



Pātea Catchment Strategy

An integrated approach from the Pātea Dam to the Pātea Saltmarsh, restoring ecological connectivity and enabling native species to thrive across the catchment.

16,965

HECTARES OF LAND & WATER

200+

PREDATOR TRAPS DEPLOYED

3 yrs

OF CONCERTED GROUP EFFORT

1

INTEGRATED STRATEGY

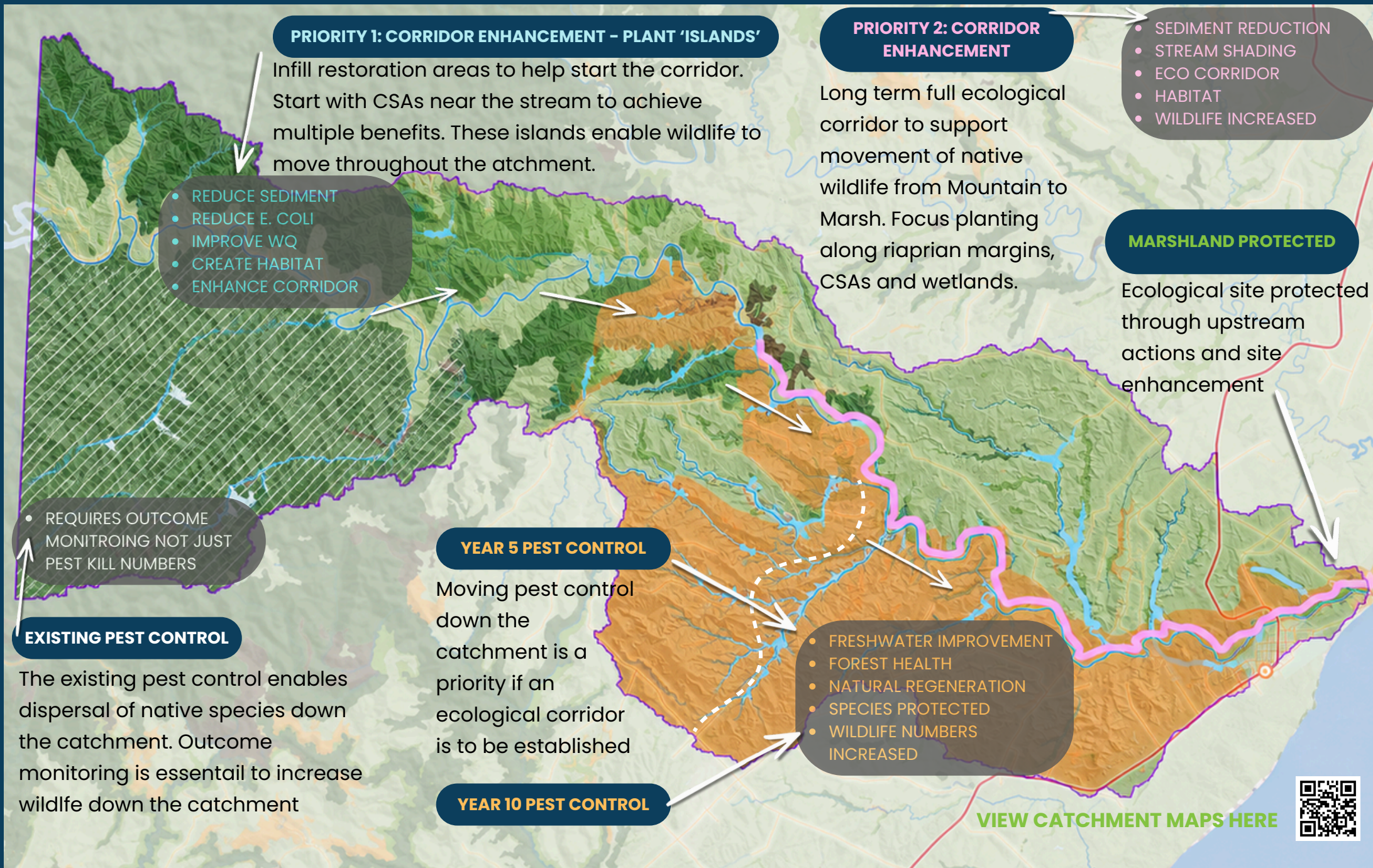
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01: Objectives & Approach

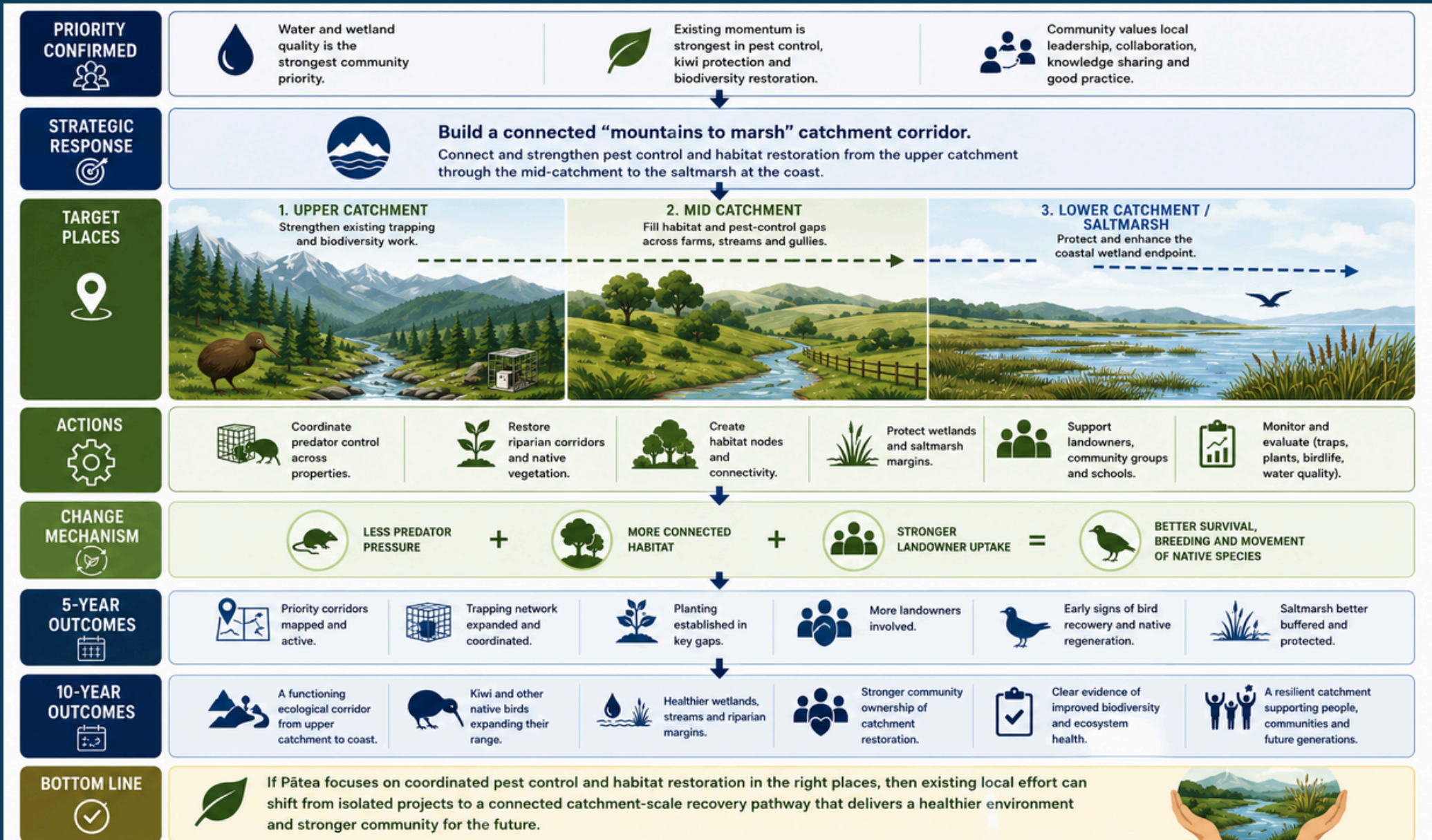
Catchment Strategy Summary

10 YEAR STRATEGY ON A PAGE



Catchment Strategy Logic

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER



PRIORITY → PLACE → ACTIONS → CHANGE → 5 YEARS → 10 YEARS → BETTER FUTURE

Catchment Objective

Pātea is a connected freshwater ecological corridor where the community works collectively to reduce pests and restore native habitats.

Within 10 years we will see healthier forests, waterways, land and coastal environments.

Within a generation we will create the conditions for iconic native species to thrive throughout the catchment

ABOUT PĀTEA AND THIS CATCHMENT PLAN

The Pātea River catchment extends from the upper reaches below the Pātea Dam through steep, predominantly indigenous forested hill country, before opening into the pastoral lowlands and tributary networks of the lower catchment and coastal floodplain near Pātea township. The river ultimately flows to the Tasman Sea through the nationally significant Pātea Saltmarsh. The Pātea is an ideal ecological corridor that links indigenous forest habitats with coastal and estuarine environments.

This strategy builds on three years of upper-catchment conservation work and brings existing mahi together into a coordinated, catchment-scale ecological corridor that delivers measurable biodiversity and water quality outcomes through practical land management.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Predator control is happening across the whole catchment
- Kiwi regularly seen in lower catchment
- Habitat quality and quantity enhanced
- Connected native habitat along the river corridor
- Native birds moving seeds through the catchment naturally



02: What Makes Pātea Great

Catchment State

Biophysical character

The Pātea catchment extends from the Pātea Dam through steep hill country, rolling pastoral land, and lower floodplain environments before reaching the Tasman Sea at Pātea Township. The catchment functions as a connected river-to-coast system, linking indigenous forest, tributary networks, wetlands, riparian margins, and estuarine habitats.

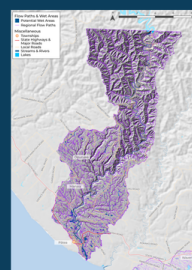
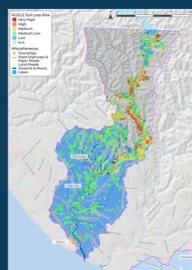
While the TCC project area begins below the dam, the wider catchment still functions as a continuous ecological corridor from the forested upper catchment through to the coast.

KEY BIOPHYSICAL AND HYDROLOGICAL FEATURES

- Steep mudstone landscapes throughout the mid-catchment are highly dissected, with a dense tributary network and areas of elevated erosion risk.
- Pastoral farming, drainage networks, and productive allophanic and brown soils dominate the lower catchment land.
- The Pātea River and its tributaries form the main ecological corridor linking the upper catchment to wetlands, riparian habitats, and the coast.
- Many waterways in the mid and lower catchment have limited riparian vegetation, creating opportunities to improve stream shading, habitat connectivity, and water quality.
- The presence of kōura, longfin eel, giant kōkopu, īnanga, and other native fish species indicates that parts of the catchment remain well connected from the coast to upstream habitats.



VIEW CATCHMENT
MAPS HERE



Patea

Community Context

PĀTEA CATCHMENT GROUP CATCHMENT STRATEGY 2026

Local Action

The Pātea catchment has a strong agricultural identity, with sheep and beef farming dominating the hill country and dairy farming concentrated across the lower plains and floodplain areas. Commercial forestry is also present in parts of the upper and mid catchment.

Alongside productive land use, the catchment has an active and growing culture of environmental stewardship. Existing work by farmers, landowners, and community members has already established a strong foundation for biodiversity restoration and catchment-scale action.

KEY PROJECTS

- Extensive trapping work is already underway in parts of the upper and mid catchment.
- Tarere Kiwi Project, a community-led biodiversity restoration focused on creating the conditions for kiwi return and long-term native species recovery.
- Landowners across the catchment are already undertaking riparian planting, native restoration, and biodiversity projects.
- The catchment group, coordinator, and lead farmers provide an established platform for future catchment-scale action.
- Local aspirations include increasing youth involvement, strengthening environmental education, and growing participation across the wider community.
- Existing projects provide a strong foundation for developing a coordinated ecological corridor from the upper catchment to the coast.



Key issues & pressures

WHAT SHAPES THE STRATEGY

Ecological threats

INTRODUCED PREDATORS

Stoats, ferrets, weasels, rats and possums remain the most immediate threat to kiwi and other native wildlife. While predator control is already a strong focus across the catchment, a sustained and coordinated effort is needed to reduce pressure along the wider corridor and create the safe conditions kiwi require to expand their range.

DEER AND FERAL PIGS

Deer and feral pigs cause persistent damage to regenerating native vegetation, particularly in the upper and mid catchment. Their browsing and rooting activity undermines natural forest recovery and makes it significantly harder for plantings and natural regeneration to establish successfully.

Waterways & Landscapes

RIPARIAN CORRIDORS

The Pātea River and its tributaries form the catchment's main natural corridor, but connectivity is weakened wherever stream margins are narrow, grazed, or dominated by pasture and exotic vegetation.

This reduces habitat quality, shading, bank stability and water quality, and limits the movement of native species between the upper forest, mid-catchment wetlands and the coast.

Strengthening riparian margins and linking existing native patches would help rebuild a continuous corridor from the hill country to the salt marsh.

FRESHWATER MONITORING GAPS

There is strong community action and valuable local knowledge across the catchment.

Limited freshwater monitoring makes it difficult to track change over time or clearly demonstrate the benefits of restoration work. More targeted and consistent monitoring would support adaptive management, help communicate progress to funders and partners, and tell a more compelling story about the catchment's recovery.

Priorities & connected actions

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAID — AND HOW THE STRATEGY RESPONDS

Priorities were identified through the March 2026 Pātea Catchment Workshop. These preferences shape the focus of this strategy, weaving together a corridor approach that meets identified environmental and community priorities

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES



COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



A connected approach

This strategy is built around three linked workstreams. Each workstream supports the others: pest control improves the chances of native species recovery, habitat restoration creates places for species to move and thrive, enhance freshwater and engagement helps build the kaitiaki needed to sustain action over time.

PREDATOR CONTROL

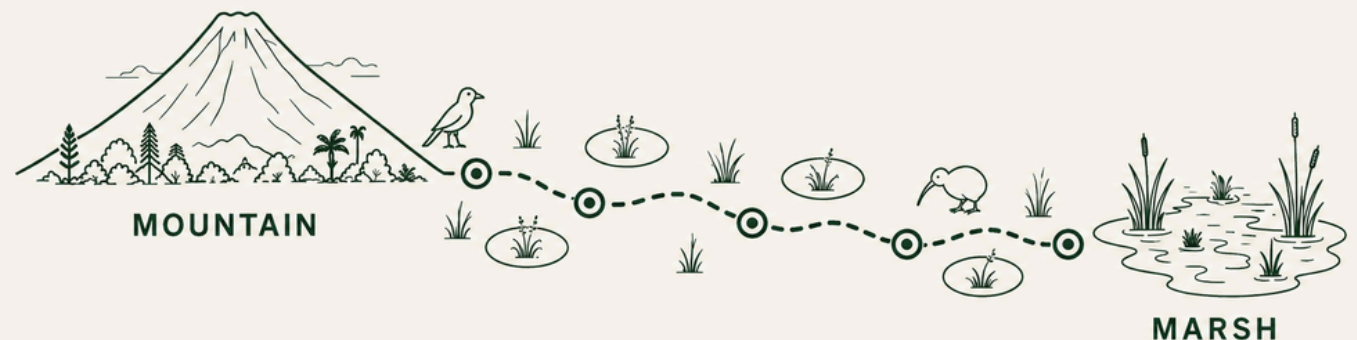
Coordinated trapping and pest control to reduce predator pressure across the catchment, building from existing efforts and filling key gaps over time.

HABITAT RESTORATION

Targeted planting and habitat enhancement to strengthen riparian margins, restore key sites, and create connected movement pathways for native species.

ENGAGEMENT

Building community knowledge, local ownership, and visible progress through practical actions, shared learning, and support for locally-led initiatives.

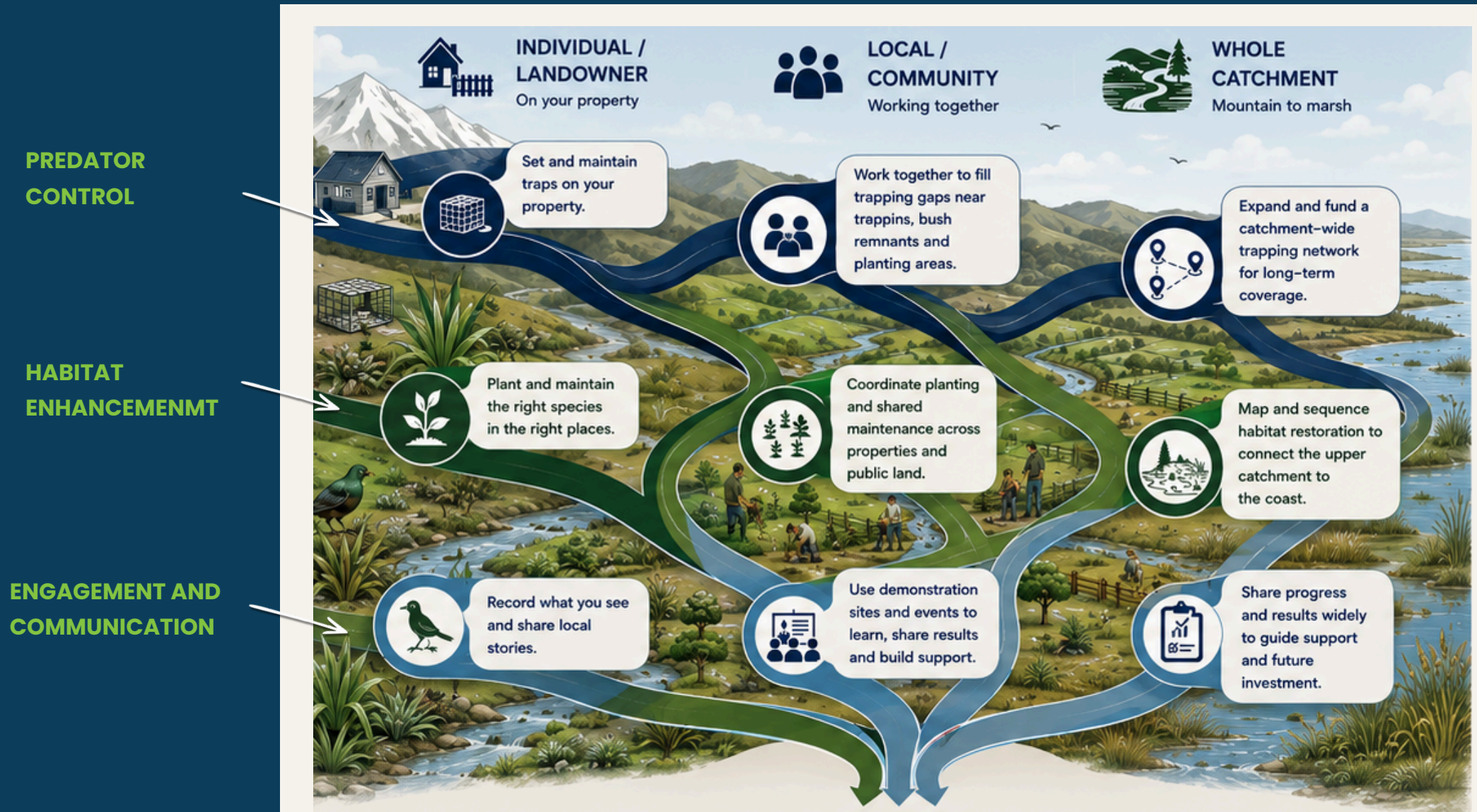




03: Direction & Workstreams

Meet Outcomes

THROUGH ALIGNMENT OF THREE WORKSTREAMS ACROSS DIFFERENT SCALES OF ACTION



Meet Outcomes For Pātea

Predator Control

WORKSTREAM ONE

Predator control is the backbone of the corridor, and this work starts by building on the trapping efforts already happening in the upper catchment. Planting creates habitat, but sustained predator control helps make that habitat safe enough for native species to use. Where trapping is active and maintained, birds are more likely to nest, feed, disperse seeds, and move through restored areas. Without it, planting alone is unlikely to deliver the biodiversity gains the corridor is aiming for.



Actions across multiple scales

Individual / Landowner

Set up traps at your planting site first

Install traps around proposed planting areas, stream margins, wetlands and bush remnants before planting begins. Seek advice on trap type, spacing and placement.

Join a shared monitoring system

Record trap locations, checks and catches using Trap.NZ or another shared system so individual effort contributes to the wider network.

Maintain traps consistently

Check and reset traps regularly, especially before and during bird breeding season. Keep traps active year-round.

Report bird and pest sightings

Record bird sightings, pest signs, plant survival issues and other observations. These help show whether conditions are improving.

Local / Community

Map trapping and planting together

For each priority restoration site, check whether trapping is already in place. Where gaps exist, include trapping as part of the site plan from the start.

Fill local trapping gaps

Identify gaps between properties, especially near streams, bush remnants, wetlands and future planting areas. Work with neighbours to connect these gaps.

Coordinate checks and training

Organise trap-checking rosters, training days, equipment support and practical advice so landowners are supported.

Share results

Share catch data, bird sightings and progress updates with the local group. Use results to identify where more support is needed.

Whole Catchment

Plan the corridor in phases

Plan how trapping and restoration will extend from existing upper catchment work downstream over time. Predator control and planting should move together.

Fund a full-time trapper

Seek long-term funding for a full-time trapper to maintain trap lines, support landowners, fill network gaps, and keep predator control active across the corridor.

Target future investment

Use trapping, bird and restoration data to decide where effort is needed next.

Habitat Restoration

WORKSTREAM TWO

Actions across scale

Habitat restoration creates the places native species need to move through the corridor. Building on existing planting and native vegetation, this workstream focuses on restoring riparian margins, wetlands, gullies and priority habitat areas that connect the upper catchment to the coast. Planting needs to be targeted, protected, maintained, and supported by predator control to contribute to long-term biodiversity outcomes.

Individual / Landowner

Plant in the right places

Focus planting around streams, wetlands, CSAs, gullies, and bush remnants.

Use bird-friendly species

Include fruiting, nectar and shelter species that support native birds as planting matures.

Maintain plantings early

Fence, release weeds, replace losses and maintain planting for at least three years.

Connect planting with trapping

Ensure planting areas have active predator control where biodiversity outcomes are the goal.

Local / Community

Prioritise connected sites

Choose sites that connect with existing habitat, waterways, wetlands or trapping networks.

Coordinate planting packages

Plan fencing, site preparation, plant orders, pest control, planting days and maintenance together.

Support shared maintenance

Run maintenance days and support landowners to keep plants alive.

Create demonstration sites

Use visible sites to show how planting, fencing and trapping work together. Use iconic plant species

Whole Catchment

Map habitat gaps

Identify the highest-value gaps in the mountain-to-marsh corridor.

Plan planting over time

Sequence planting over several years so priority areas, funding and plant supply line up.

Secure local plant supply

Work with local nurseries to secure suitable eco-sourced plants.

Monitor restoration outcomes

Track hectares planted, survival, connectivity and bird use to guide future effort.



Engagement & Visibility

WORKSTREAM THREE

Engagement and visibility help sustain the corridor over time. This workstream is about making progress visible, supporting landowners in taking part, and showing how trapping, planting, and biodiversity gains connect. Demonstration sites, simple maps, local stories and shared results can help turn the corridor from a plan into something people can see, understand and contribute to.



Actions across scale

Individual / Landowner

Record what you see

Record bird sightings, pest signs, trap catches and plant survival.

Invite neighbours in

Host a walk-through, working bee or trap-check so others can see what is involved.

Tell the practical story

Share simple examples of traps installed, trees planted, birds seen and lessons learned.

Ask for support

Flag where help is needed with traps, plants, advice, maintenance or monitoring.

Local / Community

Use demonstration sites

Show how trapping, planting and maintenance work together at visible local sites.

Share local results

Share catch data, bird sightings, planting progress and lessons learned.

Create easy entry points

Make it easy for landowners, schools and volunteers to join through practical activities.

Coordinate local effort

Coordinate events and landowner support so people are not working alone.

Whole Catchment

Maintain a progress map

Map active trapping, restoration sites, planting progress and species observations.

Publish an annual update

Summarise trapping effort, planting progress, monitoring results and next priorities

Use feedback to guide support

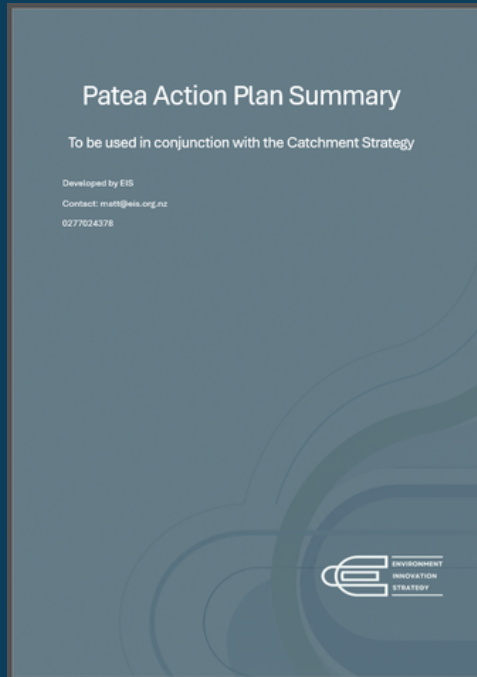
Celebrate new trapping areas, planting targets, bird sightings and completed corridor sections.



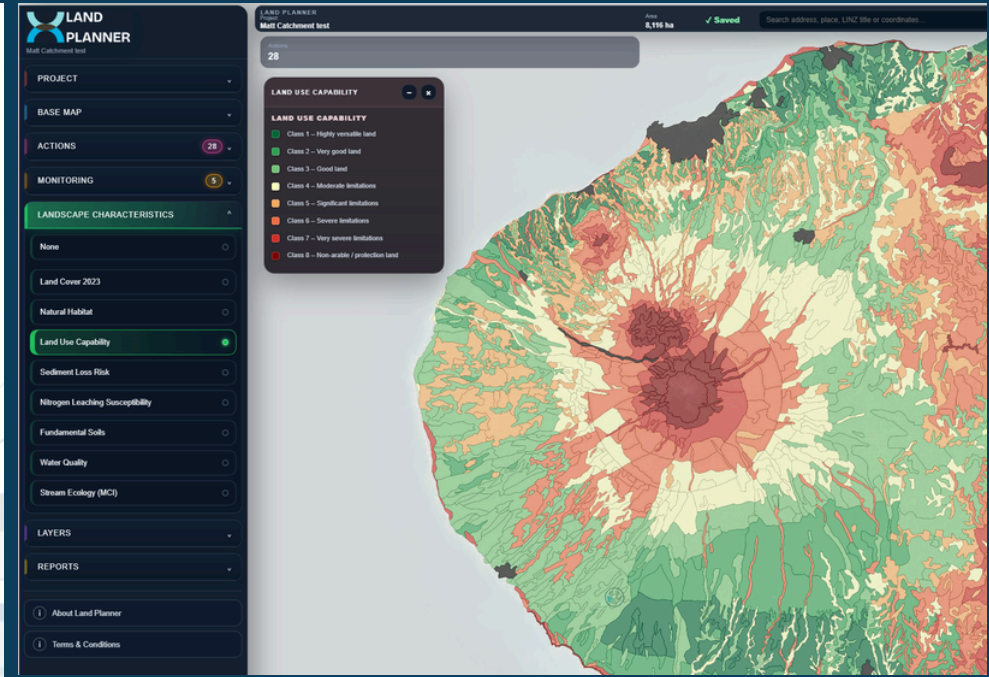


04: Implementation

Action planning is a live approach



Year	Quarter	Workstream	Key Implementation Action
2026	Q3	Predator Control	Map existing trapping network, identify priority gaps and develop a coordinated predator control plan from the upper catchment towards the coast.
2026	Q4	Habitat Restoration	Map ecological corridor priorities, restoration gaps and priority planting areas including riparian margins, wetlands, gullies and bush remnants.
2027	Q1	Predator Control	Expand trapping into priority restoration areas and support landowners with trap selection, installation and Trap.NZ recording.
2027	Q2	Habitat Restoration	Develop restoration plans for priority sites including fencing, planting, predator control, maintenance and funding opportunities.
2027	Q2	Engagement & Visibility	Establish demonstration sites showcasing integrated trapping, habitat restoration and monitoring.
2027	Q3	Habitat Restoration	Implement priority corridor restoration projects including riparian planting, wetland restoration, bush remnant enhancement and habitat linkages.
2027	Q3	Predator Control	Coordinate community trapping network expansion, training and ongoing trap maintenance across priority areas.
2027	Q4	Engagement & Visibility	Hold field days, publish annual progress report and communicate biodiversity outcomes using stories, maps and monitoring results.
2028	Q1	Habitat Restoration	Review restoration success, infill plantings and extend corridor into remaining priority gaps.
2028	Q2	Predator Control	Secure long-term trapping capability and expand predator control further downstream towards the saltmarsh.
2028	Q3	Engagement & Visibility	Develop additional demonstration sites, increase school and community involvement and showcase successful projects.
2028	Q4	All Workstreams	Complete three-year review, evaluate ecological corridor progress and update implementation priorities for the next phase.



Actions planning for this catchment has been templated by EIS into a word document. The key for this approach is that action planning:

- Remains live
- Discussed at regular intervals by the group
- Is adjusted as resources change
- Notes budget requirements for actions
- Includes monitoring and how to tell the story

The Land Planner Software will be available for TCC use in September 2026. This will enable visualisation of data, access to monitoring data, planning of actions and reporting.



Actions matched to resourcing



IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVELY RESOURCING FLUCUATIONS

The Pātea Catchment Group will use a flexible delivery approach that matches the resources available at any point in time.

We can start with low-cost coordination and progressively increase direct support as funding, partnerships and capability grow. More resources = more targeted support = greater catchment impact.

Different approaches, matched to resourcing levels

LOW RESOURCING Indirect / Influence

Focus on enabling & influencing existing programmes

What This Looks Like

- Share information and resources
- Connect landowners to funding
- Support partner and council programmes
- Provide advice and guidance
- Promote best practice

MEDIUM RESOURCING

Hybrid Delivery

Influence and coordination

What This Looks Like

- Strong community engagement
- Demonstration sites and local stories
- Targeted one-on-one support in priority areas
- Coordinate funding applications
- Work with partners to deliver actions

HIGH RESOURCING

Direct Delivery

Work directly with landowners

What This Looks Like

- Dedicated staff providing one-on-one landowner support
- Farm and restoration planning
- Coordinated implementation
- Monitoring and reporting outcomes
- Catchment-wide programmes

Building Capability



Targeting Investment



Scaling Impact

YEARS 1–2: Build Foundations

- Build relationships and trust
- Map priorities and opportunities
- Establish demonstration sites
- Secure grants and partnerships
- Share knowledge and resources



YEARS 3–5: Targeted Delivery

- Increase one-on-one landowner support
- Develop farm and restoration plans
- Coordinate funding and investment
- Implement actions in priority areas
- Monitor progress and adapt



YEARS 5+: Scaled Impact

- Dedicated delivery team and capacity
- Larger funding streams and investment
- Catchment-wide implementation
- Comprehensive monitoring
- Measurable environmental outcomes

The delivery model is not fixed.

As resources increase, the Pātea Catchment Group can move from coordination and influence to targeted delivery and large-scale implementation



More resources
More support
Greater impact



05: Measuring success

What success looks like

MEASURING PROGRESS ACROSS THE CATCHMENT

Progress should be measured by whether the corridor is becoming more connected, better protected, and more visible over time. The most useful indicators combine evidence from all three workstreams: predator control, habitat restoration, and engagement. So the strategy tracks outcomes, not just activity.

Focus Area	Individual / Landowner	Local Community	Whole Catchment
Predator Control	Traps are active around planting areas, stream margins, wetlands or bush remnants, and catches are recorded.	Local trapping gaps are identified and filled between neighbouring properties and priority restoration sites.	A connected trapping network expands progressively from the upper catchment downstream, supported by funded trapping capacity.
Habitat Restoration	At least one fenced and maintained planting area is established, with suitable local species and good survival after three years.	Priority planting sites are connected across local stream reaches, gullies, wetlands or existing native vegetation.	Habitat connectivity improves across the mountain-to-marsh corridor, with priority gaps mapped and enhanced over time. Freshwater improves due to land management
Wildlife Response	Native birds such as tūī, kererū and pīwakawaka are observed in restored areas.	Wildlife observations and monitoring show increasing native species.	Key indicator species are recorded progressively further through the catchment over time, including movement into the mid-catchment.
Engagement	Landowners are recording trap data, sharing observations and taking part in local events or support networks.	Local groups run planting days, trap support, monitoring activities or demonstration events. Communicate successes often.	A progress map and annual update show trapping coverage, planting progress, monitoring results and next priorities. Implement a communications strategy.

The Core Principle

This strategy builds from what is already working: The Taiere Conservation Project, Taranaki Kiwi Trust networks, and committed landowners in the upper catchment. It extends progressively downstream, with predator control and habitat restoration moving together. Progress will be uneven, but every new priority site should aim to activate trapping, planting, maintenance and monitoring as part of the same package.

Shared kaitiakitanga

A SHARED GOAL FOR THE PĀTEA GROUP

The corridor will only succeed if it is carried by the people who live, work and care for the Pātea catchment. Every trap checked, tree planted, sighting recorded, and neighbour brought in adds to the wider mountain-to-marsh corridor.

This strategy builds on the work already underway and gives it a shared direction. By working together, landowners, whānau, schools, community groups, agencies and iwi can strengthen local kaitiaki — caring for the catchment now and leaving a stronger ecological pathway for future generations.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Want to be part of the corridor?

Work with your catchment coordinator or Taranaki Catchment Communities to find out where your effort can contribute most — whether that is trapping, planting, monitoring, hosting a site, joining a working bee, or sharing what you are already doing.

Read the full TCC Strategy to see how this work connects with wider catchment priorities and locally-led action across Taranaki.

