

Project Mōhua



Strategic Plan 2020 -2025

*Connecting people with nature conservation
in Mōhua*

Project Mōhua Strategic Plan

Our Purpose

Conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of Mōhua through community collaboration

Our Vision:

Project Mōhua is supporting community conservation groups, enabling them to maximise ecological gains. We are supporting new initiatives to enhance the mauri¹ of our rivers, the wellbeing of the coastal wildlife and the removal of pest predators and plants. All these are contributing towards ecological corridors connecting fragmented ecosystems ki uta ki tai (from the mountains to the sea).

Climate change is affecting Mōhua and we recognise that resilient biodiversity and ecologies build resilience to climate change impacts.

In five years, the Mōhua community is increasingly active and focussed on restoring its rich and diverse natural environment. Funders see progress in environmental projects and are actively supporting the work in Mōhua. The community and businesses are being celebrated for the great work they are doing. Our young people have hope for the future and actively participate in shaping it. All this contributes to connecting the community with nature conservation in Mōhua.

Overview

Project Mōhua is a community initiative, formed from a local passion for coordinating the diverse and considerable community action across Mōhua to restore and conserve habitats and control animal and plant pests. It is envisaged to be the connector between community groups and other organisations enabling coordination between projects and funding leading to landscape scale conservation outcomes. Activities are coordinated by the Project Mōhua Management Group comprising of a range of interested community members, iwi and advisory representatives from DOC and TDC. It presently operates, as a management committee, under the Tasman Environmental Trust (TET), supported by their charitable status and robust governance, administration and financial systems. Further information on TET is on their website <https://www.tet.org.nz/>.

This strategic plan has the directions and goals we think are the most important for the next five years. It is a starting point for discussions with our communities as to where we should support actions and guide new initiatives to occur.

This plan was written as Covid 19 changed and challenged our society showing that plans need to be flexible. Thus, we set directions for where we want to go and are not describing every step to take. Post Covid 19, and its economic effects, there is the potential for green recovery funds to come to Mōhua. We will support the conservation and restoration opportunities arising and use this strategy to guide us.

¹ We describe mauri as the lifeforce of the river

Goals for the next five years - 2020 to 2025

A. Supporting existing projects to be even more effective.

In September 2019 Project Mōhua hosted a community forum and asked what support community conservation groups wanted. The main messages from the community were:

- Help us get people to help us
- Promote what we do
- Help with resources like funding applications and connecting us together

Priorities:

1. Community conservation groups are supported

Project Mōhua will:

- Support existing community conservation projects, which connect people in the community and grow the capability of the people involved.
- Help volunteers with the tasks that community groups struggle with such as admin, health and safety and funding applications.
- Minimise the bureaucratic load on volunteers and maximise the funds reaching conservation work
- Proactively seek further funding to support others' conservation efforts, including large scale integrated restoration projects
- Provide and co-ordinate the sharing of physical resources and equipment

B. Ecological restoration is progressing rapidly

Promote and lead identified priority Flagship Projects that have the potential to transform Mōhua.

Flagship projects are larger scale actions that may join up smaller projects and stretch towards big audacious goals making a real difference.

Priorities:

2. All Mōhua rivers are healthy and have high water quality

We want Mōhua awa/rivers to be renowned for their strong mauri/life force, recreational beauty, health, and ecological richness of species – such as inanga, tuna, other native fish and river and wetland vegetation. To achieve this we will actively support:

- Riparian planting
 - Promoting areas that are ecologically useful to revegetate
 - Prioritise the use of taonga species for restoration projects
 - Promoting projects that create ecosystem corridors and/or buffers around forest remnants.
 - When granting money for revegetation will emphasise agreements that promote weed control and long-term health of the plantings
- Wetland restoration
- Utu/Reciprocity. This approach encourages water and land users to recognise that everything they do has an impact on catchment health. Reciprocity measures highlight the privilege of utilising resources in the catchments, supporting an ethic of respect for

water and land resources. This is discussed in depth in the *Manawhenua Mātauranga Report for the Tākaka Catchments June 2019*.

3. Coastal habitats are Protected

Coastal habitat, comprising of shorelines, dunes, estuaries and intertidal zones, is an important ecological feature largely outside the protection of National Parks and containing many taonga species. A focus for Project Mōhua is to support projects that provide coastal wildlife with safe places to live and breed

- Protect and enhance habitat for coastal wildlife by supporting vertebrate pest control, weed control, and appropriate revegetation
- Identify options to support ensuring that coastal wildlife have safe places to live and breed

4. Mōhua is free of pest predators

- Supporting the extension of mammalian predator and wasp control on areas adjoining large scale pest control operations to connect them to lowland Golden Bay.
- Support the identification and mapping of existing pest control operations.
- Work with MKM, DOC, TDC and community groups to identify and prioritise next steps and limitations to success
- Work in with the Tasman Environmental Trust and their development of a Tasman Pest strategy

5. Pest plant control is supported

- Support other initiatives for pest plant control

C. Our community is collaborating well to achieve ecological restoration

Priorities:

6. Tasman Environmental Trust is assisted with the administration of the Cobb Valley Mitigation Fund which provides for projects enhancing the Tākaka Valley Catchments.

7. Work closely with Manawhenua ki Mōhua to include cultural values into visioning, planning and project delivery

- Discuss with Manawhenua ki Mōhua possibilities to develop joined vision and priorities
- Explore with Manawhenua ki Mōhua how we can work together in partnership.

8. Young people are actively supported in restoring the health of the local ecology

- Consult with young people of Mōhua to learn what interests them and how they would like to participate
- Build networks to be able to communicate effectively with youth and for them to feed into the Management Group

9. Our communities are aware of the local ecological issues and can easily become involved

- Create awareness of what is happening and what is needed for a healthy Mōhua. The most effective role is building on the existing work and leveraging complementary actions
- Input into community forums
- Support private landowners and the farming community in restoring the health of the local ecology through collaboration and good communication networks
- Provide public communication, engagement, and information on ecological restoration

- Develop and maintain relationships with individuals, iwi, groups, and organisations that are planning or currently providing environmental projects in Mōhua.
- Consult with the key communities to understand their passions, current contributions, local projects & opportunities

10. Existing national and regional strategies and reports are used to guide decisions

- Using the regional strategies of Kotahitanga mo te Taiao, the TDC Biostrategy (under development), Tasman Environmental Trust Regional Pest Control Strategy and this strategy to guide integrated actions for ecological restoration for Mōhua. We will invite and coordinate community, businesses, and government participation towards this strategy.
- Liaise with the Mōhua 2042 Strategy Group to ensure Project Mōhua goals are integrated into the Mōhua 2042 strategy.
- Work with Tasman Environmental Trust as they work with the ecological science community to map the highest priority sites for mammalian pest control actions in the catchments and coast
- Look to fill in the gaps for the great conservation work that the TDC, DOC and other organisations are doing.
- Provide input on strategic direction and opportunities for community conservation in Mōhua.

Reporting

As part of being transparent, clear reporting is important. It is also a good way of communicating and inspiring others.

We will develop clear reporting methods and measures of success once actions are agreed on. Kotahitanga have started developing measures for part of their plan and we will consider using these or adapting them.

We will use website, social media and Golden Bay Weekly as our main sources of sharing. We will contribute to the Tasman Environmental Trust Annual Report for our own Annual Report.

Celebration of progress

It is important to celebrate ecological successes, and these will be a key focus of our communications with our communities

Learning and growing – evaluation measures

What we learn from the first strategic plan will make a better second version. The key is collecting good feedback and we will seek comments from key stakeholders and will be open to comments from any user. We will seek feedback widely as part of a full review in 2024.

Review of this Strategy

This strategy will be fully reviewed in 2024. As a result of feedback, and our experience using it, we will tune and improve the Strategy. Key reasons for review are if circumstances change and if there is confusion.

Appendix

Priorities from Manawhenua ki Mōhua

The Management Group acknowledges that Manawhenua ki te Mōhua (Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Rārua) are kaitiaki/guardians of the rohe/region. As such, a key priority is to “*work in closely with Manawhenua ki Mōhua to integrate cultural values into visioning, planning and project delivery*”

As part of the Tasman District Council gaining a better understanding of how to manage the Tākaka River catchment the TDC commissioned a report from manawhenua (written by Ursula Passl) – *Manawhenua Mātauranga Report for the Tākaka Catchments June 2019*.

This document outlines the principles for the management of wai/water and identifies actions to be taken. Even though it is focussed on the Tākaka catchments it is an excellent starting point for how the Iwi see the management of the other catchments and the Mōhua. The key excerpts that relate to this strategy are in the appendices.

As a demonstration of how the work of Project Mōhua and Manawhenua ki Mōhua can be aligned we have included below a section of the report which describes what users can do to respect the water they need and take – the principle of Reciprocity. These actions are excellent priorities for Project Mōhua.

D. Reciprocity

Manawhenua work in partnership with the Council to ensure that all land and water users incorporate a reciprocity measure to enhance and or restore the domain of Tangaroa (the sacred guardian of fresh and coastal waters). This approach encourages water and land users to recognise that everything they do has an impact on catchment hauora. Reciprocity measures highlight the privilege of utilising resources in the catchments, supporting an ethic of respect for ngā wai (water) and ngā whenua (land) resources.

3.21 Examples of reciprocity measures include, but are not limited to:

- *Maintaining indigenous vegetation along waterway margins to support natural filtering functions, provide shading for wai, improve water quality and enhance habitat for taonga species;*
- *Stream enhancement projects, such as planting new areas with indigenous vegetation on waterway margins;*
- *Pest control operations to support planting initiatives – focusing on both plant, animal and insect pests;*
- *Undertaking an ecological/biodiversity assessment of life in the water body to guide further enhancement of this ecosystem; and*
- *Working with manawhenua to monitor wai according to cultural indicators, in order for manawhenua to ascertain the cultural health of the receiving environment.*

Priorities from Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Strategy

The Kotahitanga mō te Taiao Alliance of local government, central government and Iwi have developed a strategy from Kaikoura through to Buller that gives the high-level objectives and also gives place-based objectives. This was done in conjunction with some leading ecological scientists in Te Tau Ihu. For Project Mōhua the relevant sections are Northwest Nelson and the Nelson Bays and the priorities are summarised below

North West Nelson - What we want to achieve

NN 1.0 Fully functioning indigenous ecosystems restored.

NN 1.1 Threatened flora populations are secured.

NN 1.2 Rare and uncommon ecosystems are restored and secured.

NN 1.3 Communities flourish in the West Coast lowlands alongside legally protected areas.

NN 1.4 Fragmented lowland ecosystems of Mōhua and Buller District are secured and restored

NN 1.5 Nationally important ecosystems are restored to full natural function

Nelson Bays - What we want to achieve

NB 4.0 The restoration of shellfish beds to a level where harvesting can be sustained.

Sediment inputs from rivers and streams are at levels that enable benthic ecosystems to thrive

NB 4.1 Estuarine ecologies are restored, and managed, and coastal retreat is provided for as sea levels rise.

NB 4.2 Roosting sites for shorebirds are secured.

NB 4.3 Communities and industries change land-use and sea-based activities to approaches that allow them to flourish while using ecologically sustainable practices.

The Department of Conservation has an older strategy for Te Tau Ihu, 'The Nelson Marlborough Conservation Management Strategy 1996-2006'. It has useful priorities, although these may be out of date.