

Wairoa River Valley Strategy Overview

Ko Te Wairoa, He Whakaora
Whenua, He Whakaora Tangata.

“The Wairoa River, a River that
gives life to the land and
the people”



September 2023

Vision

A unique green corridor that integrates cultural, recreation, wilderness and land use values.

This will be achieved by...

- protection and enhancement of the natural, cultural and heritage environment
- cherishing its uniqueness within the western bay
- ensuring the river and its surrounds create tranquil settings as well as places for relaxation, recreation, working and living
- balancing the isolated wilderness values upstream with the enjoyment of passive and active recreation in the lower reaches
- securing the vantage points that allow this beautiful landscape to be appreciated by all.

About the Wairoa River Valley Strategy

The Wairoa River Valley Strategy includes the area from McLaren Falls Bridge down to where the river meets Tauranga Harbour. It extends up to the dominant ridgeline beside the river and land either side of the riverbank. *A more comprehensive approach that includes the wider catchment and tributaries that feed into the Wairoa River is planned for the future.*

The Wairoa River Valley Strategy has been developed recognising that land within the Wairoa River Valley is in various forms of ownership.

The Strategy provides a balance between protecting and recognising the isolated wilderness values in the Wairoa River's upstream reaches, and the enjoyment of passive and active recreation in the lower reaches.

In recognition of the cultural significance of the Wairoa River Valley to tangata whenua, the Strategy tells the story of the Wairoa River Valley as told by the elders of the Wairoa hapū.

These hapū, as kaitiaki, are the first point of contact for any work that is proposed to be undertaken in the Wairoa Valley. For queries relating to the Tauranga City area, contact information is available at <https://www.tauranga.govt.nz/community/tangata-whenua/resource-management-processes>. For queries relating to the wider western bay district, contact information is available from the Western Bay of Plenty District Council at <https://www.westernbay.govt.nz/council/contact-us>.

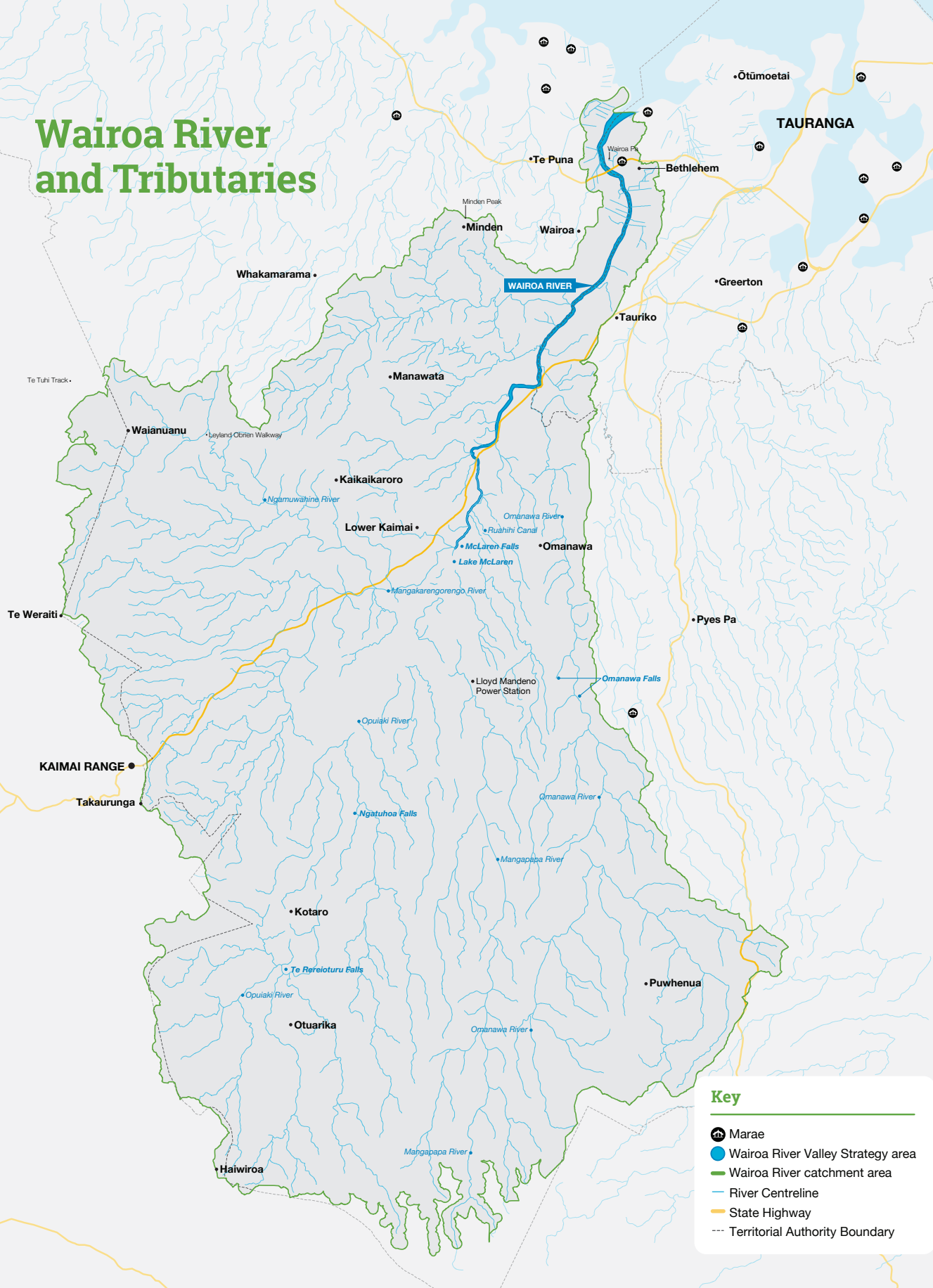
The Strategy also has detailed information about defined local management areas...

- 1. McLaren Falls Bridge to Ruahihi Power Station** - supported by a 'green corridor' that recognises recreational opportunities focused on 'wilderness' values while protecting rural communities and infrastructure.
- 2. Redwood Lane** – a peaceful, natural environment with a 'green corridor' and river that is appreciated by the wider community through the provision of passive recreational opportunities and river vantage points.
- 3. Miles Lane/End of Wairoa Road** - connected recreational opportunities via a 'green corridor' that runs through farmland, parks and reserves and residences that are nestled into the landscapes.
- 4. Bethlehem** - the urban gateway for the Wairoa River Valley from the sea forming part of the 'green corridor' of the Wairoa River Valley.

The Wairoa River Valley Strategy will be reviewed in 2026 following completion of the regional freshwater plan change, which will implement the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management requirements.

The Wairoa Valley River Strategy was developed in 2005 and reviewed in 2013.

Wairoa River and Tributaries



About the Wairoa River

The Wairoa River is approximately 14km in length. It is the largest freshwater tributary to Tauranga Harbour. The main tributaries that feed directly into the Wairoa River are Mangakarengorengo, Opuiaiki, Mangapapa, Omanawa below Ruahihi, and Ruangangara (Ohourere).

What does the strategy say about...

Sustainable land use and development

- enhancing the 'green corridor' and water values
- protection of highly productive land
- activities on land should not impact the ecological and amenity values of the River

Examples of actions

Encourage, facilitate and support sustainable farm management.

Managing impacts from recreation activities.

Supporting Landcare and environmental programmes.

Developing an entire Wairoa River catchment management plan - focusing on sustainable land management, biodiversity enhancement, protection works.

Improvements to the quality of the River environment

- water quality
- riparian margins
- biodiversity of native flora and fauna.

Examples of actions

Responsibility lies with several groups, including landowners and river users, councils and other agencies.

Riparian planting, statutory provisions, landcare and environmental programmes, manage stormwater discharge, research and monitor ecological values, monitor water quality, biodiversity importance increased.

Cultural values

- recognising, restoring and protecting the kaitiaki role of tangata whenua in the use of the Wairoa River Valley
- protecting indigenous ecological and cultural landscape values of significance to tangata whenua
- promoting the ability for tangata whenua to preserve and foster their traditional values
- protecting and restoring the Wairoa River Valley margins in traditional local species
- improving public awareness of the cultural landscape and values.

Examples of actions

Prepare iwi/hapū management plans and give effect to these plans in statutory documents.

Protect and maintain Māori reserves within the Wairoa River Valley environment.

Identify and protect significant cultural sites within the Wairoa River Valley.

Identify options for the return of ownership of key cultural sites within the Wairoa River Valley to hapū.

Replant public river margins with nominated eco-sourced species. Hold wananga/workshops/tours where people learn about the traditional values and environmental management.

Valued landscapes

- identified and protected
- development will be located in a visually discreet manner
- nurtured through native planting.

Examples of actions

Give priority to the protection of the cultural landscape sites of significance.

Identify and protect (or acquire) open space 'green corridors' to both connect and define the visual and recreational space within the Wairoa River Valley.

Use statutory plans.

Recreation and access

- provision of a 'green corridor' with places for relaxation and recreation
- recognises that there is a maximum "carrying capacity" of the river environment
- will not compromise the social and community values (including cultural and spiritual values)

Examples of actions

Supporting initiatives for protecting and enhancing esplanade and recreation reserves adjacent to the river.

Promotion of enhanced pedestrian linkages between reserves.

Enforcement of requirements for motorised use.

Improved opportunities for viewing the Wairoa River Valley from key vantage points.

Social, heritage and community values

- protection
- promoting opportunities for recreation within the 'green corridor'
- community stewardship contributing to the 'sense of place'

Examples of actions

Land uses and development will continue to evolve, but activities must be conscious of the need to protect important social, heritage and community values.

Statutory recognition, education, walking and cycling, community participation.