

# 14.

## POUKAWA TE WAIŪ POUKAWA THE LIFE FORCE

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IN COLLABORATION WITH – TE TUMU PAEROA  
– JO PLEYDELL (NGĀI TĀMANUHIRI) AND  
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ADVISORY TRUSTEES – ROBIN HAPE, RAWIRI  
HAPUKU, VADELIA WIRIHANA LE GEYT AND  
TE KURA POHATU (NGĀTI KAHUNGUNU,  
NGĀI TE WHATUIĀPITI, TE RANGIKOIANAKE)

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*Ko Kahurānaki te maunga*

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*ko Te Rangikoianake te hapū*

*Ko Kahurānaki te marae*

*Ko Te Hapuku Ika Nui*

*o Te Moana te tangata*

*E mihi nei, e karanga nei, mo  
te taonga Moana a Poukawa i  
waiho ake mai nga tūpuna mo  
ngā tipuranga e heke mai*

Tuatahi, ngā mihi ki ngā mate kua ngaro i te pō a Tama Huata (former Advisory Trustee member). E te rangatira, haere, haere, haere ki te pō, moe mai.

Nā reira te hunga mate ki te hunga mate, te hunga ora ki te hunga ora.

Tēnei te mihi ki a koutou katoa e te whānau o te marae a Kahurānaki rauā ko ngā tangata katoa who assisted with this long-term plan to restore Lake Poukawa to its original state. Many thanks particularly to Revell Wise (retired Te Tumu Paeroa staff member), Craig Erskine (planner), Keith Thompson (wetland ecologist), Garth Miller and Thomas Harrison (former Advisory Trustee members), Jerry Hapuku, and all the kaumātua and kuia who have contributed and shared their whakaaro and memories over the duration of the last several years. Without you this would not be possible. Ngā mihi aroha ki a koutou.

– Ngā mihi, nā mātou Elizabeth, Advisory Trustees

Previous and current page: Lake Poukawa view from the inlet.  
Photo: Jonathon Brownrigg



## LAKE POUKAWA POUKAWA TE WAIŪ POUKAWA IS THE LIFE FORCE

Lake Poukawa is a taonga (culturally important) to the people of Te Hauke and the hapū (subtribe), Ngāi Te Rangikoianake, and has shaped the history of the area pre- and post-colonisation. It is the largest lake lying within an ancient peat wetland, in the active tectonic Poukawa Depression (also known as the Poukawa Basin), between the Raukawa and Kaokaoroa Ranges of central Hawke's Bay.

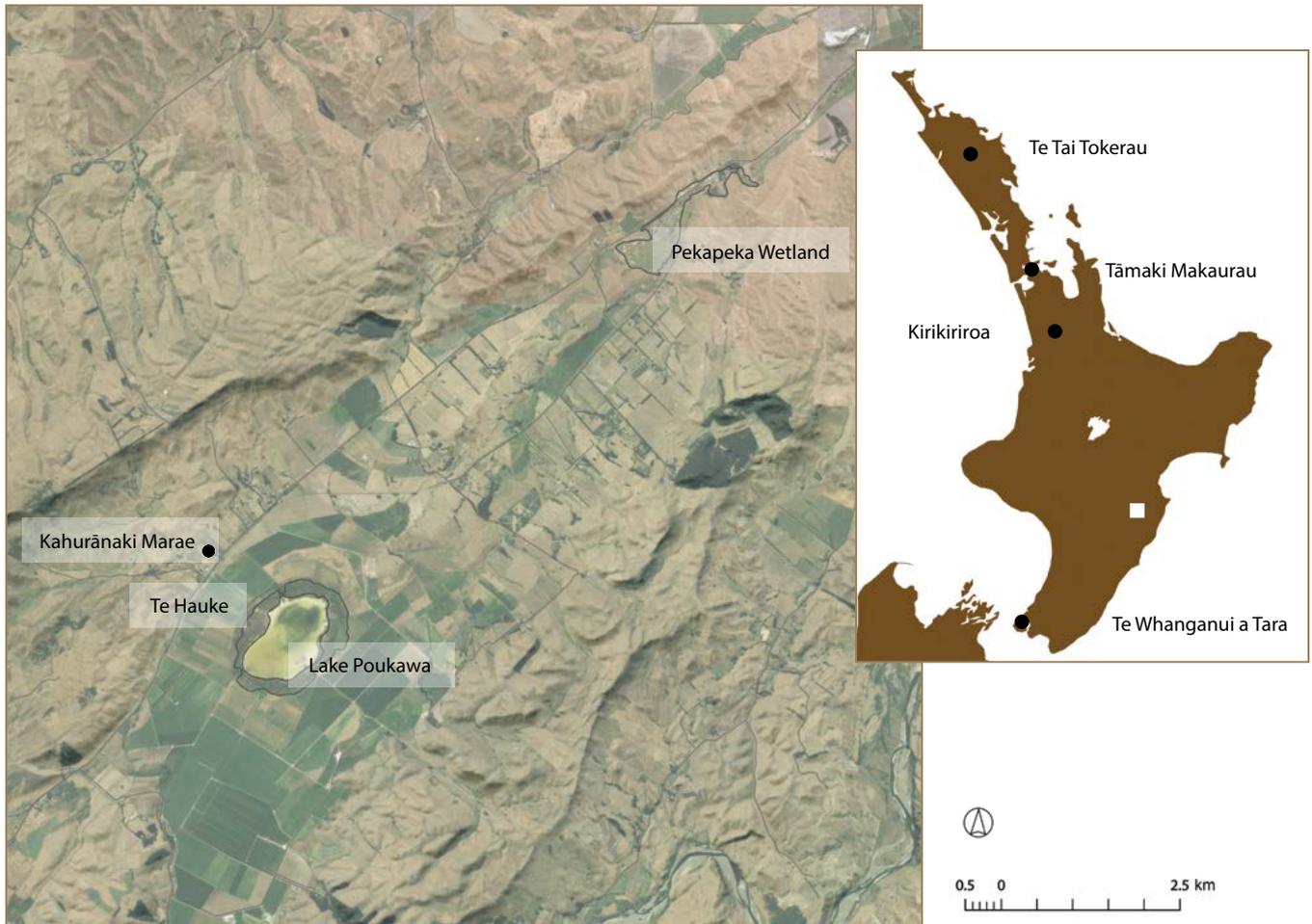
Lake Poukawa is both regionally and nationally significant and is acknowledged for outstanding wildlife values and ecological function. In times past, the lake and the surrounding basin supported multiple pā sites (fortified place) located on the nearby ranges with available kai (food) such as tuna (shortfin eel), inanga and kōkopu (whitebait), and kākahi (freshwater mussels).

Lake Poukawa maintains populations of several key bird species. These include the nationally endangered matuku (Australasian bittern) and black billed gull, the nationally vulnerable tūturiwhatu (banded dotterel), taranui (Caspian tern), highly valued weweia (NZ dabchick), kuruwhengi (Australasian shoveler), and poaka (pied stilt). There are also fibre resources, primarily harakeke (NZ flax) and raupō (bulrush).

This history and related relationship to the overall water catchment to the Hawke's Bay, has prompted the Hawke's Bay Regional Council (HBRC) to recognise the lake as one of the most important wetland habitats in the region along with Pekapeka Wetland. The Pekapeka Wetland is a 98 hectare wetland reserve located 9 kilometres north of Lake Poukawa, within the Poukawa Basin (Fig. 1).



Weweia, New Zealand dabchick | Kuruwhengi, Australasian shoveler | Poaka, pied stilt. Images taken at Pekapeka Wetland nearby Lake Poukawa. Photo: © John Nelson



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**Figure 1. Location of Lake Poukawa, Pekapeka Wetland, and Kahurānaki Marae in Te Hauke, Hawke's Bay region.**  
Source: Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research

Once part of a huge lake and wetland complex, Lake Poukawa is now a shallow lake and wetland system with a maximum depth of less than one metre. The shallowness is mainly due to the artificial draining of the lake after the 1931 Hawke's Bay earthquake. Over the past 150 years, over 90% of the wetlands in Heretaunga have been lost or severely degraded. With the ever-increasing decline in lake and wetland coverage, many native species of birds, plants, fish, and insects have also been lost locally.

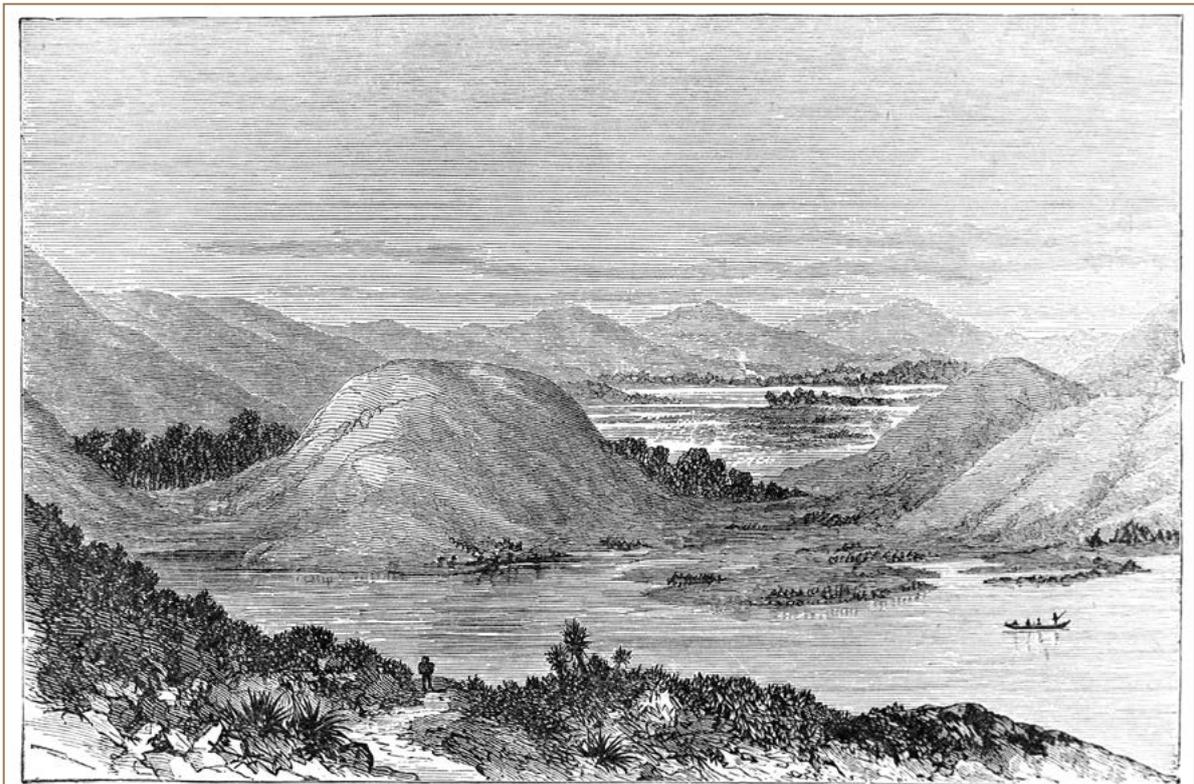
Cultural practices and important landscapes and sites associated with those practices have also been severely impacted, in some cases due to the local disappearance of important species. Tuna fishery is of considerable cultural importance, and from 1966, the lake was declared a non-commercial fishery. This means that until we (Te Tumu Paeroa and the Advisory Trustees) deem the lake and the tuna population 'healthy', no tuna will be taken for commercial purposes, and the tuna take is for customary fishing only.

Our tupuna (ancestor) Te Hapuku, a well-respected and prominent rangatira (chief), helped facilitate land sales in the late 19th century by early European settlers, but with the understanding that the lake would never be drained. His descendants, through the Poukawa 13B Trust, continue to hold fast to his directions by endeavouring to maintain the unique features of the ecosystem.

The Trustees of Poukawa 13B, the landblock within which Lake Poukawa is situated, are committed to ensuring that the state of the lake is restored to what it was when our tūpuna lived around it and within the living memories of many of our kaumātua and kuia (elders). This chapter is the story about the start of our journey in partnership with the Māori Trustee to implement this vision.



Lake Poukawa 1877, as interpreted by WD Blatchley, an artist in the late 19th century.  
Photo: Ref: PUBL-0016-23-1. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.



TE AUTE LAKE, HAWKE BAY.

Lake Poukawa 1875-77, as interpreted by CD Barraud, an artist in the late 19th century.  
Photo: Ref: PUBL-0016-22. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

## ABOUT POUKAWA 13B AND OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS RESTORATION

Poukawa 13B is a 522.50 hectare block of Māori freehold land and is a taonga to our people. The block is situated along State Highway 2, in rural Te Hauke, 11 km from Hastings (Fig. 1). It is on the western side of the railway line that runs parallel to the State Highway. Poukawa 13B has its own legal and formed access from SH2 across the railway line at Te Hauke. Further formed access runs from SH2 at the southern end of the property.

## PLANNING FOR RESTORATION

Although the Māori Trustee and Poukawa 13B Advisory Trustees have been working in partnership since 2008, multiple challenges arose as Advisory Trustees changed and the Māori Trustee Office/Te Tumu Paeroa sustained organisational changes. Initial wānanga (workshops) plans were interrupted, and while there is now a definitive strategic plan, this has also been a challenge to implement. However, from 2007/8, with the intervention and support of the Māori Trustee, newly elected Advisory Trustees, have identified many

uri (descendants of traditional landowners) to develop a strategic plan. The plan significantly included how uri 'felt' about the lake and the surrounding arable land.

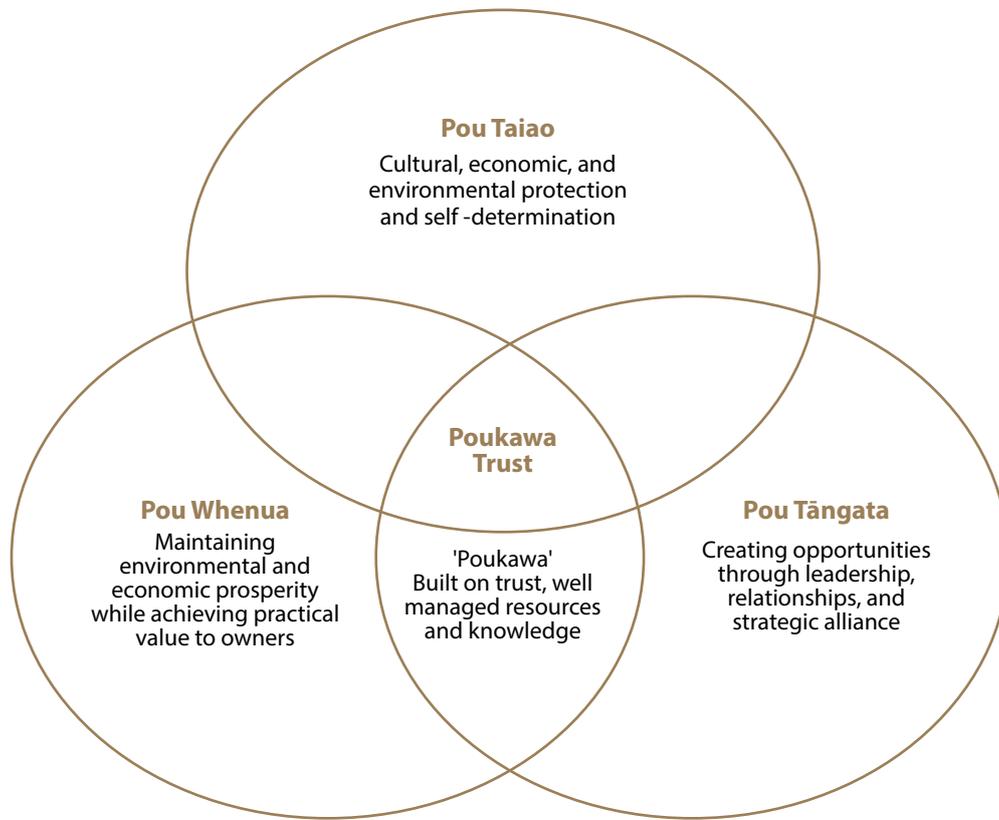
Restoration planning for traditional lands is not a case of simply sitting down and drawing up a plan. With the help of Te Tumu Paeroa and others we have identified many further steps that need to be implemented to drive the vision we all seek. Key steps we have noted and have either put in place or will be implementing over the coming years include:

- **Setting a vision** – where have we come from and what do we want the future to look like for our whenua (land), valued plant and animal species, and our people (including upholding of our tikanga (cultural practices) and kawa (protocols and customs), and sustenance of the tikanga that we value?
- **Developing a communication plan** – how do we keep our shareholders informed so that they can participate meaningfully in the process when and if they want to?
- **Historical information gathering** – based on our mātauranga (knowledge), what is missing, what is still available to us (including practices), and what is the current state or condition?
- **Long-term management** – what information and steps do we need to implement to move towards our vision and recovery of those things we value as described in our historical narratives?

Pekapeka Wetland and boardwalk meandering through the restored wetland. Photo: © John Nelson



## POUKAWA TE WAIŪ – THE UNIFYING VISION



*Poukawa te Waiū – Poukawa is the life force*

Element	Description	Vision	Commentary
<b>Pou Taiao</b>	<b>Kaitiakitanga</b> Cultural and environmental protection and restoration	<b>Cultural and environmental protection and self-determination</b>	Poukawa the Life Force – The wellbeing of our taonga will be the keystone measure of the unifying vision and integration of all three Pou.
<b>Pou Whenua</b>	<b>Tiakitanga</b> Cultural, environmental, and economic integration	<b>Maintaining environmental and economic prosperity while achieving practical value to owners</b>	Relationship management and strategic alliances are critical in achieving the right balance between environmental and economic prosperity and the legal; environmental; financial; lease and administration responsibilities of the trust (beyond 2023).
<b>Poukawa Trust</b>	<b>Rangatiratanga</b> Trust knowledge and leadership	<b>The 'Poukawa Brand' built on trust, well managed resources and knowledge</b>	For the 'Poukawa Brand' to become known as professional operators, the Trust will require good leadership and governance expertise to ensure a smooth transfer of administration and trusteeship from 2023. Ensuring the Trust has the right balance of skills and expertise across all three Pou.
<b>Pou Tāngata</b>	<b>Manaakitanga</b> Supported and informed	<b>Creating opportunities through self-determination</b>	Creating opportunities for owners to be engaged as kaitiaki and active participants of the Trust. Ensuring transparency of information and communication with owners in the protection of our resources and future of the Trust.

Figure 2. Poukawa Te Waiū – The Unifying Vision (2021) for Lake Poukawa as set by the Trust and Advisory Trustees of Poukawa 13B

## COLLABORATING TO IMPLEMENT OUR IDENTIFIED STEPS

### 1. Setting the vision

The vision and passion were identified over 10 years ago, and the drive for improvements recognised by the plan has quietly simmered away in the background. On establishment, the Advisory Trustees worked with hapū and whānau to identify points of significance, resulting in The Unifying Vision (2010) which was recently been reviewed and updated in 2021, as Poukawa te Waiū – The Unifying Vision (Fig. 2). Research and assistance from individual experts have also helped maintain enthusiasm, with the main objective for improvement of our taonga never far from Trustees' thoughts.

### 2. Communicating the process and intent

The Advisory Trustees developed a communication plan to identify all shareholders and invited them to have input online with the My Whenua site, located on the Te Tumu Paeroa website.

### 3. Building our historical information to guide us

The Advisory Trustees wanted to collect and collate as much historical information about Lake Poukawa as possible to build a picture for current and future generations of shareholders/owners. Kaumātua and kuia enjoyed the interaction, were pleased to be included, and felt their memories were valued.

### 4. Long-term management

As we near the end of lease agreements (2020), we need to ensure that any new negotiated leases are going to advantage shareholders and enable future Trustees and Advisory Trustees to continue building on what the current Trustees have initiated. While we agree that the ultimate goal is to gain overall management of Lake Poukawa, we recognise that this is not possible at this stage. In the interim we continue to monitor water quality, define, and implement restoration activities, identify future land use, and collaborate with shareholders.

The Poukawa 13B Trustees are committed to developing a long-term management plan for Lake Poukawa. A strategic management plan 2020–21 to identify specific areas that the Advisory Trustees would be able to oversee, includes the restoration plan. The need for an overarching management plan has been discussed at some length over the past 5 years and is explained in several documents, such as an Issues and Options Paper (2013) and the Poukawa Lake Indigenous Biodiversity Management Plan (PLIP) Proposal (2017).

Lake Poukawa view from the inlet. Photo: Jonathon Brownrigg



## KEY LEARNINGS

'...preparation of a long-term management plan requires a good understanding of the current state of the resource that is to be managed.'

– Keith Thompson

Challenges over the years regarding activities in the catchment with Hawke's Bay Regional Council and the current lessee, have to some degree affected development. To ameliorate this, the Trust engaged Craig Erskine (planner) and Keith Thompson (wetland ecologist) to help address the environmental issues faced by both our people and the lake. These issues included developing responses to resource consent applications for activities that impact on the Trust Lands, and ultimately on the lake. The work that was initially undertaken by both consultants, and then continued by Keith Thompson, has been invaluable. The reports produced for the Trust help clarify what is really happening to the lake. Alongside what we learn from our own mātauranga, baseline studies from scientific and physical research, surveying, and monitoring are also important to the Trustees and support the effective development of a long-term management and restoration plan (Table 1). Working with planners and ecologists are key considerations for other whānau seeking to learn more about their own lands.

Water quality, particularly the impacts of nutrient loading, is critically important to the long-term health and well-being of the lake ecosystem. Until recently, no systematic water studies had been carried out at Lake Poukawa. However, a preliminary survey of lake water quality and main surface water sources was approved

and resourced by the Poukawa 13B Advisory Trustees. In December 2018, Hill Laboratories undertook water quality analyses, and technicians from Cawthron Institute identified algal communities present in samples.

## NEXT STEPS

Current options for Poukawa 13B Trust that could be useful for shareholders and Advisory Trustees to consider are:

### OPTION 1:

**Release** – Poukawa 13B land would be 'released' from any ongoing rental agreement. This is the ideal option; however, as there have been many changes both within Te Tumu Paeroa and the Advisory Trustees this is not currently a viable option.

### OPTION 2:

**Develop a Farm Management Plan** – This option could be managed in conjunction with Option 3, we believe this option would be manageable under the current structure and overall position of the Trust.

### OPTION 3:

**Strategic Restoration Plan** – This is the preferred option and was voted as the most realistic at this point in our tenure. With this in mind, we advertised for clear expressions of interest and strategic plans for both Poukawa 13B and the lake. We negotiated a contract for a project manager in late October 2019. A decision was made by Te Tumu Paeroa and the Advisory Trustees, to contract Ngāti Pahauwera Development Trust (NPDT), to undertake the work. The plan had to include future land use and management options.

**Table 1. Information sources of environmental information about Lake Poukawa and surrounds**

Kaupapa	Rationale for the development of Poukawa te Waiū	Information sources: reports, Advisory Trustee workshops, and related Hui-a-Iwi (2008 – current)
Birds (avian fauna)	✓	NZ Fish & Game (2011), Wildlands (2018), HBRC (2019)
Fish populations	✓	NIWA (2009), HBRC (2019)
Hydrology	Partial, gaps	GNS (2011), NIWA (2014), HBRC (2014)
Wetland vegetation ecology	✓	Wildlands (2018), Singers (2015)
Lake algal and aquatic plant ecology	Partial, gaps	NIWA (2009)
Status of vertebrate pests	X	Advice obtained from DOC and HBRC
Water quality	X, gaps	HBRC (2019), Cawthron (2014)
Historical documentation	✓	Te Tumu Paeroa (2013), Wildlands (2018)

Table 2. Culturally important plant species

Structural class	Species names known to Ngāi Te Rangiokeanake	Scientific name
Gymnosperm trees & shrubs	Totara	<i>Podocarpus totara</i> var. <i>totara</i>
Dicotyledonous trees & shrubs	Swamp coprosma Kānuka Mānuka Mingimingi Ralph's kohuhu Kohuhu Ribbonwood Kōwhai Koromiko	<i>Coprosma tenuicaulis</i> <i>Kunzea robusta</i> <i>Leptospermum scoparium</i> var. <i>scoparium</i> <i>Leucopogon fasciculatus</i> <i>Pittosporum ralphii</i> <i>Pittosporum tenuifolium</i> <i>Plagianthus regius</i> subsp. <i>regius</i> <i>Sophora tetraptera</i> , <i>S. microphylla</i> <i>Veronica</i> spp.
Dicotyledonous herbs	Swamp nettle	<i>Urtica perconfusa</i>
Dicotyledonous lianes	Pōhue	<i>Calystegia sepium</i> subsp. <i>roseate</i>
Ferns	Retoretore	<i>Azolla rubra</i>
Grasses	Toetoe	<i>Austroderia fulvida</i> , <i>A. toetoe</i>
Sedges	Pūrua grass, kukuraho Rautahi Makura, pūrei, pūrekireki, pukio Pūrei Ūpoko-a-tangata Spike sedge Kuta, giant spike sedge Kāpūngāwhā	<i>Bolboschoenus fluviatilis</i> <i>Carex geminata</i> <i>Carex secta</i> <i>Carex virgata</i> <i>Cyperus ustulatus</i> <i>Eleocharis acuta</i> <i>Eleocharis sphacelata</i> <i>Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani</i>
Monocotyledonous herbs	Kareara Harakeke, NZ flax Manahi Raupō	<i>Lemna disperma</i> <i>Phormium tenax</i> <i>Potamogeton cheesemani</i> <i>Typha orientalis</i>
Monocotyledonous trees & shrubs	Ti kōuka, cabbage tree	<i>Cordyline australis</i>



Rautahi. Photo: Beverley Clarkson



Pūrei. Photo: Beverley Clarkson

Ūpoko-a-tangata, umbrella sedge.  
Photo: Beverley Clarkson

## Ngāti Pāhauwera Development Trust

Ngāti Pāhauwera Development Trust are a post-settlement entity that had considerable experience in riparian fencing and planting, and water quality monitoring in the Mohaka rohe (northern Hawke's Bay). NPDT offered their expertise to assist with the restoration of Lake Poukawa. The people of Ngāti Pāhauwera, who NPDT represent, have close whakapapa links to Kahurānaki Marae. NPDT tendered for the work and were successful in supporting the lake restoration planning which is now underway.

## Planting

To appropriately restore Lake Poukawa, Ngāti Pāhauwera Development Trust are considering using the Pekapeka Wetland development to identify plant species and follow the approaches outlined in the Wildlands Restoration Plan. The Pekapeka Wetland is a 98 hectare wetland reserve located 9 kilometres north of Lake Poukawa, within the Poukawa Basin.

Some of our taonga plant species integral to future restoration are listed in Table 2.

Drone coverage has helped identify access and the main problem areas of Lake Poukawa. Raupō and willow (grey and crack willow, *Salix* species) have been identified as major areas of work, therefore planting regimes will be prioritised in these areas. Raupō and willow were left to colonise several areas around the lake and effectively became a weed issue. In the initial assessment undertaken by NPDT, it became obvious that raupō would need to be managed and contained, and where possible harvested. Some would also be transferred to other areas of the lake or used by uri for other purposes. Once these raupō and willow areas are controlled, the planting of complementary taonga plant species can take place.



Robin Hape (CEO NPDT), Reka and Jade Joe (kaimahi) standing at the edge of the raupō cropping area, Lake Poukawa. Photo: Ngāti Pāhauwera Development Trust

## Monitoring

Once reliable water quality baseline studies have been undertaken, a monitoring programme can be established to identify changes in the structure and functioning of the wetlands.

## Water quality assessments

Hydrology and water quality are the two most important drivers in the functioning of the wetland ecosystem. As far as we know, HBRC has allocated no resources to water quality studies in the 2020–2021 year, and Brownriggs Agriculture Land (current lessee) may not be carrying out water quality studies beyond their consent compliance monitoring programme.



NPDT lead by Rawiri Hapuku (Advisory Trustee) have planted 1500 plants to date; 500 of each tī kōuka (cabbage tree), pūrei and mingimingi. Photo: Ngāti Pāhauwera Development Trust

## Floating Platforms

Access to Lake Poukawa is challenged by a wide margin of mud and raupō that lies between dry land and the lake. This makes it difficult to undertake water testing in the lake. However, HBRC are considering the use of floating platforms to provide safe and easy access to deep water, making it easier to conduct water testing. The platforms are covered in native plantings, which help them blend with the local environment. NPDT partnered with HBRC to successfully implement the floating platforms system in the Putere Lakes (Lakes Rotonuiaha, Rotongaiao and Rotoroa) in Wairoa. NPDT are also interested in using the platforms as work platforms for planting and willow control.



Representatives from HBRC and NPDT standing on a floating platform undertaking water quality testing in one of the Putere Lakes. Photo: Ngāti Pāhauwera Development Trust

## UNDERSTANDING TRADITIONAL LAND CONNECTIONS

Before colonisation, land was traditionally communally 'owned', although the concept of 'ownership' did not necessarily mean what it means under a modern (western) economic structure. For many iwi (tribes) and hapū, connection to land is a more powerful concept than possession, as it is the land and its environs that shape who we are as the people of the land – tangata whenua (Indigenous people). From this perspective, it could be understood that it is the whenua that 'owns' us as its descendants and benefactors. It is the responsibility of tangata whenua to adapt to life in a way that ensures resource sustainability. This ensures present and future generations are able to continue a healthy and balanced connection with their whenua. However, colonisation, and the structures associated with possession and control, began to sever that relationship. The division of the land into smaller parcels meant that lands could then be sold or confiscated under colonial law. Consequently, it has been a slow journey for some of our people, requiring much patience and determination to rebalance those impacts.

### Questions on succession:

If you or your whānau need to succeed to land after the passing of a tupuna, approach Te Kooti Whenua Māori (the Māori Land Court) for assistance.

## ROLE OF THE MĀORI TRUSTEE

The Māori Trustee leads Te Tumu Paeroa, an independent trustee organisation that supports the Māori Trustee to fulfil their role and responsibilities.

The Māori Trustee, with the support of Te Tumu Paeroa, seeks to support and empower whenua Māori owners and trustees in protecting and enhancing whenua Māori. The Poukawa 13B project for Lake Poukawa is one example of this.

### Working with Te Tumu Paeroa – what they can offer:

- Te Tumu Paeroa offers services to support whenua Māori owners and trustees regarding land administration. They work with owners to realise opportunities to improve the land and also increase their capability to manage and govern their own whenua.
- Te Tumu Paeroa works with trustees and owners to ensure the terms of the trust order from Te Kooti Whenua Māori are met. All decisions relating to land ownership (including succession) are the function of Te Kooti Whenua Māori.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Note: If you are having problems with the hyperlinks below try copying and pasting the web address into your browser search bar.

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## Useful websites

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### Floating platforms

<http://www.gisborneherald.co.nz/environment/20200303/bringing-back-life-to-putere-lakes>

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### NIWA LakeSPI Lake Submerged Plan Indicators

<https://lakespi.niwa.co.nz>

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### Te Kooti Whenua Māori

<https://maorilandcourt.govt.nz>

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### Te Puni Kōkiri

<https://www.tupu.nz>

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### Te Tumu Paeroa

<https://www.tetumupaeroa.co.nz>

- My Whenua  
<https://www.mywhenua.co.nz>
  - Succession to land  
<https://www.tetumupaeroa.co.nz/land-owners/succession-to-land>
  - Working with owners to rejuvenate the land  
<https://www.tetumupaeroa.co.nz/news/working-owners-rejuvenate-land>
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### Te Waiū o Poukawa

<https://www.kauwhatareo.govt.nz/en/resource/new-video-2>

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