



Southern Tairāwhiti Catchment Advisory Group – Hui 3

Date: 14 July 2025

Subject: Data Sovereignty, Options for Management Areas

1. Introduction

The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM) 2020 provides a framework for achieving the community's long-term vision for freshwater. It's called the National Objectives Framework – or 'NOF'. It represents a series of steps that our group will work through to develop the Southern Tairāwhiti Catchment Plan.

In the last hui we had a recap on preliminary visions and values considered, introduced Management Areas, and considered the current state of the environment. We also started discussing potential actions that may help achieve objectives, while also undertaking site visits to look at the Hangaroa River and Lake Rotokaha.

This report includes:

- Data sovereignty
- Management Areas.

2. Data Sovereignty

Data sovereignty refers to the concept that data is subjected to the laws, governance, and control of the nation, group, organisation, landowners, or people to whom it belongs. It asserts that individuals or communities have the right to control the collection, access, use, and sharing of data about them or their resources.

For farmers and landowners, this relates to the information they may collect on their lands, including farming activities and inputs. Information can be commercially sensitive.

For tangata whenua, this relates to sensitive cultural information, including *inter alia* mātauranga Māori, tikanga, and place-based knowledge (such as the location of wāhi tapu sites). Mātauranga Māori is a key mechanism for enabling self-determination and innovation and is concerned with protecting tangata whenua rights of access to data, participation in data integration activities, and partnership in the governance and / or ownership of data (Kukutai, 2018)¹. Mātauranga Māori is a taonga. When it is shared, it is a gift and should be safeguarded and treated with respect. Tangata whenua have sovereignty over their mātauranga, data, and tikanga.

Data sharing between councils, tangata whenua, and landowners is important when implementing the NPS-FM 2020. However, processes and mechanisms must be put in place that safeguard sensitive data, intellectual property, and other information that warrants protection.

¹ Kukutai, T. (2018) Data Summit '18 Informed decision-making through the ethical use of data. University of Waikato, Te Mana Raraunga. Data from a Māori worldview

Council is still considering how best to protect sensitive data, not only for this catchment but across the region. **This work is still in progress.**

In the interim, we propose to apply the following:

- Sharing of information owned / controlled / funded by any specific party is voluntary.
- Members of the advisory group are to advise upfront if any data is sensitive and subject to data sovereignty considerations.
- Where any party wishes to share any information subject to data sovereignty considerations, the advisory group will consider any potential risks with sharing that information.
- In terms of the above, any conflicts of interest will be considered.
- Where information is to be shared, the advisory group and Council will 'handle' that data according to the requirements of that party; this will include consideration of:
 - How data is integrated / processed
 - Where does it sit / is it stored
 - How is it safeguarded
 - How long is it stored for
 - Who has access to it, and for how long
 - Who updates and adds to it
 - How is it used
 - How is it mapped (if it is spatial data)
 - Who reports on it

The extent that the above applies to any data will depend on the nature of the data considered.

The above is designed to uphold data sovereignty principles, particularly for Māori communities and private landowners, and ensure transparency and integrity within advisory group work.

Question:

1. Is the above list adequate for this catchment planning process?

3. Options for Management Areas (MAs)

Freshwater Management Units (FMUs) represent the whole catchment area. We have historically called these catchment areas 'Catchments', however the NPS-FM is requesting consistency in terminology used across councils. This requires us to change our language slightly from what is currently used in our 2015 Regional Freshwater Plan and Waipaoa Catchment Plan.

To reflect the request for consistency, going forwards, what was previously an FMU in our 2015 freshwater plan is now a Management Area (MA).

As discussed at hui 1 and 2, we have the ability to identify MAs to reflect catchment character, land-use activities, unique or differential values, catchment-specific issues, and receiving environments. We can also consider interested and affected parties (e.g. Mana Whenua groups, water users, etc.), and practical reporting outcomes.

Based on initial discussions at Hui 2, we have developed four options for discussion at this hui. We can choose one of them or develop other scenarios / options.

Option 1 Receiving Environments

This option considers applying a management framework according to the needs of receiving environments. **Figure 1** below shows the areas draining to the Wairoa River (blue-shaded), Nūhaka River and Kopuawhara Stream (red-shaded), and Maraetaha River and Wherowhero Lagoon (purple-shaded).

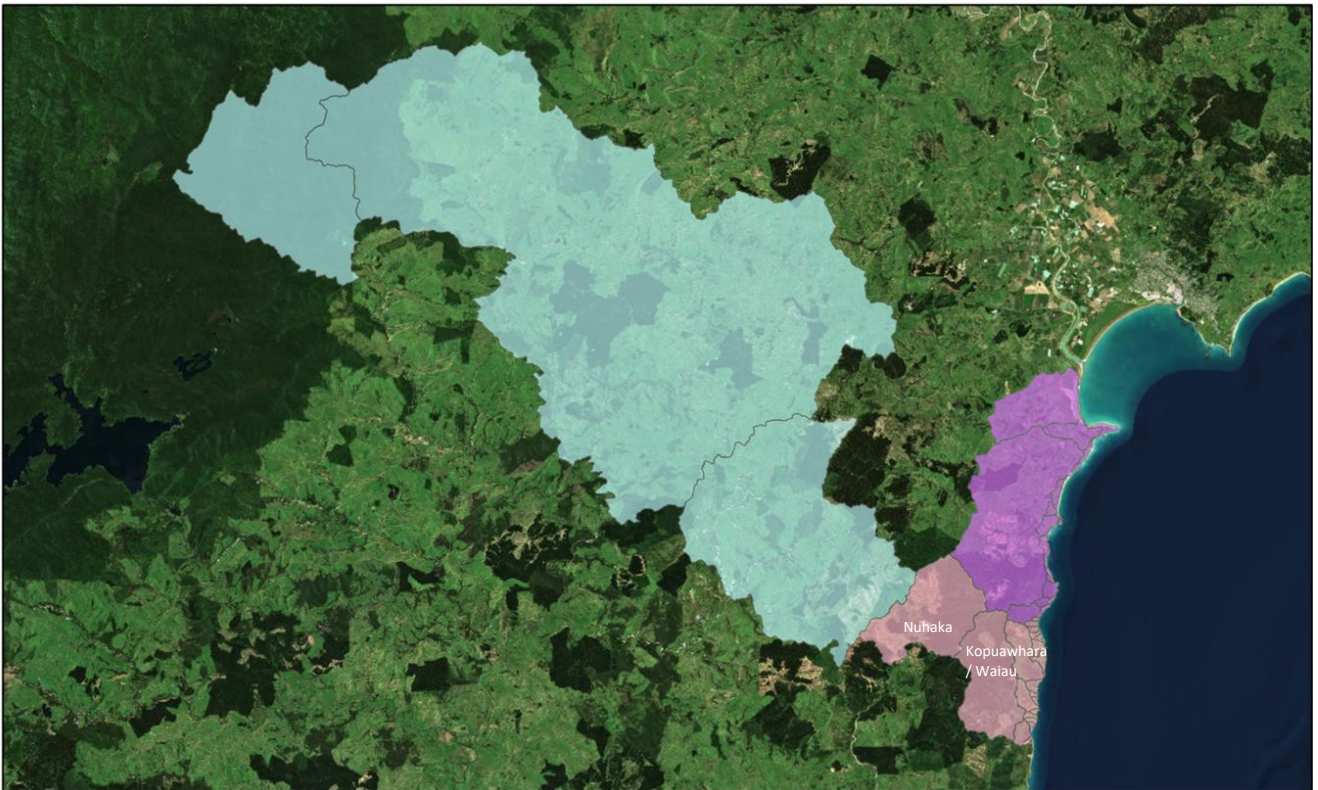


Figure 1: Option 1: 3 MAs based on 3 different receiving environments.

Questions:

1. How significant are the differences (if any) between different receiving environments?
2. Should we manage water and land-use differently according to receiving environments?

Option 2a Conservation / Naturally Intact Land versus Primary production

This option considers applying a management framework based on different objectives for extensively farmed land (which has little native land cover) versus land that is still mostly covered in native vegetation or is conservation land. This option recognises that it is extremely difficult or impractical to achieve the same level of ecosystem value across these land uses, which means objectives may differ in these areas. **Figure 2** shows protected areas and land use in the FMU. **Figure 3** shows land cover in the FMU.

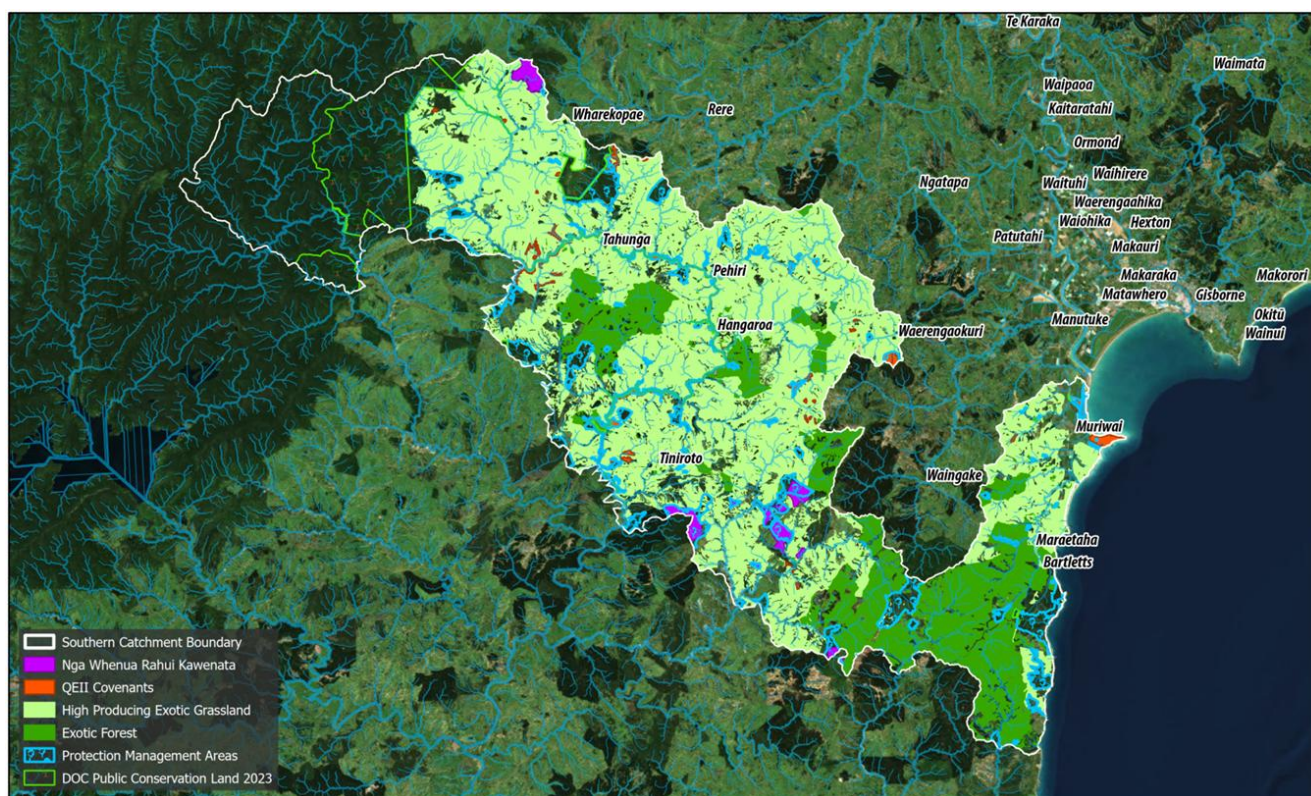


Figure 2: Map displaying land cover (exotic grassland for farming, exotic forest for forestry) and protected areas.

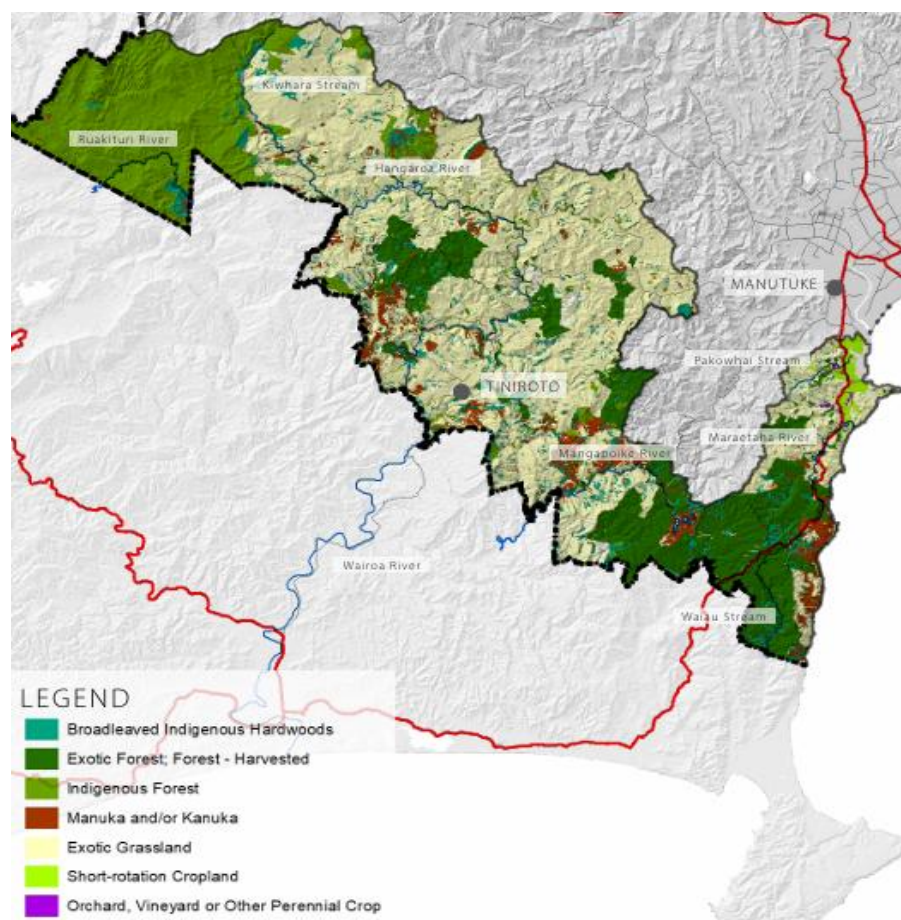


Figure 3: Landcover in Southern Tairāwhiti Catchment Plan area.

Questions:

1. Based on the land uses in this FMU, will we manage water and land-use differently?
2. How do these relate to catchment boundaries?

Option 2b Further Differentiation Based on Land Use

Linked to Option 2a, in terms of primary production – **do we need to differentiate between livestock farming, commercial forestry and intensive agriculture?**

Option 3 Soft-bottomed Streams versus Hard-bottomed Streams

This option would create two MAs – all streams and rivers flowing (1) to the Hawkes Bay and (2) to Tairāwhiti.

The sections of stream and rivers flowing towards Hawkes Bay are all hard-bottomed, while those flowing to Tairāwhiti are mostly soft-bottomed.

Questions:

1. Considering **Figure 4**, to what extent is the Maraetaha River hard- versus soft-bottomed?
2. How does the substrate relate to position in the catchment?
3. Will freshwater and land management differ based on soft- versus hard-bottomed river and streams?

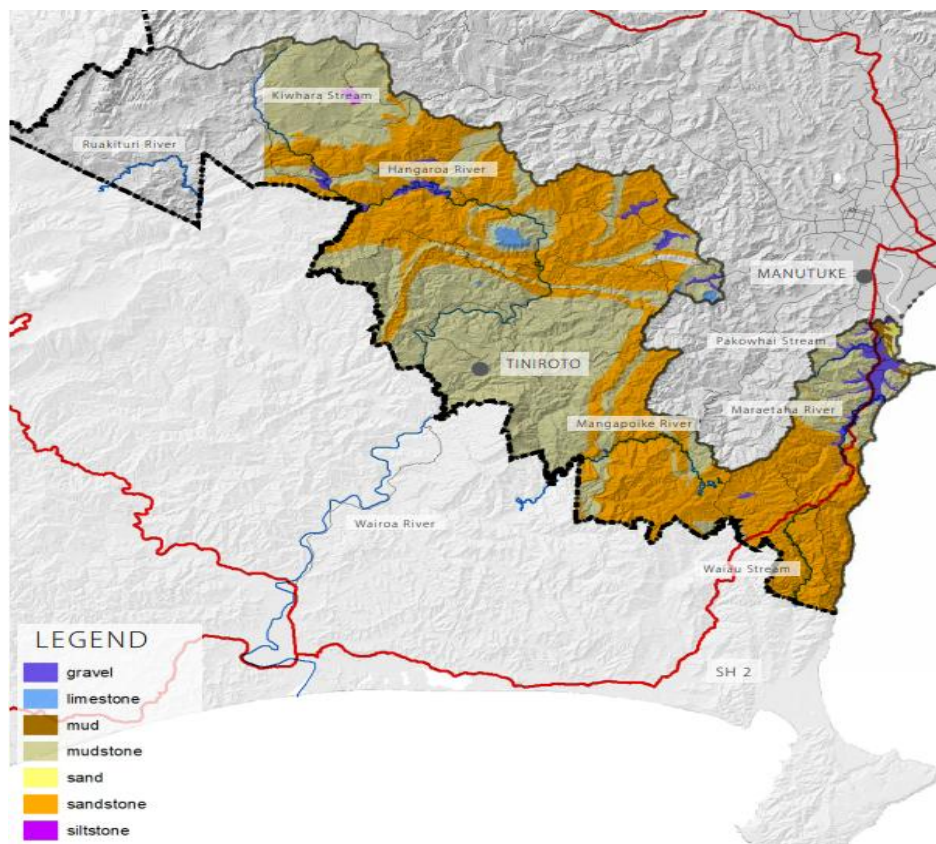


Figure 4: Geology in the Southern Tairāwhiti FMU. Predominantly mudstone and sandstone, with very minor limestone and gravel found.

Based on the above options, we have developed a potential option for the advisory group to consider:

Three Management Areas

- Catchments flowing into Tairāwhiti
- Catchments flowing into Hawkes Bay
- Catchments flowing into Wherowhero lagoon

AND we:

- **Include specific management requirements through action plans** for the range of land uses in these catchments to ensure that land use differences are addressed at the implementation level.
- **Ensure that place-based values**, such as community and mana whenua values, **are adequately integrated** at the implementation level.

Reasons:

- Broad alignment with Mana Whenua rohe / areas of interest.
- Enables separate consideration of catchments flowing into Hawkes Bay, specifically integrating with their planning requirements and affected communities across those catchments.
- Generally these also reflect hard- versus soft-bottomed rivers and streams.
- In terms of receiving environments, this option caters for the unique receiving environment of Te Wherowhero lagoon.
- While the catchments draining to Hawkes Bay also flow into low-lying flat farmland areas and tidal areas, these are very different to the Wherowhero lagoon; they are more akin to the character of the Maraetaha River and its mouth.

We will discuss these at the hui, with a view to finalizing a preferred MA option. **Please note that, depending on conversations through the NOF process, we may revisit this topic if we need to undertake any refinements.**

4. Next steps

Following on from hui 3, we will dive deeper into values and environmental outcomes.

We will also look deeper into water quality and quantity (potential limits and allocation) and start looking at Attributes and Target Attribute States (TAS).