



# **Pest Plant Operational Plan 2025 – 2026 and Monitoring Report 2024-25**



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Front Cover Photo  
Horizons Regional Council

ISBN: 978-1-991351-90-6  
Report No: 2025/EXT/1986

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# 1 OVERVIEW

This Operational Plan and Monitoring Report details the previous year's activities, as well as the scope of activities Horizons intends to undertake for pest plant management and the implementation of the Regional Pest Management Plan 2017-37 (RPMP) for the 2025-26 financial year. Performance measures and other targets by which performance can be assessed by Council are identified.

This Operational Plan delivers on the key priorities for pest plant management established through the RPMP and Horizons non-regulatory pest plant management activity. The implementation components of pest plant management programmes are summarised as follows:

## 1.1 Direct management

Horizons funds and organises control for 18 plant species across the region and a further 11 plant species within individually-specified active management zones for regional benefit. Horizons records spatial information, plant population measures, the biological maturity and hence risk of spread, and abundance.

## 1.2 Regulation

Rules and restrictions are set, and compliance enforced with appropriate processes and penalties, including the recovery of costs incurred. Enforcement of the RPMP rules, particularly good neighbour responsibilities, aims to prevent adverse effects of pest plants on the occupiers of clear properties and is a strong theme of Horizons new approach through the RPMP.

The RPMP includes both regulatory and non-regulatory commitments. Advising about and enforcing the rules is an additional component of the Pest Plant team's work. The principal objectives for pest plants identified in the RPMP are surveillance, eradication, progressive containment, and boundary control. The RPMP identifies that if the associated plant-specific rules are not met, an authorised person will:

1. Advise the occupier of their non-compliance and direct them to take remedial actions.
2. Follow the initial inspection with a further inspection to confirm what remedial action has been taken and/or identify outstanding requirements.
3. In circumstances of non-compliance, the authorised person will utilise the administrative and enforcement provisions of the Act.

## 1.3 Biological control

Horizons will release and redistribute appropriate agents for the control of production and environmental pest plants as biological control offers the prospect of ongoing suppression without the ongoing costs of physical or chemical intervention. Horizons will provide financial and logistical support for research into biocontrol agents and the biocontrol programme is structured around effective establishment, distribution and impact monitoring. We regularly liaise with occupiers to ensure the ongoing success of biological control release sites.

## 1.4 Surveillance

Horizons undertake inspections of potential infestation areas for high threat plants not presently known in the region and will monitor for, and act to eradicate, any infestation of the Exclusion species to prevent production and natural areas being adversely affected. Horizons staff also survey retail outlets to ensure compliance with regulations banning plants from propagation, distribution and sale in the RPMP and the National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA). Surveillance is also carried out for notifiable plants and any discoveries will be reported to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

## 1.5 Awareness and behaviour change

Advice is given to raise awareness of pest plant problems and to provide land occupiers with information to control their own pest plants. This includes explaining people's obligations under the RPMP and responding to complaints and enquiries from the public. Horizons' goal is to have an initial response to a complaint within three working days of the complaint being received. Awareness programmes are generally outcomes-focused, targeting changing people's behaviour, e.g. responsible gardening and freshwater hygiene. Horizons' biosecurity promotion activity also includes public liaison, including awareness and education programmes, developing community group initiatives and responding to complaints and enquiries from the public.

## 1.6 Resources

Within Horizons Biosecurity Pest Plant team there are five Biosecurity Officers - Plants (BOPs), two Senior Biosecurity Officer Plants (SBOPs) and one Team Leader- Pest Plants. They have primary responsibility for inspection, enforcement, advisory, and monitoring activities. The Biosecurity Officers are also responsible for organising contractors to carry out control work on eradication of targeted plants and enforcement work. Contractors undertake treatment or remedial work, although isolated plants and smaller sites may be treated or removed by BOPs. The activity of the Biosecurity plants team is further supported by activity of other Horizons teams, particularly the Biodiversity team who complete a substantial amount of pest plant control in priority bush remnants and wetlands.

# 2 MONITORING REPORT 2024-25

The RPMP describes in section 6.2 the monitoring required of pest plant operational plans from the Biosecurity Act 1993 (Section 100B 2):

Horizons will report annually, by August, on work conducted over the previous financial year to achieve the objectives of the RPMP. Reporting will include (but is not restricted to) the following performance measures:

1. The results of inputs, outputs and outcomes monitoring. Reasons for changes in pest population or infestation number, size or density (positive or negative) will be explained;
2. The results of outcomes and outputs monitoring as detailed in any programmes to identify and control new incursions;
3. The change (positive or negative) in the extent of biocontrol agents and suggested reasons for the change.
4. The results of trials;
5. An evaluation of work programmes, including review of the operational plan and, if necessary, amendment;
6. Reporting on education initiatives with a statement on the perceived success of these, and guidance on the direction of future education work; and
7. An overview of community initiatives including extent of work, methods and results

The following sections provide detail against the seven performance measures.

## 2.1 Outcome monitoring against control programme targets

The RPMP aim for the Eradication suite of species is that all known sites are controlled to zero levels by 2027; with the exception of woolly nightshade and Chinese Pennisetum which is by 2037. The aim for the progressive containment-mapped species is to reduce populations within the Active Management Zones (AMZ). This reduction is measured similarly to the eradication species using a site status of percentage at zero levels.

Zero levels are defined in the RPMP as; where a pest is destroyed from that area but accepting that the pest may continue to appear in the area after destruction due to seed sources or migration from an unmanaged area.

The percentage of managed species sites at zero levels across both eradication and progressive containment mapped categories at year-end is 73%. Figures 1 and 3 shows a year-on-year comparison of all managed sites zero level status for both eradication and progressive containment – mapped species respectively. Both show a downward trend since last year with eradication being at 81% and progressive containment – mapped being at 68%. This is due to continued surveillance and discovery of new sites in both categories and continued spillover from unmanaged infestations in the good neighbour process zone for progressive containment mapped species.

The Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 (LTP) has a target that the overall zero-level status of Horizons managed pest plant sites increases on a yearly basis. The baseline measure (taken from FY 2022-23 end of year reporting) was recorded in error as 86%, where the actual baseline figure for the combined eradication and progressive containment-mapped species was 79%. The current result of 73% (Figure 5) is less than the LTP target and this second consecutive result of lower zero levels than desired is due to increased surveillance on species in urban area previously not surveyed and the continual pressure from the areas not controlled due to being either within the non-managed areas of the progressive containment suite of species or areas not able to be fully resourced due to historic infestation load.

Another measure implemented after the RPMP became operative to help with success monitoring is the measure of plant abundance using the area of actual plant cover, measured in hectares. Pest plant sites are described using a Horizons produced internal database with field collected information input into a phone app. Plant maturity along with the approximate number and size of plants present are recorded. The measures create the effective sun shadow area of all plants within the larger area which makes the site, and when amalgamated by species proved a regional pest footprint. Plant maturity is recorded by classifying a sites most mature plants as adult, juvenile, or seedling. Maturity can also infer risk status to the site, given mature plants may have seeded, which could infer spread or additions to the seedbank, useful programme management information.

The **Area of Occupancy (AOO)** describes the number of hectares that are occupied by the plants themselves over the extent of an area. For eradication species the AOO showed an upward trend from the previous FY. This was due to an increasing number of woolly nightshade sites in Palmerston North being discovered by staff and as a result of the Woollybusters outreach program. The species alone accounted for a 2ha increase. For progressive containment mapped species the AOO showed a slight downward trend.



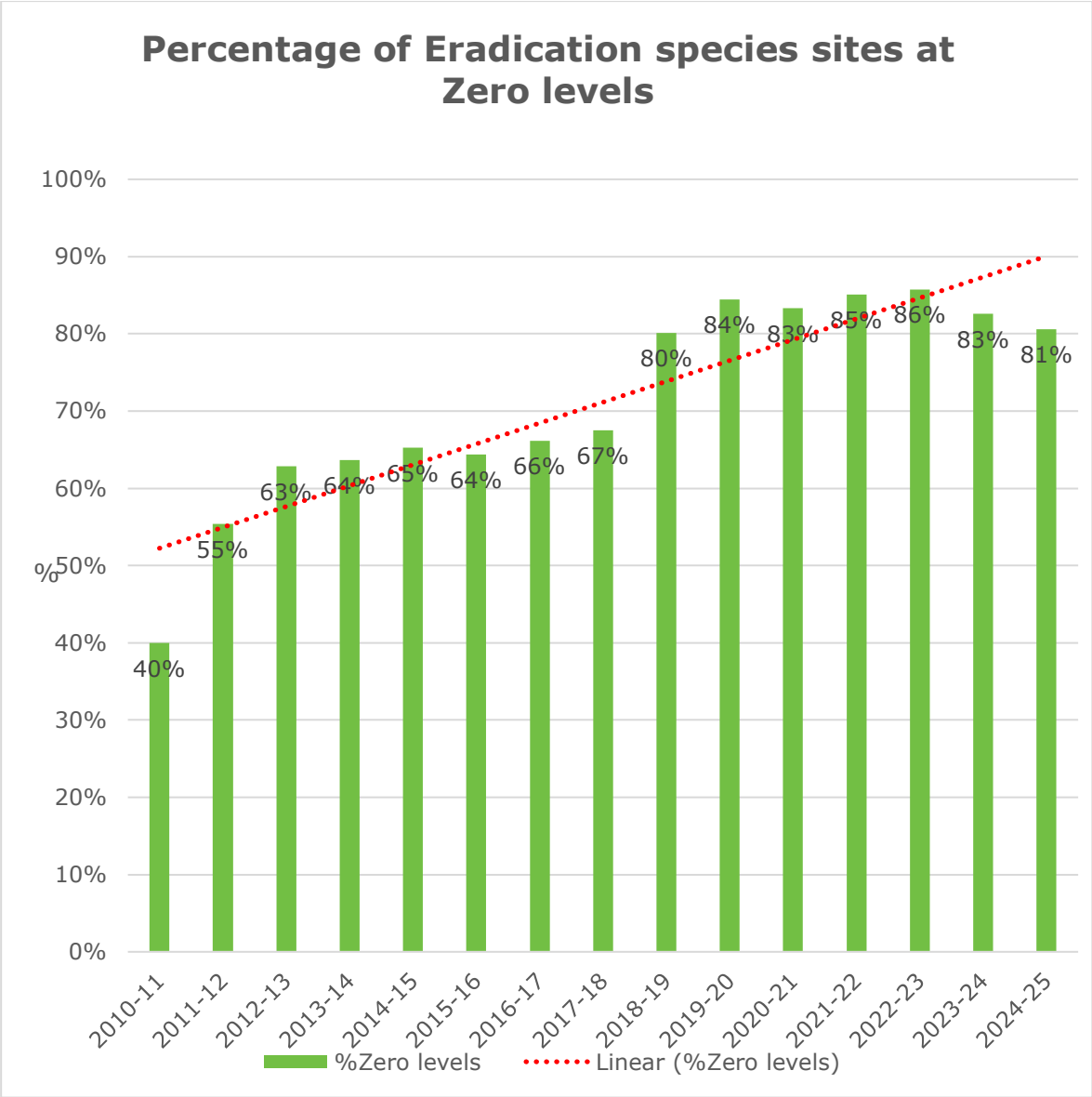


Figure 1: Eradication percentage at zero levels.

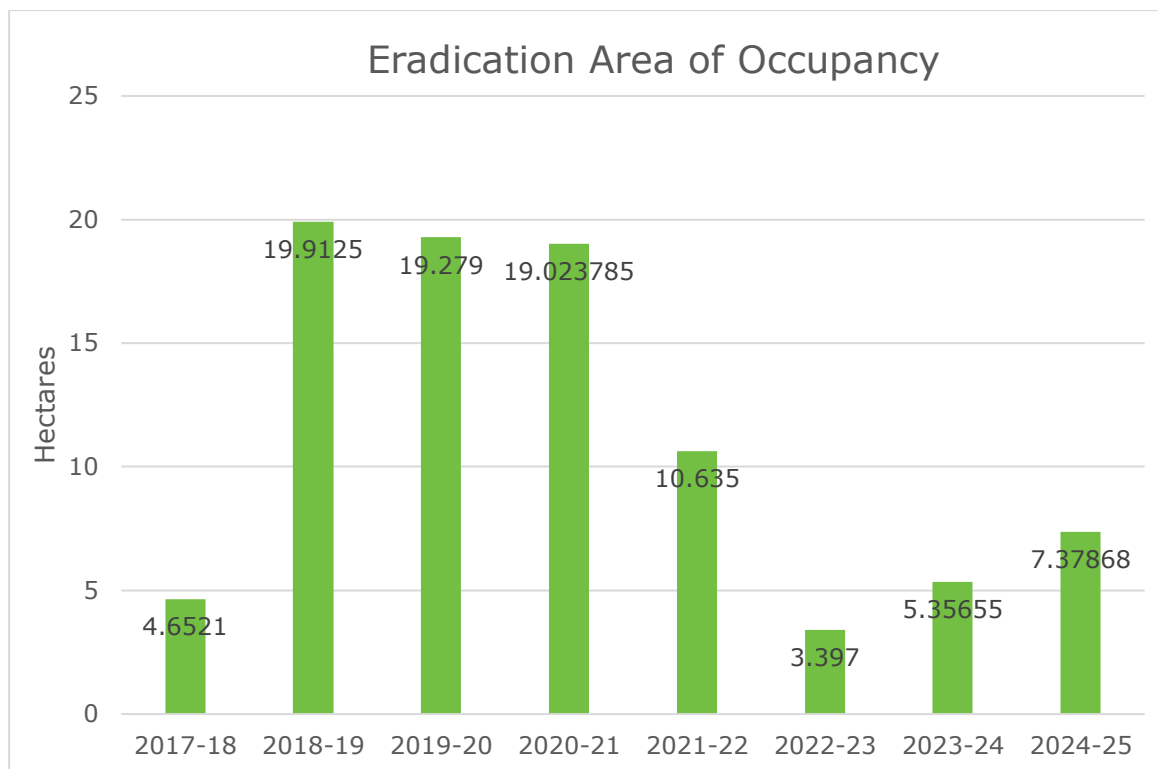


Figure 2 Eradication Species Area of Occupancy

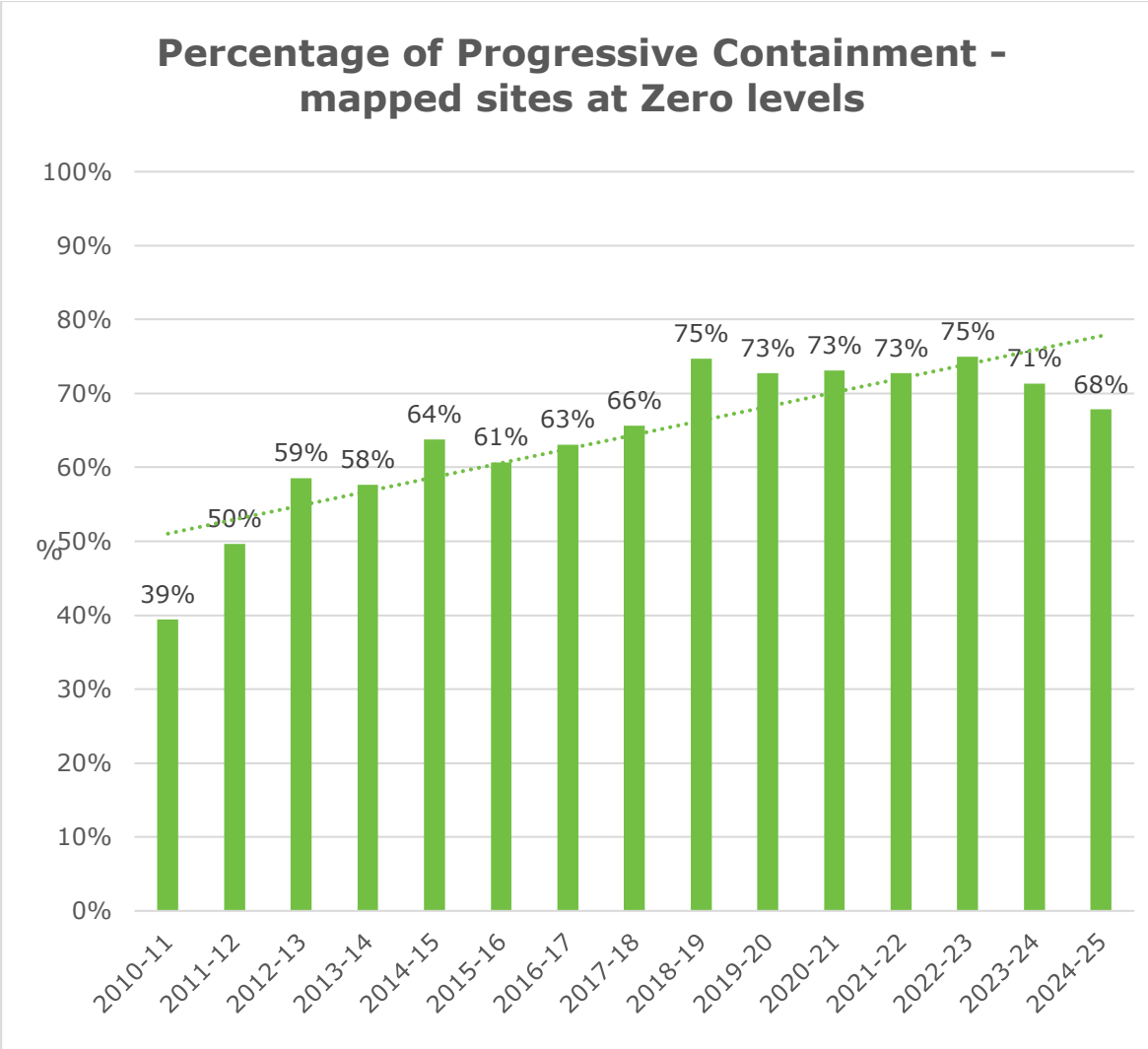


Figure 3 Progressive Containment - Mapped Species percentage at zero levels

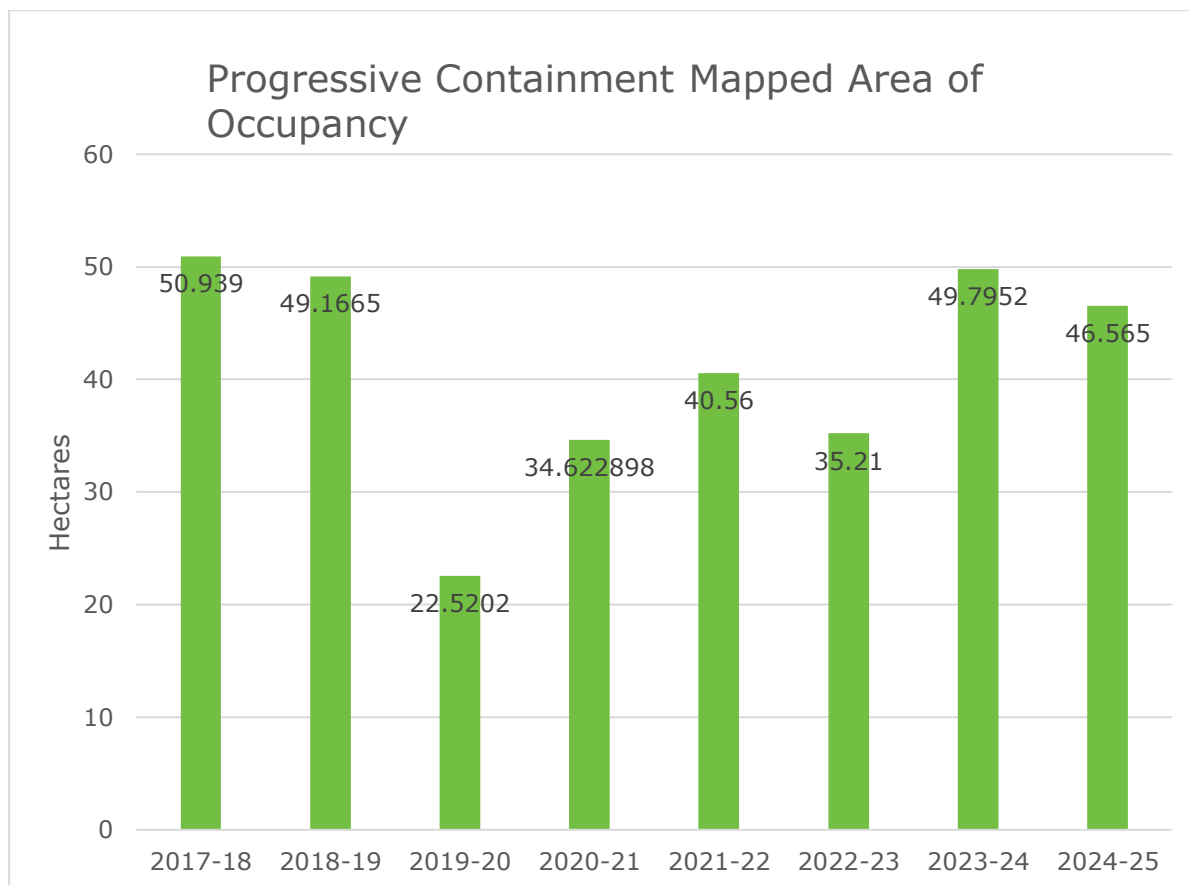


Figure 4 Progressive Containment Mapped species Are of Occupancy



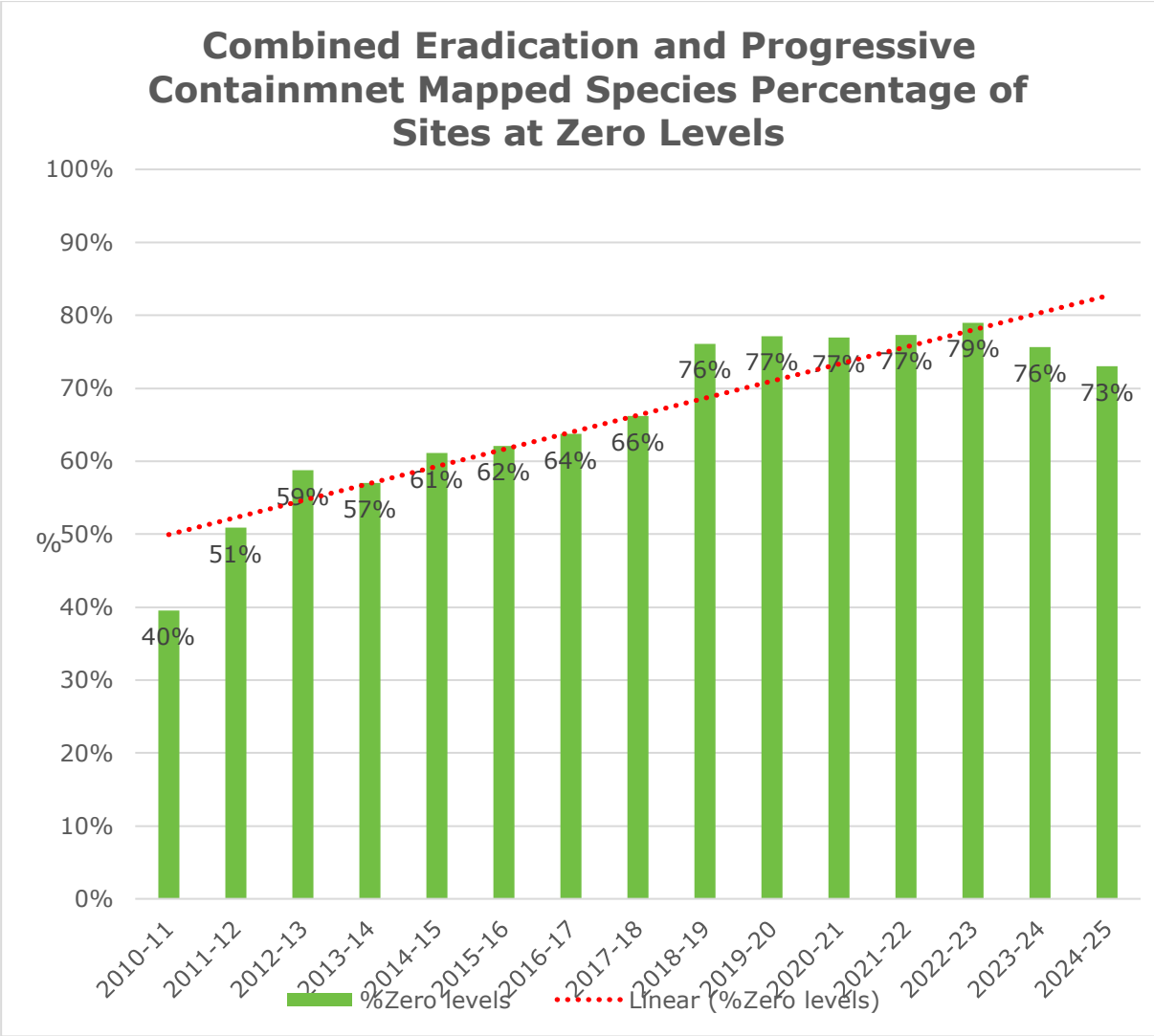


Figure 5 Combined Eradication and Progressive Containment Mapped species percentage sites at zero levels

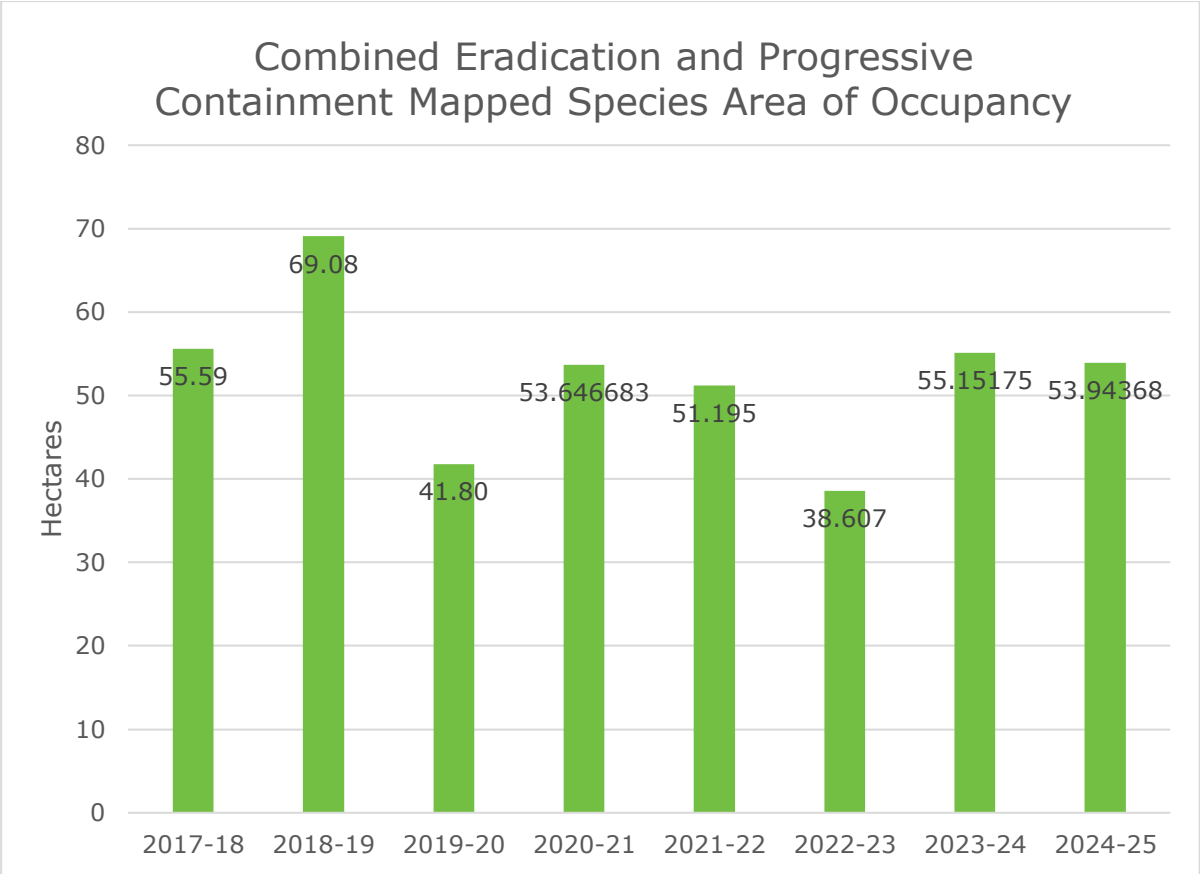


Figure 6 Combined Eradication and Progressive Containment Mapped Species Area of Occupancy

## 2.2 Outcome monitoring against new incursions

### **Sagittaria**

Regrowth *sagittaria* was removed from the Pioneer Drain at Palmerston North in February 2025 with no plants discovered in the lower Mangaone Stream. The Eketahuna site which was discovered in summer 2024, has had a significant reduction in plant numbers with only 15 seedlings controlled in January 2025.

No other Exclusion category plants were found in the region this year.

### **New to the region incursions**

An additional site of fringed water lily was discovered at the *sagittaria* site in Eketahuna with the *sagittaria* initially suppressing the fringed water lily. Both active sites were treated twice over the season with only a small number of seedlings found. A third site has been eliminated with the pond it was growing in drained and filled in.

## 2.3 Extent of biological control agents

Biocontrol has been successful this year with the following to report:

### **Old man's beard sawfly**

HRC was scheduled for three releases this year. Only one was received due to mass rearing failure and was released in Makuri in Tararua. The sawfly has shown signs of establishment in Tararua and at previous locations in the Rangitikei.

### **Old man's beard gall mites**

Region wide sampling and microscope assessment of dissected flower buds has proven the mites are now widespread across the region. It is now a case of waiting for population increases to reach damaging levels. The longest observed distance from a release site is 41km in Tararua.

### **Acacia longifolia gall forming wasps**

A shipment of *Acacia longifolia* gall wasps was received in December 2024 and released at sites near Waitarere Beach which had previously received wasps. During post-release monitoring signs of establishment were evident with the presence of galls at both the Whanganui and Waitarere sites. One sub-site along the Whanganui coast had over 100 galls. This has reached nursery site status, suitable for gall harvest and dispersal to other *Acacia longifolia* infestations

### **Field horsetail weevils**

A final release of the field horsetail weevil was made in October 2024 at a site in Whanganui with MWLR having now wound down this program. Monitoring of sites has yet to show any signs of establishment with no adult weevils having been found post release.

## 2.4 Results of trials

Not applicable in 2023-24 as no trials were undertaken

## 2.5 An evaluation of work programmes

### **Prioritisation of RPMP species programs**

In October 2024, comprehensive review of the pest plant programmes was undertaken to determine whether they remain fit for purpose in preparation for the review of the RPMP. Many of the current programmes are not fully funded due to extensive infestations and AMZ drawn with limited knowledge at the time of drafting the RPMP. Fully funding all programmes to achieve zero level

targets is not currently possible, and spreading available funding across all programmes would only allow partial progress toward those goals.

As part of this review, the pest plant team was tasked with developing an in-house prioritisation tool to identify which species, and in which areas, should receive full funding to reach zero level outcomes. A framework was established to divide the management area for each species actively managed by Council into Species Management Units (SMUs), based on species presence, abundance, external influence and geographic distribution.

The prioritisation tool included a range of factors used to generate a score for each SMU. The team then reviewed and discussed these scores to ensure they accurately reflected on-the-ground knowledge and operational realities. All eradication and progressive containment-mapped species were provided SMUs and assessed through this tool, resulting in a ranked list of priorities. This ranking has informed the programme design for the 2025–2026 financial year.

Maps and additional details regarding reporting can be found in the operational plan section.

## 2.6 Reporting on education initiatives

Staff assisted the Enviro Schools programme by participating in a pest plant day for the Ruapehu district, repeating the previous year's event. Positive feedback was received from children and adults and the pest plant team helped to host the teacher who was part of the Science In Schools programme from Longburn School. She accompanied the Pest Plant team on different activities including biocontrol, direct control of plants and surveillance activities.

## 2.7 Overview of community initiatives

The Woollybusters program is an initiative established in October 2024 to encourage residents in Palmerston North and Feilding to watch out for and report woolly nightshade, an eradication species in the RPMP. Users were encouraged to report it using iNaturalist app. A map was set up on the Horizons website recording where woolly nightshade had been sighted and where it had been 'busted'. Social media posts were also used to support the program. A total of 35 observations were recorded through iNaturalist over FY 24-25.

## 3 2025-26 Operational Plan

### 3.1 Financial Overview

Council apportions the rate take for Pest Plant Biosecurity into programmes that were created under the previous Regional Pest Plant Management Strategy and this split is used for financial reporting. The RPMP designations have a slightly different breakdown of activity within the cost codes. Table 1 Table 1 maps Council programme name to the Operational Plan programme. Table 2 breaks down the programme by RPMP status and shows staff hours attached to each program.

Table 1: 2025-26 Horizons internal programme description to Operational Plan Programme map

| Internal programme name                  | Equivalent Operational Plan programme              | 2025-26 Operational Plan budget |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Biological Control</b>                | Biological control                                 | \$240,800.00                    |
| <b>Crown/non-rateable (vector)</b>       | Exclusion/Eradication/PC-unmapped                  | \$54,621.00                     |
| <b>Surveillance activity</b>             | Exclusion/Response, Investigation and Surveillance | \$81,431.00                     |
| <b>Production</b>                        | Exclusion / Eradication/ PC-mapped/ PC-unmapped    | \$466,834.00                    |
| <b>Zero-density</b>                      | Eradication/PC-mapped/PC-unmapped                  | \$1,565,438.00                  |
| <b>Promotion</b>                         | Promotion                                          | \$142,561.00                    |
| <b>National and regional initiatives</b> | Regional Pest Management Plan Review               | \$102,200                       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             |                                                    | <b>\$2,653,885.00</b>           |

Table 2: Financial overview of 2025-26 by Operational Plan programme

| Programme                                       | Staff hours (#) | External expenses (\$) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| <b>Exclusion</b>                                | 156             | \$5,000                |
| <b>Eradication</b>                              | 2464            | \$330,500              |
| <b>Progressive Containment mapped</b>           | 5512            | \$675,500              |
| <b>Progressive Containment unmapped</b>         | 824             | \$4,088                |
| <b>Biological control</b>                       | 544             | \$164,000              |
| <b>Promotion</b>                                | 988             | \$10,000               |
| <b>Response, Investigation and Surveillance</b> | 468             | \$6,000                |
| <b>National and regional initiatives</b>        | 0               | \$102,200              |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                    | <b>10,956</b>   | <b>\$1,297,288</b>     |

Every effort is being made to deliver on the Pest Plan targets and outcomes, while operating within this budget. Close monitoring of expenditure will ensure budgets are not exceeded.

## 4 ANNUAL PLAN TARGETS

Table 3: Biosecurity Plants Annual Plan targets for 2025-26.

| Performance Measures for Levels of Service                                                                                                                                                                    | 2025-26                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Any exclusion category pest plants that are found in the region are promptly managed, with an initial response plan completed within the specified timeframe that is appropriate for that particular species. | Response plans enacted with their specified timeframes (target 100%)                                              |
| Number of managed sites at zero-levels (ZL) increases for pest plants identified for Eradication and Progressive Containment - mapped in the Regional Pest Management Plan.                                   | Overall percentage of managed sites at zero-levels (ZL) increases from the baseline year (2023-24), which is 76%. |
| Financially support the national bio-control agent development programme and report annually to Council on this programme.                                                                                    | Financial support provided and annual report to Council                                                           |
| Monitoring of RPMP programmes according to Biosecurity Act requirements                                                                                                                                       | Annual monitoring report to Council                                                                               |

## 5 REGIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### 5.1 Programme overview

The Biosecurity Plants activity is strongly linked to the delivery of Horizons' RPMP, which can be reached via the following link <https://www.horizons.govt.nz/HRC/media/Media/Pests/2017-2037-Regional-Pest-Management-Plan.pdf>

The activity reporting is arranged in sections as per the RPMP groupings for pest plant management programmes as outlined in Table 4. More information on these groupings is on page 25 of the RPMP.

Table 4 Activity Summary for Biosecurity Plants

| Aim                       | Programme                          | Key Deliverables                                                                            |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Preventing establishment  | Exclusion Programme                | Keep unwanted pest plants that are not present out of the region.                           |
| Eradicating               | Eradication Programme              | Controlling and reducing the prevalence and extent of Eradication species.                  |
| Rolling back              | Progressive Containment Programme  | Containing and reducing the geographic distribution of the pest plant to an area over time. |
| Maintaining low densities | Progressive Containment – unmapped | Ongoing control to reduce species' impact and spread to other properties.                   |



- Planned – Works planned for the FY
- In progress – Works currently underway but not yet completed
- Completed – Works completed for the FY
- Deferred – Works planned for SMU but have been deferred to a subsequent FY
- No planned work – No works planned in SMU due to funding shortages; would be worked if resources available, and/or high abundance of species; will not be worked even if resources available as lower priority than other species or intractable infestations.

**Woolly Nightshade 2025-2026**

**Status**

- Planned
- No Planned Work
- Conservation Estate

Geographical labels on the map include: Whanganui, Whanganui River, Whangapehu River, Turakina River, Rangitikei River, Manawatu River, Ohau River, Feilding, Palmerston North, Dannevirke, Woodville, Pahiatua, Mt. Tongariro, Mt. Ngauruhoe, Mt. Ruapehu, Otago Peninsula, Otago River, and Otago Bay.

Scale: 0 to 10 km. North arrow pointing up.

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 Date: 20/01/2025  
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2025-26 Biosecurity Pest Plants  
Operational Plan and 2024-25  
Monitoring Report



Figure 3 shows a map of a progressive containment – mapped species, in this instance pest pines which includes contorta pine, Scots pine, mountain pine, dwarf mountain pine. The map shows the planned work for this FY, deferred work which is happening in subsequent FYs and no planned work where work is not happening due to funding shortages. The Good Neighbour Process Zone is shown which corresponds directly to the RPMP with the other SMU statuses corresponding to the Active Management Zone. The Good Neighbour Process Zone is where council does not have a mandate to work due to an abundance of the plant and current tools available for management do not allow infestations to be managed to zero levels. In this area good neighbour and clear land rules apply; these are the landowner's responsibility to comply.

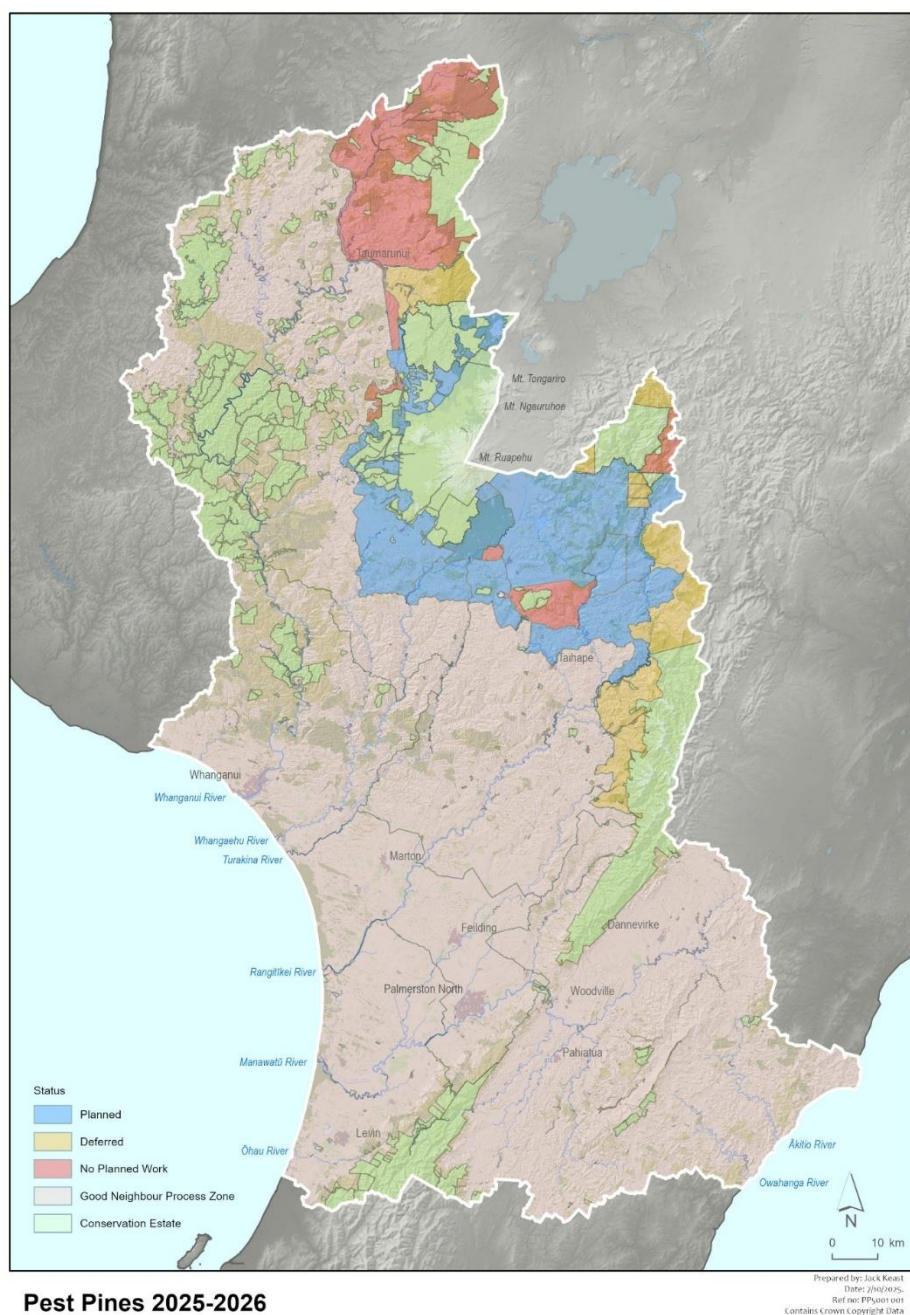


Figure 3 Pest Pines SMU map 2025-2026

## 5.2 Regional Pest Management Plan Activity

### 5.2.1 Preventing establishment - Exclusion Programme

For pest plants that are in New Zealand but not in our region, Horizons' goal is to prevent establishment. We aim to detect these plants before they become widely established in the region and facilitate a quick response through appropriate funding that will enable the control or management of these species on rateable land. There are 11 species in this category and Chilean needle grass is an example.

Staff will monitor for the regrowth of *Sagittaria platyphylla* and include this plant in in-stream surveillance while looking for alligator weed in the lower Mangaone Stream and Manawatu River. The dump site will continue to be monitored to ensure that no regrowth occurs. A second site will also be monitored on a farm property near Eketāhuna for any regrowth following discovery of this species last financial year. A total \$5,000 external dollars is allocated to this program.

Other species covered by the surveillance plan included in Table 7.4 in the appendices. NB the following species are removed from work programme due to species-specific reasons such as no ability to control, similar to previously discontinued species.

Table 6: Exclusion species removed from work programme in 2025-26

| Species                       | Removal rationale                                                                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Heath rush                    | DOC estate recipient of vectors                                                          |
| Humped bladderwort            | No control tools available                                                               |
| Manchurian wild rice          | MPI National Interest Pest Response target                                               |
| <i>Phragmites australis</i>   | Same effects as <i>P.karka</i> and is well controlled in Hawkes Bay with no spread risk. |
| <i>Sagittaria platyphylla</i> | Move to Eradication as control will be long term.                                        |
| Tussock hawkweed              | DOC estate recipient of vectors                                                          |

### 5.2.2 Eradication Programme

High-risk species that should be completely removed from the region are managed via the Eradication programme. There are 18 species in this category and at the start of the financial year our information was that 83% of the 1,698 sites were at zero levels.

As mentioned above, the programme will be reporting in SMUs which the numbers are mentioned in Table 7. A similar programme to previous years across all Eradication species. Notable changes include African feather grass in the Whanganui River will be managed in its entirety by HRC with DOC providing funding for their portion, increased funding for alligator weed site at Taumarunui after discovery of plants outside managed area and a rollback of the woolly nightshade program to focus on prioritised areas. A total of \$330,500 to be spent on this program.

Table 7: Eradication species planned activity

| Species                     | Activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | External Cost |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| African feather grass       | Whanganui River catchment control from Mangatiti Stream down to lowest known infestations on Whanganui River. Also Manawatū River control and surveillance                                                                                                                                                                                              | \$45,000      |
| Alligator weed              | Mangoane Stream and Taumaurunui oxidation ponds. Taumarunui site extended surveillance on control on two monthly basis. Staff time includes monitoring for machinery washdown from both Taumarunui and Palmerston North sites                                                                                                                           | \$40,000      |
| Arrowhead                   | Control and surveillance at Levin site                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |               |
| Blue passionflower          | Urban site treatment across Whanganui, Palmerston North, Manawatū and Horowhenua.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |               |
| Cathedral bells             | Sites visited and treated twice yearly; across the southern half of the region                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$29,500      |
| Chilean rhubarb             | Control and surveillance across region. Large sites in Tararua, Rangitikei and Whanganui contracted out                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | \$116,500     |
| Chinese <i>pennisetum</i>   | Whanganui River sites control and surveillance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | \$20,000      |
| Climbing <i>alstromeria</i> | Surveillance and staff controlled. Southern half of region                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |               |
| Climbing spindleberry       | Region wide control. Large recently discovered site in Okahukura requires surveillance flight                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | \$25,500      |
| Himalayan balsam            | Surveillance and control in Tararua, southern Ruapehu district, Marton and Horowhenua                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |               |
| Knotweed                    | Ongoing control and surveillance in Palmerston North and Ongarue                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |               |
| Nassella tussock spp        | Staff control and surveillance at small, mostly urban sites region wide                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               |
| Purple loosestrife          | Operationally treated as Progressive Containment - mapped programme. No active control of Lake Horowhenua and Hokio Stream, and Nga Kawau Lagoon due to lack on control tools and political reasons. Program of works to be enacted in Lake Horowhenua catchment including delimiting survey and control of outlier populations within containment area | \$10,000      |
| Queensland Poplar           | Urban Whanganui, Palmerston North and Levin control by staff                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |               |
| Rum Cherry                  | Sites in Ohakune and Owango, surveillance continuing in Ruapehu due to eDNA hit at both Owango and Pipiriki                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |               |
| Senegal tea                 | Staff to treat sites in Whanganui, Ashhurst, Palmerston North and Kuku.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               |
| Spartina                    | DOC control at Manawatu, Waikawa and Ohau estuaries. Horizons to assist with surveillance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |               |
| Woolly nightshade           | Control and surveillance at prioritised sites in Horowhenua, Palmerston North, Tararua, Taumarunui and inland Whanganui. Due to prioritisation and funding shortages no work is planned for urban and coastal Whanganui district down to Rangitikei River mouth or Palmerston North area around Tararua foothills (Figure 3)                            | \$27,000      |



## 5.2.3 Rolling back – Progressive Containment programme

Where population levels or difficulty and expense of control prevent achievement of a region-wide zero-density objective, high-threat pest plant species will be managed under a Progressive Containment objective. For each species managed this way, an active management zone is defined within which the pest plant species will be controlled wherever it is found, as in the Eradication designation.

### 5.2.3.1 Progressive Containment - Mapped Species

Eleven Progressive Containment species fall into the mapped category (e.g. old man's beard). At the start of the year the data showed 68% of 2,513 sites were at zero levels in the zones actively managed for these species.

The old man's beard conjoint programme with Department of Conservation for the Ruahine Forest Park is continuing this financial year. DOC funding has remained at similar levels for this project since last FY. Programs have been rationalized through the prioritization tool with some programs being discontinued. Species impacted include Darwin's barberry, banana passionfruit, old man's beard and boneseed. A total of \$675,500 external is to be spent on the program.

Table 8: Progressive Containment - Mapped species activity

| Species             | Activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | External  |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Banana passionfruit | Control and surveillance in Tararua, Horowhenua, Whanganui.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | \$22,500  |
| Boneseed            | Control and surveillance in Whanganui, Ashhurst, Foxton, Waitare. Surveillance flight to be undertaken on eastern coastline. All Waitare Forest blocks now excluded from program due to lack of funding and prioritised areas elsewhere                                                                                                                                               | \$8,000   |
| Darwin's barberry   | Programs in Ruapehu district, Ruahine Forest Park buffer, Waeawaepa and Puketoi buffer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | \$16,000  |
| Evergreen buckthorn | Whanganui infestations continuing control. Low priority zone continuing around Levin urban area. Plants present across Horowhenua, Palmerston North and Tokomaru. Assessment to be made if programme continues operationally in these areas                                                                                                                                           |           |
| Grey Willow         | Assessing requirements according to joint organisation control programme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |           |
| Moth plant          | Whanganui and Horowhenua areas, in- house control surveillance and control. Increased surveillance around Kairanga, Rongotea and Foxton as new sites discovered there                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |           |
| Old man's beard     | Horizon's biggest programme. Programmes being conducted region- wide. Second year of a conjoint programme with Department of Conservation to survey and control plants across both private land and public conservation land (see attached map, appendix 2).                                                                                                                          | \$467,000 |
| Pest conifers       | Work against four pest conifer species, time and contribution towards the national wilding conifer control programme where Horizons acts as fund holder and has two staff as project managers for work within the central plateau. Expenditure also includes support for the Wilding Pine Network and the <b>National Wilding Conifer Control Programme (NWCCP)</b> fund holder role. | \$100,000 |
| General expense     | Chemicals and equipment upkeep                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | \$2,000   |

### 5.2.3.2 Progressive Containment – Unmapped Species

Fifteen Progressive Containment species make up the unmapped category (e.g. gorse). These species are generally widespread, but some parts of the region are clear and it is desirable to keep them clear. This programme does not have a strong information base to report on progress against these weeds. Horizons' involvement is primarily through regulation via the Good Neighbour or Clear Land rules of the RPMP and through non-regulatory advice or in some cases by biological control. For occupiers of large land areas, farmers and other organisations we have the ability to allow responsibility to be acknowledged and actions planned via Approved Management Plans. The intent of these plans is to meet the objectives of rules and contribute to the outcomes of the RPMP by eradicating or reducing the spread of pest plants from the place/s occupied or managed by the plan-maker.

Table 9: Summary of Pest Plant Management Plan documents with Territorial Authorities and Crown Entities.

| TA/ Crown Agency              | Approved Management Plan | Notes                           |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ruapehu District Council      | Current                  |                                 |
| Rangitikei District Council   | Current                  |                                 |
| Whanganui District Council    | Current                  |                                 |
| Manawatū District Council     | Current                  |                                 |
| Tararua District Council      | Consultation             |                                 |
| Palmerston North City Council | Current                  |                                 |
| Horowhenua District Council   | Current                  |                                 |
| NZTA – Southern               | Consultation             |                                 |
| NZTA – Northern               | Current                  |                                 |
| KiwiRail                      | Consultation             |                                 |
| DOC                           | N/A                      | Consultation – RPMP rules apply |
| LINZ                          | N/A                      | Consultation – RPMP rules apply |

Project Yellow, the Desert Road invasive legume control project, is now working under a refreshed Memorandum of Understanding that was signed earlier this year for another 12 year period. Flights are not required this year as MWLR staff were able to successfully map both broom and lupin flowering at the same time. Learnings from previous distribution map assessment include that the outliers are very important to the overall success of the project. A total of \$4,088 is to be spent on the project contributing to the production of broom density maps.

### 5.2.3.3 Progressive Containment – Unmapped aquatic species

Aquatic pest plants are also part of the Progressive Containment – Unmapped grouping of the RPMP and are grouped together on the basis that they are aquatic pests managed the same way for the same objectives. Eel grass, egeria, hornwort, lagarosiphon and reed sweetgrass are aquatic pest plants included in the Progressive Containment section of the RPMP 2017-37. Their distributions are not yet mapped with any certainty and our aim is to progressively contain or reduce the number of sites affected across the region, to prevent further spread and to reduce adverse effects on the environment.

Activity is focused on staff time to support the Check Clean Dry freshwater advocacy campaign. And responding to enquiries. This is reported in the Awareness section.



## 6 Other pest plant management programmes

### 6.1 INCURSION RESPONSE

#### 6.1.1 Programme overview

The Incursion Response programme aims to provide immediate and effective assistance for all national or regional biosecurity incursions and any transitions to long-term management. This is a function detailed by a Memorandum of Understanding between the [Ministry for Primary Industries \(MPI\)](#) and regional councils.

#### 6.1.2 Velvetleaf

The longstanding velvetleaf programme will continue this year with Horizons funding use of the detection dog as well as part-funding with other regional councils in the North Island for a community contractor who has been liaising with farmers affected by velvetleaf. This community contractor will help coordinate the surveillance contractor flights and respond to any enquiries that landowners may have about velvetleaf. A total of \$6,000 external dollars is to be spent on the program.

#### 6.1.3 Sea spurge

The sea spurge response will continue with DOC having a full-time ranger committed to the project for the North Island's west coast from Waikato down to Wellington. Horizons will provide support by controlling some sites. A total of 60 hours will be committed by the Pest Plant team to help with surveillance and control when required.

## 7 BIOLOGICAL CONTROL

### 7.1.1 Programme overview

Many entrenched pest plants in the region are now the target of our Biological Control programme, which aims to assist the development of insects and diseases to control a wide range of pest plants and to release, distribute and monitor those agents within the region.

### 7.1.2 Purple loosestrife

Staff have consulted with local iwi in Horowhenua and an integrated management plan has been formed for the catchment. The plan has been formed around reducing the amount of purple loosestrife with the current tools available including both using biocontrol agents and traditional methods for outliers. The plan also contains details around baseline monitoring and a delimiting survey to find outlier populations for control. The two leaf weevils and the root weevil are currently in containment in New Zealand with MWLR working on mass rearing and overwintering the populations to synchronise to the southern hemisphere seasonal cycle.

### 7.1.3 Old man's beard

Staff will look to release old man's beard sawfly at two locations with two releases on back order from last financial year. Staff will continue to monitor release sites from previous seasons with signs that two sites have established in Tararua and Rangitikei respectively.

### 7.1.4 Chilean flame creeper

Three orders are in place with MWLR to release this agent at sites in Rangitikei and southern Ruapehu districts. These orders were transferred over from the original tutsan releases that had been purchased which are no longer going ahead.

Table 10: Overall Biological Control Programme expenditure (2025-26)

| Biological Control costs   |  | \$164,000 |
|----------------------------|--|-----------|
| New Zealand BC Collective  |  | \$30,000  |
| ID service                 |  | \$4,000   |
| Purple loosestrife project |  | \$130,000 |

## 7.2 INVESTIGATION

### 7.2.1 Programme overview

A number of plants present in the region may have the potential to become economically and ecologically damaging. This output contains the Pest Plant Investigation Programme and the **National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA)**. Complaints are responded to by the team on an as and when required basis.

## 7.2.2 AWARENESS AND PROMOTION

### 7.2.3 Programme overview

The aim of the Awareness Programme is to alert the community to issues, threats and solutions to ensure region-wide best-practice pest plant management. This includes responding to enquiries from the community and undertaking collaborative projects.

Staff will again seek funding from MPI for the **Check Clean Dry (CCD)** programme to advocate for behaviour change by freshwater users. Horizons will also support this programme with financial and in-kind contributions.

Staff will work with Horizons communications staff to promote weed species through the 'weed wizard' videos and a particular focus on formulating a repeatable urban pest plant awareness program which could be used in any of our urban centres.

## 7.3 COLLABORATIVE PEST PLANT CONTROL

### 7.3.1 Programme overview

Collaborative projects undertaken by Horizons staff and external stakeholders provide a team approach to managing weeds in some challenging environments. Working with others and providing advice and leadership has delivered some excellent results that otherwise would not have eventuated. A summary of this activity is provided in Table 5.

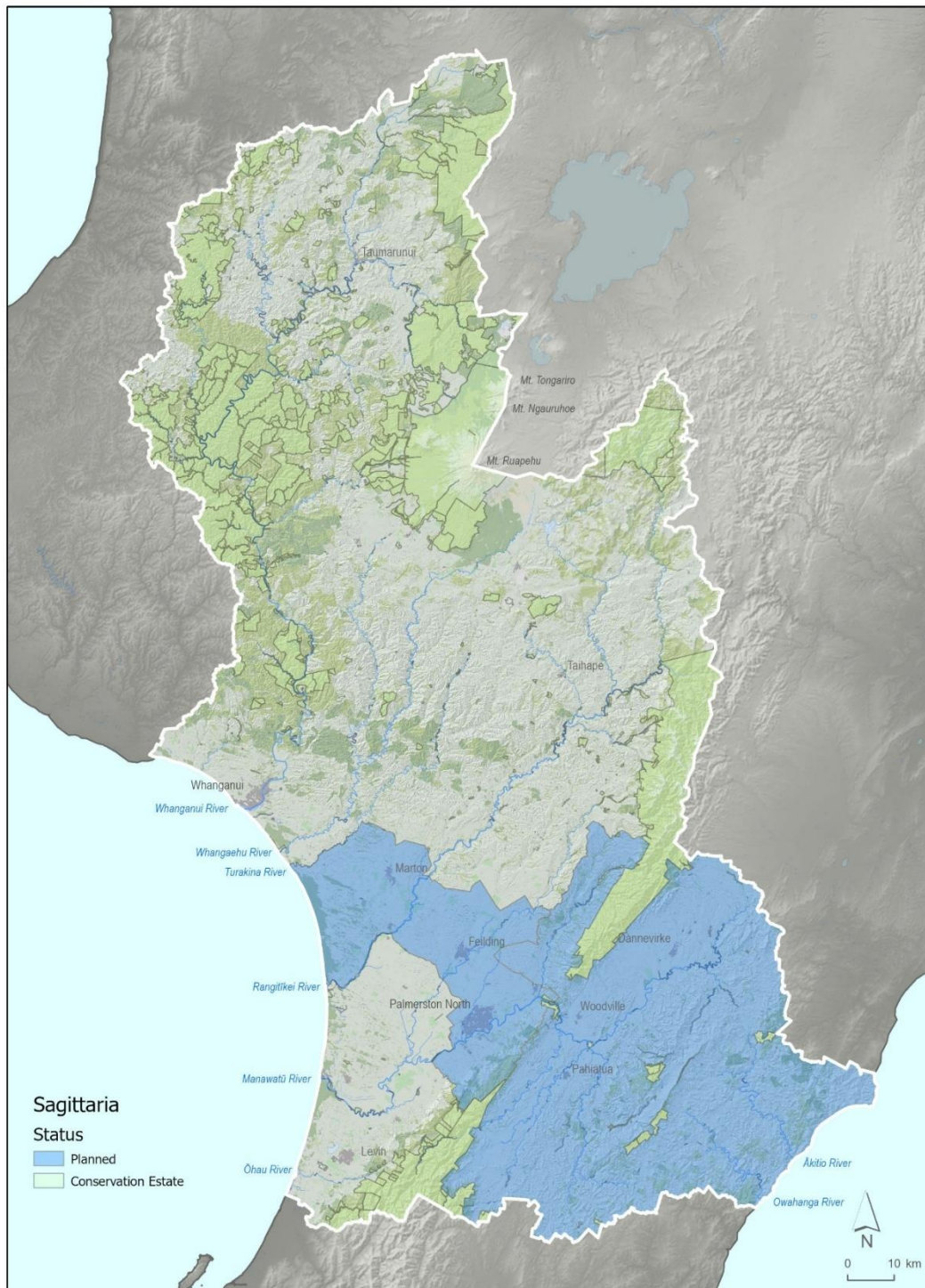
Table 11: Collaborative Pest Plant Control Projects.

| Project                                                                                             | Key Deliverables                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Horizons' Role                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wilding Conifer – Central North Island <b>Regional Coordination Group (RCG)</b>                     | <p>Work with partners and other stakeholders on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning for management unit (MU) activity and reporting</li> <li>Managing the budget</li> <li>Annual meeting scheduled</li> </ul> <p>Deliver on annual work programmes as agreed by RCG. In 2022-23 the national programme was approximately \$1.3-1.5 million.</p> | <p>Contracted to MPI as the agency for managing Central Government funding for this activity in the Central North Island.</p> <p>Fund holder and Chair of the RCG.</p> |
| Central North Island Wilding Conifer Group                                                          | Facilitate the sharing of programme information amongst a broad group of Central Plateau conifer controlling organisations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | To coordinate the biennial meetings and chair the meetings                                                                                                             |
| Desert Road Invasive Legume Control Group                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship between parties maintained.</li> <li>Memorandum of Understanding maintained and implemented.</li> <li>Coordinated action in priority areas undertaken against target species.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     | <p>Relationship between parties maintained.</p> <p>Meeting facilitation with Waikato Regional Council</p>                                                              |
| Freshwater Biosecurity Partnership Programme and <b>Check, Clean, Dry (CCD)</b> advocacy programme. | Representing Horizons at a national forum to champion behaviour change and freshwater protection. Attendance at high-                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Provide staff and manage the CCD programme in the region.                                                                                                              |

| Project                                                                  | Key Deliverables                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Horizons' Role                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                          | risk events and strong advocacy with the main users of waterways in our headwater areas.                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                |
| Ruahine Ranges old man's beard conjoint project (DOC/Horowhenua council) | Surveying and controlling old man's beard within the park and the buffer surrounding it. Also reporting on an annual basis as per management plan.                                                                              | Contract management including auditing, managing health and safety, quality control and acting as a fund holder.                                               |
| Sea spurge                                                               | Work with partner organisations to control plants at known sites. Assisting DOC Sea spurge ranger with surveillance and shared communication activities if required                                                             | Surveillance and control at some sites in conjunction with DOC, communications activities including social media and outreach campaigns                        |
| Velvetleaf                                                               | Commit \$3,000 to shared contract with North Island regional councils for employment of community liaison officer. Providing funding for surveillance of known sites with detector dog at least twice during the growing season | Assistance with removing plants if any found. Liaising with community liaison officer about landowners. Providing advice for affected landowners where needed. |
| <i>Spartina</i>                                                          | DOC to provide report on season's work with spartina. Assist in surveillance with the detector dog if needed.                                                                                                                   | Provide a jet boat if needed for transport of detector dog to surveillance sites.                                                                              |

## 8 APPENDIX

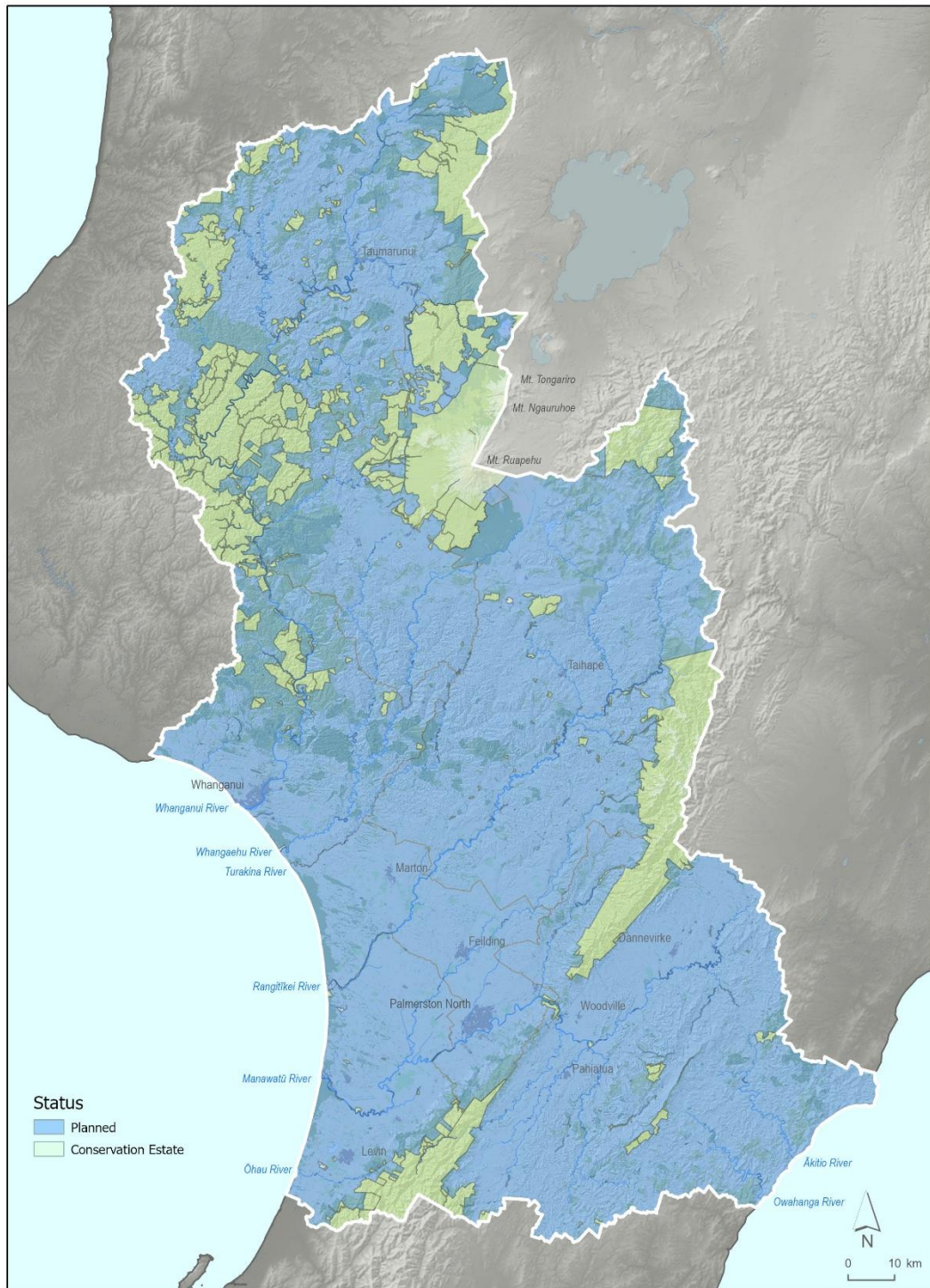
### 8.1 Species Management Unit Maps Exclusion Species



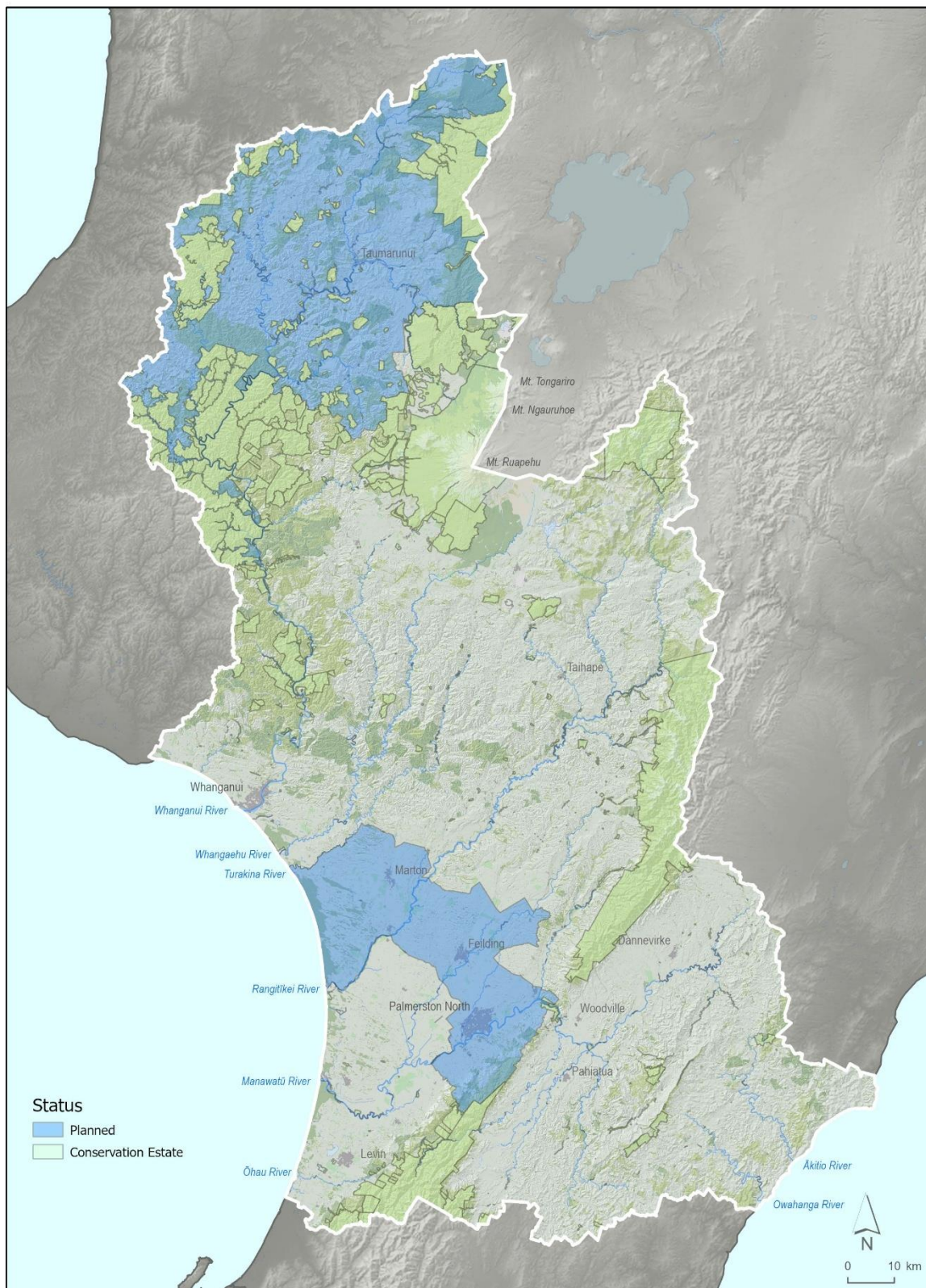
**Sagittaria 2025-2026**



## 8.2 Species Management Unit Maps Eradication Species



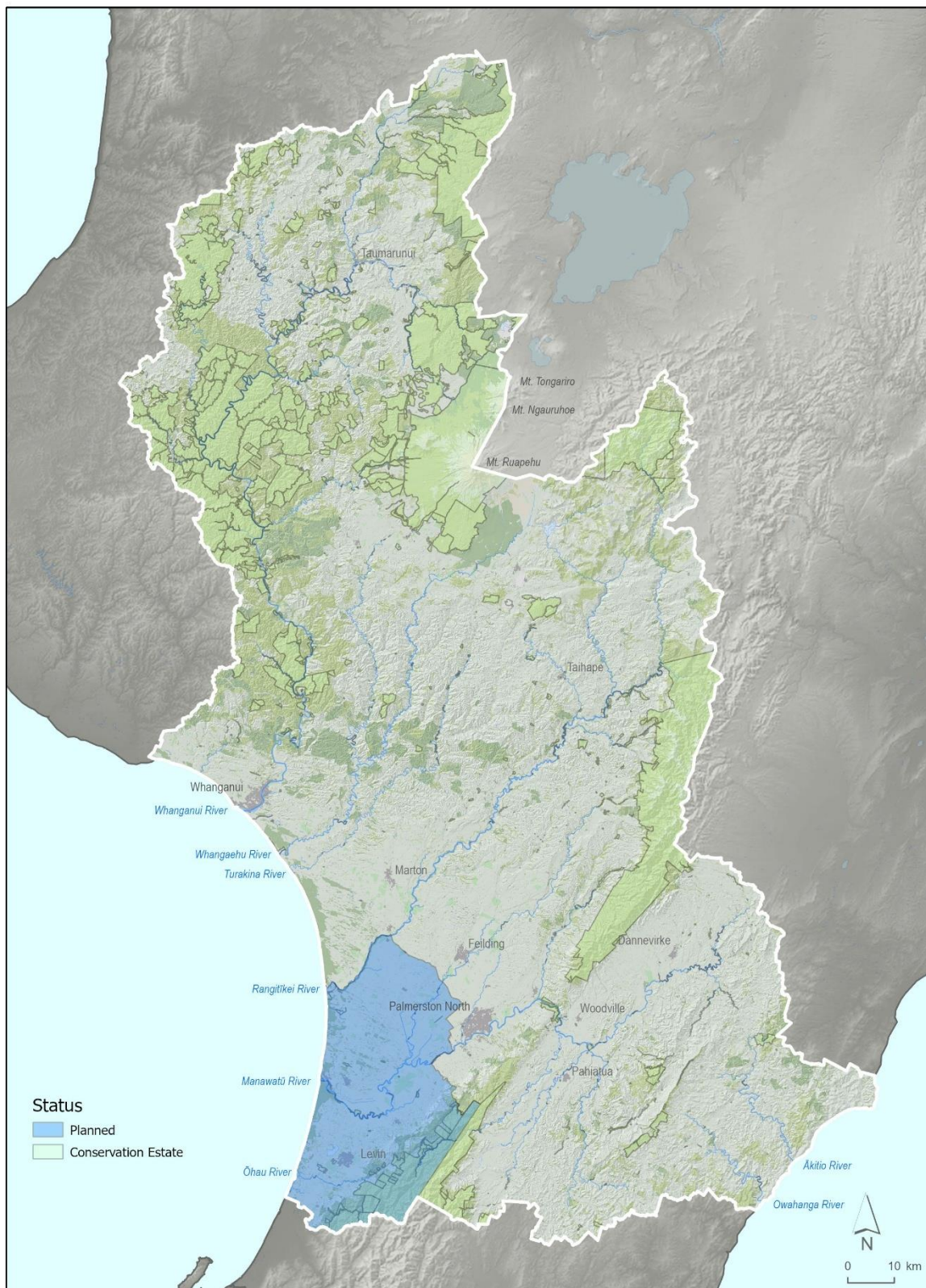
**African Feather Grass 2025-2026**



## Alligator Weed 2025-2026

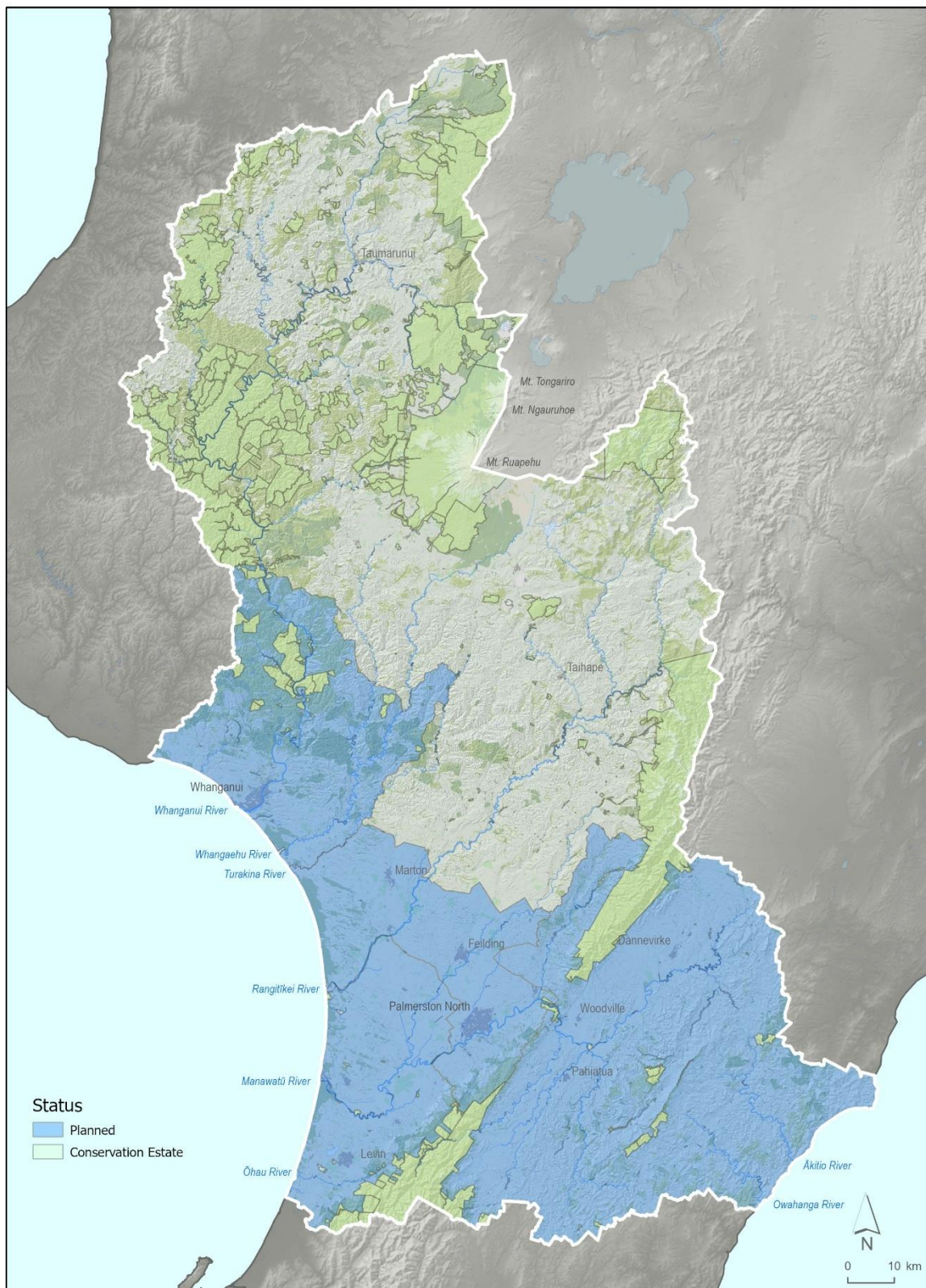
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Date: 1/10/2025  
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Contains Crown Copyright Data





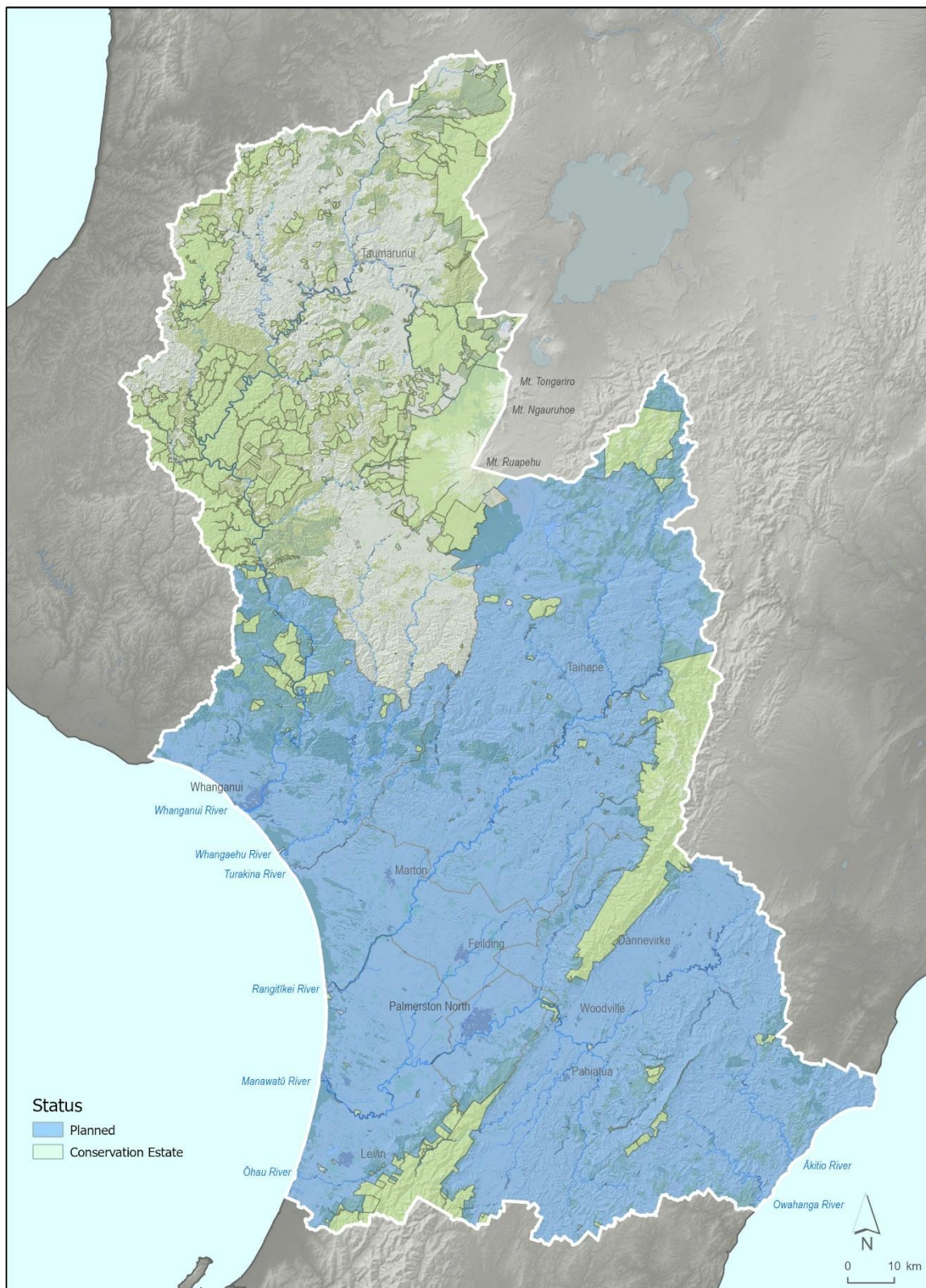
## Arrowhead 2025-2026





## Blue Passion Flower 2025-2026

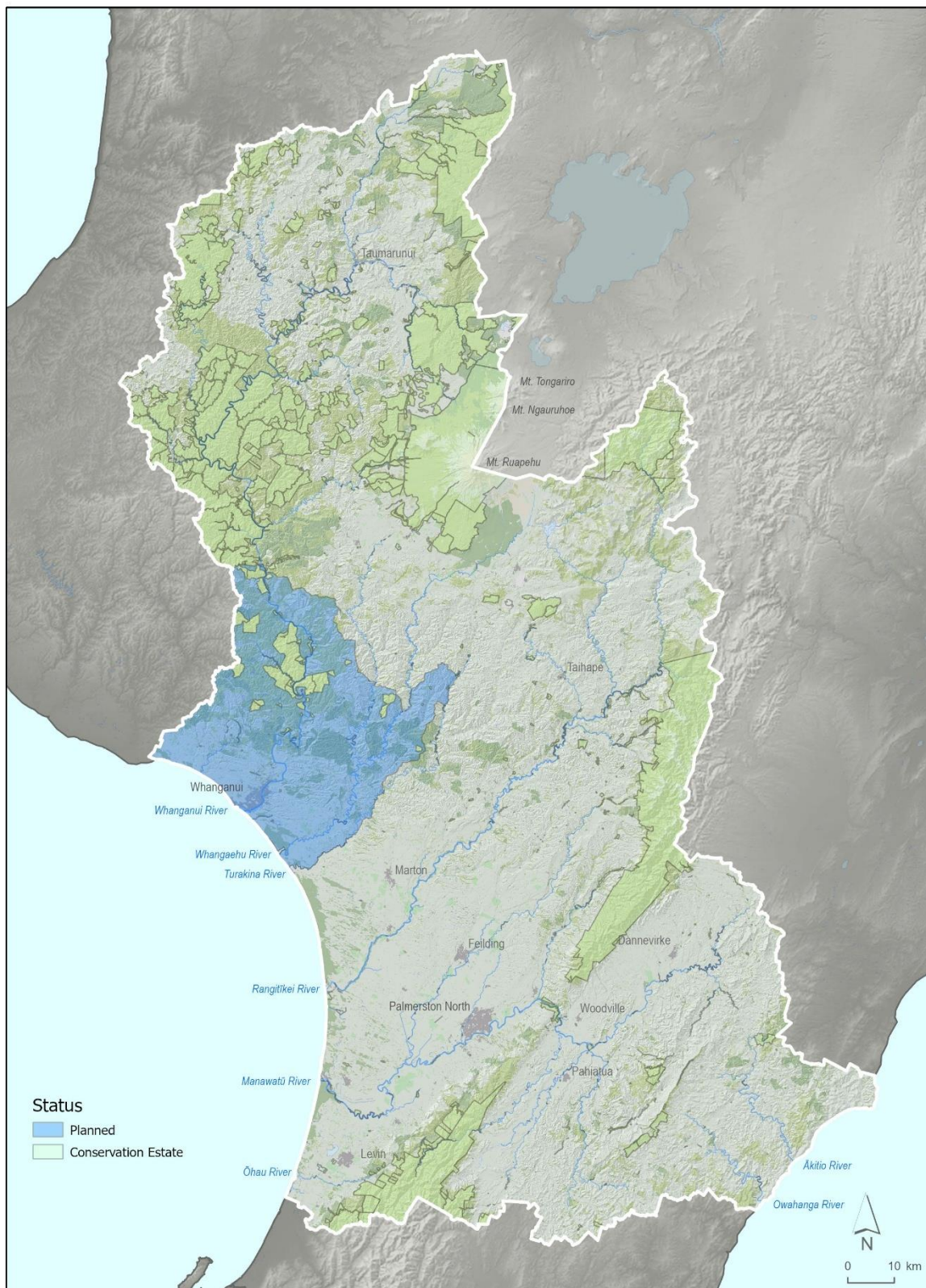




## Cathedral Bells 2025-2026

Prepared by: Jack Keast  
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Ref no: PP5001 001  
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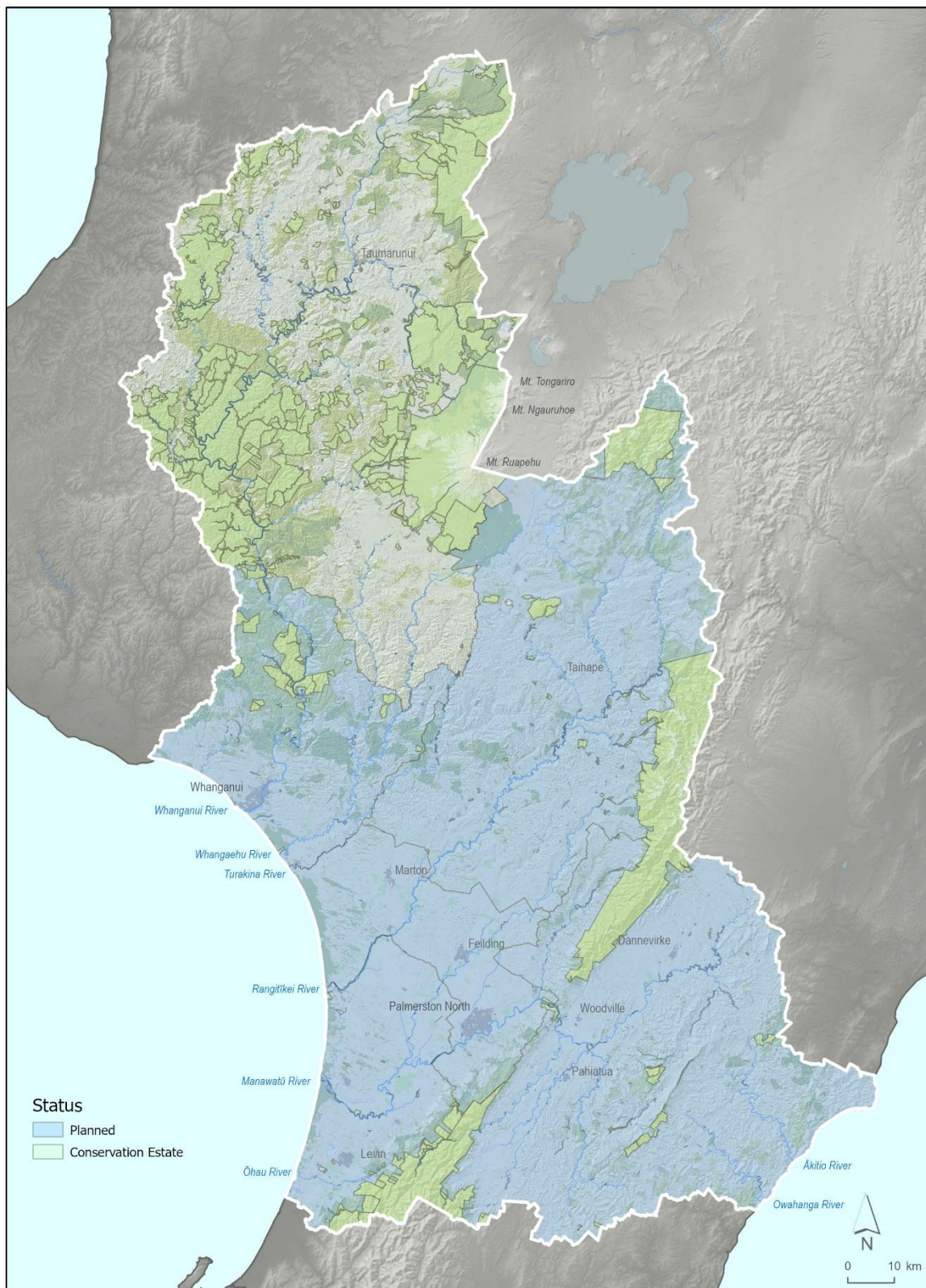




## Chinese Pennisetum 2025-2026

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Ref no: PP5001 001  
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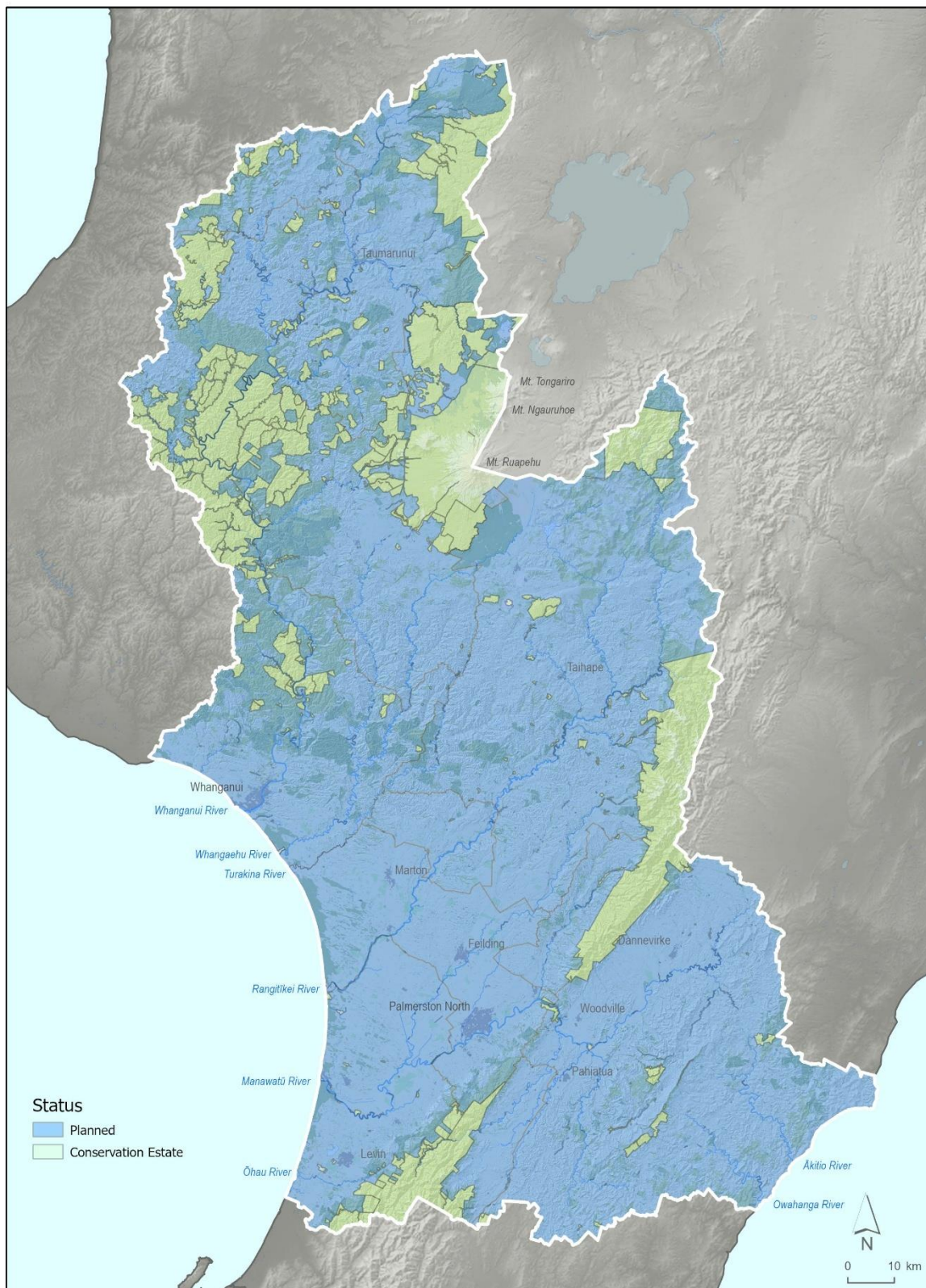




## Climbing Alstromeria 2025-2026

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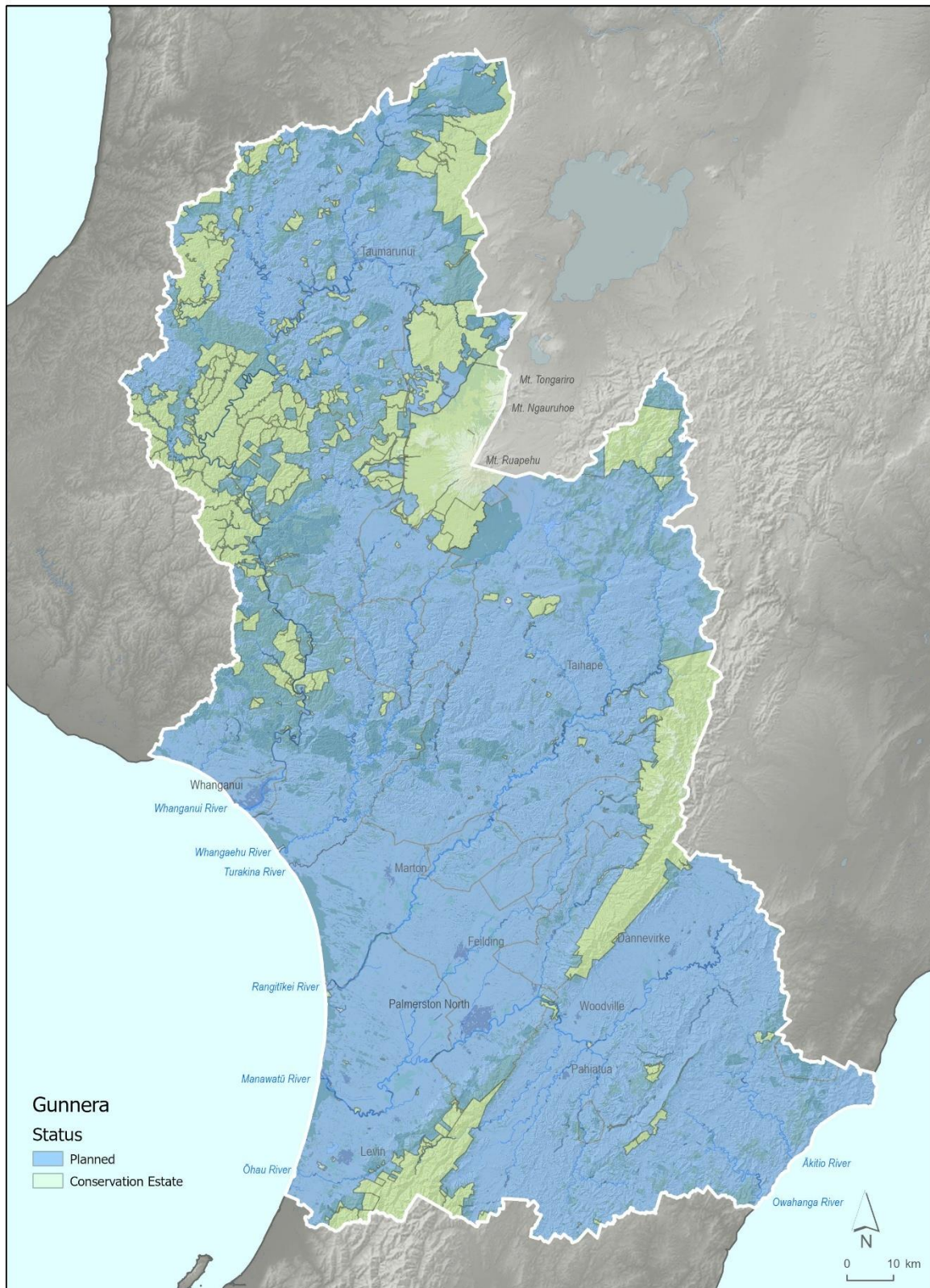




Prepared by: Jack Keast  
Date: 1/10/2025  
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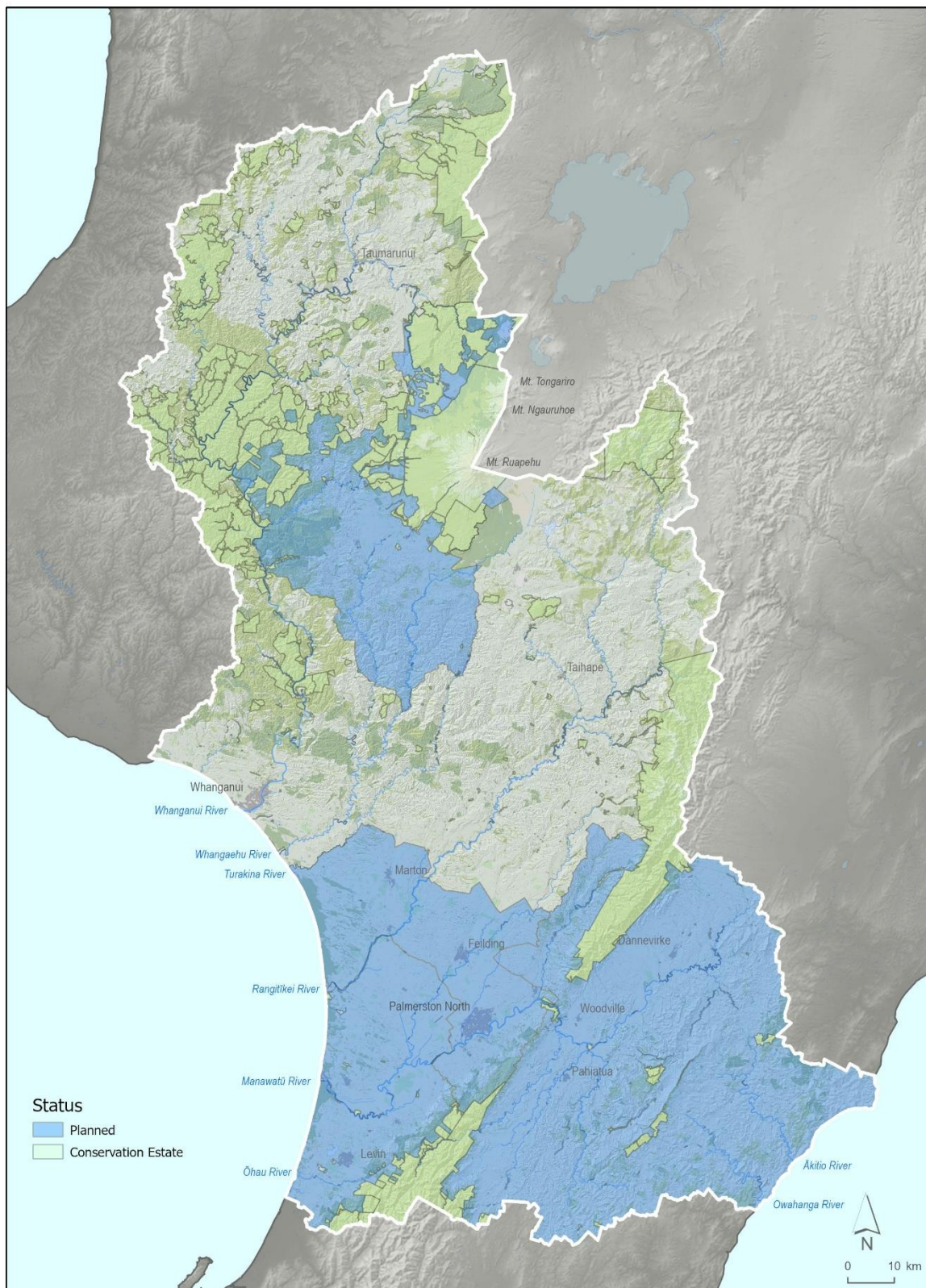
## Climbing Spindleberry 2025-2026





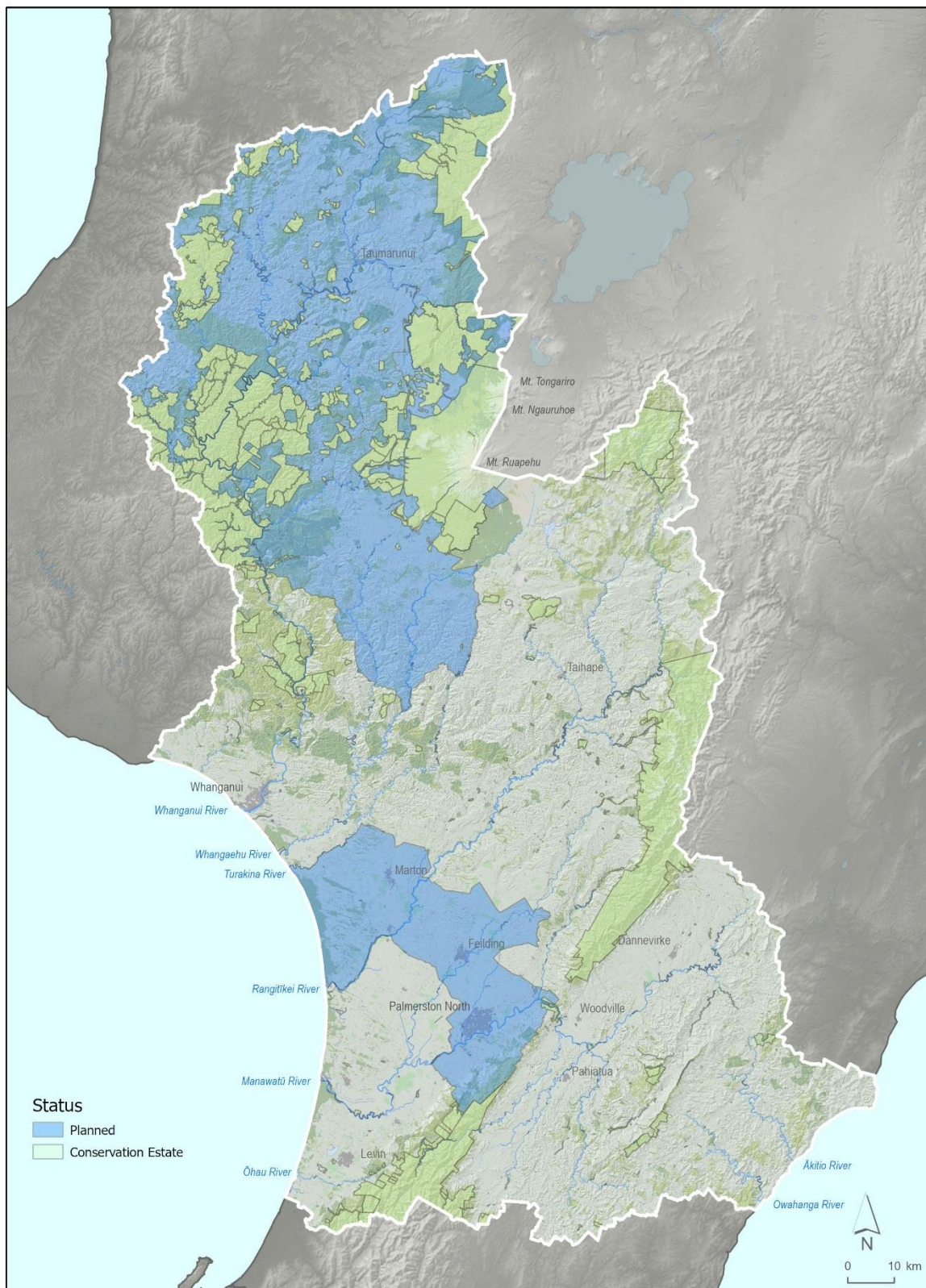
## Gunnera 2025-2026





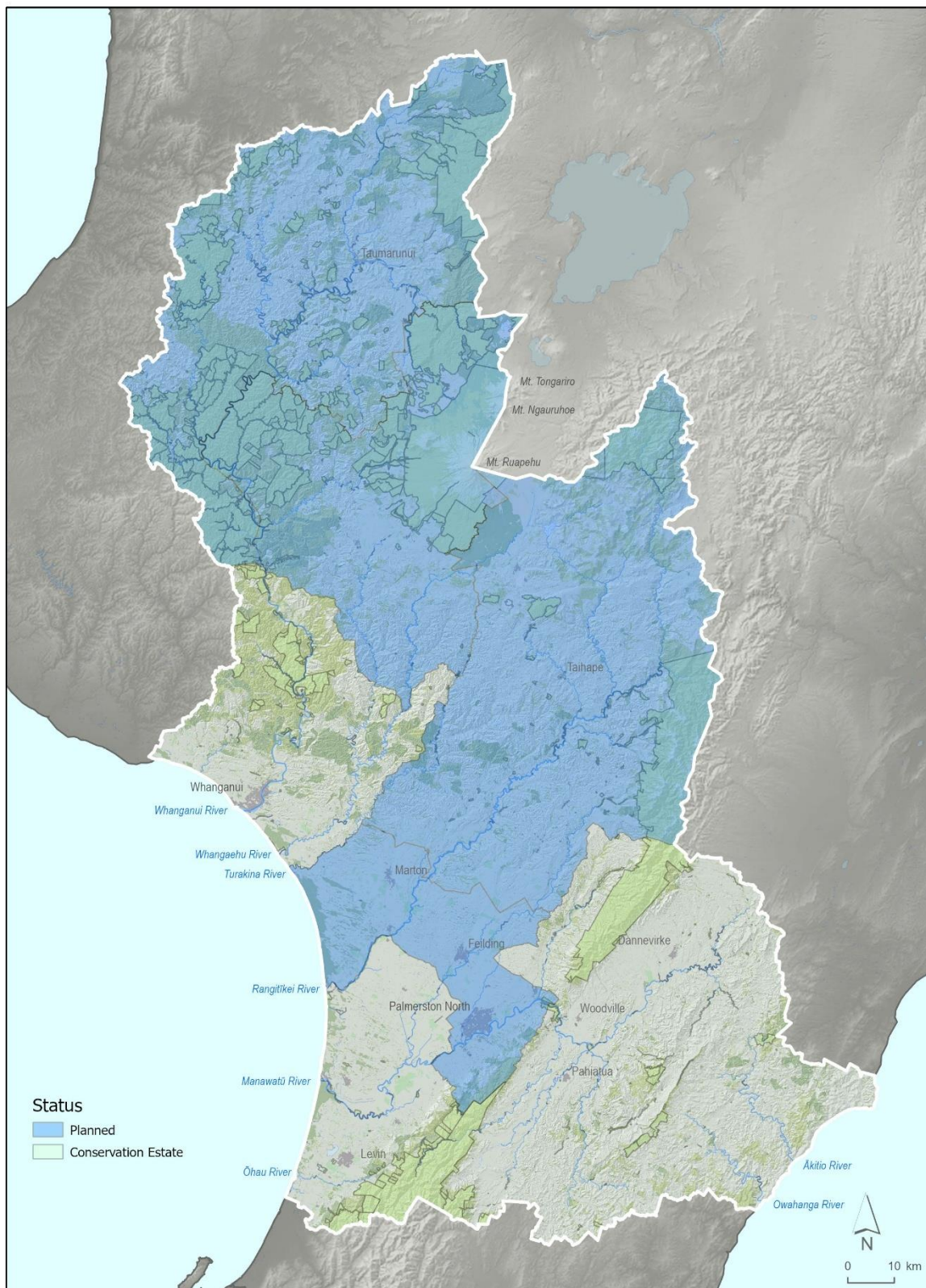
## Himalayan Balsam 2025-2026





## Knotweed 2025-2026

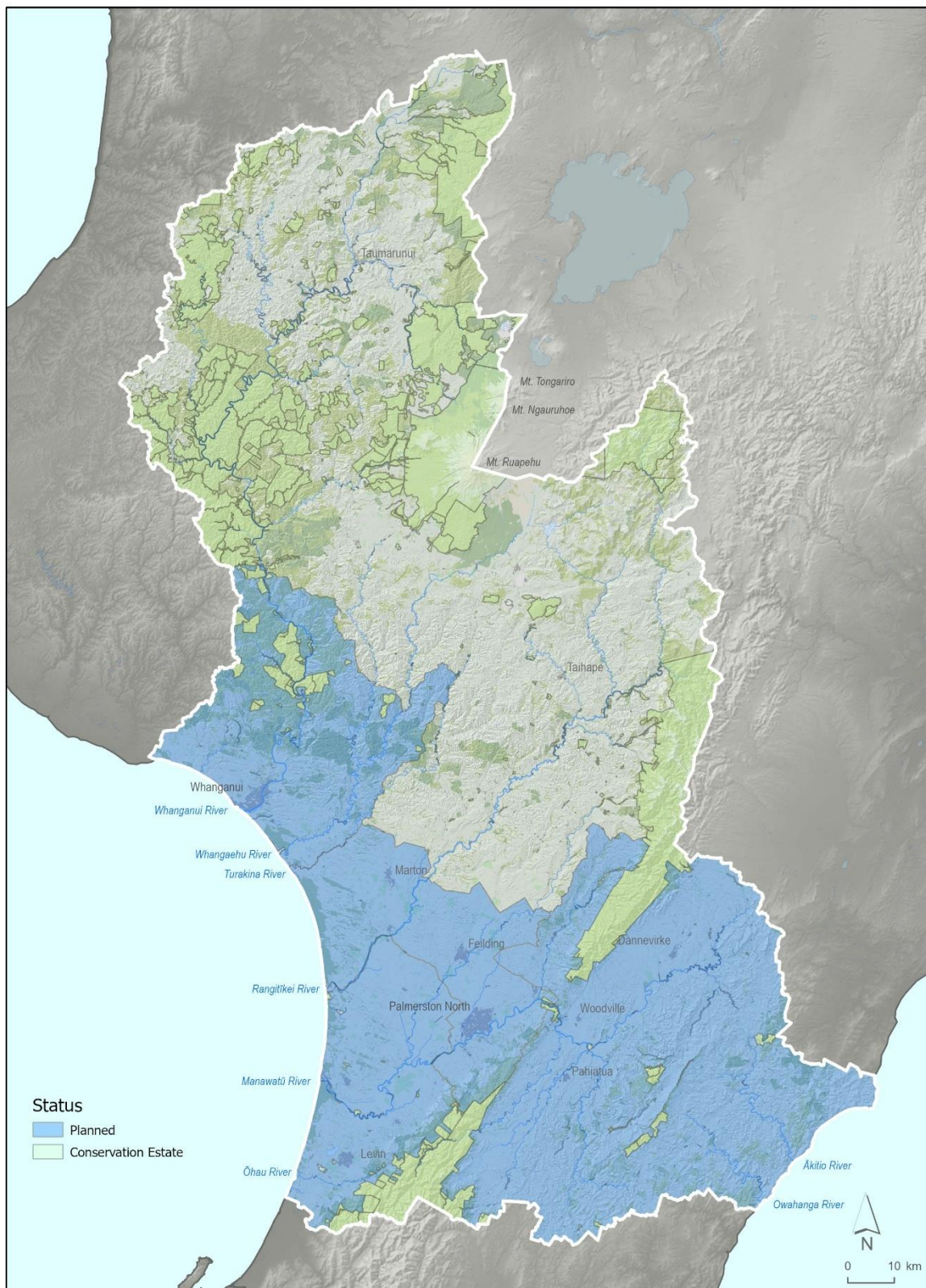




## Nassella Tussock 2025-2026

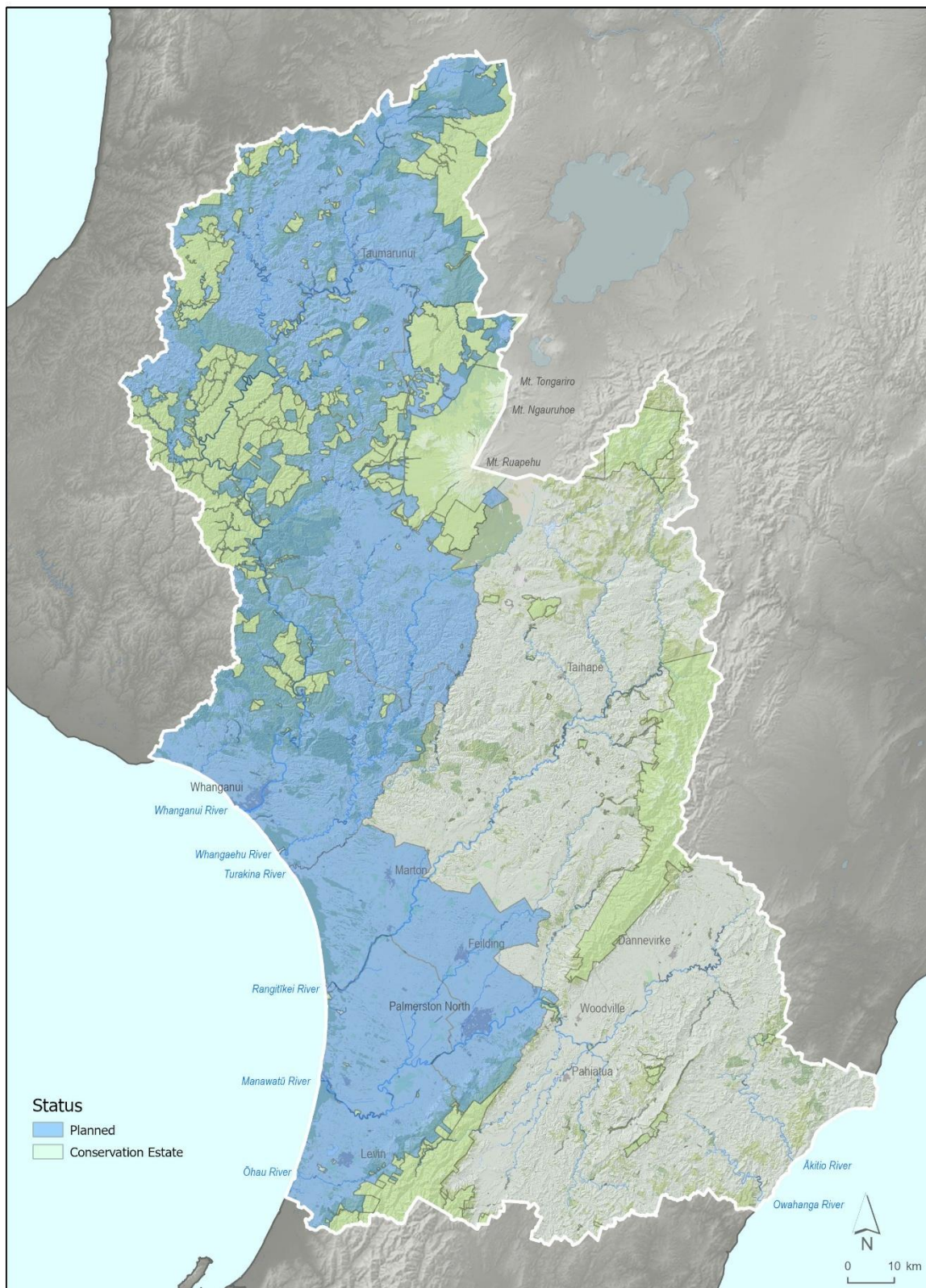
Prepared by: Jack Keast  
Date: 2/10/2025  
Ref no: PPS001 001  
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## Purple Loosestrife 2025-2026

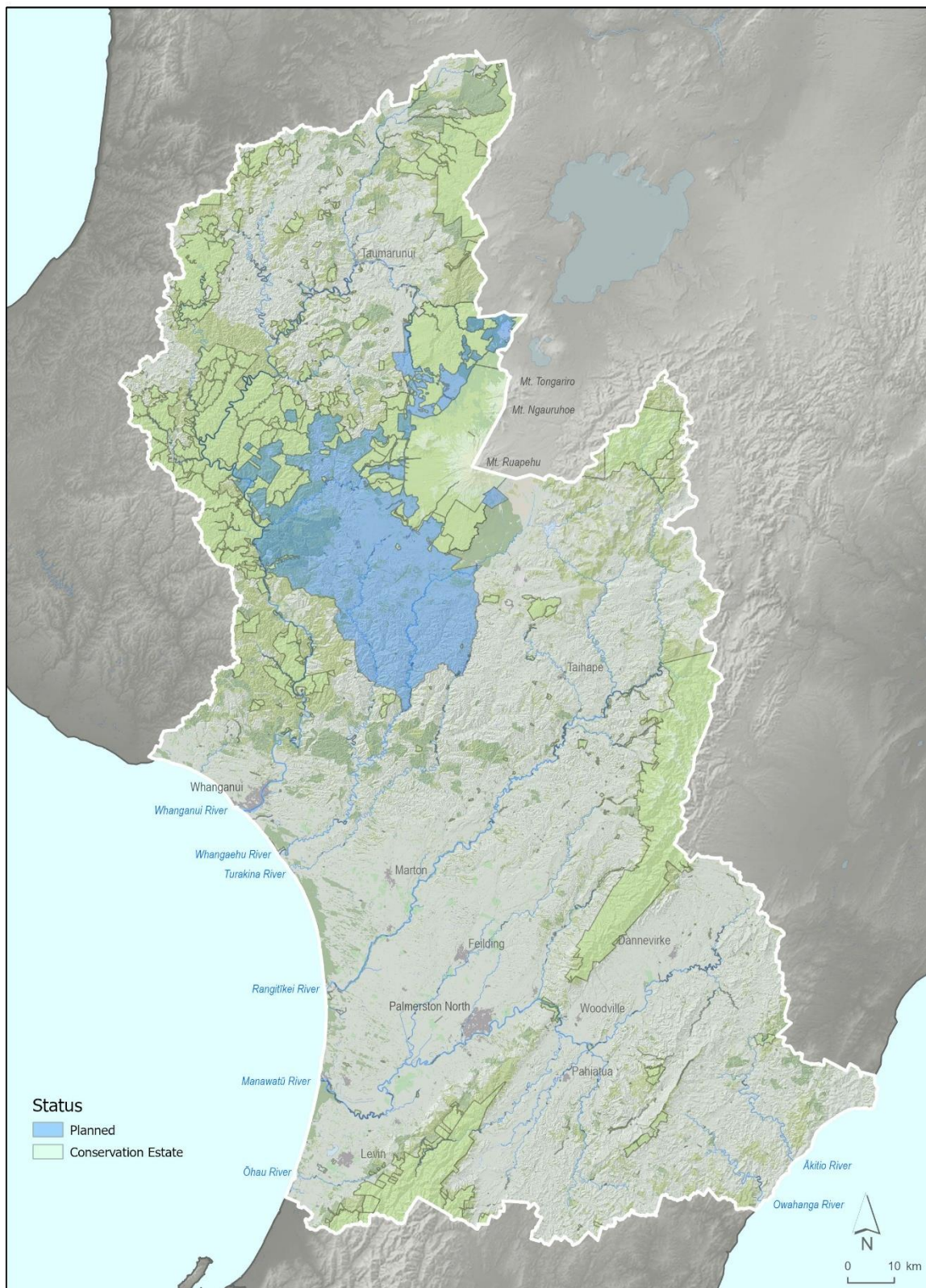




## Queensland Poplar 2025-2026

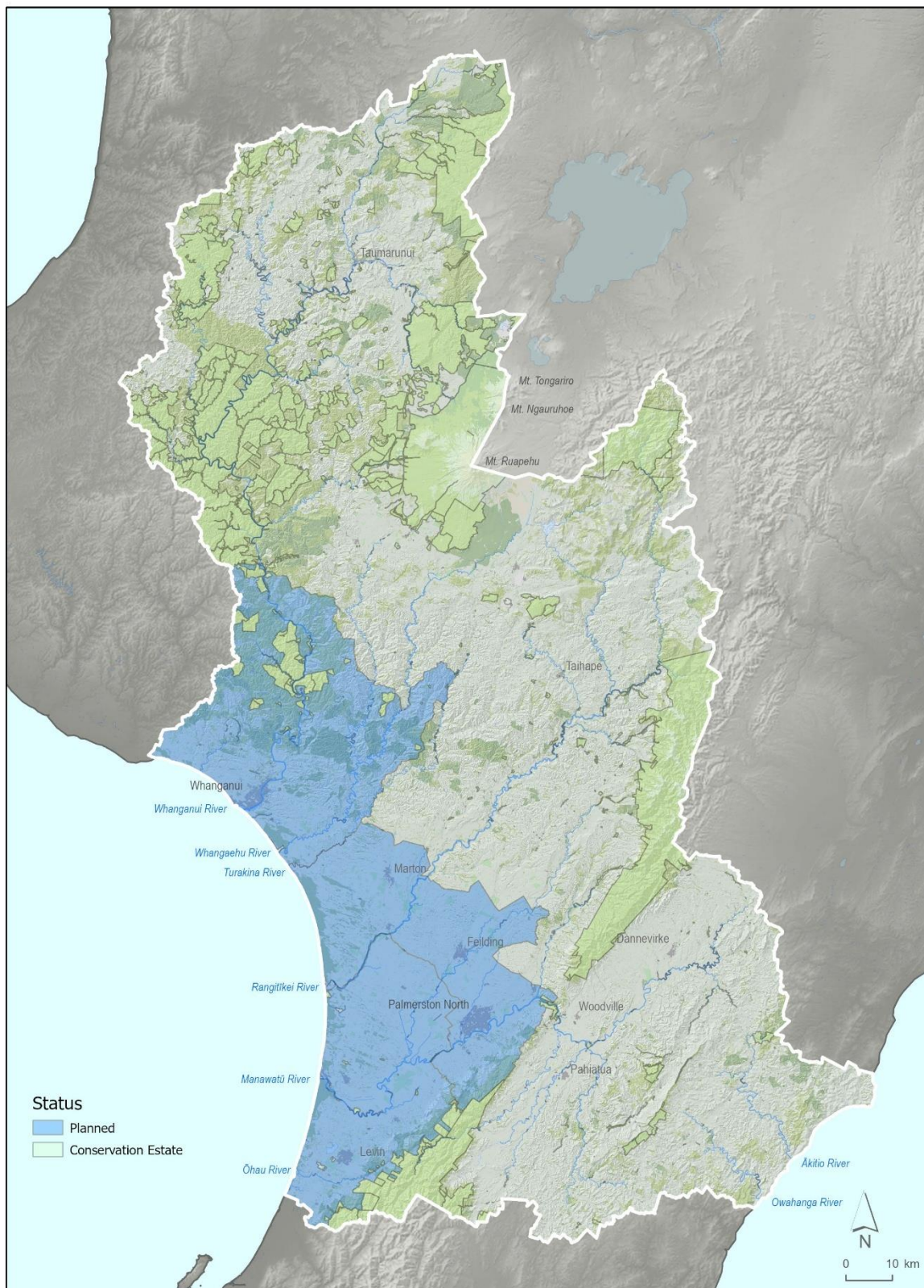
Prepared by: Jack Keast  
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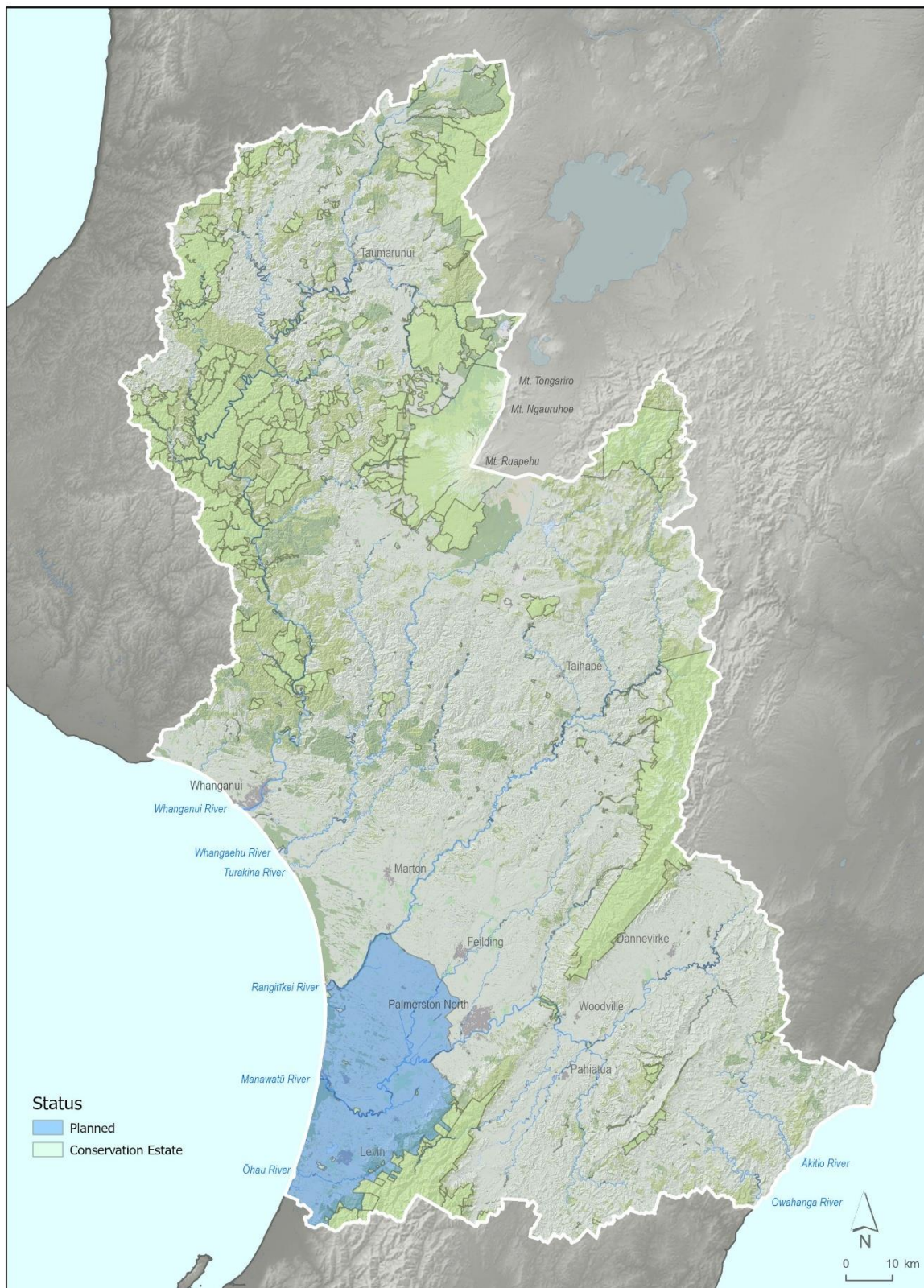
## Rum Cherry 2025-2026





## Senegal Tea 2025-2026

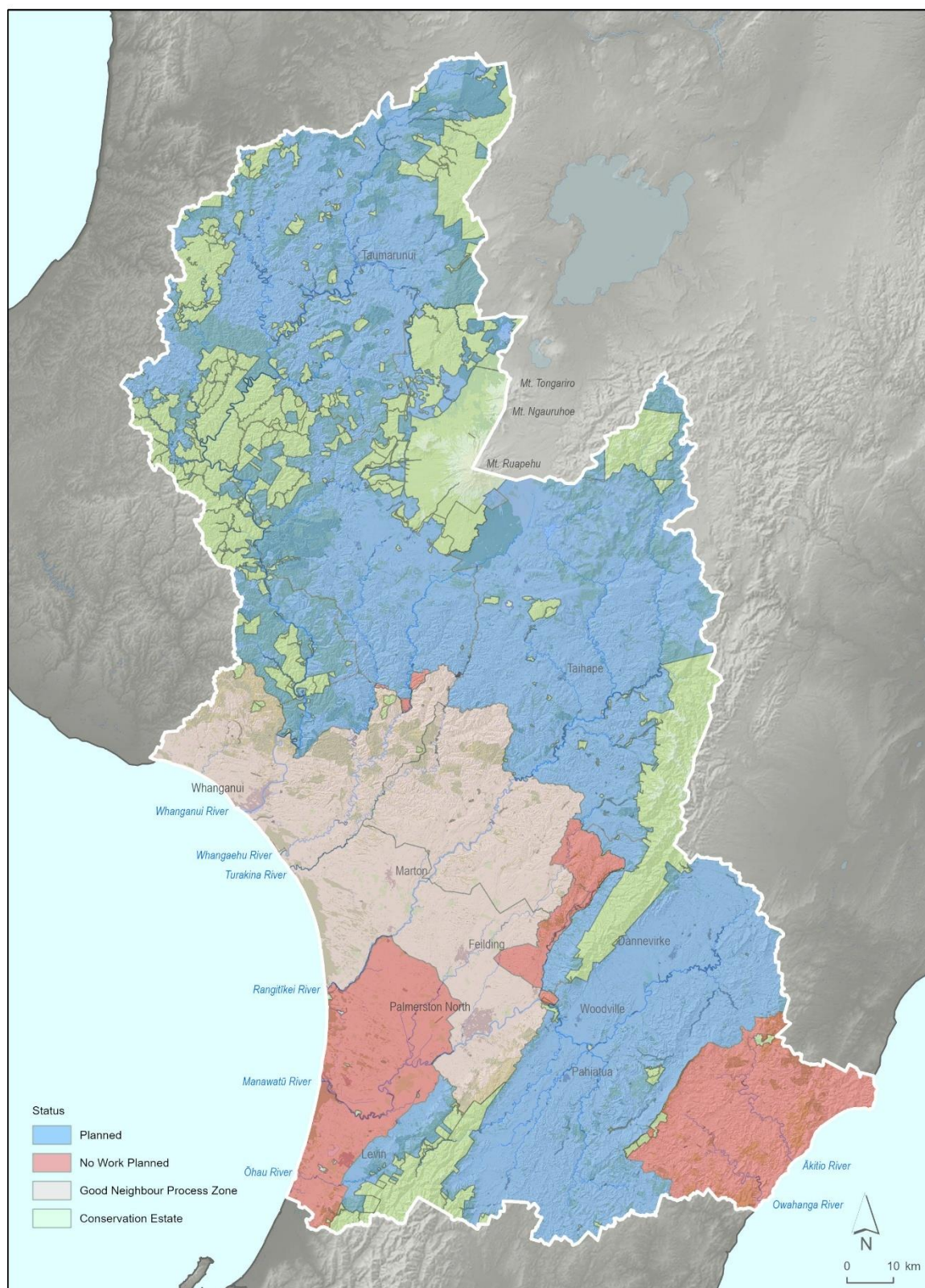




## Spartina 2025-2026



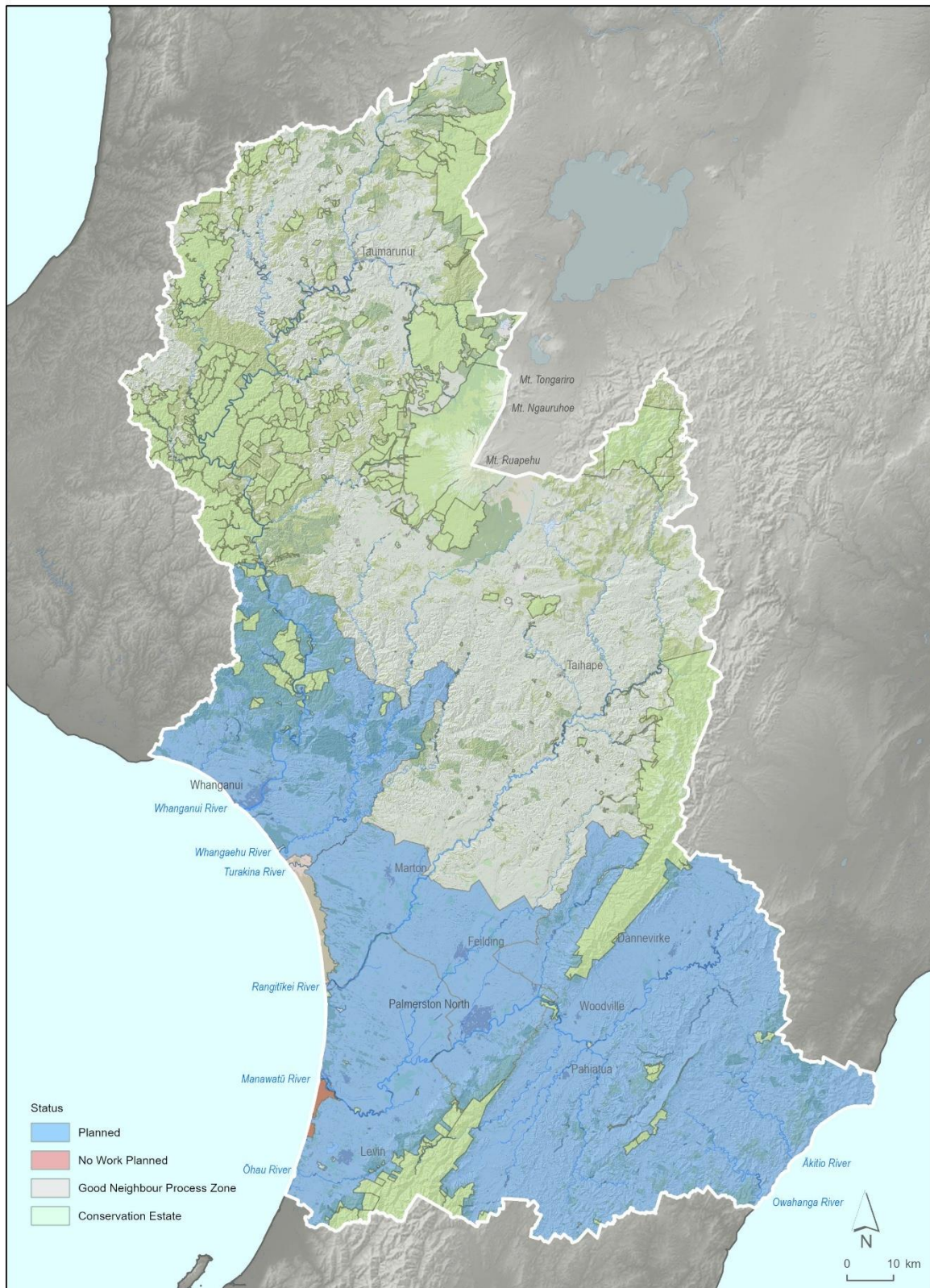
## 8.3 Species Management Unit Maps Progressive Containment Mapped Species



**Banana Passionfruit 2025-2026**

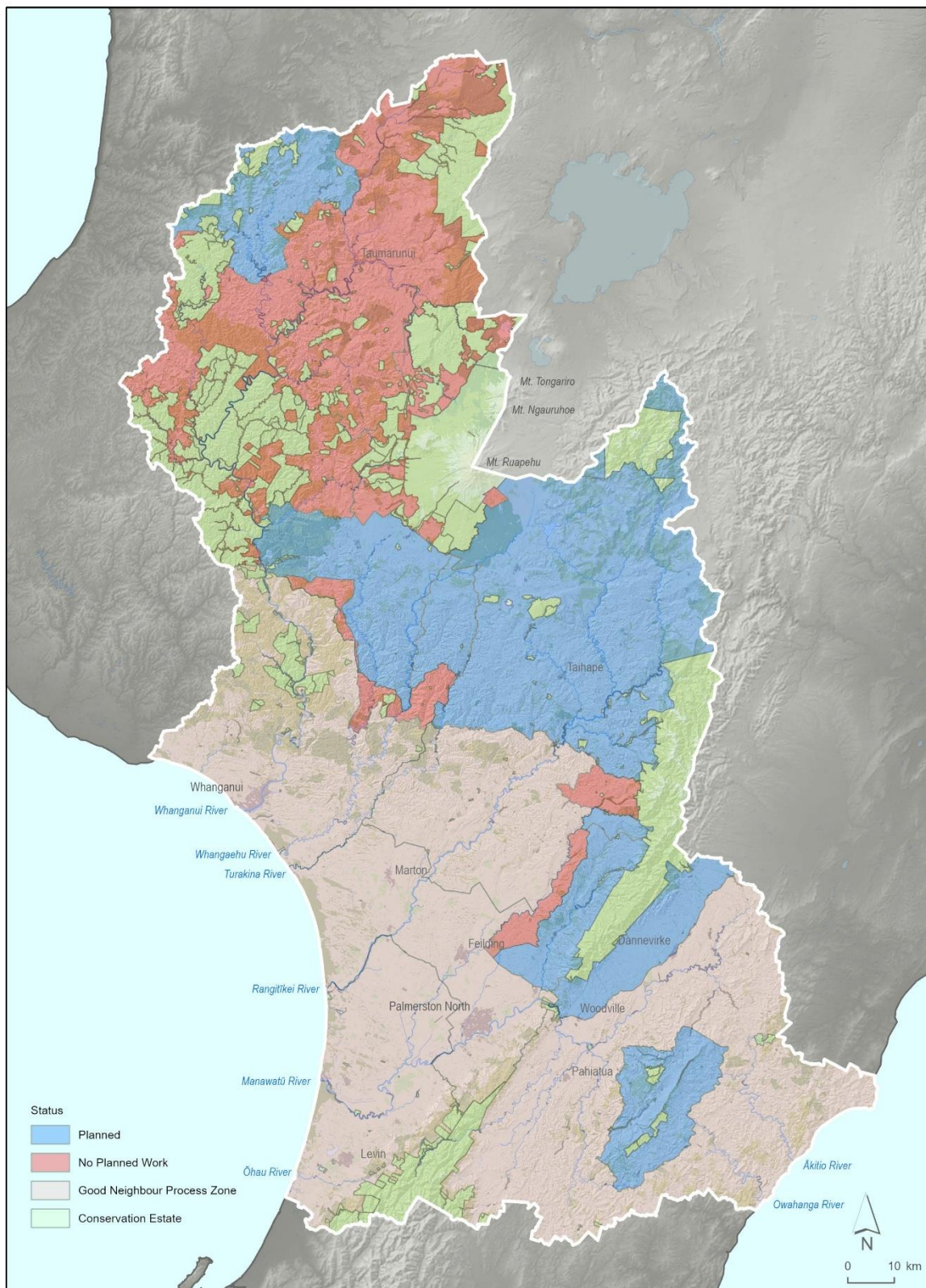
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Date: 6/10/2025  
Ref no: PP5001 001  
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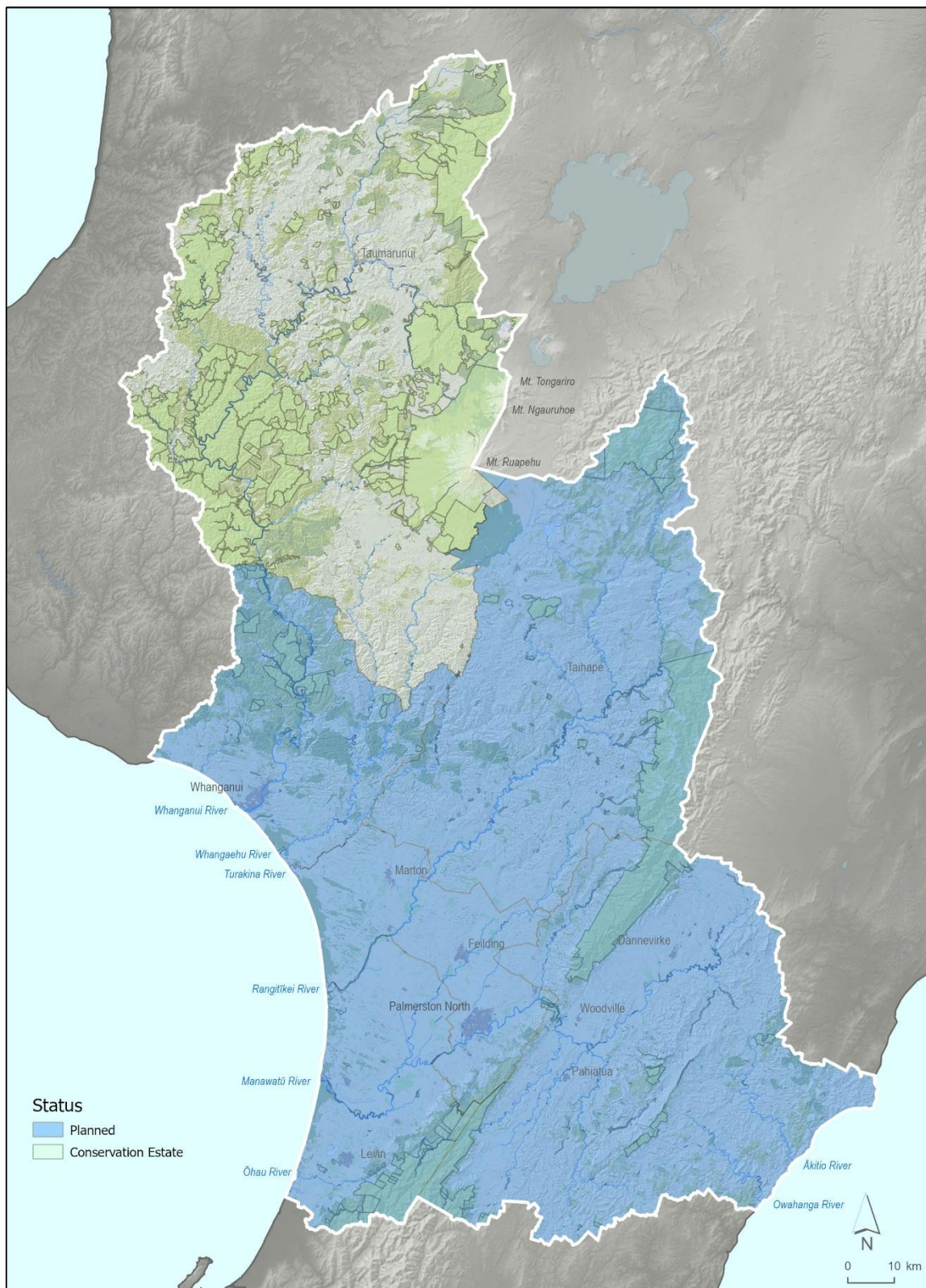
## Boneseed 2025-2026





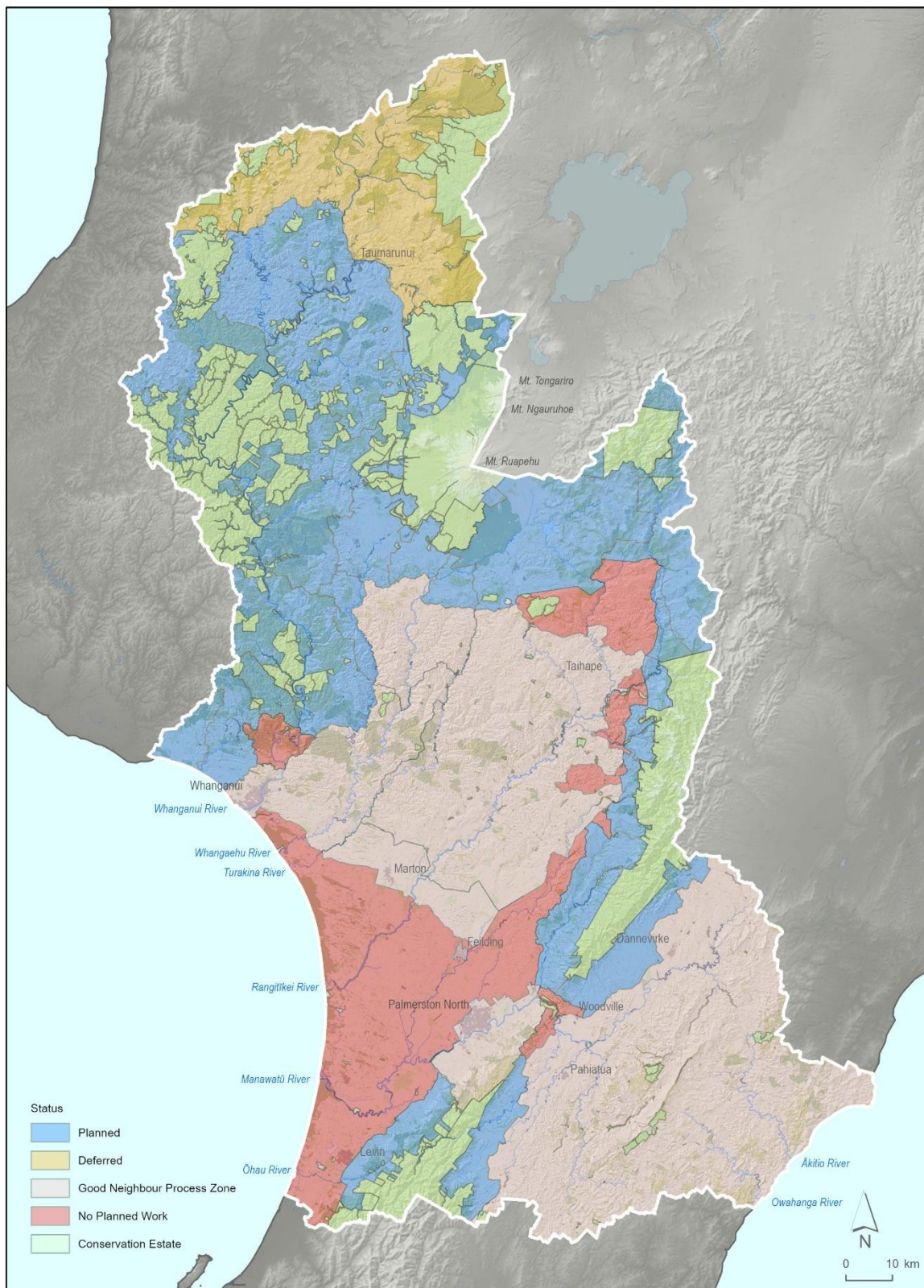
## Darwin's Barberry September 2025





## Mothplant 2025-2026

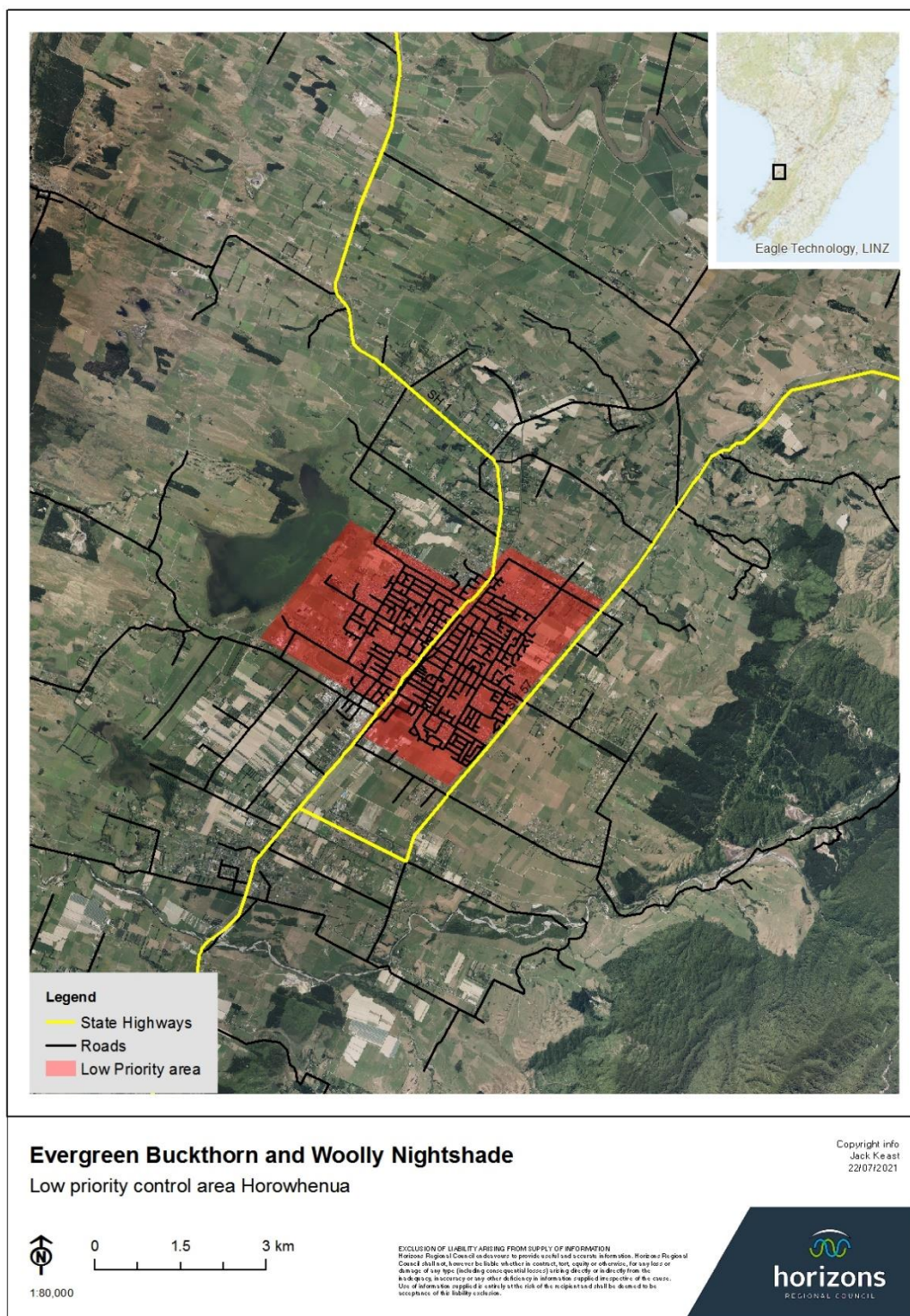




## Old Man's Beard 2025-2026

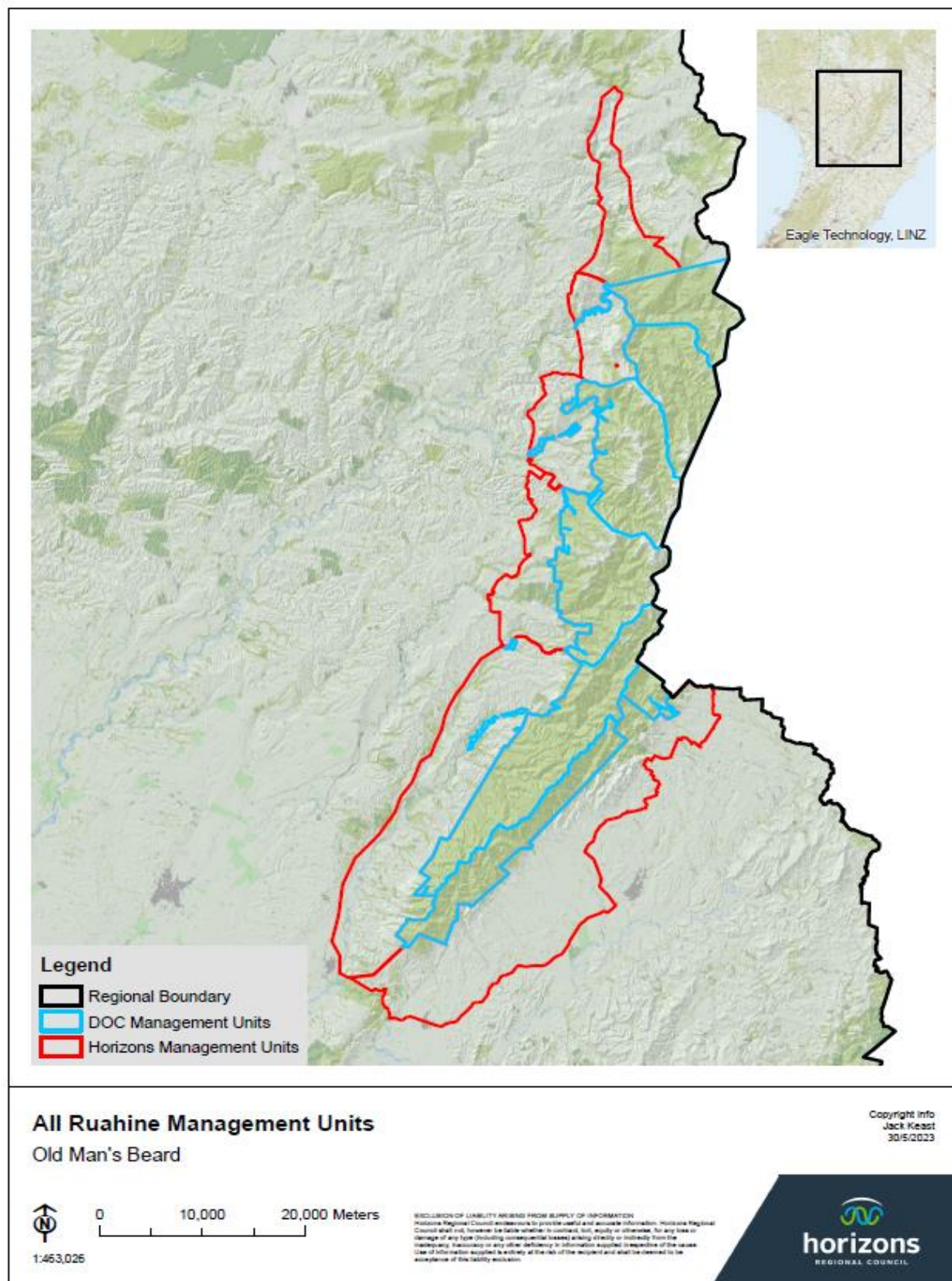


## 8.4 Woolly nightshade Low Priority zone



Map 1: Woolly nightshade and evergreen buckthorn low priority zone

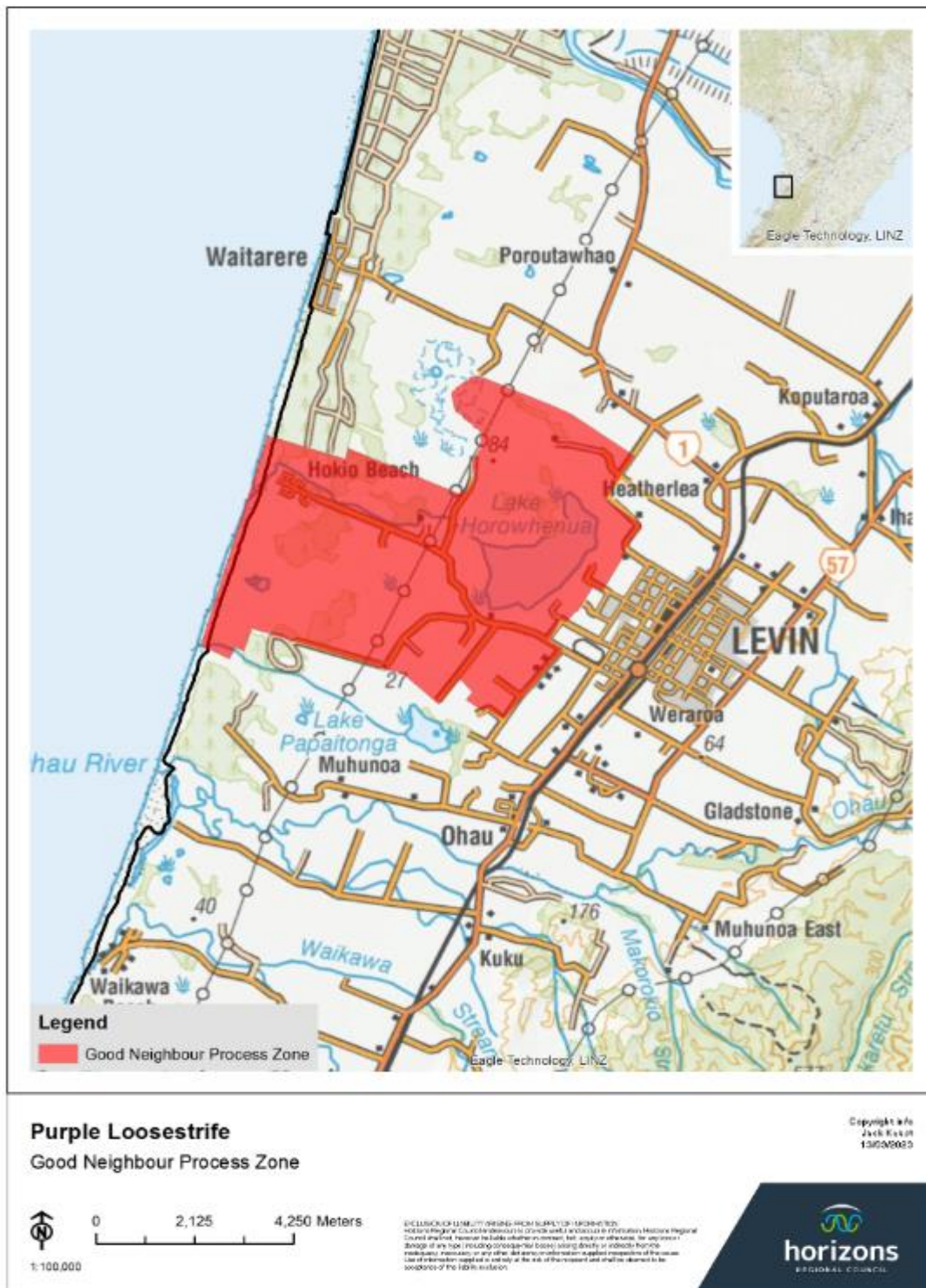
## 8.5 Ruahine Forest Park old man's beard project map



Map 2: Management units for Ruahine Forest Park old man's beard programme



## 8.6 Purple loosestrife Progressive Containment zone



Map 3: Purple loosestrife Progressive Containment zone

## 8.7 RPMP Exclusion plant register

| Exclusion pest plant | Frequency<br>(relates to live vectors)         | Vector                                                                              | Alertness score<br>1= low probability;<br>10= highly likely | Alert factors                                                                                                 | Timeliness | Specific places                                                                                                                                       | Secondary                               | Passive, Connected endeavours     | Notes                                                                                                                                                                        | Staff               | Specific tasks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Californian bulrush  | Ongoing coastal and one-off at treatment sites | Contaminated plants from Northland nurseries; coastal movement from Waikato rivers. | 2                                                           | Previously known but eradicated, potential for coastal dispersal, nursery contamination low risk              | Summer     | Taumarunui settling ponds; Hunterville settling ponds. Estuaries of western coastline                                                                 | West coast beaches                      | Whitebaiters and bird watchers    | NPPA plant. Difficult to engage with folk over plant hard to id and tell apart from similar species.                                                                         | Bash, Kelsi, Robbie | Consider building a 'what are you looking at..... Flyer'                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Chilean needle grass | Ongoing                                        | Small risk of stock movement from Hawke's Bay to Horizons region.                   | 7                                                           | Geolocation and movement of contractors, suppressed by Hawke's Bay Regional Council rules on known locations. | Nov-Feb    | Contractor washdown yards i.e. the Hermitage, Tararua; Norserwood and Ormondville farmland. Levin meatworks paunch material site and discharge field. | All other areas during flowering season | Station owners                    | Vectors fairly well controlled by HBRC pest plan. However, post Cyclone Gabrielle, gravel can be extracted from Tukituki River. Potential for further range expansion of CNG | Jack, Malinda       | MM/JK – Provide funding for AgResearch gravel extraction paper. Contact with HBRC staff about consent form for gravel, contractor biosecurity wash-down sheet and ute guides to be disseminated to contractors and landowners that have both land in HB and MW. |
| Noogoora burr        | Ongoing                                        | Ex BOP/Waikato via contractor machinery or feed                                     | 5                                                           | Geolocation and movement of contractors                                                                       | Feb-March  |                                                                                                                                                       | Ruapehu cropping land                   |                                   | Find with seed pods before plant dies off in Autumn.                                                                                                                         | Bash, Kelsi         | Staff to contact EBOP and WRC to assess spread potential. Social media posts to go up in November.                                                                                                                                                              |
| Saffron thistle      | Ongoing                                        | Human assisted via diggers, stock and feed. Ex Canterbury and Hawkes Bay.           | 7                                                           | Geolocation and movement of contractors and other vectors esp. roadside mowers.                               | Feb-April  | Contractor wash-down yards i.e. The Hermitage, Tararua. Levin meatworks paunch material site and discharge field. Dannevirke saleyards                |                                         | Hawkes Bay Regional Council staff | Likely near chicken coop/production areas                                                                                                                                    | Jack, Malinda       | Contact HBRC staff for spread risk assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Sweet pittosporum    | Ongoing                                        | Nurseries and plantings                                                             | 1                                                           | Not presently known nearby                                                                                    | Sep-Feb    |                                                                                                                                                       | Old garden centres and urban areas      |                                   | NPPA plant; white flowers and large orange fruit. Known only from Northland                                                                                                  | Robbie, Kelsi       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Unknown/ MPI         | Ongoing                                        | Various - plant breeders, aquarium trade, gardeners, farmers.                       |                                                             |                                                                                                               |            | Fly-tipping sites, abandoned nurseries, coastal access areas/dunes.                                                                                   |                                         |                                   |                                                                                                                                                                              | All                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## 8.8 Season activity and timeliness

Month is when activity starts

| Month     | Incursion                                                     | Exclusion                                | Eradication                                                                   | Progressive containment - mapped                      | Progressive containment un-mapped | Biological control                                                                                     | Investigation | Promotion                   |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| July      |                                                               |                                          | Woolly nightshade                                                             | Evergreen buckthorn                                   | Report on AMPs                    |                                                                                                        |               |                             |
| August    |                                                               |                                          | Alligator Weed (PN)                                                           | Darwin's barberry, boneseed                           | Sign off 2021-22 AMPs             | Contract with MWLR for purple loosestrife releases                                                     |               | Woollybusters               |
| September | Velvet leaf - Farmer contact                                  | Site visits                              | Spartina, Blue passionflower, knotweed, alligator weed (PN)                   | Banana passionfruit, pest conifers, Darwin's barberry |                                   | Darwin's barberry and Chilean flame creeper consultation                                               |               | CCD – Lake O, Woollybusters |
| October   | Sea spurge site visits                                        | Site visits                              | Cathedral bells, alligator weed (PN)                                          | Banana passionfruit, Darwins barberry                 |                                   | NBC meeting, green thistle beetle harvest and distribution                                             |               | CCD, Chilean needle grass   |
| November  |                                                               | Sagittaria surveillance around flowering | Chilean rhubarb, Senegal tea, rum cherry alligator weed (PN) (TMN), arrowhead | Moth plant, banana passionfruit                       | Site audits                       | Tutsan agent release, old man's beard gall mite monitoring                                             |               | CCD                         |
| December  |                                                               | Site visits                              | Nasella, Himalyan balsam, alligator weed (PN)                                 | Old man's beard, moth plant                           | Site audits                       | Broom gall mite distribution and site monitoring, field horsetail weevil monitoring                    |               | CCD, weed wizard videos     |
| January   |                                                               | Site visits                              | African feather grass, Chinese <i>pennisetum</i> , alligator weed (PN, TMN)   | Old man's beard                                       | Site audits                       | Tradescantia monitoring and distribution                                                               |               | CCD                         |
| February  | Velvetleaf paddock surveillance<br><br>Sea Spurge site visits | Site visits, fringed water lily visits   | Purple loosestrife, Alligator Weed (PN), climbing spindleberry                | Old man's beard                                       | Site audits                       | Green thistle beetle harvest and distribution, old man's beard gall mite monitoring and sawfly release |               | CCD                         |
| March     |                                                               | Site visits                              | Cathedral bells, alligator weed (PN, TMN), bomarea                            | Old man's beard                                       | Site audits                       |                                                                                                        |               | CCD, weed wizard videos     |
| April     |                                                               |                                          | Alligator weed (PN), Queensland poplar                                        | Banana passionfruit                                   |                                   |                                                                                                        |               | CCD                         |
| May       |                                                               |                                          | Alligator Weed (PN)                                                           | Banana passionfruit                                   |                                   |                                                                                                        |               |                             |
| June      | Sea spurge site visits                                        |                                          | Woolly nightshade                                                             | Evergreen buckthorn                                   | AMP reports due                   |                                                                                                        |               |                             |





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