TE TAIAO · OUR ENVIRONMENT

Ngati Wharekawa

Iwi Hapū Environmental Management Plan

A framework for the protection, management, and enhancement of our natural and cultural resources.

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VERSION 1.2 · AUGUST 2026

Chairperson's Foreword

Ngāti Wharekawa Iwi Hapū Environmental Management Plan (IHEMP)

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā karangatanga maha o Ngāti Wharekawa, tēnā koutou katoa.

It is with deep pride and a profound sense of responsibility that I present this Iwi Hapū Environmental Management Plan on behalf of our people. This document is more than a plan — it is a reaffirmation of who we are, where we come from, and the enduring obligations we carry as kaitiaki of our whenua, wai, and taonga tuku iho.

For generations, Ngāti Wharekawa has upheld a relationship with the natural world grounded in mātauranga Māori, whakapapa, and tikanga. Our ancestors understood that the wellbeing of our environment is inseparable from the wellbeing of our people. Today, as we navigate the pressures of modern development, climate change, and increasing demands on our natural resources, that ancestral wisdom remains our compass.

Our vision — to maintain and enhance our role as kaitiaki, ensuring our natural and cultural resources thrive for future generations through the harmonious integration of mātauranga Māori and contemporary practices — reflects both our heritage and our aspirations. It acknowledges that while the world around us evolves, our values endure.

This IHEMP provides a clear and practical framework to guide how we protect, manage, and enhance the taiao within our rohe. It serves as:

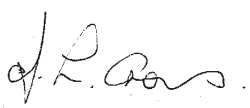
- **A reference document** for councils, government agencies, and decision-makers who must understand and respect our perspectives.
- **A values framework** that articulates the cultural principles and environmental ethics that shape our decisions.
- **An implementation guide** that outlines the actions, priorities, and pathways needed to uphold our responsibilities as kaitiaki.

Our objectives are ambitious yet essential: restoring the health of our waterways and ecosystems, safeguarding our cultural heritage, ensuring sustainable development that aligns with our values, and strengthening our voice in governance and environmental decision-making. These goals reflect the collective aspirations of our hapū and the legacy we wish to leave for our mokopuna.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to all who contributed their time, knowledge, and passion to the development of this plan — our kaumātua, whānau, environmental practitioners, and partners. Your commitment ensures that Ngāti Wharekawa continues to lead with integrity, purpose, and unity.

As we move forward, may this plan guide our actions, strengthen our partnerships, and reaffirm our enduring role as kaitiaki of our precious taonga. Together, we honour the past, uphold the present, and protect the future.

Ngā manaakitanga,



Alice Cross
Chairperson, Ngāti Wharekawa

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1. Executive Summary

Vision Statement

> *"Ngati Wharekawa maintains and enhances our role as kaitiaki, ensuring our natural and cultural resources thrive for future generations through the harmonious integration of mātauranga Māori and contemporary practices."*

Purpose & Scope

The Ngati Wharekawa Iwi Hapū Environmental Management Plan (IHEMP) establishes a comprehensive framework for protecting, managing, and enhancing our natural and cultural resources. This plan serves as:

Reference Document	For government agencies and decision-makers
Values Framework	Articulation of cultural and environmental principles
Implementation Guide	Practical actions and timelines

Key Objectives

Area	Objectives
Environmental Protection	Enhance ecological health of water bodies, land, and ecosystems
Cultural Heritage	Protect significant sites and ensure resource access
Sustainable Development	Balance growth with environmental and cultural values
Governance	Strengthen Ngati Wharekawa's role in decision-making

2. Introduction & Context

Ko Wai Mātou — Who We Are

Ko Wairere te Wainui e Whangaitia nga uri o runga
Ko Tutehe te Tupuna
Ko Wharekawa te tangata
Ko Ngati Wharekawa te Hapu
Ko Ngapuhinui tonu te Iwi
Ko Ngatokimatawhaorua te waka

Ngā Rohe — Our Ancestral Boundaries

The following map illustrates the rohe of Ngāti Wharekawa, encompassing the ancestral boundaries described in our traditional recitation. The rohe extends from Tokapatiotio at the mouth of Motukiore, following the waters, mountains, rivers, and coastal features that define our mana whenua.

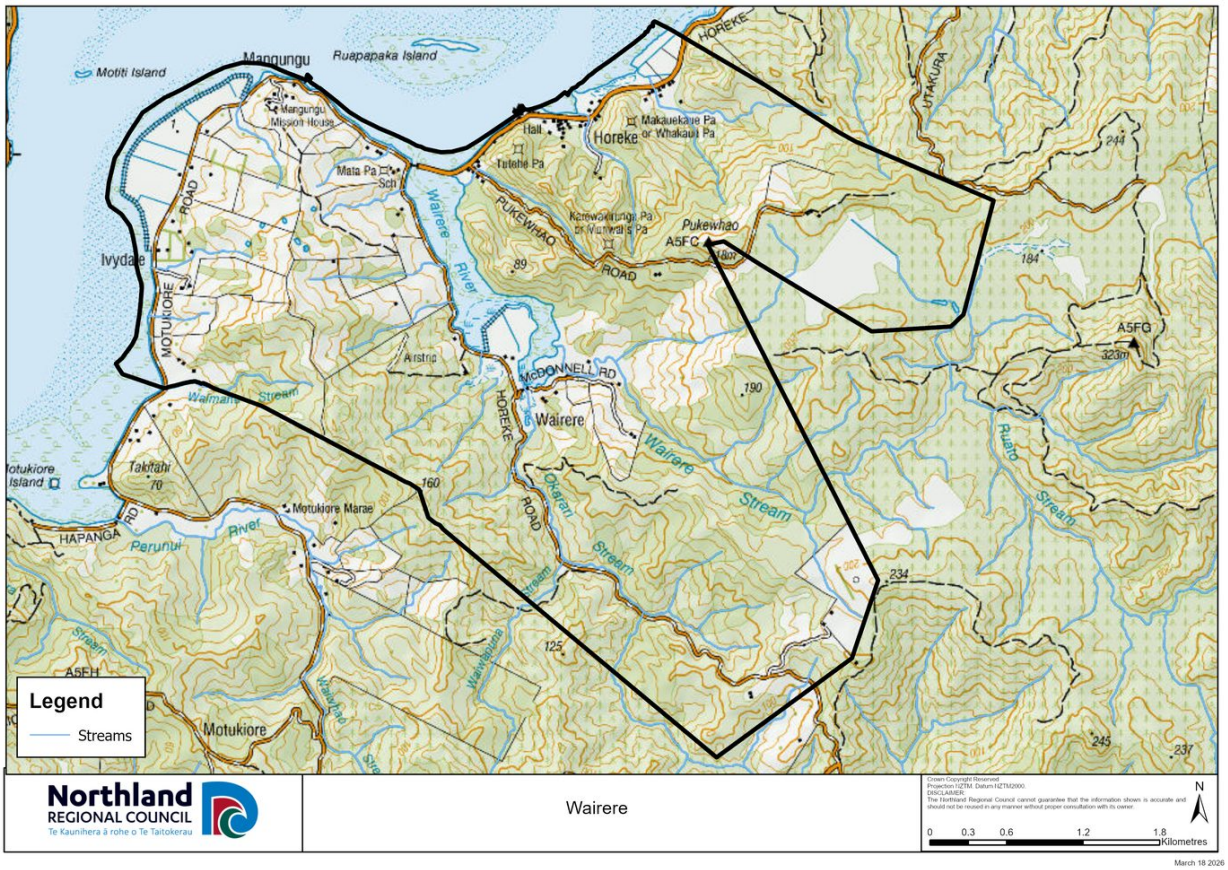

FIGURE 1

Ngāti Wharekawa Rohe Boundaries. Key landmarks and waterways referenced in the pepeha are labelled.

Ngā ingoa o ngā raina o Ngati Wharekawa

Timata I Tokapatiotio wahapu o Motukiore haere I roto I te wai tai o Motukiore tae noa kite wahapu o te Waiwhao. Ka whakatu kite Karewa ka eke ki Puke Tii, te Waipoka Tapora horahia ka tutuki ki te raina o Waima ka haere tonu I runga I tenei raina. Te Ruakaka Te Puranga/Puketotara te pua a taopuku tangitemapui Te Touoteha, Ka heke I te Puranga. Te Waipou I taka haere I roto ite wai kaputa to touoteha te Tawhitiwhiti. Arangia waipatuharakeke te wai ote Ruatoa, kokiri, ka tuhono te raina o Utakaura. Ka huri mai I roto I te wai o Ruato Te Arawhata maire, Te awa o Waipekekoura Te Poka kokoai ka tutuki kit e raina o te whenua kawaua. Ka haere te rekereke ka huri te wiroa Pukewhau. Ka heke te kokiri a maunga Maungatete. Ka huri ka whakatu kite hauauru. Ka haere I runga I te raina o Karewa tatu ki tai Rarotonga otahau Te Wai o wairere te wahapu o te kapu Pakawe a nui ka hare I runga I te raina o mangungu. Ka eke ki Puke koukou ka huri Puke Rohe ka huri ka huri I runga I te raina o Ohauiti tae noa ki PapaRoa ka huri te wahapu o Opara tae noa kite raina o Taketahi ka kake ka heke katahi ki Puripuria ka marere kite Wainui o Motukiore Ka karopoti.

This traditional recitation describes the ancestral boundaries of Ngati Wharekawa, beginning at Tokapatiotio at the mouth of Motukiore, following the waters and landmarks that define our rohe. These boundaries encompass sacred mountains, rivers, and coastal features that have guided our people for generations, establishing our mana whenua and kaitiaki responsibilities over these lands and waters.

Plan Purpose and Authority

This Iwi Hapū Environmental Management Plan (IHEMP) articulates Ngati Wharekawa's values, principles, and objectives for managing natural and cultural resources within the rohe defined above. It serves as a living document that:

- Guides decision-making for Ngati Wharekawa and partner organizations
- Informs external parties of our interests, values, and expectations
- Provides a framework for sustainable management of our ancestral lands and waters
- Establishes protocols for engagement and consultation
- Expresses our role as kaitiaki (guardians) of these taonga

Legislative Context

Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Partnership principles, active protection, right to development, rangatiratanga.
Resource Management	RMA 1991 (Sections 6, 7, 8), Local Government Act 2002, Conservation Act 1987, Heritage NZ Act 2014.
Māori Rights	Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993 (including 2020 amendments). Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act 2011. Treaty Settlement Legislation — including Te Rarawa Claims Settlement Act 2015. Fisheries Act 1996 — Section 10, Section 12, Customary Fishing Regulations 1998.

Plan Development Process

This IHEMP has been developed through extensive consultation with Ngati Wharekawa whānau, hapū leadership, kaumātua, and technical experts. The plan reflects both mātauranga Māori (traditional knowledge) passed down through generations and contemporary environmental science to address current and future challenges.

Review and Update Framework

Annual Review	Progress assessment, implementation monitoring, and minor updates.
5-Year Comprehensive Review	Full evaluation, major revisions, and strategic realignment.
Trigger-Based Review	Initiated by significant legislative changes, major environmental events, or new scientific/cultural information.

Ngāti Wharekawa commits to providing NRC with an updated copy of the IHEMP following each review cycle. All updates will include a version change log clearly identifying sections amended, content added or removed, and the rationale for changes. A tracked-changes version will accompany each update to facilitate NRC review.

The plan remains a living document, responsive to changing conditions while maintaining core cultural values and principles.

3. Our Values & Principles

Cultural Values

Mana Whenua	Authority and responsibility over ancestral lands, waters, and resources; decision-making rights.
Kaitiakitanga	Guardian role; environmental protection duties; resource management obligations; future generations consideration.
Whanaungatanga	Relationships; environmental connections; community relationships; intergenerational responsibilities.
Manaakitanga	Hospitality and care; resource sustainability; community wellbeing; environmental stewardship.
Rangatiratanga	Self-determination; decision-making authority; resource management control; cultural practice maintenance.

Environmental Principles

Sustainability
Ensuring the mauri (life force) of natural systems is maintained within their ecological carrying capacity — meaning the ability of our waterways, soils, forests, and coastal ecosystems to absorb pressures (such as nutrient loading, water extraction, or land disturbance) without degrading beyond their capacity to regenerate. For Ngāti Wharekawa, this includes maintaining the productive capacity of mahinga kai (food-gathering areas), the biological health of riparian and wetland ecosystems within the Hokianga catchment, and ensuring that resource use does not exceed the rate of natural renewal.

Intergenerational Equity	Future needs, resource preservation.
Precautionary Approach	Risk management, preventive measures.

4. Wai (Water) Management

4.1 Cultural Significance

Traditional Connections

Water bodies are central to Ngati Wharekawa identity, including Motukiore waters, Waiwhao mouth, Te awa o Waipekekoura, Omao River, and Punakitere waterways. These serve as sites for food gathering (mahinga kai), cultural materials collection, ceremonial uses, navigation routes, and boundary markers.

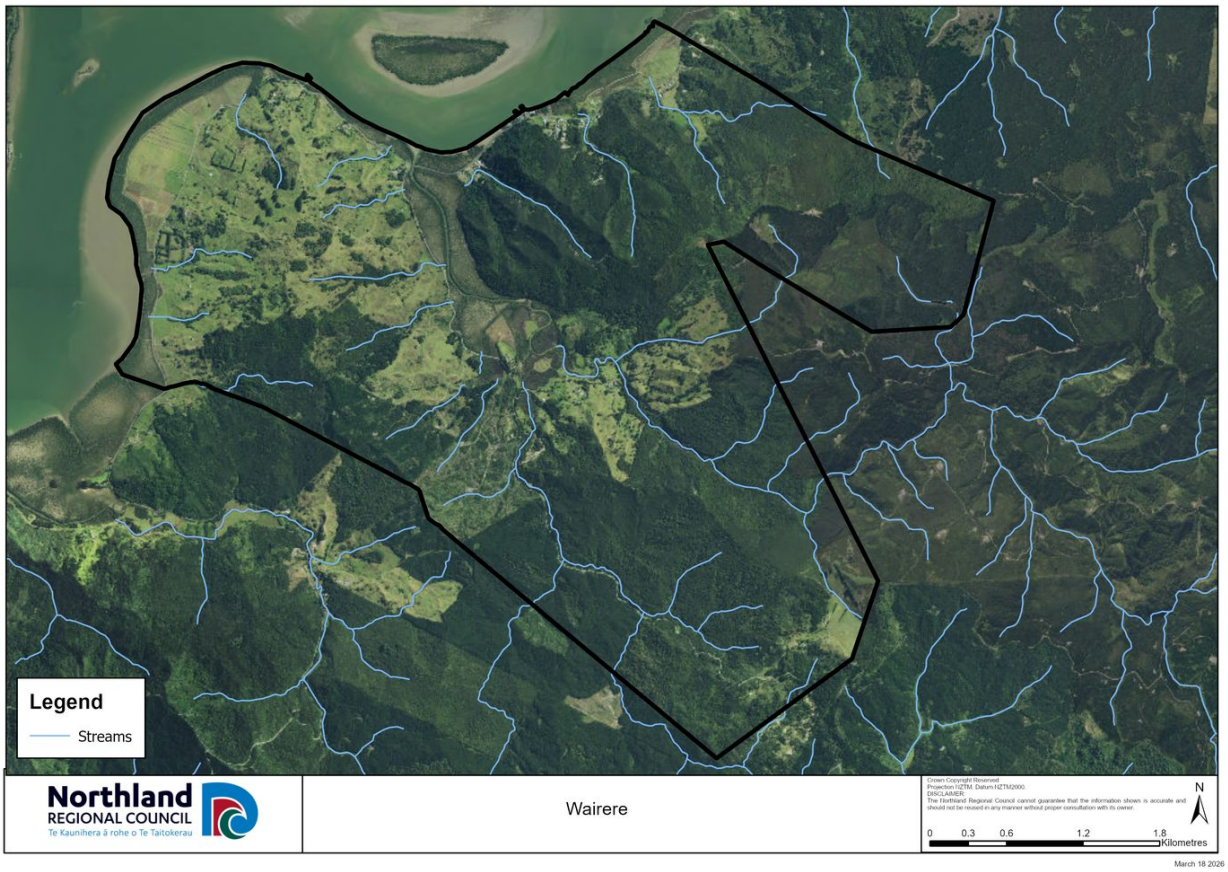

FIGURE 2

Principal waterways within Ngāti Wharekawa rohe.

Spiritual Significance

Taniwha sites, sacred pools, ritual locations, traditional crossing points.

Te Mana o te Wai

Recognizes the intrinsic value of water and our inherent relationship as kaitiaki. Water health comes first, then human health needs, then economic use. Within our rohe, the principal impacts on te mana o te wai include:

- Sedimentation and elevated turbidity from pastoral land erosion, particularly on steep hill-country pasture draining to the Utakura River and its tributaries
- Elevated E. coli levels frequently exceeding swimming-water guidelines in the Utakura River, arising from stock access to waterways and inadequate effluent management
- Nutrient enrichment (elevated total phosphorus and nitrogen) from agricultural runoff and forestry slash, contributing to degraded downstream water quality in Hokianga Harbour
- Temperature changes from loss of riparian shade cover, affecting native fish habitat (particularly for giant kōkopu and shortjaw kōkopu)
- Cumulative effects on Hokianga Harbour (NRC Rank 1 wetland), the receiving environment for all catchment impacts

4.2 Key Issues

Category	Issues
Water Quality	Sedimentation from pastoral erosion on steep Utakura catchment hill-country, forestry harvest runoff, and streambank erosion; nutrient runoff (elevated phosphorus and nitrogen from dairy/beef operations); faecal contamination (E. coli from stock access, failing septic systems); temperature changes from riparian vegetation loss.
Water Quantity	Flow alterations from land-use change affecting Wairere Stream's "flashy" hydrology (non-porous basalt accelerates runoff); extraction pressures from both surface water takes (stock water, irrigation) and groundwater bores (domestic, horticultural) — particularly concerning during low-flow summer periods; seasonal variations exacerbated by climate change; reduced base flows affecting tuna (eel) and īnanga (whitebait) migration.
Cultural Impacts	Accessibility for mahinga kai along Wairere Stream limited by land-ownership change and fish passage barriers; reduced availability of cultural resources (harakeke, kuta for weaving); constraints on customary fishing due to declining water quality; loss of traditional environmental knowledge as elders pass.
Development	Agricultural intensification (dairy conversion on former drystock land increasing nutrient and sediment loads to the Utakura); exotic forestry (harvest-cycle erosion and slash entering waterways, particularly affecting Wairere Stream tributaries); rural-residential subdivision (increased impervious surfaces, septic discharge, domestic water takes); and roading infrastructure (culverts creating fish passage barriers, stormwater discharge to streams).

4.3 Management Objectives

Cultural Protection	Mauri enhancement of the Utakura River, Wairere Stream, and Hokianga Harbour foreshore; cultural practice protection including mahinga kai access and customary fishing; knowledge preservation through intergenerational transfer of mātauranga relating to waterway health indicators; access maintenance to significant sites along our waterways.
Environmental Enhancement	Water quality improvement in the Utakura River (targeting swimmable standards); ecosystem restoration focused on: Utakura River riparian margins (native planting, stock exclusion fencing), Hokianga Harbour fringe wetlands (saltmarsh-mangrove-freshwater transition zones), Wairere Stream corridor (protection of basalt-pool habitat for native fish), and remnant freshwater wetlands within the catchment (<5% of original Northland wetlands remain). Flow maintenance to support passage for taonga species including tuna/longfin eel (At Risk–Declining), giant kōkopu (At Risk–Declining), shortjaw kōkopu (Threatened–Nationally Vulnerable), īnanga/whitebait, matuku-hūrepo/Australasian bittern (Threatened–Nationally Critical), and mātātā/fernbird (At Risk–Declining).

Sustainable Use	Sustainability of resources central to Ngāti Wharekawa identity including: freshwater; kaimoana and freshwater fisheries (tuna, īnanga, pātiki, kewai); harakeke, kuta, and other plant materials; native timber and rongoā from bush remnants; and ecosystem services (flood buffering, water filtration, carbon storage).

4.4 Policy Framework

Freshwater	Rivers/streams require flow management, quality standards, riparian protection, use allocation. Lakes/ponds need water quality monitoring, ecosystem health assessment, access management, cultural protection.
Coastal Waters	Marine environment requires water quality maintenance, species protection, cultural access, resource management. Estuarine areas need ecosystem health monitoring, habitat protection, cultural use provisions.
Wetlands	Protection measures include habitat preservation, species protection, water quality maintenance, cultural access. Enhancement programs focus on restoration projects, species recovery, cultural practice support.
Groundwater	Aquifer management requires quality protection, quantity monitoring, use allocation, recharge protection. Cultural considerations include sacred springs, traditional sources, cultural use, future security.

4.5 Implementation Actions

Short-term (1–2 years)	**Water quality monitoring establishment:** Install baseline monitoring at key sites on Utakura River, Wairere Stream, and Hokianga Harbour foreshore; establish cultural health index (CHI) alongside scientific parameters. **Cultural assessment framework:** Develop standardised CIA/CEA templates for water-related consent applications within our rohe. **Access arrangements:** Negotiate formal access agreements for monitoring sites on private land along the Utakura and its tributaries. **Management protocols:** Establish consent notification protocols with NRC for all water take, discharge, and land-use applications within our rohe.
Medium-term (2–5 years)	**Restoration projects:** Riparian planting along priority reaches of Utakura River (targeting 5m fenced buffer minimum, 10m+ preferred); Wairere Stream corridor weed control (ginger, privet, pampas) and native replanting. **Enhancement initiatives:** Fish passage remediation on priority culverts; predator trapping programme for matuku-hūrepo nesting areas (Sept–Feb). **Capacity building:** Train hapū members in water quality monitoring, CHI assessment, and data management. **Partnership development:** Formal partnership agreements with NRC, DOC, Te Roopu Taiao o Utakura, FNDC, and research institutions (NIWA, universities).

Long-term (5+ years)	**System enhancement:** Transition from monitoring to active co-management of Utakura catchment water resources; establish hapū-led freshwater management unit. **Practice optimisation:** Refine monitoring protocols based on 5+ years of data; integrate mātauranga Māori indicators into NRC state-of-environment reporting. **Knowledge development:** Systematic recording of kaumātua environmental knowledge; development of hapū environmental education programme for rangatahi; publication of Ngāti Wharekawa environmental knowledge database.

5. Whenua (Land) Management

5.1 Cultural Significance

> **Whakapapa Connection**
> Our whenua is our tūrangawaewae (place of standing). It contains our urupā, ancestral sites, origin stories, and the footsteps of our ancestors. Significant features include Maungatete mountain, Puke Tii and other hills, traditional boundary markers, and historical settlement sites.

Traditional Resources

Rongoā (medicinal plants), weaving materials, carving resources, food sources.

Culturally Significant Land Areas

Wairere Boulders and Surrounds	The basalt karst formation of the Kerikeri Volcanic Group (~2.8 million years old) is the best example of basalt karst worldwide. The boulders, up to 30m in diameter, carry deep cultural significance as landmarks within our rohe.
Puke Tii and Associated Hills	Traditional boundary markers and pā sites referenced in our pepeha.
Utakura River Corridor	The principal freshwater system draining from Lake Ōmāpere through our rohe.
Hokianga Harbour Foreshore	Our coastal interface, ranked as a Level 1 wetland by NRC (11,065 ha).
Marae Lands and Urupā	Sacred sites requiring protection buffers and maintained access.

The land cover reflects extensive historical modification — kauri forest clearance, wetland drainage (>95% of original Northland freshwater wetlands lost), and pastoral conversion — all of which have diminished the ecological and cultural values that Ngāti Wharekawa seeks to restore.

5.2 Key Issues & Challenges

Pressure Type	Specific Issues
Land Degradation	Erosion critical on steep hill-country pasture in the upper Utakura catchment and gully erosion along Wairere Stream tributaries. Invasive weeds (wild ginger, privet, pampas) problematic in Wairere Stream corridor. Bush remnants isolated by pastoral land. Soil compaction from stock on wet soils.
Development	Agricultural intensification (dairy conversion), rural-residential subdivision along Hokianga Harbour margins, roading and infrastructure projects, commercial forestry operations on steeper country.
Cultural Sites	Wāhi tapu degradation from stock access, erosion exposure of cultural deposits; access limitations from land ownership changes; knowledge loss as kaumātua pass; constraints on cultural practice from declining traditional resources.

5.3 Management Objectives

Cultural Maintenance	Site protection, access provision, knowledge preservation, practice continuity.
Environmental Health	Soil conservation, habitat protection, species recovery, ecosystem enhancement.
Sustainable Development	Appropriate land use, resource sustainability, economic opportunity, community benefit.

5.4 Policy Framework

Soil Conservation: Erosion management, soil health maintenance. **Land Use:** Sustainable agricultural practices, native species forestry. **Development:** Cultural impact assessment, environmental standards. **Protection Areas:** Wāhi tapu protection, significant natural areas, wildlife corridors.

5.5 Implementation Timeline

Timeframe	Priority Actions
Short-term (1–2 years)	Cultural site mapping, high-risk area protection, monitoring establishment, partnership development.
Medium-term (2–5 years)	**Restoration:** Priority 1 — Wairere Stream riparian corridor restoration. Priority 2 — Stock exclusion fencing along Utakura River tributaries. Priority 3 — Hokianga Harbour saltmarsh fringe protection. **Enhancement:** Buffer zones around wāhi tapu (minimum 20m, target 50m); ecological restoration between Wairere Boulders and Hokianga foreshore; pest control intensification. Protocol development for Freshwater Farm Plans and Accidental Discovery Protocols. Capacity building through hapū environmental monitoring training.
Long-term (5+ years)	Land acquisition, comprehensive restoration, practice enhancement, knowledge development.

6. Koiora (Biodiversity)

6.1 Cultural Significance

> **Whakapapa Connections**
> For Ngāti Wharekawa, all living things are connected through whakapapa. Native species are our kin — they link us to our ancestors and guardians, forming cultural identities inseparable from the landscapes they inhabit.

Taonga Species of Ngāti Wharekawa Rohe

Matuku-hūrepo (Australasian Bittern) — Threatened–Nationally Critical	Estimated 250–1,000 individuals remain nationally. Found in the Hokianga Harbour wetland complex. Key indicator of wetland health. Predation by rats, stoats, and cats is the primary threat.
Tuna / Longfin Eel — At Risk–Declining	Central to Ngāti Wharekawa mahinga kai. Found throughout the Utakura River system. One of the longest-lived freshwater fish in the world (60–100+ years). Te Roopu Taiao o Utakura has undertaken tuna restoration work.
Giant Kōkopu — At Risk–Declining	Requires intact riparian cover, stable pool habitat, and instream woody debris. Potential habitat in basalt-pool environments of Wairere Stream. Sensitive to loss of riparian shade and sedimentation.
Shortjaw Kōkopu — Threatened–Nationally Vulnerable	New Zealand's rarest galaxiid. Requires forested stream habitat. Potentially present in less-modified tributaries; targeted survey recommended.
Īnanga / Whitebait — At Risk–Declining	Spawns in tidally influenced riparian vegetation. Hokianga Harbour provides critical spawning habitat. Protection of streamside vegetation at tidal interfaces is essential.
Mātātā / Fernbird — At Risk–Declining	Important populations in coastal and estuarine wetlands around the Hokianga. Requires raupō, flax, rush, and sedgeland habitat.
Banded Rail / Moho-pēreru — At Risk–Declining	Hokianga Harbour supports the second-largest banded rail population in Northland. Found in mangrove, saltmarsh, and adjacent scrub.

Native Flora

Our rohe retains remnants of broadleaf-podocarp forest including taraire, tōtara, kahikatea, pūriri, and rimu. The Wairere Boulders area supports regenerating native bush. Wetland vegetation includes raupō, harakeke, kuta (valued for weaving), and carex sedgelands.

Ecosystem Context

Hokianga Harbour (NRC site O05/152) is the fourth-largest harbour in New Zealand — a Level 1 ecological site supporting 13 ecological units, 3 threatened flora species, and 18 threatened fauna species. Freshwater wetlands occupy just 1.5% of the Hokianga Ecological District. The Lower Waihou Swamp & Shrubland (O05/090) is one of the largest remaining mineral freshwater wetlands in the district.

6.2 Key Issues & Challenges

Threat Category	Specific Issues
Invasive Species	Animal pests (rats, stoats, possums), weed species, aquatic invaders, disease vectors
Habitat Loss	Land conversion, fragmentation, degradation, modification
Cultural Impacts	Traditional material scarcity, food source decline, medicinal plant loss, practice constraints
Knowledge Loss	Traditional knowledge loss, practice discontinuation, species relationship changes

6.3 Implementation Priorities

Ngāti Wharekawa's biodiversity priorities focus on the Wairere sub-catchment of the Waihou, at the head of the Hokianga — the Wairere Stream and its basalt-pool reaches, and the regenerating native bush of the Wairere Boulders area.

Timeframe	Priority Actions
Immediate (1–2 years)	Survey the Wairere Stream basalt-pool reaches for giant kōkopu, and the forested Wairere Boulders reaches for shortjaw kōkopu (targeted survey is already recommended for this taonga). Secure customary access and protection for the mahinga kai reaches of the Wairere Stream.
Short-term (2–5 years)	Restore riparian shade and control sedimentation along the Wairere Stream basalt-pool reaches, directly addressing the identified threats to giant kōkopu. Support ongoing regeneration of native bush (taraire, tōtara, kahikatea, pūriri, rimu) at Wairere Boulders as a forest–stream buffer. Document mātauranga associated with the Wairere waterways.
Long-term (5+ years)	Restore the Wairere sub-catchment as a connected forest-to-estuary unit, from the Wairere Boulders bush down the Wairere Stream to its estuary on the Waihou arm of the Hokianga. Re-establish customary harvest of taonga resources (harakeke, kuta) where populations recover. Embed hapū monitoring and mātauranga in the ongoing management of the focal area.

7. Climate Change Adaptation

7.1 Climate Projections

Expected: Increased average temperatures (1–3°C by 2100), more frequent and intense rainfall events, extended drought periods, sea level rise (30–100cm by 2100), more frequent storm events, ocean acidification.

7.2 Risk Assessment

Physical Environment	Coastal erosion threatening sites, increased flooding, saltwater intrusion, habitat shifts, water quality impacts.
Cultural Heritage	Erosion of coastal wāhi tapu, altered ecological conditions, changes to seasonal indicators, reduced mahinga kai access.
Social & Economic	Primary industry impacts, infrastructure damage, health impacts, increased living costs.

7.3 Adaptation Framework

Whakaaro Kotahi — Integrated Thinking	Holistic approach recognizing interconnectedness of environmental, cultural, social, and economic impacts.
Whakatipuranga — Generational Planning	Multi-generational strategies honoring responsibility to future descendants.
Tikanga-Based Resilience	Drawing on traditional values while embracing innovation and new knowledge.

7.4 Resilience Strategies

Domain	Key Strategies
Natural Environment	Restore wetlands, establish riparian planting, create species migration pathways, protect groundwater recharge, living shorelines, restore coastal dunes
Cultural Heritage	Document at-risk sites, physical protection, relocation protocols, adapt cultural harvest calendars, protect significant species, climate risk assessment for marae
Infrastructure	Diversify water sources, conservation measures, renewable energy, microgrids, upgrade vulnerable transport links
Economic Resilience	Diversify food production, revitalize traditional practices, local food networks, transition planning

7.7 Priority Actions

Short-term (1–3 years)	Establish Climate Change Working Group within hapū governance structure. Complete detailed vulnerability assessment of marae, urupā, and coastal cultural sites. Develop emergency response plans for marae. Begin coastal site documentation. Implement initial protective measures.
Medium-term (3–5 years)	Implement nature-based coastal protection at priority sites. Develop wetland restoration programme for flood buffering within Utakura/Hokianga catchment. Establish climate-adapted planting programmes. Integrate mātauranga Māori climate indicators into regional monitoring with NRC. Complete managed retreat feasibility studies. Secure dedicated climate adaptation funding.
Long-term (5–10+ years)	Implement managed retreat or adaptation of vulnerable marae and cultural infrastructure. Establish hapū-led climate adaptation monitoring network. Achieve measurable improvement in catchment resilience. Develop carbon credit programme through native ecosystem restoration. Establish intergenerational climate adaptation knowledge transfer programme. Contribute to regional and national Indigenous climate adaptation policy.

8. Governance & Partnerships

8.1 Governance Structure

Hapū Governance: Leadership oversight, management team, technical support, community participation.

Decision-Making Authority: Authority levels defined, consultation requirements specified, review processes established, cultural standards integrated.

8.2 Partnership Framework

Partner Type	Engagement Approach	Key Objectives
Government Agencies	Formal partnership agreements, liaison meetings, joint planning	Policy alignment, resource sharing, co-management
Local Councils	MOUs, planning participation, consent consultation	Early engagement, information sharing
Research Institutions	Collaborative research, knowledge exchange	Evidence base, monitoring support
Community Groups	Community hui, volunteer programs, education	Community engagement, knowledge sharing

8.3 Engagement Protocols

When to Consult Ngati Wharekawa

- All resource consent applications within the rohe
- Policy and planning document development
- Infrastructure projects affecting water, land, or cultural sites
- Research proposals involving natural or cultural resources
- Emergency response planning
- Any activity that may affect mahinga kai, wāhi tapu, or cultural practices

Consultation Process

1. Early notification (pre-application preferred)
2. Minimum 20 working days for response
3. Site visits where appropriate
4. Cultural Impact Assessment if required
5. Ongoing monitoring involvement

8.4 Contact Information

> Primary Contact: Ngati Wharekawa Environmental Management Office
> Maia Peehikuru — maia.peehikuru@gmail.com

8.5 Agency Relationships

All agencies should engage with Ngati Wharekawa as early as possible — ideally at the pre-application or policy scoping stage.

Northland Regional Council (NRC)	Regional policy, resource consents, environmental monitoring, natural hazard management. Timeframes: Minimum 20 working days (40 for complex consents).
Far North District Council (FNDC)	District plan provisions, land use consents, subdivision, infrastructure, waste management. Timeframes: Minimum 20 working days.
Department of Conservation (DOC)	Conservation management strategies, threatened species programs, concessions, archaeological authorities, biodiversity management.
Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) — Fisheries	Customary fishing regulations, commercial fishing, aquaculture proposals, fisheries enforcement. Timeframes: Minimum 40 working days for aquaculture.
Ministry for the Environment (MfE)	National environmental policy, climate change strategy, freshwater reforms, waste minimization.
Office of Treaty Settlements and Takutai Moana — Te Tari Whakatau	(Formerly Te Arawhiti. See: https://whakatau.govt.nz/) Treaty settlement negotiations, relationship agreements, Crown funding, co-governance arrangements, takutai moana applications.
Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga	Archaeological authorities, heritage site protection, accidental discovery protocols.

Dispute Resolution

Where disagreements arise: early notification, good faith discussion, mediation if needed, right to formal opposition where resolution is not achieved.

9. Monitoring & Evaluation

9.1 Monitoring Framework

Environmental Monitoring	Water quality testing, flow monitoring, habitat condition assessment, species surveys, soil quality, erosion monitoring, vegetation assessment, wildlife surveys.
Cultural Monitoring	Mauri assessment of water bodies, practice viability, resource availability, community feedback, wāhi tapu site condition, traditional indicator species, cultural wellbeing.
Performance Monitoring	Implementation progress, partnership effectiveness, consultation quality, capacity building outcomes, policy influence, community engagement.

9.2 Reporting Requirements

Report Type	Frequency	Purpose
Monthly Reports	Monthly	Track immediate priorities, water quality trends, urgent issues
Quarterly Reports	Quarterly	Implementation progress, partnership activities, community engagement
Annual Reports	Annually	Comprehensive assessment, trend analysis, strategic review
Five-Year Review	Every 5 years	Major IHEMP review, update objectives, revise priorities

9.3 Adaptive Management

Continuous Improvement Process: Information collection → Performance assessment → Strategy adaptation → Implementation refinement.

9.4 Resource Requirements

Personnel: Cultural monitors, technical experts, community liaisons, management staff. **Equipment:** Monitoring tools, testing equipment, GIS capabilities. **Training:** Cultural monitoring methods, technical skills, reporting. **Partnerships:** Agency relationships, community involvement, expert support.

10. Environmental Position Statements

IMPORTANT: These position statements establish Ngati Wharekawa's clear, non-negotiable positions on significant environmental and resource management issues. Decision-makers, consent applicants, and partners should refer to these statements as foundational guidance for all activities within our rohe.

1. Seabed Mining and Extraction

Ngati Wharekawa fundamentally opposes seabed mining within our rohe moana. The seabed is the domain of Tangaroa and holds immense cultural significance as a source of mahinga kai and as the resting place of ancestors. Any proposal for seabed mineral extraction, including iron sand mining, will not receive hapū support. We will actively advocate against such activities through all available legal and political mechanisms.

2. Marine Farming and Aquaculture

New Aquaculture Management Areas (AMAs) or marine farm expansions require explicit Ngati Wharekawa partnership and consent. We oppose any applications that have not involved early hapū engagement. Marine farming must not impede customary fishing rights, affect mahinga kai species, or compromise water quality. All proposals must include co-management arrangements and benefit-sharing agreements with the hapū.

3. Water Extraction and Bottling

Ngati Wharekawa opposes large-scale commercial water extraction and bottling operations within our rohe. Water is a taonga and has its own mauri — it is not a commodity to be exported for private profit while our communities face water security challenges. Any water take consents must demonstrate tangible benefits to the hapū and must not compromise the mauri of water bodies or affect downstream users, ecosystems, or cultural sites.

4. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

Ngati Wharekawa supports a precautionary approach to GMOs and opposes the release of genetically modified organisms within our rohe until comprehensive, long-term impact studies demonstrate zero risk to native biodiversity and ecosystem integrity. We particularly oppose GMO trials or releases near culturally significant species, traditional food gathering areas, or native forest remnants. This position applies to both terrestrial and aquatic organisms.

5. Climate Change and Adaptation

All climate change adaptation planning within our rohe must incorporate mātauranga Māori and be co-designed with Ngati Wharekawa. We assert that adaptation strategies cannot be imposed upon us; they must reflect our values, protect our cultural sites, and ensure our communities are central to decision-making. We expect government agencies to provide adequate resources for iwi-led adaptation initiatives and to recognize our traditional knowledge as legitimate climate science.

6. Wastewater and Stormwater Discharge

Direct discharge of wastewater or inadequately treated stormwater into our waterways is unacceptable to Ngati Wharekawa. We advocate for land-based treatment systems and progressive elimination of direct discharges to water. All existing discharge consents should be reviewed with a view to implementing higher treatment standards and alternative disposal methods. New developments must demonstrate water-sensitive design and zero direct discharge to natural water bodies wherever feasible.

7. Development Near Wāhi Tapu and Cultural Sites

Development activities that would damage, disturb, or compromise the integrity of wāhi tapu, urupā, or other culturally significant sites will not be supported by Ngati Wharekawa. Appropriate buffer zones must be established around all identified cultural sites. Any activity requiring earthworks or construction near such sites requires a comprehensive Cultural Impact Assessment commissioned by the applicant in partnership with the hapū, and an Accidental Discovery Protocol must be in place before work commences.

8. Indigenous Biodiversity Protection

Ngati Wharekawa expects that indigenous biodiversity will be maintained and enhanced, not merely "offset" or compensated. We oppose development that results in permanent loss of native forest, wetlands, or other significant natural areas, even where biodiversity offsetting or compensation is proposed. Enhancement of degraded sites and pest control programs must be undertaken proactively, not as mitigation for allowing further degradation elsewhere.

9. Coastal Development and Hard Protection

Ngati Wharekawa prefers natural, nature-based solutions for coastal hazard management over hard engineering structures. Seawalls, groynes, and rock revetments should be considered only as a last resort where retreat or natural approaches are genuinely not feasible. Coastal development must account for climate change projections and avoid creating future conflicts between built assets and coastal processes. Protection of coastal dunes, wetlands, and natural buffers takes precedence over new coastal subdivision.

10. Forestry on Ancestral Lands

Large-scale exotic plantation forestry should not expand onto Māori land or into areas adjacent to culturally significant sites. Where forestry occurs, Ngati Wharekawa expects harvest practices that protect water quality, maintain riparian buffers, and include transition plans to permanent native forest cover. We strongly support indigenous forestry initiatives and carbon farming using native species. Clear-fell harvesting practices that cause severe erosion and sedimentation are unacceptable.

Implementation of Position Statements: These position statements inform Ngati Wharekawa's consultation responses to resource consent applications, policy submissions, and partnership negotiations. Applicants and decision-makers should engage with the hapū early in their planning processes to discuss how proposals align with these positions. Projects that directly conflict with these statements are unlikely to receive hapū support and may face formal opposition.

11. Quick Reference Guide for Decision-Makers

This quick reference is designed for busy decision-makers, consent officers, planners, and project applicants who need immediate guidance on Ngati Wharekawa's environmental priorities and consultation expectations.

11.1 Top 10 Priority Issues

#	Issue	Hapū Position
1	Seabed Mining	Fundamental opposition
2	Wastewater to Waterways	Direct discharge unacceptable
3	Water Quality	Te Mana o te Wai must be upheld
4	Cultural Sites (Wāhi Tapu)	CIA required — no damage
5	Climate Adaptation	Must incorporate mātauranga Māori
6	Aquaculture/Marine Farms	Requires explicit partnership
7	Water Bottling	Oppose large-scale extraction
8	Native Biodiversity Loss	No offsetting — must enhance
9	Coastal Hard Structures	Nature-based solutions preferred
10	GMOs	Oppose until proven zero-risk

11.2 Consultation Checklist

Before lodging your application:

- Contact Ngati Wharekawa (minimum 20 working days before lodgement)
- Provide full project description and location
- Identify potential cultural site impacts
- Propose mitigation measures
- Offer site visit if appropriate
- Commission CIA if requested
- Discuss monitoring and reporting
- Establish ongoing communication

11.3 When CIA Required

- Earthworks within 200m of known wāhi tapu, urupā, or archaeological sites
- Projects affecting water bodies of cultural significance
- Coastal development and marine activities
- Large-scale land use changes (>5 hectares)
- Activities affecting traditional mahinga kai areas
- Infrastructure projects in culturally sensitive areas

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Consulting too late (after application lodgement)
- Providing insufficient time for meaningful response
- Assuming "no known sites" means no cultural significance
- Proposing offsetting rather than avoiding impacts
- Not following up after initial contact
- Proceeding without addressing hapū concerns

12. Contact Information

For More Information

For inquiries regarding this Environmental Management Plan, please contact:

> **Ngati Wharekawa Environmental Management Office**
> Maia Peehikuru — maia.peehikuru@gmail.com

Ngati Wharekawa Hapū Environmental Management Plan | August 2026