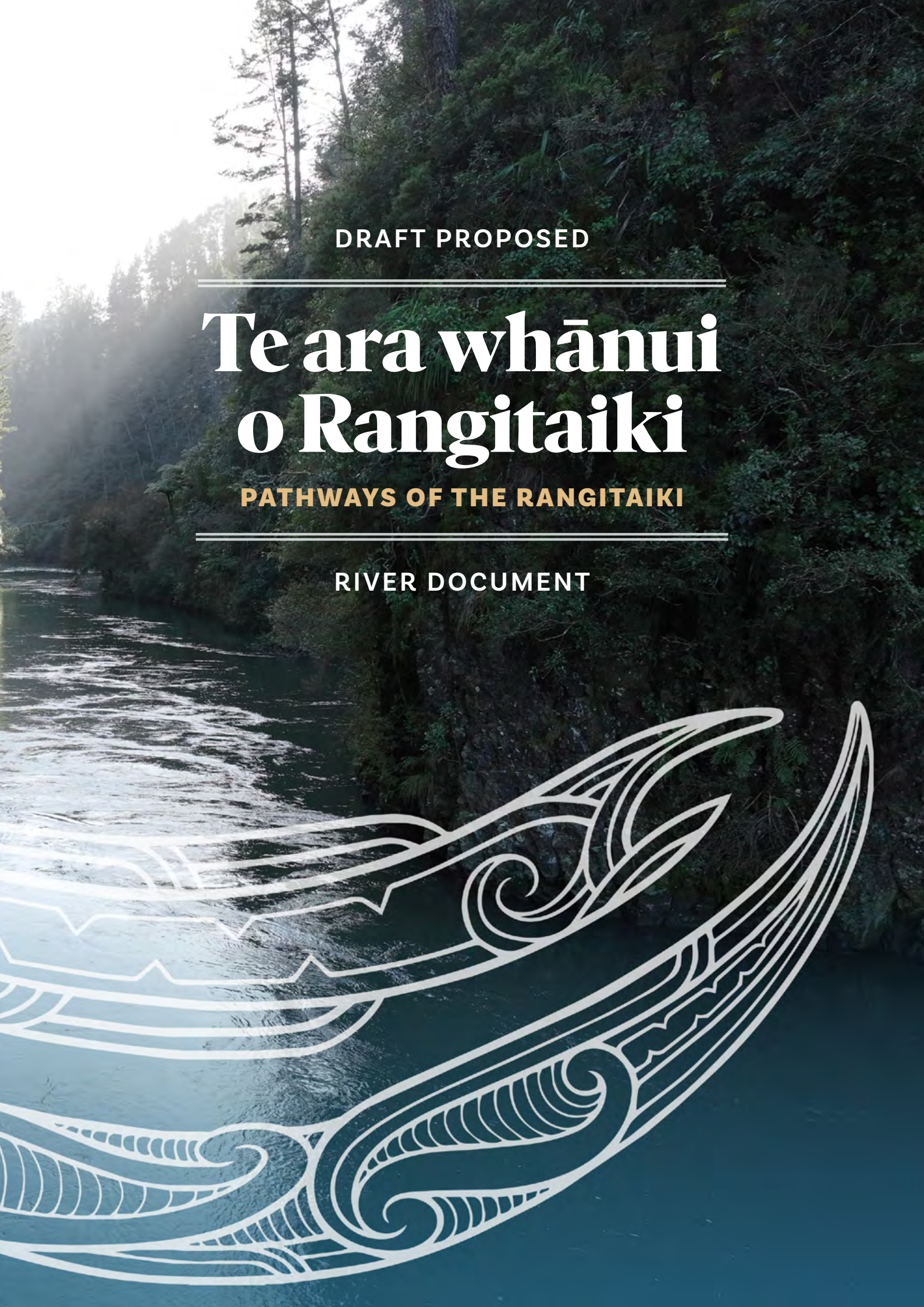


DRAFT PROPOSED

Te ara whānui o Rangitaiki

PATHWAYS OF THE RANGITAIKI

RIVER DOCUMENT



Just as everything in the universe takes a journey, the pathways taken – Te Ara Whānui – are reflected in the Rangitaiki River Catchment.

The water, land, animals, plants and people each forge their own journey along many different pathways, united within the Rangitaiki.

DRAFT PROOF

rangitaiki.org.nz

Prepared by the Rangitaiki River Forum
Published by Bay of Plenty Regional Council
5 Quay Street, Whakatāne
New Zealand

Rangitaiki River Forum

The future of the Rangitaiki

Foreword — Chair, Rangitaiki River Forum

The completion of this second generation **Te Ara Whānui o Rangitaiki** marks a significant milestone in the ongoing journey of the Rangitaiki River Forum and the communities who live alongside and care for the river. Since the Forum's establishment through the Ngāti Manawa and Ngāti Whare Settlement Claims 2012, our purpose has remained steadfast, which is to uphold the mauri of the Rangitaiki (including the Whirinaki, Horomanga and Whēao) through the promotion of integrated and coordinated management of the awa, ensuring that its voice continues to guide our collective decisions.

The Rangitaiki River Forum comprises representatives from the iwi of the Rangitaiki River and local government organisations within the Rangitaiki River Catchment. Iwi represented include Ngāti Manawa, Ngāti Whare, Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Hineuru, Tūwharetoa mai Kawerau ki te Tai and Ngāti Tūwharetoa (Taupō).

The first generation of this document laid the foundation for partnership and understanding. It brought together iwi, local authorities and stakeholders under a shared vision of restoration and guardianship.

Through this review, the Forum has reflected deeply on the progress made and the challenges that remain. The second generation document strengthens our commitment to collaboration, weaving together mātauranga Māori and contemporary science to guide sustainable management of the river and its Catchment. It acknowledges the evolution of our relationships and the growing capacity of the Forum to act as a unified voice for the Rangitaiki.

This updated **Te Ara Whānui o Rangitaiki** is both a celebration of what has been achieved and a reaffirmation of our shared responsibility to protect and enhance the river's wellbeing for generations to come.

The current Forum stands on the shoulders of those who paved the way. Those early champions, kaumātua, environmental advocates and community leaders shaped the kaupapa that continues to inspire us today. Their foresight and dedication gave life to a framework that has now matured into this refined version.

Mai te awa ki te moana, e whakahono ana nga waitapu o Rangitaiki i a tatou hei tahi e hua mai ano te tino mauri o te ora nei.

From the river to the sea, the sacred waters of the Rangitaiki bind us as one, giving birth to the very essence of life itself.

On behalf of the Rangitaiki River Forum, I extend heartfelt gratitude to all contributors, past and present, who have shaped this living document. May it continue to guide our collective journey as the Rangitaiki flows, strong and enduring.

Terewai Kalman
Chairperson Rangitaiki River Forum

DRAFT PROPOSED

Wawata

WHAT IS OUR VISION?

Ko te oranga o te awa ko te oranga o te whenua ka ora ai te tāngata.

When the river and the land are healthy so too are the people.

Mā te whakawhanaungatanga me te mahi ngātahi, ka whakawhanakehia he kaupapa i raro i te kotahitanga e whakaū ana i te tino rangatiratanga, te kaitiakitanga, te tangata-whenuatanga me te oranga tonutanga o ngā puna roimata me ngā tāngata katoa.

Through fostering relationships and collaboration, a shared vision upholds absolute sovereignty, stewardship, connection and the enduring wellbeing of these sacred catchments and people.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Mauri

The mauri of the Rangitaiki River and its tributaries is protected, restored and enhanced. The awa is recognised as a living entity with its own mana and life force. Decisions affecting the catchment must uphold Te Mana o te Wai by prioritising the health, resilience and natural functioning of the river system.

He Awa

We recognise the Rangitaiki River has intrinsic value and wellbeing independent of human interests. As a tupuna awa, it possesses its own mana, mauri and dignity. We seek a healthy and resilient river system, characterised by clean water, restored ecosystems, abundant indigenous species and protected natural processes, ensuring the awa can flourish.

He Taiao

We want thriving rivers, wetlands and connected ecosystems that sustain abundant indigenous biodiversity and customary practices. Native species, including tuna, whitebait and other taonga species, flourish throughout the catchment, reflecting the restored health and mauri of the awa.

He Tangata

We want a balanced, connected and respectful relationship between people and the Rangitaiki River. By recognising that the wellbeing of the people flows from the wellbeing of the wai, communities are empowered to exercise kaitiakitanga, strengthen cultural connections and support a resilient, sustainable and thriving future.



Contents

The future of the Rangitaiki 3

Wawata
What is our vision? 4

Rangitaiki te awa 6

Partnership in practice – Co-governance 7

Te kaupapa o tēnei rautaki
About the River Document 8

Rangitaiki me ōna takiwā
Rangitaiki River Catchment 12

Ngā iwi me ōna kōrero
Traditional associations with the Rangitaiki River 14

He aha ngā take?
What are the issues? 24

He taonga tuku iho
Desired outcomes 25

Te Huarahi
Objectives 26

Ngā Puna Roimata
Action Plan 28

Risk and Assurance Statement 42

Ngā kōrero onamata
Traditional stories 43

He puna kōrero
Overview 44

10 year trends Rangitaiki River 46

Statistics about the locals 54

Economic Activities 56

Glossary 60

Tohu o Rangitaiki River Forum 61

References 62

Statutory Acknowledgements within the Rangitaiki Catchment 63

DRAFT PROPOSED

Rangitaiki te awa

For the many hapū and iwi that belong to the Rangitaiki River, it is regarded as a tupuna, a giver of life that sustains the mauri of all within its embrace.

The Rangitaiki provides an eternal link between the past, present and future generations, each of whom has their own story to share but are united by their collective association with the Rangitaiki through time immemorial.

The following accounts about the origins of the Rangitaiki, were given by two kaumātua of Ngāti Awa and illustrate the richness and diversity of korero-a-iwi (traditional cultural history) pertaining to the awa.

The original name of the Rangitaiki is 'Te Waikoropupu o Kaimanawa' (Te Nani Vercoe as recounted by Pouroto Ngaropo). The name originates from ancient times when the maunga (mountains) of the central North Island were at war with one another. One of the battles fought was for the honour of Ngaruahoe and Pihanga. Tongariro (the reigning champion) and Kaimanawa became embattled and fought ferociously. In the end Kaimanawa was defeated and Tongariro emerged as the victor. Kaimanawa however was noted to have put up a strong defence and the energy and perspiration expended during the battle became known as 'Te Waikoropupu o Kaimanawa' in recognition of this. Today, the Kaimanawa ranges form part of the North Island volcanic plateau from where the headwaters of the Rangitaiki River begin to flow.

Subsequently when the Mataatua waka landed at Ōkorero (near Thornton Lagoon), Toroa (Captain of the Mataatua waka) set out to explore the local surrounds. There he came across the remains of a Marangaranga individual (the earlier inhabitants of the area) lying in the river. Toroa named the awa 'Te Rangitaiki nui a Tia' or 'Te Rangitaiki nui a Toroa' in recognition of this event (Eruera Manuera as recounted by Pouroto Ngaropo). The Rangitaiki continues to carry this name today.

Laurie Porima, Chairperson of Moewhare Marae Committee raised the importance of incorporating and acknowledging the intrinsic nature of Rangitaiki Awa as its own entity and not being subject to the values imposed upon it by humans. We of Ngāti Manawa see the river as a tupuna and as such it has its own mana and mauri which is irrespective and on top of the legal values placed upon it by various legal entities.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Partnership in practice — Co-governance

For generations, the Rangitaiki River and its tributaries, including the Whirinaki, Whēao and Horomanga rivers, have played an important role in the lives of the many Bay of Plenty hapū and iwi that live alongside them.

It is a taonga, a significant cultural treasure to be shared and protected by all. As kaitiaki, hapū and iwi traditionally carried the responsibility of ensuring the health and wellbeing of the Rangitaiki River and its resources, for the benefit of present and future generations.

Crown control of the Rangitaiki River and its tributaries from the late nineteenth century compromised that relationship and undermined the ability of hapū and iwi to fully effect their traditional kaitiaki role. Specifically, the Rangitaiki River and its tributaries have been affected by the construction of the Matahina, Āniwaniwa and Whēao power schemes. The dams have assisted New Zealand's economic growth, but at the cost of a decline in the health of the rivers. The tuna (eel) fisheries and other resources that hapū and iwi rely on for cultural and physical sustenance have been severely affected.

Concern about the poor state of the Rangitaiki River and growing discontent with existing management regimes gave rise to a call by iwi for a greater role in the management of the Rangitaiki River. These concerns formed a platform for discussion between the Crown, Ngāti Manawa and Ngāti Whare as part of their respective Treaty settlement negotiations. Subsequently, the Rangitaiki River Forum (the Forum) was jointly established as a co-governance forum by the Ngāti Whare and the Ngāti Manawa settlement legislation in May 2012.

The Forum represents a partnership between Māori and the Crown. It comprises equal representation from each of the iwi (Ngāti Whare, Ngāti Manawa, Ngāti Awa, Tūwharetoa mai Kawerau ki te Tai, Tūhoe and Ngāti Hineuru) that collectively claim mana whenua in the Rangitaiki Catchment and from local authorities (Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Taupō District Council and Whakatāne District Council). It provides a vehicle for participation of iwi in the governance of the Rangitaiki River Catchment through measures including the recognition of this River Document in resource and conservation management planning.

The purpose of the Forum is to **protect and enhance the environmental, cultural and spiritual health and wellbeing of the Rangitaiki River and its resources for the benefit of present and future generations**.

The Forum connects partner agencies and guides how they will manage the Rangitaiki River Catchment together. Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Whakatāne District Council, Taupō District Council and the Department of Conservation will use this River Document to guide their resource and conservation management activities in the Catchment.

DRAFT PROPOSED



Whirinaki and Rangitaiki confluence

Te kaupapa o tēnei rautaki

ABOUT THE RIVER DOCUMENT

"To mana whenua, awa within the rohe are seen as tupuna awa and living taonga[1]"

The Rangitaiki is the longest river in the Bay of Plenty region. Originating from the centre of Te Ika ā Maui (North Island) flowing out to its mouth at Ōkorero (Thornton). The river catchment is an interconnected system sustained by an extensive network of tributaries, including the **Whirinaki**, **Whēao** and **Horomanga** rivers.

The Rangitaiki River and its tributaries provide a resource for all people of the region. To mana whenua within this catchment, the river is an ancestral taonga possessing its own distinct mana and mauri (life force). Concurrently, the river is a critical economic foundation for the region, supporting infrastructure and industries including hydroelectricity generation, agriculture, horticulture, forestry and tourism.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Rangitaiki River Forum Role

The Rangitaiki River Forum is a permanent operating statutory co-governance body. The Forum's members work collectively to protect and enhance the environmental, spiritual and cultural health and wellbeing of the Rangitaiki River, its catchment and resources for the benefit of present and future generations. From its inception, the Forum prepared **Te Ara Whānui o Rangitaiki – Pathways of the Rangitaiki**.

Te Ara Whānui o Rangitaiki is an iwi-led and partner supported long-term strategic direction setting document. It brings together the aspirations, tikanga, mātauranga and environmental priorities of iwi with interests in the river and provides a practical pathway for councils, agencies, landowners, industry, community groups and decision-makers to work with those aspirations over time.

The Rangitaiki River Forum publicly consulted on the first-generation draft River Document in 2014. The Rangitaiki River Forum listened to and considered submissions and incorporated relevant contributions into the inaugural document which was approved in December 2014.

10-Year Review

In December 2024, the Forum resolved to commence the first 10-Year review of the Rangitaiki River Document. A Working Party of Forum members was appointed on 14 March 2025 to lead the 10-Year Review project. A Technical Project Team comprising Council and Iwi technical and planning staff was established to assist the Working Party and implement its directions. The Working Party led community, stakeholder and iwi consultation which concluded in August 2026.

Legislative Context of the River Document

The Rangitaiki River Document is a statutory requirement under both the Ngāti Whare Claims Settlement Act 2012 and Ngāti Manawa Claims Settlement Act 2012. Together, this legislation describes how the vision, objectives and desired outcomes contained in this document affect resource management and conservation planning documents. It contains actions which provide clear pathways toward achieving the Rangitaiki River Document's vision, objectives and desired outcomes.

In the legislation, the Rangitaiki River means the Rangitaiki River and its catchment, including the:

- Rangitaiki River
- Whirinaki River
- Whēao River
- Horomanga River

The Rangitaiki River Document dictates how the vision, objectives and environmental outcomes must be implemented across all public planning frameworks. Whatever resource management systems replace the Resource Management Act 1991 (including new national planning standards and policy direction, spatial plans or combined regional frameworks), **all persons exercising functions and powers under those acts are legally bound to give effect to this River Document**.

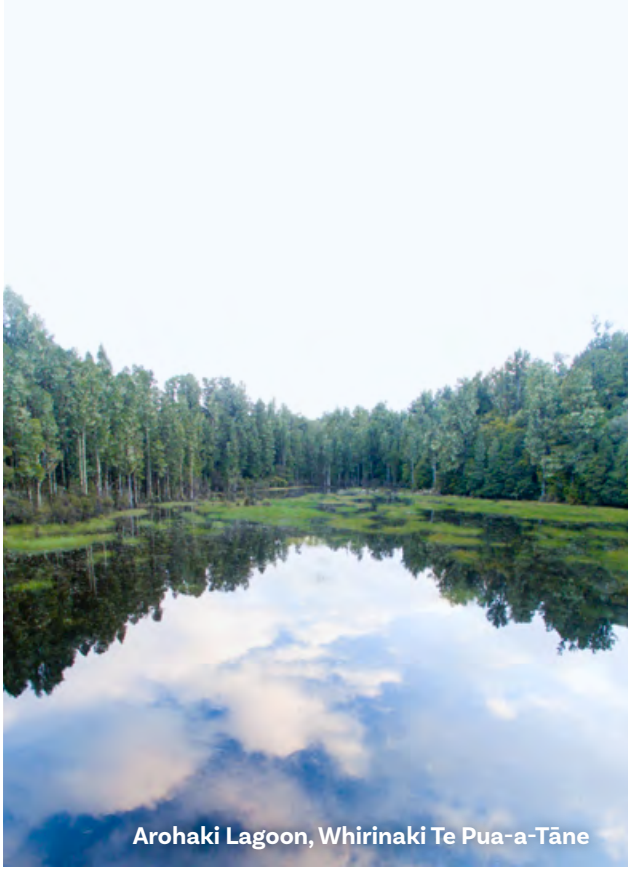
Furthermore, the legislation maintains an ironclad requirement that all persons exercising statutory powers affecting the Rangitaiki River Catchment must have particular regard to the protection, restoration and enhancement of the habitat of tuna (*Anguilla dieffenbachia* and *Anguilla australis*) in the Rangitaiki River.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Future-Proof v Reforms

The Government's local government and resource management reforms signal a shift toward fewer councils, plans and consents, greater national direction and standardisation and faster processes. Te Ara Whānui o Rangitaiki remains relevant through these reforms. It is an anchor document within the Rangitaiki River Catchment, to uphold Treaty settlement commitments. It will ensure the vision, objectives and desired outcomes for the Rangitaiki River are carried forward and recognised in the new resource management system, including the combined plan for the region (i.e. natural environment, land use plans and regional spatial plan).

The Rangitaīki River Document is a shared reference point articulating how Treaty-based obligations, iwi and local government aspirations and catchment priorities are applied in practice. The enduring nature of the Rangitaiki River Document is significant when there is uncertainty as to what equivalency in the new resource management system looks like and how local government reform will affect the catchment.



Arohaki Lagoon, Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne

Ka pēhea te whakamahi i tēnei rautaki? How will this document be used?

The Rangitaiki River Document is a living document with mandatory actions. It is not solely a voluntary guide. The Rangitaiki River Forum acknowledges delivering the vision for the Rangitaiki River requires collective community action. To ensure regulatory alignment, the Rangitaiki River Document should be used as a:

- **Treaty and settlement reference:** to identify relevant iwi relationships, statutory acknowledgements, statements of association and settlement commitments to inform decision-making for the Rangitaiki River Catchment.
- **Planning input:** to inform regional spatial planning, development of the first combined one plan for the region, natural environment, land-use and infrastructure planning freshwater management decisions and any equivalent planning processes introduced through the resource management reforms which **must recognise and provide** for the vision, objectives and desired outcomes.
- **Engagement guide:** to support early, direct and ongoing meaningful engagement with the appropriate iwi and hapū before decisions are substantially formed.
- **Implementation and resourcing:** to prioritise funding, resourcing and investment through an integrated implementation and monitoring framework to ensure the systematic implementation of the River Document's actions. The implementation and monitoring framework is underpinned by an overarching risk management and assurance reporting framework.
- **Continuity tool:** to ensure changes to local government structures, planning legislation and related statutory processes maintain or strengthen iwi rights, recognition, interests, responsibilities and aspirations for the Rangitaiki River. Further to increase and sustain rangatahi engagement in kaitiakitanga mo te taiao me te awa and guarantee leadership succession across all iwi.

Expectations for Councils, Agencies and Partners

Any person or organisation exercising functions under current and future resource management and conservation legislation must give effect to the River Document's vision, objectives and desired outcomes. It is a partnership tool. It is not a substitute for direct engagement with iwi and hapū.

Decision-makers should document how they have considered the River Document. With respect to proposals under consideration, decision makers must ask:

1. How affected and interested iwi and hapū have been identified?
2. How they have responded to statutory acknowledgements and relevant Treaty Claims Settlement legislation.
3. How decisions will protect or restore the health, mana and mauri of the Rangitaiki River.

Where reforms necessitate, the Rangitaiki River Document should be reviewed and updated to remain aligned with the statutory frameworks, while preserving the original intent agreed by iwi through the Treaty Claims Settlement legislation. In this way, Te Ara Whānui o Rangitaiki can continue to guide decisions now, during transition and into the next generation of environmental and local government planning.

Funding to resource implementation of the River Document's actions must be actively supported and prioritised by partner organsiations including through Long-Term Plans (LTPs), Annual Plans and Infrastructure Strategies.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Galatea Plains, Horomanga River, 1967.



2026



DRAFT PROPOSED

Me huri whakamuri, Ka titiro whakamua
In order to plan for the future, we must look into the past.

- **Longfin tuna (eels)** have been living in Aotearoa for at least one million years.
- **The descendants from the Mātaatua waka** have been living along the Rangitaiki River for 800 years.
- **The name 'Bay of Plenty'** was first used 250 years ago during Captain Cook's 1769 – 1770 voyage of New Zealand.
- **The Kaingaroa Plateau**, which experiences 230 frosts a year[12], was covered with native tussock and mānuka 175 years ago.
- **The Rangitaiki Plains** were drained 100 years ago.
- **The dairy factory** in Edgecumbe has been operating for 100 years.
- **The Kaingaroa Plateau** was planted with exotic trees 90 years ago.
- **Some mature female tuna** in the Rangitaiki River were born more than 60 years ago.
- **The Rangitaiki River** has been providing electricity services for more than 50 years.
- **The stopbanks along the Rangitaiki River** have been in place for more than 40 years.

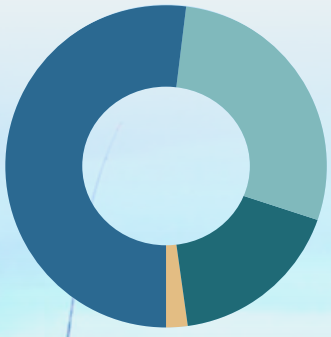
Rangitaiki me ōna takiwā

RANGITAIKI RIVER CATCHMENT

The Rangitaiki River Catchment is

2,987 km²

(298,705 ha) and is made up of...



- 52% exotic forest
- 28% native forest
- 18% pasture
- 2% other cover

155 km

The Rangitaiki River is the longest river in the Bay of Plenty

4,739 km

of waterways in the catchment, including the Whēao, Whirinaki and Horomanga rivers.

The river runs

139 km

from its source.

It is

740 m

above sea level.

Rangitaiki headwaters begin near the Napier/ Taupō highway and run to the sea at Thornton.

Rangitaiki River Catchment

This document applies to the Rangitaiki River and its catchment as shown in the map.



DRAFT PROPOSED

Ngā iwi me ōna kōrero

TRADITIONAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE RANGITAIKI RIVER

Many people have a close relationship with the Rangitaiki Catchment. Some of the traditional values have been recognised in legislation. These specific associations are summarised here.

Ngāti Manawa

Ko Tawhiuau te maunga
Ko Rangitaiki te awa
Ko Rangipo te wehenga o te tuna
Ko Ngāti Manawa te iwi
Ko Tangiharuru te tangata

Ngāti Manawa[3] are the descendants of Apa-Hapai-Taketake and Tangiharuru, with whakapapa connections to each of the Tainui, Te Arawa and Mataatua waka. The name (Ngāti) Manawa is derived from the tupuna Manawatu Manawaoho Manawarere Manawakotokoto.

Tangiharuru (the eponymous ancestor of Ngāti Manawa) journeyed from the Waikato to the Bay of Plenty together with his uncle Wharepakau. There they fought and defeated the Marangaranga, the original people of the Rangitaiki valley. Ngāti Manawa subsequently settled in this area and established many kāinga along the middle and upper reaches of the Rangitaiki River, moving seasonally within their rohe to use the resources of the Kuhawaea and Kaingaroa plains to sustain their people. The Ngāti Manawa customary rohe is a vast geographical area bounded by the Ika Whenua Ranges in the east, the Taupo/Napier highway to the south, the western edge of the Kaingaroa plains and the southern edge of Rerewhakaaitu to the north.

The Ngāti Manawa rohe encompasses the bed and waters of the upper Rangitaiki River, Ngāti Manawa's tupuna awa and its tributaries, including the Whēao and Whirinaki rivers. They are a living taonga that provided Ngāti Manawa with a valuable transport and trading route and a tuna (eel) fishery which for generations has sustained the Ngāti Manawa way of life and remains vital to their traditional economy. Other important tributaries for tuna (eels) and fishing places were the Pokairoa, Kopuriki, Horomanga and Mangamate rivers and streams. Collectively, these waterways are taonga that are critical to Ngāti Manawa's spiritual sustenance and wellbeing.

The relationship of Ngāti Manawa and their respect for the Rangitaiki River and its tributaries, gives rise to their responsibilities to protect the mana and mauri of the river and to exercise their mana whakahaere in accordance with their long established tikanga. This lies at the heart of their spiritual and physical wellbeing, tribal identity and culture. According to Ngāti Manawa tikanga, the Rangitaiki River and its tributaries were part of the environment of successive generations of their ancestors and represent their link with both the past and the future. To Ngāti Manawa, the Rangitaiki River is a tupuna which has mana and in turn represents the mana and mauri of Ngāti Manawa, as encapsulated in the waiata below:

E tere rā te awa Rangitaiki,
Ka tae koe ki te putahitanga ki Whirinaki,
Riporipo atu rā ki te Moana-nui-a-kiwa,
Tū tonu mai Tawhiuau i ngā tihi tapu,
Kei ngā taumata korero a ngā tupuna.
I reira tiro iho ai ki te Mania Kuhawaea,
Te nohanga o ngā uri a Ngāti Manawa.



Rangitaiki Awa by Tipapa marae, Murupara
- he Kohatu Te Mauri O Te Awa O Te Rangitaiki

DRAFT PROPOSED

Ngāti Whare

Ko Tūwatawata te maunga
Ko Whirinaki te awa
Ko Mataatua te waka
Ko Ngāti Whare te iwi
Ko Wharepākau te tangata

Ngāti Whare are descendants of Toi-kai-rākau (Toi-te-huatahi) and derive their name from their most prominent ancestor Wharepākau tao tao kite kapua (Wharepākau). The traditions of Ngāti Whare are deeply connected to the lands, forests, mountains and waterways of Te Whāiti-nui-a-Toi, the Whirinaki Valley and the wider Rangitaiki Catchment. These traditions record the journeys, battles and settlements of Wharepākau, whose actions established the foundations of Ngāti Whare occupation and authority throughout the rohe (district).

According to Ngāti Whare traditions, Wharepākau, migrated to the Te Whāiti-nui-ā-Toi district, with his nephew Tangiharuru and encountered Te Tini o Te Mārangaranga, the original occupants of the land.

Along their journey, significant battles were fought at Tarewakahawai, Kahu-horanoa and Kowhatu-kanihinihi before they advanced inland towards Tawhiuau. There, at the meeting place of the Whirinaki and Rangitaiki, known to Ngāti Whare as Kōwhaikura, the two warriors parted ways, with Wharepākau continuing up the Whirinaki Valley. Through these campaigns, Wharepākau established an enduring presence throughout the interior and laid the foundations for the continued occupation of Ngāti Whare in the rohe.

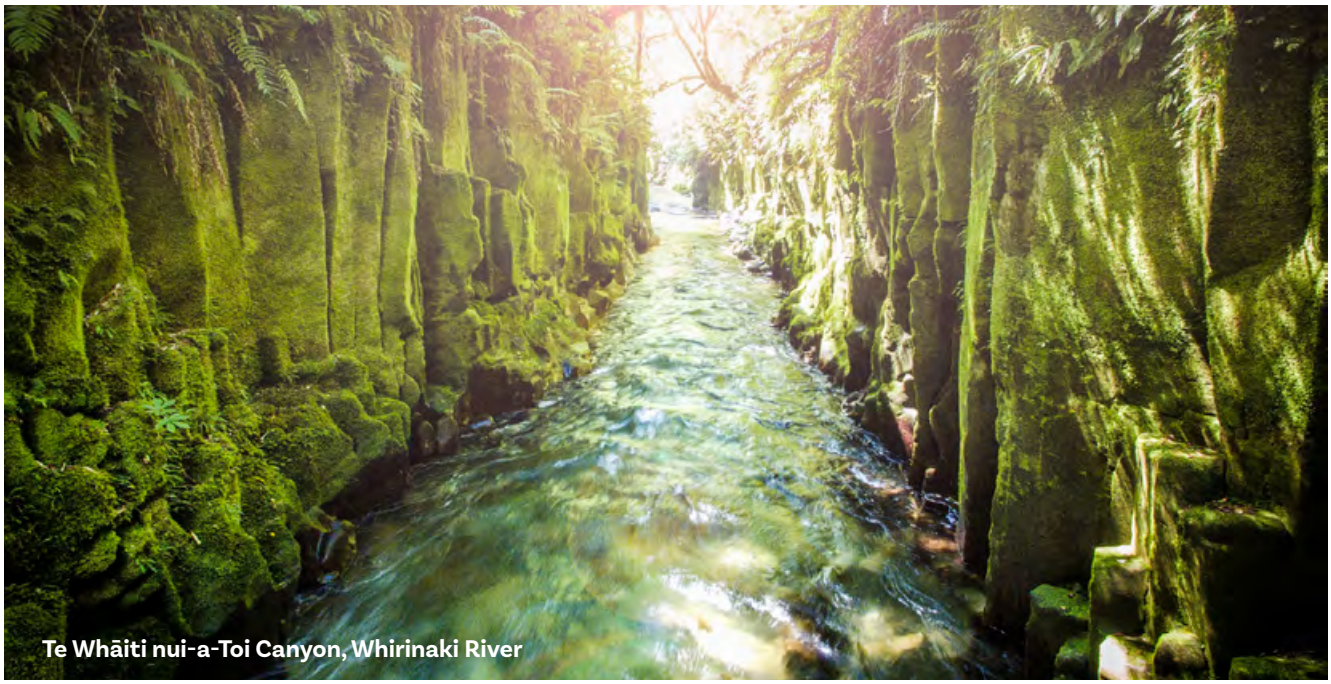
Numerous landmarks throughout the Whirinaki and Rangitaiki Catchments preserve the memory of Wharepākau and his deeds along the Whirinaki, including Te Ana a Wharepākau, Te Awa-kai-kinaki-tangata-a-Wharepākau, Te Puku-o-Wharepākau and Te Takanga-a-Wharepākau. These places and their significance serve as enduring reminders of his journey, battles, leadership and occupation in the area.

Ngāti Whare are deeply connected to their whenua and hold enduring responsibilities as kaitiaki of Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne. From this ancient ngāhere emerges the

DRAFT PROPOSED



Mangamate Waterfall and Whirinaki River



Te Whāiti nui-a-Toi Canyon, Whirinaki River

ancestral river known traditionally as Whirinaki-a-Tāne, a name that acknowledges Te Wao nui a Tāne (The great forest of Tāne) the forest from which it flows and the life-giving relationship between the waters, the whenua and the people. The river and its tributaries are woven throughout the traditions and identity of Ngāti Whare, connecting them to the wider Rangitaiki, Whēao and Horomanga river systems.

The māunga of Ngāti Whare are among the oldest ancestors of the rohe, standing as enduring expressions of whakapapa, identity and belonging. According to tribal traditions, Tūwatawata and Moerangi are the ancestral parents whose tears formed the waters of the Whirinaki and its many tributaries. Their children, Maungataniwha, Māpouriki, Ōtohi, Tikorangi, Titokorangi, Rangiāhua and Tāwhiuau are sacred landmarks of Te Whaiti-nui-a-Toi and stand as guardians that watch over the forests, rivers and valleys, maintaining the enduring bond between the whenua, the wai and the people of Ngāti Whare.

The waters that descend from these ancestral mountains form the Whirinaki and its many tributaries, joining at Kōwhaikura before flowing into the wider Rangitaiki, Whēao and Horomanga river systems. These ancestral waterways have sustained the people since the time of Wharepākau and continue to bind together the whenua, ngāhere and communities of the rohe. From the Ōkahu, Mangamate, Ōtamariki, Ōtaiharuru and Tunakapakapa streams to the larger river corridors that traverse the landscape, each waterway contributes to the mana, mauri and whakapapa of Ngāti Whare. Together, they form a living network of connected waters that nourish the land, sustain indigenous species and reinforce the enduring relationship between the people and their awa.

Central to the traditions of Ngāti Whare is Hineruarangi, daughter of Toi-kai-rākau, who was entrusted with the guardianship of Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne and its waterways. Oral traditions remember her as a woman of beauty and chiefly rank who possessed a deep reverence for the Whirinaki and resided along its banks near a confluence known as Te Tī Whaka-marumaru a Hineruarangi (The Sheltering Palm of Hineruarangi). She is remembered as a tipua (Celestial being) and kaitiaki of Ngāti Whare, embodying the values of guardianship, stewardship and protection that continue to guide Ngāti Whare today. Her legacy serves as a reminder that the wellbeing of the people is inseparable from the wellbeing of the whenua, ngāhere and awa.

Since the time of Wharepākau, Ngāti Whare have maintained an enduring relationship with the whenua and waterways of the rohe. Guided by mātauranga, tikanga and the legacy of ancestors such as Wharepākau and Hineruarangi, Ngāti Whare remain committed to protecting and restoring the mana and mauri of their awa for future generations.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Ngāti Awa

Ko Pūtauaki te maunga
Ko Rangitaiki te awa
Ko Mataatua te waka
Ko Ngāti Awa te iwi
Ko ngā hapū me ngā marae o te awa ngā kaitiaki

The traditions of Ngāti Awa[4] illustrate the cultural, historical, spiritual and enduring association of Ngāti Awa with the Rangitaiki River. For Ngāti Awa, the river is not only a physical waterway but a living taonga that links atua, tūpuna and present generations. These histories reinforce tribal identity, whakapapa, connection and continuity between generations and confirm the importance of the Rangitaiki River to Ngāti Awa as a source of life, sustenance, movement, protection and responsibility.

The Rangitaiki River has long been a treasured taonga and resource for Ngāti Awa. Traditionally, the river and its associated wetlands and swamp lands provided food, materials, transport routes and places of refuge. Te Mārangaranga held primacy over the swamp during the pre-migration period and were principally located in the Rangitaiki valleys of Te Houhi and Te Whāiti. Following the arrival of the waka Mātaatua, Te Mārangaranga inter-married with the new arrivals and in time Ngāti Awa hapū, including Warahoe, occupied lands along the Rangitaiki River. Warahoe was also the old name of the Ōrini Stream, which connected the Rangitaiki and Whakatāne rivers. The resources of the Rangitaiki River and swamp area were shared by Ngāti Awa hapū living in the area.

The Ngāti Awa statutory acknowledgement for the Rangitaiki River records the Crown's acknowledgement of Ngāti Awa's cultural, spiritual, historical and traditional association with the river. It also recognises traditions associated with taniwha and tipua who lived in and along the Rangitaiki, including Hākai Atua of Ngāi Tamaoki and Raukawarua at Kōkōhinau, reflecting the depth of Ngāti Awa relationships with specific places, kāinga and hapū communities along the awa.

The Ngāti Awa hapū of Ngāti Pūkeko, Ngāti Hokopū, and Te Patutātahi occupied the eastern bank of the Rangitaiki River. Te Pahipoto, Ngā Maihi, and Te Patutātahi occupied the upper (southern) portion of the river around Te Teko. Te Tāwera, Ngāi Te Rangihouhiri II, and Ngāti Hikakino occupied the western edge of the river. Te Patutātahi had a large grouping of hapū that included Ngāti Hinanoa, Ngāti Kama, Ngāti Hina, Ngai Tāpiki, and Te Whānau a Taiwhakaea II. This group occupied the important central reaches of the Rangitaiki River. Te Patutātahi are today known as Ngāi Taiwhakaea II. The Rangitaiki River was an essential resource and taonga for those hapū communities from the Ngātamawahine, Pōkairoa, Pāhekeheke, and Waikōwhewhe streams to the original outlet of the river at Matatā, where it once converged with the Tarawera River.

A number of settlements were established by the hapū of Ngāti Awa along the Rangitaiki River. Such settlements highlight the connections of Ngāti Awa with the Rangitaiki River and their occupation of the river's catchment. One such settlement was Te Pūtere, located on the coast between the Tarawera and the

DRAFT PROPOSED



Rangitaiki River at Te Teko, circa 1920[5]

Rangitaiki Rivers. Te Pūtere was a block of land slightly higher than the surrounding swamp area, originally inhabited by Ngāti Patuwai and later Te Patutātahi, Te Pahipoto, and Te Patuwai. Inland hapū used Te Pūtere as a fishing nohoanga, allowing them access to the resources of the lower reaches of the Rangitaiki River and the sea.

Further inland along the Rangitaiki River were the Ngāti Awa settlements of Te Kupenga and Te Teko (which remains one of the principal Ngāti Awa settlements along the river). Kōkōhinau Marae is another important Ngāti Awa settlement located in the Te Teko area along the bank of the Rangitaiki River.

Te Pahipoto are the hapū of Kōkōhinau. Ngā Maihi, Ngāti Tamawera and Ngai Tamaoki also had villages along the river. Ngāti Hāmua also have their kāinga and marae on the banks of the Rangitaiki River. Ōtipa Pā, occupied at different times by Ngā Maihi, Warahoe and Ngāti Hāmua, is another Ngāti Awa kāinga located along the Rangitaiki River.

The Rangitaiki River provided Ngāti Awa hapū, particularly those living in pā and kāinga along the river, with abundant food and material resources. Water from the river supported cultivation along the riverbanks, while harakeke and raupō grew well along the river and across the swamp lands, providing materials for clothing, building and trade. Tuna, fish, kākahi, birds and other mahinga kai were important sources of sustenance. The river also enabled movement between settlements and hapū communities, supported trade and communication, and provided refuge in times of danger.

The tupuna of Ngāti Awa held considerable knowledge of whakapapa, traditional trails, tauranga waka, mahinga kai, wāhi tapu and other taonga associated with the Rangitaiki River. This knowledge reflected the relationship between people and the river, the dependence of communities on its resources, and the tikanga that guided proper and sustainable use. These values remain important today. Many descendants continue to live alongside the Rangitaiki River and contribute to its care through Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa, through their hapū, and through collective entities such as the Rangitaiki Hapū Coalition and the Rangitaiki River Forum. In this context, kaitiakitanga is an inherited obligation grounded in whakapapa, ahi kā, mana whenua, tikanga and the continuing relationship

DRAFT PROPOSED

The Rangitaiki River has always been an integral part of the social, spiritual and physical lifestyle of the Ngāti Awa people.



Rangitaiki River at Ōkorero (Thornton)

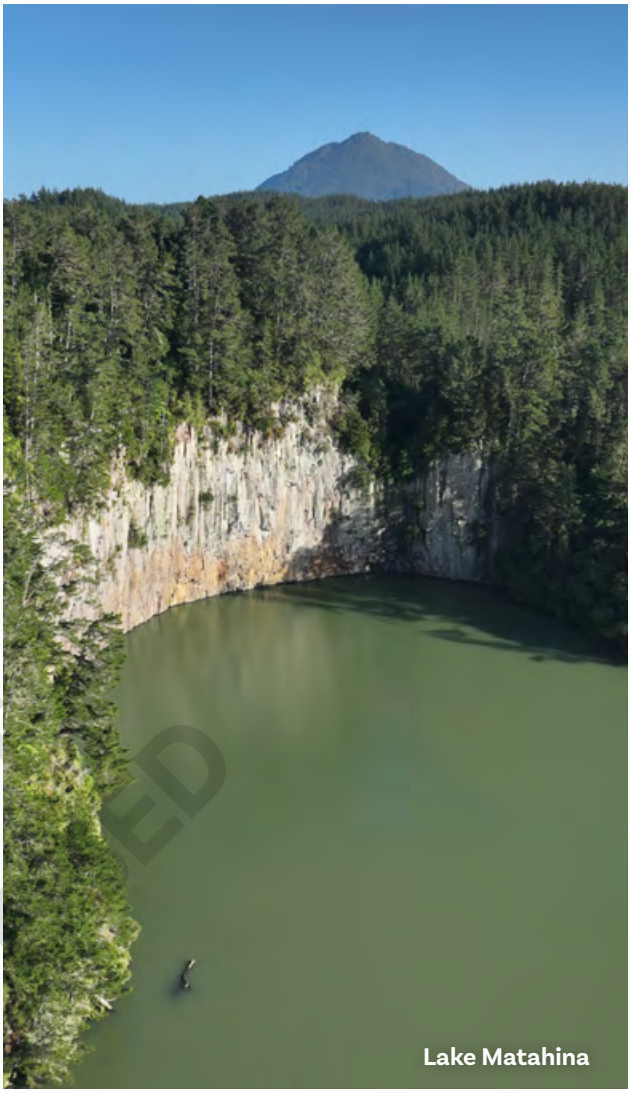
between Ngāti Awa hapū and particular reaches, resources and sites along the awa.

For Ngāti Awa, exercising kaitiakitanga means maintaining relationships with the river, observing changes in its mauri, protecting wāhi tapu and wāhi taonga, sustaining mahinga kai and ensuring decisions about the awa are informed by local hapū knowledge. It also requires active participation in resource management processes, so that activities affecting the river are assessed for their effects on cultural values and their contribution to environmental outcomes. In practice, this means kaitiakitanga should support cleaner water, healthier riparian margins, restored wetlands, improved fish passage, more abundant tuna, whitebait and other native species and habitats that sustain customary harvesting and cultural practice. The Rangitaiki River Cultural Baseline Report reflects this approach by identifying the need for ongoing consultation, monitoring and protection of culturally significant places without unnecessarily exposing those places to risk.

Mauri is central to the spiritual relationship of Ngāti Awa whānui with the Rangitaiki River. The Rangitaiki River Cultural Baseline Report was prepared to record cultural values and significant places along the river, guide monitoring and support kaitiaki responsibilities in response to river management changes, including the operation of the Matahina Power Station. It confirms the role of the Rangitaiki Hapū Coalition, in administering the report in accordance with kaitiaki responsibilities as ahi kā and in exercising mana whenua rights held by Ngāti Awa hapū who maintain enduring relationships along this stretch of the river. Contemporary Ngāti Awa involvement in cultural health monitoring continues this work by bringing mātauranga Māori, tikanga, whakapapa and local hapū knowledge into decisions affecting the awa.

Kaitiakitanga also carries an intergenerational responsibility. The health of the Rangitaiki River is inseparable from the wellbeing of Ngāti Awa whānau, hapū and marae who rely on the awa for identity, sustenance and cultural practice. These responsibilities are directly linked to environmental outcomes: reduced sediment and contaminants entering the river, stronger connections between the river and its wetlands and floodplains, more resilient native vegetation, healthier aquatic ecosystems and the return of customary harvesting practices where resources are abundant and safe.

Kaitiakitanga provides a practical pathway from cultural values to environmental action. It supports cultural health monitoring, riparian planting, wetland restoration, pest plant and animal control, protection of spawning and nursery habitats and advocacy



Lake Matahina

DRAFT PROPOSED

through planning and consent processes. When mātauranga Māori is considered alongside technical science, Ngāti Awa and river managers can better understand changes in mauri, water quality, habitat condition and species abundance and measure whether restoration is improving the awa over time. In this way, kaitiakitanga helps ensure that future generations inherit a Rangitaiki River that is healthy, resilient, abundant and able to sustain Ngāti Awa identity, tikanga and wellbeing.

The Rangitaiki River has always been integral to the social, spiritual, cultural and physical life of Ngāti Awa. Protecting and enhancing its mauri, restoring mahinga kai, safeguarding places of significance, recognising hapū relationships with particular reaches of the awa and enabling Ngāti Awa to exercise kaitiakitanga in practical and visible ways remain central to Ngāti Awa aspirations for Te Ara Whānui o Rangitaiki and for future generations.

Ko te ora o te awa, ko te ora o te iwi.



Lake Matahina

Tūwharetoa mai Kawerau ki te Tai

Ko Pūtauaki te maunga
Ko Te Takanga i o Apa te wai
Ko Te Aotahi te tangata
Mai i te riu o Kawerau ngā hapū
Tūwharetoa mai Kawerau ki te Tai te iwi
Ko Te Arawa te waka

Ahi inanga, ahikāroa – our home fires will burn brightly for generations to come.

A great river, like a full tide.

Tūwharetoa mai Kawerau ki te Tai hold mana whenua and kaitiakitanga across a rohe reaching from Pūtauaki to the coast. The Rangitaiki River is the traditional eastern boundary of our rohe, and our Iwi Environmental Management Plan names it as one of the principal waterways for which we hold kaitiaki responsibility.

One water system. Our pepeha names Te Takanga i o Apa, the Tarawera River, and our connection to the Rangitaiki cannot be separated from it. Before drainage, the Rangitaiki and Tarawera flowed together through the great swamps of the plains and shared an outlet at Matatā. For our tūpuna, the rivers, wetlands, lakes and geothermal waters from Pūtauaki to the sea were one connected taonga. Waka carried our people to whanāunga upstream, down to the sea for mullet, herring and whitebait, and to tangihanga.

Kai and life. The Rangitaiki and its wetlands fed our people with tuna, fish and birds. Raupō was gathered for thatching and harakeke for weaving and rope. Kūmara and rīwai were grown on the higher ground, and when Matariki rose, kūmara were bedded in the warm earth to sprout the season's crops. Hot pools along the river were used for bathing and healing, and sulphur and warm mud were used as rongoā.

Loss and redress. In 1866 the Crown confiscated about 87,000 acres, over 92% of our rohe. In the twentieth century, the draining of the Rangitaiki swamp and increasing environmental degradation further damaged our whenua and wāhi tapu, and we lost access to the Kawerau geothermal resource. The Crown apologised for these harms in our 2005 settlement legislation. That settlement provides a statutory acknowledgement and a deed of recognition over parts of the Rangitaiki and Tarawera Rivers, which require the Crown to consult us and have regard to our views.

Kaitiakitanga. We are a founding iwi member of the Rangitaiki River Forum and sit alongside our neighbours on Te Wai Ū o Tarawera. Our Iwi Environmental Management Plan 2025 is lodged with Toi Moana, and councils must take it into account under the Resource Management Act 1991. Under that Plan, we expect decisions affecting the Rangitaiki to:

- put the health and wellbeing of the water first, essential human needs second, and economic and other uses last (WM P1);
- protect and restore mahinga kai, and allow whānau access to traditional food sources in line with tikanga (WM P4, P5);
- give Tūwharetoa mai Kawerau ki te Tai a formal role in water policy and resource consent decisions (WM P6);
- engage us early on any activity that may affect water quality, flow or access (WM P9).

Activities within our area of interest should give effect to this River Document alongside our Iwi Environmental Management Plan, developed with the Tūwharetoa mai Kawerau ki te Tai Settlement Trust.

He ora te wai, he ora te whenua, he ora te tangata.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Ngāti Hineuru

Ko Tītīokura te maunga
Ko Mōhaka te awa
Ko Mātaatua te waka
Ko Te Hāroto te marae
Ko Rongopai te wharepuni
Ko Piriwiritua te wharekai
Ko Ngāti Hineuru te iwi
Ko Te Rangihīroa te tangata

Hineuru and her first husband Kiripakeke produced a son, Te Rangihuritini. The second husband of Hineuru was Rakauwhakapuna, a descendant of Tangiharuru. Rakauwhakapuna and Hineuru produced a son, Tokowaru Rakauwhakapuna. Hineuru shared her lands between them and the descendants of Te Rangihuritini became known as Ngāti Hineuru.

Hineuru hold mana whenua within their rohe who have held and continue to hold ahi-kā-roa (long occupation) since the original inhabitants first settled the land. The Hineuru rohe, although in a mountainous region, was in a pivotal position, as it was the main access routes for iwi between Ahuriri to Taupō-nui-a-Tia, Toi-Te-Huatahi (Bay of Plenty) and further to Waikaremoana.

The north and north-eastern expanses of the rohe are comprised of the Rangitaiki and Kaingaroa plains, which were traditionally seasonal mahinga kai areas rather than permanent settlements. The core areas of occupation were the high-altitude lands located to the south of the plains. Many 'areas of interest' are shared or border those with Ngāti Whare and Ngāti Manawa, especially the upper reaches of the Rangitaiki river.

"Ka tupu, ka ora, ka rangatira
- We grow, we flourish, we lead"

Our vision for our people of Hineuru is born from the strength of our tūpuna and shaped by the enduring impact of raupatu. As mana whenua of the upper catchment of the awa, Hineuru recognises Te Mana o te Wai through its enduring kaitiaki responsibilities across the headwaters, springs, wetlands and upper catchments connected to the Rangitaiki system. Protecting the integrity of these source waters is fundamental to sustaining the mauri of the entire catchment.

Our role as kaitiaki is an all-encompassing one, providing for the protection of biodiversity, the use and sustainable management of natural and physical resources for present and future generations and the restoration and enhancement of damaged ecosystems are important aspects to Hineuru.

We want to ensure that: we are visible, heard and influential in decision making, our relationship with the awa is recognised, Te Mana o te Wai and the principles of Te Tiriti are recognised and provided for, as it relates to the upper catchment of the Rangitaiki awa.

"Kia rangatira ai te iwi
– Rejuvenate our Hineuru people"

As we progress with the implementation of the second generation of the river document for Hineuru, our mission is to create a strong foundation for future generations, while ensuring the continued growth and well-being of our people. Respectfully, we request any activities and collaborations relating to waterbodies and catchments within our area of interest, along with the strategic direction of this document, give effect to Hineuru iwi environmental management plan and any current strategic plan and must be negotiated with Hineuru iwi trust.

DRAFT PROPOSED



Lake Pouarua

Tūhoe

Nā Toi rāua ko Pōtiki te mana whenua
Nā Tūhoe te mana me te rangatiratanga[6]

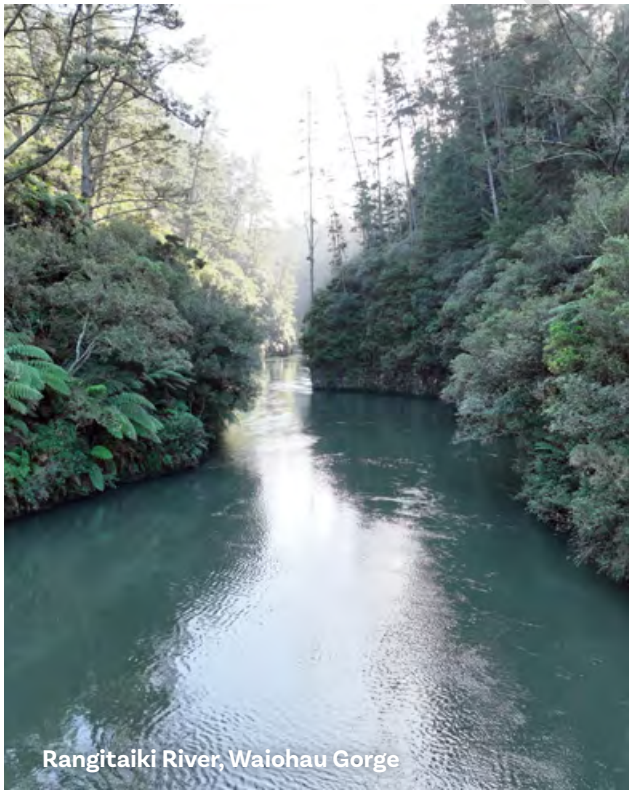
Te Urewera, the heartbeat of Tūhoe – the ancestral lands from whence identity, language, tikanga and responsibility draw life. He ewe whenua; a place of origin and return where responsibilities are upheld by whānau and hapū as an iwi.

The Western Boundary of Te Urewera is charged under the guardianship of Tūhoe whānau and hapū. Ngāti Tāwhaki ki Ngaputahi nestled at the foothills of Tarapounamu, are the sentinels[7] of historical entry points into Ruatahuna, who continue to wade the waters of the Whirinaki. Patuheuheu and Ngāti Haka historical accounts along Kuhawaea (Galatea Plains) to Matahina, trails the Rangitaiki River reminding us of the Tatau pounamu achieved at Ōhui – 'Koura ki Uta, Hatua ki Tai'[8].

The mountainous summit of Tarapounamu and Te Ika Whenua ranges provide a natural divide between Ohinemataroa and Rangitaiki River, where in their closest proximity of each other is measured at 30 *maro*[9] between the two streams.

From Tarapounamu, the Ohaoko Stream winds downward until it meets the Whakatau Stream, where the waters take the name Te Manawa-hiwi. They journey on to join the Okahu Stream at Ngaputahi.

From there, the Okahu passes the ancient pā Te Umu Rākau[10] and carries them to the Whirinaki at Te Whaiti, before taking them onward into the Rangitaiki[11].



Rangitaiki River, Waiohau Gorge

The Horomanga flows out from Te Urewera, crosses Kuhawaea and enters the Rangitaiki further downstream where Hikurangi stands in silence, bearing witness to the past and present of her people living at Te Houhi and will always continue to do so, resonating the permanence of pepeha[12].

Together, the journey of these waterways carrying life from mountains to sea, are steeped in oratory chants and incantations, mapping ancestral landscapes shaped by many iwi and hapū relationships captured in pātere[13].

> [14]Hikohiko te uira Papa te whatitiri ki runga i Te Ranga-Pihere
>
> Ko Kōura ki uta, Ko Hātua ki tai
>
> Ka tau ki Tauaroa, ki Kaimokopuna, ki Oirakau e ko te Horomanga e
>
> Kia māwhiti rā taku haere ki te tihi o Hikurangi, ka huri ki waho ki Te Aho o te Atua, ka titiro whakararo kia Te Āniwaniwa, kia Mangapapa, kia Kiorewēku, ki te taumata riri a Tamarau raua ko Rawaho, ki te rīwai tapu ki te mauri o Hape-ki-tua-rangi.
>
> Me huri noa ake au ki Mangamako, Ki Waihua ki Te Pūau o Waikōwhewhe, ki Tāwhia, ki Mangamutu, ki Waikōkopu ki te Whakamatau, ki te Rua-o-Tangaroa, kia Te Raepango e Manaaki nei i te mauri o āna uri.
>
> Me takahi e au i te ara haere ki Waikuku ki Kariwhakinokino ki Maramara-ā-Tawa
>
> Me hoki ko muri e au ki Te Onepoto, ki te Kiokio, ki Motukura ki Te Pūau o Pōkairoa ki te Ruakōkopu, ki Ōpoukehu, ki Pāhekeheke ki Te Maire, ki Te Totara.
>
> Kia tau iho ki Mangahouhi, Kōpūriki, e Ko Te Umutaoroa
>
> Tu Rangatira au ki Te Raepōhatu, ma Tarahanga, e ko Hinatore.
>
> Mā Hine-i-whāroa ahau e kawe ake ki Tama-ki-Hikurangi e tu mai ra i te taha whakauta o Waikōkopu, ki Wai-ō-te-hau-oranga-tonutanga koia hei whakaoho i taku moe e ko koia e ara e.

The currents that flow within the Rangitaiki run deep in our history. Had the child of Te Rangi-whaka-ekehau and Uenuku-Rauriri been born a girl, the name Te Ia-o-Rangitaiki[15] would have been etched into our history in place of Rangi-te-aorere, whose actions coined the phrase, 'He iti nā Tūhoe, ka kata te po'.

A living network of whakapapa passed down through the generation confirms the essence of mahinga kai, papakāinga and waahi tapu. Caring for these landscapes and waterways is the nature of reciprocity; where ngākau iti is part of maintaining the mauri[16], mana and continuity of Tūhoe to the Rangitaiki.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Kaitiakitanga

Whakarongo-titiro in observing and hearing changes within our environment requires the action of our people; we read the condition of the landscape and waterways together; understanding that climate change is upon us, we adjust, we pivot, unlearn, relearn and reset, replacing fear with preparedness.

Toxicity bestowed upon land and in waterways, calls upon the cleansing rituals of Parawhenuamea where gentle stream becomes thundering torrents gushing over waterfalls, warning her people of Waiohau to make ready, prepare the marae – a storm is brewing.

In our role as responsible kaitiaki we intervene and challenge the causes of such toxicity to bring accountability to the fore, confronting practices and relationships evaluating standards[17] to ensure the protection of cultural and spiritual taonga, of sacred tubers growing in the calm waters of the riverbanks below Arorangi, is being upheld and respected.

Customary harvest from the rivers is inseparable from responsibility. Mahinga kai sustains whānau, knowledge of when to gather, when to leave a place undisturbed and how to read signs in the river and on land is held through practice and shared knowledge.

A healthy harvest is not measured only by what is taken, it is measured by what remains, what regenerates and whether river and land can continue to sustain life. Hunter gatherers contribute to pest control activities reconnecting and retracing footsteps of ancestors.

Anga whakamua

Meandering streams of the Whirinaki and Horomanga feed the Rangitaiki. Care in their upper reaches, directly supports the mauri of the wider river system; to be understood as an interconnected part of one living system.

Care of the Rangitaiki bring tikanga, mātauranga-ā-whānau, mātauranga-ā-hapū[18] and contemporary science into relationship as a succession plan rather than treating them as competing systems.

Kaitiaki practice is both inherited and forward-looking. It draws on experience transferred through the generation and accepts responsibility for consequences not yet seen. To care for the Rangitaiki upholds whakapapa – to honour those who came before, sustain those living today and leave the river with greater vitality for those still to come. Code of ethics is time bound, but code of honour is timeless[19].

The currents that flow within the Rangitaiki run deep in our history.

DRAFT PROPOSED



Te Houhi wetland, Galatea

He aha ngā take?

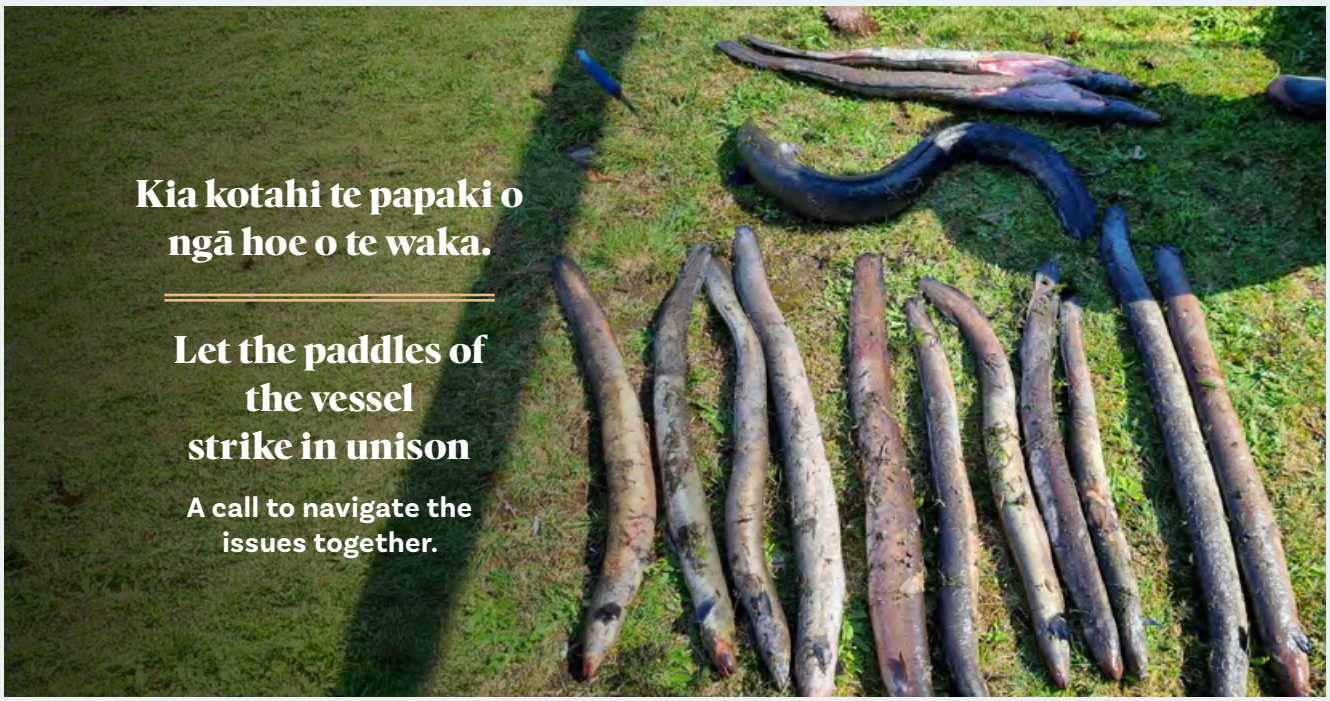
WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

The Forum is concerned that:

- severe tuna hekenga (migration) impacts including tuna mortalities and reduced tuna habitat utilisation caused by land drainage pump stations and hydro-electric power schemes. As a result, the Rangitaiki River is no longer providing an abundance of food
- water quality is not always good enough for swimming or drinking
- the river is losing its special qualities and liveliness, becoming unfit for holding rituals and ceremonies
- young people no longer have strong ties with the river
- the river has not been looked after and its water quality is unsatisfactory to those who hold mana whenua (authority over the land)[20].



DRAFT PROPOSED



He taonga tuku iho

DESIRED OUTCOMES

What do we want for the Rangitaiki River for our mokopuna (future generations)?

Te Mana o te Wai underpins this River Document. The health and wellbeing of the Rangitaiki River and its tributaries is the first priority. The health needs of communities and the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of people are sustained through the protection and restoration of the awa and its mauri.

The Forum recognises Te Mana o te Wai as a foundational principle for freshwater management within the Rangitaiki River Catchment. Te Mana o te Wai recognises the intrinsic value of water and the obligation to protect the health and wellbeing of the Rangitaiki River first. Through this River Document, mātauranga Māori, tikanga and contemporary freshwater management are brought together to restore and enhance the River's mauri.

Te Mana o te Wai recognises the intrinsic value and mana of the Rangitaiki River and its tributaries. It affirms that the health and wellbeing of the wai must be protected and restored first, because the wellbeing of the whenua, ecosystems and people is dependent upon healthy water. Through Te Mana o te Wai, the Rangitaiki River Forum seeks to uphold the mauri of the awa, strengthen the relationship of tangata whenua and communities with the river and ensure future generations inherit a healthy and abundant Catchment.

"Our river is a taonga tuku iho, a treasure handed down from our ancestors that we must and will fight to protect for our tamariki."

Tania Waikato Quoted in Te Teko Times

Mauri

The mauri of the Rangitaiki River and its tributaries is protected, restored and enhanced. The awa is recognised as a living entity with its own mana and life force. Decisions affecting the catchment must uphold Te Mana o te Wai by prioritising the health, resilience and natural functioning of the river system.

He Awa

We recognise the Rangitaiki River has intrinsic value and wellbeing independent of human interests. As a tupuna awa, it possesses its own mana, mauri and dignity. We seek a healthy and resilient river system, characterised by clean water, restored ecosystems, abundant indigenous species and protected natural processes, ensuring the awa can flourish.

He Taiao

We want thriving rivers, wetlands and connected ecosystems that sustain abundant indigenous biodiversity and customary practices. Native species, including tuna, whitebait and other taonga species, flourish throughout the catchment, reflecting the restored health and mauri of the awa.

He Tangata

We want a balanced, connected and respectful relationship between people and the Rangitaiki River. By recognising that the wellbeing of the people flows from the wellbeing of the wai, communities are empowered to exercise kaitiakitanga, strengthen cultural connections and support a resilient, sustainable and thriving future.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Te Huarahi

OBJECTIVES

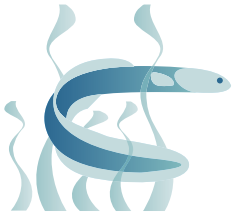
1 **Decision making is guided by kaitiakitanga, tikanga and mātauranga Māori, ensuring the protection and restoration of the mauri of the awa.**

Kaitiakitanga will remain forefront when giving effect to this River Document. When practiced in tandem with tikanga and matauranga Māori, kaitiakitanga establishes a clear expectation protecting the mauri of the awa remains the overriding objectives for all activities proposed in the catchment. The Crown acknowledges the historical and enduring relationship between iwi and the Rangitaiki River. Iwi and others are committed to protecting and enhancing the river while restoring and protecting their relationship with the river according to their tikanga and values.



2 **Tuna habitat and unassisted two-way migration pathways are actively protected and restored.**

Tuna have a unique and important customary fishery status in the Rangitaiki, representing the wealth of the people. Tuna act as a cultural indicator or tohu of the taiao and wai. Tuna feature in local legends as the kaitiaki of the resource and of its people. Providing for their natural life-cycle, including tuna hekenga, is crucial for their protection.



... so the tuna (eels) are fat and plentiful in the Rangitaiki River waterways.

DRAFT PROPOSED

---

3 **The habitats that support indigenous species and linkages between ecosystems are created, restored protected, maintained and enhanced.**

Some of New Zealand's indigenous biota is highly threatened, with some sensitive freshwater and reptile species at risk of disappearing. The native ecosystems in the Rangitaiki Catchment support these species, reduce rainfall run-off and provide for carbon sinks. While some introduced species are valued by the community and are protected, they can be detrimental to some native species.



4 **Wai quality in the Rangitaiki Catchment is maintained and improved where degraded.**

Rangitaiki communities have seen a continuous decline in water quality and fear further decline. The Forum and the community have strong values and expectations for the water to be swimmable, abundant, suitable for ceremonies at places and able to sustain customary food sources. The ability to source safe drinking water in as many places as possible within the catchment is important to the community.



... so it is safe for people to swim in, take food from and find drinking water in as many places as possible.

5 **The Rangitaiki River and its tributaries are protected as the first priority, with prosperity occurring only where sustainable limits are respected.**

A healthy catchment that supports cultural, environmental and spiritual wellbeing is needed for healthy and sustainable communities. Agreed limits on how water is used can ensure the needs of the community are met long-term.



6 **Iwi, hapū and community relationships with the Rangitaiki River are restored and strengthened.**

Rangitaiki communities have seen an increasingly distant relationship between the people and the river, despite the fact that the river is one of the greatest taonga in the community. Much of the rich knowledge and history about the river is gradually being lost to its people. Achieving a healthy Rangitaiki River requires active participation and a strong connection between people and the environment.



7 **Naturalness and landscape values of the Rangitaiki River are respected.**

Flood protection infrastructure development, upgrades and modifications have modified the river's naturelness to enable economic development and prosperity. This came at a cost to natural landscape and heritage values and two-way fish migration pathways.



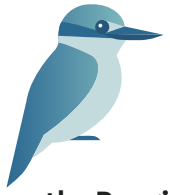
8 **Access upholds and nurtures cultural connection while ensuring respectful use.**

Access to the Rangitaiki River and public areas alongside its waterways promotes outdoor recreation and enables people to maintain cultural and spiritual connections by visiting significant sites.



9 **Environmental, cultural, social and economic health is monitored, evaluated and reported to inform timely action, improve decision-making and support the ongoing protection, restoration and enhancement of the mauri of the Rangitaiki River.**

An important function of the Rangitaiki River Forum is monitoring the extent to which the River Document's objectives are being achieved and its actions implemented. The review of the first-generation River Document identified the importance of building on existing catchment programme dashboard reporting frameworks. The aim is to develop a more bespoke robust consistent and transparent monitoring framework which enables broader iwi, community and stakeholder participation and more integrated cultural monitoring. Monitoring is only valuable if it informs action.



... so the Rangitaiki River and its waterways stay special.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Ngā Puna Roimata

ACTION PLAN

Ngā Puna Roimata Action Plan identifies actions the Forum expect will make the vision and objectives more tangible, promote coordinated management and strengthen the influence of "*Te Ara Whānui o Rangitaiki - Pathways of the Rangitaiki*".

Five-Year Implementation and Milestone Plan (2027–2031)

The Action Plan provides the actions that the Rangitaiki River Forum considers will contribute to achieving the vision and objectives of Te Ara Whānui o Rangitaiki - Pathways of the Rangitaiki. The actions are intended to support coordinated effort across iwi and hapū, councils, Crown agencies, communities, industry, researchers and other partners. The Action Plan is not intended to be a fixed programme of work; implementation will need to respond to changing circumstances, available resources, new information and the outcomes of monitoring and review.

To support coordinated implementation, a Five-Year Implementation and Milestone Plan has been developed for the first five years following adoption of this River Document. The plan provides a staged pathway for progressing the actions and establishing the systems, relationships, information and capability needed to support long-term implementation. It identifies key milestones and deliverables for each year while recognising that timing and sequencing may change as implementation progresses.

The first two years focus on establishing the foundations for implementation, including governance arrangements, partnership commitments, baseline information and integrated monitoring frameworks. Years three and four focus on progressing priority restoration, infrastructure, biodiversity, water quality, access and community initiatives, while using monitoring information to support adaptive management. Year five provides for a comprehensive review of progress and outcomes, confirmation of longer-term priorities and development of the next implementation phase.

The plan should be read alongside the actions and indicative lead organisations identified in Ngā Puna Roimata. Progress against the five-year milestones will be informed by the monitoring, reporting and review framework established under Objective 9, including annual reporting on the state of the Rangitaiki River and periodic review of implementation progress. The five-year approach utilises Te Huringa Whanaketanga (Continuous Improvement Cycle) and provides the foundation for sustained implementation and continuous improvement over subsequent implementation periods.

The Five-Year Implementation and Milestone Plan Table below sets out the strategic focus, priority actions, key milestones and implementation activities for years 2027 to 2031. Action wording is retained only where it adds implementation specificity; related milestone activities have been consolidated to avoid duplication.

DRAFT PROPOSED



Marama-ā-Tawa wetland, Waiohau

Strategic focus and relevant River Document actions	Key milestones / implementation activities	Key deliverables / end-of-year outputs
2027 Foundation Phase		
Establish the foundations for implementation. Relevant actions: 1.1, 1.5; 2.1, 2.4; 5.8; 8.1; 9.1, 9.2.	• Establish Ngā Puna Roimata Kaitiaki Rōpū and Tuna Steering Group. • Establish River Users Stakeholder Group and identify iwi representatives, technical experts and agency leads. • Develop the integrated and iwi-led cultural monitoring frameworks, including cultural health indicators, monitoring sites and data sovereignty protocols. • Review partner agency plans against River Document objectives; develop an implementation responsibilities matrix and confirm partner resourcing/funding pathways. • Complete the catchment-wide tuna migration barrier audit and establish biodiversity/ecological corridor and public access/cultural-site baselines.	• Ngā Puna Roimata Kaitiaki Rōpū Terms of Reference. • Tuna Steering Group established. • Integrated Monitoring Framework and Cultural Monitoring Framework completed. • Catchment Baseline Report. • Tuna Barrier Inventory and Prioritisation Report. • Annual State of the Rangitaiki River Report #1.
2028 Early Delivery Phase		
Begin implementation and build iwi, hapū and community capability. Relevant actions: 1.4, 1.7; 2.1; 3.1–3.4; 6.4–6.6; 9.2.	• Begin implementation of iwi-led decision-making frameworks and embed cultural monitoring in key consent processes. • Develop rangatahi kaitiaki training/succession pathways and secure longer-term funding agreements. • Complete the Te Hekenga Nui o te Tuna review, prioritise the top 10 migration barriers, commence design of priority fish-passage structures and deliver tuna education/awareness. • Prioritise catchment restoration sites and commence ecological corridor, wetland and riparian restoration. • Resource catchment schools and community programmes, including annual Rangitaiki Awa Day events and community clean-up initiatives.	• Cultural monitoring operating across priority sites. • Rangatahi Kaitiaki Programme established. • Priority Tuna Barrier Action Plan. • Wetland and Riparian Restoration Programme launched. • Annual Awa Day Programme established. • School Engagement Programme implemented. • Annual State of the Rangitaiki River Report #2.
2029 Implementation Phase		
Transition from planning to significant delivery. Relevant actions: 2.1, 2.3; 3.1–3.5; 4.1–4.5; 8.2–8.3; 9.3.	• Commence construction of priority tuna migration structures and pilot unassisted migration solutions; operate the centralised tuna information system. • Expand biodiversity restoration, including 500+ hectares under active restoration management, significant pest-control programmes and lake management plans with hydro-electric power operators. • Review flow and wai quality limits and implement priority nutrient-reduction initiatives, including expansion of forestry riparian retirement. • Deliver priority public-access projects, install bilingual interpretation/cultural signage and identify cultural trail opportunities. • Complete the mid-term implementation review and use monitoring information to refine priorities.	• Priority fish-passage projects completed. • Tuna Monitoring Database operational. • Ecological Corridor Restoration Projects underway. • Biodiversity Restoration Progress Report. • Public Access Improvement Projects completed. • Mid-Term Implementation Review completed. • Annual State of the Rangitaiki River Report #3.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Strategic focus and relevant River Document actions	Key milestones / implementation activities	Key deliverables / end-of-year outputs
2030 Expansion Phase		
Scale up successful initiatives and apply adaptive management. Relevant actions: 2.1, 3.1–3.6; 4.3–4.5; 9.3–9.5.	• Review environmental, cultural and social indicators; establish management trigger thresholds and implement corrective measures where trends decline. • Monitor effectiveness of tuna migration structures, assess opportunities to reduce reliance on trap-and-transfer and extend migration solutions to secondary barriers. • Increase wetland restoration and protection of Significant Natural Areas; demonstrate catchment nutrient-reduction trends. • Increase school and community participation, establish annual State of the River reporting as an ongoing practice and complete economic development case studies.	• Additional migration barriers remediated. • Expanded wetland restoration footprint. • Catchment Nutrient Reduction Programme operational. • Adaptive Management Framework implemented. • Community Stewardship Network established. • Priority Ecological Corridors connected. • Annual State of the Rangitaiki River Report #4.
2031 Evaluation Phase		
Evaluate outcomes, secure long-term investment and prepare the next implementation phase for years 2032 - 2036. Relevant actions: 9.1–9.5, with outcomes assessed across Objectives 1–8.	• Complete a comprehensive five-year review against River Document objectives and an independent assessment of outcomes achieved. • Update implementation priorities for years 6–10 and prepare the next implementation roadmap. • Demonstrate progress in unassisted tuna migration and adopt a long-term restoration strategy. • Complete cultural health assessments across river reaches, embed rangatahi succession pathways and support iwi-led monitoring to operate independently. • Demonstrate trends in wai quality, restoration extent, habitat connectivity, community participation and cultural wellbeing indicators. • Confirm longer-term funding and public reporting arrangements.	• Five-Year State of the Rangitaiki River Report. • Independent Outcomes Evaluation. • Cultural Health Assessment Report. • Tuna Recovery and Connectivity Report. • Biodiversity Outcomes Report. • Long-Term Funding Strategy. • 2032–2042 Implementation Roadmap. • Outcome dashboard for public reporting.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Five-Year success measures (2031)

By the end of 2031, the Rangitaiki River Forum should expect functional governance and iwi-led monitoring arrangements; a complete tuna barrier inventory with priority barriers addressed and measurable improvement in tuna passage; catchment-wide wai monitoring and reporting with cultural water indicators embedded; major biodiversity, wetland and ecological corridor restoration underway; established awa, school and rangatahi programmes and improved access; active partner contribution to implementation and annual reporting; and five consecutive State of the Rangitaiki River Reports supported by an evidence-based adaptive management system. The Rangitaiki River Forum will be well informed to prepare the next implementation plan for years 2032–2036.

Ngā Puna Roimata Action Plan (Objectives 1 – 9)

Actions listed here remain subject to each organisation's decision-making processes. This Action Plan indicates the lead organisation for actions, while recognising most actions require joint effort. The Forum encourages councils, rūnanga, agencies, researchers, businesses, the community and individuals to contribute to these actions or initiatives.

The timeframes are dependent on funding, practicality and other factors. Lead organisations are expected to assess practicality and affordability as they consider and plan for implementation. This Action Plan is not absolute, as the actions may evolve and need to be responsive to change.

Objective 1	Decision making is guided by kaitiakitanga, tikanga and mātauranga Māori, ensuring the protection and restoration of the mauri of the awa	
Actions		**Indicative lead organisation**
1.1	Establish a Ngā Puna Roimata Kaitiaki Rōpū to develop the integrated monitoring and reporting framework required under Objective 9.	River Forum partners
1.2	Plans, consents and strategies must give effect to the River Document's vision, objectives and desired outcomes.	River Forum partners
1.3	Embed iwi management plans, cultural values and mātauranga Māori as primary inputs in statutory planning documents.	Regional and District Councils
1.4	Embed iwi and hapū co-design and co-decision-making roles across planning, consenting and resource management decision making processes by: a) Establishing iwi-led decision-making frameworks. b) Requiring early and ongoing engagement with mana whenua. c) Resourcing iwi/hapū participation (technical, cultural, monitoring capacity). d) Ensuring consent holders resource iwi/hapū cultural monitors.	River Forum partners
1.5	Protect and uphold iwi and hapū data sovereignty over mātauranga Māori, wāhi tapu and cultural information by: a) Identifying and protecting wāhi tapu and sites of cultural significance in accordance with iwi and hapū tikanga. b) Developing iwi-controlled cultural information systems. c) Establishing tikanga-based data sharing agreements. d) Ensuring sites of cultural significance and wāhi tapu protection is embedded in planning tools without full public disclosure.	Iwi and hapū
1.6	Revitalise and embed tikanga practices in management, monitoring and restoration activities by: a) Supporting rāhui, karakia, maramataka-based management. b) Embedding tikanga into compliance and monitoring frameworks. c) Enabling intergenerational transmission of knowledge (kaumātua → rangatahi).	Iwi and hapū
1.7	Secure long-term resourcing to build iwi and hapū capacity to exercise kaitiakitanga, including rangatahi development pathways.	River Forum partners

DRAFT PROPOSED

Explanation:

Kaitiakitanga, tikanga and mātauranga Māori provide the foundation for how decisions affecting the Rangitaiki River should be made. Objective 1 seeks to strengthen iwi and hapū leadership and participation in planning, consenting, monitoring and restoration, so that decisions are informed by both mātauranga Māori and contemporary evidence and uphold the mauri of the awa.

Action 1.1 establishes the Ngā Puna Roimata Kaitiaki Rōpū to lead development of the integrated monitoring and reporting framework under Objective 9. This provides a governance connection between decision-making, monitoring and the continuous improvement approach.

Actions 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 provide for the River Document, iwi management plans, cultural values and mātauranga Māori to be embedded in planning and decision-making, with early and meaningful iwi and hapū participation. Resourcing participation and cultural monitoring is important to ensure these roles are effective rather than solely procedural.

Action 1.5 recognises that mātauranga Māori, wāhi tapu and other cultural information may be sensitive and should be managed according to iwi and hapū tikanga and data sovereignty requirements. Action 1.6 supports the practical application of tikanga through management, monitoring and restoration, including the intergenerational transfer of knowledge. Action 1.7 provides for the long-term capability and succession needed to sustain kaitiakitanga across generations.

Together, these actions establish a pathway from iwi-led values and knowledge, through decision-making and implementation, to monitoring, learning and continued protection of the mauri of the awa.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Objective 2 Tuna habitat and unassisted two-way migration pathways are actively protected and restored.

Actions	Indicative lead organisation
2.1. Re-establish and resource a Tuna Steering Group (TSG) which will: a) Complete a 10-Year review of Te Hekenga Nui o te Tuna. b) Lead engagement with Ministry for Primary Industries, hydro-electric power companies, iwi/hapū and key stakeholders on restoring unassisted two-way migration pathways for tuna. c) Analyse research and make recommendations on tuna restoration programmes. d) Work with hydro-electric power companies to: i. Design, fund and construct structures that enable unassisted two-way tuna migration through existing hydro-electric power infrastructure, and ii. Once (2.1.i) is completed, monitor the effectiveness of unassisted two-way tuna migration structures to determine whether the manual trap and transfer programme can end. e) Work with Rivers and Drainage staff to design, fund and construct unassisted two-way tuna migration structures through existing Rivers and Drainage assets currently impeding unassisted two-way tuna migration. f) Develop and implement a community and stakeholder engagement and education programme on the importance of protecting tuna habitat and restoring unassisted two-way migration pathways.	Tuna Steering Group
2.2 Use rāhui as a mechanism to protect tuna.	Iwi and hapū
2.3 Establish and maintain a centralised tuna information management system.	Tuna Steering Group
2.4 Complete a comprehensive catchment wide audit of two-way tuna migration path barriers.	Tuna Steering Group

Explanation:

Tuna are a taonga species and an important indicator of the health of the Rangitaiki River and its connected waterways. Their life cycle depends on access between freshwater and the sea, while the quality, extent and connectivity of habitat influence their ability to feed, grow, reproduce and migrate. Objective 2, therefore, focuses on addressing both physical barriers and the governance, information and community support needed to restore unassisted two-way tuna migration.

Action 2.1 re-establishes the Tuna Steering Group as the coordinating mechanism for implementation, engagement, research, infrastructure solutions and monitoring. Its role is particularly important because restoring tuna migration requires coordinated work with hydro-electric power companies, Rivers and Drainage, MPI, iwi and hapū and other stakeholders.

Action 2.2 recognises rāhui as an iwi and hapū mechanism for protecting tuna and supporting tikanga-based management. Action 2.3 provides for a centralised information system so that knowledge and monitoring information can support coordinated implementation and the integrated monitoring framework under Objective 9.

Action 2.4 provides the catchment-wide evidence base needed to identify, assess and prioritise barriers to two-way migration. Together, these actions support a coordinated approach in which barriers are identified, priorities are agreed, solutions are implemented and outcomes are monitored over time.

Objective 3 The habitats that support indigenous species and links between ecosystems are created, restored, protected, maintained and enhanced.

Actions	Indicative lead organisation
3.1 Implement projects to protect, maintain and restore indigenous biodiversity in wetlands, lakes, significant natural areas and Priority Biodiversity Sites.	Regional Council
3.2 Encourage restoration of indigenous biodiversity and ecological corridors along waterways.	Regional Council
3.3 Work with industries, landowners, volunteer care groups and agencies to support projects involving the protection, maintenance and restoration of indigenous biodiversity.	Regional Council
3.4 Develop and implement a coordinated programme to identify, fund and prioritise, the protection, maintenance and restoration of existing ecosystems, significant natural areas and ecological corridors.	Regional Council
3.5 Work with Hydro-Electric Power Companies to develop and implement lake management plans which shall: a) Specify sluicing regime dates and times. b) Identify sediment controls to reduce impacts on ecosystems particularly tuna habitat. c) Systematically remove pest weed species and other exotic pest flora and fauna in lakes connected to dam infrastructure.	Regional Council
3.6 Work with partner agencies to manage biosecurity threats and actively implement the Regional Pest Management Plan.	Regional Council
3.7 Enable and promote employment opportunities for tangata whenua through ecological restoration, protection and maintenance projects involving pest and silviculture management, fencing services and environmental monitoring.	Regional and District Councils
3.8 Encourage ecological restoration programmes using eco-sourced indigenous species from catchment based native plant nurseries.	Regional Council

DRAFT PROPOSED

Explanation:

It is the totality of indigenous ecosystems existing within the Rangitaiki River Catchment that gives it recognisable character and unique identity. This totality comprises a mix of significant natural areas, wetlands, Priority Biodiversity Sites, ecological corridors and remnants of indigenous biodiversity habitats. In order to achieve Objective 3, it is important to restore, maintain, protect and enhance as many of these remnants as possible.

There are a number of agencies with responsibilities for indigenous ecosystems management and protection. The suite of actions under Objective 3 promotes a coordinated and integrated approach to avoid duplication of effort and maximise efficiency.

High-quality wetlands along the Rangitaiki River, such as Marama-ā-Tawa (at Waiohau), Hinengāwari (at Murupara) and Te Houhi (at Kopuriki) exhibit a high degree of ecological integrity and serve as exemplars. The goal of wetland restorations should be the creation healthy, resilient wetlands that provide multiple benefits, such as supporting diverse native plants and animals, maintaining natural water flows, filtering pollutants, storing floodwaters and providing important cultural, ecological and recreational values.

Actions 3.1 and 3.4 recognise a network of existing significant natural areas, Priority Biodiversity Sites and ecological corridors exist throughout the catchment. These areas require a concerted effort to protect, maintain and restore. These actions will ensure the Rangitaiki River Forum takes a proactive approach to implement a programme of projects to ensure these areas are identified, their maintenance and protection prioritised and funded.

Action 3.2 provides support for ecological corridors and indigenous biodiversity restoration along waterways. Action 3.3 recognises the need to work with and support the efforts of landowners, volunteer groups and industry, with projects involving indigenous biodiversity protection, maintenance and restoration.

Action 3.5 recognises the role Hydro-Electric Power Companies must play in removing exotic pest weed species and reducing adverse impacts on tuna habitat in hydro-electric lakes. The Rangitaiki River Forum will work with these companies to ensure lake management plans are developed and implemented to address these concerns.

There are multiple introduced pests that could have a significant negative impact on the Rangitaiki River and tributaries, should they become established. For example: gold clams, koi carp, brown bullhead catfish, various aquatic weeds and didymo. Action 3.6 focuses on managing the impact of these and other pests. It recognises the risks pests and biosecurity threats pose to indigenous ecosystems and the role of the Regional Pest Management Plan in managing them. The Rangitaiki River Forum's partner agencies must coordinate their efforts to actively implement the Regional Pest Management Plan.

Actions 3.7 and 3.8 recognises tangata whenua seek an active role implementing projects to achieve Objective 3. The Rangitaiki River Forum will actively enable and promote employment opportunities for tangata whenua where projects involve pest and silviculture management, fencing and environmental monitoring. This extends to eco-sourcing plants for indigenous biodiversity creation, restoration, protection, maintenance and enhancement from catchment based native plant nurseries.

Many special and culturally significant sites exist within indigenous biodiversity areas targeted for protection, maintenance, restoration and enhancement. These may include traditional cultural harvesting sites or taonga raranga, places for traditional ceremonies or wāhi tapu. The implementation of the suite of Objective 3 actions has the dual benefit of recognising and protecting the culture and traditions of these culturally significant sites.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Objective 4 Wai quality in the Rangitaiki Catchment is maintained and improved where degraded	
Actions	**Indicative lead organisation**
4.1 Develop sustainable environmental flow and wai quality limits to ensure: a) The mauri of water is maintained and protected. b) Wai is allocated and used efficiently. c) Wai quality can maintain ecosystem health and provide for safe drinking sources, human contact and threatened indigenous species.	Regional Council
4.2 Wastewater and stormwater can introduce contaminants to the awa. The action provides an opportunity to improve treatment and disposal approaches, including land-based options, in partnership with tangata whenua and communities.	District Councils
4.3 This action provides a forward-looking approach by identifying and assessing emerging pressures and opportunities so that priorities and targets can be adjusted as conditions change. It also complements the monitoring and continuous improvement approach in Objective 9.	Regional Council
4.4 Regulate to achieve low nutrient loss land uses and land management practices including by: a) Controlling the runoff of nitrogen and phosphorus from land use activities. b) Managing sediment and microbial contaminants entering waterways from land use activities. c) Monitoring and assessing the extent of nutrient, sediment and microbial losses. d) Retiring, protecting and restoring riparian areas and wetlands where these provide an effective means of reducing contaminant and sediments losses to waterways.	Regional Council
4.5 Provide land advisory services and incentives to support good land use, nutrient and production forestry management practices including stocking rates, pasture management, stock exclusion, soil conservation and management of critical source areas.	Regional Council

Explanation:

Wai quality is fundamental to the health and mauri of the Rangitaiki River and its tributaries and supports the wellbeing of people, communities and indigenous species. It is influenced by land use, wastewater and stormwater discharges, water allocation, sedimentation and changing environmental conditions. Monitoring indicates that land use has a significant influence on wai quality in parts of the catchment, with some pasture-dominated streams experiencing higher nutrient and bacterial levels than streams draining native forest. Objective 4, therefore, provides a coordinated basis for maintaining and improving wai quality across the catchment.

Action 4.2 – Wastewater and stormwater can introduce contaminants to the awa. The action provides an opportunity to improve treatment and disposal approaches, including land-based options, in partnership with tangata whenua and communities.

Action 4.3 – This action provides a forward-looking approach by identifying and assessing emerging pressures and opportunities so that priorities and targets can be adjusted as conditions change. It also complements the monitoring and continuous improvement approach in Objective 9.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Objective 5 The Rangitaiki River and its tributaries are protected as the first priority, with prosperity occurring only where sustainable limits are respected	
Actions	**Indicative lead organisation**
5.1 Work with rural industries, iwi, landowners, community and stakeholders to articulate their expectations for prosperity and values for freshwater.	Regional Council
5.2 Ensure Treaty settlement and customary rights are recognised and upheld across all national and regional water-governance systems.	River Forum partners
5.3 Report actual consented water take usage and ensure gaps in water use data reporting are promptly remedied.	Regional Council
5.4 Water is allocated sustainably with no over-allocation occurring anywhere in the catchment.	Regional Council
5.5 Support the development and embedding of cultural water take limits[1] into water allocation decision making processes.	Regional Council
5.6 Support iwi cultural monitors to monitor and audit water take consents.	Regional Council
5.7 Landowners demonstrate implementation of best management practice with efficient water use and discharge treatment and prevention, including through Farm Plans as directed by their industries and other authorities.	Industry sectors
5.8 Establish a 'River Users Stakeholder Group' to engage in Rangitaiki Catchment freshwater debates and issue resolutions.	River Forum partners
5.9 Hydroelectric power companies, large industrial and commercial water take and discharge consent holders report annually to the Rangitaiki River Forum on actions taken to achieve a healthy Rangitaiki River.	River Forum partners
5.10 Showcase proven opportunities that enable economic development in the Rangitaiki Catchment within sustainable limits (for example, utilisation of new technologies to improve efficient water use).	River Forum partners

DRAFT PROPOSED

Explanation:

Objective 5 recognises that the long-term wellbeing and prosperity of communities depends on a healthy Rangitaiki River and that economic activity must operate within sustainable limits. The objective provides a framework for balancing freshwater use with the needs of the awa, ecosystems, tangata whenua and communities, rather than treating economic development and environmental protection as separate objectives.

Action 5.1 supports a shared understanding of community, iwi, hapū, rural industry and stakeholder expectations for freshwater and prosperity. Action 5.2 ensures Treaty settlement obligations and customary rights remain recognised within current and future water-governance arrangements. Actions 5.3 and 5.4 support transparent information and sustainable allocation, so that actual water use can be understood and over-allocation avoided.

Actions 5.5 and 5.6 strengthen the recognition of cultural water needs and the role of iwi cultural monitoring in water allocation and consent oversight. Action 5.7 complements these measures by supporting land-use practices that use water efficiently and reduce contaminant losses to the awa. This includes appropriate stocking rates, pasture management, stock exclusion and soil conservation, consistent with the wider water-quality outcomes sought under Objective 4.

Action 5.8 provides a forum for freshwater users to participate in catchment-wide debates and resolution of issues, while Action 5.9 strengthens accountability by requiring significant consent holders to report on actions taken to contribute to a healthy Rangitaiki River. Action 5.10 recognises that sustainable prosperity remains an important outcome and seeks to showcase practical opportunities for economic development that operate within environmental and cultural limits.

Together, the actions support a 'limits first' approach: protect the health and mauri of the awa, recognise cultural and customary needs, use freshwater efficiently and transparently and enable prosperity where sustainable limits are respected.

1 Cultural water take limits are restrictions on the volume or rate of water abstracted specifically factoring in the cultural, spiritual and customary needs.

Objective 6 Iwi, hapū and community relationships with the Rangitaiki River are restored and strengthened.

Actions		Indicative lead organisation
6.1	Support initiatives that strengthen kaitiakitanga (guardianship and care of the river) and deepen the relationship between iwi, hapū, communities and the Rangitaiki River.	Iwi and hapū
6.2	Address where and how rubbish is entering waterways and implement better waste and pollution management systems with industries and communities to prevent further contamination.	District Councils
6.3	Remove refuse and discarded materials in and along river margins and in consultation with local communities, investigate and implement alternative options for disposal.	District Councils
6.4	Resource rangatahi and educational providers to deliver taiao and cultural programmes connected to the Rangitaiki River.	Iwi and hapū
6.5	Support schools in the Rangitaiki Catchment through funding environmental projects that connect them with ecological restoration, cultural identity and environmental sustainability initiatives.	River Forum partners
6.6	Support community-based projects that enhance the Rangitaiki Catchment, raise environmental awareness and mobilise local communities through funding, education and advice.	River Forum partners

Explanation:

A healthy Rangitaiki River depends not only on environmental restoration but also on strong relationships between the awa and the people who live alongside and depend on it. Objective 6 seeks to rebuild those relationships by supporting kaitiakitanga, participation, learning and practical community action. Strengthening these connections can increase local knowledge, stewardship and shared responsibility for the health and mauri of the awa.

Action 6.1 supports iwi, hapū and community-led initiatives that strengthen kaitiakitanga and create opportunities for people to reconnect with the river through cultural, community and awa-based activities. Actions 6.2 and 6.3 address rubbish and discarded materials in and around waterways. Reducing visible pollution and improving waste-management systems can both improve environmental outcomes and reinforce community ownership and care for the awa.

Actions 6.4 and 6.5 recognise the importance of rangatahi, schools and education providers in building knowledge, cultural identity and enduring relationships with the Rangitaiki River. Action 6.6 supports wider community participation through funding, advice and practical projects that improve the catchment.

Together, these actions create opportunities for people to know, use, care for and advocate for the awa, helping restore the intergenerational relationships that underpin kaitiakitanga and the long-term wellbeing of the Rangitaiki River.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Objective 7 Naturalness and landscape values of the Rangitaiki River are respected.

Actions		Indicative lead organisation
7.1	Nature-based and soft-engineering approaches can help maintain or restore natural river processes and aquatic habitat while continuing to provide necessary flood and drainage protection. Minimising adverse effects on habitats and biodiversity, including herbicide use, can further support the health of the river environment.	Regional Council
7.2	In consultation with iwi explore alternative nature based solutions for riverbank management and protection on a case-by-case basis.	Regional Council

Actions	Indicative lead organisation
7.3 In-stream structures can restrict fish movement and access to habitat needed for feeding, growth and spawning. Eco-passages provide a practical means of restoring connectivity where such barriers occur.	Regional Council
7.4 Survey and map the status of in-stream habitat values and enhance biodiversity where degraded.	Regional Council

Explanation:

The Rangitaiki River is a dynamic system that has been modified over time to support communities, infrastructure, agriculture and other land uses. Drainage, flood protection works, stopbanks, riprap and other structures can provide important protection for people, property and infrastructure, but may also affect natural river processes, aquatic habitats, biodiversity and the landscape character of the awa. Objective 7 seeks to ensure that necessary river management works are undertaken in ways that recognise and, where possible, protect and restore these natural, ecological, landscape and cultural values.

Action 7.1 – Nature-based and soft-engineering approaches can help maintain or restore natural river processes and aquatic habitat while continuing to provide necessary flood and drainage protection. Minimising adverse effects on habitats and biodiversity, including herbicide use, can further support the health of the river environment.

Action 7.3 – In-stream structures can restrict fish movement and access to habitat needed for feeding, growth and spawning. Eco-passages provide a practical means of restoring connectivity where such barriers occur.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Objective 8 Access upholds and nurtures cultural connection while ensuring respectful use

Actions:	Indicative lead organisation
8.1 Survey, map and develop an inventory of: a) Existing and future public access points, esplanade strips/reserves and marginal strips. b) Opportunities for ecological corridor restoration. c) Opportunities to reconnect traditional waterways and restore healthy wai flow pathways from source to coast.	Regional and District Councils
8.2 Utilise the inventory from Action 8.1 to prioritise and implement projects to restore and reconnect: a) Public access opportunities. b) Ecological corridors. c) Traditional waterways with healthy wai flows from source to coast.	Regional and District Councils
8.3 Co-design amenities to promote and facilitate responsible and informed access, not exclusive to: a) Rubbish disposal facilities. b) Interpretive panels. c) Pou whenua/cultural land markers. d) Bilingual signage. e) QR codes with educational information relating to sites of cultural, historical and environmental significance.	District Councils
8.4 Maintain safe and identifiable public access points along the margins of the rivers in the Rangitaiki Catchment, where appropriate.	District Councils
8.5 Restore public access by removing barriers or adapting structures or legal instruments that impede access to areas or sites of significant cultural, historical and recreational value.	District Councils

Actions:	Indicative lead organisation
8.6 Taupō and Whakatāne District Councils must consult the Rangitaiki River Forum when considering whether to: a) Acquire esplanade reserves and strips. b) Develop or establish other public access strips. c) Develop vehicle, walking, cycle and waka accessways. d) Prohibit or restrict public access rights. e) Prohibit or restrict access to any areas of significance to iwi, not exclusive to waikaukau, waahi tapu and mahinga kai sites. f) Identify existing and new public access points and linkages.	District Councils

Explanation:

Access to the Rangitaiki River provides opportunities for cultural practice, customary harvesting, recreation, learning and connection between people and the awa. Objective 8, therefore, recognises access as an important part of restoring relationships with the river, while also requiring access to be safe, respectful and compatible with the protection of cultural, ecological and historical values.

Action 8.1 provides the information base for coordinated access planning by identifying existing and potential public access, opportunities for ecological corridor restoration and opportunities to reconnect traditional waterways and healthy wai flows. Action 8.2 then provides for this information to be used to prioritise and resource projects.

Action 8.3 recognises that access infrastructure and amenities should be co-designed so that people understand and respect the cultural, historical and environmental significance of the places they visit. Actions 8.4 and 8.5 support safe, identifiable and practical access while addressing physical or legal barriers that prevent access to places of significance, including customary access routes.

Action 8.6 strengthens the relationship between the River Forum and local authorities by requiring consultation on significant public access decisions. This is particularly important where decisions may affect waikaukau, wāhi tapu, mahinga kai or other places of significance to iwi and hapū.

The objective is, therefore, not simply to increase access, but to create appropriate opportunities for people to reconnect with the awa while protecting the places, values and tikanga that make those connections meaningful.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Objective 9 **Environmental, cultural, social and economic health is monitored, evaluated and reported to inform timely action, improve decision-making and support the ongoing protection, restoration and enhancement of the mauri of the Rangitaiki River.**

Actions	Indicative lead organisation
9.1 Establish and maintain an integrated monitoring framework that integrates monitoring of: a) Indigenous biodiversity and biosecurity. b) Water quality, water allocation and use. c) Community stewardship activities. d) Compliance and enforcement of consented activities. e) Iwi led Cultural Monitoring Framework in Action 9.2.	River Forum partners
9.2 Iwi-Led Cultural Monitoring Framework. Develop and implement a Cultural Monitoring Framework for the Rangitaiki, Whirinaki, Whēao and Horomanga Rivers that: a) Incorporates mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori. b) Includes Cultural Health Indicators and cultural monitoring sites. c) Measures trends in cultural wellbeing and mauri. d) Identifies priority areas for protection, restoration or management intervention projects.	Iwi and hapū

Actions	Indicative lead organisation
9.3 Monitoring Indicators. Ensure the integrated monitoring framework developed in action 9.1 monitors and reports on indicators for: a) Water quality. b) River flows. c) Wetland extent. d) Indigenous biodiversity including condition, extent and connectivity of wetlands, Significant Natural Areas. e) Unassisted two-way tuna migration pathways in Action 2.10. f) Aquatic habitat condition. g) Community and rangatahi stewardship participation. h) Public access and cultural connection.	River Forum Partners
9.4 Establish Monitoring Thresholds and Management Triggers. Develop agreed environmental, cultural and community wellbeing thresholds and management triggers that: a) Identify improved, stable and declining trends. b) Highlight emerging risks. c) Trigger investigations where adverse effects are identified. d) Inform management priorities and corrective actions.	River Forum partners
9.5 Respond to Declining Trends and Adverse Effects. Where monitoring identifies declining trends, risks or threshold exceedances: a) Investigate causes. b) Identify contributing pressures and activities. c) Develop response plans with remedial actions. d) Implement corrective actions. e) Report outcomes and progress to the Rangitaiki River Forum.	Regional Council
9.6 Monitor Water Allocation, Use and Efficiency. Monitor and report on: a) Consented water takes. b) Actual water use. c) Water allocation status. d) Irrigation efficiency. e) Cultural water take limits. f) Catchment areas approaching allocation limits.	Regional Council
9.7 Monitor Compliance and Environmental Performance. Report annually on: a) Consent compliance. b) Environmental incidents. c) Enforcement actions. d) Abatement notices. e) Corrective actions. f) Environmental performance of major consent holders.	Regional and District Councils
9.8 Prepare Annual State of the Rangitaiki River Report. Produce an annual report that: a) Summarises monitoring results from Actions 9.6 and 9.7. b) Reports against agreed indicators established in Action 9.3. c) Identifies trends and emerging issues. d) Evaluates progress towards objectives. e) Recommends actions and priorities for the coming year resulting from Actions 9.1 and 9.5.	River Forum partners

DRAFT PROPOSED

Actions:	Indicative lead organisation
9.9 Support Community Participation in Monitoring. Support iwi, schools, rangatahi, landowners and community groups to participate in monitoring, restoration and stewardship programmes that contribute to the protection and enhancement of the Rangitaiki River.	River Forum partners
9.10 Review and Improve Monitoring Programmes Undertake periodic reviews of monitoring programmes, indicators and reporting methods to ensure they remain relevant, effective and responsive to changing environmental, cultural and community priorities.	River Forum partners

Explanation:

The Rangitaiki River Document reflects the shared aspirations of iwi, communities and partner agencies to protect, restore and enhance the health and mauri of the Rangitaiki River. Objective 9 establishes an integrated monitoring framework to help the Rangitaiki River Forum monitor progress towards the River Document's vision, objectives and desired outcomes.

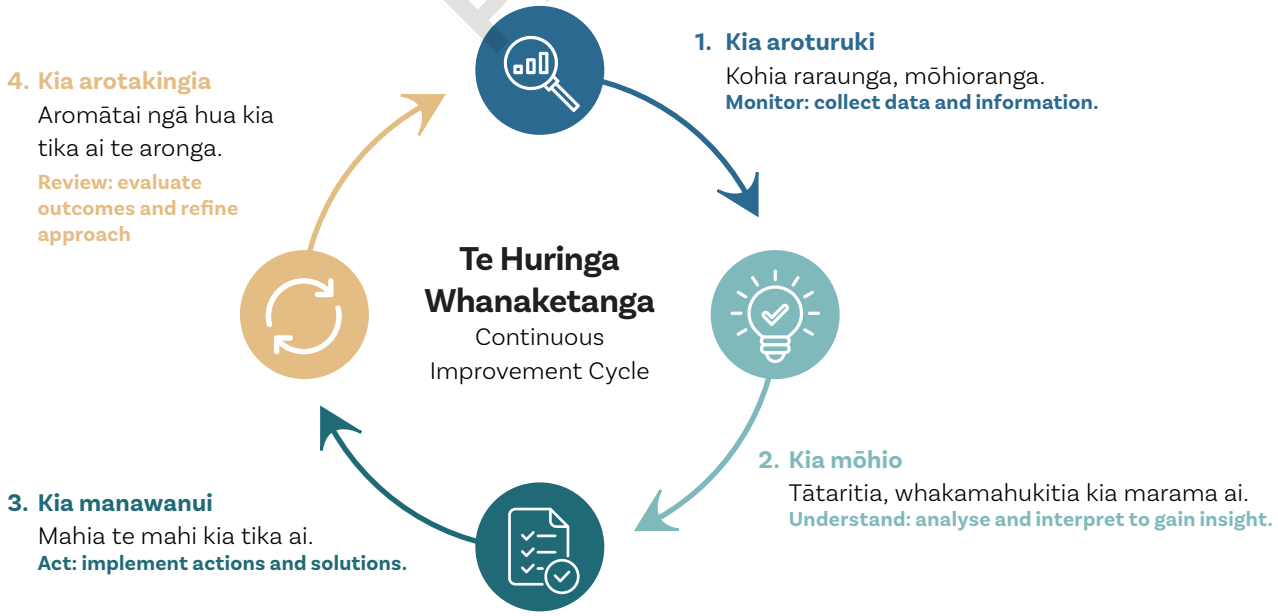
The Ngā Puna Roimata Kaitiaki Rōpū established under Objective 1 action 1.1 will oversee the development of this monitoring framework and coordinate partner agencies reporting input. This is intended to replace the current Rangitaiki Catchment Programme Dashboard reporting to the River Forum. Instead, regular monitoring and reporting will be designed with the River Document as the foundation document. Partner agencies, including Councils and hapū, are expected to work collaboratively with the Ngā Puna Roimata Kaitiaki Rōpū to prioritise and design work programmes, which systematically implement and report on the priority River Document actions.

The framework brings together environmental, cultural, social and economic monitoring, including biodiversity, water quality and allocation, compliance, community stewardship and an Iwi-Led Cultural Monitoring Framework. This recognises that mātauranga Māori, tikanga Māori and cultural health indicators are essential for understanding the health and mauri of the river alongside scientific monitoring. Iwi play a leadership role in developing and implementing cultural monitoring, interpreting results and helping identify priorities for protection and restoration.

Monitoring is intended to inform action. By tracking agreed indicators and identifying trends over time, the integrated monitoring framework helps the Rangitaiki River Forum and partner agencies understand what is happening across the catchment, respond to emerging issues and prioritise actions that improve river health.

An annual State of the Rangitaiki River Report will bring together monitoring results, report on progress, identify emerging issues and recommend priorities for future action. The framework also encourages iwi, hapū, schools, landowners, rangatahi and community groups to contribute to monitoring and restoration, recognising that protecting the Rangitaiki River is a shared responsibility.

DRAFT PROPOSED



By combining scientific evidence, mātauranga Māori and community knowledge, the framework supports informed decision-making and coordinated action to protect, restore and enhance the health and mauri of the Rangitaiki River for present and future generations.

Risk and Assurance Statement

The delivery of Ngā Puna Roimata o Rangitaiki Action plan is underpinned by an overarching risk and assurance framework to ensure its vision, objectives and desired outcomes are achieved in a resilient, sustainable and culturally appropriate manner.

The Rangitaiki River Forum, in partnership with relevant agencies and mana whenua, is committed to safeguarding the mauri and resilience of the Rangitaiki River. This includes upholding kaitiakitanga, strengthening enduring relationships with iwi and hapū and ensuring that river management decisions support the environmental, cultural, social and economic wellbeing of current and future generations in alignment with the vision.

Risk Management

The Rangitaiki River system is dynamic and subject to a range of environmental, cultural, economic and operational pressures. Key risks to achieving the River Document's objectives include:

- **Environmental risks** including major flood events, erosion, sedimentation, salt water intrusion, declining water quality and pressure on water allocation associated with land use intensification, climate variability and extreme weather events.
- **Climate change risks** such as increased flood frequency and intensity, changing flow regimes and impacts on ecosystem health.
- **Funding and resourcing risks** due to a lack of adequate funding from partner agencies to resource implementation of actions, monitoring programme and continuous improvement framework.
- **Cultural risks** including destruction of sites of cultural significance, inadequate recognition of iwi and hapū values, mātauranga Māori and the cultural significance of the Rangitaiki River.
- **Infrastructure and asset risks** particularly relating to the performance and maintenance of drainage and flood protection assets including, stopbanks and pump stations.
- **Regulatory and compliance risks** including meeting statutory obligations, consent conditions and alignment with national policy frameworks.
- **Stakeholder and partnership risks** where insufficient or ineffective engagement results in a breakdown of trust, impedes decision-making and shared outcomes.

These risks will be actively identified, assessed and managed through an ongoing monitoring and assurance approach which focuses on mitigation and adaptive management to achieving the River Document's objectives.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Assurance Approach

A comprehensive and robust assurance framework is applied on an annual basis to provide clear visibility of progress against the objectives and actions for the Rangitaiki River. Through this framework, the Forum exercises its governance role by providing direction to proactively identify and mitigate risks, thereby ensuring that all objectives and actions are effectively progressed and achieved as intended. The identification of achieved objectives, together with their recognition and celebration, also provides a valuable opportunity for systematic analysis to support continuity and inform further development to enhance future outcomes.



Hinengāwari wetland at confluence Whirinaki me Rangitaiki awa

Ngā kōrero onamata

TRADITIONAL STORIES

In Māori mythology, taniwha are beings that live in deep pools in rivers, dark caves, or in the sea, especially in places with dangerous currents or deceptive breakers. Taniwha were often considered as omens of uncertain times ahead and were therefore highly respected as kaitiaki (protective guardians) of people and places, or in some traditions as dangerous, predatory beings[21]. There were a number of taniwha and tipua (guardian spirits) associated with the Rangitaiki River.

Hākai Atua was a taniwha of the Ngāti Awa hapū of Ngāi Tamaoki and resided close to their kāinga (village)[22]. Hākai Atua travelled the river and was a kaitiaki (guardian) who protected the Ngāi Tamaoki people.

Hine-i-Whāroa was a tipua in the form of a white tuna (eel) that lived in the Rangitaiki River[23]. Hine-i-Whāroa was the kaitiaki of all the other tuna that lived in the river. Hine-i-Whāroa became the kaitiaki that limited the number of tuna that could be caught by the people thereby ensuring that the fishery would survive. No matter how hard the people tried to catch Hine-i-Whāroa to clear the way so they would have unrestricted access to all tuna, they could never do so.

Hotupuku was a taniwha that once lived on the Kaingaroa Plains[24]. It was a cannibalistic, legged and tailed taniwha that was slain by warriors.

Murupara was a friendly gigantic tuna (eel)-like taniwha with no scales[25]. Its name meant "to wipe off the mud". Murupara dwelt in a cave below the old Kiorenui village[26].

Hineruarangi, daughter of Toi-kai-rākau, is remembered as a tipua and kaitiaki of Ngāti Whare, entrusted with the guardianship of Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne and its waterways. Her presence is regarded as both a protector and a tohu, embodying the enduring values of guardianship, stewardship and care for the whenua, ngāhere and awa.

Raukawarua was a taniwha who lived at Kōkōhinau[27]. To the people of Pahipoto, Raukawarua was supposed to be a kaitiaki of other taniwha that lived in the river. Raukawarua became known as the rangatira of Ngāti Awa, the chief of the river tribe and of all other river creatures.

Rimurimu was a tupuna (ancestor) of the Ngāti Awa hapū of Warahoe and Ngā Maihi who lived along the Rangitaiki River between Te Teko and Matahina[28]. Rimurimu was only recognisable to the Warahoe hapū and only revealed itself to warn the people of danger. Rimurimu came about after Miro, daughter of Hikareia (a chief of Warahoe), drowned herself after her plan to be with her lover was thwarted. Miro chanted Te Punga i Orohia. A line in the chant refers to her being a rimu. Miro then took the form of Rimurimu (seaweed/aquatic plant).

DRAFT PROPOSED

He puna kōrero

OVERVIEW

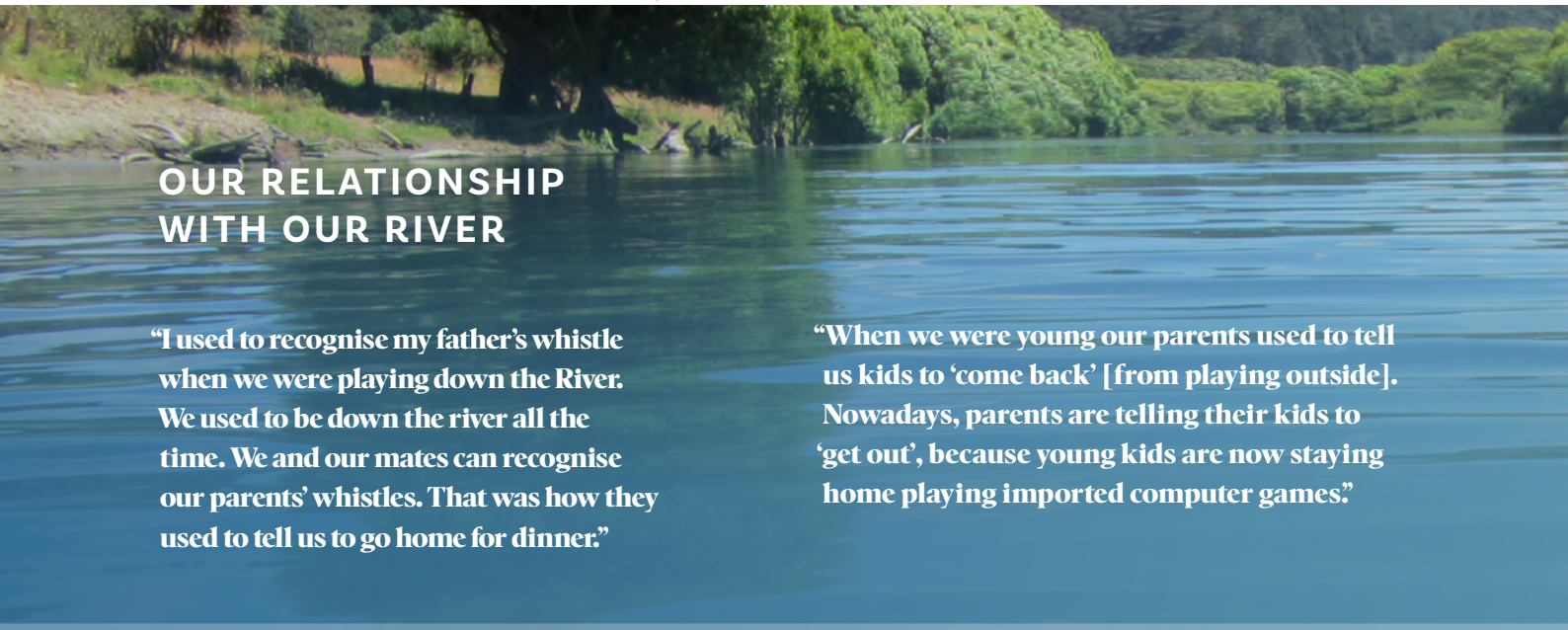
Stories that have been passed down through generations tell us that Tīwakawaka was the first to explore the Bay of Plenty, later followed by Toi Te Huatahi, the founding ancestor of many tribes who lived around the Rangitaiki River. The upper reaches of the Rangitaiki Valley were first settled by the Marangaranga, the descendants of Toi. Back then, volcanic eruptions and floods were the only major factors that changed the physical landscape of the Rangitaiki River.

Many years later, the Mataatua waka brought more people to the Bay of Plenty. The river provided their iwi with a rich source of food. The rhythm, pattern and continuity of the Rangitaiki River shaped and created the culture of the people who lived there over generations.

This has changed dramatically as people have adopted ways of cultivating the land more effectively. In the 20th century, engineering and technology solutions altered the Rangitaiki River Catchment landscape to what we see today. A law passed in 1910 allowed 40,000 hectares of Rangitaiki wetland to be drained and converted into fertile grazing land. Later in the 1930s, people discovered applying cobaltised super phosphate to previously barren areas made them suitable for farmland and large-scale forestry. Soil became richer and more fertile in areas previously incapable of supporting farming or planting pines.

Changes to the Rangitaiki River Catchment landscape accelerated drastically after the World Wars and the depression. Poverty limited the ability of people to look after their resources for future generations. Virgin land was divided up and sold for farming. Land that was not suitable for farming was planted with fast-growing pine trees for a good economic return. Meanwhile, tangata whenua became restricted in accessing traditional food sources along the Rangitaiki River. Tuna (eel) weirs were removed to make way for logs being carried down the river. Later, in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, the Government carried out large-scale infrastructure

DRAFT PROPOSED



OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR RIVER

"I used to recognise my father's whistle when we were playing down the River. We used to be down the river all the time. We and our mates can recognise our parents' whistles. That was how they used to tell us to go home for dinner."

"When we were young our parents used to tell us kids to 'come back' [from playing outside]. Nowadays, parents are telling their kids to 'get out', because young kids are now staying home playing imported computer games."

projects - constructing hydro-electricity schemes, piping sewerage and building stopbanks and culverts and then planting willow to protect surrounding farmland from floods.

The combination of hydro-electricity, forestry and pasture land makes the Rangitaiki River Catchment a rural production engine room for New Zealand. Forestry and dairy industries have boomed in the Rangitaiki Catchment, which has become one of the country's primary producing areas with a strong export focus. In the process of making the Rangitaiki Catchment profitable, many activities have changed the natural pattern of the Rangitaiki River and diminished its natural features and characteristics. In the 1960s, the local community underwent rapid change; their livelihood shifted from a tuna culture to a forestry culture in a generation. When the forestry sector reduced hiring in the 1980s, many people had no choice but to move away or become unemployed.

Many of the natural resource benefits from the Rangitaiki River are exported, while the costs are borne within the catchment.

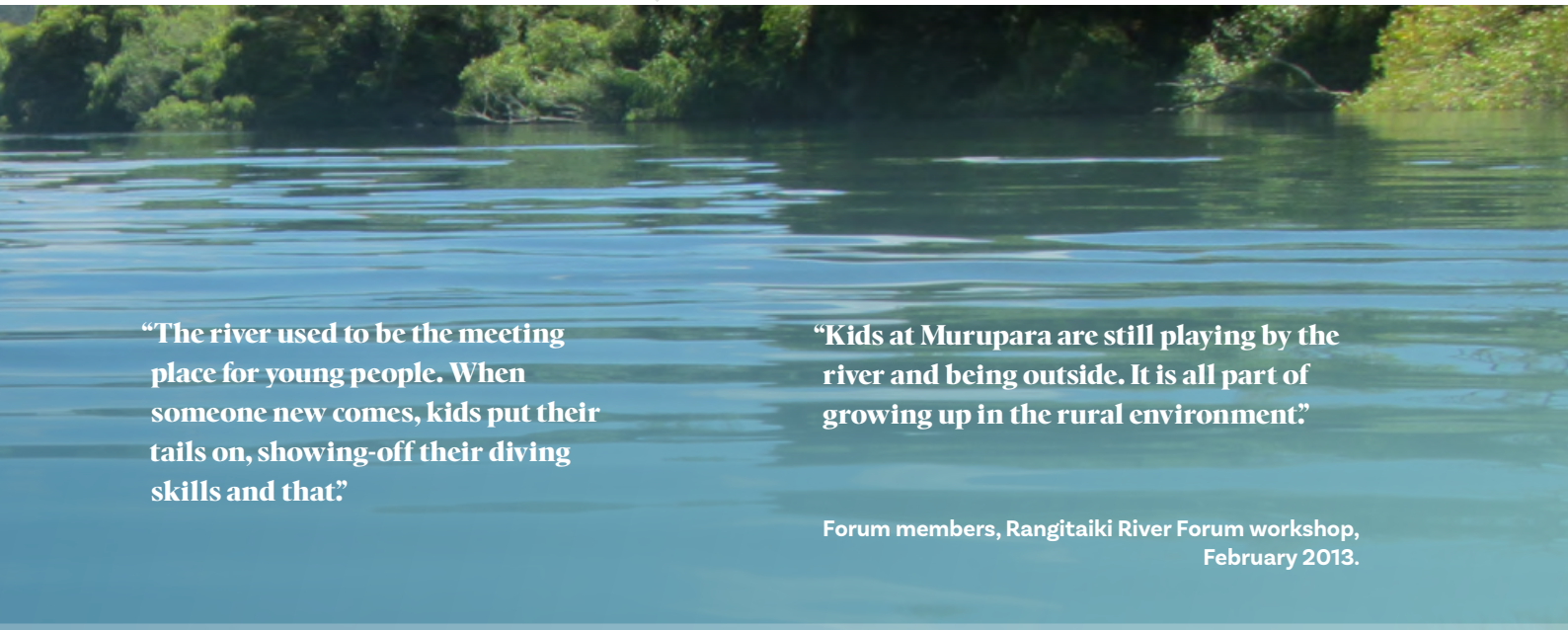
The Rangitaiki Catchment energises the nation and the region, but there are limited examples of wealth generated from the river being reinvested back into restoring and preserving its health and wellbeing.

The degradation of the Rangitaiki River has reduced its spiritual values and compromised the ability of iwi to exercise kaitiakitanga (stewardship) and conduct their tikanga (customs) and kawa (ceremonies).

The interactions between the river and its people have become restricted as the community expectations for the Rangitaiki River have dwindled. People are spending less time learning how the river contributes to their environmental, cultural and spiritual wellbeing and how to look after it.

It will take time, clear directions and smart thinking to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of the Rangitaiki River and its communities and to reinvigorate the community's relationship with the river.

DRAFT PROPOSED



"The river used to be the meeting place for young people. When someone new comes, kids put their tails on, showing-off their diving skills and that."

"Kids at Murupara are still playing by the river and being outside. It is all part of growing up in the rural environment."

Forum members, Rangitaiki River Forum workshop, February 2013.

10 year trends Rangitaiki River

In the ten years since December 2014, when the first Rangitaiki River Document was approved, monitoring shows the following positive water quality trends:

1. Nitrate and suspended fine sediment trends have changed from worsening trends prior to 2014, to improving 10-year trends.
2. Phosphorus has improving trends with the exception of Matahina Dam. Given catchment geology, it is unlikely reductions in phosphorus will result in improved freshwater outcomes (e.g. reductions in slime).
3. Fish passage remediation is ongoing including tide gate survey and instream structure assessments.

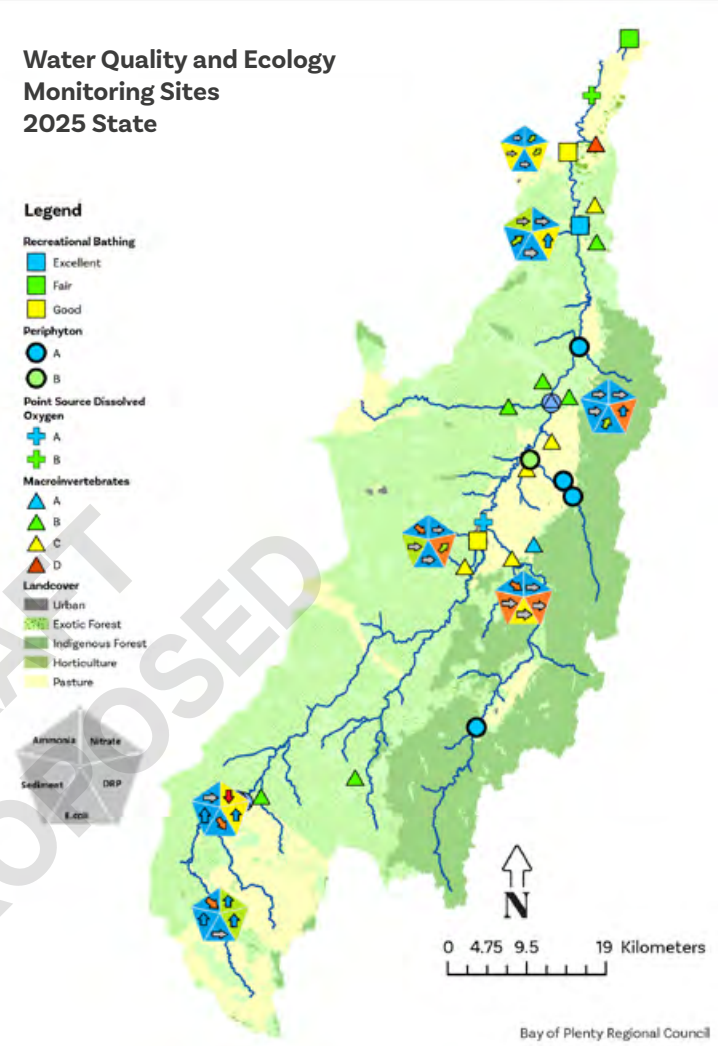
901 total sites

127 barriers identified

90 barriers remediated

37 barriers to be remediated

4. Improvements in Lake Matahina trophic level index (TLI) due to significant declines in total phosphorus (TP) and dissolved reactive phosphorus (DRP).



DRAFT PROPOSED

Key water quality trends considered to be worsening are:

1. Elevated nitrogen and worsening trends in the upper Rangitaiki Catchment (Otamatea pastoral area only).
2. Some worsening ammonia trends in the upper catchment, however, they are still meeting national bottom lines.
3. Despite fish passage remediation efforts, tuna and other indigenous fish species continue to be heavily impacted by fish passage obstacles (i.e. hydro-electric dams, pump stations and flap gates).
4. Lowland, heavily modified tributaries (Reids Canal, Western Drain, Ngakauroa Stream) have degraded water quality, ecosystem health, cultural values and natural character.
5. Many invertebrate trends are worsening, usually by small annual changes <1%. The cause is uncertain. It is unlikely to be related to water quality (i.e. nutrients or *E-coli*) as there is generally no relationship between macro-invertebrate (MCI) scores and water quality. The worsening trend might be due to habitat loss, changes in riparian vegetation or another unknown stressor.
6. Lakes Āniwaniwa and Matahina contain excess nutrients impacting algae, causing significant exotic lake weed growth impacting lake ecology, aesthetics and recreational opportunities.

Maintaining water quality could be a challenge under climate change scenarios and limit land use intensification opportunities.

Profile of the Rangitaiki River Catchment

The overall health of waterways throughout the Rangitaiki Catchment is assessed by measuring different parameters such as:

1. Water quantity (including the flow, volume and its variability).
2. Water quality (including nutrients, sediment loads or turbidity, the amount of bacteria in the water and conductivity or the presence of "salt" in water).
3. Ecology (including plants, invertebrates and fish).

By looking at these different parameters, we can assess the overall health of waterways throughout the Rangitaiki Catchment. About half (47 percent) of the approximately 4,400 kilometres of waterways in the catchment are small headwater streams. The larger main stem rivers such as the Rangitaiki River and Whirinaki River, contribute only 13 percent of the total waterway length. To simplify analysis, the main stem of the Rangitaiki Catchment has been divided into five areas (refer to Species by Elevation in the Rangitaiki River Catchment' graph on page 50):

1. A lowland area downstream from Edgecumbe.
2. A reach around Te Teko.
3. A mid-reach in the Galatea Plains, including Lakes Āniwaniwa and Matahina.
4. The upper area upstream from Murupara.
5. The Whirinaki Catchment.

Many small headwater streams flow from native bush, pine forest or pasture into the larger rivers, potentially changing their condition downstream. By looking at these five areas in the Rangitaiki and the smaller headwater streams, a broad picture of the catchment's overall health can be established.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Water quantity

The Te Teko reach

The Āniwaniwa and Matahina dams have greatly altered flows at Te Teko[29]. River flow increases in response to electrical generation and often peaks twice a day. Periods of low stable flow are also common.

Upstream from Murupara

When it rains in the upper catchment, rainfall quickly soaks into the pumice soils. This means river flows upstream from Murupara are groundwater dominated[30]. Large floods that rise and fall quickly are rare.

The Whirinaki

The Whirinaki Catchment is dominated by hard greywacke rock. Rainfall does not soak into this, but instead runs quickly off the catchment. River flows are rainfall-dominated, meaning large floods that rise and fall quickly are common[31].

Overall Rangitaiki Catchment

Irrigation is an important use of water in the Rangitaiki Catchment. Limited water is available above the Matahina power scheme because the flow is maintained for generating electricity. Increased irrigation would support land use intensification but risks affecting water quality and quantity.



Āniwaniwa falls

Water quality

Downstream from Edgecumbe

The Fonterra Dairy Factory and Edgecumbe's stormwater are the two main discharges to the river. Increasing trends in phosphorus and nitrate-nitrogen have been observed at the Rangitaiki River Estuary, although there is no apparent increase in algal biomass.

The Te Teko reach

Total nitrogen concentrations have remained steady while fine sediment trends have improved, while phosphorus concentrations have decreased slightly. Average water clarity (1.2 metres) is below the recommended national guideline for swimming (1.6 metres)[32]. This may be due to the large amounts of small algae (phytoplankton) found in Lake Matahina above the dam. Despite the low clarity, water quality exceeds national guidelines for bacteriological contamination for safe swimming most of the time.

The Galatea mid-reach

Whakatāne District Council, in partnership with Te Runanga o Ngāti Manawa, are investigating options for upgrading the Murupara sewage treatment plant which is one of two main points discharging treated contaminants into the Rangitaiki River[33]. The existing plant was commissioned in 1954 and its wastewater discharge consent expires in 2028. Ngāti Manawa vision is to eliminate any discharge to the river.

Both Lakes Āniwaniwa and Matahina have high to very high levels of nutrients impacting algal and weed growth. Weed growth has adversely affected recreational activities and aesthetics. Lake Āniwaniwa is classed as eutrophic (poor water quality) and Lake Matahina is classed as supertrophic (very poor water quality).



Kōtare

Upstream from Murupara

Nutrients have been increasing steadily in the last 15 years[34], possibly reflecting land use intensification associated with dairy farming near State Highway 5. In many cases, high nitrogen concentration levels lead to excessive algal growth, which is bad for the more sensitive invertebrates in the water. The high concentration of nitrate in the Otamatea River and in Rangitaiki at State Highway 5 are enough to potentially affect river ecosystems. Average water clarity (2 metres) is greater than recommended national guidelines, but data suggests that clarity is decreasing over time. Bacteriological contamination is low most of the time, meaning the river is generally safe to swim in.

The Whirinaki

Average clarity in the Whirinaki (1.8 meters) is above recommended guidelines for swimming. Nutrient levels (particularly phosphorus) are increasing[35], but levels of ammonia have decreased. As with other areas, it is generally safe to swim there.

Overall Rangitaiki Catchment

Water quality in the Rangitaiki River degrades progressively downstream[36]. Water quality (in terms of levels of nutrients, bacteria and clarity) ranges from fair to excellent south of Murupara[37], to low to fair in downstream from Matahina. Measured total nitrogen concentrations in the Rangitaiki Catchment are some of the highest in the region. Levels of bacterial contamination in the Rangitaiki River are generally low enough to allow for swimming most of the time. However, more bacteria are washed into the rivers during times of rainfall and it is during these times that levels may exceed those that are safe for swimming. Bacterial levels are also generally higher in the lowland parts of the river.

Water quality in small streams shows a significant effect of land-use activities. Streams from pasture sites have higher nutrient levels and bacterial contamination, while streams from native forest have low nutrient and bacterial levels. Streams from pine forests have moderate nutrient and bacterial levels.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Ecology

Stream health has been classified into “excellent”, “good”, “fair” or “poor” categories on the basis of their invertebrate communities. Of the 117 sites surveyed[38] throughout the Rangitaiki Catchment, 102 streams (almost 90 percent) supported invertebrate communities indicative of excellent or good health. Only four streams were regarded as being in “poor” condition. Two of these streams drain pasture areas and two drain pine forests. Overall, streams draining native bush were in the best ecological condition, followed by streams in pine plantations and pasture.

Downstream from Edgecumbe and the Te Teko reach

Ecological health of the Rangitaiki River downstream from Edgecumbe and in the Te Teko reach was in “fair” condition. The ecological health of the river here differs greatly from what could have been predicted in its natural state. It has been modified with land drainage, stopbanks and riprap to minimise bank erosion.

Exotic water weeds (macrophytes) are common in the channel. Water flows are controlled by the Matahina Dam.

All these pressures have reduced its overall health. A wide range of fish are found in the river, including whitebait, bullies, tuna (both shortfin and longfin eels) and kōkopu. The Matahina Dam prevents the successful migration of many of these fish, so a trap-and-transfer programme continues to be implemented.



Kererū

The Galatea mid-reach

The ecological health of the Rangitaiki River above the Matahina Dam was in “good” condition, while above Lake Āniwaniwa it is regarded as being in “excellent” condition.

The shallow Lake Āniwaniwa supports dense growths of aquatic weed such as hornwort and curly oxygen weed. This impacts aquatic life and lake users. However, these plants may also be taking up nutrients from the water and improving water quality below the Āniwaniwa Dam.

Large rainbow trout are common in the river and lakes behind the dams, as well as many of the small tributary streams.

The diversity of native fish decreases above the dams, so that above Lake Āniwaniwa, tuna and koaro are the only migratory fish found. Their presence above the dams reflects the success[39] of the trap-and-transfer programme[40]. This programme may have increased the distribution and numbers of shortfin tuna (eels) above Lake Āniwaniwa, although recent surveys have shown that the distribution of longfin tuna (eels) may be increasing. While successful in allowing for the upstream movement of tuna, considerable challenges lie ahead to ensure that mature adult tuna can still migrate downstream[41].

Populations of the non-migratory dwarf galaxias have also been found in small streams flowing from the Ikawhenua Ranges. These are the only known populations of this species in the Bay of Plenty region. These fish are found mainly in streams where there are no trout.

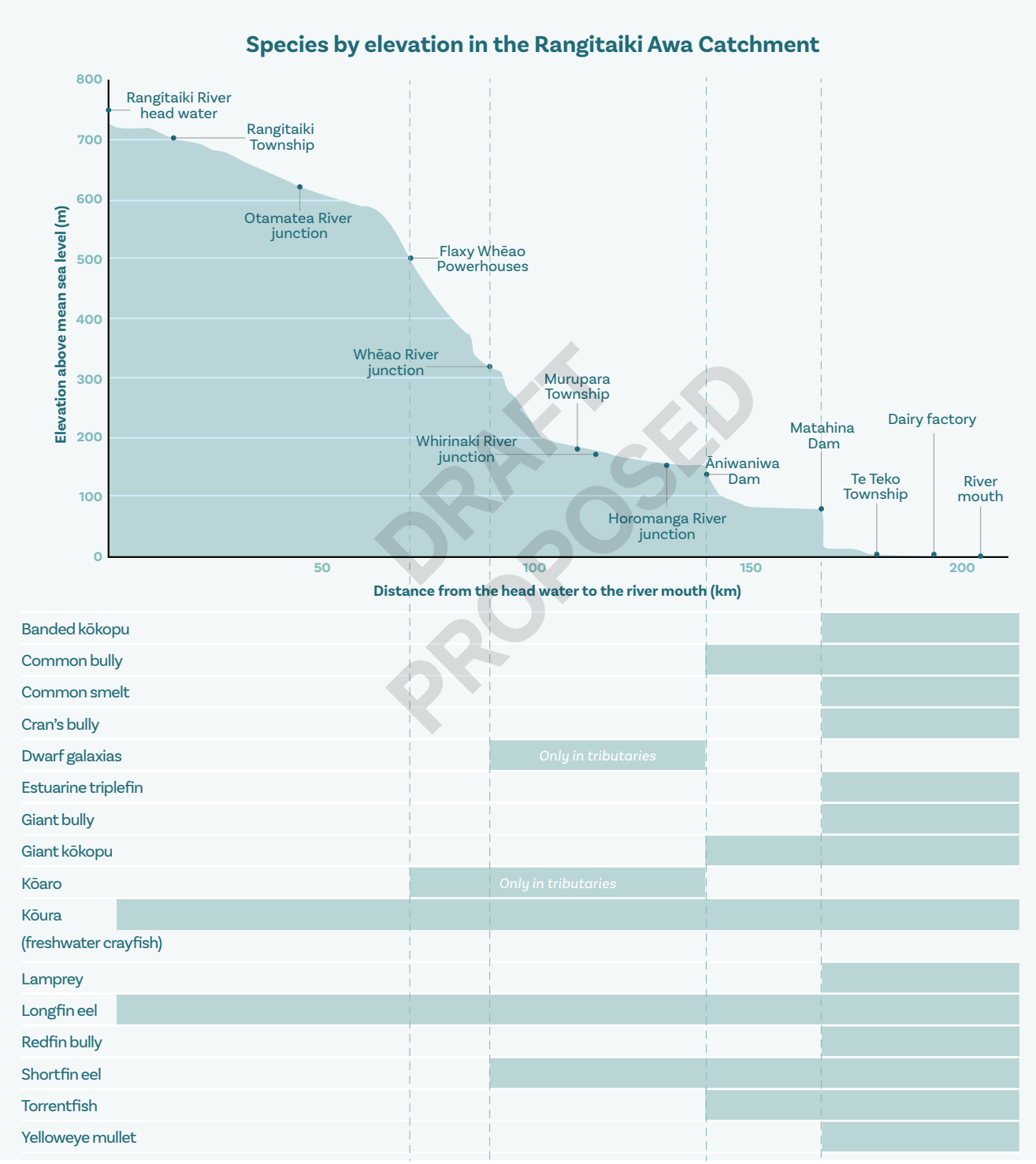
Upstream from Murupara and the Whirinaki

Ecological health of waterways above Murupara is generally regarded as being “excellent” in the upper reaches of the Rangitaiki River and in the Whirinaki. The ecological health of waterways here is very similar to what was predicted in a natural state. While tuna are found at sites throughout the Whirinaki, their abundance decreases further inland.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Overall Rangitaiki Catchment

Landuse changes in the past have been quite dramatic as native vegetation was cleared for either pine plantation or pasture. These activities have impacted on stream health. However, the degree of land use change appears to have stabilised in the last 10-15 years[42]. This suggests that stream health may not have changed much in recent times. Comparison of invertebrate communities through repeated surveys confirms this, as the current ecological health of selected sites in the Rangitaiki Catchment has remained similar to what it was in the 1970s and 1980s.



The Rangitaiki River Catchment is valued for indigenous fish species, mainly tuna (eels) and inanga (whitebait), kākahi and kōura (freshwater crayfish). The catchment contains 33 threatened freshwater species. It is the only catchment in the region with non-migratory threatened fish species (Dwarf galaxias) and unique frost flat habitats. Historically kōkopu and piharau (lamprey) were also present throughout the catchment.

Ngā ika wai māori – native freshwater fish

The Rangitaiki, Whēao and Whirinaki rivers were taonga (treasure). For Māori, the rivers were steeped in tribal lore and history, as well as being a main source of material and spiritual sustenance and wellbeing. In the Rangitaiki River, tuna were a secure food source available at any time.

Many native New Zealand freshwater fish (ikawai) are valued by Māori as mahinga kai (traditional food sources). Most of these fish, like kōkopu and tuna, are nocturnal. They like dark cool places and are active at night[43]. They don't come out during the day and don't live in freshwater fulltime; they migrate between rivers and the sea.

The native freshwater fish could live in rivers, lakes, wetlands and groundwaters. Over thousands of years, some of them have developed excellent skills of climbing steep waterfalls as they venture inland to spawn or to feed. Today, due to competition with other bigger, hungrier and equally athletic fish, most native fish are now living in small streams, many of which are less than a metre wide.

Unlike game fish, ikawai are not protected under New Zealand legislation. Although native fish are protected in Department of Conservation land, hydroelectric dams and large irrigation projects are turning running waters into lakes, changing the river flow and restricting fish movement along river systems. Pollution and aggressive introduced animals and plants can also make life harder for native fish. The long-term decline of ikawai populations has impacts on our communities around the Rangitaiki.

The hurdles for tuna

The Rangitaiki River is home to many paewai (also known as tuna kūwharuwharu, longfin tuna), a fish unique to Aotearoa and the largest and longest-living of its kind. Tuna flourish in connected waterways with plenty of cover, food and resting pools along the way.

For tuna, life in the Rangitaiki River has become harder in recent decades. It is more difficult for tuna to find good food because of a variety of changes, including reduced riparian native vegetation, declining water quality, increasing levels of nitrate in parts of the river (as a result of more fertiliser and manure runoff in the water) and sediments. Barriers to fish passage (like dams and culverts) mean that the tuna's vital journey from the sea to Rangitaiki River and back has become impossible without human help (e.g. trap and transfer).

The future survival of paewai is threatened. It is possible that New Zealand could lose this special taonga tuku iho forever.

DRAFT PROPOSED

[Tuna] Eels and eeling and the rivers have always been the life blood of the people of the Ika Whenua valley.

Quote from Waitangi Tribunal, 1998:12, Wai 212.

Importance of tuna for Rangitaiki iwi

Hapū and iwi of the region are wellknown for the prized tuna from the Rangitaiki. As well as being a key food source, tuna were a vital part of traditional trade and economies and highly prized as koha in gift exchange. For this reason, tuna are regarded by many as a taonga and often feature in pūrākau (ancient legend), whakapapa and depicted in whakairo (carving) that adorn many marae; a testament to their importance.

Many varieties of tuna were traditionally caught by those who lived along the Rangitaiki and its tributaries, including black tuna (mataamoe), silver-bellied tuna (paewai), blind tuna (piharau) and yellow-bellied tuna. In many instances, specific individuals and families had special knowledge of fishing methods and had the responsibility to pass their knowledge on to the next generation. Places where specific varieties of tuna could be caught were wellknown and were often named and treated with great care. There were a number of traditional fishing methods, including hīnaki, retireti, rama tuna, fern beds or boxes and line fishing. Many iwi had their own maramataka (fishing calendar) and carefully managed their tuna fishery in accordance with tikanga.

Crown control of the Rangitaiki and its tributaries from the late nineteenth century has had a huge impact on tuna and those that depended upon them. The tuna fisheries and other resources that were traditionally relied upon for cultural and physical sustenance have been severely impacted. Specifically, the construction of the Matahina, Āniwaniwa and Whēao power schemes now inhibit the ability of both young elvers to travel upstream and the downstream journey of adult tuna out to sea to spawn. Flood control measures that required the removal or changes to their habitat, together with commercial harvesting of tuna, has also contributed to their decline.

There are several contributing factors to rejuvenating tuna stocks in the Rangitaiki which lie beyond the immediate reach of this Forum. However, protecting and enhancing tuna habitat and migration paths form a key objective of this document and are a step towards that outcome.


Private pump station


Old Rangitaiki Channel Pumpstation


Āniwaniwa

Adapted from Ngāti Manawa Claims Settlement Act, Te Ika Whenua Energy Assets Report 1993 and Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment "On a pathway to extinction? An investigation into the status and management of the longfin eel", April 2013.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Whitebait in the Rangitaiki

The Rangitaiki River is home to three types of whitebait, which normally lay their eggs in freshwater. After the eggs hatch, they quickly migrate to sea before they come back to lay eggs[44]. Traditionally, the abundance of whitebait provided local iwi with essential food in a protein-limited world.

Īnanga (or whitebait or small fry) are common and they don't need to travel very far inland. They breed on seasonally flooding estuarine wetlands and their life cycle is dependent on the dynamic of freshwater and seawater exchange. The massive (40,000 hectare) Rangitaiki/Tarawera/Whakatāne saltmarsh wetland used to offer an ideal breeding ground for īnanga right in the middle of the Bay of Plenty. When īnanga go to sea all at once, they attract many other fish to feed on them. Today, we can find īnanga in the Rangitaiki River, Western Drain, Waikamihi Stream, Mangaone Stream, Reid's Central Canal and upstream of the Otarere Stream/Drain of the Rangitaiki Plains and the Whakatāne River.

Banded kōkopu (sometimes called kōkopu tawhara, moruru, para, kopu, korewhariwha, kōkōpuruau, koopakopako, ruao, ruwao, or Māori trout or native trout) are the travellers of the family. As part of the whitebait family, the junior banded kōkopu look the same as baby īnanga.

In the wild, banded kōkopu like to live in small boulder streams in native forest. Banded kōkopu are known to climb waterfalls in a small forest stream and perpendicular rock faces. Māori traditionally harvested banded kōkopu with rama (torches) at night. Today, the limited numbers may be too critical for feeding people. One common neighbour of the banded kōkopu – New Zealand grayling, was once common in New Zealand waters but now they are extinct. However, we can still find banded kōkopu in the Rangitaiki River, Lake Matahina, Otarere Stream/Drain, Ngakauroa Stream/Drain, Waikamihi Stream and Mangaone Stream of the Rangitaiki River.

Giant kōkopu (or kōkopu, raumahehe, kokopara, para, bull trout or like the banded kōkopu - Māori trout and native trout) are the agile giant, although they are the same size as other whitebait in the family when hatched. The giant kōkopu is special to the lower Rangitaiki. With some luck you may find the secretive giant kōkopu in the Rangitaiki River, Ngakauroa Stream/Drain, Western Drain, Awaiti Canal, Omeheu Canal, Waikamihi Stream and Te Rahu Canal of the Rangitaiki River.

Besides whitebait, a science research project[45] recently discovered koaro in the Rangitaiki Catchment. That research also found trout presence has diminished the habitat and survival of dwarf galaxiid.

DRAFT PROPOSED



Te wahapu o Te Whēao ki tona putahitanga ki te Rangitaiki. The junction of the Whēao and Rangitaiki rivers

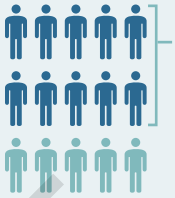
Statistics about the locals

The 2023 census shows in the Rangitaiki River Catchment there were:

- 7,610 people usually living in the catchment.
- About two thirds of the population (66 percent) is Māori. This is a higher proportion compared to the region (31 percent) or the nation (18 percent).
- About 22 percent of the population are children (14 years old or under), while 14 percent are elderly (65 years and over). The catchment is more youthful compared to the region (19 percent aged 65 years and over) and nationally (17 percent aged 65 years and over).
- Almost two thirds (64 percent) of the families in the catchment have at least one child. This was a higher proportion compared to the region (57 percent) or the nation (58 percent).

Almost one quarter (24 percent) of residents aged 15 years and over of the Rangitaiki River Catchment are employed in occupations connected to primary industries (e.g. agriculture, forestry and fishing). In comparison, less than one tenth (7 percent) of people in the Bay of Plenty work in the rural sector. The census also showed people in the Rangitaiki Catchment are more likely to work from home (24 percent, compared to 17 percent for the region) and more likely to be unemployed (8 percent) compared to the rest of the Bay of Plenty (3%).

7,610 people live in the Rangitaiki Catchment (approx)



66% of the Rangitaiki River Catchment is represented by Māori

= 500 people (approx)

DRAFT PROPOSED



22% of the people in the Rangitaiki River Catchment are children (14 years old and under)



14% of the people in the Rangitaiki River Catchment are elderly (65 years and over)



Several Iwi
have an interest in the Rangitaiki River Catchment

There are
16 Marae
and **22 Hapū**
in the Rangitaiki Catchment area

approximate

DRAFT PROPOSED



Petrified Totara Forest at Te Teko

Economic Activities

In 2023/24, the Rangitaiki River Catchment contributed about $400m (or 2%) to the Bay of Plenty region's gross domestic product (GDP).

As illustrated in Figure 1, the main economic activities in the catchment are dairy product manufacturing (i.e. Fonterra plant at Edgecumbe), primary industries (particularly dairy farming and forestry) and electricity generation.

In terms of employment, the dairy product manufacturing industry is a significant employer, followed by primary industries (particularly support services and dairy farming), as illustrated in Figure 2.

Three hydropower schemes (see below for detailed description) contribute significantly to Bay of Plenty's renewable energy production. They provide more reliable electricity, water-based recreation opportunities, jobs and a means to manage flood events. Solar power generation is also an emerging activity in the catchment, with one solar farm already in operation and three currently under construction.

Recreation, tourism and other sectors also contribute to the Rangitaiki Catchment's economy. For instance, NIWA (2023) estimates anglers spent between 3,479 and 785 angler days fishing in the Rangitaiki River Catchment in 2021/22 (see trout fishing). Other than anglers, walkers and hunters, the Rangitaiki River Catchment is also frequented by campers, horseriders, jetboat riders, waterskiers, kayakers, rafters, free-floating tubers and people who simply come for a scenic picnic or a swim.

DRAFT PROPOSED

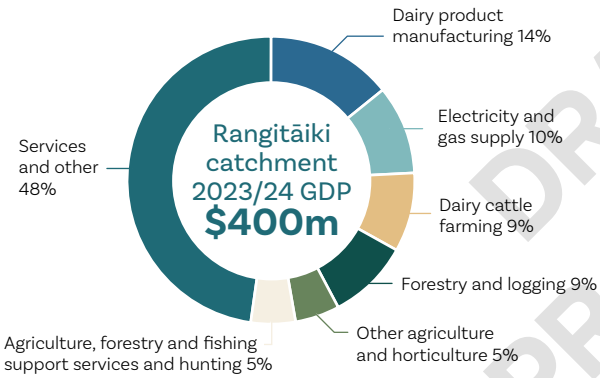


Figure 1: Rangitaiki Catchment contribution to regional GDP 2023/24 by industry (Source: Infometrics Regional Economic Profile)

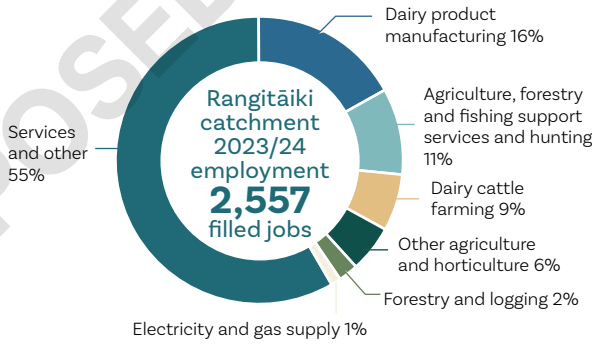


Figure 2: Employment in the Rangitaiki Catchment 2023/24 (Source: Infometrics Regional Economic Profile)



Dairy farming in the lower Rangitaiki River, view north east toward Moutohorā Island

Kaingaroa Forest

Kaingaroa Forest is the largest exotic forest in the North Island and the largest softwood plantation in the Southern Hemisphere. It covers 150,000 hectares from northeast of Lake Taupō to south of Kawerau. It supplies logs domestically and internationally and provides a major source of trees for timber, pulp and paper industries in the region.

Before the 1950s, the only economical use for this vast area of land was to grow trees. It was uneconomical for pasture and grazing stock. Scientists later found its soil lacked the mineral cobalt and this deficiency made stock ill with bush sickness.

During the 1923-1936 depression, the Government formed the New Zealand Forest Service to plant the Kaingaroa Plains as a 'make-work' project. The idea was to keep men employed and it was hoped it would also be an economical decision. Later, this state-owned asset was sold to investors.

Today, these forestry assets are a distinct feature on an internationally competitive scale. This commercial plantation provides the logs for high tech value-adding processing facilities within easy distance. This is a unique feature distinct from other forestry in New Zealand.

Kaingaroa Forest is one of the crown jewels of international forestry, being one of the oldest and largest softwood plantations in the world. It is an important consideration in the Rangitaiki Catchment.

Kaingaroa Forest is one of the crown jewels of international forestry, being one of the oldest and largest softwood plantations in the world. It is an important consideration in the Rangitaiki Catchment.

DRAFT PROPOSED



Kaingaroa forest, view west toward Pekepeke, south of Murupara

Farming in Rangitaiki

Dairy farmers working to the local conditions

In 2023 there were approximately 147 dairy farms in the Rangitaiki Catchment area. Dairy farmers in the Rangitaiki Catchment are working toward improving stream health. This includes better stock exclusion, effluent control, phosphorus and nitrogen management.

All Fonterra supplying dairy farms in the Rangitaiki Catchment have tailored Farm Environment Plans. Fonterra are partners with Landcare Trust to invest in wetland restoration. In 2003 the Dairying and Clean Streams Accord extended good practice beyond regulatory bottom lines. Fonterra engaged with stakeholders and took responsibility for improving dairy farming practices. In July 2013, the new Sustainable Dairy: Water Accord (SDWA) was signed by all dairy companies in New Zealand, along with DairyNZ and other interested organisations.

Source: Fonterra submission October 2014

Glen and wife Karen farm a 1,000 cow dairy unit at Rangitaiki near Taupō. For farmers, the high altitude and colder climate means a short growing season. It makes Rangitaiki a tough environment to farm, especially in comparison to their neighbours on the versatile Rangitaiki Flood Plain. Glen and Karen chose a grass variety that can handle the harder environment.

Source: PGG Wrightson Seed 2012

Farmers on the Rangitaiki Station grow pasture and crops to sustain the land

Landcorp's Rangitaiki Station is an 8,500 hectare farm that focuses on sheep, beef and deer farming. It has 85,000 stock units, including 7,500 breeding hinds, 8,500 Romney ewes and 1,200 Angus breeding cows. The farming practices employed focus on developing the topsoil and managing pasture rejuvenation. All waterways are fenced off and protected and changes in farming practices have reduced nutrient loss and allowed better management of resources. They are previous winners of Bay of Plenty Ballance Farm Environment Awards, recognising their meticulously planned cropping programme, outstanding pasture management and livestock conditions.

Rangitaiki Station's high altitude (range 700–800 metres above sea level) makes it tough country to farm, because of the short growing season and high wintering costs. On the farm, a team of 20 permanent staff manage 52,400 animals, comprising 19,090 deer, 28,600 sheep, 1,500 beef cattle and up to 2,300 dairy cows (including winter grazers).

Source: New Zealand Farm Environment Trust, 2012

"From a land point of view, we have a responsibility to leave it better than we found it. A healthy planet is vital for life to prosper now and in the future. The land will still exist in some form long after ourselves and future generations have departed."

Ross Shepherd, Rangitaiki Station Farm Business Manager
Quoted in Beef + Lamb New Zealand website, 2012

DRAFT PROPOSED

Trout fishing

The Rangitaiki River holds wild trout (introduced around the turn of the 20th century) and is recognised for providing great fishing waters by New Zealand freshwater anglers[46]. The trout habitats and fisheries in the Rangitaiki River, Lake Matahina, Lake Āniwaniwa, Whēao River and Lake Flaxy are significant for the Bay of Plenty region.

The lower and mid Rangitaiki River holds many trout in a variety of fast water and long run habitats. There are several cold water stream inflows that provide good summer fishing at their stream mouths when the river is warm and these tributaries also have spawning runs of trout that are targeted by anglers during the autumn.

Lake Āniwaniwa (previous name Lake Aniwhenua) was one of the North Island's most productive lakes, with many trophy fish caught. In more recent years, Āniwaniwa still provides good rainbow and brown trout to shoreline fly and spoon, or stalking from drifting boats. During summer, the lake is affected by weed in the water, so the better fishing is in the spring and autumn.

The Whēao River and associated Flaxy hydro lakes and canals provide some large trout with mainly spring-fed flows so can be fished at times when other rivers and streams are flooded. It is also popular with anglers around the world and contains some trophy-sized fish that are keenly sought after by visiting fly fishers.

Solar electricity generation

High sunshine hours in the catchment have seen considerable investment in solar farms since the first River Document was approved in December 2014. To date, three solar farms (i.e. utility scale solar photovoltaic (PV) generation) have been approved and are under construction in the Edgecumbe area, while New Zealand's largest solar farm is under construction at the top of the catchment in the Rangitaiki River headwaters.

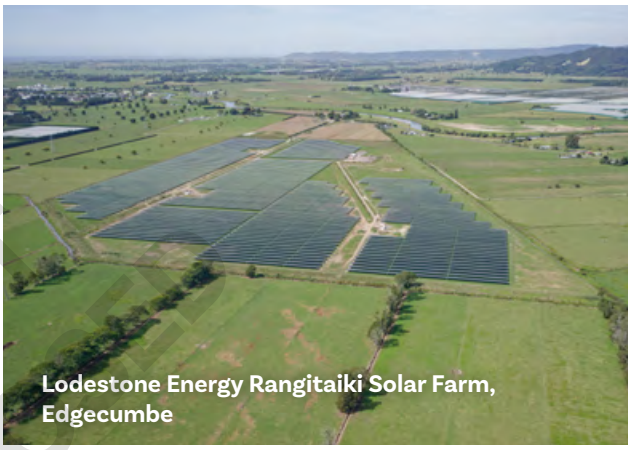
Omeheu Solar Farm is under construction between Western Drain and Putiki Roads on the outskirts of Edgcumbe. Situated on a 30-hectare site it will consist of 63,000 solar panels and is expected to generate 38MW of energy sufficient to power about 6,000 homes.

Genesis Energy is also constructing a solar farm on a 207-hectare site near Edgecumbe. This solar farm is expected to have 220,000 solar panels, generate 230 GWh electricity annually, which is enough energy to power 30,000 homes and is expected to start generating electricity in 2027.

The 50-hectare Rangitaiki Solar Farm is situated 250 metres from the Rangitaiki River halfway between Te Teko and Edgecumbe. Owned by Lodestone Energy it started operating in March 2024 and currently contains 59,600 panels generating 54 giga watts of electricity annually. It is capable of powering 7,500 local homes.

At the southern extent of the river catchment is Te Rāhui Solar Farm. Te Rāhui is jointly owned by Meridian and Nova Energy. Once fully operational, it will generate enough energy to power 100,000 homes. The 1,022ha site and will be New Zealand's largest solar farm when complete.

All solar farms operate in tandem with livestock grazing enabling agriculture to continue in tandem with electricity generation.



Lodestone Energy Rangitaiki Solar Farm, Edgecumbe

DRAFT PROPOSED

Hydro electricity generation

There are three major hydropower schemes on the Rangitaiki River; Matahina, Āniwaniwa and Flaxy-Whēao. Together they generate approximately 130 megawatts of renewable energy with an annual average of 540 gigawatt hours (GWh), which is equivalent to supporting roughly 70,000 average New Zealand households*, or supplying approximately 20 percent of the region's electricity demand without using fossil fuels. These schemes are important infrastructure in the region.

Matahina Dam was commissioned in 1967 and was the first hydro electric dam built on the Rangitaiki River. This 86-metre high dam is the largest earth dam in the North Island. The Matahina Hydropower Scheme's resource consent was renewed in 2013 to continue operating for a further 35 years.

Āniwaniwa Dam was built on the Rangitaiki River in the late 1970s. The Āniwaniwa system diverts water from the dammed Lake Āniwaniwa through a 2.2 kilometre canal and two generators and then releases the water back to the Rangitaiki River. The resource consent for the Āniwaniwa Dam system expires in 2026 and is currently being assessed for renewal.

The Flaxy-Whēao Scheme was the third hydro electricity generation system commissioned. This scheme had its beginnings in 1974 and was commissioned in 1980. Water from the Flaxy Station is discharged into the 4.7 kilometre Rangitaiki Canal which stretches from the intake of the Rangitaiki River to the Whēao Powerhouse. All of the water used in this scheme is then discharged to the Whēao River. The resource consent for the Flaxy-Whēao system expires in 2061.

*One gigawatt hour (GWh) is required to meet the average consumption of 131 residential connections. Trustpower calculation based on Ministry of Economic Development, New Zealand Energy Data File, 2010, Tables G.6a.

Glossary

Māori	English translation
Awa	river/stream/creek
Hapū	sub-tribe
Heke	migration
Iwi	tribe
Kai	food
Kaitiaki	guardian
Kaitiakitanga	guardianship
Kaumātua	elder
Kawa	Marae protocol/traditional ceremonies
Kōrero	to speak, discussion or story
Mana whenua	authority or mana associated with possession and occupation of tribal lands
Matauranga Māori	traditional Māori knowledge
Maunga	Mountain
Mauri	life-force, life supporting capacity
Mihi	greeting/acknowledgement
Mokopuna	grandchild/grandchildren
Nohoanga	settlement, reserve
Paewai	*Anguilla dieffenbachii* (longfin tuna (eel)) (Section 2.6 of Ngāti Manawa Deed of Settlement: Schedule)
Taiao	environment
Tamariki	children
Tangata	person
Taniwha	water spirit/guardian
Taonga	treasure or anything prized
Taonga tuku iho	heirloom/something handed down from another generation
Tauranga waka	landing place for vessels
Tikanga	customs or correct procedure/ meaning
Tipua	guardian spirits
Tupuna	ancestor
Tuku	release/presentation or offering
Tuna	freshwater eels found in New Zealand rivers/streams
Uri	descendant(s)/someone's child or children
Wāhi tapu	sacred site(s)
Waka	canoe
Whakapapa	genealogy/descent

English terminology

Created
something having been brought into existence.

Enhance
the state of improving quality, value or status.

Lead organisation
lead organisations are the likely organisations which will drive or coordinate actions within the action plan. However, the actions listed remain subject to each organisation's individual decision-making process.

Nutrient
is a substance contributing to nourishment. Nutrients can be contaminants; for example, nitrates and phosphates can have adverse effects on water quality. (Regional Policy Statement of the Bay of Plenty, 2014)

Prosperity
a condition in which a person or community is doing well financially.

Protected
the state of not being harmed or damaged.

Rangitaiki Catchment
means the area shown on OTS-076-034 and OTS-095-024 maps published by the Office of the Treaty Settlement; the area is indicated on the map in section 3 of this document. It generally shows the area from which rain flows into the Rangitaiki River.

Restored
the state of being returned to an original or former condition.

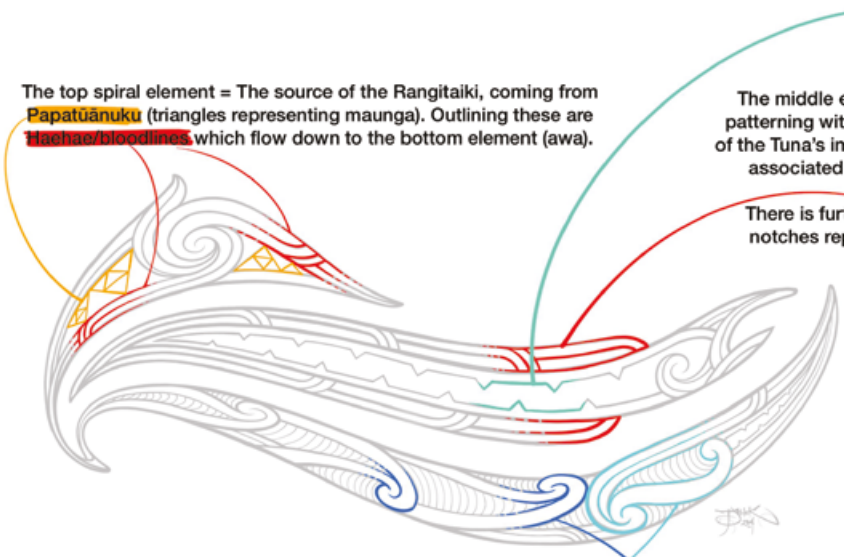
Sustainable
the use of natural resources is kept at a steady level that is not likely to damage the environment.

Valued
generally means to be held in regard, especially in respect of merit.

Note: the above are based on relevant dictionary definitions, unless stated otherwise.

DRAFT PROPOSED

Tohu o Rangitaiki River Forum



Designed for the Rangitaiki River Forum by Jordan Schick

DRAFT PROPOSED

Rangitaiki River Forum

The **Rangitaiki River Forum** is a permanent joint committee made up of representatives from:

Te Rūnanga O Ngāti Whare · Hineuru Iwi Trust · Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa · Tuwharetoa mai Kawerau ki te Tai · Great Lake Taupō (Taupō District Council)

Te Rūnanga O Ngāti Manawa · Te Kotahitanga o Ngāti Tūwharetoa · Whakatāne District Council · Toi Moana Bay of Plenty Regional Council · Tūhoe Te Uru Taumatua

References

1 Ngāti Manawa and Ngāti Whare Supplementary Deed in relation to Rangitaiki River (pg 2, Cl 2.1.1)

2 Smale, M., 2007, *"The frost flats of Rangitaiki"*, New Zealand Geographic, Issue 085 May – June 2007.

3 Adapted from *Ngāti Manawa Claims Settlement Act 2012*, *Te Ika Whenua Rivers Report 1998* and *Te Ika Whenua Energy Assets Report 1993*.

4 Adapted from the *Ngāti Awa Claims Settlement Act 2005*.

5 Image courtesy of http://mp.natlib.govt.nz/detail/?id=36933&l=mi.

6 The orgins of Tūhoe whakapapa stems through Pōtiki 1 as the son of Hinepūkohūrangi and Maunga hence Toi and Pōtiki te mana whenua, ko Tūhoe te mana me te rangatiratanga. Tūhoe is also referred to as 'Ngā tamariki o te Kohu' – Children of the Mist.

7 Cowan, J. (1983). The New Zealand Wars: A history of the Māori campaigns and the pioneering period (Vol.2). Wellington, New Zealand: Government Printer.

8 Mead, H, M & Phillis, O.e. (1982) The abundant earth: The centennial of Ruataupare at Kokohinau Marae. Te Teko, New Zealand: Te Komiti Māori o Kokohinau. Te Tatau Pounamu is the peace agreement between Ngāti Awa and Tūhoe in the early 1800s. This whakatauki continues to be used on the marae today when the occasion arises between both Tūhoe and Ngāti Awa speakers.

9 Doherty, W, Personal communication, 11 August 2026 – Maro is a measurement term spanning the length of an arm, from shoulder to fingertips.

10 Doherty, C. Personal communication, 19 August 2026. - The Journal of the Polynesian Society No.45 (March, 1903), Volume 12, p206

11 Doherty, W. Personal communication, 11 August 2026

12 Rangiaho, N. (2016) Ko Waiohau te pito o taku ao – A case study of governance and its application; Masters Degree in Māori Studies, Whakatane, New Zealand, Whakatane Printers

13 Kruger, T. Personal communication, 29 July 2026

14 Cameron, C. Personal communication, 13 July 2026

15 Doherty, W. Personal communication 11 August 2026

16 Kruger, T. (2016). Te mauri o te wai. Te Ōniao – Te mauri o te wai. Rotorua, New Zealand: Bay of Plenty Regional Council Conference.

17 Te Urewera Board (2017) Kawa o Te Urewera, Whakatāne, New Zealand, Law Creative – developing policies and practices

18 Doherty, W., (2009, August). Mātauranga Tūhoe: The centrality of mātauranga-ā-iwi to Māori Education. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. Auckland. New Zealand.

19 Rangiaho, N. (2016) Ko Waiohau te pito o taku ao – a case study of Governance and its application; Masters Degree in Māori Studies, Whakatane, New Zealand, Whakatane Printers

20 Section 7(15) of *Ngāti Manawa Claims Settlement Act 2012*.

21 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taniwha.

22 *Ngāti Awa Claims Settlement Act 2005*.

23 *Ngāti Awa Claims Settlement Act 2005*.

24 Reed, A.W., edited by Calman, R., 2008, *Taniwha, Giants and Supernatural Creatures – He Taniwha, He Tipua, He Patupaiarehe*, Traditional Māori Stories Volume 1, a Raupō Book Published by the Penguin Group.

25 Merito me Peti Hetaraka Reunion 93-94: Rangitahi Marae, Murupara 1880 – 1994, page 7 Reed, A.W., 2010, *Place Names of New Zealand*, p.265, North Shore, N.Z., Raupō.

26 *Te Ika Whenua – Energy Assets Report 1993*.

27 *Ngāti Awa Claims Settlement Act 2005*.

28 *Ngāti Awa Claims Settlement Act 2005*.

29 2010, *NERMN River and Stream Channel Monitoring programme 2005-2010*, Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

30 Boubée, J. and Hudson, N., 2009, *Assessment of the state of the Rangitaiki River within the Ngāti Manawa rohe*, NIWA client report for Ngāti Manawa.

31 Boubée, J. and Hudson, N., 2009, *Assessment of the state of the Rangitaiki River within the Ngāti Manawa rohe*, NIWA client report for Ngāti Manawa.

32 Donald, D., 2012, Health of Rangitaiki River PowerPoint presentation to the Rangitaiki River Forum, Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

33 Donald, D., 2012, Health of Rangitaiki River, PowerPoint presentation to the Rangitaiki River Forum, Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

34 Donald, D., 2012, Health of Rangitaiki River, PowerPoint presentation to the Rangitaiki River Forum, Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

35 Boubée, J. and Hudson, N., 2009, *Assessment of the state of the Rangitaiki River within the Ngāti Manawa rohe*, NIWA client report for Ngāti Manawa.

36 Donald, D., 2012, Health of Rangitaiki River, power-point presentation to the Rangitaiki River Forum, Bay of Plenty Regional Council.

37 Boubée, J. and Hudson, N., 2009, *Assessment of the state of the Rangitaiki River within the Ngāti Manawa rohe*, NIWA client report for Ngāti Manawa.

38 Suren, A.M., 2014, *An ecological assessment of waterways throughout the Rangitaiki Catchment*. Bay of Plenty Regional Council Environmental Report 2014/11.

39 Kearney, M., Kerrison, B. and Kayes, P., 2013, Recruitment of elver into the Rangitaiki Catchment 2010 - 2013, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi client report prepared for Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa.

40 Kearney, M., Kerrison, B. and Kayes, P., 2013, *Distribution and abundance of shortfin Anguilla australis and longfin A. dieffenbachia eel in the Whakatāne Region*, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi client report prepared for Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa.

Kearney, M., Kerrison, B., Sisley, M. and Kayes, P., 2013, *Assessing distribution and harvest of freshwater eels within the Rohe o Ngāti Awa*, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi client report prepared for Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa.

41 Kearney, M., Kerrison, B. and Kayes, P., 2013, *Defining the migration of adult eels within the Rangitaiki River*, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi client report prepared for Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Awa.

Smith, J., Boubée, J., Stevenson, C., Jenner, R. and Mitai, F., 2009, *Status of eels in the Rangitaiki River reservoirs and tributaries – 2008*, NIWA client report HAM2009-062 prepared for Rūnanga o Ngāti Manawa.

Smith, J., Boubée, J., Grayling, S. and Jenner, R, 2007, *Status of eels in the Rangitaiki River reservoirs and Whirinaki River – 2007*, NIWA client report HAM2006-100 prepared for Ngāti Manawa.

42 Boubée, J. and Hudson, N., 2009, *Assessment of the state of the Rangitaiki River within the Ngāti Manawa rohe*, NIWA client report for Ngāti Manawa.

43 www.teara.govt.nz.

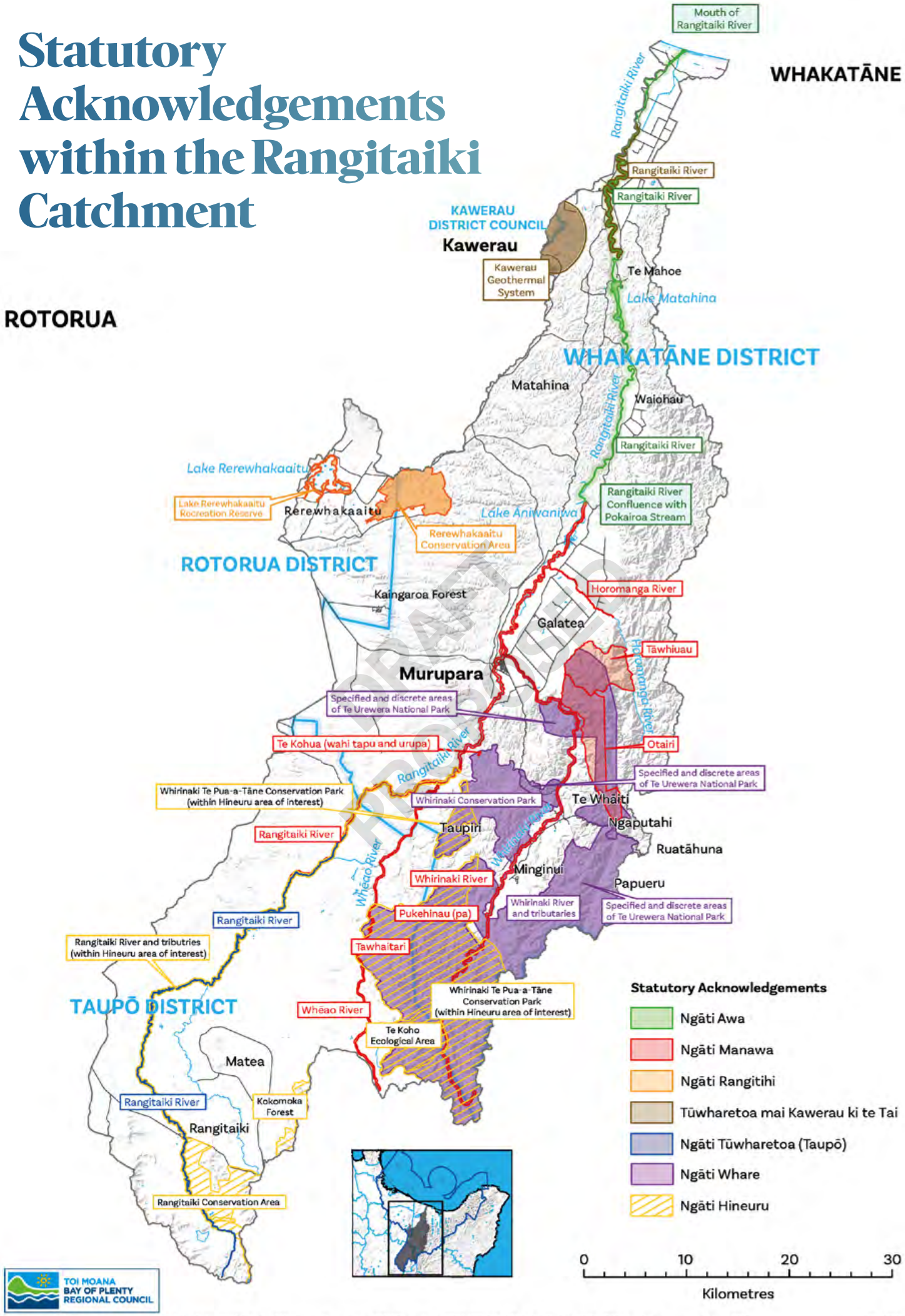
44 Suren, A.M. presentation "Rangitaiki Ecological Survey" to the Rangitaiki River Forum on 24 September 2014.

45 Suren, A.M. presentation "Rangitaiki Ecological Survey" to the Rangitaiki River Forum on 24 September 2014.

46 www.riverfishing.co.nz.
www.trout-fishing-new-zealand.com.
Eastern Fish and Game New Zealand.

DRAFT PROPOSAL

Statutory Acknowledgements within the Rangitaiki Catchment



DRAFT PROPOSED

Projection and Grid Information HORIZONTAL DATUM: New Zealand Geodetic Datum 2000 For practical purposes, NZGD2000 equates to WGS84 VERTICAL DATUM: Mean Sea Level PROJECTION: New Zealand Transverse Mercator 2000
Copyrights © Bay of Plenty Regional Council 2026 © Sourced from Land Information New Zealand data. © Sourced from Statistics New Zealand data.

zen_36192
Created 2/07/2026



PROOF

For more information or to request further hard copies of this document please contact 0800 884 880.

Electronic copies can be downloaded from rangitaiki.org.nz