



High Value Area

ANNUAL REPORT

2025 - 2026

Our Vision

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

Weed Management and Habitat Restoration Strategy

- Engage and support the community in habitat restoration through publicity and information, skills development, and access to tools and herbicides.
- Support seven weed removal volunteer groups to restore native habitats in over 20 small reserves and grow the volunteer base and number of groups.
- Landscape level habitat restoration on reserves and public conservation land through partner-funded projects underpinned by hapū/iwi habitat restoration aspirations.
- Use containment and suppression strategies on invasive plant species where their spread or prevalence is limited or defined within the Whangārei Heads area.



Weed Action is dedicated to supporting the community within the rate-payer funded High Value Area in successful invasive weed control. This Annual Report summarises the projects undertaken towards this goal between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.



Supporting community habitat restoration

By equipping locals with identification skills, tools, techniques, and advice, their efforts to control pest plants on their own property will protect nearby native bush reserves, and benefit their own connection to nature



Visibility, outreach and conveying our story

Building awareness of the threat of invasive plants within the community was primarily achieved through:

- The second year of Mega Moth Plant Movement promotions and activities (see more at right)
- Weed of the Month promotions via prominent roadside signs, website and Facebook posts with detailed instructions on control methods, and direct offers to assist residents with target species
- School visits to both Whangārei Heads School in November and Parua Bay School in May
- Articles in the local WHCA newsletter on topics including berrying weeds, Taiwan cherry and privet, moth plant control tips
- A feature in an April 2026 Northern Advocate article on moth plant pod competitions and progress in controlling it
- 52 Facebook posts, shared to wider community pages, gaining 130,000 distinct views
- 5 Facebook Reels utilising humour and demonstrating weed control techniques, with close to 5,000 views

Weed Action contractors committed to a second control sweep for moth plant along Whangārei Heads Road, where the reduction in moth plant load is already becoming visible. This work was supported by a Whangārei District Council Community Grant for labour costs, traffic management, pod collection bins and signage.

The Mega Moth Plant Movement is a 5 year strategy to bring moth plant to minimal levels at key sites and educate and empower the community with sustainable management principles for this rampant invasive. Community awareness of this pest plant is very high during flowering and podding in summer, which we then capitalise on with publicity, competitions, and community weed control events.

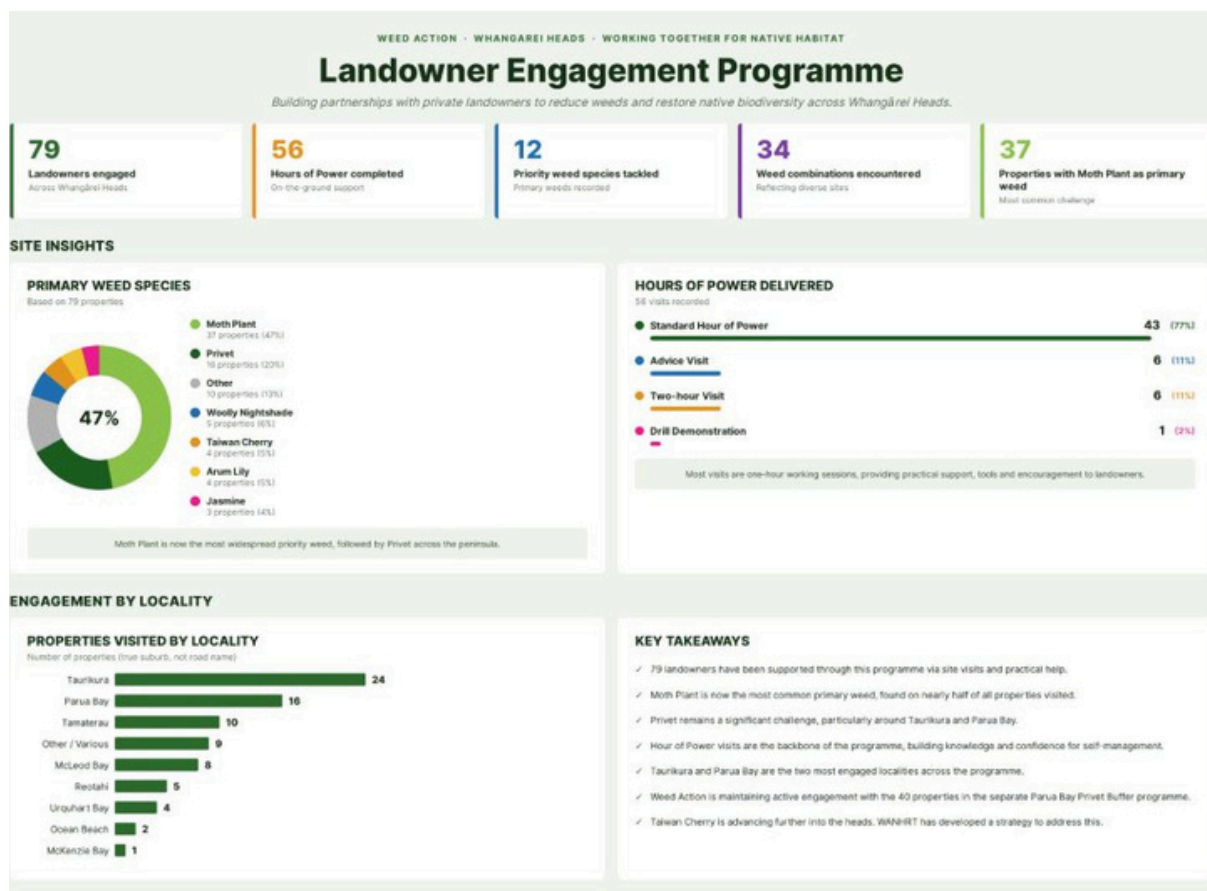
There are two phases to the campaign:
– **STOP THE PODS**, calling on the community to remove moth plant from October to January, when it is flowering
– **COLLECT THE PODS**, encouraging locals to collect moth plant pods and dispose of them at our community weed bin

Weed Action held two moth plant competitions over this period.

In December 2025, winners received Parua Bay Tavern vouchers for getting moth plant vines early.

In March 2026 entrants had one weekend to collect and then bring their pods to Whangārei Heads School's Funky Fishing and Diving Competition, to be "weighed in" for judging

The winners received prize packs from locally owned Mitre 10 Mega Whangārei.

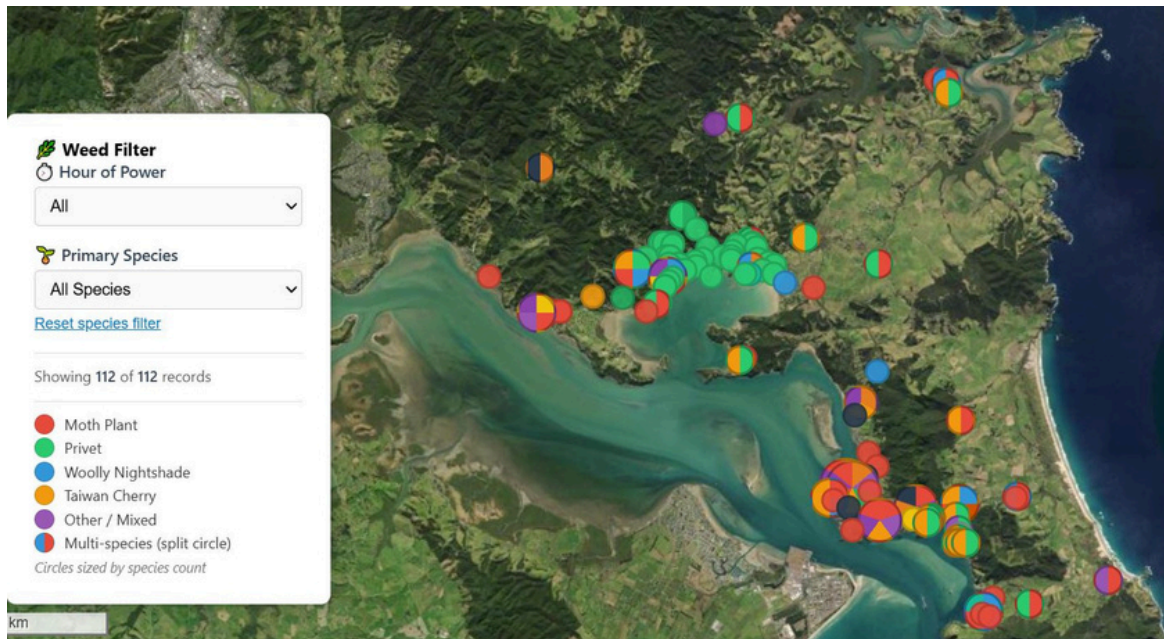


graphic from: <https://tinyurl.com/ynmmkme7> by Hadden Morrison and WANHRT

Supporting local residents in habitat restoration

- In the 2025 – 2026 year, 64 residents used our website enquiry form or emailed us at info@weedaction.org.nz for help with invasive plants at home
- 79 residents received assistance, with close to 100 dispensations of herbicides or Cut n Paste gels (including volunteer groups)
- Locals know and trust they can ask for assistance and receive advice, herbicides and site visits
- 56 Hour of Power site visits were delivered, in which a WANHRT team member will undertake one hour of weed control alongside the owner, allowing for training on techniques, tips and tricks of the trade, and how to manage large or multi-species infestations

Landowner visits by species



graphic from: <https://tinyurl.com/ynmmkmef> by Hadden Morrison and WANHRT

Mapping Our Story

In early 2026 Weed Action engaged local conservation worker and NorthTec student Hadden Morrison to create an ArcGIS StoryMap, mapping the 25–26 financial year's activities across the region. With this platform now established, we will be retrospectively adding past data and also updating all future activities on an annual basis.

The StoryMap can be viewed here <https://tinyurl.com/ynmmkmef>

Community Engagement in Action Tackling Taiwan cherry at home



We have 10 acres of bush near the golf course which had become thick with invasive weeds, especially Taiwan cherry.

Kate at Weed Action came and demonstrated drill and fill techniques and provided chemicals and a loaned drill.

Over 50+ hours I killed hundreds of Taiwan cherry trees. I thank the Weed Action group for helping me with the right information and equipment to feel confident and for all they do for our beautiful area.

A Tamaterau resident

Volunteer habitat restoration in reserves

Supporting our volunteers

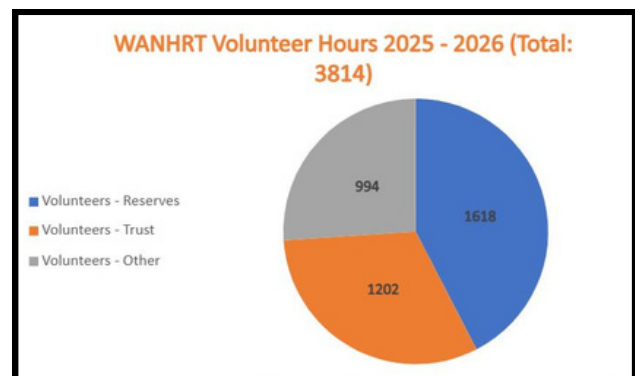
With two dedicated community engagement coordinators, this year has been about sticking to our knitting and the fantastic progress volunteer groups have made across a range of reserves and habitat types at Whangārei Heads.



**7 Weed Action groups = 50 regular volunteers = 1618 hours across 15 reserves
2025 – 2026**

The Heart of Restoration

Weed Action volunteer groups are at the heart of the incredible progress in habitat restoration being made across the Whangārei Heads peninsula. Seven groups dedicated solely to invasive weed removal meet on a monthly basis to turn local bush reserves from weed-infested jungles to thriving native ecosystems. From Tamaterau to Ocean Beach, this year 15 reserves received volunteer attention.



Planting Day at McLeod Bay

Following last year's successful planting day at Reotahi, Weed Action continue to extend our habitat restoration efforts to restoration planting. This year's site selected itself in some ways. A small section of stream side reserve has been weeded by the Manaia Bush Recovery Group for several years. They diligently removed infestations of flame tree, pampas, woolly nightshade, moth plant, queen of the night, purple spur flower, palm grass and more. However, with fallen flame tree slash, the site was becoming hazardous to work in. In November 2025 Weed Action, gained permission from WDC to bring in a large mulching machine to rid the area of debris and slash. The mulch left behind was, in the words of Mike Ulrich "the perfect planting site".

In June 2026 it took 40 passionate volunteers only 2 hours to plant hundreds of plants, including species such as ti kouka, harakeke, manuka, coprosma, karo, lacebark, puriri and umbrella sedge.



Celebrating Volunteers

In June 2026 volunteers and the WANHRT team gathered for our annual Sharing Workshop. Each group presented on their progress and the WANHRT coordinators also updated on our strategy, mapping and data collection, and tools and techniques.

Lunch from local caterers Harvest was the perfect way to finish and share our appreciation for volunteers and their achievements.



New Volunteers

In the past year, Weed Action has gained 10 new volunteers across several of the groups. This has provided a real boost to both the efforts in the bush but also to the social and community side of weed work.

This Formula Works

Just as you need to make sure you are using the right herbicides and techniques to control different weed species, Weed Action volunteer groups have finessed exactly what works to achieve restoration goals AND have volunteers want to come back every month.

- Work in distinct areas and typically stay close together to ensure a complete sweep.
- Skilled volunteers with good tools are happy volunteers. Weed Action provides training and upskilling opportunities and regular equipment checks and replacements.
- Don't just focus on weeds. Know how to ID native species and make sure to note signs of them regenerating in the areas you work. That's the reward!

Reserves receiving Weed Action habitat restoration 2025 – 2026

Reserve/size ha	Group	Volunteer Hours	Contractor Hours
Tamaterau Reserve 2ha	Tamaterau Landcare	307	8
Wharf Road Reserve 1.5ha	Parua Bay Weed Action	18	3
Turiapua Reserve 3.3ha	SWAT	7.5	4
Parua Bay Community Sports Fields surrounds 4ha	Parua Bay Weed Action	118	51
Parua Bay QEII Covenant 2ha	SWAT	39	16
Kiteone Reserve 7.5ha	Parua Bay Weed Action	21	4
The Nook Reserve 6.5ha	SWAT	17	4
McLeod Bay Green & Watercare lands 34ha	Manaia Bush Recovery Planting Day	151 80	58
Manaia Scenic Reserve	Aki Tai Here Mike Ulrich		540 30
Darch Point PCL 7ha	Logan Carter DoC Volunteer Wednesday	244 40	12
Corner Reotahi & Darch Point Roads	SWAT	18	12
Reotahi Coastal Walkway 7ha	Reotahi Working Bee Planting Day	77 140	44
Little Munro Bay & Vinson Reserves 7ha	Little Munro Bay residents	44	
Whangārei Heads School 4ha	SWAT	22	12
Busby Head/Smugglers Track	Smugglers Track Crew	52	14
Ocean Beach Reserve 5ha	Ocean Beach Landcare	189	8

Landscape level habitat restoration

DoC Threatened Species

Since 2024 Weed Action has administered a Department of Conservation Community Fund for the protection of Threatened Species on Maunga Manaia.

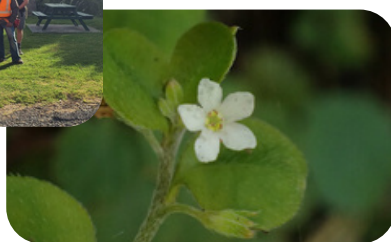
WANHRT engaged local kaimahi team Aki Tai

Here to deliver both threatened species monitoring and pest plant control for this 3 year contract.

Findings from the project were significant and include:

- Many more locations and incidences of threatened plant species than were known of
- Invasive plant burden is of greatest concern on the western and lower flanks of the maunga
- Recording and monitoring using observations about habitat types and GPS track logs is an effective way to manage a landscape of this scale

To read more on this project, please find Aki Tai Here's Report here: <https://arcg.is/1eP55a4>



QEII Stephenson Fund

In 2025, Weed Action successfully obtained support through the QEII Stephenson Fund to enable contractor weed control and habitat restoration across a Parua Bay QEII-protected forest and wetland, a significant native ecosystem that drains into the Pataua Estuary. We engaged Aki Tai Here to undertake delivery of this work.

This landscape presents some of the most valuable and rare podocarp forest in the area. By removing thickets of Chinese privet, elaeagnus, Japanese honeysuckle, and more, the mission to restore this important native habitat continues. The Parua Bay Weed Action volunteer group's work around the Community Centre and sports grounds complements this effort by reducing weed pressure, strengthening ecological resilience, and helping protect biodiversity across the wider Parua Bay landscape.

Hapū and Iwi Engagement

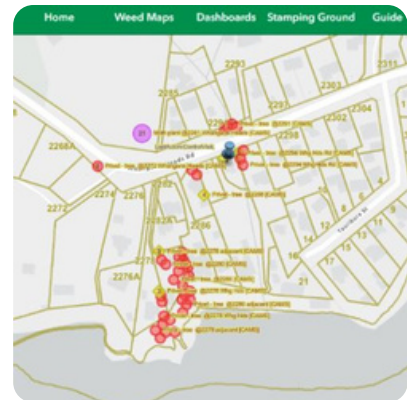
In November 2025 and April 2026, we were privileged to take part in two hui seeking to engage local hapū and iwi members and hear their aspirations or challenges regarding conservation activity on the significant landscapes we work on.

While in part driven by DoC contract requirements, in the view of both organising groups, Weed Action and Bream Head Conservation Trust, this relationship-building is essential to our continued ability to make fully-informed decisions and work respectfully on these lands.

Strategic Weeds Management

Containment Operation: Privet and Taiwan Cherry

The Privet and Taiwan Cherry programme is a continuation of the now-scaled back Parua Bay Privet Buffer. Thanks to funding from Northland Regional Council (NRC) Weed Action worked to contain the spread of these invasive species by removing them from areas east of Parua Bay, where they are not yet prevalent. To date the team have controlled approximately 50 large specimens and 100s of saplings in Taurikura alone, with single outliers also contained in other areas. The project confirmed that Taiwan Cherry and Tree Privet infestations within the Whangārei Heads containment area are more extensive than initially understood. However, infestations remain concentrated in discrete pockets rather than being widespread. NRC funding enabled significant control work that would otherwise not have occurred, particularly in Taurikura where major seed sources of Taiwan Cherry were removed or controlled. The project also improved understanding of the distribution of Tree Privet and reduced a substantial number of infestations. Strong landowner support and growing community involvement have been important outcomes.



Madeira Vine Management

Thanks to community reporting we have established there are 18 sites of madeira vine across Whangārei Heads. With a mix of contractor, landowner, and volunteer effort we are currently actively working on 8 of these. Using year on year tracking we expect several sites to become close to eradicated and allow more sites to be added to the management list.



graphic from: <https://tinyurl.com/ynmmkmef> by Hadden Morrison and WANHRT

Collaborations

This year provided multiple opportunities for our team to mahitahi with organisations including Northland Regional Council, Aki Tai Here, Department of Conservation, Bream Head Te Whara Conservation Trust, QEII, Backyard Kiwi, Predator Free Whangārei, NorthTec, Papakarahi Nursery, Whangārei Heads School, and Parua Bay School.

Support from Whangārei District Council

Weed Action has a strong Memorandum of Understanding with WDC that allows weed volunteer groups to work in their reserves. Each year we provide updates on our work and plans.

This year we received WDC support for our planting day catering and a substantial grant towards our moth plant project and strategic weed removal.

Operational funding and Trust update

A Word from the Governance Committee

"Consolidate" and "stick to our knitting" have been our guiding themes this year. While these phrases suggest restraint, we've been working steadily and, at times, intensively, behind the scenes.

This year we farewelled Mike Ulrich, whose knowledge, leadership, and commitment have made a lasting contribution to our mahi. While he has stepped back from his formal role, Mike remains a valued supporter and remains involved in some of our larger landscape-scale projects.

We also welcomed Kate Davies, who, alongside Kate Hardcastle, has built a strong and capable team. Together they have strengthened volunteer support, community engagement, and outreach to landowners, helping to extend the reach and impact of our work across the Whangārei Heads.

The Trust was pleased to welcome Louise Freckleton, whose support, alongside Chair Robyn Bigelow, has strengthened our fundraising efforts. Bill Mallett, Simon Gurnsey, and Ali Bryant continue to provide sound financial stewardship, while Simon's ongoing work has strengthened our health and safety systems and supported the development of improved data management processes. James Bellamy brings valuable expertise in habitat restoration, community development, and tangata whenua engagement, helping to ensure our conservation work remains grounded in both people and place.

Nga mihi nui to you all,

Robyn Bigelow and Jan Marshall, Founders, Weed Action



Looking ahead, we recognise the importance of bringing new and younger voices onto the Trust to strengthen WANHRT's resilience and ensure its long-term sustainability. We are currently seeking two new Trustees to help guide the next chapter of our journey.

The contribution made by our Trustees extends well beyond governance. The many volunteer hours they collectively contribute reflect a deep commitment to restoring and protecting the unique native habitats of the Whangārei Heads. Their dedication, knowledge, and passion continue to play a vital role in achieving the Trust's vision for native habitat restoration.

Contribution 2025-26 Amount

A K Franks	\$1,000
Interest (Kiwibank)	\$2,899
NRC Strategic	\$3,550
WDC community grant	\$9,382
NRC Privet Taiwan Cherry	
Containment	\$6,326
Foundation North	\$24,475
DoC Ocean Beach	\$1,107
DoC Threatened	
Species	\$56,002
DoC Engagement	\$4,000
NRC HVA	\$78,068
QEII Stephenson Fund	\$2,835

Total **\$189,644**

WANHRT Volunteers
(3814x\$30/hour) \$114,420

Total **\$304,064**

