

Catchment Group Story

Wellington/Te Upoko-o-te-Ika | APRIL 2025



Tīnui Whareama Community Catchment Group

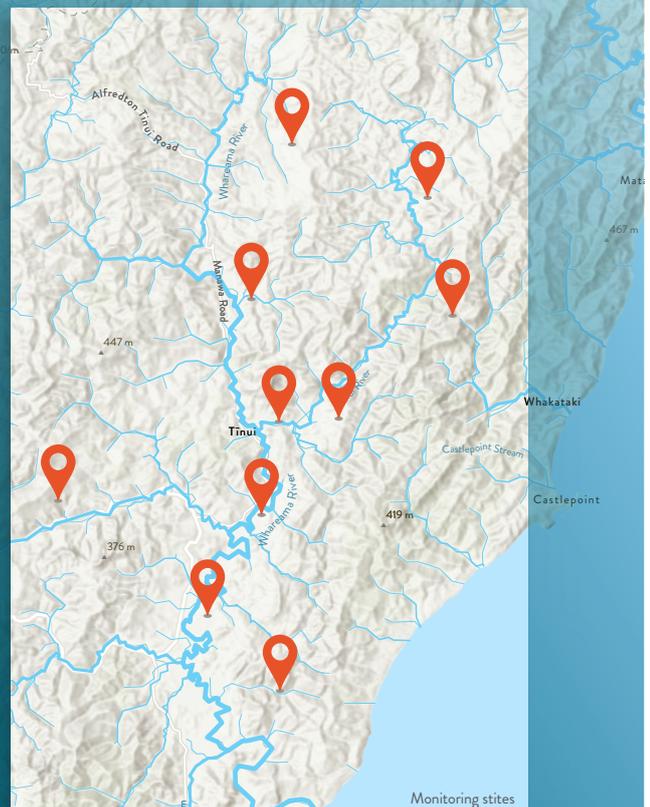
Whareama River Catchment, Wairarapa

In the heart of Wairarapa’s eastern hill country, the Whareama River, Tīnui River and their tributaries, stretch for 40 km – connecting the community with nature. In 2020 a group of rural landowners came together to form a catchment group, with aspirations of improving and enhancing the Whareama river and all its tributaries.

The group was hit last in 2023 with multiple cyclones which damaged properties and the township. As a resilient rural community, the group has not only expanded in numbers, but they’ve also set some ambitious goals for the catchment including:

- » profitable, environmentally sustainable farms and businesses for future generations
- » resilient infrastructure that reflects community needs and values
- » healthy waterways where wildlife, business and recreation thrive
- » land with the right mix of indigenous and exotic plants to build greater biodiversity and native ecosystems across the catchment.

Supported by the Wairarapa Catchment Collective, Greater Wellington, and Mountains to Sea Wellington (MTSW), they’re committed to making a difference in their catchment.



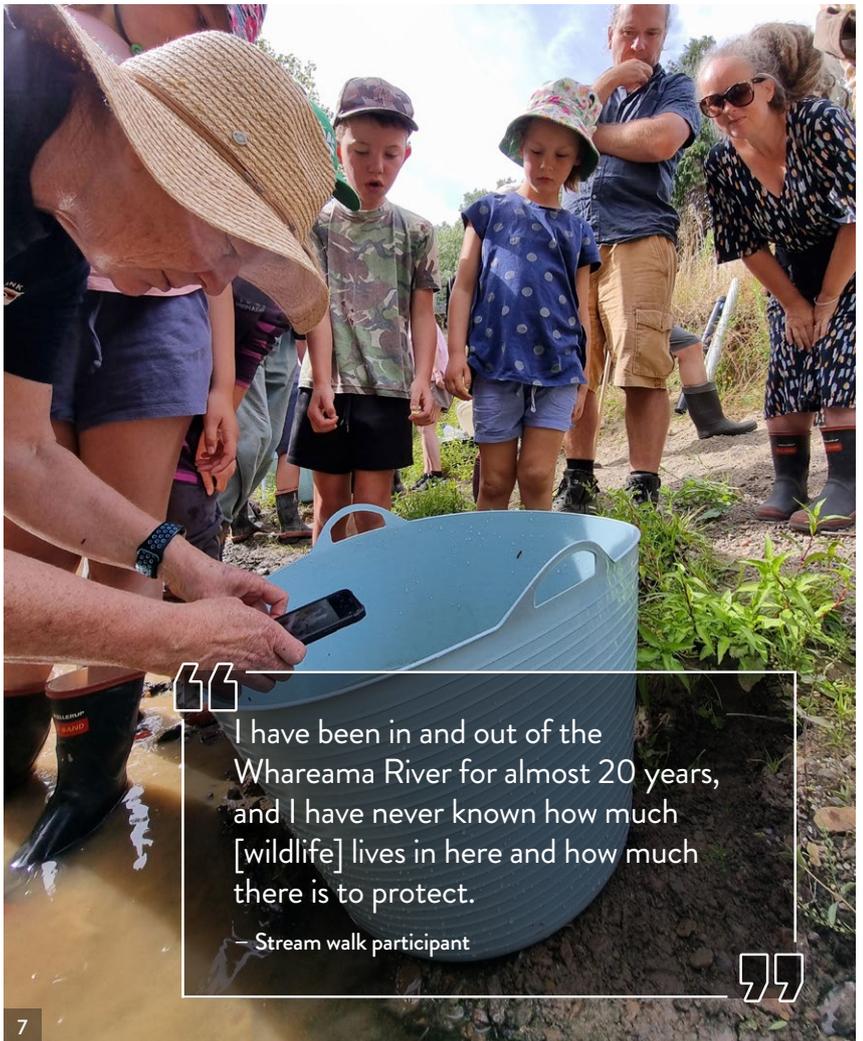


PHOTO CAPTIONS – Front cover: 1. Maddy and Nicky looking out at the lower monitoring site, the jetty, Whareama River. Above: 2. Mike, the surf lifesaving captain, giving us a ride to find the saltwater wedge. 3. Whareama Action Planning workshop, August 2024. 4. Stream walk day, the community gathered for whakawanungatanga. 5. Whareama School Students searching for inanga eggs. 6. Whareama School students learning about inanga life cycle. 7. Tamariki and adults excited by a bucket of bullies. Back page: 8. A Captivated audience learning about the quality of the water in Whareama. 9. Fish identification with Liz and Dianne. 10 Local kids learning about local waterways.

Community Engagement & Monitoring Initiatives



Stream Walk

40 people joined MTSW for a guided exploration of two local waterways. The journey began at the old St Andrews Church site, where the group delved into the Mangapokia Stream. Whaea Di, highlighted intriguing features like a shallow mineral pan causing rust-coloured banks. Using a clarity tube, we examined water quality, which was a bit of a fan favourite. The fish traps revealed a thriving ecosystem with shortfin eels, īnanga, bullies, shrimp, and caddisflies.

The exploration continued to Lake Braemore, an artificially constructed lake on Braemore Farm. Initially created for irrigation, the lake now holds a broader community vision as a potential local camping and jet boating spot. Although it's artificially constructed, the lake is teeming with life. Our nets were bursting with 14 shortfin eels, much to the excitement of all the tamariki. Before sharing some kai, the group gathered for whakawhanaungatanga – a moment to share and reflect. Days like these are not only about connecting with te taiao, but also about connecting the community with each other.



Mangapakeha Polar Workshop

A pole workshop and community BBQ was held at Mangapakeha on Father's Day. There were around 45 participants learning about growing, planting and harvesting of poplar poles. Native seedlings and harvested poles were available to take home. There appears to be some interest in the nursery being used as a community resource - further work needs to be undertaken on how this would work.



Pest Control

The group has been working with John Bisell through the Wairarapa Catchment Collective around pest control. Key elements identified were pest animal concerns across the catchment, aligning these with clear goals, and carry out catchment wide pest monitoring using chew cards, and trail cameras to help measure, and confirm anecdotal observations.

Next steps involve presenting the monitoring results to the group and identifying startup biodiversity sites with potential that the group can manage. This will include pre-monitoring to set benchmarks, designing specific pest control methods, costing infrastructure and exploring funding options, and implementing the plan with training and data collection systems in place.



Water Quality Monitoring & Macroinvertebrate Sampling



Currently there is little monitoring done of the Whareama and Tīnui Rivers, as such monitoring by the catchment group will be supported by Greater Wellington Regional Council. The group will monitor 12 sites along the Whareama and Tīnui Rivers and their tributaries. There are four rounds of bottle sampling and macroinvertebrate sampling scheduled over the coming wet and dry seasons. The group will also join the trial of the CBFM monitoring tools utilising survey123 for the sampling. MTSW will support the group with trialling the tools and data management.



Īnanga Monitoring

The Whareama River was once known for being an abundant īnanga fishery river. In the past 20 years there's been a rapid decline in the fishery. The community would like to know more about īnanga in the river, the impacts, and potential solutions. The Whareama School senior students are working to understand the lifecycle of īnanga and how they might be impacted in the Whareama River. The students will then come up with solutions on how the community can help protect the īnanga population in the awa.

Next Steps



The group has created an action plan to consolidate ideas and timeline actions to be able to take tangible steps.

- » Continue water quality monitoring in the Whareama and Tīnui Rivers to gain better insights into the current state of the awa.
- » Continue the īnanga spawning project and have students come up with actions to restore the īnanga spawning habitat. The results of the project will then be presented to the wider Whareama Tīnui Community.
- » Community review of pest animal monitoring information and creating Pest control trapping plan.
- » SedNet Modelling: SedNed Modelling is set to start in June 2025 to better understand the areas of high risk for soil erosion in the Whareama Catchment.



8

To learn more about the Whareama Tīnui Community Catchment Group, or how 'Wai Connection – Tatai Ki Te Wai' is supporting them, please contact:

SUE MALCOLM | WTCCG Coordinator
sue-malcolm@outlook.com

SAM JOHNSTON | WTCCG Group Chair
samjohnston@xtra.co.nz

 www.facebook.com/whareamariver
 www.wairarapacc.nz

MADDY GLOVER | Mountains to Sea Wellington
'Wai Connection' Regional Coordinator
maddy.glover@mtsw.org.nz

All images © Mountains to Sea Wellington



9



10