



Annual Report

2023 – 2024



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Our Vision:

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



About Us

Weed Action Native Habitat Restoration Trust recognises the importance of a diverse and resilient forest to support native ecosystems and mitigate against climate change. We achieve this through targeted pest plant control and native planting where appropriate.

We engage with our community through awareness and education, support, advice, training and equipment, so they can control pest plants in their backyard.

We work in collaboration and partnership with local hapū/iwi and support the development of iwi-led conservation within the area.

Weed Action volunteer groups and contractors are making a difference in our native forests on Public Conservation Land and Reserves, backed up by our health and safety systems, management plans, and supplies.

Overarching principle for all programmes

To work with tangata whenua and develop our Tangata Tiriti partnership by upholding the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and to promote habitat restoration mahi to support hapu/iwi links back to their ancestral lands.

Three programmes

1. Engage and support the community in habitat restoration

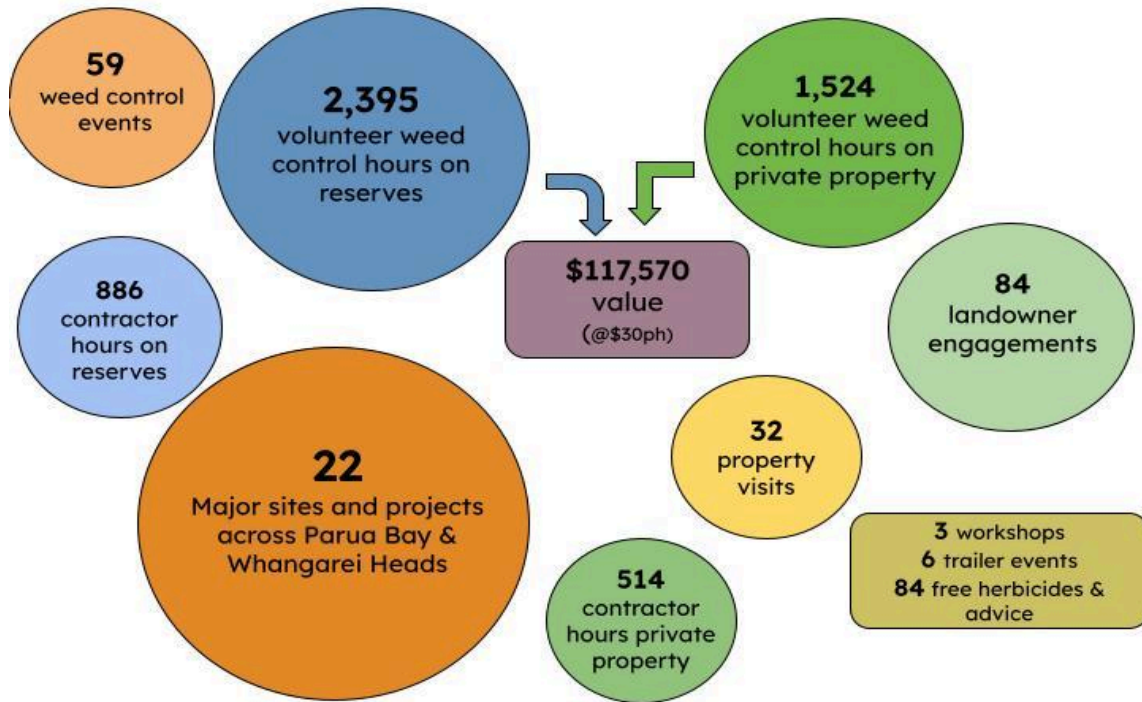
2. Volunteer habitat restoration on Reserves and Public Conservation Land

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



This map of Reotahi illustrates how our three programmes operate (note the yellow shaded areas are representative only and do not indicate that all of these households have been engaged).

2023 - 2024 Highlights



21 major sites

(map excludes Coastal Survey)

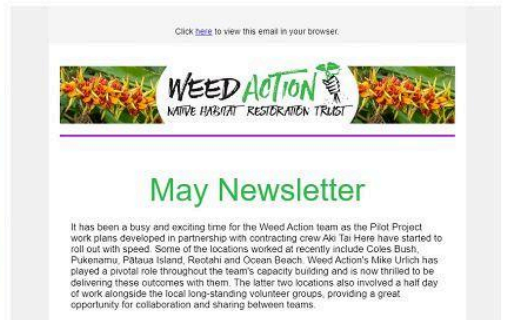


Community Engagement

**1. Engage and support the community in habitat restoration
Northland Regional Council - High Value Area**

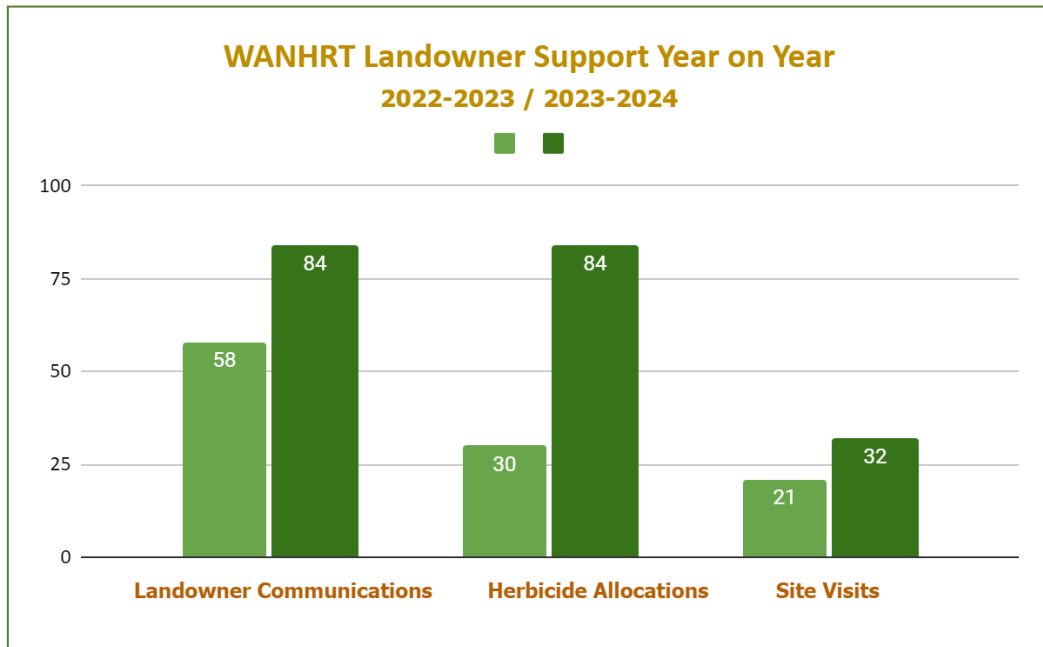
This year, we engaged the community through

- 53** Facebook posts
- 7** Monthly E-Newsletters (began December 2023)
- 6** Pop up Trailer Events giving out advice and herbicides
- 2** Workshops on weed management and herbicide management
- 2** Month Long Moth Plant Pod Amnesty Bins
- 1** Moth Plant STOP THE PODS campaign
- 12** Weed of the Month promotions and roadside signs
- 6** Articles for the Whangārei Heads Citizens Association newsletter
- 4** Collaborative weed control events
- 2** Submission Presentations at the Whangārei District Council and Northland Regional Council Long Term plans
- 1** Community Learning Hui on the Pilot Project, Te Tiriti, and local Māori land alienation



And the community responded

The wider Whangārei Heads community continues to show its dedication to keeping invasive weeds under control in backyards and private properties. Weed Action Native Habitat Restoration Trust was seen as a trusted source on 84 occasions for advice, support, weed management plans, herbicides, solidarity, equipment and more. This resulted in 32 site visits and 84 herbicide and advice allocations.



EcoNet CAMS

Keeping track of all of this activity and data using forms and spreadsheets has become an ongoing challenge, so we have been excited this past year to trial and adopt the EcoNet Conservation Activity Management System (CAMS) system, which includes Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) and ArcGIS mapping tools. The improved database and reporting tools will allow us to record and share information effectively and meaningfully.

We appreciate the support for this programme from the Northland Regional Council High Value Area Programme.

Our mission


EcoNet is building a national Conservation Activity Management System (CAMS) to:

- Increase participant engagement
- Get more done in less time
- Increase capacity for environmental action

CAMS integrates and automates CRM for Contact Relationship Management and GIS for geographic mapping tools

- contact systems (email, locations, skills, interests, comms)
- activities (events, health and safety, bookings, marketing)
- reporting (dashboards as action oriented maps and apps)

For more information see "Why CAMS?"



Parua Bay Privet Buffer

This was the final year of the 5 year Northland Regional Council Community Pest Control Agreement. The Parua Bay landscape has changed significantly over this period with thousands of large seeding privet trees removed, as well as many more privet poles and seedlings, thus making room for native habitat regeneration.

In response to a recent survey, the majority of landowner participants are committed to continuing privet and other weed control into the future and are appreciative of the physical support, advice and access to tools and herbicide that they have received. It is essential that the gains made are not lost and WANHRT will be working to access other funds so that the Parua Bay Privet Buffer can continue with its intention.



Volunteers

2. Volunteer habitat restoration on Reserves and Public Conservation Land

Weed Action volunteer groups and individuals are the backbone of habitat restoration in Whangārei Heads. Regular (weekly to monthly) human intervention over many years in select reserves is restoring and maintaining healthier native bush at the margins between intact forest and landscapes. These marginal areas are highly susceptible to weed invasion, so the determination and optimism of volunteers to keep pushing invasive weeds back is remarkable.

There are long-standing and committed groups operating at Tamaterau, Ocean Beach, McLeod Bay/Manaia, Reotahi, and the Smugglers Maintenance Crew has been revived in a joint initiative with Bream Head/Te Whara Conservation Trust. The Strategic Weed Action Team (SWAT) continues to be a strong, visible and effective way to address invasive weeds at key locations or areas of community concern.

Weed Action volunteer groups contributed 2394.75 hours of weed control work on WDC Reserves and Public Conservation Land in the 2023 - 2024 year. This equates to over \$70,000 of labour value (@\$30ph) in restoring native bush across a range of sites and ecosystems.

Dedicated weed warriors



Landscape level restoration

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



Weed Action habitat restoration operates across various landscape types and eco-systems, including where you can find the best examples of native habitats - within reserves and conservation parks. These large sites require us to work closely with other organisations, including the Department of Conservation and Whangārei District Council. It also calls for skilled and well-resourced person-power and consistent management.

Within these projects we aim to maintain and strengthen relationships with tangata whenua and local hapū groups

Mike Ulrich has continued to strengthen local relationships working alongside and supporting Aki Tai Here, a local conservation team who uri to the Whangārei Heads. They have undertaken restoration on whenua Māori, presented at the National Education and Training Seminar of the NZ Biosecurity Institute in Paihia in August 2023, and won awards in the category Environmental Action to Protect Native Life at the Northland Regional Council Environmental Awards 2023. Aki Tai Here undertook DoC contracts on offshore islands based on the skills and experience they have developed working alongside WANHRT over the last few years.

The Pilot Project Collaboration

From initial discussions and exploration of building a Waka Hourua partnership between WANHRT and tangata whenua, an exciting local project emerged. The project aim was to develop local mātauranga informed collaborations for habitat restoration throughout Whangārei Heads This has been funded by Foundation North, supported by Weed Action governance and training, and operationally delivered by Weed Action and Aki Tai Here.

Some key achievements:

- Capacity building and training of a strong team of kaimahi to confidently manage restoration projects
- Training and capacity building for the Weed Action team and Trust to support working in partnership with tangata whenua
- Extensive consultation with whānau, iwi and hapū of the area
- Surveying, scoping and consulting to agree on site selection
- Hundreds of hours of skilled habitat restoration work across over 20 sites
- A hui in May provided the opportunity for the wider community to understand Te Tiriti o Waitangi and local land alienation. It was well-received and sparked further community interest in Te Tiriti education
- Collaborative events with volunteers and staff from multiple environmental organisations including Backyard Kiwi, Bream Head/Te Whara Conservation Trust, Campbell Road Landcare, Citycare, Department of Conservation, Manaia Bush Recovery Group, Manaia Landcare, Ngātiwai Trust Board Kauri Ora, Te Pukenga/Northtec, Northland Regional Council, Patuharakeke Te Iwi Trust Board, Predator Free Whangārei, QEII National Trust and Whangārei District Council

Aim: Work with tangata whenua to build momentum for an iwi led invasive weed removal programme on Maunga Manaia

WANHRT and Aki Tai Here have progressed two significant projects taking place on Maunga Manaia.

Threatened Species: Department of Conservation Threatened Species funding enabled WANHRT and Aki Tai Here to undertake three days of threatened species survey training on Mount Manaia in March and April 2024. Botanical guidance was provided by DOC botanist Andrew Townsend, Northland Regional Council's Lisa Forrester and Stephanie Tong and Weed Action's ecological expert Mike Ulrich. Careful sharing of cultural, rongoa and maramataka aspects from Winiwini Kingi and Te Kaurinui Parata provided a rare opportunity for all to add this information to their practice in the field.

Following the survey, a report for management of these vulnerable species habitats is currently being drafted to be reviewed by hapū of Manaia, agencies and ecological experts, to guide the three year DOC Threatened Species partnership project.

Mahi Tahī for Manaia: On the 6th and 7th of June, the Mahi Tahī for Manaia collaborative event saw over 60 people working together to remove invasive pest plants from the WDC administered former water board lands on the lower slopes of Manaia. These areas have historically been planted and then harvested for pines, followed by a wilding pine removal programme in 2020. The disturbed and open landscape left by this activity is a wonderland for invasive weeds, posing a source of further spread to the upper reaches of Manaia and into neighbouring private property. In total, a staggering 600 hours of weed control work was contributed by the participating organisations.



Aim: Ensure Whaka Ora Reotahi, our WANHRT flagship restoration project, receives the resources required

Work that began in 2022 with Lotteries Environment funding of \$55,000 for Whaka Ora Reotahi, was finally completed in 2024. The planned full sweep of Reotahi maunga utilised Pilot Project funding from Foundation North to close out the remaining areas as highlighted on the map below. This has been the largest amount of weed control in the history of the reserve.

As this first phase of work was completed at Reotahi, the Weed Action Native Habitat Restoration Trust fundraising committee were delighted to receive confirmation of a second round of funding from the NZ Lottery Environment and Heritage Grants Board. Aki Tai Here and Weed Action contractors will deliver this over the second half of 2024, with the \$41,700 grant providing a significant boost to what is required for Phase Two. Self-seeded native seedlings will be supported by continuing to keep invasive weeds at bay across the maunga.



Governance

Governance Goal 2023 - 2024: Strengthen the Trust Board and build a sustainable and resilient organisation

This year the Trust and Team have stretched our understanding of what it means to be Te Tiriti partners. Te Tiriti workshops and hui have helped us develop our collaboration skills as we shared the management of the Pilot Project. This has caused WANHRT as an organisation to explore what true partnership means, the conversations, explorations, learning, growth and integration of working within a different world view has enhanced the organisation. These understandings will continue to inform all aspects of our work.

Financial systems reviewed and providing clear information

Bill Mallet, Simon Gurnsey and Ali Bryant have handled improvements and developments that have enabled the Trust to grow in confidence about our financial management. The Finance Sub-Committee has developed a Terms of Reference with a Financial Policy document now establishing agreed practice around transparency, accountability and sound financial management.

Succession planning to ensure longevity

The Trust has a strong core of committed volunteers, passionate about the work we do. The Trust functions well with professional reporting and adherence to Charitable Trust requirements. The Governance volunteer hours amount to 1,190, which is remarkable but possibly not sustainable. It is important at this stage of our development to grow the number of Trustees and spread the workload to be less reliant on a few.

Health and Safety systems are reviewed and fit for purpose

This year our Health and Safety has become integrated into one system and we received SiteWise to Gold Standard in late 2023, achieving a grade of 94% on our annual assessment. A Health and Safety Committee Terms of Reference has been developed and approved.

Funding opportunities are taken

- This financial year has been very successful with meaningful funding from Foundation North for our mātauranga Maori Collaboration on conservation land. As a result of this funding, we have been able to support capacity building with Aki Tai Here and increased involvement with hapū/ iwi.
- Lotteries Environment have supported our Whaka ora Reotahi project for a second time which has enabled us to begin a second sweep of Reotahi.

Funding

	Funds carried forward from 22-23	New funds sourced 23-24
Foundation North - Pilot Project	\$222,917	
NZ Lottery - Gear Up	\$3,838	
NZ Lottery Environment - Whaka Ora Reotahi	\$36,892	
Whangārei District Council	\$3,163	
Department of Conservation - Threatened Species		\$36,708
Northland Regional Council - High Value Area		\$73,404
Northland Regional Council - CPCA		\$15,000
Pub Charities		\$2,810
Whangārei District Council - Community Grant		\$3,500
Total	\$250,565	\$141,422

Thank you to our Funders - Ngā mihi nui ki a koe

Weed Action Native Habitat Restoration Trust is only able to continue to push back the threat of invasive weed species with the support of these major funders. Thank you.



Tables

High Value Area data

Data Collected	Total
Volunteers hours	5109.25
Value (\$) of volunteer contribution (valued at \$30/hr)	\$153,277.50
Number of groups	6
Number of core group members	30
Number of public engagement activities	6 trailer; 3 workshops; 59 weed work events
Number of landowner engagement/support	84 landowner requests for help via call, text, email, FB; 84 herbicide allocations; 32 site visits
Contractor hours public land	886
Contractor hours private land	514
Value (\$) of other funding obtained:	\$285,604 TOTAL

Residential/private land sites worked by contractors 2023 - 2024:

Location	Habitat being restored	Pilot Project 23-24 Contractor Hours	Strategic Sites 23-24 Contractor Hours	Main weed species
Lamb Road	QE II	50		
Madeira Vine sites	Various		20	Madeira vine
Our Road	Lowland forest		24	Elaeagnus, wild ginger, aristeia
Pukenamu	Private Land	100		Tobacco weed, prickly hakea, wilding pines, wild passionfruit
Pakikaikatu	Whenua Maori	120		Wild ginger, Taiwan cherry, tree privet, tobacco weed, mothplant
Privet Buffer	Private Land		200	Tree privet, chinese privet
Total		270	244	514

Reserves and public land sites worked by contractors 2023 - 2024:

Location	Habitat being restored	Pilot Project 23-24 Contractor Hours	Strategic Sites 23-24 Contractor Hours	Main weed species
Bream Head/Te Whara	Coastal forest		15	Mothplant, climbing asparagus, tobacco weed, cotoneaster, elaeagnus
Coastal Survey	Coastal escarpments, coastal forest, estuaries		30	Mothplant, woolly nightshade, wild ginger, privet
Coles Bush	Lowland forest	60		Selaginella, elaeagnus, tree privet, tobacco weed, ginger
Darch Point	Coastal forest	60	12	Mothplant, tobacco weed, cotoneaster, elaeagnus, ginger
Kauri Mountain	Lowland forest	Incomplete	6	Tradescantia, mothplant, tobacco weed, wilding conifers, prickly hakea, flame tree
Lamb Road Buffer QE11	Lowland forest, riparian	60	8	Mothplant, tobacco weed, cotoneaster, elaeagnus, tree privet, chinese privet
Madeira Vine sites	Coastal forest, riparian		20	Madeira vine
Ocean Beach	Dunelands, coastal forest, riparian	60	15	Tradescantia, cape honeyflower, silver poplar, wilding conifers,
Pataua South	Dunelands, riparian, coastal escarpment, coastal forest	100	12	Flame tree, silver poplar, iceplant, , cotoneaster, buffalo grass, pampas, tobacco weed
Reotahi	Coastal forest, lowland forest	80	16	Elaeagnus, tree privet, Queen of Night, wild ginger, mothplant
Roadside Moth Plant Blitz	Roadside/seed corridor		30	Moth Plant
Turiapua Reserve	Coastal forest, wetland, estuary	60	12	Elaeagnus, Queen of Night, wild ginger, bangalow palm, tree privet
WDC Watercare land at Manaia	Lowland forest, wetland	150	80	Elaeagnus, Queen of Night, wild ginger, bangalow palm, tree privet
Hours		630	256	886 Total hours

Reserves and public conservation land sites worked by volunteers 2023 - 2024:

Location	Habitat being restored	Monthly Group Name	Regular volunteers	Volunteer Hours	SWAT / DOC Hours	Main weed species
Busby Head Track and Home Bay	Coastal forest and scrub	Smugglers Maintenance Crew	6	87		Moth plant, woolly nightshade,
Darch Point	5.5ha secondary coastal native forest and scrub	Logan Carter	1	125.5	55 - DOC 27 - SWAT	moth plant, queen of the night, Japanese honeysuckle, cape honeysuckle, elaeagnus madeira vine,, wild ginger
Ocean Beach	Approx 3ha dunes and riparian	Ocean Beach Landcare Group	8	166		bamboo, everlasting pea, Japanese honeysuckle, blue morning glory, buffalo grass,pampas, tradescantia, agapanthus
Reotahi Coastal Walkway	Approx 5ha secondary coastal native forest and scrub	Reotahi Working Bee	4	68.5	105 - SWAT	wild ginger, moth plant, elaeagnus, cotoneaster, queen of the night, jasmine, wattle,
Reotahi/Darch Point Roads	.5 ha	SWAT	8		36 - SWAT	jasmine
Ritchie Road Reserve	6 ha	SWAT	8		12 - SWAT	cotoneaster, privet, phoenix palm
Rukuwai Road	1 km road verge	Residents	8	20		tree privet, chinese privet, woolly nightshade
Tamaterau Reserve	2ha lowland coastal native forest	Tamaterau Reserve Landcare Group	5	157		queen of the night, woolly nightshade, nut sedge,

The Nook	ha	SWAT	8		35 - SWAT	
Vinson Reserve		Frank Bates	1	40		moth plant, cotoneaster, agapanthus, jasmine
WDC Watercare land and The Green	33ha coastal native forest and regenerating scrub	Manaia Bush Recovery Group	8	154	600 - Mahi Tahī for Manaia	wild ginger, woolly nightshade, elaeagnus, queen of the night, moth plant, banana passionfruit
Total	Hectares covered		65	818	835	

The Team and Trustees: Robyn Bigelow - Chair and Co-Founder, Jan Marshall - Parua Bay Privet Buffer Coordinator and Co-Founder, Mike Ulrich - Ecological Expertise, Kate Hardcastle - Community Engagement Coordinator, Bill Mallet - Treasurer, Marion Blake, Simon Gurnsey, Brian Waddell and Peter Coates.

Advisors to the Trust: Joanna Barr - Northland Regional Council, Ngaire Sullivan - Kiwi Coast, Hori Parata - Cultural Advice, Patrick Holmes - Whangārei District Council and Amy MacDonald - Northland Regional Council.

