Motueka Community Catchment Plan

A living framework for revitalising our rivers & deepening community connection and resilience

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Executive Summary

This plan is a living, evolving guide for creating a thriving and resilient future for the Motueka River (ngā awa), the people and communities (ngā tangata) who depend on it, and the land (te whenua) that holds us all. It is shaped by the wisdom of the past, grounded in the realities of today, and guided by the future we hope to build together.

At its heart is a story of connection – to the river, to the land, and to one another. It reflects the lives of those who live, work, and play here, and who find identity, wellbeing, and restoration in and around the awa.

Recent floods have reminded us how powerful and changeable the river can be, and how closely our wellbeing is tied to its rhythms. These events have highlighted the importance of understanding the awa as a living system and strengthening resilience – in our landscapes, our communities, and the choices we make – so we can continue to thrive alongside it.

Vision

From its origins in the mountainous Maungarakau / Red Hills and the wild ranges of Kahurangi – fed powerfully by the Wangapeka – the Motueka River grows to majestic proportions as it journeys toward Te Tai-o-Aorere / Tasman Bay. This beautiful, powerful force – woven with tributaries, wetlands, and unseen flows of groundwater – shapes the rhythms of life for all who dwell beside it. Yet the river and the communities it sustains face pressures, some visible and immediate, others unfolding quietly over time.

Our vision is for a catchment where sustainable, thoughtful, and environmentally sound practice is the norm – across commercial and non-commercial land uses alike. Every person, every hand, every piece of land, and every stream contributes to the wellbeing of the living legacy that is the Motueka Awa.

About the Plan

This plan is rooted in the Motueka Catchment Collective (MCC) values of stewardship/kaitiakitanga, resilience, and inclusivity. It builds on the collaborative efforts of those who came before, weaving science, mātauranga Māori, and local knowledge. It reflects a shared commitment to caring for the awa and its surrounding landscapes, and to supporting communities to live safely and well within a dynamic river system.

Signed Debbie Win, Dayveen Stephens

Co Chairs – MCC Steering Group

QUALITY INFORMATION

Reference:	Carter D. (2026) Motueka Catchment Community Plan. Motueka Catchment Collective.
Date:	March 2026
Prepared by:	D. Carter on behalf of Motueka Catchment Collective.
Reviewed by:	H. Forsey (Tasman District Council) J. Gregory (Ministry for Primary Industries) S. Davies (Tasman Environmental Trust D. Win (Motueka Catchment Collective) D. Stephens, R. Love, R. Cudby (Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Rārua, Te Ātiawa) Along with other members of MCC thematic groups, the MCC Steering Group
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Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

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MOTUEKA CATCHMENT COLLECTIVE PLAN

OUR VISION

A HEALTHY, SWIMMABLE MOTUEKA RIVER AT THE HEART OF A THRIVING CATCHMENT – CARED FOR BY COMMUNITIES AND IWI, WITH PEOPLE LIVING AND WORKING SAFELY AND PROSPEROUSLY ALONGSIDE A DYNAMIC RIVER SYSTEM.

OUR ROLE AS MOTUEKA CATCHMENT COLLECTIVE

The Motueka Catchment Collective (MCC) is community led, with farmers, growers, landowners, residents, and iwi at its centre. We connect people, support practical action, work with partners, and help the community understand and care for our catchment's freshwater system.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

HEALTHY LAND, HEALTHY RIVERS

We support practical land care to reduce erosion, strengthen soil and water health, and maintain productivity.

A RIVER THAT NURTURES PEOPLE AND PLACE

We help communities build understanding, connection, and capability to care for their awa and live well with a changing river and climate.

ECOSYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT THE AWA

We help communities and landowners regenerate native ecosystems, control pests and weeds, and restore habitats.

OUR PRIORITIES

Across the catchment, people are taking action. MCC supports this mahi by:

EMPOWERING SUB-CATCHMENT COMMUNITIES

Supporting locals to organise, plan, and take action together.

RAISING THE PROFILE OF CATCHMENT CARE

Sharing stories, celebrating leadership, and sharing tools and techniques across urban and rural areas.

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER ON CHALLENGING ISSUES

Hosting hui and events on flooding impacts, river health, and catchment resilience.

SUPPORTING PRACTICAL LAND & RIVER CARE

Working alongside farmers, growers, landowners, community groups and partners on planting, erosion control, weed and pest control, and community based and cultural river monitoring.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

EVERYONE HAS A PART TO PLAY.

LEARN, MONITOR, JOIN A HUI, SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE, OR TAKE ACTION WHERE YOU LIVE AND WORK.

SCAN ME

MOTUEKACATCHMENT.ORG.NZ/EVENTS

1. About the Plan

1.1 Purpose of the plan

This plan offers a living framework for a safe, healthy future for the Motueka River and its communities, guided by ki uta ki tai—from mountains to sea. It responds to growing challenges like weather extremes, sedimentation, and habitat loss, recognising that lasting solutions require a shared, catchment-wide approach led by communities. It builds on what's working and helps us do more—together.

The plan guides the Motueka Catchment Collective and local partners with a practical, inclusive structure to align efforts, scale impact, and look after what matters most.

1.2 How This Plan Can Be Used

This plan is designed to be used—not just read. It is a guide for those actively involved in looking after the Motueka Catchment as outlined below.

Audience	**How They Can Use the Plan**
MCC (Steering Group, thematic groups, sub-catchment leads, community groups)	➢ Align local actions with catchment-wide goals ➢ Prioritise where energy goes ➢ Guide work and track progress
Partner Organisations (see Section 1.6) Iwi, TET: Tasman Environmental Trust, TBG: Tasman Bay Guardians, NZLT: New Zealand Landcare Trust, TDC: Tasman District Council, DOC	➢ Understand MCC and community priorities ➢ Identify opportunities to work together ➢ Align regional planning and funding with community-led priorities
Funders and Supporters	➢ Assess the rationale and impact of MCC's work

Audience	How They Can Use the Plan
	➢ Identify investment opportunities ➢ Support community-led restoration and resilience
Community Members	➢ Understand the MCC's long-term vision and plan to get there ➢ Explore opportunities to get involved

1.3 What This Plan Is Not

This is not a comprehensive plan for the whole catchment. It's not a regulatory document, nor does it represent council policy or iwi-led planning. Instead, this plan reflects the scope and kaupapa of the MCC and expands MCC's aspirations into the future. It's shaped by those who have had involvement in the MCC, so while it seeks to be representative of community voice and perspectives, it does not necessarily reflect the aspirations of the whole community.

1.4 How the Plan Was Developed

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini.
My strength is not that of a single warrior, but that of many.

This plan integrates and reflects years of shared effort — informed by workshops, community meetings, actions, and conversations across the catchment. It brings together the knowledge and mahi of landowners, iwi, researchers, and community groups, all committed to the wellbeing of the Motueka Catchment.

It is guided by an internationally recognised framework, adapted for local context. Key foundations include:

- Support from the Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance using the "Open Standards" plan development framework, integration of Motueka's Integrated Catchment Management programme insights, and recent research and monitoring findings.
- Incorporation of the *2023 Community Survey Results* and feedback from community workshops, hui, and informal kōrero to guide priorities

- Guidance from MCC's Steering Group, and input from MCC's six thematic groups to develop actions.
- A core working group of MCC members and partners.

The plan will continue to evolve as we learn and adapt together.

1.5 Mana whenua partners

The Motueka Catchment lies within the rohe of several iwi who hold mana whenua status and act as kaitiaki of the awa and surrounding landscapes. MCC has been lucky to have been supported by these iwi partners including Ngāti Rārua, Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Māui, and Ngāti Tama. Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō has also supported MCC.

Representatives from these three iwi sit on MCC's Steering Group, and MCC is on a learning journey towards respectfully including iwi perspectives, values and priorities in its processes and actions.

1.6 Other Plan Partners

While this plan is intended to primarily guide the ongoing mahi of the MCC community, it has been supported by, and its implementation will depend on, a wide network of partners and organisations who will be essential to how effectively the goals of the plan can be achieved.

Partner	Role
Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and Ministry for the Environment (MfE)	Funders and central government supporters
Tasman Environmental Trust (TET)	Funding administration, coordination, and partnerships

Partner	Role
NZ Landcare Trust (NZLT)	Technical support, landowner engagement and event coordination
Tasman Bay Guardians (TBG)	Support for community based freshwater monitoring, youth education and engagement, and river events
Tasman District Council (TDC)	Technical and delivery support, data, funding, and alignment with regional policy
Department of Conservation (DOC)	Technical conservation advice and support where capacity allows, science information.
Science partners (Earth Sciences, Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, and Cawthron Institute)	Science advice, research findings, technical input.
Fish & Game (F&G) and other agencies	Trap building, support at events, technical input
Rural productive sector industry groups and bodies (i.e. Beef & Lamb, Horticulture NZ, Dairy NZ)	Sector advice and connections, support for events, rural sector conduit
Regional organisations (Kōtahitanga mo te Taiao Alliance, Nelson Tasman Climate Forum, Tapawera Connect	Link with regional environmental and community goals and strategies
Local businesses (Commercial nurseries, pest management operators, horticultural producers, farming goods suppliers)	Provision of support for resources and services relating to plan actions, along with technical guidance.
Local community groups (Sub-catchment groups, nurseries, and trapping networks and other community groups)	Support for achieving plan goals and delivery of on-ground actions.

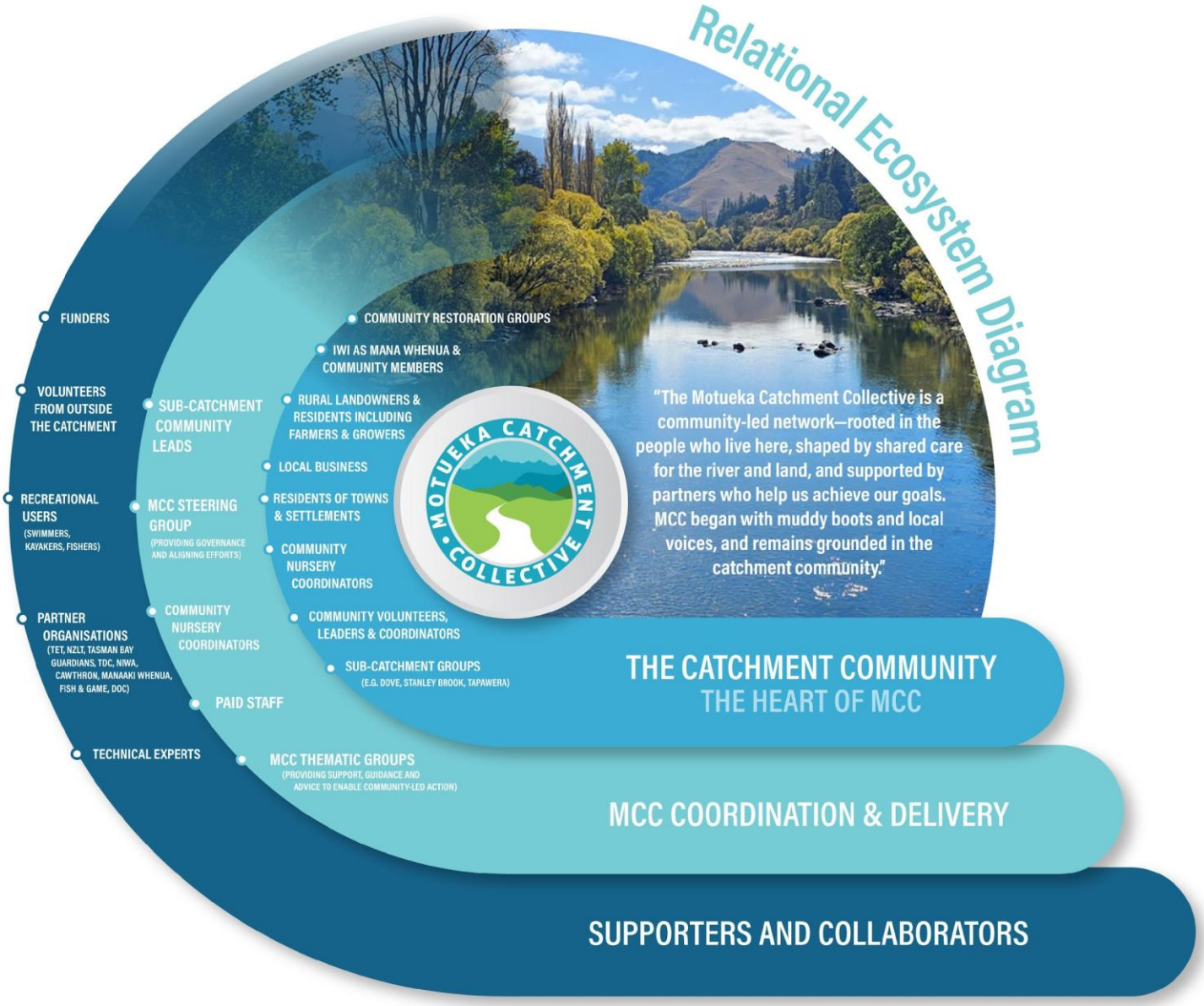
2. The Motueka Catchment Collective

2.1 Who is the Motueka Catchment Collective?

The MCC is a community-led network made up of the people who live and work in the catchment—especially rural landowners, residents, and volunteers. MCC began with grassroots energy and local conversations in the upper catchment, and while partners provide valuable support, it is the community that defines the kaupapa, sets priorities, and leads the way.

Many involved wear multiple hats and move between roles—farmers, professionals, employed by partners, advocates, and more. MCC is not a single voice, but a chorus of lived experience, values, and goals. This diversity fosters connection and shared purpose, but also calls for care, clarity, and honest conversation.

The diagram below shows the many voices of MCC, with the community at the centre.



2.2 Our role in the Catchment

MCC exists as a connector and capacity builder - to weave together local knowledge and action, lived experience, and technical insight to encourage the community to look after the catchment for generations to come. It helps guide strategy, build partnerships, and support community-led care. Its core functions are:

- **Strategic Coordination & Governance** – Aligning priorities, guiding delivery, and maintaining inclusive governance
- **Capacity Building & Knowledge Sharing** – Strengthening community capability through training, tools, and peer learning
- **Monitoring, Data & Adaptive Action** – Supporting community-based monitoring and linking science and data to restoration and planning
- **Engagement, Dialogue & Visibility** – Fostering connection, awareness, and shared purpose across the catchment
- **Partnership & Collaboration** – Working with iwi, council, researchers, and community groups to deliver shared goals

2.3 What We Care About

MCC was formed from a desire to protect this place we call home — its people, its landscapes, and the river systems that connect us. As recent floods have shown, caring for the catchment means caring for both community safety and livelihoods along with environmental health. We wish to be good ancestors, leaving a legacy that enables future generations to thrive.

The catchment is a living system, and our wellbeing is woven into its rivers, wetlands, forests, aquifers, and estuaries. It is also shaped by the people who live and work here — mana whenua, landowners, residents, farmers, growers, and volunteers. The photos and descriptions below reflect some of what our community values.

✓ The Motueka Awa – Central to Our Catchment

The Motueka River system links mountains to the sea and plays a major role in recreation, identity, and daily life. The many rivers and streams in our catchment also support treasured and important freshwater species and habitats.

> *"It's great for swimming in, fishing from, kayaking along, walking and biking beside."* — 2023 Community Survey

Recent flood events have also highlighted how powerful and changeable the river can be, and how closely our communities are tied to its behaviour. Understanding the awa helps us look after it — and live safely alongside it.

For mana whenua, the Motueka Awa holds deep ancestral significance. The following statement from iwi partners outlines this enduring relationship:

The significance of the Motueka River to manawhenua

A number of iwi hold manawhenua status over the Motueka River and catchment. These include Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Rārua and Te Ātiawa. Statements from these iwi below indicate the significance of the Motueka River to each iwi.

Ngāti Tama

For whānau of Ngāti Tama the Motueka Awa was a place we used to exercise our values and upholding these values are paramount for our identity and connection. Ngāti Tama have steeped history in and around the Motueka Awa and its tributaries and as Kaitiaki, Ngāti Tama exercises this responsibility through ensuring the Awa and its tributaries are protected now and for the future. Our values are based firstly on;

- Whakapapa – Our identity and connection to the Motueka Awa
- Mahinga Kai – Our whānau knowledge and values associated with customary food-gathering areas
- Manaakitanga – Hospitality and Respect
- Kaitiakitanga – Exercising our responsibility to restore, protect and maintain our environment

Ngāti Rārua

The Motueka River is central to the lives of Ngāti Rārua whānau, who have lived in the catchment since the early 1830s.

For the original Ngāti Rārua families, the Motueka River was the source of life. The water channels, swamps and wooded areas associated with the river were habitats supporting a huge food basket. Oral traditions identify the Motueka River and flood plain as an extensive and bountiful mahinga kai from which to gather a huge variety of natural resources. Floods would replenish and fertilise the catchment, enabling iwi to cultivate food.

Traditionally, the Motueka River and its tributaries were full of tuna, kōkopu and īnanga. Tuna formed an important part of the customary diet. Upokororo, named after the grayling, was an important tribal area where tūpuna harvested eels. The gathering and processing of tuna was a customary practice that strengthened the kinship of iwi and whānau. Customary management practices followed the lifecycle of the tuna, and harvesting was regulated according to the seasons. The blue duck or whio was common on the faster flowing waters. Ngā manu were not only important as a source of food but were also valued for their plumage, which was used for decorative purposes. One major birding site was located up the Motueka River at Upokororo.

The Motueka River Valley provided a natural inland pathway to reach Te Tai Poutini. This pathway was a traditional greenstone trail, used by tūpuna in search of this valuable taonga and other items for trade. The route followed the Motueka River Valley, before connecting with the Wairau and Waimeha/Wai-iti routes, ahead of Lakes Rotoiti and Rotoroa. Waka were used to negotiate the waterways, therefore the Motueka River has many traditional tauranga waka (landing sites) and camps sites, which were used for fishing along its banks.

The significance of the Motueka River to Ngāti Rārua is illustrated in the carvings in the main whare at Te Āwhina Marae in Motueka. The river is also recognised in the pepeha of Motueka whānau, "Ko Motueka te awa, Ngāti Rārua te iwi...".

Te Ātiawa

Ko Motueka te awa, Ko Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Māui te Iwi

For Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Māui the Motueka River is an Awa Tupuna. Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Māui ancestral ties bind us to one another and to our ancestor - the Motueka River. Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Māui has mana, whakapapa and history within the Motueka River and its tributaries. Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Māui has kaitiaki responsibilities for the Motueka River and its tributaries.

The Motueka River is part of a complex framework connecting all levels of our identity as an iwi. Our landscape defines us and our customary use of traditional resources is the context in which we most often engage with the natural world, thus providing for the transmission of intergenerational knowledge and the maintenance of identity. Our tikanga is the manifestation of our responsibilities and interests, including access and use, water quality, regulation of prohibited behaviours and maintenance of activities, sacred sites, ceremonies and rituals.

The health of the Motueka River is integral to our health and cultural identity. The health and the mauri of the River, derives from the need for flowing water from the head of the River and its tributaries to the point where it meets the sea. Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Māui tūpuna had an intimate knowledge of navigation, river routes, and landing places, and the locations of food and other resources on and around the Motueka River. The relationship Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Māui has with the Motueka taonga is central to Te Ātiawa o Te Waka-a-Māui identity and our cultural and spiritual wellbeing.

✓ Local Communities – People at the Centre

Over 20,000 people live across the catchment—from long-established families in Dovedale, Stanley Brook and Tadmor to orchardists in Riwaka and newcomers in Motueka township. Their safety, wellbeing, and connection to place is central to MCC's vision.

✓ Rural Landowners – Stewards of the Land

Farmers, foresters, horticulturalists, and lifestyle block owners steward large portions of the catchment. Their practical knowledge and long-term care and

on the ground experience are essential to catchment health and community resilience.

✓ Mana Whenua – Ancestral Connection and Kaitiakitanga

Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Rārua, and Ngāti Tama hold enduring ties to the awa and whenua. Their leadership, mātauranga, and stewardship are central to catchment wellbeing.

✓ Wetlands – Quiet Guardians of Water Health

Wetlands filter water, buffer floods, and support biodiversity.

> *"Our wetland is a key feature of our water ecosystem. Restoring it will hopefully mean that the bird and aquatic life across our property will improve over time."* — Landowner, Dovedale

✓ Aquifers – Hidden but Essential

Aquifers store and supply freshwater, sustain stream baseflows, and buffer seasonal extremes.

> *"We rely on bore water and want to make sure it stays clean and available."* — Grower, Motueka Plains

✓ Native Forests & Fauna – taonga of the Catchment

From Kahurangi National Park to lowland bush remnants, native forests shelter birds, hold cultural significance, help stabilise slopes and soils, and support thriving ecosystems.

> *"We planted natives around our wet patch—now the tūī and pīwakawaka are back."* — Lifestyle block owner

✓ Estuaries – Where River Meets Sea

The Motueka and Riwaka deltas pulse with life. These intertidal zones support fish nurseries, bird feeding grounds, and coastal connection.

> *"The estuary is where we walk the dog, watch the birds and see the sun rise. It's peaceful."* — Resident, Motueka

These aspects reflect what matters most to our community—and they shape the vision, values, and objectives that guide MCC's work.

2.3 Our guiding framework

2.4 Our Progress and achievements

Over the past three years, with generous funding from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), MCC has supported and worked alongside the catchment community to advance restoration, connection, and care. This has included:

- hosting many hui and practical workshops
- building a volunteer network
- supporting landowners to restore their land
- beginning to set up a catchment trapping network; and
- motivating and supporting local communities to monitor their local stream.

These efforts show that we're not starting from scratch—we're building on momentum.

The infographic below highlights some of MCC's achievements to date, and the community catchment stories illustrate these metrics in a more grounded way. Many more stories can be found on MCC's website - https://motuekacatchment.org.nz/allnews/.

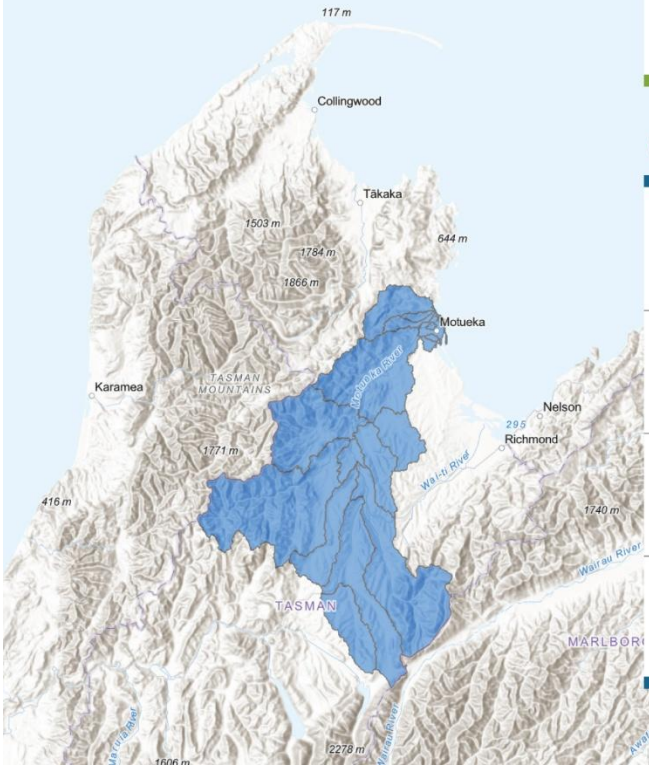
PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENTS
2002 - September 2025

Engagement

158	Meetings & Events
1278	Attendee numbers at hui
7	Weeding bees
4110	Volunteer hours
6	Schools and community groups involved

Action

100K+	Trees planted
147	Traps given out
3	Community nurseries and many community propagators
3	Wetlands created
10	Sub Catchment Based Freshwater Monitoring Groups
600	Meters of fencing provided



Map: www.arcgis.com

Organisation

6	Thematic working groups
671	People on MCC database 22 newsletters sent, 112 stories on MCC website
9	Steering Group members Including 3 iwi representatives - Ngāti Tama, Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Rārua.
$897K	Funding over the 3 year period

Community catchment stories

Here are just a few glimpses into the people and places shaping restoration in the Motueka catchment.

Growing sub-catchment action in the Dove

Bill thought he would have a go at growing natives in his backyard to provide a legacy. Local generational farmer Debbie attended a Beef & Lamb Workshop on water monitoring and catchment groups and was inspired.

Debbie asked other farmers and lifestyle property owners if they want to have a Dove sub catchment. “Yes, we are interested”, they said, “BUT no meetings”.

Bill now propagates thousands of eco-sourced natives to distribute to locals. Debbie and her neighbour Winnie now monitor the stream that runs through their properties (photo below), and Winnie works with others to monitor the Dove River too.

Debbie and Winnie are planting natives, are avid trappers, work hard to combat invasive weeds, and are both looking to enhance and develop their wetlands. Neighbours are working on their own restoration plans and are keen to hear water-monitoring results.

Farming with nature in Tadmor

Jo Leyland, a farmer in Tapawera, recruited many to join the Upper Mouteka Catchment Group after attending the same workshop as Debbie. Kate and Susan (photos below) were part of this, and they went on to set up a propagators group and Susan developed her own nursery and carried out considerable planting and fencing on her farm.

There are many more stories on the Motueka Catchment Collective website, from putting in new picnic tables along the river, to setting up a community trapping network, and inspiring stories of individuals and groups doing their bit.

3. Natural and physical features of the catchment

The Motueka Catchment is one of Aotearoa's most ecologically diverse river systems, shaped by its mountains, valleys, wetlands, aquifers and estuaries — and by the people who live and work alongside them and have done so in the past. Spanning roughly 2,200 km^2, the catchment stretches from its headwaters in the Maungakura / Red Hills and the Kahurangi Mountains in the west, across to the Spooners Range, Richmond Ranges and Moutere Hills in the east, flowing from alpine heights to the estuarine margins of Te Tai-o-Aorere / Tasman Bay.

This landscape supports communities, livelihoods and cultural identity. Mana whenua hold deep ancestral ties to the awa and its tributaries. Rural landowners steward large areas of the catchment, and towns and settlements are closely connected to the river's behaviour. Together, people and place form an interconnected system where environmental health and community wellbeing are inseparable.

The following section summarises the distinctive natural and physical features of the catchment — its geology, climate, waterways, land use and the communities who depend on them.

The Motueka Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) research programme

Between 2000 and 2011, the Motueka Catchment became a national and international exemplar of integrated science through the ICM programme, led by Landcare Research and Cawthron Institute. Recognising that land use, freshwater, and coastal processes are deeply interconnected, the programme applied a whole-of-catchment lens to explore how biophysical and social systems interact.

Key contributions included:

- **Catchment-wide modelling** of sediment, nutrients, and water flows
- **Collaborative research** with iwi, landowners, and community groups
- **Integration of mātauranga Māori** alongside western science
- **Scenario planning and decision support tools** for sustainable land and water use

The ICM programme laid the groundwork for many of the insights presented in this section. Its legacy continues through local initiatives like the Motueka Catchment Collective, which apply ICM principles in restoration, monitoring, and governance.

To access ICM information, go here - https://icm.landcareresearch.co.nz/

3.1. Catchment Form and Flow Patterns

The complexity of the Motueka catchment lies in the interplay between geology, soils, rainfall, and land use.

3.1.1 Geology, soils and topography

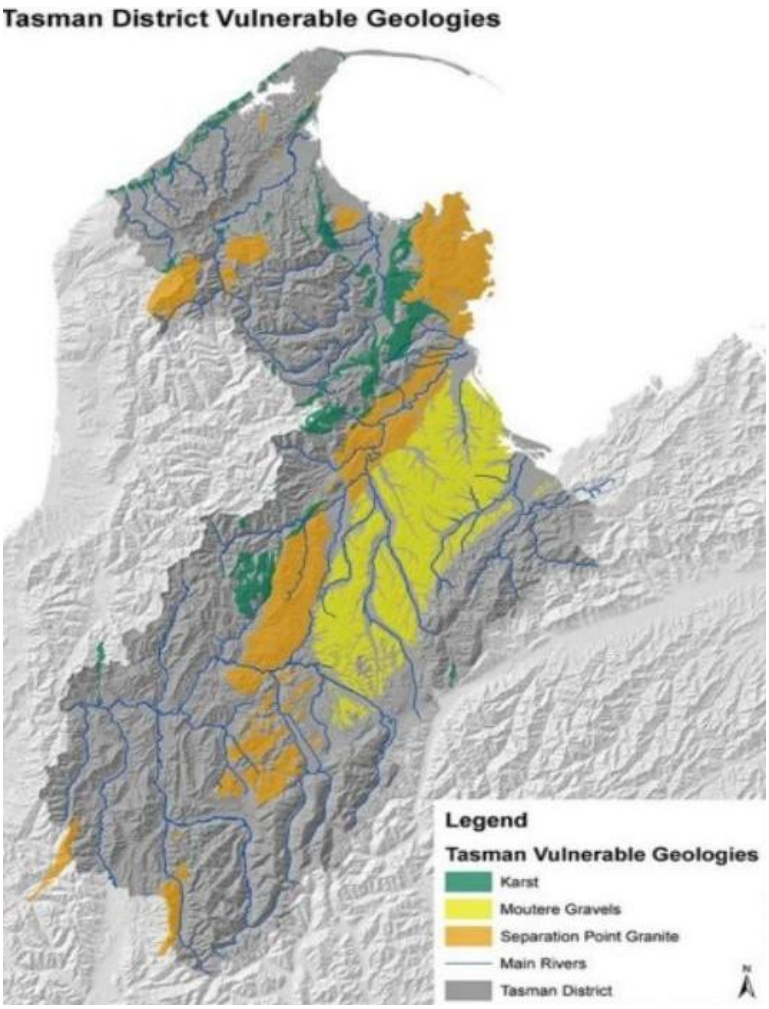
The Motueka Catchment is geologically diverse, with sharp transitions between ultramafic, granitic, sedimentary, and alluvial formations[1].

- **Red Hills ultramafic rocks** dominate the upper western headwaters of the Motueka River, forming steep, sparsely vegetated ridgelines with slopes often exceeding 35**%**. High magnesium and heavy metal content also influences stream chemistry. These zones are erosion-prone and ecologically sensitive.
- **Separation Point Granite** underlies much of the western hill country, especially around tributaries like the Baton and Pearse, and accounts for approximately 10–12% of the catchment's geology. These areas are steep and dissected, with slopes typically ranging from 20–30%. The fractured granite weathers into fine gravels and quartz-rich sands, which are mobilised during heavy rain and transported downstream. In lower-gradient reaches, stream beds are often dominated by sand and fine gravel deposits. While these sediments shape channel form, they do not typically produce braided riverbed structures. Instead, channels may exhibit wandering forms with mobile bars and occasional avulsions following high-flow events.

  Soils on granitic and ultramafic terrain are shallow, stony, and low in fertility and are prone to runoff and overgrazing impacts.
- **Moutere gravels** cover around 35–40% of the Motueka Catchment, dominating the central basin across areas like Motupiko, Tadmor, and Tapawera. These gravels form rolling hill country with slopes of 10–20% and give rise to clay-bound soils that are compacted and slow to absorb water. Moutere gravels shed water due to low-permeability soils that limit infiltration, leading to surface runoff and erosion under pastoral and forestry land use.
- **Recent alluvium** underlies the lower Motueka plains, forming flat terraces with less than 5% slope. These fertile soils support intensive horticulture and urban development, but soils are vulnerable to compaction, nutrient

[1] ICM Catchment Atlas; TDC Technical Report, 2003

leaching, and groundwater drawdown. Their gentle topography facilitates aquifer recharge and estuarine transition.



Vulnerable geologies of Tasman District, TDC

Fuller, Basher & Hicks (2014) and other studies have found that erosion risk is highest in steep pastoral zones and post-harvest forestry blocks, especially on granite and gravel-derived soils. See the map opposite.

Together, these geological–topographic zones explain much of the catchment's hydrological diversity. Restoration and monitoring strategies must reflect these underlying physical drivers.

3.1.2 Hydrology and Flow Regimes

The Motueka River: Hydrological Integrity and Protection

The Motueka River is protected under a Water Conservation Order and retains much of its natural flow, though water takes and historic channel works have shaped how the river behaves today. The WCO safeguards its outstanding ecological, cultural, and recreational values by prohibiting damming and restricting activities that would significantly alter natural flows or degrade water quality across the main stem and key tributaries.

Flowing 116 km from the Maungakura / Red Hills to Te Tai-o-Aorere / Tasman Bay, the river shifts from steep alpine headwaters to wide gravel reaches and finally to a dynamic estuarine delta. Its gravel-bed form, riffle–pool sequences, and naturally low turbidity distinguish it from many lowland rivers in Aotearoa.

At the same time, decades of human use have shaped parts of the river corridor. Stopbanks, gravel extraction, historic channel straightening, and land development close to the margins have all influenced how water moves during both floods and droughts

Rainfall patterns and flow variation

Rainfall varies dramatically across the catchment — from more than 3,000 mm/year in the western ranges to less than 1,000 mm/year near the coast. This steep gradient drives the river's "flashy" behaviour, with rapid rises following heavy rain in the upper catchment, as evidenced in the June/July 2025 floods.

In recent years, seasonal rainfall has become more variable, with longer dry spells and more frequent drought pressure in the mid and lower catchment. These shifts raise concerns about low flows, aquifer recharge and the resilience of water users and ecosystems.

Flow volumes and seasonal dynamics

At Woodstock, the Motueka River's mean annual flow is around 20–22 m^3/s. Typical monthly flows range from about 10 m^3/s in summer to more than 30 m^3/s during winter peaks. Flood events can exceed 200 m^3/s, particularly when intense rainfall hits the western ranges. These high flows shape the river's gravel-bed morphology, move sediment and influence downstream habitat.

During extended dry periods, flows can drop below 5 m^3/s, especially in late summer and early autumn. Low flows affect aquatic habitat, mahinga kai, and water allocation. Climate projections suggest more frequent low-flow periods in the mid and lower catchment, where aquifer recharge is limited and irrigation demand is high.

During extended dry periods, low flows can drop below 5 m^3/s, especially in late summer and early autumn. These low flows can impact aquatic habitat, mahinga kai, and water allocation. Climate projections suggest increasing frequency of low-flow conditions, particularly in the mid and lower catchment zones, where aquifer recharge is limited and irrigation demand is high.

Runoff and groundwater interaction

The catchment's mean annual runoff is approximately 844 mm — moderate by national standards. High rainfall in the headwaters combines with significant infiltration and groundwater recharge in the mid and lower catchment.

In the lower Motueka Valley, shallow aquifers play a crucial role in sustaining baseflows during dry periods. Groundwater–surface water interactions near the estuary help maintain ecological connectivity, cultural values and recreational use.

Tributary contributions and catchment complexity

The Motueka's hydrology is shaped by a diverse network of tributaries, each influenced by its own geology, slope and land use. Some tributaries respond rapidly to rainfall because of steep terrain and shallow soils, while others — particularly those draining Separation Point geology — provide steady baseflow through groundwater recharge.

The next section outlines the major tributaries and their contributions to the wider river system.

Motueka Catchment Tributary Zones – Geology, Hydrology and Sediment Overview

Tributary / Stream	**Catchment Size (km^2)**	**Geology & Relative Sediment Yield**	**Rainfall & Flow Characteristics**
Motueka (main stem)	—	Mixed geology; integrates upstream sediment inputs	Variable flows; influenced by tributary peaks and aquifer-fed baseflows
Wangapeka	300	Separation Point Granite; High sediment yield due to steep, fractured terrain	2,500–3,000+ mm/year; rapid rise and fall; major contributor to flood peaks
Baton	150	Separation Point Granite; Moderate–High sediment yield	2,500–3,000+ mm/year; flashy flows; steep terrain
Pearse	~20	Karst limestone; Low sediment yield; spring-fed clarity	2,500–3,000+ mm/year; stable flows; visually clear in floods
Graham	~50	Mixed geology; forested; Low–Moderate sediment yield	2,500–3,000+ mm/year; moderate slopes; relatively stable flows
Pokororo	~40	Mixed geology; Low sediment yield	2,500–3,000+ mm/year; often visually clear; limited sediment transport

Tributary / Stream	Catchment Size (km^2)	Geology & Relative Sediment Yield	Rainfall & Flow Characteristics
Motupiko	~230	Moutere Gravels; Moderate sediment yield; prone to slippage	1,200–2,000 mm/year; moderate baseflows; episodic sediment pulses
Tadmor	~130	Moutere Gravels; Moderate sediment yield	1,200–2,000 mm/year; rolling hill country; sediment spikes during rain
Dove	—	Moutere Gravels; Moderate sediment yield	1,200–2,000 mm/year; similar to Tadmor; hillslope erosion in wet seasons
Stanley Brook	~60	Moutere Gravels; Moderate–High sediment yield	1,500–2,000 mm/year; flashy hydrograph; prone to bank erosion
Sherry	~100	Moutere Gravels; Moderate–High sediment yield	1,500–2,000 mm/year; high peak flows; erosion-prone margins
Waiwhero	~30	Alluvium and gravels; Low sediment yield	900–1,200 mm/year; low baseflows; modified stream network
Rainy	~25	Alluvium and gravels; Low sediment yield	900–1,200 mm/year; lowland stream; limited flushing capacity
Little Sydney	—	Alluvium; Low sediment yield	900–1,200 mm/year; modified flow regime; low sediment mobility
Orinoco	~35	Alluvium and gravels; Low sediment yield	900–1,200 mm/year; low baseflows; sediment retention in channel
Hinetai / Lower Motueka Valley springs	—	Aquifer-fed; Low sediment yield	1,000–1,200 mm/year; stable baseflows; vulnerable to drawdown
Motueka Sandspit / Estuarine Delta	—	Receives upstream sediment; Variable accumulation	Stable baseflows; sediment accumulation risk due to low flushing
Riuwaka	105	Karst and spring-fed systems; Low sediment yield	~2,000 mm/year; stable flows; low sediment transport

Why Sub-Catchment Scale Matters

While the Motueka Catchment is often described at the whole-of-catchment scale, real understanding emerges only at the sub-catchment level. Each tributary zone in the table above reflects a unique mix of geology, soil type, rainfall, and slope, which shapes how water moves, where sediment comes from, and how resilient each system is. Steep granitic headwaters shed gravel and sand quickly; clay-bound Moutere gravels limit infiltration and elevate runoff; lowland streams accumulate nutrients and sediment. These patterns aren't obvious until you zoom in—local mapping and monitoring are essential to reveal cause and effect.

The ICM programme showed that without this finer-grained lens, catchment-wide averages can mask what's really happening on the ground.

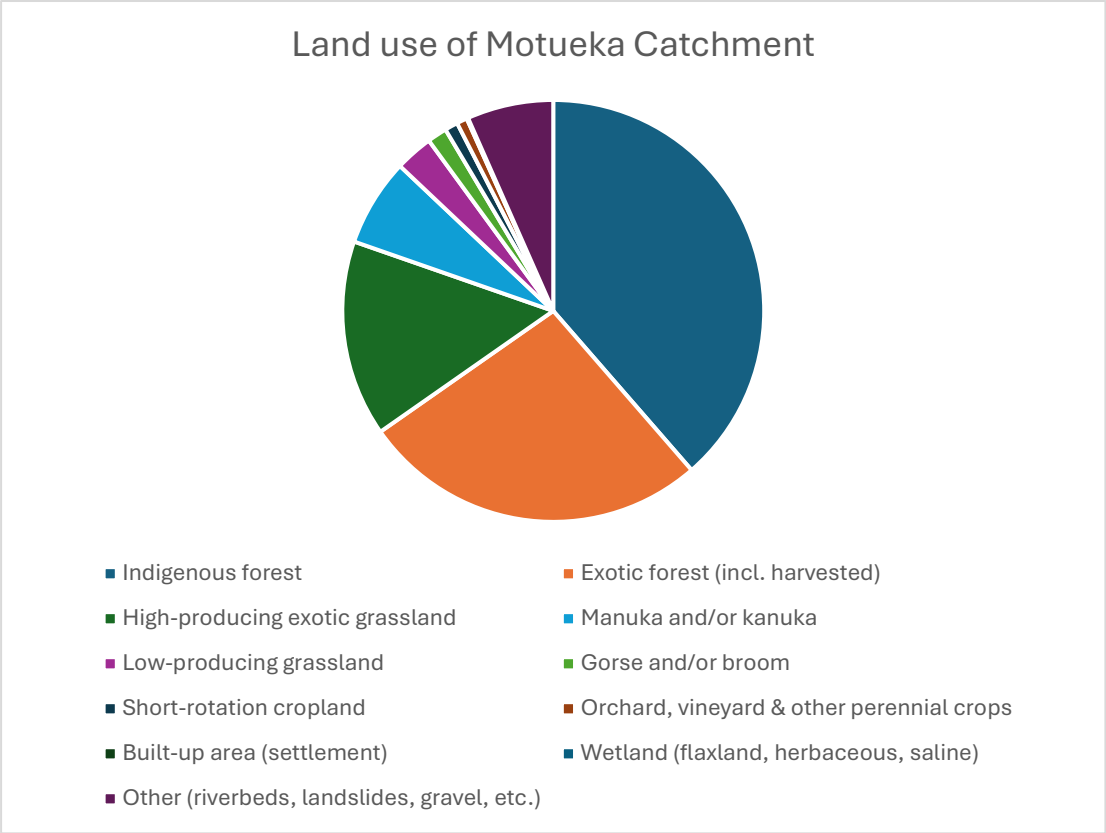
3.1.3 Land Use Patterns

The Motueka Catchment's land use is unusually diverse and spatially distinct, shaped by steep rainfall gradients, complex geology, and a long history of mixed land tenure.

Historical Context

Land use has shifted dramatically over the past 150 years. Early Māori settlement focused on river corridors and coastal zones for mahinga kai and access to pounamu. European colonisation brought widespread land clearance for grazing, followed by gold mining, tobacco farming, and eventually horticulture. Steep hill country was later converted to exotic forestry, while lowland plains became hubs for intensive production.

Land Use of the Motueka Catchment



Taken from LAWA Land Cover Dataset (2021), based on LCDB v5.0 reclassification by Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research.

Land Use mosaic

The Motueka Catchment is a patchwork of land uses—from native forest in the Wangapeka to sheep farms in Tadmor and kiwifruit orchards in Riuwaka. Around 15% of the catchment is used for dairying, sheep and beef farming, and 2% for horticulture – vegetables, pipfruit, kiwifruit, and hops. Urban development is concentrated around Motueka township, with smaller hubs like Tapawera, Ngātimoti, Brooklyn, and Riuwaka spread across the valleys.

Land use follows a clear spatial pattern shaped by geology, slope, and water availability:

- **Forestry** dominates steep hill country, especially on Separation Point granite and is extensive in the Upper catchment. These erosion-prone zones respond quickly to rainfall and drive sediment loads.
- **Pastoral farming** is concentrated in mid-catchment valleys. Gravelly soils and seasonal flows challenge nutrient retention and bank stability.
- **Horticulture** clusters in the lower plains, supported by aquifer irrigation. These zones are productive but sensitive to flooding, runoff and groundwater drawdown.

- **Indigenous forest** buffers the upper catchment, supporting ecological integrity and long-term resilience. A significant portion of the catchment is either held in Kahurangi National Park, QEII Trust land or Richmond Forest Park.
- **Lifestyle blocks** are scattered across valley margins. Though small in area, they influence stream health through grazing, planting, and runoff.

3.2 Biodiversity, Freshwater Ecology, and Habitat Connectivity

The Motueka Catchment supports a wide range of native species and habitats—many of national significance. However, fragmentation, sedimentation, and altered flows now threaten the systems that make the catchment unique.

3.2.1 Freshwater Fauna and Aquatic Systems

The Motueka Catchment supports a rich diversity of freshwater fauna, including 18 native fish species, confirmed through electric fishing, spotlighting, and eDNA sampling. These species reflect a range of ecological niches and sensitivities to flow, sediment, and habitat disturbance. Key species include:

- **Shortjaw kōkopu** (Galaxias postvectis) – *Nationally Threatened*. Found in shaded, low-sediment tributaries with stable flow and intact riparian cover.
- **Inanga** (Galaxias maculatus) – A key whitebait species. Spawning occurs in tidal reaches of the lower Motueka and Riuwaka, often in riparian grasses at the saltwater interface.
- **Longfin eel** (Anguilla dieffenbachii) and **torrentfish** (Cheimarrichthys fosteri) – Widespread but vulnerable to flow alteration, sedimentation, and loss of channel complexity.
- **Kākahi** (Echyridella spp.) and **kōura** (Paranephrops spp.) – Present in low-disturbance streams; populations decline where sedimentation and riparian degradation are high.
- **Flathead galaxias** (Galaxias depressiceps) and **pouched lamprey** (Geotria australis) – Both listed as *Nationally Vulnerable*, requiring cool, clean water and migratory connectivity.
- **Dwarf galaxias** (Galaxias divergens) and **giant kōkopu** (Galaxias argenteus) – Regionally significant species, often found in spring-fed or forested reaches.

- **Bluegill bully** (Gobiomorphus hubbsi) – Rare and sensitive to extended low-flow conditions, particularly in mid-catchment gravel-bed streams.

Recent modelling by TDC and Cawthron, validated through field sampling, confirms that streams flowing through Moutere gravel geology tend to have naturally lower MCI scores. This reflects the geology's influence on substrate composition, baseflow variability, and macroinvertebrate assemblages—not necessarily poor water quality.

Jacob Lucas with his son and brown trout

Brown trout, while not a native freshwater fish, are highly valued in the Motueka River for recreational fishing, and their habitat is protected in the Motueka Water Conservation Order.

3.2.2 Terrestrial Biodiversity and Vegetation Patterns

Vegetation across the catchment reflects its underlying geology and land use history:

- **Beech–podocarp forest** dominates the western ranges, supporting native birds, bats, lizards and invertebrates, and contributing to clean headwater flows.
- **Ultramafic-tolerant species** like Dracophyllum and alpine tussock persist in the Red Hills—rare communities adapted to magnesium-rich soils.
- **Lowland forest remnants** are fragmented and degraded, often confined to gullies and riparian strips, vulnerable to weeds, browsing, and edge effects.
- **Riparian zones** vary widely: eco-sourced natives stabilise banks in restoration areas, while Old Mans Beard, blackberry and willow dominate less-managed reaches.
- **Wetlands**, though covering less than 0.03 of the catchment (LAWA Land Cover Dataset (2021), provide critical habitat for waterfowl, amphibians, and aquatic plants—but many are fragmented or degraded.

3.2.3 Birdlife and Habitat Connectivity

The catchment's birdlife reflects its habitat diversity—and its vulnerabilities:

- **Whio** (blue duck) in upper tributaries like Wangapeka and Baton— requiring clean, fast-flowing water and stable boulder beds. Their presence signals high ecological integrity.

A pair of whio, photo credit: Farmers for Whio

- **River-nesting birds** like black-fronted tern, banded dotterel, South Island Pied Oystercatcher, and pied stilt rely on open gravel beds, now threatened by channelisation, vegetation encroachment, and recreation.

- **Forest birds** including tūī, bellbird, rifleman, and kārearea are common in the western ranges and regenerating bush but depend on forest connectivity and predator control.

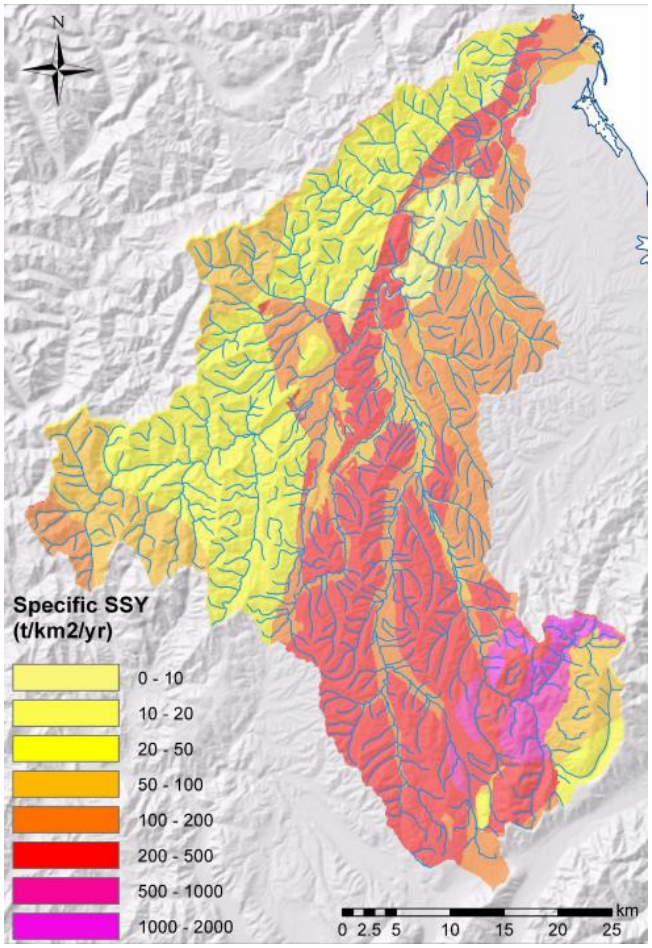
- **Estuarine species** such as kotuku ngutupapa (royal spoonbill) and kuaka (bar-tailed godwit) feed and roost in the Motueka Estuary— particularly the sandspit, an ecologically rich zone shaped by upstream sediment and nutrient flows.

4. Challenges and opportunities for the health of the River and catchment

The Motueka Catchment is rich in natural treasures and shaped by generationsof people using and caring for the land. This section outlines key pressures—based on local data, community observations, and scientific monitoring—and signals where collective action can make the greatest difference.

4.1 Slips, Sediment, and Erosion

Sediment remains one of the most persistent pressures on the Motueka Catchment's freshwater and coastal systems, driven by hillslope erosion, streambank collapse, and land disturbance linked to heavy rainfall, forest harvesting, and land use change. These processes are especially active in areas underlain by Separation Point Granite and Moutere Gravels—geologies recognised for their high erosion potential. Multiple studies, including Basher & Hicks (2003), alongside recent LAWA data from TDC and NIWA monitoring, confirm consistently elevated sediment loads in these vulnerable sub-catchments.



Impact: Sediment smothers streambeds, disrupts fish spawning, reduces habitat quality, and affects estuarine and coastal ecosystems. Sediment exported from the Motueka River—especially during floods—can extend over 180 km^2 into Tasman Bay, affecting shellfish beds, seagrass, and aquaculture viability.

- **Restoration journey**: While riparian planting and bank stabilisation are underway, efforts are fragmented. Strategic action must target high-yield areas, support good land management across forestry and farming, and

align restoration with land use drivers. This interactive map highlights where sediment loads are highest and where mitigation could deliver the greatest impact.

4.7 Floods That Hit Hard

Floods are becoming more frequent and severe driven by intense rainfall, saturated soils, and constrained river channels. The June–July 2025 event was a stark reminder: the largest on record at Woodmans Bend, peaking at 2,785 m^3/s, overtopped stopbanks and caused widespread damage across the catchment. Civil Defence called it the worst flood in nearly 150 years (based on analysis by TDC's hydrology department).

Recent modelling from the Climate Sigma report for the Ministry for the Environment suggests that Nelson and Tasman are among the most flood-exposed regions in Aotearoa. National research led by NIWA and Earth Sciences New Zealand confirms that extreme rainfall events are likely to become more frequent and more intense as the climate warms.

These projections align with local experience. The June–July flood was not an anomaly—it was a signal.

- **Impact**: Sediment mobilisation, streambank collapse, habitat disruption, infrastructure failure, and community hardship
- **Restoration**: Natural floodplain reconnection, riparian buffers, and adaptive land use planning are key to long-term resilience, along with well planned river management and effective flood protection works.

4.3 Nutrients in Our Water

While many parts of the Motueka River and its tributaries maintain high water quality, nitrate and phosphorus levels are trending upward in some streams

indicating increasing pressure. This is most evident in pastoral zones, but also occurs in native and plantation forest catchments, where natural soil processes, atmospheric deposition, and legacy land use may contribute.

Young *et al*. (2005) found that nitrate concentrations were highest in pastoral streams, but also unexpectedly elevated in forested areas, suggesting complex nutrient pathways. More recent monitoring by Tasman District Council and LAWA confirms these patterns and highlights emerging nutrient hotspots.

- **Impact**: Algal blooms, reduced dissolved oxygen, and altered aquatic food webs.
- **Restoration journey**: Stock exclusion, farm planning, and riparian buffers are helping reduce runoff—with many landowners already taking action. Yet nutrient hotspots persist. Broader uptake of good practice and increased support are needed to restore water quality at scale.

You can explore current nutrient levels and trends across the catchment on LAWA's Motueka River monitoring dashboard.

4.3 Straightened Rivers and Reduced Floodplain Connection

Across the Motueka, Riuwaka, Tadmor, and Motupiko, many river reaches have been straightened or armoured over time to protect land, infrastructure, and communities. These historical changes have altered natural flow patterns and reduced the connection between rivers and their floodplains, along with reducing the width of the river channel. Tasman District Council (2011) documented a loss of channel complexity and floodplain connectivity in parts of the lower Motueka and Tapawera zones.

- **Impact:** Reduced habitat diversity, higher erosion risk, higher energy flows during heavy rain, and increased thermal stress during low flows.
- **Looking ahead:** Catchment-wide strategies will be needed to improve river–floodplain connection and support habitat complexity to balance community safety, land use needs, and the realities of a changing river system.

4.4 Drained Wetlands, Disconnected Systems

Over 90% of wetlands in the Motueka Catchment have been lost—especially in lowland zones. Many were drained for farming or development, leaving fragmented remnants with limited ecological function.

- **Impact**: Reduced flood buffering, habitat loss, and declining biodiversity.
- **Restoration**: Wetland rehydration and reconnection projects are underway, supported by landowners, iwi, and community groups. Scaling up restoration

is essential to rebuild biodiversity and buffer climate extremes—through both grassroots efforts and strategic support.

For practical guidance and current restoration efforts, see Tasman District Council's wetland restoration page.

4.5 Fragmented Forests

Lowland and riparian bush across the catchment has been largely cleared over generations, leaving only scattered remnants. While upland forests remain relatively intact, fragmentation continues in some areas — breaking up once-continuous habitats and weakening ecological function.

The *Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Strategy* (2019) notes that many lowland areas across Te Tauihu retain less than 1% of their original native vegetation cover, with fragmentation continuing to erode ecological integrity and connectivity. Research across Aotearoa and globally confirms that fragmented bush leads to cascading impacts on biodiversity, freshwater health, and catchment resilience.

- **Impact:** Stream degradation, biodiversity decline, disrupted ecological processes, soil instability, reduced climate resilience.
- **Restoration:** Thousands of natives have been planted across the catchment supported by nurseries and community partnerships. But lowland forest cover remains critically low. Considerable increases in replanting and corridor projects are needed to reconnect habitats, restore biodiversity, and stabilise soils.

4.6 Drying Streams and Thirsty Land

While the Motueka Catchment receives high rainfall overall, it is increasingly exposed to seasonal dry periods—especially in the lower plains and mid-catchment valleys. These zones rely on shallow aquifers and baseflow contributions that are sensitive to drought and land use change. Hydrological modelling shows that exotic forestry and historic land cover both reduce low flows, with implications for irrigation, aquatic habitat, and estuarine health. Climate change is expected to amplify these patterns—bringing more intense rainfall events but also longer dry spells. Understanding and planning for low-flow dynamics is essential to sustaining catchment resilience.

Aerial imagery, lowland Motueka catchment. Source MFE

Long dry spells are now affecting tributaries and aquifers across the catchment. Some streams dry seasonally, and shallow groundwater zones are struggling to recharge—a pattern becoming more entrenched with climate change. Thomas *et al.* (2005) showed that low flows significantly reduce habitat availability for native fish and macroinvertebrates and highlighted declining recharge rates in shallow aquifers. National modelling from the Deep South Challenge and MPI confirms that climate change is altering Aotearoa's hydrological cycle: increasing evapotranspiration, intensifying droughts, and reducing soil moisture and aquifer recharge.

As air temperatures rise, stream temperatures follow—stressing aquatic life, accelerating algal growth, and reducing dissolved oxygen. These thermal impacts are especially severe in unshaded lowland streams and shallow tributaries.

- **Impact**: Habitat fragmentation, thermal stress, native vegetation decline, increased fire risk, reduced recharge
- **Restoration**: Riparian shading, drought-resilient planting, and wetland expansion are helping buffer dry-season impacts. However, long-term resilience requires landscape-scale interventions, protection of recharge zones, and climate-adaptive land use planning.

4.8 Invasive Weeds and Predators

Invasive species are widespread across the catchment — including Old Man's Beard, blackberry, willow, and tradescantia in riparian zones, and possums, rats, and mustelids in forest remnants. These species suppress native regeneration, degrade habitat quality, and threaten taonga species.

Old Man's Beard (Clematis vitalba) has been identified as one of New Zealand's most ecologically damaging weeds, particularly in forest remnants and riparian margins (West, 1992; Williams & Timmins, 2002). Predator monitoring by local groups and national programmes has also shown high possum and rat densities in fragmented bush, requiring sustained control efforts (DOC, 2024; University of Otago, 2021; Manaaki Whenua, 2020).

- **Impact**: Loss of native vegetation, reduced nesting success, and ongoing pressure on restoration sites and farmland.
- **Restoration**: Weed control, predator trapping and pest control are active and increasing across the catchment — led by community groups and landowners. But many areas remain untreated or reinfested. Coordinated, long-term programmes are needed to protect gains and restore ecological balance and protect livelihoods.

4.9 Water Extraction and Flow Stress

Water is extracted across the catchment for irrigation, stock water, and domestic use — particularly in summer months when flows are lowest. Shallow aquifers are also under pressure, with declining recharge and increased demand.

Fenemor *et al.* (2011) found that water allocation pressures in the Motueka Catchment were intensifying, especially in the plains and lower tributaries. Flow reductions were shown to affect fish habitat, water temperature, and cultural values.

- **Impact**: Reduced streamflow, thermal stress, habitat fragmentation, and loss of mahinga kai.
- **Restoration**: Improved water efficiency, recharge protection, and community-led flow restoration are needed to safeguard freshwater health.

4.10 Economic Pressures and Land Use Realities

Farmers across the catchment are navigating a complex landscape. Rising costs, shifting markets, and evolving regulations are creating real challenges — but they're also prompting innovation, collaboration, and a renewed focus on long-term resilience. Many landowners remain deeply committed to stewardship, even when margins are tight.

As *Fenemor et al. (2003)* observed, balancing production with restoration is never easy, especially under short-term financial pressure. Yet the Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) programme showed that when farmers are equipped with practical tools, flexible funding, and trusted relationships, restoration efforts flourish.

- **Current Constraints:** Limited capacity to invest in fencing, planting, or trialling new techniques, and uncertainty around compliance and funding can stall momentum.
- **Emerging Opportunities:** Nature-based enterprises and diversified land use, linking restoration to farm productivity, risk reduction, and offering of tailored, flexible, collaborative support programmes.

4.11 Stresses to community wellbeing and resilience

The Motueka Catchment is home to strong, diverse communities — from long-standing landowners and iwi partners to newcomers seeking connection with place.

Yet pressures are mounting. Climate-driven events like floods and droughts, alongside land turnover, rural isolation, and economic stress, are reshaping community dynamics. Participation in collective action is uneven, and some residents feel disconnected or overwhelmed by competing demands.

Recent national studies highlight how social cohesion, cultural identity, and access to trusted information underpin both community wellbeing and environmental resilience.

- **Impact:** Weakened informal networks and reduced shared care for place, burnout among volunteers and leaders, lower participation in restoration and preparedness, reduced capacity for coordinated catchment response.
- **Restoration Potential:** Peer learning, community nurseries, and hands-on workshops can rebuild cohesion. Storytelling, local champions, and inclusive events help foster connection and collective action. Strengthening social infrastructure is essential to sustaining long-term catchment health.

4.12 Iwi Cultural Values and Participation

Despite deep ancestral ties to the Motueka Catchment, iwi face systemic barriers to meaningful participation. Planning frameworks often fail to reflect kaupapa Māori, limiting kaitiakitanga and cultural expression.

Te Mana o te Wai, while conceptually strong, has had limited practical impact in local decision-making and restoration delivery.

- **Impact**: These barriers reduce access to mahinga kai, weaken cultural identity, and perpetuate frustration with extractive approaches and tokenistic engagement.
- **Restoration Potential**: Where iwi lead their own restoration — such as at the Whakarewa site supported by Ngāti Rārua Ātiawa Iwi Trust — there is strong potential to restore native biodiversity, reconnect whenua and whānau, and demonstrate culturally grounded approaches. This applies to iwi led cultural health monitoring. Broader uptake depends on resourcing, governance reform, and genuine partnership.

4.13 Understanding Catchment Resilience

The challenges outlined above underscore the need for a shared, systems-based approach to resilience. The Catchment Resilience Framework offers a visual guide to this thinking. It places the living system at the centre, acknowledges the pressures that disrupt it, and highlights the role of community action in sustaining and restoring it, and staying safe.

CATCHMENT RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

5.100 Year Vision for the Catchment in 2125

When the river is well, people are well.
In 2125, the Motueka Catchment is a thriving, resilient mountains-to-sea system — ecologically healthy, culturally grounded, and cared for by its communities and mana whenua.

Ecological resilience

Rivers, wetlands, forests and soils function as a connected living system.

- ✓ Rivers and streams are healthy and resilient, with wide native margins, cooler water, naturally shifting yet stable banks and improved habitat complexity — even where channels remain modified for flood protection or land use.
- ✓ Freshwater species are abundant, including īnanga, tuna, kōaro, kākahi and diverse macroinvertebrates. River health is tracked through both scientific and cultural indicators.
- ✓ Wetlands buffer the catchment, with restored valley-floor and seepage-zone wetlands reducing flood peaks, filtering water and supporting aquifer recharge.
- ✓ Native forests and wildlife are connected, with expanded lowland forest cover and low predator and weed pressure. Kererū, kākā and Powelliphanta are thriving.
- ✓ Estuaries and the coast are resilient, with healthy saltmarsh, stable shorebird populations and strong mahinga kai values.

Land stewardship and climate-ready practice

Land use supports livelihoods and ecological health — and adapts as the climate changes.

- ✓ Farmers, growers and foresters lead catchment care, with erosion-prone slopes stabilised and sediment loss significantly reduced.
- ✓ Land use is adaptive, responding to shifting rainfall patterns, more frequent floods, drought pressure and changing growing conditions. Decisions draw on local knowledge, climate projections and long-term catchment goals.
- ✓ Urban and lifestyle areas contribute, through backyard planting, trapping, stormwater improvements and stream care.
- ✓ Flood resilience is built into land management, with wetlands, buffers and slope-sensitive planting reducing peak flows and sediment mobilisation.

- ✓ Community-led preparedness plans are active across all sub-catchments.

Community connection

Restoration is a shared, everyday practice.

- ✓ Sub-catchment groups are strong local hubs, supported with tools, mentoring and shared kaupapa.
- ✓ Community nurseries, schools and landowners grow natives, trap pests and control weeds, making restoration normal and visible.
- ✓ Freshwater monitoring is collaborative, with iwi, community and council data guiding adaptive action.
- ✓ The awa is loved and lived with, a place to gather, swim, paddle, learn and share stories — known, understood and respected.

Cultural leadership

Te Ao Māori guides freshwater care.

- ✓ Te Mana o te Wai is upheld in decisions and action, led by mana whenua.
- ✓ Iwi and hapū lead cultural health monitoring and restoration.
- ✓ Marae are active partners, and places are restored in ways that reflect whakapapa, wairua and kaitiakitanga.

6. Strategy: Turning Vision into Action

The Motueka Catchment Plan turns long-term vision into practical action. It builds directly on the 2125 Vision.

To get there, we focus on three interconnected strategic pathways. These respond to the pressures we face as outlined in Chapter 4. Each pathway reflects the values of our communities, iwi, and landowners, and is shaped by both scientific knowledge and mātauranga Māori.

The strategies don't sit along — they're woven together like flax in a kete.

Shared Principles

All strategies are grounded in principles that reflect MCC's vision and values:

Build on what's working – Support and amplify existing community-led efforts

Stay flexible – Adapt through consultation and local input

Focus on outcomes – Prioritise ecological function, connectivity, and resilience

Support the willing – Work with landowners, schools, and groups ready to act

Celebrate and share – Use storytelling to build pride, momentum, and visibility

Integrated Approach to Recovery

Action is driven by a blend of grassroots energy and strategic coordination. Community-led efforts — like riparian planting, predator control, or stream monitoring — often spark wider projects that attract technical support and involvement from partner organisations and funding. Likewise, strategic interventions — such as catchment scale sediment management, or achieving 25% lowland forest cover — depend on local leadership to succeed. In practice, these approaches are deeply interwoven. Mapping, modelling, and prioritisation help guide effort, but it's the relationships and responsiveness on the ground that make restoration stick.

Many actions in this plan will be delivered through sub-catchment groups — where local knowledge, lived experience, and community leadership shape priorities. MCC's next phase will focus on strengthening these groups. At the same time, MCC continues to support individual landowners who prefer to restore their own land independently. Whether through quiet planting efforts, fencing waterways, or predator control, these contributions are vital to catchment health.

By enabling both grassroots action and strategic coordination — across sub-catchments, individual properties, and partner networks — MCC ensures catchment work remains grounded, inclusive, and effective.

Enabling Conditions for success

To deliver these strategies, eight enabling conditions help turn intent into action.

Pillar	What Success Looks Like
Inclusive Governance & pro-active coordination	✓ Cohesive, high-functioning structure that supports plan delivery ✓ Co-governance structures in place ✓ Transparent roles and responsibilities ✓ Effective processes for decision-making
Strong partnerships	✓ Collaboration with iwi, councils, researchers, businesses and funders builds support and visibility, along with enabling a more strategic level response that prioritises efforts.
An engaged and capable community	✓ Active sub-catchment groups ✓ Peer learning hubs ✓ Youth-led initiatives ✓ A strong volunteer network
Cultural values embedded and strong iwi leadership	✓ Cultural indicators in monitoring ✓ Iwi-led restoration projects ✓ Te Mana o te Wai reflected in planning ✓ mātauranga Māori and iwi leadership embedded across all strategy areas
Integrate knowledge & Learning	✓ Integrated monitoring systems ✓ Shared learning platforms ✓ Annual review and refinement data, stories, and experience guide adaptive management
Economic resilience and innovation	✓ Nature-based enterprises and land-based livelihoods align environmental and economic outcomes. ✓ Pilots scaled across catchment ✓ Restoration visible in signage, art, and storytelling
Clear strategic focus	✓ Prioritisation tools, adaptive planning, and monitoring guide investment and learning

Pillar	What Success Looks Like
Secure funding & Investment	✓ Nature-based enterprises trialled ✓ Catchment-wide funding strategy ✓ Long-term support for community-led and strategic restoration achieved ✓ Restoration-linked employment opportunities

6.1 Freshwater Stewardship Strategy

This strategy supports the catchment-wide vision for healthy rivers and connected freshwater systems. It responds to key pressures — elevated temperatures, sedimentation, severe weather, a changing climate, and habitat loss — and focuses on practical, community-led actions that restore ecological function, build resilience and live safely with a dynamic river system. It strongly connects with the other two strategic pathways of this plan.

We recognise that people engage with freshwater in different ways — for recreation, resource use, cultural practice, and care. MCC will work inclusively, supporting diverse perspectives and enabling action at multiple scales. Whether

through riparian planting, wetland creation, monitoring, flood risk reduction, or storytelling, we aim to bring communities along — building shared ownership, trust, and long-term resilience.

Delivery is supported by MCC's enabling conditions — including strong partnerships, inclusive governance, seeking funding pathways, and integrated learning systems.

MCC's three-year priorities are outlined below. Over time and with increased capacity and funding, the strategy will guide coordinated action across land uses and sub-catchments to strongly contribute to freshwater health outcomes — using practical tools, partnerships, and adaptive planning to support both group and individual restoration. The long-term goal is a freshwater system that sustains life, absorbs shocks, reflects deep respect for the awa, and supports a community that live safely alongside it.

MCC's Focus: 2025–2027

Focus Area	**Strategic Emphasis**
MCC group review	Assess current thematic group structure and delivery approach and adjust to suit new priorities.
Freshwater Monitoring	Support, strengthen, and connect existing monitoring groups, and expand monitoring groups if capacity, in collaboration with TBG. Support iwi-led cultural health monitoring.
Sub-Catchment and community engagement	Increase engagement with the community and sub-catchments through hui, workshops, storytelling, and provide support for determining local priorities.
Flood Risk reduction planning	Support community flood resilience planning through workshops and action planning, in collaboration with stakeholders.

Freshwater Monitoring

MCC's Freshwater Monitoring Group (FMG) along with Tasman Bay Guardians enables community based freshwater monitoring across the catchment. It does this by acting as a hub for training and resources — delivering training and mentoring with groups, sharing good practice, hosting peer learning hui, and building a shared repository of tools.

Baton freshwater monitoring group

Orinoco group with TBG's Elliot Easton

MCC also supports iwi-led cultural health monitoring through providing some funding to iwi to support their ongoing projects. Where possible, MCC will encourage local groups to learn about cultural health indicators.

As the strategy evolves, FMG's role may expand — linking monitoring to restoration, priority water quality issues, habitat improvements, flood resilience, and catchment-wide planning. The FMG will:

Summary targets and indicators table

Focus area	Key actions	Draft targets
Existing freshwater monitoring groups	Support existing freshwater monitoring groups: ✓ to become self-sufficient, clear on their goals, and linked with the wider sub-catchment community ✓ by providing templates, guidance, and access to resources, in collaboration with TBG. ✓ By offering advice on actions to improve freshwater health, with expert input. ✓ Work with groups to review and share monitoring data so it is accessible, appropriately held, and	✓ All current groups still active and self-sufficient in 2027 ✓ Data being shared widely by all groups by 2027 ✓ 2 groups implementing restoration actions by 2027 ✓ 80% of groups attend shared annual hui

Focus area	Key actions	Draft targets
	used to inform restoration and planning. ✓ Hosting annual sharing and learning hui	
New community-based monitoring	Expand community-based monitoring into unmonitored tributaries where capacity allows.	✓ 10 MCC SHMAK kits by 2027 ✓ 10 active groups by 2027 ✓ 20 active groups by 2050 ✓ Groups for all sub-catchments by 2125 ✓ Data shared catchment wide which influences restoration priorities by 2030
Iwi led Cultural Health Monitoring	Support iwi led Cultural Health Monitoring by: ✓ Providing funding support ✓ Supporting learning about CH monitoring by other groups and people.	✓ Support and knowledge of cultural indicators known by CBFM groups. ✓ Hold hui to upskill CBFM monitors about CHI by 2027
Temperature and sediment monitoring	Support improved temperature and sediment monitoring and clearer reporting on trends and hotspots, in collaboration with partners and sector groups. Consider an expert review of all sediment research and summary of findings, including gaps.	• Joint hui on data needs held by 2026 • One joint sediment monitoring project initiated by end of 2026
Partner relationships	Maintain and build positive, reciprocal relationships with	✓ Ongoing support for TBG and other partners

Focus area	Key actions	Draft targets
	TBG, TDC and other delivery partners	✓ Number of training sessions delivered ✓ Partner feedback and coordination outcomes
Wider community engagement	Engage the wider community in freshwater monitoring through stories, events, and data, including helping communities understand sediment sources and impacts	✓ 4 stories in 2026 ✓ 1 wider sharing event by 2026 ✓ 2 sub-catchment hui by 2027

Habitat and Ecological Enhancement

MCC enables habitat enhancement through coordination, technical input, and grassroots delivery, largely led through MCC's Biodiversity and Restoration (BAR)Thematic Group. These actions improve sediment control, temperature regulation, flood buffering, and habitat connectivity — all essential to the vision of cool, healthy streams and rivers.

The "Cool River" Concept — One Vision for a Living Motueka River

The *Cool River* concept describes how the Motueka River might function if flows, sediment, channel shape, floodplain connection, and habitats were closer to their natural balance. It contrasts today's straighter, warmer, more confined river with a more dynamic, cool, connected system.

A more dynamic river would affect people living and working beside it in different ways — including more channel movement, more frequent floodplain connection, and changes to how land and infrastructure are protected. This raises important questions about fairness, who bears the cost, and what is practical across the catchment.

In simple terms, the concept points to:

- healthier, cooler flows
- less fine sediment and more natural gravel movement
- a river able to adjust and move where safe
- more floodplain connection
- better habitat connectivity

Climate change adds pressure to rethink how rivers are managed.
More intense weather patterns, rising recovery costs, and increasing pressure on flood-protection systems are prompting communities everywhere to consider whether giving rivers more room — alongside other solutions — may become part of long-term planning.

Any shift toward these outcomes would require catchment-wide conversations, careful planning, and a shared understanding of the trade-offs between river health, community safety and livelihoods, land use needs, and the realities for those closest to the river.

Riparian Planting and wetland restoration

These actions are covered in the Biodiversity and Restoration Strategy.

Fish Passage and other freshwater habitat actions

While not a current priority, MCC recognises that barriers to fish movement — such as culverts, weirs, and dams — limit mahinga kai recovery and stream health. Where capacity allows, MCC will support actions in collaboration with TDC, other partners, landowners and freshwater groups.

MCC will:

- Support iwi, council, and community groups with their work to identify priority sites
- Connect community groups to TDC to enable sharing of technical advice and where feasible seek funding for piloting removals and other actions.
- Share good practice and link fish passage improvements and other freshwater habitat enhancements to broader restoration efforts

Flood risk in the Motueka Catchment

Flood resilience in the Motueka Catchment is complex, deeply felt, and central to people's safety, livelihoods and wellbeing. The 2025 floods showed how differently communities experience risk, what they value, and what they expect from councils and agencies. Some people emphasise nature-based approaches such as restoring wetlands, reconnecting floodplains, slowing flows in gullies and improving land management. Others prioritise engineered measures — stopbanks, gravel extraction, channel shaping and drainage improvements — to protect homes, businesses and productive land. These perspectives all need to be part of any planning conversation.

Future flood events are expected to become more frequent and more severe. In many parts of the catchment, it will not be possible for TDC or any agency to fully mitigate the effects of flooding. This means personal responsibility, understanding risk, and managing hazards on individual properties will become increasingly important. Communities have also been clear that better information, clearer communication and more coordinated support are needed before, during and after flood events.

At the same time, people want rivers that are swimmable and healthy, with thriving fish and other species. Many recognise that heavily engineered channels — straightened, narrowed and disconnected from their floodplains — can increase flood risk downstream and reduce ecological health. Balancing safety, livelihoods and river health will require careful choices and open conversations about trade-offs.

MCC's role is to help create the conditions for that shared understanding. We work in sub-catchments to support community-led discussions, connect people with good information, and bring together iwi, councils (including TDC), technical experts and landowners. This helps communities explore a full range of resilience-building actions, from improving drainage and adapting

infrastructure to restoring wetlands, riparian plantings, strengthening land management and supporting emergency preparedness.

Across the catchment, MCC will continue to support communities to understand their rivers, navigate risk, and identify actions — individual and collective — that contribute to safer, healthier and more resilient places to live.

Action area	**Draft targets**
Collaborative Planning on minimising flood risk ✓ Facilitate inclusive hui and workshops to explore flood history, risk, and future options ✓ Build relationships with partner agencies and involve them in hui, particularly TDC ✓ Coordinate input and seek advice from iwi, engineers, scientists, and landowners on sub-catchment engagement around flood minimisation and community engagement ✓ Work closely with TDC to target actions at priority catchments / landowners. ✓ Advocate for planning that balances ecological function, safety, and landowner priorities ✓ Contribute to Motueka catchment flood risk reduction plan ✓ Support sub-catchment groups to develop tailored flood resilience plans ✓ Link flood resilience actions to restoration, monitoring, and community wellbeing	• One hui held by end of 2025 • 1-2 catchment wide workshops/year from 2026 attended by 100+ people / year • MCC works with partners to support three sub-catchment communities to meet, and identify goals and actions around flood risk reduction by end of 2026 • MCC supports several groups to implement flood risk planning action(s) by 2028
Nature-Based Pilots - Pilot re-meandering and other nature-based approaches in suitable locations in collaboration with partners, including TDC. Consider community education around nature based solutions.	• 1 re-meandering site scoped by 2026 • 2 sites implemented by 2028 • Monitoring undertaken at sites and shared • 1 hui by end of 2026 on nature-based solutions

Community Connection to Freshwater

People across the Motueka Catchment have strong, long-standing connections to their rivers and streams. Conversations, surveys and hui show how important these places are for swimming, fishing, walking and spending time with whānau, with many families holding generational ties to their local waterways.

Māori worldviews deepen this connection. Concepts such as whakapapa, mauri, kaitiakitanga and Te Mana o te Wai help people see rivers as living systems with their own needs, sitting alongside community aspirations for healthy, swimmable waterways.

MCC supports communities to understand how their rivers work — how land use, vegetation, drainage and river works affect river health, habitat and flood behaviour. As flood events become more frequent, this knowledge helps people make informed choices about safety and resilience.

Through workshops, recreation and peer learning, MCC builds capacity for action, from individual restoration to sub-catchment priorities. This work may sit within a reconfigured freshwater engagement group.

Summary action and targets table

Action Area	**Targets**
Sub-Catchment Engagement and action ● facilitate hui and peer learning in sub-catchments ● facilitate sharing by freshwater monitoring groups to their wider community ● support groups to develop local priorities and action plans ● Deliver catchment literacy workshops (sediment, habitat, temperature, flood behaviour ● provide support and resources for individual landowners restoring independently.	● MCC / FMG holds 6 sub-catchment hui by 2027 ● 5 active groups by 2027 ● Catchment literacy resources added to MCC website by 20272 groups develop sub-catchment plans by 2027. Could use this template.
River Access & Recreation	● 1 new sign by 2027, 4 by 2040

Action Area	Targets
• improve access to swimming spots, walking tracks, and environmental reserves. • Use recreation sites as places for river literacy and storytelling (signage, QR codes, species info)	
Storytelling & River Literacy • Coordinate storytelling, including intergenerational stories and a community-led video • Work with iwi to integrate whakapapa, mauri and kaitiakitanga into community engagement • Support youth engagement, events and practical guidance • Use signage to deepen river literacy — sharing stories, species, and catchment values. • Offer diverse opportunities for learning, dialogue, and action across the catchment. • Support communities to understand local flood behaviour and strengthen preparedness	• 1 event/year from 2025 • 5 schools engaged by 2027 • Community video produced by 2027 if funding sourced

6.2 Biodiversity & Restoration Strategy

Purpose

Restore native ecosystems across the Motueka Catchment by reconnecting fragmented habitats, supporting taonga species, and enabling community-led action that builds long-term ecological and cultural resilience.

Context

Native biodiversity in the catchment faces ongoing pressures — including habitat fragmentation, sedimentation, invasive species, and the decline of culturally significant fauna and flora. These pressures are compounded by climate vulnerability and land use change, and require coordinated, long-term action across landscapes and communities.

MCC's Role

MCC supports biodiversity restoration by enabling landowners, iwi, and community groups to lead action in ways that reflect their values, capacities, and connections to place. This includes connecting people, coordinating action, reducing barriers to delivery, and amplifying work already underway. The MCC's BAR Group takes an ecosystem-based approach that integrates planting, remnant protection, seed islands, and natural regeneration with species recovery and long-term stewardship. This work links with the Pest Management Group (PMG's) mahi to address weeds and predators across the catchment.

This strategy has three connected threads – habitat restoration and ecological connectivity, weed control, and predator control.

6.2.1 Habitat Restoration & Ecological Connectivity

Habitat restoration reconnects fragmented ecosystems and supports species that define the Motueka Catchment and that the community cares about. MCC prioritises riparian zones, wetlands, and lowland forests.

Biodiversity and Restoration pricking out event

Dovedale community nursery seed bomb trials

Delivery is coordinated through the BAR Group, which contributes to the long term regional goal led by Kotahitanga mō te Taiao (KMTT) to achieve 15% lowland forest cover.

Three-year priority actions (2025–2028)

Focus Area	Key actions	Targets
Riparian Planting	• Identify key tributaries for riparian planting, especially those linked to sediment, temperature, and flood risk. • Collaborate with iwi, landowners, sub-catchment, TDC and freshwater monitoring groups to develop planting plans and funding options.	• 2 riparian planting projects completed by 2028 • Riparian planting event run by 2027 • $ funding awarded
Wetland Restoration	• Support iwi-led and landowner restoration of lowland and spring-fed wetlands. • Lead several projects if capacity allows.	• 4 wetland restoration plans started or new wetlands created by 2028 • 1-2 wetland events by 2027 • At least 2 stories
Remnant Protection & Corridors	• Support landowners to protect and expand QEII and other remnant patches. • Coordinate planting to connect fragmented habitats.	• Support one project to expand remnant native by 2027 • 1 story by 2027
Community Propagation	• Maintain support for community nurseries and landowner propagation. • Provide eco-sourcing guidance, seed sourcing, and bulk purchasing support.	• Funding achieved • 2 community nurseries in 2027 • Start up another community nursery by 2028
Seed Islands & Innovation	• Trial seed islands and scalable restoration methods (e.g. direct seeding, grazable natives). • Share lessons across the catchment.	• 1 seed island trial by 2028 • 1 grazeable native trial by 2028 • 2 sites trialling passive restoration by 2028
Advice, Events and engagement	• Provide planting advice and maintenance protocols. • Host seasonal events for seed collection, propagation, and peer learning.	• Stories • Events delivered

Focus Area	Key actions	Targets
	• Explore a QEII block gathering to connect landowners in collaboration with Pest Management Group. • Celebrate and share restoration stories.	

Long term strategic direction

MCC's long-term strategy for biodiversity restoration is grounded in enabling diverse, locally led action across the catchment in collaboration with other partners and stakeholders. Restoration will be scaled by supporting landowners, iwi, and community groups to restore native habitat in ways that reflect their values, capacities, and connections to place—not just at mapped priority sites, but wherever momentum and readiness exist.

However, to contribute to the 2125 vision, MCC will align planting and propagation efforts with KMTT's strategy, strengthen eco-sourced seed networks, and support culturally informed habitat design for taonga species such as whio, kōkopu and river-nesting birds. Habitat work will also support climate resilience, with riparian and wetland planting linked to sediment control, aquifer recharge, and flood buffering.

Sub-catchment planning and nature-based solutions will help integrate this work with MCC's freshwater strategy, ensuring restoration contributes to both biodiversity and hydrological health.

Long-term success depends on intergenerational stewardship. MCC's role is not to lead top-down planning, but to cultivate the conditions for restoration to thrive—through relationships, seasonal planning, peer learning, and adaptive delivery. However MCC does have a role in coordinating connections with other partners who can help scale up momentum, such as TDC and KMTT. Over time, success will depend on shifting norms: restoration becomes expected, celebrated, and sustained across generations.

6.2.2Weed Control

Invasive weeds suppress native regeneration, degrade habitat quality, and increase restoration costs. Old Man's Beard (OMB) is a particular threat in forest remnants, riparian corridors, and QEII blocks, along with multiple other

aggressive weed species. Supporting TDC and the community to tackle new weeds such as Japanese honeysuckle and needle leaf hakea which haven't yet taken hold is also a focus for MCC. MCC's current approach focuses on strategic site-based action, community coordination, and practical support.

The Pest Management Group has led efforts at Haycocks Bush — a significant remnant site — through regular weeding bees and contractor support. Volunteers have received training in OMB removal techniques and cut-and-paste materials have been distributed. MCC plans to continue this work, expand to other priority sites, and continue to support groups like the Motueka Valley OMB team and the BOMB Squad in Brooklyn.

Haycocks Bush weeding bee 1

Brooklyn BOMB squad tackling huge OMB vines

Weed control is not a standalone task — it's embedded in restoration design, planting maintenance, and long-term ecological recovery.

Short-Term Actions (2025–2028)

These actions continue and strengthen current delivery through the Pest Management Group and local weeding groups:

- **Maintain regular weeding bees** at Haycocks Bush, with contractor support between events and explore new sites as capacity and funding allows, along with widening focus to trapping and planting in Haycocks.
- **Support active community groups** (e.g. Motueka Valley OMB, BOMB Squad) through event promotion and resources where possible.
- **Distribute tools, guidance and materials** (e.g. cut-and-paste kits) and offer practical training in OMB removal to landowners and groups as capacity allows and largely based on individual approaches.
- **Work with BAR group to ensure weed and pest animal control are integrated with planting for MCC projects**. For example, there should

be pest and animal and plant control pre, during & after planting, including hares & rabbits, mice that eat seeds

Strategic Scaling-Up Actions

To move toward long-term ecological recovery, MCC and its partners will:

- **Explore biocontrol options** in collaboration with experts and funders
- **Expand to additional high-value sites**, contingent on funding and community capacity
- **Embed weed control into restoration design**, including species selection and planting layout
- **Strengthen monitoring and reporting**, linking weed suppression to biodiversity outcomes
- **Build intergenerational stewardship**, through education, leadership development, and shared data platforms

These actions will require sustained funding, strong partnerships, and a shift from reactive weeding to proactive, landscape-scale control — embedded in restoration planning and supported by community leadership.

Weed Control – Short term Targets & Indicators

Action Area	Targets	Indicators
Old Man's Beard (OMB)	• Sustained control of OMB completed in Haycocks Bush by end of 2026 • Planting of open sites at Haycocks initiated with BAR group by end of 2026. • Identify another key site if capacity or funding allows by end of 2027. • One story about BOMB squad / Mot Valley OMB group by end of 2026.	• Area under control • Contractor and community involvement • Reinvasion rates • Integration with restoration plans
Other Weeds	• 2 stories about other invasive weeds in catchment by end of 2026	• Number of landowners supported • Events and training delivered

Action Area	Targets	Indicators
	• One education event on weeds by end of 2027 • Strong set of guidance and tools available on MCC website by end of 2027	
Integrated Control Trials	• Trial staged clearance and grazable natives at 2 pilot sites with BAR group.	• Methods trialled • Evaluation results • Sites scaled or replicated

6.2.3 Predator Control

Predator control is essential to protect native birds, invertebrates, and ecological processes. Possums, stoats, rats, ferrets and wasps threaten biodiversity across forest, wetland, and riparian habitats — especially in bush remnants and along rivers where nesting sites are vulnerable.

MCC's approach is community-led and strategically coordinated within local areas. The Pest Management Group has distributed over 200 subsidised traps (DOC200s and rat traps) to landowners and residents across the catchment. Traps have been built affordably by Fish & Game staff, and new projects are underway in Shedwood Bush and the Motueka township/sandspit area.

Community member collected traps

MCC at the Motueka Sunday market disseminating traps

Trapping groups are forming organically, and MCC will support these as capacity and funding allows by:

- Identifying lead contacts in each area
- Coordinating education events and peer learning

- provide support to groups or individuals that want to set up predator control projects within the Motueka catchment
- Sharing resources and good practice
- Encouraging use of TrapNZ and tracking active trap data
- Continuing to support with providing subsidised traps
- Encouraging community trap building, such as through the Nelson Trout Fishing Club to encourage and motivate a trapping community.
- Continuing to support backyard trappers across the catchment, including to maintain data on catches and number of traps deployed.
- encouragement of the use of trail cams to determine what the traps are getting & not getting
- Linking with other projects in the catchment and beyond (e.g. TET's trapping coordinator, Farmers for Whio network)
- Prioritising effort in high biodiversity zones — bush remnants, forest edges, estuaries, and river margins
- Collaborating with TDC and trapping experts to strengthen technical advice and monitoring

MCC will also begin to address a key gap: monitoring outcomes, as funding and capacity allows. This includes understanding which species are being protected, what predators are present, and how trapping is influencing biodiversity over time.

Predator Control – Targets & Indicators (by 2027)

Focus Area	Targets	Indicators
Trap Distribution & Coverage	• Distribute 250+ traps across catchment • establish three active trapping clusters with local leads	• Number and type of traps distributed • Geographic spread • Number of active clusters and lead contacts
Community Coordination	• Run one education event • maintain online resources and peer learning channels	• Event attendance • Website engagement • Feedback from trappers and leads

Focus Area	Targets	Indicators
Monitoring & Data	● 50+ active traps with data recorded in TrapNZ ● pilot species monitoring in two areas	● TrapNZ usage rates ● Predator detection trends ● Indicator species tracked
Strategic Partnerships	● Formal links with TET, Farmers for Whio, DOC and TDC ● coordinate effort in priority biodiversity zones	• Joint initiatives launched • Shared resources or training delivered • Collaborative planning in high-value areas
Expert Support & Advice	● Enable expert input across all active clusters via Pest Management Group members	• Number of groups receiving expert support • Uptake of best practice • Trapper confidence and retention

6.3 Productive Land Use Strategy

The Motueka Catchment is a working landscape—home to farmers, foresters, growers, and lifestylers who shape the land daily. This strategy supports those who care for the land to do so in ways that sustain both profitability and ecological health. This strategy does not exclude those living in towns and in areas not related to productive land use. It acknowledges that the Motueka Catchment is largely made up of rural land, and

Many landowners are already leading restoration—fencing QEII blocks, planting riparian zones, restoring wetlands, controlling predators, and creating habitat. MCC recognises and celebrates these efforts that align land management with catchment-wide restoration goals.

Wetland on Judith Rowe's farm

Native planting on Evan Baigent's farm in Upper Motueka

Primary producers are also increasingly adopting good management practices through industry programmes, and the development of farm plans. Many forestry companies also hold international sustainability accreditation, and work to reduce catchment impacts.

MCC acknowledges the realities of rural land management: time pressures, rising costs, regulatory complexity, and climate extremes including drought, flooding, and biosecurity threats.

Catchments and sub-catchments should also be focal points for farm and community adverse event planning and response. MCC's strategy supports pastoral, forestry, and horticultural sectors—recognising achievements and where it is useful and capacity allows, helping landowners build resilient, diversified, and climate-adapted businesses.

Expanding Sector Support

Until now, MCC's land management focus has been shaped by its forestry working group, although support has been offered to rural productive landowners through the BAR and Pest Management Groups. This strategy expands support across all three key productive land uses—pastoral farming, forestry, and horticulture—each with shared and sector-specific approaches. Some strategies also overlap with biodiversity and pest control goals. It should be noted that the implementation of this strategy will require additional funding and capacity to allow a coordinated and targeted support package from MCC.

6.3.1 Common Strategy for Landowners, Farmers and Growers.

Focus Area	Key Actions	SMART Goal (Draft)
1. Biodiversity	• Support landowners to care for existing and create new native biodiversity including planting, natural regeneration and enhancement of bush blocks and wetlands. • Provide support for weed control and predator control including possums, deer, goats, rats, stoats on private land.	Provide ongoing advice, resources, incentives, and leverage funding to support landowners' goals for new and care of existing native biodiversity on private land.
2. Engagement, Learning & Support	• Review thematic groups and assess how best to include farming and horticulture sectors • Partner with sector groups (e.g. B+LNZ, DairyNZ, Fed Farmers) on events and guidance • Link landowners into sub-catchment groups and stream monitoring • Understand peoples' drivers and barriers to participation. Tailor support to these drivers and remove barriers to participation (e.g. time, complexity) • Celebrate small wins and peer learning	Launch 2 new thematic groups, link 50 landowners into sub-catchment groups, and host 3 cross-sector learning events by 2026

3. Farm Environment Planning and good land management practices	A. Where capacity and skills allow, MCC will support farmers/growers to access information and resources to help them with their farm planning and good land management practices. B. MCC will support landowners wanting to achieve Farm Assurance Plus/Gold FEPs or Global/NZ Gap plans in collaboration with other partners and as appropriate. C. MCC will encourage workshops and advice for the development of both farm and (sub) catchment adverse event plans to reduce the impacts of and improve the response to adverse events in the catchment.	MCC has supported some farmers / growers with farm planning an emergency preparedness.
4. Alternative land use	Where capacity allows, MCC will support farmers and growers with possible profitable, alternative land uses that could improve financial and environmental resilience in the catchment.	Hold 1 workshop per year. By 2030, 80% of farmers and growers have been provided with information or know where to find information on potential land use options to support resilient farming and growing.

6.3.2 Pastoral

PLEASE NOTE - THIS SECTION HAS NOT YET BEEN REVIEWED BY THE FARMING SECTOR

Sheep, beef and dairy farming each interact with the Motueka Catchment in different ways, shaped by topography, soils, stocking rates and climate. The main environmental risks for pastoral systems relate to sediment, nutrients and E. coli entering waterways, as well as erosion on steeper country.

While a new area, MCC sees its role is to connect farmers with good information, tools, funding pathways and peer learning, and to support sub-catchment groups and partners to work together on practical solutions. MCC does not

provide one-on-one farm planning, but helps create the conditions for locally led improvements in water quality, soil health and climate resilience.

Sheep and beef farms are typically located on sloped terrain where overland flow of sediment, phosphate and E. coli can occur during heavy rain, especially on erosion-prone soils. Managing slope, groundcover and critical source areas is key to reducing these losses.

On dairy farms, which are generally on flatter land with higher stocking rates, nitrate leaching is the primary risk to groundwater and surface water. Overland flow is less common but can still occur around races, gateways and compacted areas.

Across all pastoral land, eroding and unshaded stream and riverbanks can contribute significant sediment to waterways, particularly during floods, and reduce habitat quality. Stabilising banks, protecting margins and managing stock access are important tools for reducing this pressure.

Pastoral farming remains a major part of the Motueka Catchment's identity and economy. Many farmers are already implementing good practice, and there is strong potential to continue improving water quality, soil health and climate resilience through locally adapted approaches.

Focus Area	Key Actions	SMART Goal (Draft)
1. Sediment flows into waterways	A. Prioritise the most erosion-prone sub-catchments where there is landowner willingness and support farmers, landowners and TDC to work together on practical, long-term ways to reduce stream and riverbank erosion. This includes agreeing on locally suitable options for bank stabilisation, riparian planting and improving how waterways handle high flows and sediment. B. Support sub-catchment groups and landowners to identify the most erosion-prone slopes and gullies, and work with TDC and industry partners to promote practical options for reducing land slippage, including managing water	Reduce sediment runoff from priority erosion zones by 25% by 2035. By 2125 pastoral farmers retain all sediment on their farms and it is recycled into productive soils.

	flows and using strategic native or exotic planting.. C. Work with farmers in priority sub-catchments (as skills and capacity allow) to share and encourage good management practices that reduce sediment loss, focusing first on the activities with the highest risk, such as intensive winter grazing and soil cultivation. D. Help sub-catchment groups and landowners improve understanding of critical source areas and overland flow paths, and connect them with tools, expertise and funding that support better management of these high-risk zones. E. Where there is capacity, encourage and help secure funding for sediment and water-capture solutions such as ponds, sediment traps, wetlands and leaky weirs, and work with TDC to reduce consent barriers where appropriate. Prioritise sub-catchments where these tools will have the greatest benefit for water quality and farm resilience.	
2. Nutrient flows and E. Coli	Work with farmers and landowners in priority sub-catchments to identify the main sources of nutrient and E. coli losses and support the uptake of practical, locally suitable actions that reduce these losses.	By 2030, at least 50% of farmers in sub-catchments with nutrient or E. coli issues have adopted one or more actions that meaningfully reduce losses to waterways. By 2125, more than 90% of nutrients and faecal matter are retained and

		reused on farms through good management practices, improved infrastructure and new technologies.

6.3.3 Horticulture

Horticulture is a major part of the Motueka Catchment, with apples, kiwifruit and hops grown across the district. These land uses generally have lower nutrient and sediment losses than pastoral farming, but there are still opportunities to improve water use efficiency, nutrient management and soil health.

MCC sees its role (although new and evolving) being to connect growers with good information, tools, funding pathways and peer learning, and to support sub-catchment groups and industry partners to work together on practical improvements. MCC does not currently have the capacity to provide one-on-one farm planning, but helps create the conditions for locally led action that supports water quality, soil health and climate resilience, while maintaining business continuity.

Context

- Nutrient and sediment losses from horticulture are relatively low, but improving nitrogen-use efficiency remains an opportunity.
- Most growers use drip irrigation or other efficient systems, but further gains are possible through soil-moisture monitoring and improved scheduling.
- Water takes are managed through resource consents and the Water Conservation Order, which protect minimum flows. Growers who do not use their full allocation may risk future reductions.
- Integrated pest management (IPM) is widely adopted, using beneficial insects, natural predators and cover crops to reduce chemical use.
- Increasing drought intensity in the centre of the catchment makes water efficiency and soil health increasingly important.

Focus Area	Key Actions	SMART Goal (Draft)
Sub-catchment group formation	Work with horticultural producers in key sub-catchments to encourage them to work together in their sector and within the community on sub-catchment goals.	
1. Water extraction from aquifers and the river for irrigation use	A. If capacity exists, work with growers, HortNZ and TDC to clarify how the water-quota system operates so growers do not feel pressured to use water unnecessarily to protect future allocations. B. Strengthen relationships with HortNZ and other industry groups to ensure support for growers is well targeted and aligned with industry programmes. Where there is capacity and interest, support growers to improve water-use efficiency by sharing information on irrigation technology, soil-moisture monitoring and scheduling, delivered through industry partners and sub-catchment groups.. C. Facilitate information sharing on ways to improve soil health and soil carbon in compacted or regularly cultivated soils to improve water holding capacity therefore improve drought resilience and reduce water use. D. On suitable clay-based soils, work with landowners and TDC to reduce regulatory barriers and improve biodiversity outcomes for ponds, wetlands and water-capture	By 2035, growers in priority sub-catchments meet industry good practice for irrigation and know where to access support to make further efficiencies. By 2125, water use on farms has no negative impact on river health, and growers have opportunities to capture high-flow water for use during dry periods.

	systems that store high-flow water for later use	
Integrated pest management	A. Work with industry organisations to share best practice in integrated pest management, supporting continued reductions in chemical use. B. Promote native plantings that support pollinators and beneficial insects in and around horticultural blocks.	By 2035, there is increasing adoption of IPM and other technologies that reduce chemical use across horticultural properties.
3. Nutrient flows	A. Work with industry organisations to share best practice for fertiliser use, helping growers minimise nutrient leaching into aquifers and improve nitrogen-use efficiency	Growers meet industry good practice for fertiliser use required under industry assurance schemes (including timelines) and understand where to find information and support to make further efficiencies.

9.5 Forestry

PLEASE NOTE – THIS SECTION HAS NOT YET BEEN REVIEWED WIDELY BY THE FORESTRY SECTOR

Forestry covers roughly a quarter of the Motueka Catchment, including extensive areas on steep, erosion-prone Separation Point granite. Forest cover contributes positively to water quality, carbon storage, and local livelihoods, and the sector plays a significant role in the regional economy. At the same time, some forestry practices can increase sediment loss, landslide risk, and stream degradation. Broader impacts may include altered hydrology, reduced aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity, and loss of riparian habitat, especially in headwater streams and post-harvest periods.

Long-term Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) research in Motueka has highlighted the importance of tailoring forestry practices to terrain sensitivity, embedding monitoring, and taking a systems approach to catchment resilience—especially in the face of increasing droughts, floods, and climate variability.

Forestry companies operating in the catchment have taken steps to improve environmental practices, including enhanced riparian setbacks, stream health monitoring, and trials of alternative species. Many are working under international sustainability frameworks, such as Forest Stewardship Council certification. There is a clear commitment across the sector to continue improving practices over time, and to respond constructively to community concerns.

MCC's Forestry Working Group brings together iwi, community members, forest managers, scientists, and small block owners to share knowledge, surface concerns, and highlight good practice. The actions in this plan build on that collaborative foundation—supporting riparian and living fence trials, facilitating site visits, promoting species alternatives, and amplifying stories of innovation and care.

MCC's role is to foster trust, share good practice, and partner with iwi, landowners, forestry operators, and agencies to support projects that improve environmental outcomes and strengthen community relationships. Community voices—particularly those affected by forestry impacts—are central to this strategy. At the same time, MCC acknowledges the sector's ongoing efforts and the importance of constructive, solutions-focused dialogue. Progress will come through collaboration, not polarisation.

MCC's long-term goal is to support forestry that enhances catchment health, respects cultural values, and responds to community concerns—while recognising the sector's contribution to regional resilience and innovation.

Forestry Action Framework – MCC's Role and Priorities

Action Area	What MCC Will Do	Targets (Draft)
Reduce the detrimental impacts of large-scale forestry	• Support innovative projects that reduce environmental impacts and showcase good practice • Strengthen relationships with commercial forestry operators • Share best practice case studies and encourage uptake across the sector • Work with other organisations and forestry owners to explore options for mitigating post-harvest impacts and flood-related sediment loss,	• Riparian and other buffers (set target) • living fence trials (set target) • best practice case studies (set target) • increased number of sites verified as meeting best practice environmental standards (consider target)

Action Area	What MCC Will Do	Targets (Draft)
	especially on Separation Point granite terrain • Continue supporting living fence trials and riparian buffer establishment where these are effective • Support and encourage continued discussions and action on creating buffer zones to protect high sediment yield sites (outside riparian areas) • Use sediment yield data, community input, and forestry sector feedback to identify priority zones for action—focusing efforts where ecological benefit and readiness align • Support the continued transition away from pine on high-risk sites • Support trials of alternative forest models (e.g. continuous cover, mixed species, native restoration) • Promote uptake of economically feasible and ecologically resilient forest systems • Collaborate with forestry operators to increase the number of sites meeting best practice environmental standards	
Iwi-owned forestry	• Work with iwi and partners to identify priorities, approaches, and opportunities for iwi-led forestry, respecting cultural values and aspirations	*(SMART goal to be co-developed with iwi partners)*
Improve understanding of forestry impacts on catchment health	• Support expert synthesis of research done to date (including ICM) to identify current findings and data gaps, particularly in relation to sediment impacts.	• Research findings shared as available

Action Area	What MCC Will Do	Targets (Draft)
	• Support research and partner-led initiatives to identify sediment sources and landscape responses • Share findings with stakeholders and the wider community to build understanding and inform future planning	
Foster transparency through site visits	• Organise visits to large-scale forestry sites for community members, iwi, and small forest owners to build understanding of current practices and terrain-sensitive approaches	• Draft target about number of site visits
Promote alternatives to pine	• Collaborate with MPI and others to provide information on alternative species and forest systems • Support small forest owners and farmers to plant native or mixed-species forests as productive alternatives • Pilot continuous cover forestry or mixed-species trials in vulnerable zones • Identify practical barriers (e.g. cost, advice, market access) and explore partnerships or funding pathways to support landowners • Share case studies to build confidence and uptake	• Draft target about alternative planting projects supported
Engage and inform the community	• Share best practice stories and case studies from across the sector • Ensure balanced, science-based communication about forestry impacts and benefits • Facilitate discussions between community and industry to build common ground • Host dialogue around forestry expansion, especially where it	• Draft target about community/forestry hui held • Draft target about best practice stories shared

Action Area	What MCC Will Do	Targets (Draft)
	intersects with biodiversity, cultural values, or productive farmland • Promote awareness of the Forestry Working Group and its contributions to catchment health	
Clarify MCC's role and the work of the Forestry Working Group (FWG)	• Review the work of the FWG and identify next steps for its evolution • Consider representation on the FWG and the need for a balanced mix of community members and forestry company representatives, or explore a different model. • Create a monitoring approach to track progress across key actions and support adaptive management	• Draft target about monitoring framework developed

Using the Plan as a Tool for Strategic Delivery

Along with continuing to work the willing and supporting landowners where they're at a pace that suits the community, this plan is designed to guide strategic action to address the key pressures and challenges faced in the catchment. It provides a shared framework for MCC and its partners to:

- **Assess feasibility and capacity** for different restoration approaches
- **Identify high-impact opportunities** based on ecological need, community readiness, and cultural significance
- **Coordinate funding, contractors, and technical support** across the catchment
- **Track progress toward long-term targets and indicators**
- **Adapt delivery based on feedback, monitoring, and experience**

To support delivery, MCC may also explore a range of economic levers and creative engagement strategies—including philanthropic partnerships, incentive models, and community-led innovations such as speed planting competitions and restoration challenges. These approaches can help build momentum, attract new contributors, and make restoration more visible and rewarding. MCC's role is to enable these ideas to flourish while ensuring they remain grounded in ecological integrity and community values.

7. Implementation Plan

7.1 Building on momentum created

The Motueka Catchment Plan builds on four years of community-led action, coordination, and capacity building. MCC has already laid strong foundations through:

- Active thematic groups delivering on biodiversity, freshwater monitoring, pest management, forestry, and recreation priorities
- Sub-catchment networks forming organically, especially in the upper catchment, with strong local leadership and peer support
- On-ground restoration including riparian planting, fencing, and pest control, supported by Trees That Count, community nurseries and growing community propagation skills
- Monitoring systems like SHMAK kits and eDNA sampling, with community training underway
- Governance development, including a formalised Steering Group, co-chairing, and forming a vision, mission, objectives and Terms of Reference
- Community engagement, with over 100 attendees at hui, hundreds of survey responses, and growing visibility through communications and events.

MCC will continue to support the implementation of the plan through enabling, convening, connecting, and supporting the community.

Building on the ICM Legacy

The Motueka Catchment has long been a site of innovation in integrated environmental management. The Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) programme (2000–2015) laid critical foundations by:

- Advancing interdisciplinary science across land, water, and community systems
- Developing tools for participatory modelling, scenario planning, and stakeholder engagement
- Highlighting the importance of co-learning and adaptive management in complex catchments

MCC carries this legacy forward — translating research insights into community-led action and long-term restoration. Where ICM focused on understanding systems, MCC focuses on enabling change.

This plan honours the past and current momentum and provides a pathway to sustain and scale it.

7.2 Strategic pathway – two-year implementation (2025–2027)

The next 1–2 years are a foundation phase. With limited funding available, the focus is on the following five areas:

Focus Area	Key Actions	Delivery Mode
Keep Momentum Alive	Support existing thematic groups; maintain and where possible increase sub-catchment connections; host low-cost hui and workshops	Voluntary effort; in-kind support
Strategic Prioritisation	Identify and progress only high priority actions at a project level as funding allows, including addressing flood risk.	MCC coordination; partner input
Funding & Partnerships	Maintain existing partner relationships, develop new funding proposals linked to priorities; engage philanthropic and government partners; build case studies for investment	MCC lead; support from advisors
Profile & Visibility	Share success stories; update website and visuals; celebrate community effort	Communications volunteers; local media
Governance and MCC structure Review	Facilitate review of thematic and governance structures; explore new models for delivery alignment	MCC facilitation; external input

Delivery will be coordinated across the following five groups:

Layer	Role in Implementation
Catchment Steering Group	Strategic oversight, prioritisation, alignment with regional frameworks, adaptive review

Layer	Role in Implementation
Paid staff	Communications, administrative support, logistics, event planning and delivery, some coordination.
Thematic Working Groups	Lead delivery within strategy areas: Freshwater, Biodiversity, Sustainable Land Management
Sub-Catchment Networks	Local action planning, peer learning, monitoring, and community engagement
Landowners & Partners	On-ground implementation, innovation, co-investment, and feedback

These groups will evolve as delivery scales and governance is refined. We anticipate that some of the groups will develop detailed workplans. We recommend that each workplan should clearly link to this catchment framework.

7.3 Strategic Pathway – 100-year implementation

Implementation is staged across four horizons, each requiring distinct system shifts and enabling conditions:

Timeframe	System Shifts Required
2025–2030	Build trust and coordination; pilot restoration and monitoring; establish governance and funding foundations
2030–2050	Scale restoration and monitoring; embed cultural indicators; normalise community-led stewardship
2050–2080	Transition land use practices; achieve ecological thresholds; institutionalise adaptive management
2080–2125	Maintain gains; intergenerational leadership; full catchment resilience and biodiversity recovery

Each phase will require new workplans, partnerships, and review — but this pathway ensures coherence and direction.

7.4 Achieving outcomes

All three strategic pathways follow a set of steps that ensure outcomes are achieved.

Outcomes Framework

Here is the updated outcomes framework presented cleanly as a **table**, aligned with your revised 2125 vision and the tone of the updated catchment plan.

Outcomes Framework (Aligned with 2125 Vision)

Category	2125 Outcome	Intermediate Conditions	Key Enablers	Risks
Freshwater Stewardship	Healthy, resilient rivers, wetlands and aquifers functioning as a connected living system, with abundant mahinga kai and restored hydrological processes from mountains to sea.	• Native riparian margins restored, shaded and maintained • Sediment, nutrient and E. coli loads significantly reduced • Wetlands expanded - buffering floods, filtering water and supporting aquifer recharge • Catchment-wide monitoring using scientific and cultural indicators • Landowner stewardship and iwi leadership embedded in everyday practice	• Long-term funding and stable partnerships • Integration of Te Ao Māori and Te Mana o te Wai • Community awareness, capability and shared kaupapa • Trusted, accessible data guiding adaptive action	• Fragmented delivery or loss of momentum • Regulatory misalignment or unclear roles • Climate-driven extremes outpacing adaptation
Biodiversity & Habitat Restoration	Thriving native ecosystems across the catchment, including lowlands, with connected habitats, low predator and weed pressure, and stable populations of taonga species.	• Habitat connectivity from mountains to sea • Sustained pest and weed control at scale • Community and iwi-led planting and restoration • Ecological thresholds achieved for key species and	• Strong volunteer networks and community nurseries • Iwi-led restoration and cultural health monitoring • Effective monitoring systems and	• Climate stressors reducing habitat resilience • Lack of coordination across land uses • Restoration efforts not reaching sufficient scale

Category	2125 Outcome	Intermediate Conditions	Key Enablers	Risks
		habitats • Expanded and maintained lowland forest cover	shared data • DOC, council and sector support aligned with community action	
Sustainable Land Management	Catchment-wide resilience to flooding and climate extremes, with land use that supports livelihoods, protects soil and water, and adapts to changing conditions.	• Adaptive land practices informed by climate projections and local knowledge • Reconnected and functioning floodplains • Sector-specific improvement pathways for farming, horticulture and forestry • Community-led preparedness plans active in all sub-catchments • Integrated planning across landowners, iwi, council and industry	• Strong landowner engagement and sub-catchment groups • Technical support, peer learning and industry partnerships • Cross-sector collaboration on erosion, sediment and water management • Access to funding and practical tools for climate-ready practice	• Economic pressures limiting uptake • Siloed planning between sectors or agencies • Insufficient visibility or adoption of climate-ready approaches

7.5 Funding and capacity

Many of the actions and targets in this plan rely on a secure funding stream to enable investment in research, monitoring, support for landowners and the productive sector, and coordination of projects and initiatives.

MCC is committed to identifying new sources of funding, and applying for funding as it arises, and aims to develop a Funding strategy to support long term goals and stable project delivery.

7.6 Indicators and monitoring

Monitoring focuses on whether the catchment is moving toward healthier rivers, stronger biodiversity, climate-ready land use, and deeper community connection — not just whether activities were completed. Indicators will evolve as capacity grows and will reflect both scientific measures and cultural health indicators led by iwi. Early monitoring will be light-touch and community-driven, with more formal systems developed over time.

Monitoring Framework

Timeframe	Example Indicators
Short Term (1–5 years)	• Number of active sub-catchment groups • Pilot restoration or monitoring sites established • Participation in hui, workshops and community monitoring • Uptake of tools such as SHMAK kits and simple soil/erosion assessments • Use of LAWA land management register or equivalent
Medium Term (5–20 years)	• Percentage of catchment under active restoration • Monitoring coverage across rivers, wetlands and estuary (e.g., SHMAK, eDNA, cultural indicators) • Cultural health indicators developed and used alongside scientific measures • Increased adoption of climate-ready land practices • Sub-catchment plans active and reviewed regularly
Long Term (20–100 years)	• 15% lowland forest cover achieved and maintained • Stable or increasing populations of īnanga, tuna, kōaro, kākahi and other taonga species • Reduced flood damage and sediment loads at key monitoring points • Wetlands functioning as buffers for floods and droughts • Community-led and iwi-led monitoring embedded in catchment governance

8. Conclusion & Call to Action

The Motueka Catchment Community Plan is a living guide for healthy rivers, strong communities. It connects ecological restoration, sustainable land use, and culturally grounded water care. Every action, big or small, contributes to the catchment's revival as shown in the visual below.

Your Role: A Call to Action

Now is the time to act. We invite everyone in the catchment—landowners, iwi, businesses, volunteers, and decision-makers—to:

- **Engage**: Join thematic groups, attend hui, and share your insights.
- **Connect**: Join or start a catchment group in your local community
- **Act**: plant trees, trap predators, control weeds, monitor your local stream
- **Share**: Help spread the vision across the catchment.

Moving Forward Together

Catchment care is a journey of learning, adapting, and caring. Every planting day, every partnership, every story shared strengthens our collective impact. Together, we can build a legacy of resilience and connection.

If you'd like to get involved or learn more, please reach out. The future of our catchment is in our hands.

TOGETHER FOR OUR CATCHMENT

HEALTHY RIVERS, STRONG COMMUNITIES

MOTUEKA CATCHMENT COLLECTIVE

LOOK AFTER THE LAND

CARE FOR OUR RIVERS

PROTECT & CELEBRATE NATIVE BUSH

KA ORA TE AWA, KA ORA TE TANGATA
WHEN THE RIVERS ARE WELL, THE PEOPLE WILL BE WELL.

RAINY
CLARK
UPPER MOTUEKA
MOTUPIKO
KOHATU
MOTUPIKO
TADMOR
SHERRY
DART
WANGAPEKA
KAHURANGI
MT OWEN
TAPAWERA
STANLEY BROOK
BATON
THORPE
DOVEDALE
DOVE
WOODSTOCK
TUAO WHAREPAPA (MT ARTHUR)
PEARSE
ORINOCO
GRAHAM
WAIMEA
POKORORO
MOTUEKA
MOTUEKA
TE AWHINA
BROOKLYN
RIWAKA
RIWAKA

ILLUSTRATION BY JACQUI CHAN

MOTUEKA CATCHMENT COLLECTIVE

WE STRENGTHEN & EMPOWER LOCAL COMMUNITIES... to UNDERSTAND, ADAPT... ...and TAKE ACTION for the CATCHMENT

SCAN ME

MOTUEKACATCHMENT.ORG.NZ/EVENTS

9. Appendices

These appendices are provided to give examples of tools and information that can be used to help implement the catchment plan.

Examples:

Community transformation using theories of change

Farmer engagement strategy

Mapping and prioritising tool.

Decision making matrix

10. References

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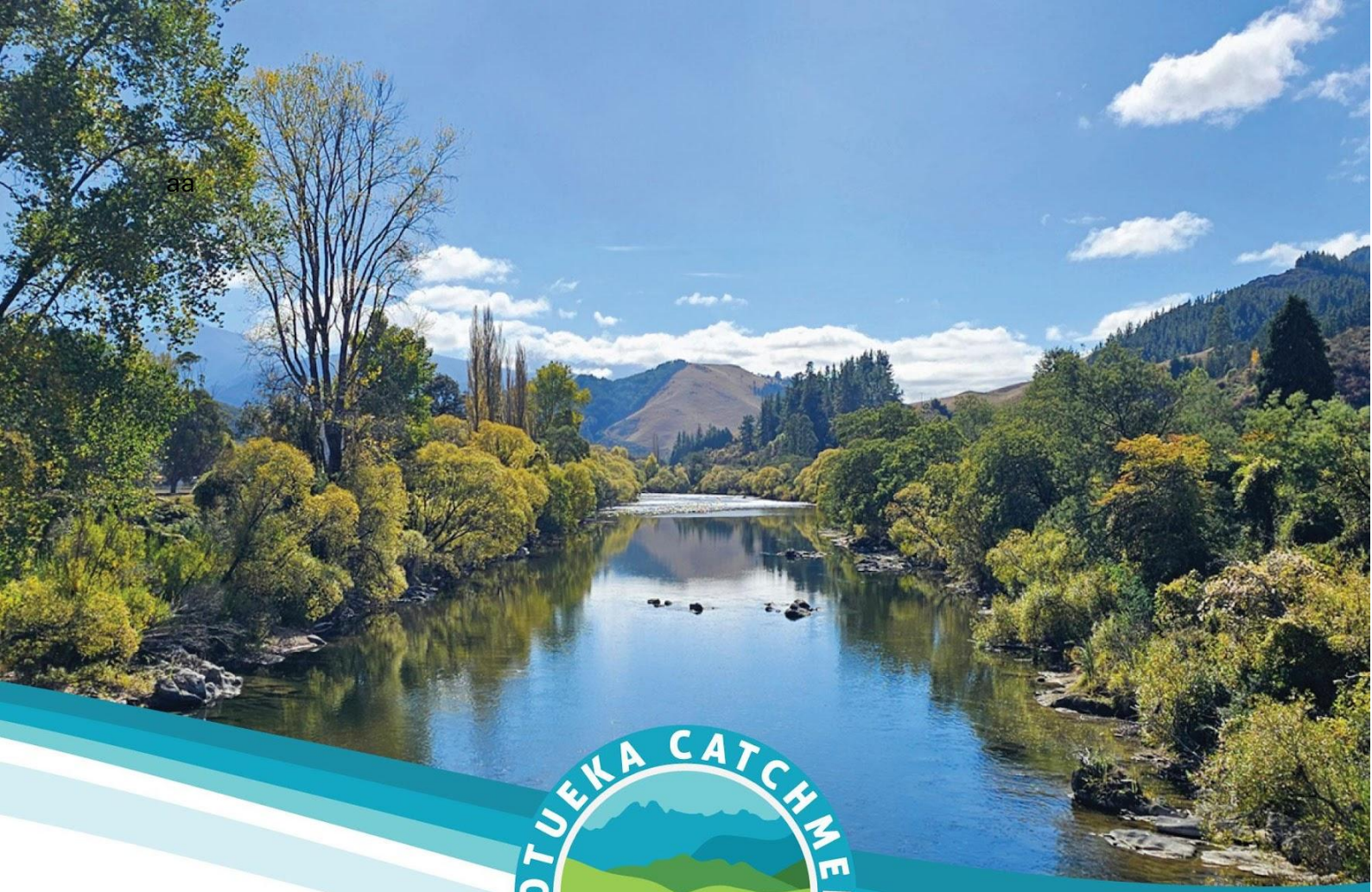

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