

REVIEW OF AVAILABLE CULTURAL INFORMATION FOR CATCHMENTS FLOWING TO WAIROA

1. Introduction

Gisborne District Council has reviewed several available cultural and environmental documents relating to the waterbodies and catchments that flow toward Wairoa. In particular, the documents consider cultural elements of freshwater management.

We included the documents below:

- Pohaturoa Station Land Resource Inventory
- Project Profile - Pōhaturoa Trust Freshwater Management Strategy
- Te Wairoa Tapokorau Whānui Trust Kāhui Hapū Taiao Management Plan 2026
- Tātau Tātau o Te Wairoa Te Mana o Te Wai Vision & Values Statements o ngā whānau, ngā hapū me ngā iwi o Te Rohe o Te Wairoa
- Te Puna Waiora o Nukutaurua: Māhia Freshwater Plan
- The health of cultural values and mahinga kai in the Te Wairoa-Hōpūpū- Hōnengenenge-Mātangirau, Wairoa River catchment and the impacts of sediment
- Sediment and cultural values in Wairoa: overview report.

The analysis below reflects the information within these documents.

We acknowledge the important work undertaken in these documents. While we have attempted to summarise potential key information as relevant to the NPS-FM, we acknowledge the depth and relevance of all information in the reports.

Should any additional key information need to be included, or if any information is misstated, changes are invited to be made to this document.

2. Pohaturoa Station Land Resource Inventory

Key freshwater issues

Waterway extent and characteristics

The property contains approximately 83.8 km of waterways across Pohaturoa Station. This includes 3.6 km of the Hangaroa River, which forms the property's western boundary. There are 11.4 km of smaller, lower-order streams, including the Mangaotara and Mangarengiora Streams. There are about 68.8 km of ephemeral waterways.

Accelerated erosion and siltation risks

Erosion occurring on Pohaturoa Station is highly significant. Recent extreme weather events, specifically Cyclone Gabrielle followed by a prolonged period of wet weather, have severely accelerated erosion across much of the property. This presents a major issue for freshwater quality due to sediment inputs into the streams and gully systems.

Geological vulnerabilities and stream deposition

The primary forms of erosion are gully and soil slip erosion occurring across all geology types, recorded as severe-to-extreme in places. Slump and earthflow erosion predominantly occur on mudstone lithology, while areas of deposition and streambank erosion also occur directly adjacent to the waterways.

Topographical and soil drainage pressures

Out of 4,165.7 ha, a massive 1,603.2 ha (38.5%) are steep hillslopes, and 152.0 ha (3.6%) are very steep scar faces and gullies. Underlying poorly drained mudstone subsoils (with high clay content) compact when dry and become highly slippery when wet, creating poor drainage and promoting slips where the tephra mantle is thin. This contributes to substantial pugging risks and secondary erosion from rainfall runoff along farm tracks.

Key cultural concerns and issues

Threats to natural landscape integrity

The severe to extreme gully, landslip, and slump erosion compromise the integrity of the whenua, directly affecting lands that are intimately connected to the ancestral identity of the region.

Impact on natural hydrology

The acceleration of streambank erosion and deposition alters the natural hydrological character of waterways, directly undermining the mauri of the waterways.

Damage to native vegetation ecosystems

Pasture accounts for 33.7%, while consolidated indigenous bush comprises 39.6% (1,650.1 ha) and mixed scrub covers 3.8% (157.2 ha). The expansion of severe erosion threatens indigenous bush pockets, which serve as reservoirs for cultural values and ecosystems.

Compromised land and site access

Formed farm tracks span 79.1 km, but track access across all areas has been significantly compromised by recent erosion caused by Cyclone Gabrielle and prolonged wet weather. This negatively affects physical connection to different parts of the land.

Key freshwater values

Hangaroa River

High value is placed on the 3.6 km stretch of the Hangaroa River as a primary border and aquatic corridor, alongside the interconnected lower order streams.

Ponds

Several naturally occurring ponds are on the property, providing unique water habitats and contributing to the diversity of water ecosystems across the landscape.

Ecosystem coexistence

The presence of 1,650.1 ha of consolidated indigenous bush interlocks with the extensive waterway network, reinforcing the value of native vegetation in maintaining slope stability and protecting freshwater environments.

Key actions to improve freshwater values

Targeted soil conservation and pole planting

Implement systematic pole planting using poplars or appropriate species across all erosion-prone faces and within the vulnerable gully systems to arrest severe soil slip and gully erosion.

Runoff management

Exercise care when siting and maintaining the 79.1 km of tracks, implementing targeted stormwater control to prevent secondary soil slip or gully erosion driven by poorly managed water tables.

Mitigation of livestock pugging

Manage grazing intensities with heavy cattle to minimize the high risk of pugging damage, particularly in intensively grazed areas, around water troughs, gates, stock camps, and thin soils where drainage is poor.

Limiting cultivation exposure

Restrict or limit exposed soils during periods of pasture renewal and cropping to prevent surface rill and sheet erosion on weakly structured tephra topsoils containing high percentages of pumice.

3. Project Profile - Pōhaturoa Trust Freshwater Management Strategy

Key freshwater issues

Ecosystem and wetland sustainability

Maintaining reliable access to freshwater is crucial for the Tairāwhiti region to sustaining the health of local ecosystems, including vulnerable rivers, streams, and wetlands. These networks are suffering from farming pressures and environmental changes.

Climatic vulnerabilities and water crises

The catchment area faces significant water crises driven by severe natural disasters. For example, Cyclone Gabrielle caused a complete failure of the local water plant, leaving the entire city (Gisborne) without clean, reliable water.

Strategic knowledge and data gaps

Prior to the project, there was a pronounced gap in the structural understanding of freshwater risks, data collection, and long-term planning within the trust and hapū. Upskilling was required.

Key Cultural concerns and issues

Intergenerational resource pressures

Water management involves highly complex and intergenerational concerns for the Pōhaturoa Trust and hapū. Waterways carry deep historical importance for hapū whānau who possess long-standing spiritual and cultural connections to the land.

Disruption of customary interactions

The ancestral hapū - Ngāti Kōhatu and Ngāti Hine-Hika - historically relied directly on these specific waterways to sustain their daily living requirements. Environmental degradation threatens the quality of these traditional practices.

Need for stronger Māori participation

There is a critical necessity to reverse historical marginalization by building internal capability, ensuring that Māori voices and indigenous knowledge are not excluded from modern statutory planning and regional freshwater decision-making processes.

Key freshwater values

Te Mana o te Wai

Value is placed on Te Mana o te Wai, utilizing its framework to prioritize the health of the water body, the environment, and the community.

Relational and ancestral connection

The relationship between mana whenua and freshwater is relational.

Ecosystem services and biodiversity support

Freshwater is highly valued for its natural ecosystem services, including water filtration and flood control, alongside supporting cultural components.

Sustaining economic and agricultural livelihoods

Reliable freshwater access is recognized as a fundamental resource for sustaining the region's agricultural activities, particularly sheep and beef farming, which are core economic drivers for the whenua.

Key Actions to Improve Freshwater Values

Freshwater management strategy

Implementing the freshwater management strategy for the Pōhaturoa Trust to actively manage water on their whenua.

Hapū capability development and upskilling

Upskill hapū members in freshwater management processes, data collection techniques, and technical monitoring to contribute effectively to a long-term vision.

Execution of Farm Environment Plans (FEPs)

Implement and monitor the 20 Farm Environment Plans that have been developed for whenua operators to ensure land-use practices minimize water quality issues.

Baseline data gathering via eDNA testing

Extensive eDNA testing across the eight significant waterways flowing from Maunga Whakapūnake to establish baseline biological data.

Weaving mātauranga Māori and western science

Actively integrate traditional mātauranga Māori with western science methodologies to build a robust, dual-knowledge framework for environmental care.

Inter-agency collaboration

Foster enduring, collaborative relationships with diverse entities including Hawke's Bay Regional Council, Gisborne District Council, whenua blocks, catchment groups, and the Tairāwhiti Whenua collective.

4. Te Wairoa Tapokorau Whānui Trust Kāhui Hapū Taiao

Management Plan (2026)

Key freshwater issues

Waterbody degradation

Waterways across the rohe are degraded because of substantial human-induced pressures, leading to poor water quality, accelerated erosion, and significantly increased sediment loads.

Agricultural and industrial pollution

Streams and main river stems are heavily impacted by agricultural run-off pollutants, industrial discharges, and waste disposal. Industrial impacts are located within the Hawkes Bay region.

Depletion of aquatic taonga stocks

There is a significant decline in the capacity of the taiao to sustain essential mahinga kai species.

Invasive plant and animal pests

Proliferating pest species, both terrestrial and aquatic.

Climate change and environmental imbalance

The rohe is experiencing heightened environmental instability, with frequent extreme rainfall events causing severe riverbank erosion.

Key cultural concerns and issues

Tino Rangatiratanga

Ineffective recognition of hapū values, interests, mātauranga, and customary rights within contemporary resource management and governance processes.

Knowledge transfer

Reduced physical access to waterways and ancestral whenua directly impairs the ability of elders to conduct intergenerational knowledge transfer and practice traditional customs.

Capacity for manaakitanga

Depletion of traditional food resources means whānau are frequently unable to provide traditional kai for marae gatherings, undermining their capacity to express manaakitanga.

Wai tapu and urupā

Human and animal waste contamination directly degrades sacred water bodies (wai tapu). Riverbank erosion physically washing away urupā (burial grounds) and historical pā sites.

Cultural practices

Restrictive regulations can suppress or halt management practices (e.g., the controlled seasonal burning of raupō).

Key freshwater values

Mahinga kai

High value is placed on mahinga kai across all ecosystems, to provide physical, social, and cultural wellbeing.

Wai Ora

Water is revered as the source of all life and wellbeing, essential for providing safe,

uncompromised drinking water and supporting recreational bathing and swimming.

Mauri and Wairua

The spiritual life force (mauri) and soul (wairua) are core values, serving as direct indicators of the environment's health and the trust's collective mana motuhake.

Wai Tapu and Wāhi Taonga

Water bodies are highly valued as sacred sites for essential traditional rituals, including karakia, purification, wānanga, tohi, and the execution of whakatapu and whakanoa.

Mātauranga-ā-Hapū

Traditional knowledge acquired and adapted over generations is held as a treasured taonga that guides resource planning and decision-making.

Key actions to improve freshwater values

Te Mana o te Wai as a law of nature

Ensure the practical application of Te Mana o te Wai as an immutable law of nature.

Deploy the 'Whakaoho ake te Mauri' monitoring framework

Use localized cultural monitoring frameworks to track environmental health using traditional Māori indicators.

Collaborative cultural and environmental restoration

Partner with iwi, hapū, and other agencies and groups to enable restoration.

Establish native plant nurseries and planting

Native plant nurseries and planting.

Formalize environment personhood for the awa

Advocate for and implement a long-term policy structure to advance toward legal environmental personhood for the Wairoa River and its key tributaries.

Establish limits

Set cultural and environmental limits, incl. for water takes and point/non-point source discharges.

5. Tātau Tātau o Te Wairoa Te Mana o Te Wai Vision & Values Statements

Core framework and vision

This mahi applies an integrated, holistic framing where freshwater planning prioritizes the *mauri* (life force) and wellbeing of the water foremost. Decision-making operates within a strict hierarchy of three obligations: *Te Hauora o Te Wai* (the health of the water), *Te Hauora o Te Tangata* (the health of the people), and *Te Hauora o Te Taiao* (the health of the environment). The collective vision seeks prosperous, healthy whānau who proudly connect with Te Ao Māori, act as active kaitiaki for a restored natural environment, and serve as central decision-makers across all catchments of Te Rohe o Te Wairoa.

Key cultural and ecological themes

The document outlines eight foundational values that dictate how freshwater resources must be

understood and protected:

Mana Whakahaere & Rangatiratanga

Asserts the power, authority, and obligation of mana whenua as active leaders and participants in governance, planning, and consenting processes to lead decision-making driven by tikanga.

Ki Uta ki Tai (Mountain to Sea) Ecosystem Health

Requires holistic, interconnected management of all water forms within the water cycle (Te Hurihanga Wai), recognizing that the health of rivers, springs (puna), wetlands (repo), and lakes (roto) directly determines the wellbeing of the land and the people.

Mauri

Recognizes mauri as the universal life essence across all natural domains. Restoring *mauri ora* serves as an explicit, functional indicator of environmental health and mana motuhake.

Mātauranga Hapū

Positions traditional ancestral knowledge, lived experiences, and customary practices as authentic bodies of knowledge that must actively inform environmental science and resource management.

Mahinga Kai & Momo Taonga (Taonga Species)

Focuses on restoring the abundance, quality, and diversity of traditional habitats and threatened species - such as longfin tuna, kōkopu, kanakana, and kōura. It emphasizes restoring secure physical access to harvest sites to allow whānau to practice manaakitanga and pass knowledge to future generations.

Wai Ora (Healthy Waters)

Prioritizes safeguarding clean, clear, and safe water for year-round contact recreation (swimming and bathing) and protecting reliable, climate-resilient drinking water supplies.

Wai Tapu and Wāhi Taonga

Requires the protection and restoration of sacred and culturally significant sites from physical or spiritual degradation, contamination (such as human or animal waste), or climate change impacts.

Strategic directions and pathways

To transition these values into operational resource management, the document directs several key pathways for the seven designated Freshwater Management Zones (FMZs):

Inclusion of traditional tools

Cultural mechanisms such as rāhui (prohibitions) and taiāpure (local fisheries management area) to be used as environmental management tools.

Mitigation of human-induced pressures

Future planning must adequately consent, monitor, and manage the adverse impacts of human-induced land-use activities including industrial actions, forestry, farming, flood protection, and invasive pests.

Wai-centric management

Resource activities and land-use must ensure there are no negative modifications, obstructions, or diversions to the natural flow regimes and geomorphology of the waterways.

Restoration of cultural landscape connections

Planning must restore traditional place names, historical narratives, and whakapapa connections directly to physical sites within the catchment.

6. Te Puna Waiora o Nukutaurua: Māhia Freshwater Plan

Key freshwater issues

Historical and ongoing decline

The iwi and kaumātua have witnessed a steady, 100-year decline in freshwater systems and ecosystems across the 26,600 ha planning area. This includes the drying up of several historical streams and a significant decrease in water volumes, leaving insufficient water for waka and boats.

High siltation and fertilizer contamination

Streams across the peninsula suffer from high levels of silt from erosion-prone hills, alongside heavy fertilizer run-off from farmland, turning stream reaches murky and muddy (e.g., at Whakateretere / Old Man's Hat).

Septic tank and E.coli

Water quality is heavily degraded by high levels of *E. coli* bacterial contamination from domestic septic tanks and wastewater infrastructure. This has rendered springs and lagoons unsafe for drinking and swimming.

Land use effects

Land-use pressures from 14,200 ha of intensive farmland and 6,000 ha of exotic conifer forestry operations accelerate stream-bank collapse and erosion. This causes significant sediment deposition that harms sensitive marine and freshwater species, such as crayfish and kōura.

Escalating climate change

The peninsula faces a substantial increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, accelerating erosion, altering stream headwaters, and threatening coastal lagoons.

Key Cultural concerns and issues

Natural balance

The balance of the taiao has been broken by human actions.

Loss of customary abundance

The degradation of rivers and coastal interfaces has significantly reduced the abundance of kaimoana, mahinga kai, and rongoā, which are central to the cultural identity of Rongomaiwahine.

Loss of taonga

Increased erosion and shifting coastal / riverine currents are physically washing away sacred urupā (burial grounds) and ancestral taonga.

Regulatory barriers

Overlapping and rigid legislative regulations make it difficult for iwi to implement flexible, localized nature-based solutions or exercise self-determination over their freshwater needs.

Key freshwater values

Wai as a source of identity

Water is considered the core pillar of strength, life, identity, soul, and survival (te puna o te kaha, te ora, te tuakiri, te wairua, te oranga tonutanga). Spiritual connection (I am the water, the water is me).

Wai Tuawhiti and Wai Haumarū

High value is placed on achieving a natural abundance of healthy water across streams, aquifers, wetlands, and springs, alongside ensuring clean surface and groundwater quality safe for drinking and swimming.

Kaitiakitanga and safeguarding Mauri

A duty to safeguard the life force (mauri) of water.

Nōhanga (flourishing habitats)

An environment where aquatic species can thrive, including the presence of taonga species.

Key actions to improve freshwater values

Establish a Māhia native plant nursery

Build and scale a dedicated native plant nursery to supply low-cost, eco-sourced plants for extensive peninsula-wide revegetation.

Develop the catchment-wide infrastructure plan

Complete a comprehensive program across multiple workstreams (as detailed in the plan).

Eradicate wilding pines and invasive pests

Implement animal and plant pest control programmes.

Resources for restoration

Provide whānau with essential monitoring tools, water testing kits, heavy machinery (diggers), and other resources required for the mahi.

Secure funds

Secure long-term financial resources to fund a dedicated program coordinator and establish formal taiao working groups to manage catchment operations.

Integrate the plan into statutory frameworks

Provide input into local, regional and relevant national plans and changes in freshwater management and activities.

Traditional controls

Use of traditional rāhui on at-risk aquatic species, incl. preventing vehicle access to sensitive stream environments.

7. The health of cultural values and mahinga kai in the Te Wairoa-Hōpūpū-Hōnengenenge Mātangirau, Wairoa river catchment and the impacts of sediment

Key freshwater issues

Sediment

The Te Wairoa River and its key tributaries are severely impacted by excess sediment loads driven by historical and current land-use decision-making and intensive farming practices.

Smothering

Cultural assessments reveal that 87% of surveyed participants report an extensive, suffocating covering of mud, silt, and invasive weed over the riverbed, destroying habitats.

Visual clarity

67% of respondents report poor water clarity, with rivers remaining consistently murky or turbid.

Decline of spawning reaches

Specific reaches, such as Te Wairoa Hōnengenenge, show significant sediment accumulation and degradation of inanga spawning zones; high sediment deposition with minimal tidal flushing.

Habitat degradation

A total of 82% of respondents record limited habitat capacity, impacted by invasive species and land use change. 48% report little riparian planting, mostly exotic, with few native species.

The above only describes a few of the aspects reported in the assessment.

Biodiversity

85% note that low numbers of macroinvertebrates and other species.

7.1 Key cultural concerns and issues

Traditional harvesting

Thick mud and poor visual clarity prevent historical, visual harvesting methods. For example, fishers are forced to net flounder rather than employing traditional spearing techniques, which degrades the cultural authenticity of the practice. Thick sediment deposition has smothered historical harvest beds.

Mātauranga

Reduced opportunities for whānau to practice traditional harvesting directly risks the permanent loss of intergenerational knowledge and customary skills.

Dangerous access

Bank erosion has made traditional river access points dangerous and in some cases inaccessible for older whānau members.

Cultural ethics

The current state of the Mana Atua (divine environment) domain is significantly degraded compared to the Mana Tāngata (people) and Mana Whenua (land) domains, directly limiting the practical fulfillment of core cultural ethics such as kaitiakitanga and manaakitanga.

Auditory tohu

61% of respondents report weak or very weak native bird song along the waterways, marking a loss of sensory indicators (tohu) that traditionally informed the community of ecosystem health.

Key freshwater values

Interconnectedness between whenua (land), tāngata (people) and wai (water)

High value is placed on the Te Ao Māori paradigm of interconnection between whenua, tangata, and wai, viewing water as a living taonga.

Te Mana o te Wai

Deeply valuing the authority, mana, and mauri of water bodies, supporting a framework that shifts freshwater management away from standard resource reductionism.

Mahinga kai and Rongoā

Protecting the abundance and safety of customary food and plant gathering, recognizing it as a pillar for spiritual, physical, and community health.

Ecosystem integrity and native tohu

Valuing the presence of diverse macroinvertebrates, indigenous fish species, stable native riparian borders, and clear, free-flowing channels.

Key actions to improve freshwater values

Māori-led monitoring

Resource Māori-led cultural monitoring frameworks within statutory frameworks to generate credible, relevant, and legitimate planning data.

Integrate knowledge

Integrate traditional mātauranga Māori observations with western scientific indicators (e.g., visual clarity and sediment indices) to assess the holistic health of the awa.

Targeted restoration

Undertake restoration of native vegetation along compromised reaches to control severe crumbling banks and exclude destructive exotic species.

Re-establish access

Clear sediment obstructions and enable safe, stable access to historical gathering and ceremonial locations to maintain the physical connection of the whānau to the water.

8. Sediment and Cultural Values in Wairoa: Overview Report

Key freshwater issues

Sediment loads

Current sediment losses across the Wairoa River catchment are 240% higher than natural, pre-human baseline levels. This surge is driven by widespread historical land clearance and current pastoral development.

Breaching of national bottom lines

Six out of eight long-term monitored river sites across the catchment sit firmly below the national bottom lines (NPS-FM) for median visual clarity, placing them in the highly degraded Band D category.

Shallow landslides

Landslide erosion on steep pastoral slopes as a dominant source of sediment across the catchment, aggravated by episodic storm events such as the March 2022 storms and Cyclone

Gabrielle.

Climate change

Climate change will increase sediment loads by an additional 10% to 37% by mid-century, and up to a devastating 7% to 69% by late century under high-emission tracks, severely threatening existing values.

Key cultural concerns and issues

Landscape degradation

Significant sediment yields alter the geomorphology of riverbeds, directly suffocating mahinga kai habitats and negatively affecting cultural values.

Intergenerational identity

The persistent inability to connect with the awa due to chronic sediment murkiness disrupts the practice of maramataka (traditional lunar calendar tracking) and threatens the core cultural identity embedded within iwi pepeha. The water bodies of the Wairoa District compose the lifeblood of the landscape and form an integral part of the identity of hapū of the Wairoa District.

Economic hardships

Implementing necessary reversion erosion control measures carries massive compliance costs for pastoral farming, creating tension between achieving environmental outcomes and maintaining economic viability.

Key freshwater values

Pepeha and relational genealogy

Water is valued as a living ancestor and the vital lifeblood of the community, forming the absolute foundation of iwi and hapū identity within their formal pepeha. Waterways are used as cultural identifiers in pepeha, and the status of hapū is enhanced by the many and varied uses of the water bodies of their territory and the resources they contain.

Cultural ethics

The core values are governed by the ethics of manaakitanga (hospitality), kaitiakitanga (guardianship), and whānaungatanga (relationship), summarized by the foundational whakataukī: Toitū te marae a Tangaroa, Toitū te marae a Tāne-Mahuta, Toitū te Tāngata (If the water is thriving, if the land is thriving, the people will thrive).

Mahinga kai

High value is placed on a natural abundance of native harvesting species.

Key actions to improve freshwater values

Erosion mitigation

Undertake a "best effort" scenario combining reversion of the steepest hill slopes to native scrub, extensive space planting on moderate slopes, and undertake targeted riparian fencing and revegetation.

Cost-sharing

Develop regional funding models to assist landowners with mitigation costs, ensuring business viability is maintained.

Intensification

Promote high-value horticulture and land intensification on remaining areas to economically offset financial costs of retirement of steep pastoral slopes.

Contract community facilitators

Formally contract local facilitators to support engagement and understanding values and examine data from various sources related to land and sediment, for example from wānanga and hui whakatoke, karakia.

Expand monitoring

The better understanding around mahinga kai values and the impact on sediment resulting from this project could provide important benchmarks into the future, that would potentially justify extending HBRC's longer term monitoring network.

9. Long-Term Visions

The documents assessed either directly or indirectly consider long-term visions.

Some key excerpts are included in the table below.

Source Document	Explicitly Stated Vision / Mission Text	NPS-FM Alignment
Pōhāturoa Trust	Our Te Mana O Te Wai journey for us in Te Reinga, starts in the Maunga. Ki Uta Ki Tai, from the maunga to the awa, out to the moana... one day, we will protect our waterways.	Emphasizes the holistic ki uta ki tai (mountains to the sea) approach required by the NPS-FM.
Te Wairoa Tapokorau Whānui Trust	Vision (Te Pae Tawhiti) Te Oranganui o Te Wairoa Tāpokorau Whānui - A flourishing future for our people, culture, and whenua. Mission Kia whakamanahia i te puāwaitanga o a tātau pāharakeke - Through strong leadership, responsible stewardship, and collective purpose, we are enabling whānau, marae, hapū, and iwi to thrive.	A comprehensive 100- year strategic timeline that integrates environmental health directly with cultural thriving.
Tātau Tātau o Te Wairoa	Vision The Whānau, Hapū and Iwi of Te Rohe o Te Wairoa are: prosperous, healthy and aspirational; proudly identifying and connecting with Te Ao Māori; kaitiaki for a restored natural environment; and informed key decision-makers for our future. Mission The Whānau, Hapū and Iwi of Te Rohe o Te Wairoa are acknowledged kaitiaki for a restored natural environment, exercising	Fulfills the NPS-FM requirement to centre mana whenua as active, informed decision-makers in governance.

Source Document	Explicitly Stated Vision / Mission Text	NPS-FM Alignment
	Mātauranga Māori to maintain sustainable land use, flourishing biodiversity and clean streams and rivers.	
Māhia Freshwater Plan	Core Whakatauki Ka ora te wai, Ka ora te whenua; Ka ora te whenua, Ka ora te tangata. Long-Term Vision A 100-year shared restoration journey to ensure the physical and spiritual health of the environment is maintained, protected and enhanced. 30-Year Aspiration That our taiao is looked after... Te Māhia-mai-tawhiti is restored to what it was 200 years ago... peninsula is pest-free... kaimoana, mahinga kai, rauemi, rongoā is plentiful.	Defines clear, long-term timelines (30 and 100 years) to systematically reverse degradation back to historical baselines.

10. Summary

Consolidated key freshwater issues

The key freshwater issues across the seven documents are:

- Sediment pollution is undoubtedly the most significant issue, along with hydrological modification. Poor water and sediment quality.
- Shallow landslides on steep pastoral hill country and harvested forestry areas act as the primary sediment generators.
- Significant erosion also changes the natural character of waterways, and receiving coastal environments.

In combination, **all the above points result in significant freshwater degradation.**

The below statement summarises the effect succinctly:

“While sediment loss and erosion are a natural feature of the Wairoa catchment, the rate of sediment loss has increased because of changes in land use from native forest to pasture, and forestry and farming land-use practices. Current sediment losses are estimated to be approximately 240% higher than before human arrival. This significant increase in sediment is of particular concern, as sediments affect cultural values in multiple ways: directly, via impacts on mahinga kai, and indirectly, by affecting cultural practices.”¹

This widespread instability is profoundly worsened by extreme weather events like Cyclone Gabrielle.

Furthermore, lowlands and coastal interfaces suffer from chemical and bacterial contamination, including high *E. coli* counts from failing residential septic systems and extensive agricultural run-off.

Collectively, **the above biophysical issues result in large-scale cultural impacts.**

Consolidated key cultural concerns and issues

The key cultural concerns raised across the seven documents are:

- The degradation of the water bodies directly threatens iwi culture and identity.
- A key concern is the consequential inability to undertake traditional harvesting practices due to zero water clarity and substrate smothering.
- Physically, bank erosion creates highly dangerous, steep cliffs that cut off access for older whānau, while unchecked erosion is washing away urupā and historical pā sites into the rivers.

¹ Melissa Robson-Williams, Nikki Harcourt, Laise Harris, Nathan Heath, Lewis Ratapu, Benita Tahuri, Duane Culshaw (2024). Sediment and cultural values in Wairoa: overview report. Prepared for: Wairoa Tripartite (Tātau Tātau o te Wairoa, Hawke's Bay Regional Council, Wairoa District Council). Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, Hawke's Bay Regional Council, Tātau Tātau o te Wairoa, Wairoa District Council.

- Spiritually, faecal and chemical contamination desecrates sacred areas.
- Inadequate partnership between Councils and mana whenua in decision-making.
- Practical legislative, and institutional challenges for mana whenua to perform their obligation as kaitiaki.

Consolidated Key Freshwater Values

The key freshwater values identified across the seven documents are:

- Across all catchments, freshwater is valued through a relational, non-transactional Te Ao Māori worldview - water is recognized as a living ancestor.
- Applying Te Mana o te Wai is held as a paramount value, establishing a strict hierarchy that prioritizes the health of the water body and ecosystem above human consumption or commercial exploitation.
- Mahinga Kai and Rongoā represent core physical and social values, requiring a natural abundance of healthy, safe, and diverse indigenous species.
- Ki uta ki tai is a central tenet.
- Wai Ora and Wai Tapu are held as foundational components for collective wellbeing, wairua, and mana motuhake.

Consolidated key actions

Erosion control and fencing

Deploy erosion mitigations, including native scrub reversion on steep pastoral faces, systematic poplar pole planting in gully systems, and comprehensive livestock exclusion fencing.

Silt capture

Intercept sediment before it smothers waterways.

Native nurseries

Build and operate native plant nurseries to supply affordable vegetation for intensive riparian revegetation and bank stabilization.

Embed Māori-led cultural monitoring

Operationalize and resource Māori-led cultural taiao monitoring alongside western science indices to track holistic ecosystem health and consider water takes. The latter is an issue within the Hawkes Bay area.

Cultural controls

Actively utilize traditional management tools, including rāhui, taiāpure and other means.

Access

Provide for safe access for mana whenua to exercise their cultural practices within waterways.

Furthermore, mana whenua want to formally integrate the visions, long-term objectives, and Te Mana o te Wai into regional resource management plans, partner in decision-making, and provide for their kaitiakitanga.

11. References

Jobs for Nature (2022) Pōhaturoa Trust Freshwater Management Strategy. Pōhaturoa Trust Project Profile

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