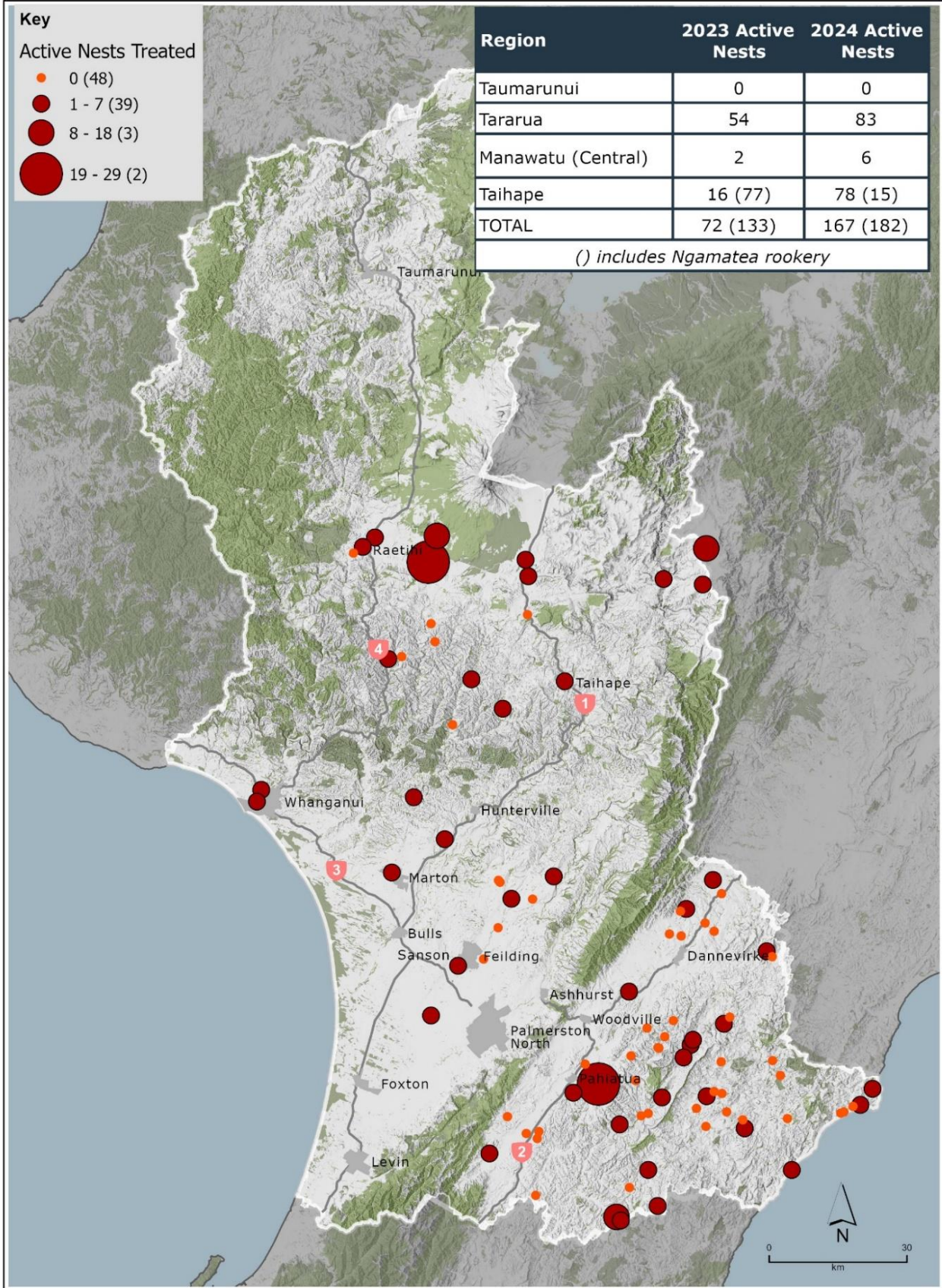
Map 2: Possum Control Operation status YTD 2024-25.



PCO Monitor Results July 1st - November 30th

Prepared by: Biosecurity Pest Animal Team on: 6/01/2025

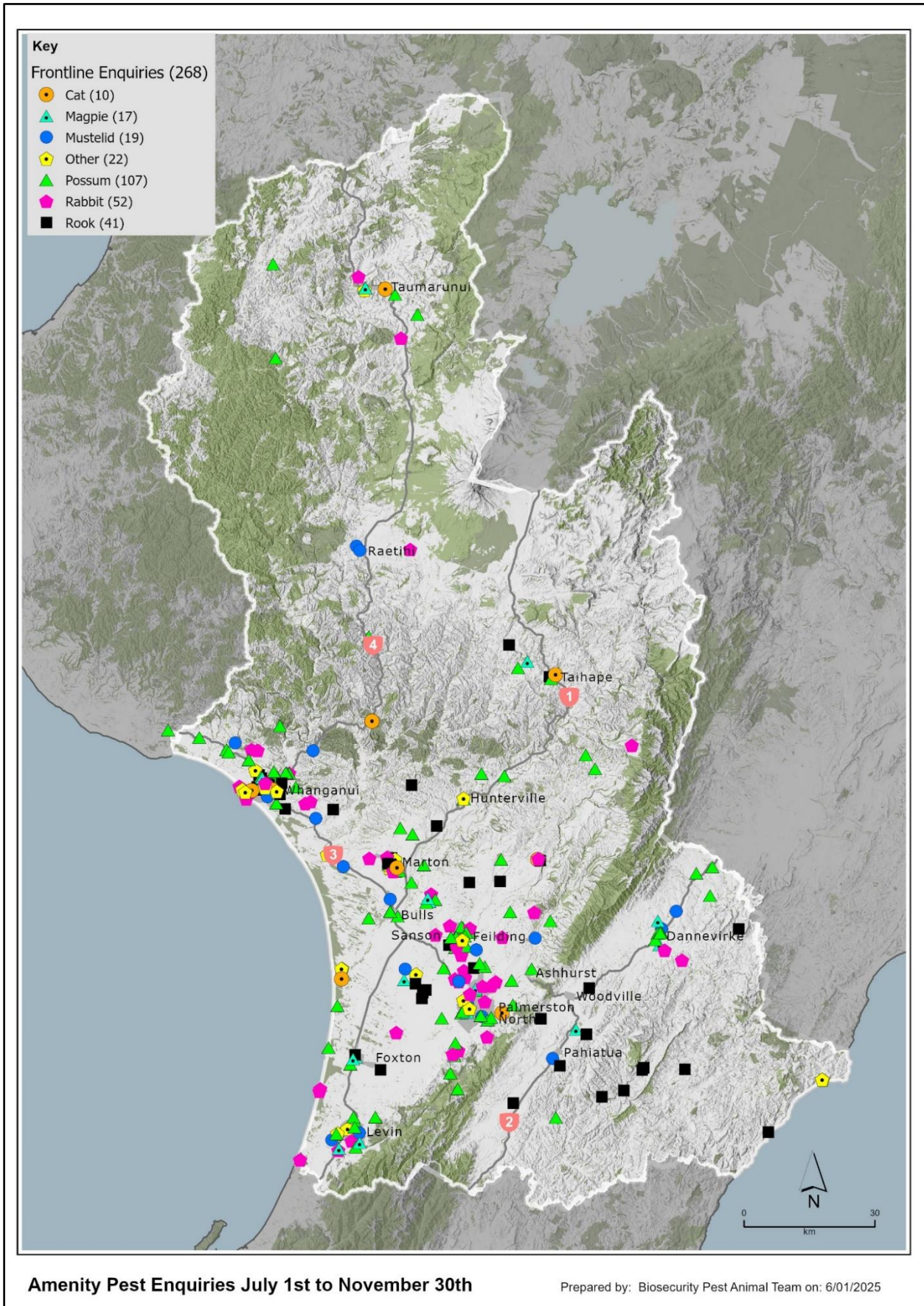
Map 3: Possum Control Operation monitor results YTD 2024-25.



Aerial Rook Control 2024

Prepared by: Biosecurity Pest Animal Team on: 9/01/2025

Map 4: Rook aerial October and November 2024.



Map 5: Amenity pest enquiries YTD 2024-25.

11. BIOSECURITY PLANTS

Overview

11.1. The biosecurity plants programme includes activity to implement the **Regional Pest Management Plan (RPMP) 2017-37** and other pest plant programmes included in the annual Operational Plan. The RPMP, includes 66 species of pest plants. Horizons funds and coordinates pest plant control across the region for 18 plant species and a further 11 species inside individually managed zones. The objectives for the various designations and species are provided in the RPMP, and these are summarised, at a basic level, in the sections below.

11.2. Biosecurity plants activity in the Operational Plan includes establishing and monitoring biocontrol agents, coordinating pest management activity with other stakeholders for national programmes, education, information and advocacy, which includes the “Check Clean Dry” freshwater biosecurity programme. Horizons also coordinates the Central North Island Regional Coordination Group for the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme and administers Central Government funding to other agencies, including Hawke’s Bay, Taupō and Whakapapa DOC offices, and Waikato and Hawke’s Bay Regional councils.

Annual Targets 2024-25

11.3. The annual plan targets for the biosecurity plants programme (Table 10) have been reduced from seven targets to four. Changes include reducing the targets for Exclusion pest response plans to the measure that response plan timeframes will be met; combining both eradication and progressive containment-mapped species reporting as an overall percentage of zero-levels for the sites managed by Horizons; and the addition of the requirement to produce an annual RPMP monitoring report.

Table 10: Pest plant programme Annual Plan targets progress 2024-25.

Performance Measures for Levels of Service	Target 2024-25	Progress
Response plans are enacted within their specified timeframes.	Number of response plans enacted within specified timeframes (100%).	No new response required to date.
The overall zero-level status of Horizons-managed sites increases on a yearly basis. Please note; 86% is noted as the baseline in the LTP24-34. However, this was an error; the 22/23 baseline was 79%.	Overall percentage of managed sites at zero-levels (ZL) increases from a 22/23 baseline of 79%.	On track. Species worked on this period include: alligator weed, woolly nightshade, banana passionfruit, Chilean rhubarb, blue passion flower, moth plant, knotweed, arrowhead, old man’s beard, cathedral bells, pest conifers and Darwin’s barberry.
Financially support the national bio-control agent development programme and report annually to Council on this programme and Horizons’ other biocontrol activity.	Financial support provided and annual report to Council.	Achieved.
		Report to be provided in May 2025.
Submit an annual monitoring report.	Annual monitoring report to Council.	To be included in final committee report for end of FY 2024-25.

11.4. An overview of the Regional Pest Management Plan is provided above. The sections below provide updates on implementation of plans for the eradication, exclusion and progressive containment programmes.

Exclusion programme

11.5. Council’s goal for the exclusion programme is to keep unwanted pest plants that are not already present out of the Horizons Region. Species that are in this category and progress in the 2024-25 year are overviewed in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Exclusion programme progress in 2024-25.

Species	Exclusion programme in 2024-25
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bladder wort 2. Chilean needle grass 3. Heath rush 4. Manchurian wild rice 5. Noogoora bur 6. <i>Phragmites australis</i> 7. Saffron thistle 8. <i>Sagittaria platyphylla</i> 9. Sweet pittosporum 10. Tussock hawkweed 	<p>Chilean needle grass (CNG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizons made a financial contribution to the gravel exclusion project, which is being run by AgResearch and primarily sponsored by Hawke’s Bay Regional Council. The project will look to determine if there is the possibility of being able to screen Chilean needle grass seed out of river gravel. River gravel is a major pathway for CNG, with the potential for seed to be spread into the region via contractors using river gravel from the Waipawa River for farm races and repairs. <p>Noogoora bur</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media post was put up in November to encourage people to keep an eye out for this pest plant, in particular landowners in the Ruapehu District, where there is the potential for contractors who have worked in the Waikato, where it is present, undertaking cropping related work in our region. <p>Sagittaria platyphylla</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site at Eketāhuna has been checked, and four small plants were found and controlled (see Figure 10 for before and after pictures between seasons). Follow-up monitoring will occur in January 2025.

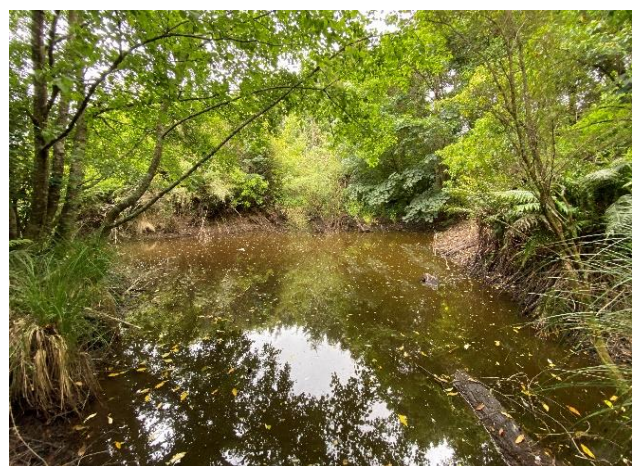


Figure 10: Before and after pictures of *Sagittaria* control at Eketahuna site. Left-hand photo is February 2024 before control, and right-hand photo is this season, November 2024.

Eradication programme

11.6. Council’s goal for the eradication programme is eliminating the prevalence and extent of certain species. The species that are in this category and progress in the 2024-25 year are overviewed in Table 12 below.

Table 12: Eradication programme progress in 2024-25.

Species	Eradication programme in 2024-25
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. African feather grass 2. Alligator weed 3. Arrowhead 4. Blue passion flower 5. Cathedral bells 6. Chilean rhubarb 7. Chinese pennisetum 8. Climbing alstromeria 9. Climbing spindleberry 10. Himalayan balsam 	<p>Alligator weed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys along the Mangaone Stream have been ongoing since September. No plants have been found to date this season. Surveys to continue throughout summer and autumn months. <p>Cathedral bells</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First of two rounds of control completed in November and December by both staff and contractors for the season. Some large sites persisting with numerous seedlings presenting. Total of 33 sites under active management, predominantly in the lower half of the region. <p>Chilean rhubarb</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controlled in November and into December with sites located across the region.

Species	Eradication programme in 2024-25
11. Knotweed 12. Nassella tussock and Mexican feather grass 13. Purple loosestrife 14. Rum cherry 15. Senegal tea 16. Spartina 17. Queensland poplar 18. Woolly nightshade	<p>Larger sites in Taranua, Ōroua Valley, and Tokomaru West near Palmerston North have been controlled by both aerial and ground contractors. A large site has been discovered in Taranua, in forestry, which will require a drone operator to spray it. Surveillance with the drone realised the extent of the infestation (Figure 11). A total of 453 sites across the region are under active management.</p> <p>Knotweed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites in Ōngarue, Turakina Valley, and Palmerston North were controlled as plants start to emerge in September. Small numbers of seedlings have been found so far and sites require bi-monthly visits during the season due to the rapid growth rate. Total of 18 sites under active management across the region.



Figure 11: Chilean rhubarb plants at Taranua site in forestry from drone.

Progressive containment-mapped programme

11.7. Council’s goal for the progressive containment-mapped programme is to contain and then reduce the geographic distribution of the named pest over time. The species that are in this category, and progress in the 2024-25 year, are overviewed in Table 13 below.

Table 13: Progressive containment-mapped programme in 2024-25.

Species	Progressive containment-mapped programme in 2024-25
1. Banana passionfruit 2. Boneseed 3. Contorta pine 4. Darwin’s barberry 5. Dwarf mountain pine 6. Evergreen buckthorn 7. Grey willow 8. Mountain pine 9. Moth plant	<p>Banana passionfruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and contractors have controlled sites at Pohangina, Horowhenua, Whanganui River Road and Manawatū. Due to the lack of a distinct season for flowering and fruiting this species is controlled throughout the whole year. Total of 329 sites are under active management across the region. <p>Darwin’s barberry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This programme has been continuing since August, with sites being controlled throughout Ruapehu District, Rangiwhahia and throughout parts of Taranua, particularly Makuri and bordering the eastern Ruahines. Challenges remain with this programme, with funding reductions for DOC for controlling this species in Tongariro

Species	Progressive containment-mapped programme in 2024-25
10. Old man’s beard 11. Scots pine	<p>National Park and Pureora Forest Park. Progress has been made with funding of Rangiwahia Reserve, which DOC managed to double its funding for control in this reserve.</p> <p>Moth plant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This programme begins in October and continues through to mid-January when the plant is flowering and easy to see. Sites have been controlled in both Whanganui and Horowhenua. Whanganui has seen a large reduction in plant numbers being found with a total of 41 out of 56 sites being clear of plants. <p>Pest conifers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreements have now been signed with all partners. Surveys within the region have been conducted at Lake Otamangakau, Mangaohane Plateau and Ngamatea Station with control work planned for December.

Progressive containment-unmapped programme

11.8. Council’s goal for the progressive containment-unmapped programme is a mix of sustained control and preventing establishment in new areas to reduce species’ impact and spread to clear properties. The species in this category, and progress in the 2024-25 year are overviewed in Table 14.

Table 14: Progressive containment-unmapped programme in 2024-25.

Species	Progressive containment-unmapped programme in 2024-25																																		
1. Australian sedge 2. Blackberry 3. Broom species (exotic) 4. Eelgrass 5. Egeria 6. Field horsetail 7. Gorse 8. Hornwort 9. Lagarosiphon 10. Nodding thistle 11. Reed sweet grass 12. Tutsan 13. Variegated thistle 14. Yellow bristlegrass 15. Yellow ragwort	<p>There were four Good Neighbour Rule responses for a variety of species and classes of landowners for this reporting period.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2" style="background-color: #1a3d4d; color: white;">Description</th> <th colspan="4" style="background-color: #1a3d4d; color: white;">Reporting Period</th> <th rowspan="2" style="background-color: #1a3d4d; color: white;">2024-25 Year to date totals</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="background-color: #1a3d4d; color: white;">1</th> <th style="background-color: #1a3d4d; color: white;">2</th> <th style="background-color: #1a3d4d; color: white;">3</th> <th style="background-color: #1a3d4d; color: white;">4</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Boundary complaints received and actioned outside of compliance.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">11</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: red;">Required to Clear notices (RTCs) issued.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="color: red;">Notices of Direction (NODs) issued.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Notices resolved in this period.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Description	Reporting Period				2024-25 Year to date totals	1	2	3	4	Boundary complaints received and actioned outside of compliance.	4	7	0	0	11	Required to Clear notices (RTCs) issued.	0	0	0	0	0	Notices of Direction (NODs) issued.	0	0	0	0	0	Notices resolved in this period.	0	0	0	0	0
Description	Reporting Period				2024-25 Year to date totals																														
	1	2	3	4																															
Boundary complaints received and actioned outside of compliance.	4	7	0	0	11																														
Required to Clear notices (RTCs) issued.	0	0	0	0	0																														
Notices of Direction (NODs) issued.	0	0	0	0	0																														
Notices resolved in this period.	0	0	0	0	0																														

Regional Pest Plants – Other Programmes

11.9. The sections below provide a summary of activities for the other regional pest plant programmes, which include incursion response, biological control and the awareness programme.

Incursion response

11.10. The incursion response programme aims to work collaboratively with partner organisations for incursion/pest management. The species that are in this category, and progress in the 2024-25 year, are overviewed in Table 15.

Table 15: Incurion response programme progress in 2024-25.

Species	Incurion Response in 2024-25
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. African love grass 2. Velvetleaf 3. Fringed water lily 4. Gold clams 5. Sea spurge 	<p>African love grass</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveillance has been undertaken on sites north of Foxton. Since its discovery along the roadside, staff have been working with NZTA to implement a control programme along the roadside. Two properties were identified as having plants present on the outside of the road reserve. Plants were controlled by both landowners and staff on private land. Staff will continue to assess pathways in the New Year and look at options for shutting these pathways down with the Biosecurity Act. <p>Sea spurge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites at Tangimoana, Waikawa and Foxton have been checked. Low numbers of plants found at Foxton and Tangimoana. No plants found in Foxton. Teams are continuing to work with DOC at managing sites across the region.

Biological control response

11.11. The biological control programme aims to assist the development of insects and diseases to control a wide range of pest plants by restoring balance and suppression rather than total removal. We do this by releasing, distributing and monitoring the establishment and impact of those agents within the region. The species where work has occurred in this category in the 2024-25 year is overviewed in Table 16. This also provides Council with the annual report for the National Biocontrol Collective Programme, as required for the Annual Plan target. This programme is a collective of all regional councils and the Department of Conservation, which pools funding to support an all-of-New Zealand prioritised approach to agent development and assessment. Horizons contributes \$40,000 yearly to the combined fund of approximately \$500,000.

Table 16: Biological control programme in 2024-25.

Species	Biological Control Programme in 2024-25
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Old man’s beard gall mite 2. Old man’s beard sawfly 3. Field horsetail weevil 4. Purple loosestrife agents 5. Sydney golden wattle 6. Green thistle beetle 7. Ragwort plume moth 8. <i>Tradescantia</i> leaf spot fungus 9. <i>Tradescantia</i> beetles 10. Tutsan beetle 11. Broom gall mite 	<p>Old man’s sawfly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have undertaken early season checks of old man’s beard sawfly release sites from last season. Signs of damage have been seen at two sites, with one of those sites having been confirmed as established. Three more releases are scheduled to arrive in February and will be released around Whanganui, Palmerston North, and Ruapehu districts. <p>Sydney golden wattle wasp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In November, staff checked release sites at Whanganui and Waitarere for signs of the presence of the wasp. Both sites showed the presence of galls, which the wasp forms in the immature flower cells, with over 100 counted at one of the Whanganui sites (Figure 12). Staff will continue to monitor these sites for establishment.



Figure 12: Sydney golden wattle wasp gall, Whanganui.

Awareness programme

11.12. The awareness programme aims to alert the community to the issues, threats, and solutions for pest plant management to ensure region-wide best practices. This includes responding to enquiries from the community, an Annual Plan target, and undertaking collaborative projects. Progress and activity in the 2024-25 year are overviewed in Table 17.

Table 17: Awareness programme in 2024-25.

Awareness programmes	Awareness programme for 2024-25
Field days, species specific awareness programmes, best practice information provision, media articles, enquiry response, freshwater pest awareness via the Check Clean Dry programme.	<p>Check Clean Dry campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Check, Clean, Dry programme has begun with the CCD advocate visiting areas such as Lake Otamangakau, Ruatiti Domain and National Park freedom camping parking spot. In early November, the Big Bang Adventure Race was held around the Mangaore Village area, where the advocate helped with checking gear before the race. A series of short videos (reels) have been made with the advocate promoting the CCD programme targeting particular users such as boaties, kayakers, anglers, and duck shooters, which are being released on social media throughout the season.

12 February 2025

12. LAND MANAGEMENT

Overview

12.1. The non-regulatory land management programme includes:

- The **Sustainable Land Use Initiative (SLUI)** with support from the Central Government **Hill Country Erosion Fund (HCEF)**;
- The regional and coast activity includes a regional environmental grant programme and a programme focussed on the Whanganui Catchment with support from the **Whanganui River Enhancement Trust (WRET)**;
- A soil health monitoring programme;
- An industry partnerships programme; and
- A nursery programme to provide poplar and willow material for erosion control programmes.

12.2. During the period from 1 October to 31 December 2024, Land Management Advisors attention shifted from winter planting programmes to inspecting completed works and carrying out claims. In this early part of the financial year the focus is on completing claims for forestry projects. This period also signals the start of the Ballance Farm Environment Awards process, with entries being received and first round judging completed. Spring soil health monitoring is also completed but subject to soil moisture conditions.

12.3. For spring and early summer, staff have reported moist, humid conditions over the whole region. These conditions have been ideal for tree establishment but have led to some issues with weed control, especially in areas where native plants are being established. The good conditions have largely continued through the bulk of the region with continued good rainfall through December. The Tararua District went through a drier, windy spell before December rain eased the situation. However, wind and Porina damage has been evident on new poles, hopefully not enough to impact tree survival. Staff have reported less wild animal damage to new plantings this year.

12.4. Nurseries have been getting regular rainfall and good growth, although one block of willow at Woodville is showing signs of water stress. The normal spring work programme was completed, including mulching, mowing, weed control, and monitoring for pests and diseases. Rust was identified in the Bulls Nursery on 21 October, and spraying was carried out the following day. Spraying has continued in Bulls and Woodville. Giant Willow Aphid was identified at Bulls with a spray programme undertaken. Contractors have been on site in both nurseries undertaking pruning and leader management.

12.5. SLUI is in year two of four of the current contract, this being the fifth contract with Central Government. SLUI was conceived after the 2004 storm, and 20 years on from that event, analysis of the programme was presented to the **New Zealand Association of Resource Management Conference (NZARM)** here in Palmerston North from 12-14 November. The conference was well represented, with feedback from delegates very positive.

Annual Targets 2024-25

12.6. Progress in meeting the land management targets at the end of the financial year is shown in Table 18. In summary:

- Early work is on track and comparable to previous years.
- The programme is on track to meet four of the five targets, with the SLUI works target at risk of not being met.
- SLUI erosion reduction work is ahead of previous years, with 1,683 ha completed, but overall allocation is down (Table 19 and Figure 13).

- The Egrant/WCS target has changed this year to number of grants for works completed. These projects tend to take more effort per work area completed than in the SLUI programme. The idea of how many contacts and written bits of advice are given is presented as a more rounded look at what input the Land Management Advisors have into getting these projects completed. Often, these are new clients, and they need advice and assistance through the whole erosion control process.

Table 18: Result reporting for the land management programme for the 2024-25 financial year.

Measure	Annual Plan	HCEF Contract	Overall Target	Actual	Progress and Comments
Sustainable Land Use Initiative					
Erosion reduction works programmes in targeted SLUI Catchments (ha).	3,285	3,285	3,285	1,683	At risk. Less work on books this year, with 3,531 ha allocated.
Whole Farm Plan properties mapped per year (ha).	-	10,000	10,000	3,531	On track. Enough works on books to meet target.
Number of grants for works completed (number).	50	-	50	25	On track. 103 projects approved, number completed will be lower.
Support industry initiatives that promote sustainable land use (number).	5	-	5	5	Achieved. Groups supported to date.
Operate Council nurseries and source additional commercial pole material to deliver poplar and willow poles to control erosion (number of poles).	30,000	-	30,000	33,074 plus	Achieved.

Financial Summary

- 12.7. The budget figures are all trending as expected for this time of the year. SLUI grant claims increased over November, labour was largely on track. All sponsorship/partnership agreements were paid out.
- 12.8. There is no capex charged to the forestry account, but tree clearance work carried out in December will reflect in the budgets soon. In the nurseries the water bore and a new mist blower have been capitalised with around \$50,000 of the budget accounted for.
- 12.9. Overall land management is projecting to be favourable to the reviewed budget. In addition to this there is projected additional income from one or more forestry sales.

SLUI – work programme

- 12.10. An update on the progress for the SLUI programme is provided in Table 19. The tracking of allocation amounts for hectares of work and budgets is shown in Figure 13.

Table 19: Progress reporting for the SLUI programme for the 2024-25 financial year.

Work Type	Comments
<p>Farm mapping (see Map 6 and Figure 13)</p>	<p>The target for on-farm mapping is 10,000 ha, and this will be undertaken by a mix of internal staff and external contractors.</p> <p>2023-24</p> <p>11,013 ha were mapped of this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All newly mapped work from 2023-24 has been delivered to Land Management Advisors; Two plans, both in the Ruapehu District, are yet to be delivered to landowners. The staff member has been in contact and is awaiting a suitable time to visit. <p>2024-25</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3,686 ha (6 properties) have been mapped with 2 plans delivered and 1 agreeing to a works programme; A further 9,366 ha (20 properties) have been allocated to mappers and will be mapped over the coming months. Fourteen of these are allocated to a contractor and 6 internal; 1,822 ha (6 properties) have yet to be allocated. There are no Top or High priority farms within this group; 3,345 ha (14 properties) have information out with the landowner. Three are top or high priority and will potentially be added to this year’s work programme if the information comes back in time for them to be scheduled; To date, 13,052 ha has been allocated for mapping against the 2024-25 target of 10,000 ha. As the Freshwater Farm Plan process is largely on hold, there is budget available for more new mapping of Erosion and Sediment Control plans through savings in staff labour.
<p>Works Progress (Map 7), and Allocation of grant works (Figure 13)</p>	<p>The target for erosion control work to be completed is 3,285 ha. This is an increase from last year’s target of 3,170 ha.</p> <p>At the 31 December:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,683 ha of work had been completed and claimed; The breakdown by work type was; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Afforestation – 978 ha Retirement – 574 ha Riparian retirement and wetlands - 46 ha Space planting – 87 ha; This work was completed in 86 jobs within 71 farms; 698,730 trees have been planted; 13 km of fencing was erected. <p>Grant cost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The grant cost of this work has been approximately \$652,142 at an average grant rate of 28%. <p>Allocation levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To date, 3,531 ha of work has been allocated (Figure 13). The 3,531 ha is 107% of the 3,285 ha target. Typically, we need to allocate around 30% more work than the target or around 4,200 ha. We are probably close to our maximum allocation for the year and it would seem unlikely that we will reach our contract and AP target of 3,285 ha. Our current projection based on 60-70% completion is for 2,118 – 2,472 ha of work to be completed. The estimated grant cost of the allocated work is \$2.142M against a budget of \$2.453M, but given the projection for completion of 60-70% the final spend could be \$1.3 to 1.5M. The final hectare and dollar claim amounts will depend upon the types of work that come to charge, as some work types have a higher per hectare cost than others. This contract with MPI is in its second year, and it would appear that the balance of work types, the grant criteria, and the grant rates applied are resulting in a lower grant cost than in past contracts. There may be room to adjust these rates in the last two years of the contract.
<p>Overview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff delivered 8 new plans (6 from the 2023-24 year and 2 from 2024-25) to landowners so far this year. Four landowners have agreed to start a works programme. Staff continue to follow up “inactive plans” (plans that haven’t undertaken works within the last three years). So far this year 10 inactive plans are starting or restarting their works programmes. The Tararua Land Stabilisation Project (TLSP) has moved from a concept phase to scoping priority sites on the full Tararua roading network. Around 132 sites have been identified and the Horizons Land Management Team have assisted in prioritising these (all but 27 are sites where we have SLUI farm plans). The next step will be engaging with landowners of the highest priority sites with potential to carry out planting works in winter 2025. The staff met with Tāmata Hauhā, a company that looks to establish forestry on marginal land

Work Type	Comments
	<p>through generating carbon credits, they have identified 25 potential planting programmes within our region. Some of these may be eligible for SLUI support.</p>
<p>Governance/ Contract</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current contract is in year two of four. There are three milestone reports per year. • The fourth milestone report to Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) was completed and sent in early December. This summarised the first period of the second year of the current four-year contract. • SLUI Advisory Group members received a written update on progress based on the last Committee report. The next meeting is proposed for May, where along with updates we would seek the group’s advice around funding rates for works, and what the future of SLUI may look like with or without future MPI funding.
<p>Forestry Right (FR) Forests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One forest sale was completed on 19 July, and the carbon units earned from this agreement have been sold. The Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) transfer of participation was completed in October. • An offer from an FR partner was accepted by Council in late November. The paperwork has been completed and the completion date has been set for 17 January 2025. • A forestry consultant has been engaged to discuss options with the remaining FR partners. • As part of the forestry sale process an easement has been surveyed, and a Right of Way application lodged with the Whanganui District Council. This was in regard to an earlier sale condition on a forest from Council. This easement is proving problematic, with the District Council requesting we re-submit this application. While this had not affected the forest sale, there are potential issues with future sales and this may need to be subject to a follow up item to Council at a future date. • Insurance for standing timber cover has been renewed; cover includes wind, fire, landslip and hail and meets the requirements of all the FR agreements. • The old man pines fallen on the roadside on a Pohangina forest have been cut down and stabilised, this involved roadside traffic management.

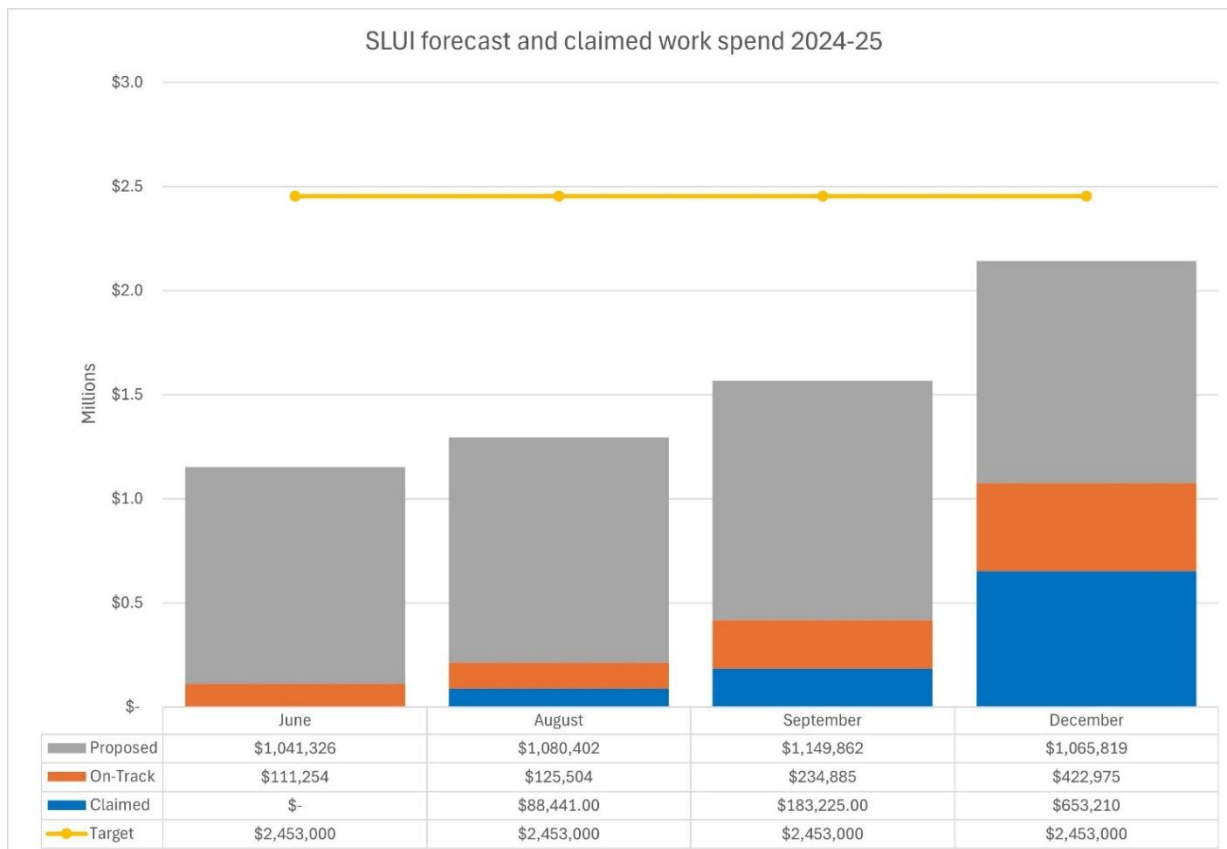
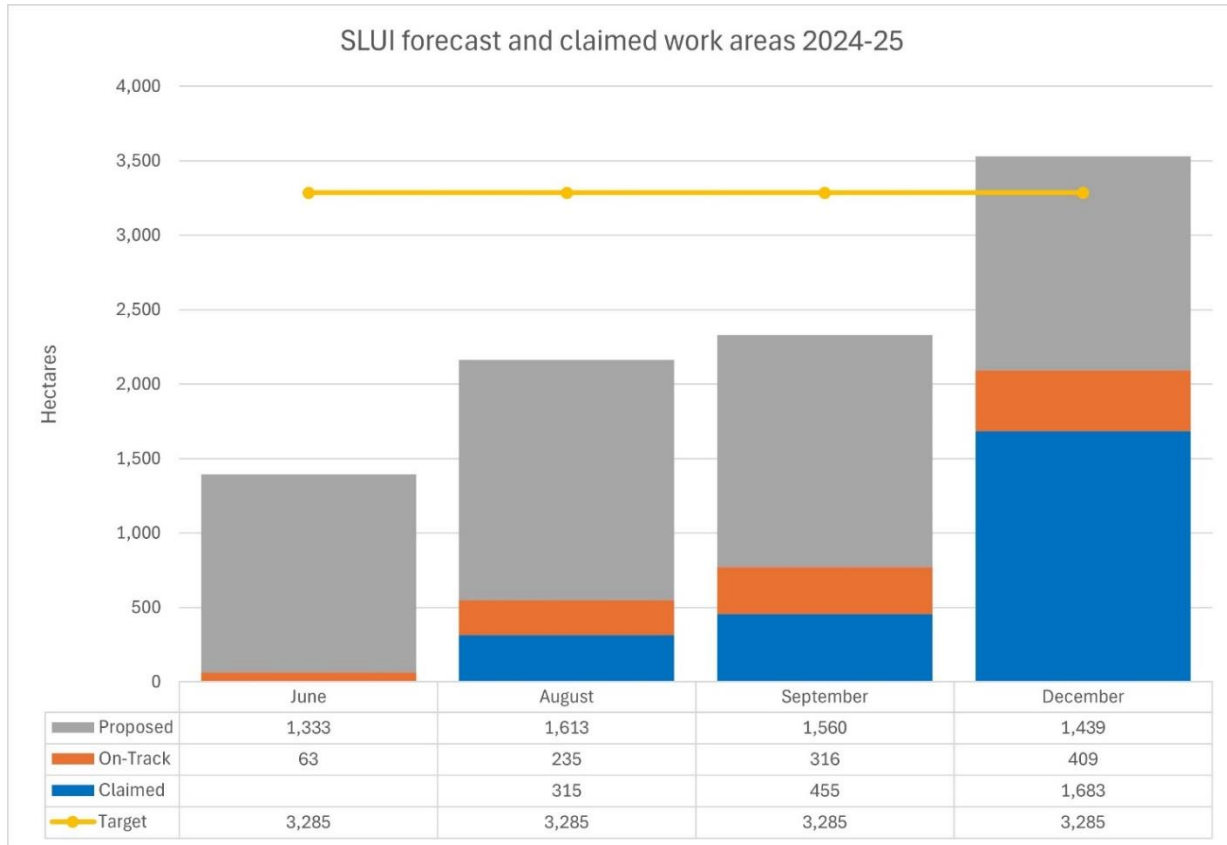
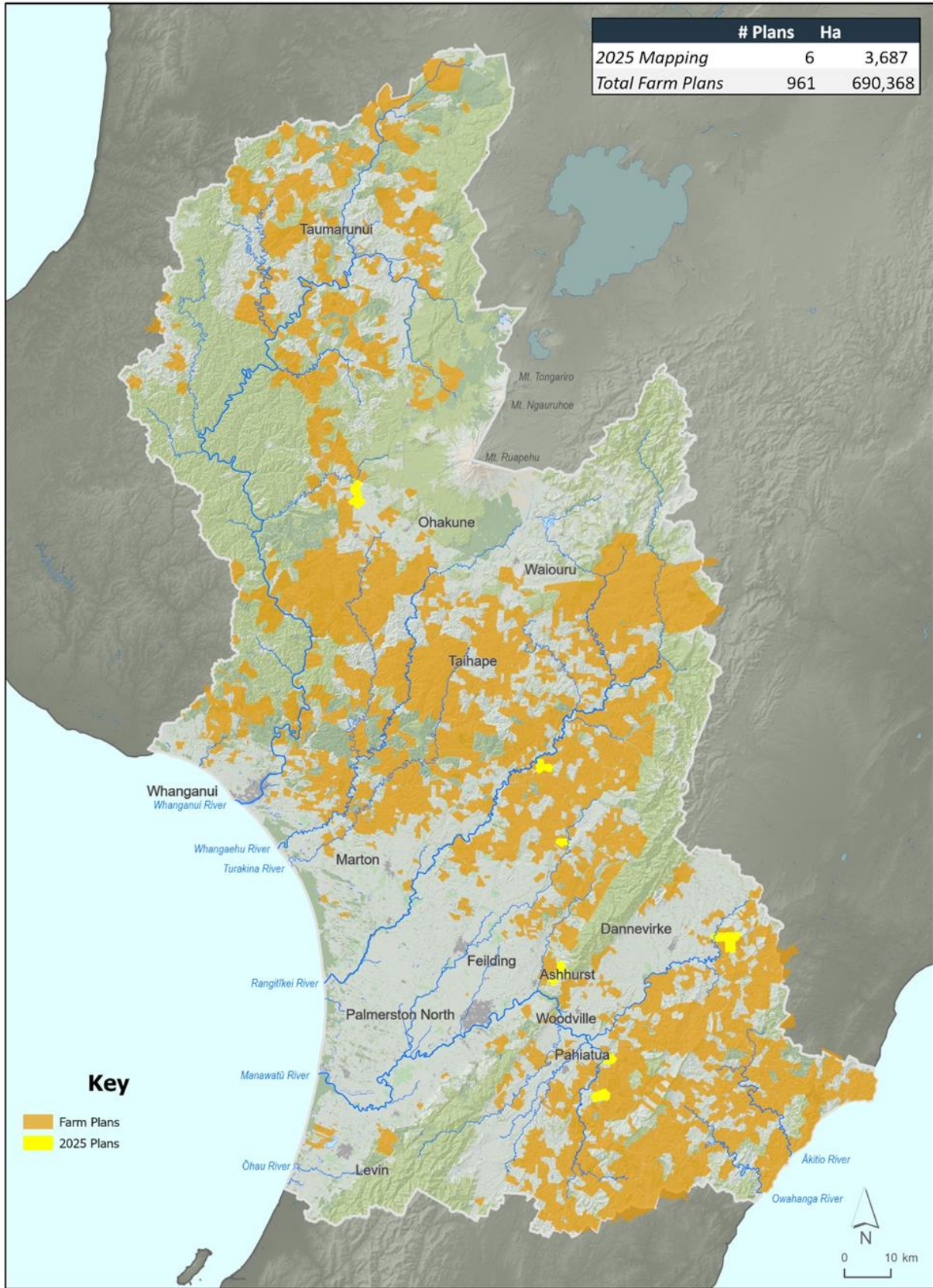


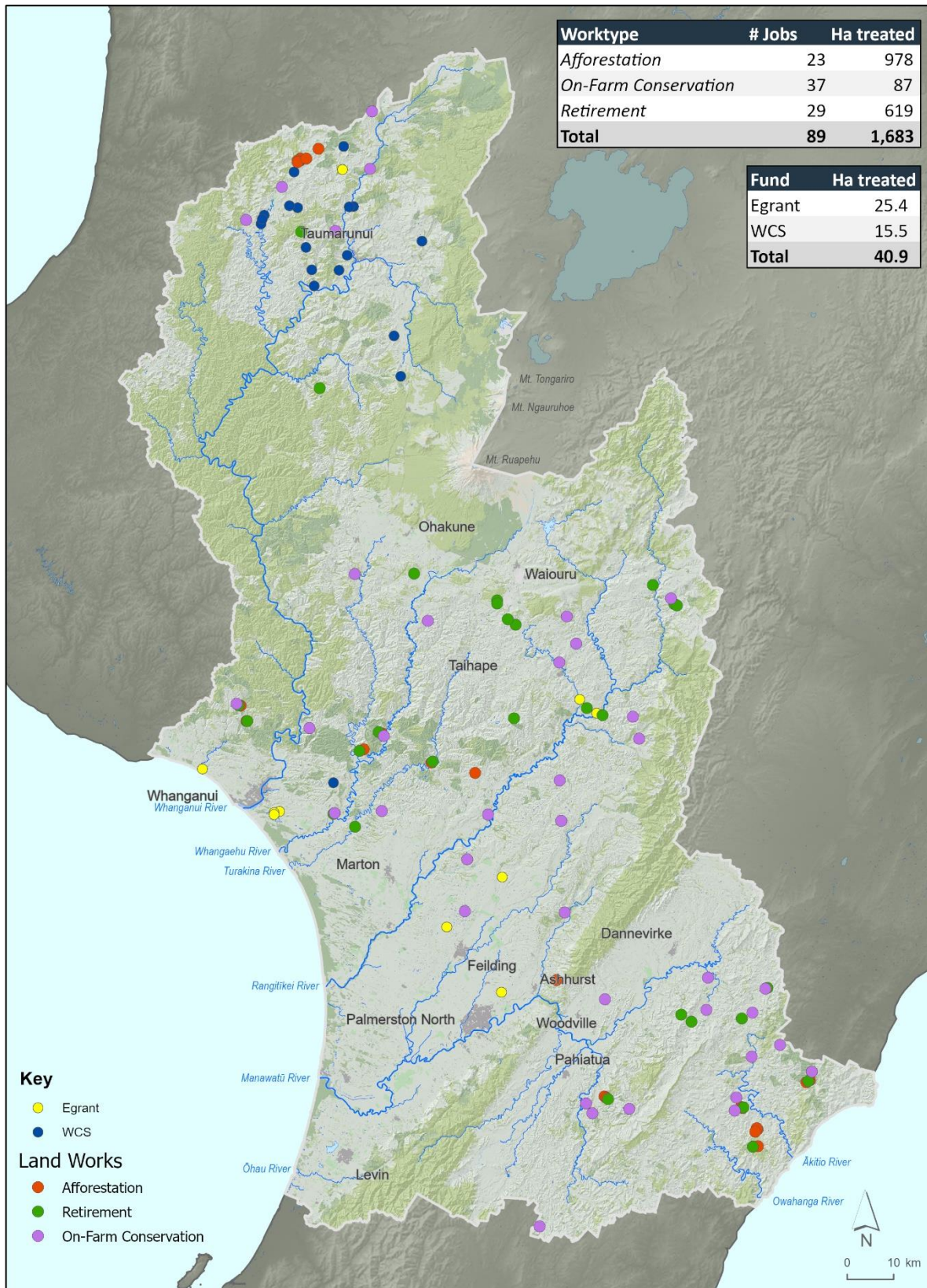
Figure 13: Allocation of SLUI erosion reduction works in the 2024-25 financial year. **Top:** Hectares allocated compared to the target. **Below:** Grant funding allocated compared to the annual grant budget.



Mapped Farm Plans December 2024

Map prepared by W McKay, Catchment Operations Group on 7/01/2025

Map 6: Locations of SLUI mapped properties, orange – life to date and yellow - 2024-25 financial year.



2025 Worktype Locations

Map prepared by W McKay, Catchment Operations Group on 7/01/2025

Map 7: Locations of completed works for SLUI, Regional Grant and Whanganui Catchment Scheme (WCS) for the 2024-25 financial year.

12 February 2025

Regional and coast

12.11. An update on the works programme for the regional and coast programme is provided in Table 20.

Table 20: Progress reporting for the regional and coast programme for the 2024-25 financial year.

Work Type	Comments
<p>Whanganui River Enhancement Trust (WRET) and Whanganui Catchment Strategy (WCS)</p>	<p>Whanganui River Enhancement Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizons presented an Annual Report to the WRET AGM in November. WRET have funded Taumarunui West and Matiere Catchment Groups in the Ruapehu for free poplar poles and sleeves (purchased from Horizons). Staff are now following up with landowners to check on establishment and give any ongoing advice as required. Ten inspections have been completed to date. WRET funding for 2024-25. WRET have already indicated they will support grant funding to the cost of \$81,956 and demonstration sites to the cost of \$5,000. This is an increase over the approved 2023-24 funding of \$75,000. <p>Whanganui Catchment Strategy grant summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 34 projects approved, \$123,649 grant funding, budget of \$50,000 Horizons and \$81,956 WRET (still to confirm officially by letter). Seven projects completed and claimed, \$42,239 grant funding, including WRET share. Completed projects are predominantly retirement fencing, with 8,980 meters of fencing claimed.
<p>Environmental Grant Programme</p>	<p>Regional Grant Programme grant summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 69 projects approved, \$46,154 grant funding (grant budget of \$80,000). 0 projects completed and claimed. The majority of the approved projects are small space planting erosion control works.
<p>Soil Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring soil quality sampling has been completed.
<p>Progress Overview</p>	<p>Land Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff continue to give advice to landowners with erosion problems and, where appropriate, applying for grant funding. A large amount of this work is around smaller farms or lifestyle blocks throughout the region. Land Team have worked with Freshwater and Biodiversity Teams, assisting each other on projects. Staff have attended various workshops, presentations or webinars. The majority of the Land Team attended all or part of the NZARM conference in November. Five staff attended a pre-conference workshop on Land and Waterway Management in Hill Country. <p>Land Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided information to landowners around a variety of land use/consent issues such as vegetation clearance, earthworks, hill country cultivation, willow clearance in riparian zones, replanting after pine harvest (alternatives to pines). Staff have been working with the Regulatory team regarding non-notified afforestation under the National Environmental Standard for Commercial Forestry (NES-CF). It appears a number of landowners (many of them SLUI or grant clients) have not notified prior to planting, this means they will now require a Resource Consent. They need to have a compliant forest before they can enter the ETS.
Industry Partnerships	
<p>New Zealand Farm Environment Trust and the Ballance Farm Environment Awards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Farming for the Future Networking Event was held on the 23 October in Feilding with around 80 people attending. Entries for the 2024-25 awards closed at the end of October with six entries received. First round judging has been completed with Horizons staff on the judging teams.
<p>Poplar and Willow Research Trust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Trust held their AGM in Palmerston North on 14 November. Iain Maxwell has stood down as the Chair of the Trust, he has been replaced by Daniel Harrison from Taranaki Regional Council. He was appointed by the Regional Council CEO Group. Staff have been assisting the Trust in putting together an on-farm nursery managers manual. This was officially launched at the NZARM conference. https://www.poplarandwillow.org.nz/documents/nzpwrt-nursery-guide-1-planning.pdf Weston Brown is the Horizons rep on the Trust Technical Advisory Group. This group met

12 February 2025

Work Type	Comments
	virtually in December and will meet in person in March. This group provides feedback from Land Managers directly to the Trust in order to influence the research/work programme.
LandWISE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LandWISE presented at the NZARM field day on the work they have done with Horizons on soil loss in vegetable growing in Horowhenua.
NZ Farm Forestry Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No interaction during this period.
Catchment Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff attended meetings of the Puketoi to Pacific Catchment Collective, and the Rangitīkei River Catchment Collective.
Taumarunui Sustainable Land Management Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff attended the TSLMG meeting.
Overall	The Annual Plan target was to support five industry initiatives that promote sustainable land use. Four groups and at least two catchment groups have been supported during this period.

Nursery

12.12. Work in the nurseries focussed on finalising harvest and post-harvest clean up. Nursery activity is summarised in Table 21.

Table 21: Progress reporting for the Nursery programme for the 2024-25 financial year.

Nursery	Comments
Woodville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nursery has been getting regular rainfall, resulting in good growth, although one block of willow on stony soils is showing signs of water stress. Contractors have completed spring tending with stool clean up, pruning and thinning to one leader. A rust spray programme has commenced, good growth conditions and a humid environment are a double-edged sword as they are ideal conditions for poplar and willow rusts to thrive. Early intervention with preventative sprays is needed to keep rust under control. Bins from Plasback have been placed at Woodville Nursery for the Dynex sleeve recycling trial.
Bulls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nursery has been getting regular rainfall, resulting in good growth. Contractors have completed spring tending with stool clean up, pruning and thinning to one leader. A rust spray programme has commenced. Giant Willow Aphid was identified, and a spray programme was undertaken to control this pest.
Northern nurseries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New planting of Tangoio willow nursery with support from WRET.
Partner, farmer and other nurseries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General advice.
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33,074 poles distributed within our region from a mix of Council, commercial, farmer and WRET nurseries. Total production from Horizons nurseries was 45,485 pieces of various sizes from 0.3 m planting stakes through to 4.0 m poles. This year we supplied material to Taranaki, Greater Wellington, Hawkes Bay, Bay of Plenty and Canterbury regions.
Capex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The irrigation project at Woodville is progressing following the establishment and testing of a bore. The next step has been to identify potential installers and suppliers of a system that will suit the site conditions. A Request for Information document was put out through Tenderlink which closed in mid-November with one response. A further response has since been received and another potential supplier has yet to respond. The next step will be to organise site visits with interested parties and follow this through the procurement process. A replacement mist blower has been purchased for Bulls nursery.

12 February 2025

River Management Forests

12.13. The management of River Management and Flood Protection forests is now overseen by Land Team forestry specialists with the help of consultants where necessary. The activity is summarised in Table 22. Horizons is awaiting feedback on the issues identified concerning forestry extent and carbon credits.

Table 22: Progress reporting for the River Management forests for the 2024-25 financial year.

Forests	Comments
Goulter's Gully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing to report.
Rangitikei River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Followed up on a forestry stand that is eroding into the Rangitikei River above Bulls Bridge that needs felling. Consulted with River Management Operations Regulatory Team and checked records for ETS obligations. Met with Area Engineer in October. Remaining stand to be felled - managed by River Management Operations Team. We are in the process of commissioning a stock take of the River Management forests. The first step will be development of a Request for Proposal. At the time of producing this report, there was still no decision from MPI on deforestation in the Rangitikei Catchment. We are informed by our consultants that it could take some time before MPI make or inform us on any decision.
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are looking at commissioning a stock take report, and all forestry stands within the River Management Scheme areas.

13. FRESHWATER AND PARTNERSHIPS

Overview

- 13.1. The non-regulatory Freshwater and Partnerships programme's overarching goal is to improve water quality and aquatic health in the region's waterways. A further component of the programme has been to provide support from a non-regulatory perspective ahead of potential or signaled new regulations.
- 13.2. The Freshwater and Partnerships programme includes freshwater implementation work that spans riparian fencing and planting, fish barrier identification and remediation, community project support and funding, advice and development of wetlands for water quality enhancement, lake-weed harvesting, and developing options for Room for the River concepts in the Pohangina and Ōroua Catchments. The programme also supports forums like the Manawatū River Leaders' Accord and works as part of the Lake Horowhenua Accord.
- 13.3. The programme has a range of Central Government co-funded programmes that are overseen by governance groups, with quarterly and annual reporting to the **Ministry for the Environment (MfE)**. The Central Government co-funded programmes include **Jobs for Nature (JFN)** projects and a Nature-Based Solutions project.

Long Term Plan targets 2024-25

- 13.4. During the 2024-25 financial year, the following work has been completed against the Long-term Plan targets (Table 23). In summary, overall, the programme:
- Is on track to achieve all of the Long-term Plan targets.
 - Is on track to achieve the majority of the contractual targets, noting Regional Jobs for Nature contractual targets will be assessed by the combination of the Regional and Manawatū programmes. Combined the programmes have:
 - 40.84 km of stream fencing allocated for a target of 64 km. The achievement of this target is currently at-risk/unlikely;
 - 176,206 riparian plants for a contractual target of 175,000 plants, i.e., on track;

12 February 2025

- 40 fish/kakahi freshwater mussel monitoring sites allocated for a target of 40. With 34 already completed, this is considered on track; and
- 63 fish passage repairs allocated for a contractual target of 40. With 14 already completed, this is considered on track.

Table 23: Freshwater and Partnerships programme Long-term Plan targets and progress for the 2024-25 year.

Measure	Long Term Plan (LTP) target	Ministry for the Environment (MfE) Contract Target	Overall Target	Completed	Allocated	Progress against LTP target
Freshwater enhancement to enable and encourage the protection of water quality, riparian margins and aquatic life.						
Delivery Freshwater enhancement in the region, including:						
Investigation of selected areas for fish barriers (number)	0	1	1	1	1	Achieved
Fish/kākahi (freshwater mussel) monitoring at a number of sites (number)	0	40	40	34	40	On track
Remediation of barriers to fish passage (number)	2	20	20	14	37	On track
Stream Fencing (km)	15 km	64 km	64 km	5.95 km ¹	40.84 km ²	On track
Riparian Plants (number)	35,000	175,000	175,000	68,389 ³	176,206 ⁴	On track
Delivery of Freshwater Regional Community Grants	5	n/a	5	0	6	On track
Delivery Freshwater enhancement work within the Manawatū Catchment, including:						
Remediation of barriers to fish passage (number)	2	0	2	0	26	On track
Stream Fencing (km)	15 km	0	15 km	3 km	27.8 km	On track
Riparian Plants (number)	35,000	0	35,000	44,853	86,097	Achieved
Delivery of Freshwater Manawatū Accord Community Grants.	5	n/a	5	0	7	On track
Deliver freshwater enhancement work within the Lake Horowhenua Catchment in alignment with the Lake Horowhenua Accord and through delivery of the Jobs for Nature - Public Waterways and Ecosystem Restoration Fund Project Lake Horowhenua Water Quality Interventions, including:						
Annual report to Council on lake restoration activity, including the Jobs for Nature Fund project for Lake Horowhenua.	1	1	1	0	1	On track

Regional Freshwater Programme

Programme and update

13.5. The regional freshwater programme includes three major projects, with two co-funded through the Jobs for Nature programme: the Regional Stream Fencing and Planting project, and the Enhancing Fish Populations through Fish Pass Remediation project. The other project is the regional community grants programme. Updates on these projects are provided in Table 24.

¹ Includes 3 km from the Manawatū Catchment

² Includes 27.84 km from the Manawatū Catchment.

³ Includes 44,853 from the Manawatū Catchment.

⁴ Includes 86,097 riparian plants from the Manawatū Catchment.

13.6. The funding round for the Manawatū Accord and Regional Freshwater Community Grants closed in July 2024. Fourteen applications were received, seeking a total of \$328,429.22. Twelve applications were successful and had their funding agreements signed. Another funding agreement was sent to the applicant in December after some further negotiation around funding certain components of the project was agreed.

Table 24: Regional freshwater programme update.

Project	Activity
Jobs for Nature – Regional Stream Fencing and Riparian Planting (Map 8 and 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Regional Stream Fencing and Riparian Planting Jobs for Nature project was scheduled to end 30 June 2024. However, an application was successfully made to MfE to extend the programme through to 30 June 2025. This will utilise underspend from previous years and money allocated within the Long-term Plan. The LTP target for stream fencing is 15 km and 35,000 riparian plants, with a contractual obligation through J4N for 64 km of stream fencing and 175,000 riparian plants (J4N applying to the Regional and Manawatū programmes). To date, 40.84 km of stream fencing has been allocated, with 5.95 km completed, and 176,206 riparian plants have been allocated, with 68,398 of those already planted.
Jobs for Nature – Enhancing Fish Populations through Fish Barrier Remediations (Map 10 and 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During this reporting period, 135 assessments have been completed and documented using the NIWA Fish Passage Assessment Tool (FPAT); bringing the year 5 total to 204 in-stream structures assessed. The majority of these were carried out in the Tararua and Whanganui districts. There was no stream walking carried out in Q2 however, the team conducted road runs that cover 595 km. The Fish Passage Team completed 14 remediations. The cost of these fixes was covered 100% by the asset owner. The 14 remediations consisted of baffles, mussel rope and flexi ramp and resulted in 8.482 km of habitat being opened in the Whanganui Catchment. Four types of monitoring were carried out over 19 sites in Q2: spotlighting for fish (3), trapping for mudfish (5), eDNA (6) and Kakahi (5). As a result of this monitoring, one new mudfish site was located in the Koputaroa Catchment and three new Kakahi sites located, one near Apiti and two near Alfredton. eDNA and spotlighting were used to assess reaches that are to be affected by remediations and other works carried out by Horizons in the near future. The team continued to assist the science team with completing State of Environment sites for Mudfish monitoring.
Community project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six projects have been allocated funding within the Regional Freshwater programme this financial year totaling \$77,508.82 in funding, with costings for one project yet to be confirmed for the remaining budget.

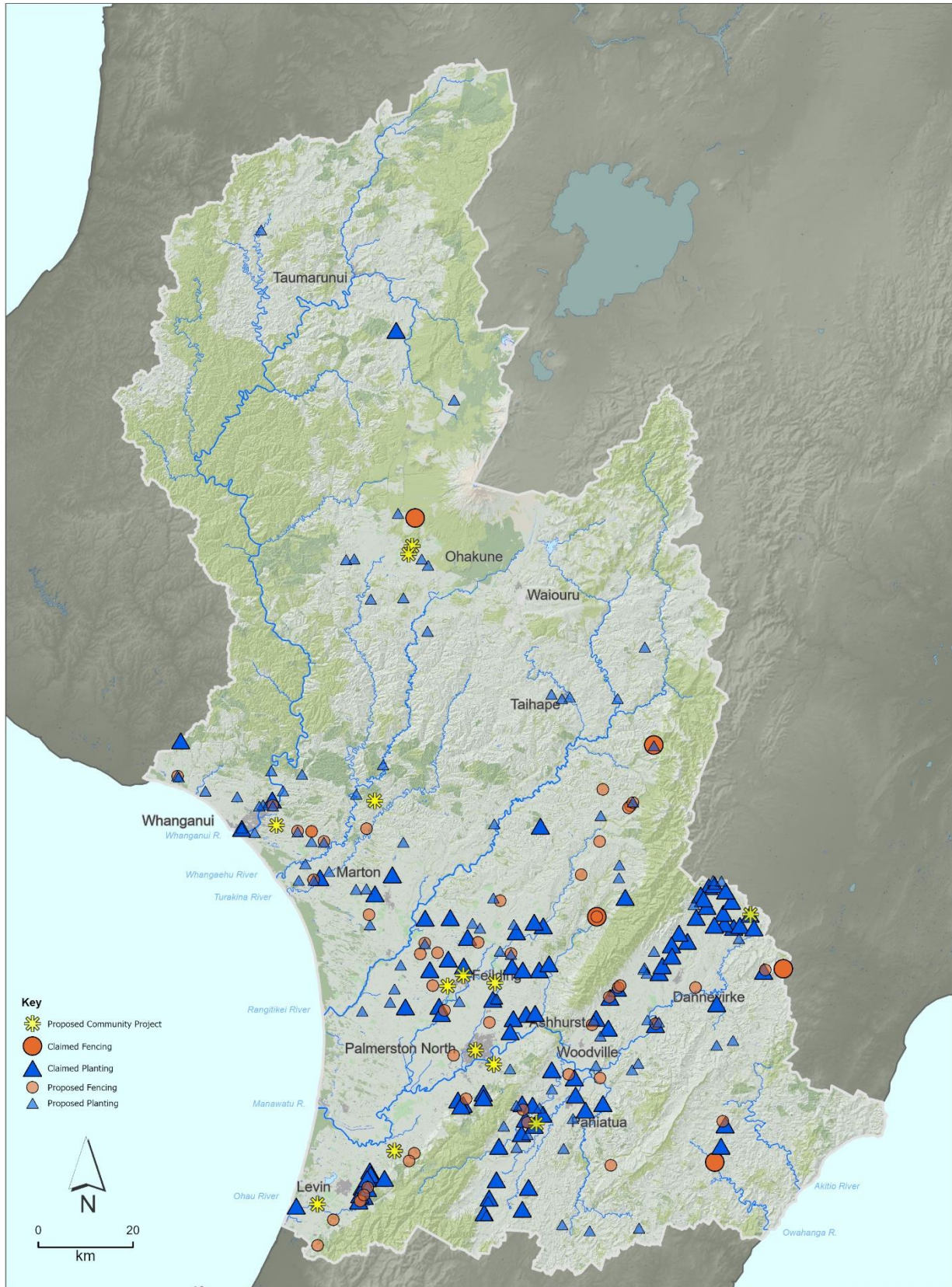
Manawatū Accord

Programme and goals

- 13.7. The **Manawatū River Leaders' Forum (MRLF)** continues to be active (Table 25), with the last forum meeting held on 19 July 2024. The next forum meeting for this financial year is scheduled for 27 March 2025.
- 13.8. Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research undertook an evaluation of the Accord and Forum in late 2023. Forum members either attended workshops within their sector groups, one-to-one interviews or took part in a survey, while members of the public took part in an online survey to provide feedback on work to date, what has worked and what hasn't worked so well. This work is to inform the next steps for the Accord members. The report was completed early in 2024 and was presented at the Manawatū River Leaders' Accord Forum on 19 July 2024.
- 13.9. The forum meeting scheduled in March will outline the water quality trends alongside biodiversity and other natural resource concerns within the Manawatu Catchment and aims to guide signatories of the Accord toward shaping up actions for the next action plan while incorporating the Mātauranga Maori framework.
- 13.10. In the 2024-25 year, the Manawatū River Leaders' Accord targeted rate funding was directed to the Jobs for Nature co-funded Regional Stream Fencing and Planting project reported on in the section above.

Table 25: Manawatū Accord activity.

Project	Activity
Stream Fencing and Riparian Planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LTP target for stream fencing is 15 km and 35,000 riparian plants, with a contractual obligation through J4N for 64 km of stream fencing and 175,000 riparian plants (J4N applying to the Regional and Manawatū programmes). To date 27.8 km of stream fencing has been allocated, with 3 km completed, and 86,097 riparian plants have been allocated, with 44,853 riparian plants being planted and claimed.
Fish barrier remediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The target for this project is two barriers remediated. 26 remediations in the Horowhenua District have been confirmed and remediations started. These are expected to be claimed in Q3.
Community project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven projects have been allocated funding within the Manawatū Catchment this financial year, with a total value of \$99,699.56.

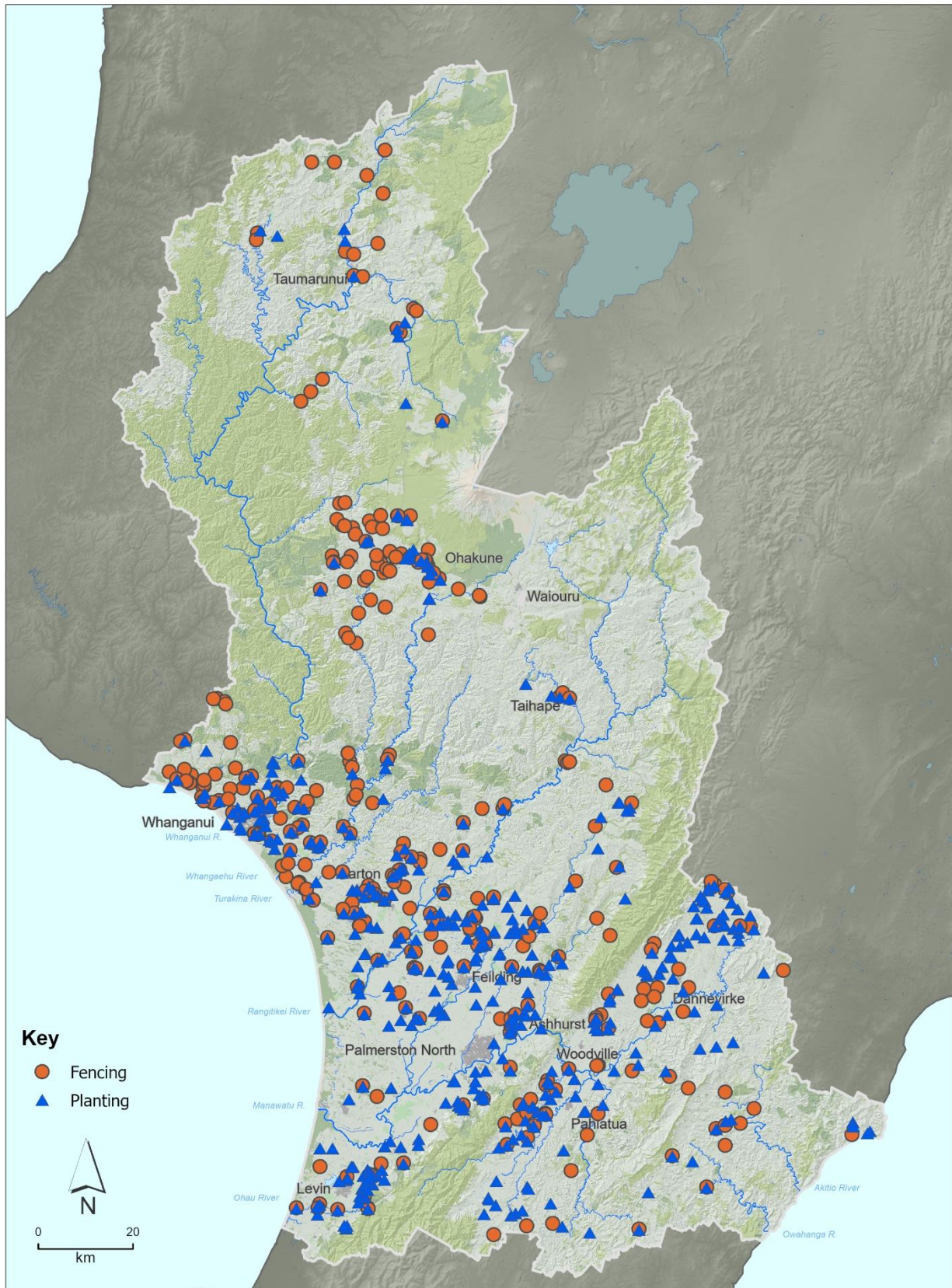


JFN Yr5 Q2 Stream Fencing and Planting



Map prepared by W McKay, Catchment Operations. 10 January 2025

Map 8: Stream fencing, riparian planting, and freshwater community-led projects proposed and completed in Q2 of the 2024-25 financial year as part of the Jobs for Nature and Manawātū Accord projects.

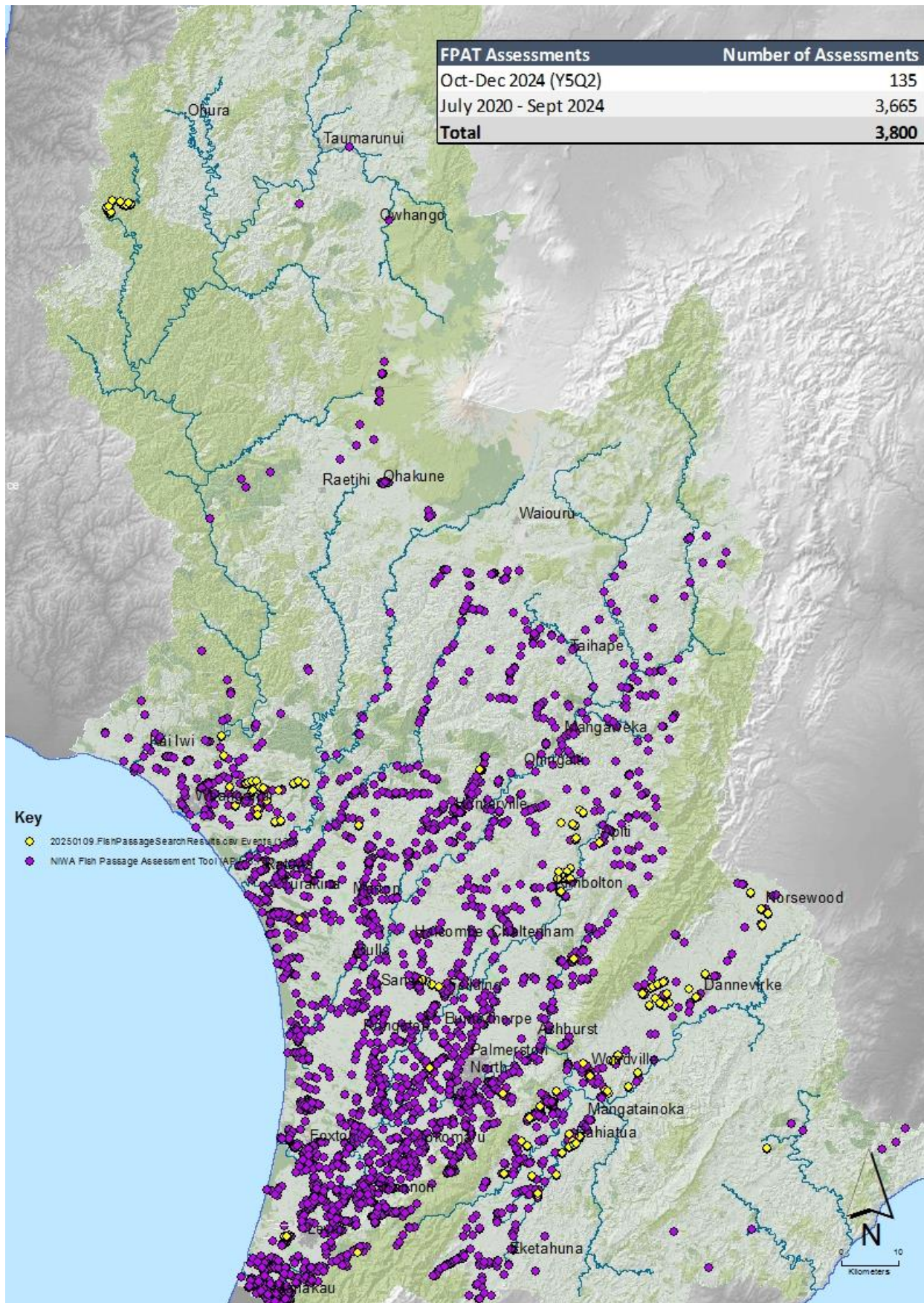


JFN Stream fencing and planting - Life of Project

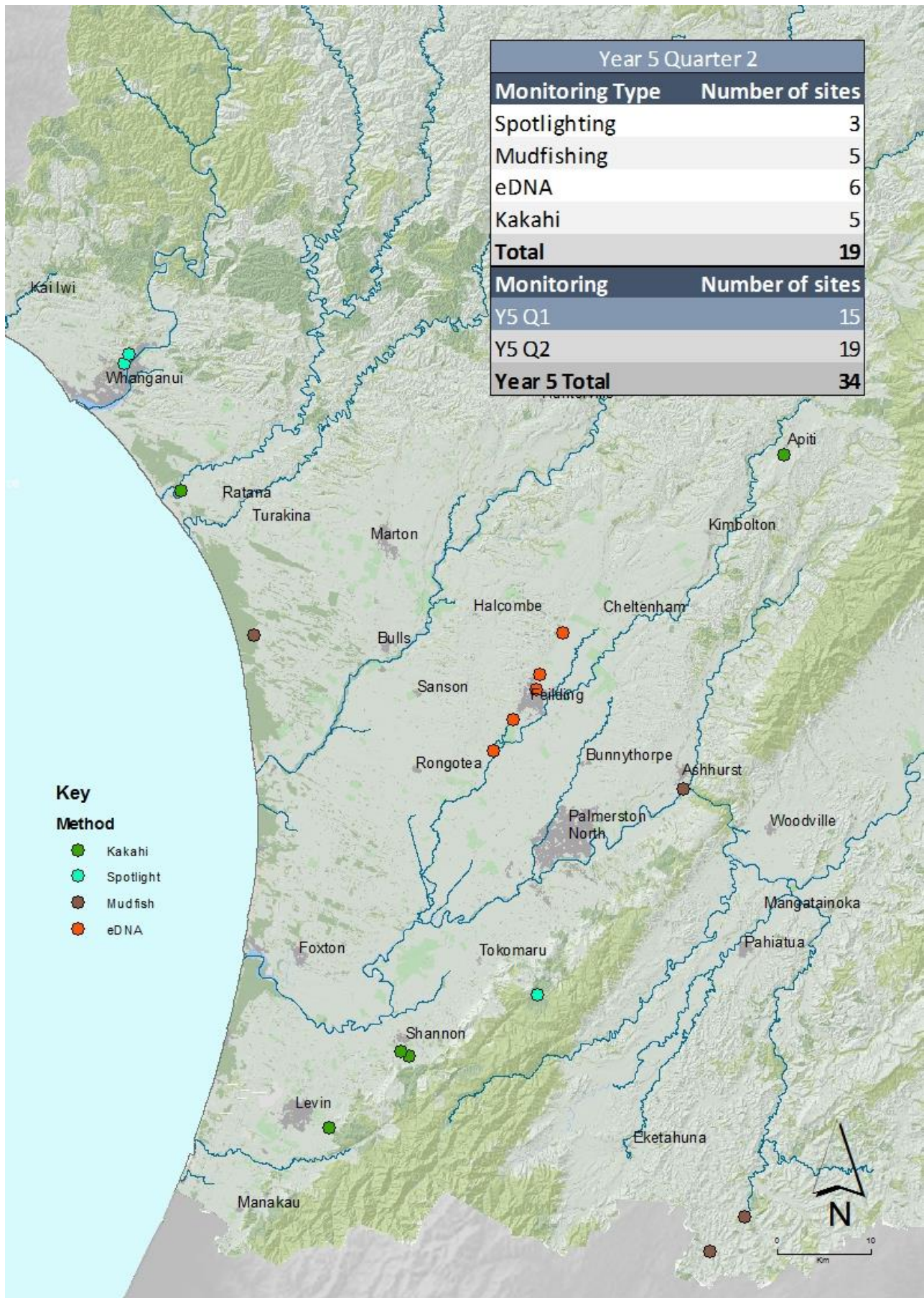


Map prepared by W McKay, Catchment Operations. 10 January 2025

Map 9: Stream fencing and riparian planting projects completed to date over the life of the J4N project.



Map 10: Fish passage assessments completed over the life of the project, including Q2 of the 2024-25 financial year as part of the Jobs for Nature project.



Map 11: Monitoring completed during Q2 as part of the Jobs for Nature project.

Lake Horowhenua Restoration Activity

Programme and goals

13.11. The Lake Horowhenua restoration activity (Table 26) includes work on the lake-weed harvesting and the Jobs for Nature project that includes enhancement work for Lake Horowhenua and work across the broader Freshwater Management Unit.

Table 26: Lake Horowhenua restoration activity, including the Horowhenua Freshwater Management Unit (FMU).

Project	Activity
Lake Weed Harvesting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lakeweed harvesting was identified in reports on lake restoration options for Lake Horowhenua in 2010 and 2011. The programme history is overviewed in the September 2021 Council item (Weed harvesting item). The upcoming season will be the third year of full operation of the weed harvest following the completion of the trial operation in the 2021-22 financial year. NIVA has updated the 2024-25 operational management plan for weed harvesting based on the information collected during the 2023-24 season. The plan has been lodged with the consents monitoring team as required by consent conditions. Monitoring of macrophytes coverage and biomass was completed in December 2024 prior to the 2024-25 harvest season commencing. Large volumes of macrophyte growth were found during this survey indicating sufficient plant mass to commence harvesting in January. Planning for harvesting is underway and planned to commence in mid-January subject to weather.
Horowhenua Jobs for Nature project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Jobs for Nature Horowhenua Freshwater Management Unit (FMU) Water Quality Interventions project, which includes work in the Lake Horowhenua Catchment and wider FMU, was initiated in March 2021 and is contracted through to June 2025. The project has five objectives. In abbreviated form, these are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a project governance group; Produce further science on groundwater and nutrient/sediment pathways and sources within the FMU to refine the placement of interventions for water quality improvement; Design and construct a wetland complex; Dissemination of information around the FMU and project is communicated to iwi, hapū and the community; and Employment. Since October 2024, the Horowhenua FMU Water Quality Interventions Jobs for Nature project has held two governance group meetings: one in October and one in December 2024. A public web tool has been developed for the Horowhenua FMU project, which is updated as reports are completed to ensure public access to information as it becomes available. It can be found here. In July 2023, MfE granted Horizons the ability to use the Fast Track legislation for the Arawhata Wetland project. A resource consent application for Phases 1 and 2 of the wetland project was completed and submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in December 2023. Phase three is planned to be consented at a later date. The EPA has assessed the application as compliant with the Fast Track Act and accepted it for processing. The application is publicly available on the EPA website and can be found here. The application was referred to the expert decision-making panel, which officially started the process on 8 April 2024. The expert panel granted the consents sought in the application in their decision released on 22 October 2024. The expert decision-making panel's decision was appealed on 12 November 2024. A case management conference for the appeal was originally set by the High Court for 3 February 2025. This was subsequently delayed to enable potential resolution of the appeal outside of the High Court process. The new High Court management conference has been set for 3 March. The project team is working through this process with the support of the project's legal expertise. The contract with MfE was scheduled to end in June 2025. The contract requires the wetland to be constructed on at least 15 ha of land. This is funded through Mahi mō te Taiao – Jobs for Nature Horowhenua (Waiopahu) Freshwater Management Unit Water Quality Interventions project. Due to ongoing delays in consenting, the construction of 15 ha of wetland within this timeframe is not possible. The project team has worked with MfE to extend the timeframes of the contract to allow for the delivery of the project by June 2026. The Arawhata farm continues to be leased as a dry stock and cropping operation (maize and grass silage). The land area required for Phase One was to be removed from the lease for the 24/25 construction season. However, with delays in consenting, construction has not commenced, and the Phase One land has remained in the lease until further notice. Options around ongoing leasing are to be assessed by the Governance Group in January 2025.

12 February 2025

Project	Activity
Botulism response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizons, in partnership with Lake Horowhenua Trust and Muaūpoko Tribal Authority, surveyed the lake during December 2024 for birds displaying symptoms of botulism. No evidence of botulism was found on the lake. Surveying will continue over the summer period. The team are currently preparing a regional draft botulism management plan that will identify roles and responsibilities for future botulism outbreaks. There will be a specific section for Lake Horowhenua, which will be jointly prepared by the Lake Horowhenua Trust and Horizons.

Other Freshwater Enhancement projects

Programme and goals

13.12. Other freshwater enhancement projects undertaken by the Freshwater and Partnerships Team include the Nature-based Solutions project to apply Room for River approaches to the Pohangina/Ōroua Rivers and parts of the Manawatū River and some restoration work at Lake Rākau Hamana. Updates on these projects are provided in Table 27.

Table 27: Freshwater enhancement projects.

Project	Activity
Nature-based Solutions “room for the river project”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Ministry for Environment (MfE) co-funded project has been funded to apply the Room for River concepts to the main stems of the Pohangina and Ōroua Rivers. Horizons have expanded the scope to also include a stretch of the Manawatū River main stem from the Manawatū Gorge to the confluence with the Ōroua River. The project commenced on 1 July 2023. During the reporting period, the fifth Governance Group meeting for the project was held in November. The next meeting is planned for 28 February. The Governance Group includes a range of representatives, with Cr Taylor elected Chair and Cr Te Keni Teira as deputy chair. A press release was published in the Farmers Weekly in late September 2024 regarding the project. In late October, 329 letters and information sheets were mailed to landowners that border the main stems of the Pohangina, Ōroua, and Manawatū Rivers within the project area. The project webpage is also available here. The project team have used historical aerial imagery to digitise river channel movements over the last ~ 80 years, which forms the basis of the Room for Rivers framework Infrastructure, information from a range of agencies is being collated, as well as geological and topographical data. Design channel lines from 2002 Scheme Review have also been digitised. Other packages of work required to be delivered within the programme are being commissioned as staff resourcing allows for the commissioning of the work to occur.
Lake Rākau Hamana regulatory follow up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Freshwater Team is undertaking a project on Lake Rākau Hamana following a regulatory issue arising through a landowner’s actions. The project team have received draft design options for the remediation of the Lake Rākau Hamana outlet. A paper was brought to Council on options to progress the remediation of the breached sand dune. Council has given direction to Officers to progress with a reinstatement option outlined in the paper. Further consultation and consenting will continue to progress the reinstatement option chosen.

14. RIVER MANAGEMENT AND FLOOD PROTECTION

Overview and progress against targets

- 14.1. The river management and flood protection activity contributes to the achievement of the community outcomes and strategic priorities defined in the Long-term Plan. The largest contributions to these outcomes are building community resilience to climate change and natural hazards and supporting a thriving and sustainable economy.
- 14.2. Through the Long-term Plan process, Council implemented changes to the delivery of the river management and flood protection activity driven by the Infrastructure Strategy that identifies the key issues that Horizons faces over the next 30 years for its river management, flood protection and drainage infrastructure. The changes to the activity

included establishment of new performance measures that directly relate to the key issues and increase the level of transparency about the activity. The key issues that were identified in the Infrastructure Strategy are:

1. Affordability of river management and flood protection activity;
2. Responding to the impacts of climate change and natural disasters;
3. Delivering capital programme works to increase resilience to climate change impacts;
4. Planning for financial implications of natural hazard events;
5. Maintaining existing assets and understanding our asset condition and maintenance requirements;
6. Achieving environmental, regulatory and other performance expectations; and
7. Merging the river management and flood protection activity into an integrated catchment management approach.

14.3. The new levels of service (non-financial performance targets) include:

- Six measures for scheme maintenance and operational delivery to reflect the introduction of a more structured approach to delivery of maintenance across the approximately 3,800 assets;
- Six measures for asset management, including inspection targets and reporting to Council on asset condition and asset revaluation;
- A target for delivery of the capital programme that builds new or upgrades existing infrastructure to maintain and improve resilience to natural hazard events; and
- Measures for reporting on regulatory requirements, damage from severe weather events, gravel management reports, environmental grants, and room for river projects.

14.4. This river management and flood protection activity report is arranged in sections based on the non-financial performance targets.

14.5. At the end of the first six months, the programme is considered on track to achieve 19 of the 20 applicable Long-term Plan targets (95%, Table 28). In summary:

- Five of the targets (25%) have been achieved;
- 14 further targets are considered on track for completion; and
- 1 target: environmental grants considered at risk of not being achieved.

14.6. The last report identified three measures that are considered at risk. Two of these are now considered on track. These are the delivery of the asset renewal programme and the target for two assets to be upgraded or modified to meet **National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM)** requirements, which is a work in progress to identify structures to upgrade for fish passage requirements. The Environmental Grants target continues to be considered uncertain. The target is for five to be completed by 30 June. For the year to date, two have been completed, and two are pending.

14.7. Overall, the programme has made good progress across a range of matters. However, there have been some challenges to achieving delivery of the programme due to staff illness, delays in obtaining regulatory permissions and the group receiving a region-wide abatement notice. In summary, at the six-month (50%) point in the year:

- The operational programme has spent approximately 39% of the maintenance budget and 41% of the repair budget.
- Asset management inspections are on track with 56% of the high criticality assets inspected and a new framework for prioritising repairs being developed (see below).
- The capital programme has grown from (\$17.1M to \$28.4M, with additional work at Tremain Avenue in Palmerston North and land purchases for the Reid Line Project in Feilding contributing to the increases). Approximately \$2.9M was spent by end Dec.

12 February 2025

Table 28: Progress reporting for the river management and flood protection activity Long-term Plan targets for 2024-25.

River Management and Flood Protection			
	Level of service and performance measures	Target	Comment
#	We will undertake maintenance within the River and Drainage Schemes.		
1	Maintenance is undertaken on scheme drains (a drain may receive maintenance more than once per year, and each maintenance activity counts toward the target).	520 km	On track with 359 km completed; an additional 494 km is on track, and 1,340 km is pre-activity.
2	Kilometres of Scheme river erosion protection maintained, e.g., mulching or maintenance of vegetation used for river bank erosion (such as mulching of willows).	75 km	On track with 39 km completed; an additional 94 km is on track, and 16 km is pre-activity.
3	Kilometers of river channel maintenance completed, e.g., movement of gravel in reach to reduce erosion pressure on stopbanks.	18 km	On track with 17 km completed; an additional 403 km is on track, and 205 km is pre-activity.
4	Number of scheme flood gates maintained, e.g., cleaned, repaired, adjusted, etc.	97	Achieved with 506 flood gates maintained; note this includes inspection visits where maintenance was planned to be completed.
5	Kilometers of scheme stopbanks maintained, e.g., mowing of stopbanks, repairs to stopbanks etc.	65 km	On track, with 18 km completed; an additional 755 km is on track and 88 km is pre-activity.
6	Number of river scheme amenity works maintained (e.g., tracks on stopbanks).	1	On track, with 1 amenity work on track.
	We will complete asset management activity for the River and Drainage Schemes.		
7	Percentage of critical asset inspections completed.	75%	On track, 56% of high critical assets have been inspected.
8	Percentage of non-critical asset inspections completed.	20%	On track, 3% of low critical assets had been inspected.
9	Percentage of asset renewal programme completed.	75%	On track, 30% completed.
10	Asset condition report provided to Council. May report on the previous year's information.	Achieve	Achieved. Provided to August ICC.
11	Asset revaluation process completed and reported to Council. May report on the previous year's information.	Achieve	Achieved. Provided in November ICC.
12	Number of assets upgraded or modified to meet NPS-FM requirements.	2	On track, 0 completed.
	We will continue to undertake capital works programmes to maintain and build resilience to climate change that have been identified through the planning process and approved by Council at the first Integrated Catchment Committee meeting at the start of each financial year.		
13	Percentage of the approved capital works programme completed.	60%	On track. Programme approval will be via Council receiving this report.
	We will continue to respond to weather events that impact our River and Drainage Schemes.		
14	Council is informed of the likely impact of weather events that cause significant damage to river and drainage schemes on work programmes and budget within three months of the event occurring.	Achieve	On track. One Moutoa gate opening, limited damage.
	We will report on River and Drainage Activity.		
15	Dam Safety Assurance Programme reports completed as a part of meeting the Dam Safety Regulations 2022.	5	On track, 10 underway.
N/A	Intermediate Dam Safety review reports completed as a part of meeting the Dam Safety Regulations 2022.	0	Not Applicable.
16	Annual report on regulatory activity, including Environmental Code of Practice and Consents, and work to align with new regulations such as national policy statements and environmental standards.	Achieve	Achieved. Provided to August ICC.
	We will continue to provide advice and direction around performance and sustainability of our scheme networks.		
17	Number of Gravel Management reports completed.	2	On track. 1 completed Lower Manawatū, 1 underway South East Ruahine.
18	Flood vulnerability assessment reports completed (year 1 only) including analysis of the potential impact of climate change.	1	On track. Contracted, Council item 14 Aug 2024.
19	Annual report on Room for River projects.	Achieve	Achieved. Rangitikei report received.
	We will continue to support community climate resilience by providing Environmental Grants to assist applicants to undertake works within waterways.		
20	Number of Environmental Grants completed.	5	At risk. 2 completed, 2 pending, waiting on approvals.

SCHEME OPERATIONS

- 14.8. The scheme operations component of work programme includes:
- Maintenance and repairs in relation to the 34 schemes (as outlined in this section of the report); and
 - Other activities, including responding to natural hazard events and asset management (as reported in subsequent sections of this report).
- 14.9. These aspects of the programme are discussed further in the sections below.

Maintenance-Based Programme Delivery

- 14.10. Implementation of the new maintenance-based program is underway. The programme identified approximately 1,215 jobs, up from the approximately 400 completed last year, although it is acknowledged that inspections that include asset servicing, such as maintenance on floodgates and dams, were not counted in the previous year's total.
- 14.11. Establishing this new programme has been helpful to define the categories of work done on assets. A tracking system has been implemented over the period of July through to September and this report provides the second update on that system. It is recognised that some of the planned works may not proceed, e.g., where inspection prior to the proposed works identifies that maintenance to a particular section of drain is not required. In these circumstances, alternative maintenance works will be considered. On an annual basis, there is uncertainty for each Scheme as to the amount of repairs that will be required. If the budget is not required, annual savings at an overall scheme level transfer to scheme reserves (noting this is for the targeted rate component only). More information on repairs is provided in subsequent sections.
- 14.12. A summary of progress to December 2024 on the various Long-term Plan targets is shown in Tables 28, with the maintenance targets shown in Table 29 and Figures 14 to 16. There are additional maintenance activities included in Table 29 that are not included in the Long-term Plan targets. Overall:
- The maintenance budget identified was \$5.116M, with a budget of \$2.268M for repairs, providing a total of \$7.384M for maintenance and repairs. Noting this excludes the majority of the Horizons staff costs scheme maintenance and repairs.
 - To complete additional maintenance this year, some Schemes are programming additional maintenance planning to use the repairs budget to fund this.
 - 50% through the year, the expenditure on maintenance is approximately 39% of the budget and expenditure on repairs is approximately 41% of the budget.
 - Lower percentages of expenditure at this stage in the year are somewhat expected due to the amount of planning early in the year, seasonal conditions and staff time dedicated to ensuring that we are fully compliant with the regulatory requirements.
 - Overall, the programme for maintenance and repairs is currently on track to be within budget, noting there may be some variance for specific schemes as a result of staffing challenges or consenting issues. Works in the Northern Area are behind due to staffing matters. Recruitment is underway for vacant positions.
- 14.13. Further information on the activities in the Scheme areas of the region is provided in Table 30.

12 February 2025

Table 29: Summary of maintenance-based programme activity from 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024. Note that some maintenance activities include a component of regular inspecting with asset servicing activities, such as: dams, drains and floodgates.

Maintenance Activity	Quantity of assets*	Target**	Year 1 planned**	Completed	On track	Pre-activity	Percent of target complete	Percent of planned complete
Maintenance activities with a Long-term Plan target								
Drain (km)	1,144	521	2,208.40	359	494	1,340	69%	16%
Floodgate (No.)	746	97	1,182.00	506	625	104	522%	43%
Stopbank (km)	510	64	487.34	18	755	88	28%	4%
River edge protection (km)	604	75	134.6	39	94	16	52%	29%
Channel (km)	802	18	492.4	17	403	205	94%	4%
Amenity (No.)	52	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Maintenance activities without a Long-term Plan target								
Weir (No.)	63	NA	3	1	3	0	NA	25%
Pump station (No.)	117	NA	345	0	4	343	NA	0
Flood barrier (No.)	73	NA	0	0	6	0	NA	0
Dam (No.)	171	NA	345.7	174	174	0	NA	50%

*Individual components of assets are counted towards the quantity for: pump stations, floodgates, weirs, and dams. This split is done for valuation purposes.

**Assets can have multiple maintenance treatments during the year, with each treatment counting towards the target, e.g., a drain being chemically cleaned twice per year; in spring and then in autumn.

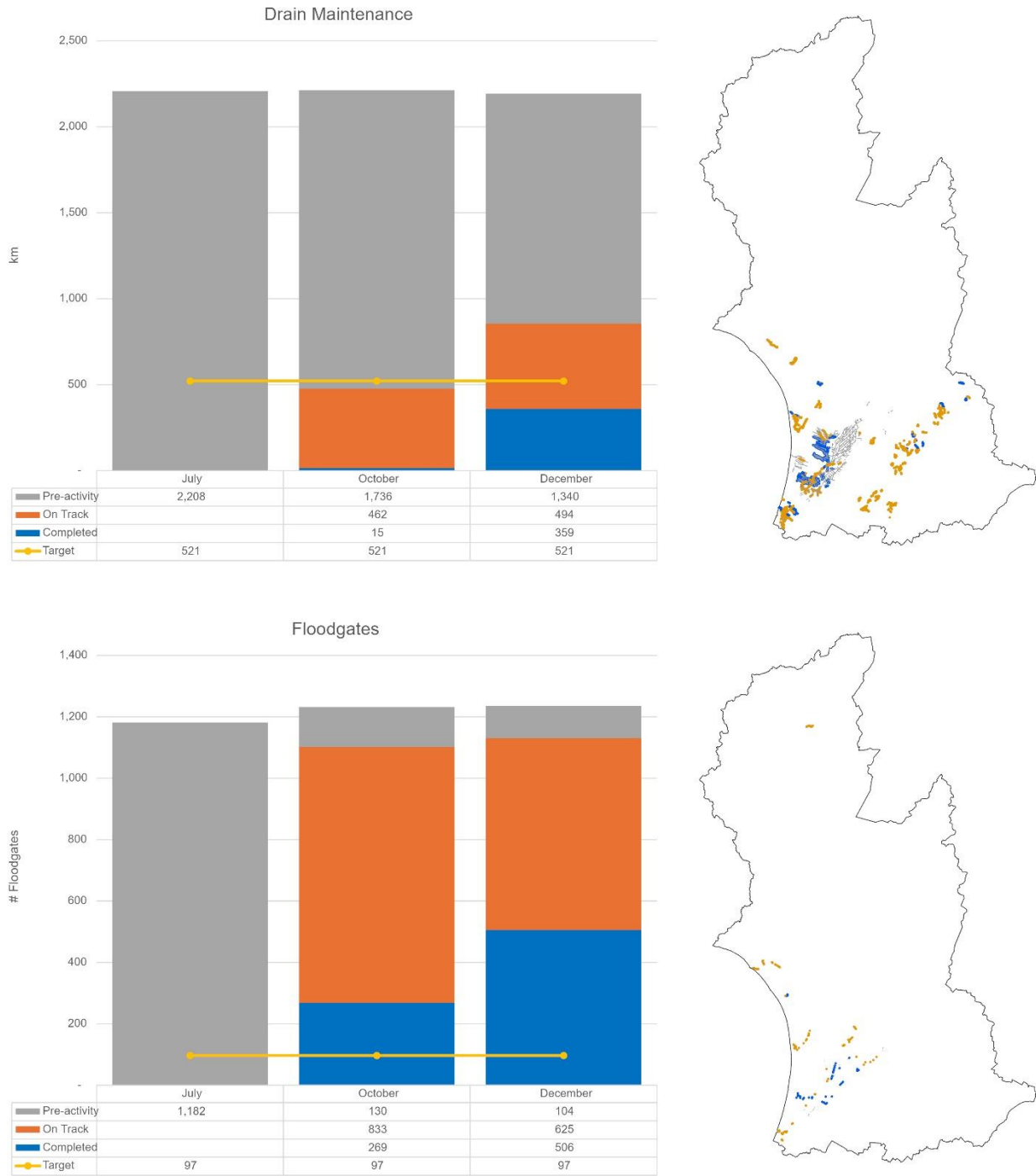


Figure 14: Progress on the maintenance programme, July, October and December 2024-25FY. Above drainage maintenance (e.g., mechanical or chemical (spray)). Below: floodgates repairs (e.g., inspection and physical repairs).

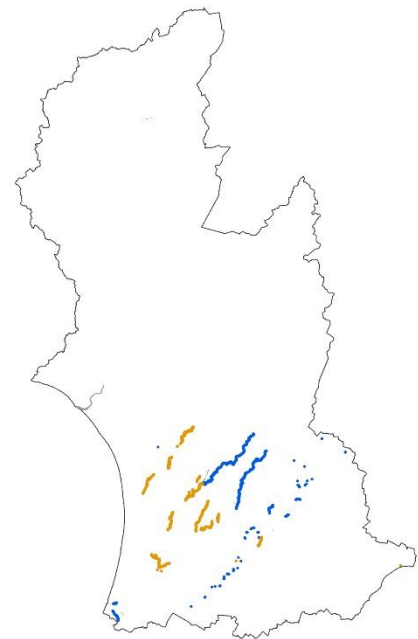
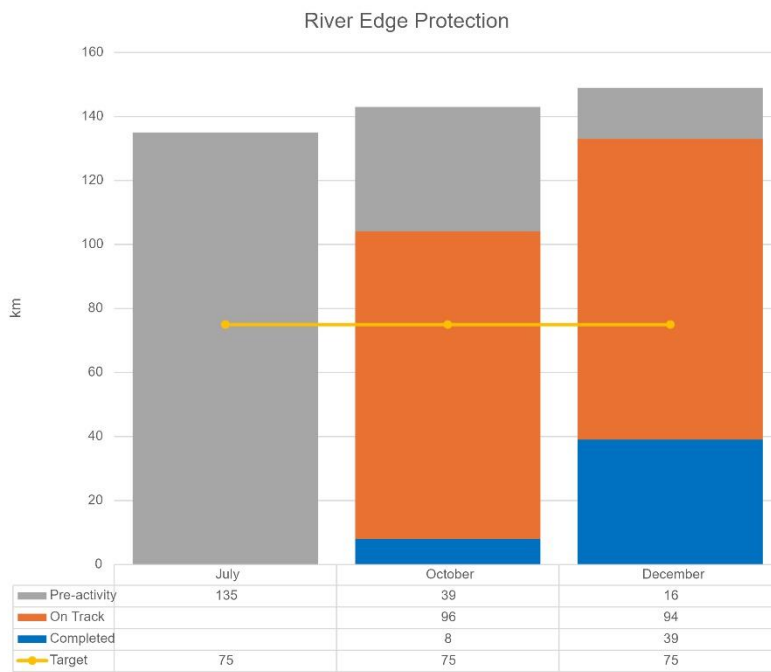
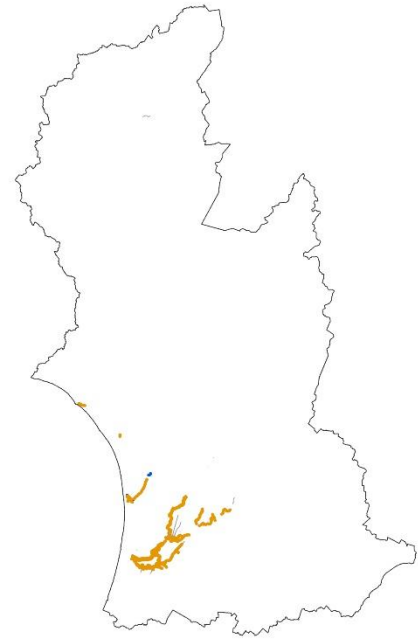
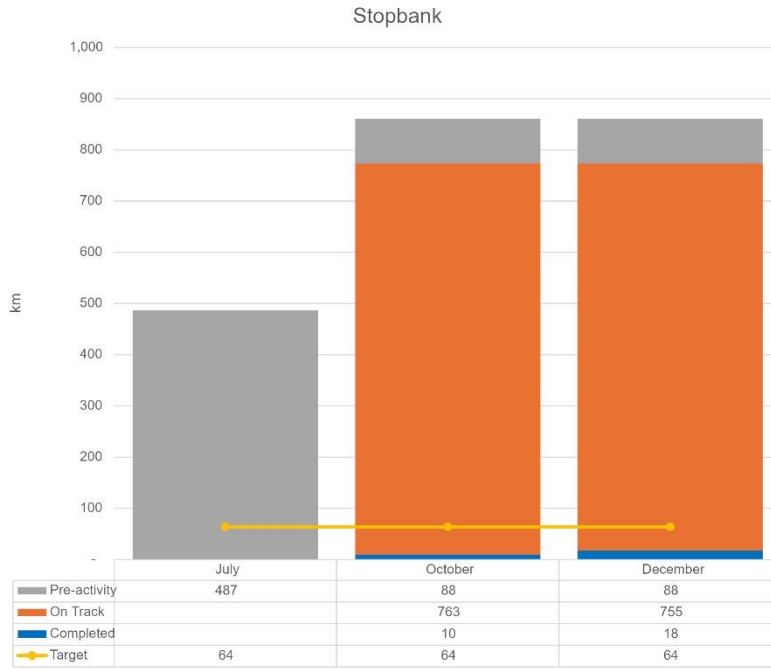


Figure 15: Progress on the maintenance programme, July, October and December 2024-25FY. Above: stopbank maintenance (e.g., spraying of weeds, mowing, animal pest control etc.) Below: River edge protection (e.g., planting, layering, mulching).

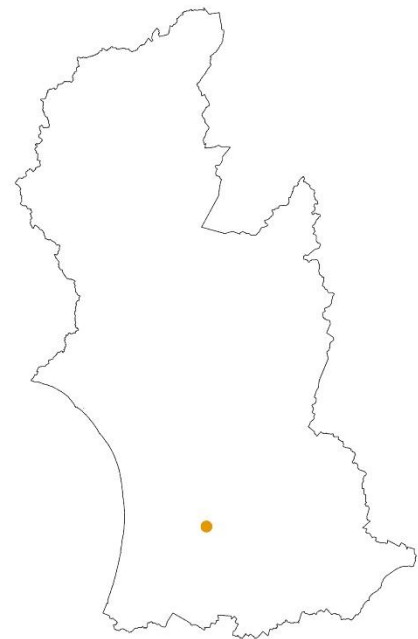
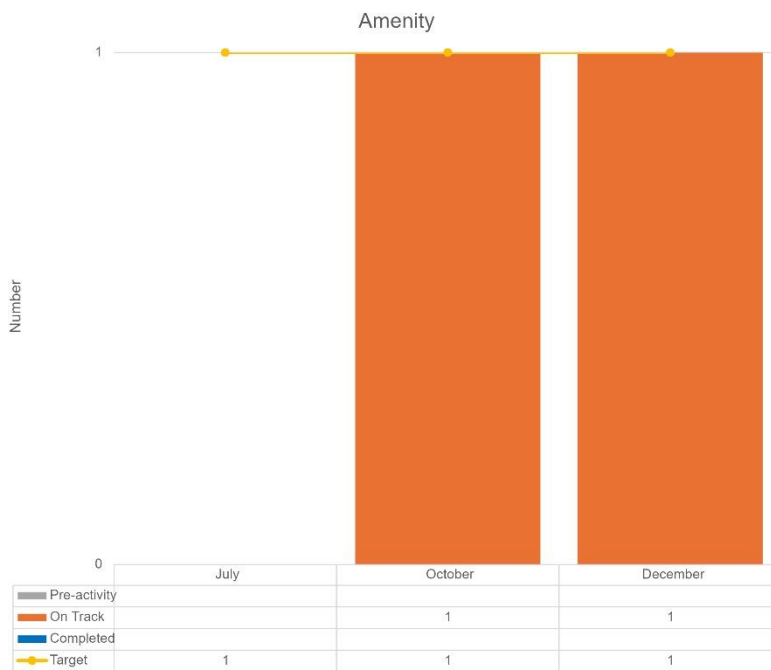
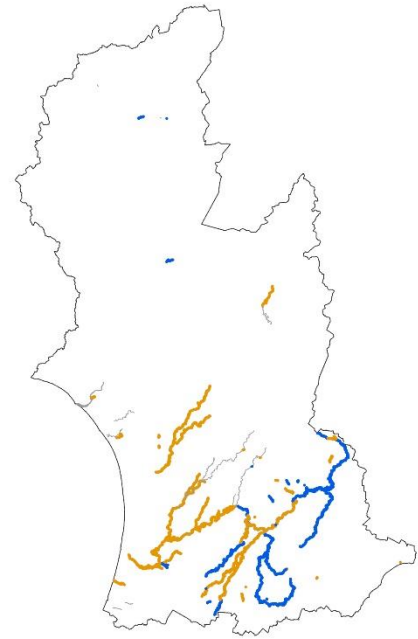


Figure 16: Progress on the maintenance programme, July, October and December 2024-25FY. Above channel maintenance (e.g., aerial spraying, debris clearance, gravel redistribution etc.). Below: Amenity maintenance (e.g., cleaning, restoring etc.).

Table 30: Summary of the status of Scheme operations by geographical area.

Area	Scheme	Comments
Northern Area	1. Forest Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Northern Area, which includes the Rangitikei and Whanganui Catchments, has 14 schemes, including 11 river schemes, one global scheme and two drainage schemes, with a combined revenue of approximately \$5.5M and a \$1.1M works budget, excluding capital works and projects. The work that can be undertaken in the Ohakune, Ruapehu and Lower Whanganui Schemes remains limited as these schemes are not covered by the Environmental Code of Practice and are therefore limited to activities that can be undertaken as a permitted activity under the One Plan or as a consented activity. There is currently limited resourcing to obtain consents for some work types, and, as a result, some works are not being undertaken. Work is underway to clarify consenting requirements and progress consenting (see the regulatory section below). Work during the second quarter of this year has continued to focus on embedding the new maintenance-based work programs into our operational activity. The report on the Ōhura Road flooding issue is progressing, with survey cross-sections now completed and forwarded to the consultant for modelling analysis. For most of this period, the weather conditions have remained relatively benign, with very few high-flow events occurring to test the resilience of our river schemes. This has allowed staff to spend more time on checking the asset information recorded within our AMIS system and forwarding through updates to the Asset Team. The Area Engineer Northern, Wayne Spencer, has resigned from Horizons to take up a position with the West Coast Regional Council. His last day is 17 January. Gerry Linklater, the current Senior Engineering Officer in the Northern Team, has been successful as his replacement. Staff capacity in the Northern Team has been limited over the first six months of the year due to staff illness, and capacity remains limited in January while recruitment is underway. Efforts are being made to redirect staffing from other areas to support programme delivery.
	2. Haunui	
	3. Lower Whanganui River	
	4. Makirikiri	
	5. Matarawa	
	6. Ohakune	
	7. Pakihi Valley	
	8. Porewa Valley	
	9. Rangitikei River	
	10. Ruapehu DC	
	11. Turakina	
	12. Tutaenui	
	13. Upper Whanganui	
	14. Whangaehu-Mangawhero	
Central Area	15. Ashhurst Stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Central Area includes the Lower Manawatū Catchment, primarily focussing on the major rivers and streams downstream of the Pohangina confluence with the Manawatū River (near Ashhurst) and out to Foxton Beach. There are five Schemes in this catchment, with a combined revenue of approximately \$15.1M and a works budget of \$2.7M, excluding capital projects, which are reported on below. The main focus has been the continuation of the maintenance-based programme with mild weather enabling this to proceed. Some repairs on the Manawatū have been undertaken. However, with some high river flows, work has been focussed outside of the main channel, including the lower end of the Mangaone. The annual maintenance run on the Makino Stream has continued through Feilding, with staff preparing to extract gravel under Duke Street Bridge to increase flood capacity, Pohangina-Ōroua scheme has had to halt repair works due to scheme budget being fully allocated, noting limited funds are available for minor maintenance work.
	16. Kahuterawa	
	17. Lower Manawatū	
	18. Pohangina - Ōroua	
	19. Lower Kiwitea	
Eastern Area	20. Mangatainoka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Eastern Area includes the Manawatū and Puketoi ki Tai Catchments. There are five Schemes in the area, four of which serve sections of the Manawatū Catchment and one global scheme that covers both the Manawatū and Puketoi ki Tai Catchments, with a combined revenue of approximately \$2M and a works budget of approximately \$1.1M. Moving out of trout spawning restrictions has enabled us to commence in channel works within the river bed. The focus is still on increasing channel capacity within our main scheme rivers via clearance of in-channel vegetation. Willow layering has been continuing through the spring in areas that have a risk of bank erosion. Scheme drain maintenance is now underway after a delayed start due to the wet weather. The Eastern Team have also been updating asset condition ratings and adding repair estimates to assets with known defects. This will enable us to have a better understanding of what repair budgets we may require going forward in order for us to maintain current levels of service.
	21. South-East Ruahine	
	22. Tararua	
	23. Tawataia - Mangaone	
	24. Upper Manawatū	
Southern Area	25. Foxton East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Southern Area includes the Manawatū and Horowhenua Catchments, primarily focussing on the drainage schemes in the Lower Manawatū floodplains south of Feilding through to Levin and from the Tararua Ranges out to the coast, as well as the network of waterways in and out of Lake Horowhenua, and waterways south of Levin including the Ōhau, Waikawa and Manakau. There are 10 schemes in this area with a combined revenue of approximately \$6.6M and a works budget of \$2.2M (excluding capital projects). Work in the second quarter has continued with the maintenance programme mostly consisting of mechanical cleaning of drains and floodgate inspections. The spray programme has made good progress for how unsettled the weather has been with some of the smaller schemes having completed the spring spray. Repairs have continued where needed on slumped drains due to consistently high water levels over the recent months. The renewal programme is underway, with three pumps being pulled and refurbished in the second quarter. The plan for the rest of the year is to progress the work programme as specific drain conditions allow for work to proceed.
	26. Himatangi	
	27. Hōkio	
	28. Koputaroa	
	29. Makerua	
	30. Manawatū	
	31. Moutoa	
	32. Ōhau Manakau	
	33. Te Kawau	
	34. Whirokino	

ASSET MANAGEMENT

14.14. Asset management is a core part of the delivery of the river management and flood protection activity. Through the Long-term Plan, performance measures for asset management were reviewed to reflect an increased focus on this part of the programme. The new performance targets are for asset inspections and increased reporting on asset condition and asset revaluations. These are reported in the Sections below. A further recommendation of the Infrastructure Strategy was to consolidate the previous 27 Asset Management Plans; this is underway, as discussed further below.

Asset Inspections

- 14.15. Asset inspections provide information on asset condition to inform if the levels of service are being provided and to identify risks.
- 14.16. The targets for asset inspections are split into 1) high-criticality assets and 2) low-criticality assets. High-criticality assets are likely to change condition between flood events. Due to this, these are inspected on an annual basis. Low-criticality assets are those that are unlikely to change without a significant event.
- 14.17. The target is to inspect 100% of the 1,248 high-criticality assets. As at 20 December 2024, 700 (56%) of high-criticality assets have been inspected, and the programme is considered on track to inspect all high-criticality assets this year.
- 14.18. The target is to inspect 20% of the 2,580 low-criticality assets. As at 20 December 2024, 97, (3%) of low-criticality assets have been inspected, and the programme is considered to be on track to meet the Long-term Plan target this year.
- 14.19. Overall, 797 (20.8%) of the 3,828 total assets have been inspected as at 20 December 2024.
- 14.20. To improve the accuracy of asset information, the asset inspection programme has a focus on reducing the length of time since the low-criticality assets were last inspected, targeting the oldest inspection date being prioritised (Table 31). As at 20 December 2024, 59 assets have no last inspection date recorded, and 1,913 were last inspected prior to 1 July 2023. The implication of this is that more than 50% of the information on asset condition is more than 18 months old, providing lower reliability in the assessment of overall condition status of the asset network. This will continue to be monitored and reported as the year progresses.
- 14.21. A further work in progress is to enhance systems and processes to enable all asset inspections completed by operational staff to be easily captured and be contributing to the asset condition data. At present not all visits where staff are inspecting assets are captured into asset condition reporting.

Table 31: Distribution of last documented asset condition inspection date.

Asset Criticality	Total Number of Assets	Last inspected date not recorded	Last inspected before FY2023-24	Last inspected in FY2023-24	Inspected in FY2024-25
High	1,248	1	19	530	700
Low	2,580	58	1,894	532	97
Total	3,828	59	1,913	1,062	797
Percentage		2%	50%	28%	21%

Asset Condition

14.22. As outlined above, asset condition data is one part of assessing risks to providing levels of service. Asset inspections are completed on a high-criticality and low-criticality basis to inform the inspection frequency.

12 February 2025

14.23. Asset condition data is one part of assessing risks to providing levels of service. Asset inspections are completed on a high criticality and low criticality basis to inform the inspection frequency. For the purpose of reporting on asset condition the data for high criticality and low criticality are merged in Table 32 and Map 12.

14.24. The condition classification has been refined by the Inspection and Area Engineering teams to be more specific regarding the operational capability of the asset and aligning this with the type of operational action needed (Table 32). The updated classification is effective from this finance year, and the Inspection team has reassessed conditions based on the new criteria, adjusting the condition ratings accordingly.

14.25. The revised condition ratings show approximately:

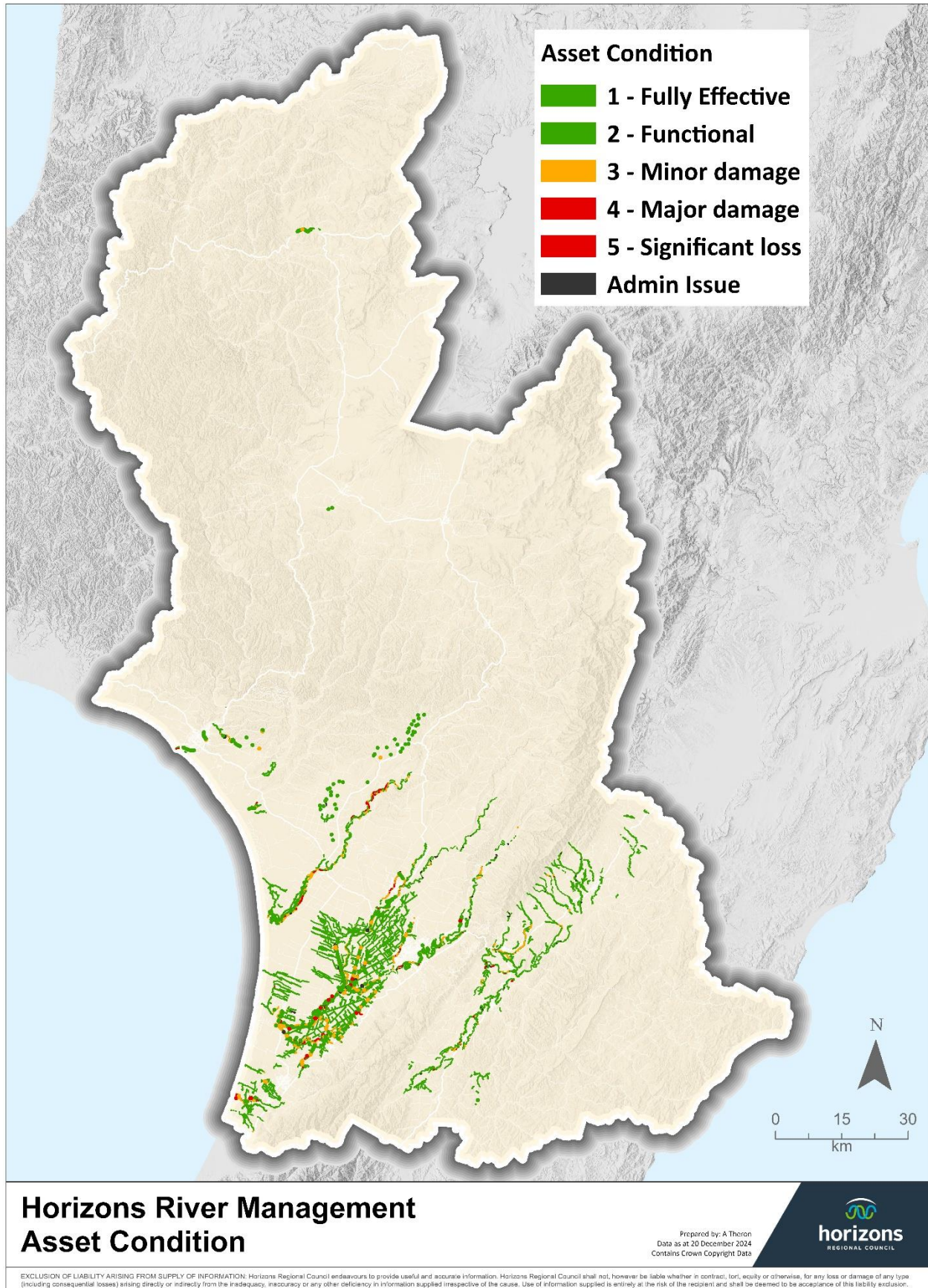
- 84% of the assets are considered in fully effective or functional condition;
- 11% are considered to have minor damage;
- 2.5% of assets have major damage or significant loss; and
- 2.5% of assets have administrative issues.

14.26. The administrative issues category relates to accessibility (43 assets, down from 49 in October) or having no recorded inspection (509 assets, down from 770 in October). These are a priority for inspection.

Table 32: Summary of asset condition ratings based on the information available at 20 December 2024.

Classification		Description	Operational action	Number of assets	% of assets
1 Fully Effective		Operating at agreed level of service.	No Action Required.	1,227	32.1
2 Functional		Maintenance program	Requires maintenance to maintain agreed level of service.	1,972	51.5
3 Minor damage		Minor damage	Requires minor repairs to return to agreed level of service.	427	11.2
4 Major damage		Damage reduces level of service.	Requires major repair to return to agreed level of service.	83	2.2
5 Significant losses		Damage reduces agreed level of service significantly.	Requires replacement or new capital work to return to agreed level of service.	17	0.4
Admin issue	6 Not accessible at the last inspection*	Add to defect report as high priority to restore access and re-inspect (assets and area team).	Not able to do visual inspection. Restore access if required and re-inspect.	43	2.6
	7 No recorded inspection		Assets not yet inspected.	59	
Total				3,828	100

*May be due to asset being submerged, overgrown, or restricted access, e.g., ground conditions or landowner (inability to contact, crop in paddock, dangerous stock, lambing, denied access, etc.).



Map 12: Current asset condition as at 20 December 2024.

Prioritising repairs

14.27. Assets can have multiple defects which contribute to the asset condition rating; an example is a stopbank, which needs repairs in multiple locations. A summary of the number of defects by area is provided below (Table 33). As of December 2024, there has been progress on completing defect risk in Eastern and Northern areas, with the larger Southern and Central still to be collated.

Table 33: Summary of assets and defects by area.

Area	Number of assets (total)	Number of assets with defects	Number of defects	Number of defects with a risk assessment	Number of defects to be assessed
Eastern	812	70	105	97	8
Northern	562	53	93	56	37
Southern	1,244	266	536	0	536
Central	1,210	344	840	1	839
Total	3,828	733*	1,574	153	1,421

* **Note** some assets with defects are rated with an overall condition of 2, so the number of assets with defects is higher than the total of those rated in conditions 3, 4, and 5.

14.28. Over this 2024-25 financial year, work is being undertaken to prioritise the known defects into categories, as shown in the matrix in Table 34. The number of defects with a high or very high-risk rating are further explained in Table 35, noting not all of the known defects have as yet been prioritised due to capacity constraints. The work to resolve the defects may be different resolution pathways, such as repair, disposal, replacement, renewal, including via large capital projects. This work is aiming to, over time, track progress on resolving defects and estimate costs to resolve the defects. The work is being progressed as resources allow.

Table 34: Prioritisation framework for defect repairs. Number of defects with each risk category as at December 2024 (purple = very high risk). Includes predominately Northern and Eastern schemes.

Risk = likelihood x consequence			Likelihood of defect impairing asset performance, inferred using asset condition score				
			Fully Effective	Functional	Minor damage	Major damage	Significant loss
Consequence of a flood occurring before defect is repaired	Paddock scale or single property, no buildings.	1			Low risk 90 defects	Low risk 27 defects	Low risk 11 defects
	Multiple properties, no buildings.	2			Low risk 10 defects	Medium risk 2 defects	-
	Infrastructure, or up to 9 buildings impacted.	3			Medium risk 7 defects	High risk 3 defects	High risk 1 defect
	Between 10 and 49 buildings impacted.	4			Medium risk 1 defect	High risk 1 defect	Very high risk 1 defect
	Greater than 50 buildings impacted.	5			-	-	-

Source: Guided by River Managers Forum, 2015. *Flood Protection Assets Performance Assessment Code of Practice*. "The consequence of failure is usually structured in such a way as to consider the full range of impact that a failure may have including specific items for flood bank failures such as: 1) Value of the land being protected; 2) Land use; Loss of production on inundated land; Lost wages of employees unable to attend work; Damage to the flood protection assets; Damage to other critical infrastructure (e.g. transport, telecommunications, power)"; and the criteria within <https://www.horizons.govt.nz/HRC/media/Media/Grant-and-Sponsorship/20230130-Environmental-Grant-Eligibility-for-River-works.pdf>

Note: Assets will each have an intrinsic strength and capacity towards delivering the Level of Service of the scheme. However, for this purpose, we are not assessing the asset; we are assessing the indicative consequence of the defect which is impairing the asset. Where there are multiple defects impairing the asset, consider the compounding effect of those defects. For the purposes of considering consequence, flood plain modelling and banks down scenarios may be used where available. Over time, this approach for assessing consequences can be improved to using available research such as modelled flood vulnerability.

Table 35: Risk detail of high and very high defects as at December 2024.

Scheme	Asset description	Risk score	Defect description	Engineer commentary	Estimated cost to fix (TBC) and resolution pathway
Tawataia Mangaone	Tawataia Dam - Culvert Inlet Structure	Very High	Channel and headwall slumping; headwall concrete block/rock movement.	Engineer has visited and investigated; further planning is required.	
South East Ruahine	Manga-atua Stream-Stopbanks-L	High	Minimal berm land; not much protection.	Recommended wider review of the purpose and classification of Eastern Area stopbanks.	
South East Ruahine	Manga-atua Stream-Stopbanks-R	High	Bank erosion.	Recommended wider review of the purpose and classification of Eastern Area stopbanks.	
South East Ruahine	Kumeti Weir No 7 Southgate.11.7 km	High	Both 2 nd and 3 rd weir from the top are destroyed; only side wall remains. Structure in poor condition due to destroyed weirs; exposed rebar and concrete debris.	Repair required to maintain bed level. Top step looking unstable, second step has failed completely - this is a high weir. Bed level would drop significantly upstream if not repaired. Could cause serious issues if it were to wash out.	
Rangitikei	Lovelocks - Waituna Stream RB	High	Decent areas of exposure with erosion and slips noted along water edge.	Recommended for bank shaping, vegetation planting, and gravel management.	
Lower Manawatū	Stopbank – Manawatū River – 20R	High	Minimal berm land-to-toe	Engineer has visited and investigated; onsite meeting held and ongoing discussions with representatives of the adjacent landowner. The particular defect has been like this for some time with minimal change. However there is a potential risk during a big flood event further erosion may occur, which could result in potential failure at this point. There are multiple engineering options that could address this defect, some have been tried, including the placement of concrete riprap and the removal of material from the beach on the opposite side of the river, but were of limited benefit. There is a need for a longer-term fix, and our Investigation and Design engineers have completed an initial assessment.	

Asset Revaluation

- 14.29. The river and drainage assets are revalued on an annual basis. A new performance target was included in the Long-term Plan, requiring a report on asset revaluations. This process and the outcome were updated in the November ICC report. In summary, the Infrastructure Asset Valuation report for the year ended 30 June 2024 has been finalised after audit was completed. This report includes the details of the methodology used for valuation, which has been peer-reviewed by an independent consultant. The assets are revalued by either (where applicable) using indexed book values (applies to 1,068 assets, 28%) or by using formulae that use asset dimensions and unit rates derived from analysis of recent construction costs (applies to 2,781 assets, 72%). This revaluation process will be reviewed again as part of the audit carried out in 2024-25 for the Annual Report.
- 14.30. Results of the 2023-24 revaluation show that Horizons had 3,849⁵ river and drainage assets valued at \$1,206M at the end of the 2023-24 year. During the audit process, there were capex and asset register adjustments resulting in an increase of \$7.8M on the provisional value. This represents an approximately \$215M (22%) increase in asset replacement value over the 2023-24 year. Over the period from 2015 to 2024, Horizons river and drainage assets have increased 224%, from \$372M to a provisional \$1,206M.
- 14.31. Insurance for river management assets is organised through two primary policies: Infrastructure Policy and Material Damage Policy. The Infrastructure insurance schedule in 2024 contains \$1,026M of assets, and the premium is \$1.5M. As Council has decided to exclude the North and South Mole assets at the Whanganui River Mouth, the reinstatement costs of \$91M will be removed from the Infrastructure insurance schedule, and a refund will happen accordingly. The Material Damage Policy in 2024 covers 106 assets with a replacement value of \$24.5M. The premium of \$88k in this policy is for these assets.

Asset Management Plan

- 14.32. Drafting of the single Asset Management Plan is underway alongside the audit process for the Annual Report. The intention was to provide the report to Council as a part of the next Integrated Catchment Committee meeting.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 14.33. The capital programme creates new assets and is a major part of building resilience to natural hazard events.
- 14.34. In the current year, the Annual Plan budget of \$17.092M has increased to \$28.399M through other Council approvals, including carry forward and procurement papers (Table 36). The increase in capital budget in 2024-25 is in part due to:
- Climate resilience project contracts being extended and having to be completed by 30 June 2025;
 - The Tremaine Avenue project having increased costs than budgeted;
 - The Te Pūwaha project having \$1.8M allocated for co-funding to an application for further Government co-funding;
 - The Central Government co-funding for the pump station power supply and communications upgrades; and
 - Additional approved expenditure on land purchases for the Feilding Reid Line project.
- 14.35. Historic delivery over the last eight years has averaged around \$9M of work on average, being approximately 57% of the budgeted activity. In the last year (2023-24), \$10.61M being approximately 75% of the budgeted activity was delivered, with underspends

⁵ The number of assets for valuation is different from the number for inspections, as assets are split for valuation where they geographically cross schemes

12 February 2025

including savings on some jobs (Te Matai Road) and lower than planned spend on the Te Pūwaha project.

- 14.36. The updated forecast (December 2024) for year-end is \$21.0M, noting there remains considerable uncertainty in that estimate. The forecast includes significantly reduced expenditure for the Te Pūwaha project. This is due to \$1.8M of the budget being to support a funding bid. The application was submitted in December; however, this funding is unlikely to be utilised this year. Further work on consents, design, and procurement is also delaying works getting underway on other aspects of the Te Pūwaha project. The Foxton Climate Resilience Project is another project forecast to underspend. A paper on the Te Pūwaha project was presented to Council in December 2024, and a paper on the Foxton project is provided separately as a part of this agenda.
- 14.37. Where in previous years, measurement of the capital programme has been reported on a percentage expenditure type measure, it is proposed that this year the target is measured in a percentage of deliverables approach. The focus on deliverables is preferred as it provides for projects to be considered delivered when there are savings; further, budgets that spend more than budgeted do not mask non-completion of other deliverables. In total, 28 deliverables of varying sizes have been identified (Table 37). The proposed approach is to measure the completion rate based on the percentage of these completed. Completing 17 of the deliverables would be over 60% completion.
- 14.38. A summary of the programme is provided in Table 37.

Table 36: Capital expenditure in the 2024-25 financial year.

Project #	Project Name	Annual Plan (\$)	Carried Forward (\$)	Other (\$)	Revised Budget (\$)
1	Climate Resilience - Lower Manawatū	4,938,183	1,412,553	549,305	6,900,041
2	Climate Resilience - Palmerston North	3,287,497	0	2,539,786	5,827,283
3	Climate Resilience - Rangitīkei	565,018	163,320		728,338
4	Climate Resilience - Foxton	1,756,967	153,129		1,910,096
5	Provincial Growth Fund - Te Pūwaha	4,522,163	1,393,673		5,915,836
6	Feilding Flood Resilience	500,000	353,867	4,532,500	5,386,367
7	Makerua - pump station communications and alternate power*	787,500			787,500
8	Moutoa - pump station communications and alternate power*	337,500			337,500
9	Koputaroa - pump lowering at Koputaroa number 4	100,000			100,000
10	Renewal - Koputaroa drainage scheme	34,835			34,835
11	Renewal - Makerua drainage scheme	65,000			65,000
12	Renewal - Manawatū drainage scheme	85,306			85,306
13	Renewal - Moutoa drainage scheme	84,194			84,194
14	Renewal - Te Kawau drainage scheme	27,700			27,700
15	Pūtiki	0	209,000		209,000
Total		17,091,861	3,685,542	3,089,091	28,398,996

*Includes the Local Government Flood resilience co-funding for pump stations upgrades. Note; other funding from this source is being received and is not part of the capital budget, e.g., the Pohangina project that includes Tōtara Reserve flood resilience, and the funding for the Flood Vulnerability Assessment.

12 February 2025

Table 37: Climate resilience project summaries for the 2024-25 year.

Sub-Project		Update	Progress
Lower Manawātū Climate Resilience			
1	Moutoa Floodway Gates	On track for first replacement winch installation Feb 2025.	On track
2	Moutoa Outlet Pump Station Gates	Tender closed, evaluation process commenced.	On track
3	Te Matai Stopbank reinstatement	Construction significantly progressed.	On track
4	Rangiotu Gates - design and consent	Engineering evaluation completed, awaiting Offer of Service to complete design.	On track
5	Rangiotu Gates - construction	Aiming to have prepared for construction by FY end. Full construction on hold due to budget.	At risk
6	Koputoroa Stopbank	Contracted. Started last season. Awaiting Iwi agreements for Kaitiaki services to restart.	On track
7	Tokomaru Stopbank – True right bank	Contracted. Start date awaiting confirmation.	On track
8	Tokomaru Stopbank – True left bank	Contracted. Awaiting Iwi agreements for Kaitiaki services to restart.	On track
Palmerston North Climate Resilience			
9	Tremaine Ave Gabion Replacement	Procured in August. Contract underway. Have removed shotcrete from scope, as it is reported not to provide additional strengthening. This will reduce costs and environmental risk.	On track
10	Belvedere Cres. Stopbank Upgrade	Design complete. Currently preparing procurement documents.	At risk
Te Awahou Foxton Climate Resilience			
11	Foxton Resilience Upgrades	Sheetpiling contracted, confirming start date. Tractor pumps have been ordered.	At risk
Rangitīkei Climate Resilience			
12	Rangitīkei Room for River Report	Report completed.	Achieved
13	Channel Management and Room for River works	Mulching and debris clearance underway. Aerial spray contracted.	On track
14	Bermland Planting	Planting completed. Release spraying to be completed.	On track
15	Amenity (Scotts Ferry walkway)	Project completed.	Achieved
Te Pūwaha			
17	Design & Consenting - Submit Tanea Groyne & interface wall consent, South Spit design, Submit South mole consent	Tanea Groyne & interface wall and South Mole consent received. Further detailed design for South Mole and Tanea Groyne completed.	Achieved
18	Commence Construction and rock supply for Tanea Groyne	Consents received, some variations to be sought. Procurement documents being finalised aiming to start procurement in February for item to Council in April.	At risk
19	As-built of Tanea Groyne and wall completed, South Spit consented, Construction Commences South Side	Tanea Groyne completion date to be determined after procurement. South spit consent application in preparation; likely to submit in early 2025. Part of South Mole being procured at the same time as Tanea Groyne.	At risk
20	He Ara Tuku Rau	Commitment made via Council in 2023-24. Requires WDC co-funding and further consultation. Is on hold at present; funding may not be spent this year so reflected as “at risk”.	At risk
21	Nga Ringaringa Waewae	Contract confirmed.	On track
22	Further application	RIF bid submitted December 2025.	Achieved
Feilding Flood Resilience			
22	Te Arakura Road	Work on hold due to staff capacity constraints. Note; not identified in the work programme for year 1.	At risk
23	Reid Line spillway planning	A Feilding flood resilience options and investment study tender document is currently being prepared. Further enquiries relating to land purchases are being made with selected landowners.	On track
24	Makino stream resilience planning	Gravel extraction at Duke Street Bridge Planned.	On track
Other capital projects			
25	Makerua pump station comms & alternate power supplies	At the planning stages. Some procurement completed.	At risk
26	Moutoa pump station comms & alternate power supplies	At the planning stages. Some procurement completed.	At risk
27	Koputaroa - pump lowering	In the planning stages.	On track
28	Pūtiki modelling and options	Initial modelling complete. Currently reviewing options.	On track

12 February 2025

Reporting Performance Measures

14.39. The river management and flood protection activity has a range of reporting measures in 2024-25. An update on these measures is provided in Table 38 below.

Table 38: Progress against various reporting related targets in 2024-25.

We will continue to respond to weather events that impact our River and Drainage Schemes.		
Council is informed of the likely impact of weather events that cause significant damage to river and drainage schemes on work programmes and budget within three months of the event occurring.	Achieve	On track. Early in the financial year, one Moutoa gate opening was been required following an event that impacted predominately in the Tararua.
We will report on River and Drainage Activity.		
Dam Safety Assurance Programme reports completed as a part of meeting the Dam Safety Regulations 2022.	5	On track, 10 underway.
Intermediate Dam Safety review reports completed as a part of meeting the Dam Safety Regulations 2022.	0	Not Applicable. There are targets related to this measure in year 2 of the Long-term Plan.
Annual report on regulatory activity, including Environmental Code of Practice and Consents, and work to align with new regulations such as national policy statements and environmental standards.	Achieve	Achieved. Provided to August Integrated Catchment Committee meeting. A further update is provided in a section below.
We will continue to provide advice and direction around performance and sustainability of our scheme networks.		
Number of Gravel Management reports completed.	2	On track. 1 completed (Lower Manawatū) and 1 underway (South East Ruahine).
Flood vulnerability assessment reports completed (year 1 only) including analysis of the potential impact of climate change.	1	On track. This project has been contracted following the Council item on 14 August 2024. The project is progressing with the initial establishment phases completed and a range of data provision completed or underway.
Annual report on Room for River projects.	Achieve	On track. The draft Rangitīkei report has been received. A report for the Manawatū is also being progressed. Work on the Nature Based Solutions programme has continued, including further communication with landowners. Work on this project has also been communicated through a dedicated section of Horizons webpage , the Governance Group and via scheme meetings.

Catchment Operations Regulatory Matters

14.40. The Catchment Operations Group operate under a number of regulatory regimes with permissions required for many activities. This includes the Resource Management Act 1991, Historic Places Act 1993, etc.

14.41. The Catchment Operations Group has over 205 resource consents with over 4,000 consent conditions and also completes a range of work through the Environmental Code of Practice that forms part of the One Plan. A stock take of the consents was presented in the [May 2024 Integrated Catchment Committee report](#). Activity under these permissions have requirements for and are assessed for compliance. There is an active workload to obtain new consents as consents expire and when new activities are proposed to be undertaken e.g. new capital projects.

14.42. The following sections provide overviews of:

- The abatement notice received in October 2024; and
- Consent application work in the 2024-25 year.

Abatement notice

14.43. In November 2024 Horizons Catchment Operations group was issued with an abatement notice from Horizons Regional Council. This section provides a broad summary of the notice and response. Please refer to the actual notice and response documents for the full details around this.

12 February 2025

14.44. The abatement notice was in response to non-compliance issues over the period May 2022 to July 2024, including one in 2024. In summary, the issues were:

- In May 2022, use of machinery in bed the Ōroua River near the Awahuri Bridge as a part of sediment removal to improve channel capacity where only one stream crossing location was permitted.
- In May 2022, use of concrete rip rap material that contained steel and wood at a site in the Pohangina/Ōroua Stream.
- In 2022 and 2023, not completing notifications to Fish and Game NZ, Department of Conservation and the environmental compliance manager. It is noted here that these were completed in 2024 (before the abatement notice was issued); and
- In July 2024, use of machinery in the river bed and lack of adequate sediment control as a part of maintenance works in the Turitea Stream.

14.45. Following the abatement notice being issued in November, the Catchment Operations Group requested in writing clarification and changes to the abatement notice. As required under Section 325A(5) of the Resource Management Act, Horizons Regional Council considered the purpose of the notice, the impact of any changes on that purpose and any other relevant factors it deemed necessary. This resulted in the cancelation of the original abatement notice and the issuing of a replacement notice in December.

14.46. The major changes between the notices were:

- The timelines outlined in the original abatement notice.
- Clarification of the definition of “river, lake or other drainage works” to mean, works undertaken by Horizons for river management and flood protection activity as outlined on pages 191-199 of the Horizons 2024-34 Long-term Plan. Clarifying that the notice does not apply to Catchment Operations as a whole, i.e., biodiversity, biosecurity, freshwater and/or land, noting these parts of the group do still have to meet regulatory requirements.
- Additional clarification of the definitions of “Good Practice” and “Best Practice”.
- Changes to the requirement on how information is to be reported, in terms of notifications. The change requires that notification of planned works for the month ahead to a number of partners and stakeholders can occur via an initial email and then at least monthly updates to the external facing webpage. This webpage will contain the proposed river management activities that are planned for the following month. This webpage went live prior to the Christmas break and can be found [here](#).
- Clarification of the term ‘significant works’.

14.47. In summary, the replacement abatement notice requires ceasing of unauthorised works (as defined in the notice) and has four further conditions, which are summarised broadly as (please see the notice for the full description):

1. Providing a report by 18 December 2024 that details how the Catchment Operations Group will implement and ensure compliance, including what processes and procedures the Group will implement to ensure compliance and “how the Catchment Operations Group will address capability and capacity deficiencies in relation to environmental management, with a particular focus on ensuring all works are

undertaken in a manner that is consistent with good practice⁶, and recognised best practice⁷”;

2. Completing at least monthly a schedule of all planned and/or programmed works for the works in the following month, at least 3 working days before the end of the month. Noting any works that were not planned but were completed need to be specified in the following schedule update (noting this is in addition to and/or aligned with other reporting requirements);
3. Requirements for additional work plan and methodology reports for all significant works where ‘significant works’ are defined as “River bed disturbance arising from the removal or movement of gravel or the clearance of vegetation that requires the tracking of heavy mobile machinery within the bed of a river or lake; and
4. The requirement that for all land disturbance activities undertaken outside of the bed of a river or lake appropriate erosion and sediment control measures must be: installed prior to, and maintained during the land disturbance activities; and designed, established, operated and maintained in accordance with the 2021 Greater Wellington Regional Council guidelines. Noting this does put in place additional requirements for these types of works to what was in place before the notice.

14.48. The required actions to report on the Catchment Operations Groups response to the notice and the requirements to undertake notifications have been actioned. The report includes an overview of the improvements made over the past two and a half years as well as additional steps being taken in response to the abatement notice. These are summarised as follows:

- Systems and processes improvements: Fifteen actions demonstrating the structured approach to the continual improvement of environmental compliance monitoring and documentation.
- Leadership and strategy decisions: Five action points demonstrating the proactive approach in integrating regulatory compliance and environmental stewardship into the core operation of river management and flood protection activities.
- Training and capacity building initiatives: Seven action points reflecting the approach to improving knowledge skills and providing support to meet regulatory requirements and promote environmental compliance across activities.
- Notification and stakeholder engagement: Three action points highlighting the importance of collaboration with stakeholders, transparency in communication and a commitment to meeting regulatory requirements through regular reporting.

14.49. Staff are now working within the framework of the new reporting and other requirements. Examples of the actions include a decision to no longer use concrete rip rap as a part of works, improvements to reporting processes, a range of training initiatives and providing additional support including guidance from external experts.

14.50. There have been, and are ongoing, implications of the associated workload and new requirements on the ability to deliver the programme and on budgets.

⁶ Good practice: means river management work activities which much meet the good practice measures identified in Horizons Regional Councils Environmental Code of Practice for River Works, dated June 2010 and cross referenced within the One Plan, or resource consent (where there is inconsistency between the Code of Practice and a consent, the consent conditions shall prevail).

⁷ Best practice means any land disturbance activities, which must be undertaken in accordance with the Greater Wellington Regional Council document titled “Erosion and Sediment Control Guide for Land Disturbing Activities in the Wellington Region” dated February 2021, or resource consent conditions (whichever is more stringent).

Resource consent applications in progress and recently granted

- 14.51. For works that fall outside the ECOP as permitted activities, or for consents that are currently held, the Catchment Operations Group needs to apply for resource consents from both the District/City Councils and Horizons as the regulator.
- 14.52. Table 39 contains the list of resource consent applications that are either being prepared to be lodged or have been lodged and those that have recently been granted.
- 14.53. In total, 27 projects are in stages of seeking regulatory permissions via consent or have had regulatory assessments or consents granted recently. These range in complexity.
- 14.54. In summary, the applications currently in progress or recently granted (Table 39) are to enable three main work programmes:
1. The river and drainage capital works programme
These are primarily preparing for this and next summer’s construction season, e.g., Tremaine Avenue, Rangiotu floodgates, Tanea Groyne and Interface wall, South Mole, etc.
 2. The river and drainage operational work programmes
These include consents for global gravel extraction and aerial spraying and also for maintenance activities outside the flood control and drainage mapped areas in the One Plan, i.e., not included in the ECOP; and
 3. Consents for the non-regulatory programmes
These include consents for the Horowhenua Jobs for Nature project to enable construction and ongoing maintenance of the Arawhata wetland complex, and the Lake Rakau Hamana project.

Table 39: Summary of resource consent applications in process (includes pre-lodgement and post-lodgement) as at December 2024 (consents granted in the 2023-24 financial year have been removed from the table).

Area	Activity/Consent	Details
	1. Tōtara Reserve flood resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been a range of work assessing consenting type requirements as the options report has been drafted. Work on this project is currently on hold until further direction on project direction is made. An item was presented to Council in November.
	2. Te Pūwaha Lower Whanganui River training structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Tanea Groyne and interface wall consent has been granted. The South Mole consent has been granted. The South Spit consent application is being drafted, aiming for submission early/mid in 2025. Some variations to these consents may be required following updated design work being received.
	3. Matiere willow congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work was commissioned in July 2024 to identify the causes of the surface flooding and possible solutions. Once possible solutions have been identified, any consenting requirements can be confirmed.
	4. Ohakune scheme global consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The activities that are required to be undertaken within the scheme area are being defined. Initial site visit with the consenting project team (planner, engineers, and freshwater ecologist) has been completed, including some initial ecological value assessments of the waterways to which the works will apply to. Once these works are fully defined, consenting requirements can be identified. Engagement with iwi is to commence once the scope of the works is identified.
	5. Rangitikei high flow channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This activity proposes to create high-flow channels through gravel beaches, with the aim of reducing pressure on outside bends. However, there is little information available as to its effectiveness and long-term effects on the river. This application proposes to seek a short-term consent with monitoring requirements that will inform future consent applications for such activities. A project team has been established, with the application proposed to be submitted in December 2024. Initial contact with some iwi has been made regarding the proposal.
	6. Pungapunga retrospective consenting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent is required to be obtained retrospectively for works that have been completed by a landowner. WSP has completed a report on options for the site. Further works may be required depending on the scale of effects of the completed works. Engagement with iwi and landowners has commenced.

Area	Activity/Consent	Details
Central	7. Pohangina gravel take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource consent lodged 15 December 2023; site visit with the reporting officers has been completed. Application for existing use rights submitted, awaiting decision after the provision of further information to the Consents Team. Undertaking engagement with iwi to inform cultural effects, commissioned Cultural Impact Assessment from Rangitāne o Manawatū. Ecological and engineering technical assessments completed.
	8. Ōroua gravel take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upper Ōroua gravel extraction consent expired on 15 December 2023. A new application is to be made, merging three resource consents into one application for the entire Ōroua Catchment, including the Kiwitea and Makino Stream. Technical reports for river management, freshwater ecology, and cultural effects are currently being commissioned.
	9. Pohangina and Ōroua aerial discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource consent lodged in July 2022. Existing-use rights will enable the activity to continue until a decision is issued on the current application. A Section 92 request for further information has been issued and is currently being worked through. Currently undertaking engagement with iwi, Department of Conservation, and Fish and Game.
	10. Reid Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the recent engineering report now available, a consenting approach is being planned. An options report for several aspects of the work will need to be drafted. A consenting project team is to be assembled once the options are narrowed. A Governance Group has been established for the project.
	11. Makino Stream/Reid Line consent variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A scope of the work required to be undertaken to inform a variation to the consent for the current spillway operation has been completed. Work has been commissioned to fulfil these requirements, and engagement with parties has commenced. The aim is to lodge this variation request in Q3 of the financial year.
	12. Rangiotu floodgate replacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The resource consent application was lodged on 24 June 2024. This application is to be withdrawn due to costs of the proposal, and proposed changes to the project needing to be reflected in any application. It will be more efficient to submit a new application rather than modify the existing application.
	13. Tremaine Ave – Mangaone Stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The resource consents required from Palmerston North City Council (PNCC) and Horizons have been granted. A variation to one of the consent conditions from Horizons was sought and granted. Works have commenced at the site.
	14. Tokomaru stopbank upgrade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The resource consents required from Horowhenua District Council (HDC) and Horizons have been granted.
	15. Te Arakura stopbanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the proposed works are captured under consents already granted for the Lower Manawatū Scheme upgrade. However, a check is being completed to ensure that the current resource consents enable all the proposed works to be completed. Changes to design may trigger the need for additional resource consents or variations to existing consents. The approaching expiry date for the consenting at this location is a further consideration for timing of works at this site.
	16. Moutoa floodgates maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An assessment of the proposed Moutoa floodgates maintenance works has been completed, with the proposed works to be completed via permitted activities in the One Plan. The outline waiver required from HDC to enable the works has been granted.
	17. Moutoa wet gates, floodgate replacements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project involves the replacement of the floodgates on the existing structures. The replacement of the floodgates has factored fish passage into the design of the gates. Investigations are being undertaken, which will inform if consent is required.
	18. Belvedere Crescent stopbank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of the proposed works shows the work being within the scope of activities allowed under the global land use consent for river management and the ECOP.
	19. Moutoa gates sediment removal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flood events which do not require the operation of the Moutoa gates result in sediment deposition between the Manawatū River and the gates. This sediment is required to be removed occasionally to ensure the efficient operation of the gates. It is estimated that approximately 175,000 m³ of material could be excavated from the area. A project team has been established to prepare a resource consent application to HDC and Horizons with the application to be submitted in Q3 of the financial year.
		20. PNCC designation review.

12 February 2025

Area	Activity/Consent	Details
		<p>modifications made to them or 3) could be removed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A project team has been pulled together to 1) ensure that all infrastructure required to be captured is included in the designations and 2) whether any additional requirements need to be sought to ensure protection of this vital flood protections infrastructure within the PNCC boundaries. Initial submissions are due with PNCC in March 2025.
Eastern	21. South Eastern Ruahine gravel take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizons currently holds a resource consent to enable the extraction of gravel from the South Eastern Ruahine Scheme. This consent is due to expire in early 2025. We have established a project team that will inform the resource consent application that will be lodged prior to the expiry of the current consent, in order to obtain existing-use rights. The project team will involve planning, freshwater ecology, river engineering, and cultural effects. Engagement with iwi and Fish and Game has commenced.
Southern	22. Koputoroa stopbank upgrade burrow area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource consents were required from Horowhenua District Council and Horizons, and applications were lodged at the end of 2023, with the consents being granted in early 2024. Works on the project have commenced, but the project is currently in a winter shutdown, and works will recommence when ground conditions are suitable. The works for the coming summer require the installation of a culvert within the Koputoroa Stream. The application required to accompany the resource consent application is currently being prepared.
	23. Koputoroa stopbank upgrade culvert and stopbank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The works for the coming summer require the installation of a culvert within the Koputoroa Stream. In addition, some of the works area falls outside of the ECOP and global landuse consent. A resource consent application to HDC and HRC has been submitted to enable the works to be completed. A s92 request for further information has been received from Horizons.
	24. Foxton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consents are likely to be required for some of the works. Actual consent requirements will depend on the final design for the project.
	25. Lake Rakau Hamana (Freshwater team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizons has existing use rights for a weir structure at the created outlet of Lake Rakau Hamana. The weir was established by Horizons after the illegal draining of the lake by a local resident. An option for remediation has been selected by Council. The project team will commence finalization of the design, consenting of the design including undertaking landowner and iwi engagement. Procurement costs for construction will come back to Council for funding approval.
	26. Horowhenua Jobs for Nature project - Arawhata wetland (Freshwater team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource consent application was submitted to the Environmental Protection Authority in late December 2023 using the Fast Track consenting process. The application was delegated to an expert panel, which began considering the application on 9 April 2024. The decision of the expert panel has been appealed to the High Court, with a case management hearing set down for February 2025. Further information on the application's progress can be found here Arawhata wetland.
	27. Hōkio Drainage scheme notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A notice has been served on Horizons on a landowner within the Hōkio Drainage scheme. The notice requires Horizons to either accept the requirements of the notice or decline them. This is currently being worked through with legal advice.

15. SIGNIFICANCE

15.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

Craig Davey
Biodiversity, Biosecurity & Partnerships Manager

Grant Cooper
Land & Partnerships Manager

Logan Brown
Freshwater and Partnerships Manager

Dr Jon Roygard
Group Manager Catchment Operations

John Foxall
Operations Manager

Shaun Edwards
Projects Manager

Julia Jung
Investigation & Design Team Leader

ANNEXES

There are no attachments for this report.