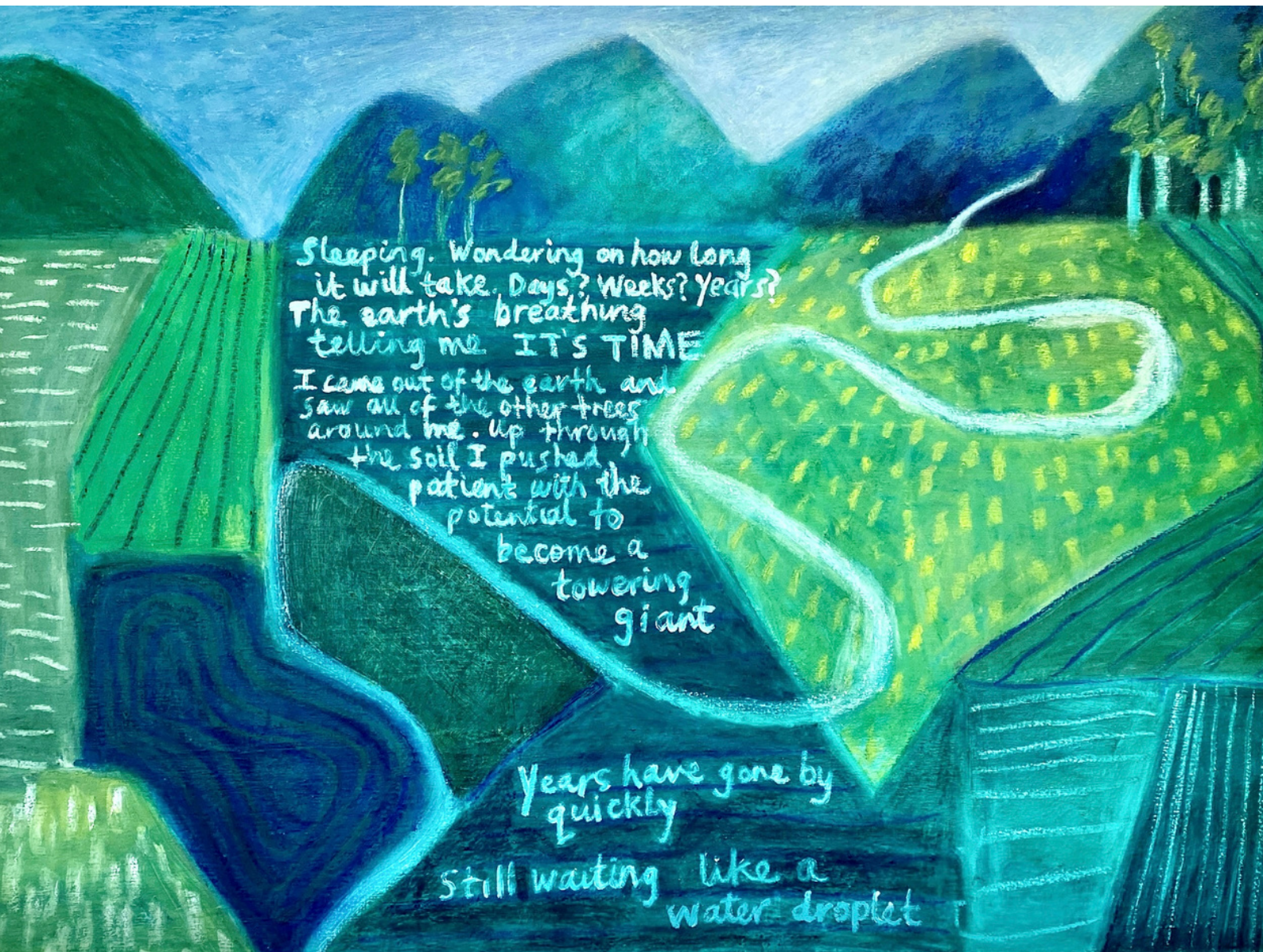




**RUAMAHANGA**  
RESTORATION TRUST

# 2023 INTERIM REPORT | 2024 PLAN





## SUMMARY

In 2023, the Ruamahanga Restoration Trust continued to expand its reach and reputation within the local community, supporting additional schools and rural landowners with resources for restoration plantings and environmental education.

2023 was our fourth year supporting **Schools Behind Our River** by funding restoration plantings, educational field trips, predator trapping activities, and outdoor learning kits. The number of participating schools supported under the project increased from 18 in 2022 to 25 in 2023 (including one Kindergarten).

In 2023 we appointed Karin Stillberg as our Environmental Education Lead to help us liaise with schools and community partners, further strengthening our community engagement and educational reach.

One notable achievement was the creation of a Conservation Week school photo competition run in conjunction with the Department of Conservation and Enviroschools Wairarapa. The Trust funded five winning entries with free Overnight Experiences at Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre for up to 45 attendees per group. Funding for the Pūkaha Overnight Experiences has since been extended to an additional five schools.

18 schools have now received our Conservation Award for Environmental Leadership. The trophies are awarded by schools at their annual prize-giving ceremonies.

Donor funding support was received from One Foundation, Masterton Trust House, Tai Shan Foundation, Lion Foundation, Nikau Foundation, Simplicity, and the Lotteries Environment & Heritage Fund. Lotteries funding supported costs for a feasibility report and preliminary designs for the proposed 'River Theatre' project.

Besides the numerous school plantings, funding also supported restoration planting on three forest remnant blocks and one council reserve bordering the Ruamahanga River.





## MISSION

The Trust promotes the restoration and protection of waterways and ecosystems that support indigenous flora and fauna within the Ruamahanga River catchment.

The Trust also offers support to schools and teachers by providing activities and resources that encourage students to respect and protect their environmental heritage.

Our aim is to work with students, teachers, landowners, community groups, and government to reverse the decline of natural wilderness, share expertise and knowledge, encourage the protection of endangered fauna and flora, and help mitigate climate change.

## 2023 DELIVERABLES

Funding in 2023 supported the following:

- Role of Environmental Education Lead
- 19 schools received some 3,000 native plants
- 27 schools received traps & equipment
- Sponsored two HOS Water Analysis Kits
- 5 students attended a trapping course run by Papa Taiao Earthcare
- Planted 2,500 native trees on 5 properties
- funded 7 Overnight school trips to Pūkaha
- funded one school trip to Wairarapa Moana
- sponsored Ruud Kleinpaste school visits
- produced three educational videos
- contributed over 500 volunteer man-hours
- completed the River Theatre Feasibility Study
- Expanded our social media reach





Several inspiring plantings have been done by schools across the Ruamāhanga Catchment in 2023. Some **650** students from 19 schools participated in restoration plantings last year.

Year 9 students from **Wairarapa College** Wairarapa Maunga to Moana classes planted a riparian zone on the Waiwaka stream that runs through the school farm. The college is also monitoring and restoring Millennium Reserve, with eDNA sampling shedding some light on the health of the waterways.

**Masterton Intermediate school** has also been doing some tremendous work on their school farm, where the stream was fenced off in 2022 and in 2023 has been cleared of exotic weeds and and planted with native plants to support stream health.

Some schools went off-site to local areas that needed their help. Year 5-6 **Opaki** students planted 166 trees at Dunvegan station on a QEII block with some impressive old-growth Rimu and other mature trees. **Saint Mary's** Year 5-8 students helped Parkvale Catchment Charitable Trust with riparian planting and learnt how to care for the native plants long-term. Te Kura o Paetūmokai **Featherston School** assisted in planting over 600 trees at a Waihinga QEII block, learning about the area and the inhabitants of the forest.

Several schools marked Matariki by planting trees. **Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Wairarapa** turned one of their fields into a home for 218 native plants.



*I really enjoy going to the creek and planting trees because the ground is perfect for the plants to grow in. I like the wildlife that lives at the creek and these plants help encourage lots of birds to come and live here.*

**Spencer (aged 8)**  
**Greytown School**





Funding for our restoration plantings in 2023 saw the trust support volunteer-day plantings at **Dunvegan Station** on the uppers reaches of the Ruamahanga, **Percy's Reserve** on the outskirts of Masterton, **Oxbow Lake QEII** site near Carterton, and the **Waihenga QEII** farm block near Martinborough.







Many schools have streams running through or close to their school grounds. **Greytown School** has been putting time and effort into restoring an adjacent creek that has some native canopy cover – weeding, planting and getting started on predator control. Their 100-student strong envirogroup explores the creek regularly and is learning how to care for te taiao.

**Lakeview School** sits next to Henley Lake and have a whole syndicate that has started restoring a wetland between the school and the lake.

**Dalefield School** has an ambition to restore 10% of its school-grounds to flourishing native ecosystem, and started this year by planting some rare native local plants as well as a wind-shelter of native plants for their prospective food forest.

Students from **Martinborough School** participated in a special planting day activity organised by Ruamahanga Mauri Oho. **Masterton Primary** planted an area bordering their school playing fields and stream. Students from **Pirinoa School** planted on their school grounds, as did students from **Mākoura College, Rathkeale, St. Matthews, and Hadlow.**

All of this is only possible thanks to the support of our private donors and numerous community funding partners.

*Kids at Te Kura O Paetūmokai enjoyed a day of planting at school with trees donated by Ruamahanga Trust. It is such an inspiration for the tamariki to talk about how big and beautiful these trees will grow and how they will stand at our turangawaewae for generations to come.*

**Abby Waterson, Teacher, Featherston School**



# TRAPPING & BIODIVERSITY KITS

The Ruamahanga Restoration Trust has been instrumental in supporting a Predator Free education project conducted in collaboration with Enviroschools Wairarapa and the Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre.

Enviroschools works with schools to empower young people to be part of creating sustainable communities. Collaborating with the education team at Pūkaha brought in the expertise and hard experience around tracking and trapping, while teaming up with the Ruamahanga Restoration Trust has further empowered local schools with the much-needed funding of a wider range of traps and tracking technology, with the trust supplying any equipment needed to support their mahi in schools.

27 schools now have tracking and trapping equipment supplied by the Ruamahanga Restoration Trust, with two more school in the process of getting their projects started.

In addition, the trust has funded resource materials for biodiversity field kits. These **‘Noticing Nature’** kits are loaned to schools on an as-need basis and topped up with fresh supplies as and when necessary.

In 2023, the trust also continued their sponsorship of **House of Science Wairarapa** contributing funds for two Water Analysis kits for use by local primary schools.





In addition:

- two physical multi-school workshops were held in 2023, with nine schools (total of 36 students and nine adults).
- Two online multi-school workshops, with ten schools registered, eight delivered to, (total of 18 students).
- Countless in-school visits were held to support schools with equipment and advice.

In 2023 we changed our model for delivery from the large self-contained kits to supporting schools with a wider range of equipment as and when they needed it. This shift has been important in making sure that those schools with gear are taking the steps to actually use it, as we found that the full kits had equipment that was not suitable for some schools.

The new '**Noticing Nature**' kits included sets of professional bird-watching binoculars, magnifying glasses, specimen trays and boxes, eDNA testing kits from **Wilderlab**, insect identification books, bird and lizard identification posters, specimen jars, and several scientific field study tools and resources for students and teachers to use when undertaking field trip classes.

The new kits be trialled by schools in Term 1 2024 and officially launched in Term 2.



*I express my wholehearted support for the Ruamahanga Restoration Trust and commend the Trust for undertaking to preserve and restore the Ruamahanga River and its surrounding ecosystems. The Trust's outreach programmes, workshops, and partnerships with local schools and organisations have been instrumental in raising awareness about the importance of environmental stewardship and empowering individuals to take action.*

**Matt White**  
Principal/Tumuaki, Wairarapa College



# HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOLS

In 2023, the Ruamahanga Restoration Trust contributed over \$16,000 to fund the supply of water science kits, monitoring materials, predator traps and materials for biodiversity kits suitable for data collection and analysis, science reports, outdoor trapping activities and field trips, much of which is conducted in collaboration with EnviroSchools and the Pukaha Wildlife Centre,



## WATER ANALYSIS

IN COLLABORATION WITH **HOUSE OF SCIENCE WAIRARAPA** ANNUAL SPONSORSHIP OF TWO WATER ANALYSIS TESTING KITS TO BE SHARED BETWEEN PRIMARY SCHOOLS ACROSS THE WAIRARAPA TO HELP STUDENTS BUILD AWARENESS OF WATER QUALITY ISSUES



## TRACKING & TRAPPING

IN COLLABORATION WITH **PUKAHA NATIONAL WILDLIFE CENTRE** AND FUNDING TRACKING AND TRAPPING KITS PURCHASED AND ASSEMBLED BY RUAMAHANGA RESTORATION TRUST TO HELP ENGAGE STUDENTS COLLECT AND RECORD PREDATOR DATA



## BIODIVERSITY

IN COLLABORATION WITH **PUKAHA NATIONAL WILDLIFE CENTRE, ENVIROSCHOOLS WAIRARAPA AND WILDERLAB**. FUNDING FOR BIODIVERSITY KIT MATERIALS THAT INCLUDE E-DNA MULTI-SPECIES TESTING KITS FOR LANDOWNERS AND EDUCATORS TO COLLECT DATA AROUND OUR BIODIVERSITY AND WATER QUALITY .

In consultation and with the participation of local iwi, we will continue to support field trip activities that invite teachers and students on field trips to natural heritage or historical sites connected to the Ruamahanga River. This also helps address the values of whanaungatanga – being mindful of the relationship between all things, our connections to each other and how we connect to our land and manaakitanga – having a deep ethic of care towards people and the whenua, acknowledging their role in the ecosystem, and how they could be affected by future outcomes.

In 2023, the trust sponsored **Ruud Kleinpaste** (a.k.a., “The Bugman”) on a one-week visit to the Wairarapa organised and partly funded by Field-Based STEM. During that week, Ruud undertook field trips with students and teachers from Kahutara School, Pirinoa School, e Kura Kaupapa Māori o Wairarapa, SouthEnd School Carterton, plus a weekend workshop with teachers and students at Pūkaha.



*In November 2023, I visited five Wairarapa schools and took kids and teachers outside into forests and reserves simply to practice the magical art of connecting humans to the environment. Teachers also joined me at Pūkaha for some live nature-based education projects. These activities would not have been possible without funding support from the Ruamahanga Restoration Trust. They are an example of how collaboration seeds educational growth and future prospects, which for me signals a sense of hope for our environment and local communities alike.*

**Ruud Kleinpaste**



## CONSERVATION AWARD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

In 2022, the Trust commissioned local ceramic artist Sam Ludden to design an award trophy gifted by the Trust to participating schools within the Ruamahanga catchment.

Each trophy features a hand-sculpted kōkopu as the centrepiece with the Māori, proverb inscribed on the timber base. “Toitū te marae ō Tāne, Toitū te marae o Tangaroa, Toitū te tangata” (If the forest and the ocean are strong, so too are the people).

Sam helped us choose the whakatauki with guidance from local iwi and mana whenua to reflect the role rangatahi can play in safeguarding Wairarapa’s waterways, biodiversity, and natural heritage.

The Conservation Award for Environmental Leadership acknowledges students who best demonstrates principles of kaitiakitanga and leadership skills in environmental conservation, restoration, or innovation within their school and community.

In addition to the award trophy, each winning recipient receives a personalised award certificate signed by the school principal and one of our Trustees.

20 trophies were commissioned in 2022 fourteen of which were awarded to schools in 2022 and the remaining six trophies were distributed in 2023.



# 24+ PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS (2022~2023)

MAURICEVILLE



KAHUTARA



TE KURA KAUAPAPA O WAIRARAPA



SOLWAY PRIMARY



CARTERTON EARTH SCHOOL



DOUGLAS PARK



SOLWAY COLLEGE



CHANEL COLLEGE



ST MATTHEWS COLLEGIATE



KURANUI COLLEGE



OPAKI SCHOOL



GLADSTONE PRIMARY



WAIRARAPA COLLEGE



RATHKEALE COLLEGE



CARTERTON SCHOOL



MĀKOURA COLLEGE



FEATHERSTONE SCHOOL



FERNRIDGE



GREYTOWN SCHOOL



ST MARY'S



PIRINOA SCHOOL



MARTINBOROUGH



HADLOW SCHOOL



DALEFIELD





## REACHING NEW HEIGHTS ...

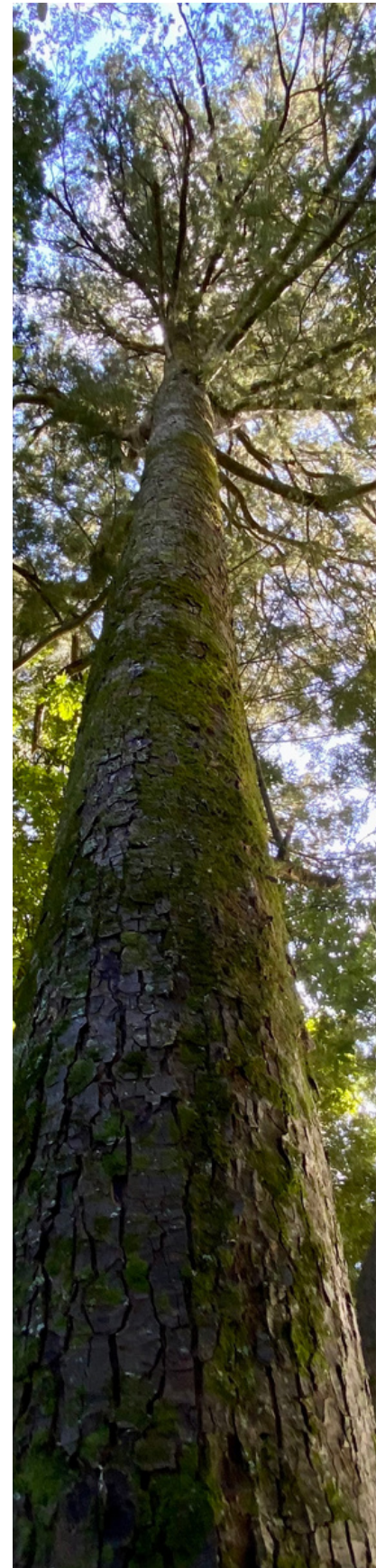
In 2023, the Trust extended its support base to an additional seven schools bringing the total number of schools engaged in our SCHOOLS BEHIND OUR RIVER project activities to 27.

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Opaki Primary               | 17. Carterton School       |
| 2. Rathkeale College           | 18. Greytown School        |
| 3. Mauriceville Primary        | 19. Masterton Intermediate |
| 4. Gladstone Primary           | 20. Fernridge School       |
| 5. Douglas Park School         | 21. Martinborough School   |
| 6. South End School            | 22. Dalefield School       |
| 7. Kahutara School             | 23. Hadlow Primary         |
| 8. Te Kura Kaupapa o Wairarapa | 24. Masterton Primary      |
| 9. Mākoura College             | 25. Lakeview School        |
| 10. Wairarapa College          | 26. St Mary's              |
| 11. Chanel College             | 27. Pirinoa School         |
| 12. Solway Primary             | 28. St. Teresa's*          |
| 13. Solway College             | 29. St. Patricks *         |
| 14. Kuranui College            |                            |
| 15. St Matthews Collegiate     |                            |
| 16. Featherston School         |                            |

• *yet to be included*

***St Matthews Science 102 and yr 11 Ag Hort classes overnight trip to the new Education centre at Pukaha was a great success. Night walks, feeding eels, bird counts and weaving were just a few of the activities the girls were involved in. A big thank you to the Pukaha staff and Ruamahunga Restoration Trust for their support!***

**Sarah Chapman**  
Teacher, St. Matthew's





# PROJECT PLAN: 2024

The Trustees acknowledge that positive change will only come about through collaboration, engagement with rural landowners, support for outdoor learning activities, active participation, and good communication.

To address this need, the Trust will continue to evolve and expand its **Eight-Step Plan**:

## 1. CONSERVATION AWARDS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

The Trust will continue to raise awareness around why we created the Conservation Award Trophy and how it will benefit youth in the medium to longterm.

The aim of the award is to acknowledge a student's work and community service in several areas including volunteering, predator trapping, restoration plantings, wildlife monitoring, etc.,.

The intention being to inspire primary and secondary students around workable goals and activities, both curricular and non-curricular. Teachers can propose practical solutions that engage students and equip them with the knowledge required for sharing their know-how and enthusiasm with other students, inspiring career paths and engagement as volunteers within the local community.



## 2. SCHOOLS BEHIND OUR RIVER

The Trust will continue to support the **Pukaha National Wildlife Centre** and **Enviroschools Wairarapa** with Predator Tracking & Trapping Kits, Biodiversity Kits, and Workshops as part of a collaborative effort to support local schools.

The Schools Behind Our River project encourages the use of scientific methodology and analytical processes within schools to help encourage student curiosity and interest around challenges related to monitoring and recording local flora and fauna, including freshwater quality, soil health, biodiversity, and other farming-related data related to climate change and sustainable farming practices.

We believe that encouraging students to embrace the sciences will help prepare them for future challenges and new opportunities in agriculture and environment-related careers.

By sponsoring the **House of Science Water Analysis Kits** for use by primary schools and by purchasing and distributing **WilderLab eDNA Multi-species testing kits** for use in our Biodiversity Kits, the Trust is gaining access to teachers and students, making them more aware of our role in helping them develop a passion and reason for collaborating on conservation work for the greater good of our community and environment.

Karin Stillberg's role as **Environmental Education Lead** liaising with schools and community partners to help deliver our SCHOOLS BEHIND OUR RIVER projects and activities will continue in 2024.





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## SCHOOLS BEHIND OUR RIVER: 2024 Vision

- Strengthen the network across schools
- Expand community links
- Increase nature connection
- Focus on monitoring and taking action

## SCHOOLS BEHIND OUR RIVER: 2024 Plan

- Engage with teachers/principals from all 31 schools in the Ruamahanga catchment (34 in Wairarapa). Offer funding and advice for native tree planting, helping as many schools as possible to take action for te taiao.
- Ensure schools re-engage with the programme and continue finding ways to plant native trees on school-grounds and/or off-site.
- Provide students with opportunities to explore outdoors and embrace conservation
- Develop and deliver sessions to engage and empower students prior to planting days.
- In collaboration with Pūkaha and Enviroschools host a two-day teacher wananga/professional learning & development conference.
- In collaboration with Pūkaha and Enviroschools host student biodiversity workshops
- Support Pūkaha and Enviroschools in delivering trapping workshops.
- Provide schools with monitoring and trapping equipment.
- Launch Noticing Nature kits in collaboration with Pūkaha and Enviroschools.
- Collaborate with other organisations around school and community events.
- Work with other organisations and the Wairarapa Catchment Collective to link schools with local catchment groups for planting and stream health studies.
- Promote our Conservation Award for Environmental Leadership.
- Interview students for our UNDERSTANDING NATURE video series.



Subject to funding, support will be offered to all of the above schools using our Eight Steps Plan.

Karin Stillberg will continue in her part-time role as Environment Education Lead working closely with the schools and our educational collaboration partners, Envioschools Wairarapa and Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre.

Trevor Thompson will continue to be hired as a consultant to help advise and supervise restoration plantings at schools or off-site on local reserves or QEII sites.

Schools will have the opportunity to access and attend workshops and site visits at Pūkaha, and participating schools will also be encouraged to remind students of the benefits and desired outcomes of winning the Conservation Award for Environmental Leadership trophy.

In addition, the trust will continue to support rural landowners and local district council with restoration plantings and to involve local youth in more outdoor learning activities.

***We want to be part of a world that is safe for us and everyone else. Working together is the only way that we are going to be able to help halt climate change. Young people need to be taking a lead here and expectations about our standards of living need to be taken with the planet in mind, so we need to always be thinking about our impact. Video documentaries like 'Understanding Nature' will make a real difference. We really like the idea that a group of children will be interviewed over the years about their views and we are really excited to be part of this.***

**Thomas Dench and Cody Harbers  
Year 6, Dalefield School  
December 2023**



### 3. RESTORATION PLANTINGS

Our restoration plantings in 2024 will continue by allocating and distributing native plants to help local schools to either establish their own pockets of native bush on school grounds or engage them in the restoration of lowland forest swamps, Council Reserves, the Rathkeale College Eco-Trail, and Carter Reserve.

These unique and biodiverse pockets of bush and wetland are key to the long-term health of our river system and are natural habitats for a range of indigenous freshwater fish and native birds.

The Trust continues to focus on plantings within habitats that provide opportunities for student-led research in conservation, land management and clean water protection. In tandem with these efforts, the trust hopes to encourage students to create their own new methods of study, to make their own discoveries, and create their own career paths.

in 2024, the Trust will continue to work with QEII Regional Representative Trevor Thompson as a consultant to advise us and schools but also to help identify and support restoration plantings on rural blocks either under QEII Covenant or of significant biodiversity value in need of restoration planting.







Our plan is to extend our restoration plantings to include riparian margins and forest remnant blocks between Mt Bruce and Rathkeale College to help create a biodiversity corridor downstream from the Tararua Ranges towards Rathkeale and beyond. In 2024, this will include planting 1000 trees donated from **Trees That Count** on a river block north of Morrison's Bush and 360 donated by **GWRC** for Ox Bow Lake.





## 4. SPECIAL EVENT DAYS

Fundraising activities will continue to support community and student-level participation in special event days such as Restoration Day, Moana Wetlands Discovery Day, World Fish Migration Day, Arbor Day, and Conservation Week, etc.

Support will be offered to those activities planned or promoted by community group, such as WP2K, Sustainable Wairarapa, Ruamāhanga Mauri oho, and the Aorangi Restoration Trust, along with any school that requests our support.

in 2024, this will include student-led community plantings at Percy's Reserve on the outskirts of Masterton and Carter Reserve — both of which border the Ruamahanga River.

Special Event Days are key opportunities for the trust to engage broader community engagement and to acknowledge the support of our various funding partners



## 5. OUTDOOR LEARNING FIELD TRIPS

In 2023, the Trust contributed over \$26,000 towards to the **Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre** to cover the entrance fees and **Overnight Experience** stays for schools from within the catchment to visit and attend workshops at the new Outdoor Learning Centre.

A further \$2600 was allocated to cover the cost of transport for schools to undertake these field trips. This included sending students from **Kahutara School** to Pukaha and back, and a field trip for students from **Featherstone School** to follow the Tauherenikau River to the Wairarapa Moana wetlands as a Field-Based STEM trip with guidance from Joe Potangaroa and Chris Hollis.

Our plan for 2024 includes our ongoing commitment to help fund school field trips to Pūkaha and other special places of interest. Where possible, this will include sponsoring further visits to the Wairarapa by well-known conservationists and experts to give talks and conduct outdoor learning field trips.



By supporting schools with the funding for these outdoor learning experiences, we not only strengthen our collaborative relationship with Pūkaha but we also hope to make younger people more aware of their local environmental heritage; to learn and understand sustainable use of our waterways and lowland forests and to share their own stories in a way that helps others appreciate the need to restore, protect and sustain our environment.

In 2024, the trust will continue documenting field trips using video as a means of storytelling and engagement. In 2023, the trust produced three short videos, two of which followed students and teachers from Opaki School and Te Kura Kaupapa O Wairarapa on field trip activities, plus one video with students from Dalefield School talking about their **Understanding of Nature** and the effects of climate change.





## 6. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The trust's Project Management received a boost in 2023 with the part-time appointment of Karin Stillberg as our <sup>task</sup> tasked with managing our collaborative needs for the trust's Schools Behind Our River program, which includes liaison between local schools, Enviroschools Wairarapa, and Pūkaha.

In 2023, the Trust spent \$21,600 on project management fees, which in addition to the Environmental Education Lead role also included fees for Trevor Thompson who advises the trust on restoration planting needs by visiting schools and other sites.

As the reach and scope of the Trust's work increases so too does the time required to submit funding grant applications, manage the relationships with community group, liaise with schools and suppliers, manage finances, complete accountability reports, and provide content for social media, etc.

For this reason, the Trust acknowledges that in addition to the significant volunteer hours contributed it is becoming increasingly necessary to allocate more financial resources to to cover project management fees and operational overheads.

The trustees are mindful of the need to maintain a proportionate balance in favour of expenditure on native plants and educational resources and activities.



### FUNDING PARTNERS



## 7. CAREER PATHWAYS

The Trust hopes that our **Schools Behind Our River** program can ultimately shape and influence young careers and create new jobs by encouraging mentors from the farming, technology, science, and the media sectors to help school leavers prepare themselves for careers in conservation, environmental sciences, and sustainable farming.

The Trust will continue to look toward developing projects that help students seek out or create new job opportunities ranging from conservation work to predator control, development of new technologies related to emissions or agricultural practices or work in native forestry, farming, or storytelling.

One immediate aim is to raise enough funding to engage a school leaver to help with predator control and restoration plantings.

In addition, the trust is also working on developing a long-term documentary series project working titled, '**Understanding Nature**', which it hopes will inspire one or more students to become storytellers with an interest in the environment and climate change.

For this reason, the trust will continue to invite various experts to visit schools and present informative educational talks that help inspire senior college students.

### PŪTĀTARA CALL TO ACTION

#### UNDERSTANDING OUR ENVIRONMENT

*"Knowing the history of the land around me helps me understand it and think about its future."*

“ KNOWING THAT I AM HELPING TO MAKE A BETTER WORLD MAKES ME EXCITED ABOUT MY FUTURE. ”

*"Engaging students in the storytelling process concerning their experiences with nature helps us build a strong connection to the environment. By discussing the impacts climate change has and can have on our community we gain valuable insights into the real-world consequences of climate change. This further develops our connection with the environment but also instils a sense of responsibility. Through these discussions, we become knowledgeable advocates for sustainability, allowing us to contribute towards ongoing environmental efforts within our community."*

**Wyatt Backhouse**  
Year 12, Wairarapa College



## 8. RUAMAHANGA RIVER CENTRE

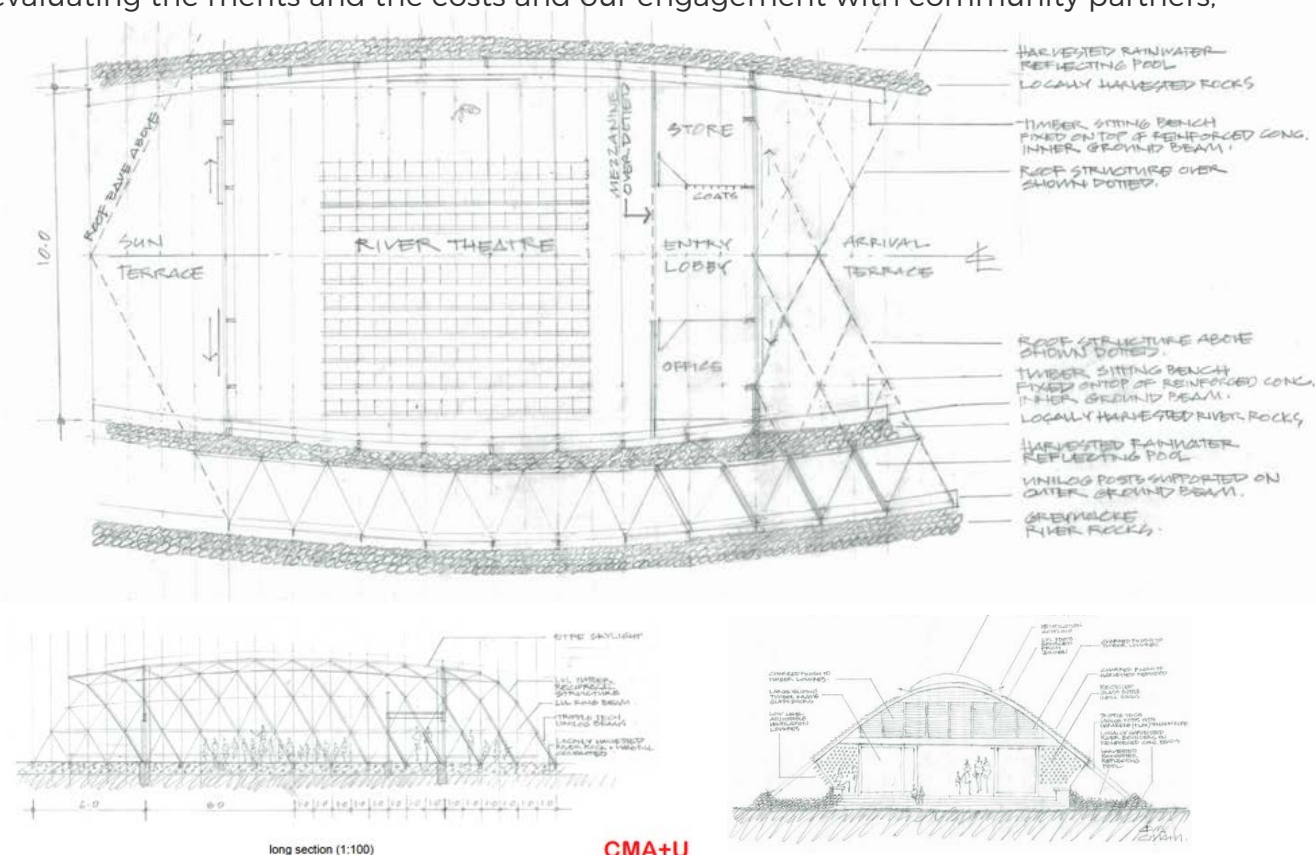
The trustees will continue to progress their initial plans and discussions around the proposed vision for the 'Ruamahanga River Centre' located at Rathkeale College.

In 2023, funding from **DIA Lotteries Environment & Heritage Fund** allowed the trust to complete a Feasibility Study for the Ruamahanga River Theatre. The idea being to create a unique educational venue for hosting educational talks and events for schools and the general public addressing current and future needs and uses around land and water management, the environment, and ecology.

The River Theatre will also address the relationship of the area as whanaungatanga – including the connections between Māori and early European settlers and how we can best use and manage land and water resources for future generations.

A vision and spacial framework was prepared by **Chris Moller Architecture + Urbanism** in association with **Dunning Thornton Engineers**. The report was prepared by Christine Ennis.

The Feasibility Study will now be used to guide the trust and our collaborative partners—most notably Rathkeale College and the Trinity Schools Trust—towards the next steps in evaluating the merits and the costs and our engagement with community partners,



# PROJECT OBJECTIVES 2024

- 1. FUND** restoration plantings in support of students and the local farming community — to restore and protect wetlands, feeder streams, forest remnants, and riparian margins along the Ruamahanga River.
- 2. ENGAGE** farmers, DOC, GRWC, and local iwi in our activities, and bring people together at plantings and special event days.
- 3. EXPAND** collaborative community partnerships and underscore a common resolve among our future generations to help restore fragile ecosystems, regenerate native bush, protect endangered species, create bird corridors and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change.
- 4. INVITE** students and members of the public to attend and contribute towards field trips and talks led and presented by renowned conservationists and scientific experts.



*It's vital for the future of the climate and sustainability movement that students and young people's voices be included and amplified. Involving personal experiences and stories of students helps others within the age group understand the beauty of nature and why it's integral to help.*

*Having students tell their stories will enable other young people to relate and understand more effectively. They can do it in a way peers can understand and build a better community response. Making climate action accessible and encouraging change is critical. With young people being the ones inheriting the planet it's of the utmost importance to include them in the conversation and use their personal voices to influence change within the wider community. It's through storytelling that we as a society share and grow, utilising young people's voices not only empowers the individual but empowers the generation.*

**Izzy Ross-Harding**  
Year 13, Wairarapa College





*The concept of a 'River Theatre' within a short distance of Pūkaha is an exciting one. Masterton and the Wairarapa as a whole is lacking in venues suitable for large groups to gather. The Kaupapa of the 'River Theatre' is complimentary to our own and we can see that it will add capacity and variety to the options for environmental learning opportunities in the region.*



**Emily Court, General Manager  
Pūkaha National Wildlife Centre**

**5. PRODUCE** informative videos that underscore the importance of outdoor learning and the possible longterm affects of climate change.

**6. TALK** about our rivers and restoration stories using social media, blog posts and media releases regarding the Trust's activities.

**7. DEVELOP** and encourage discussion and progress around the proposed Ruamahanga River Centre.

**8. CREATE** career opportunities for local youth to work in conservation, restoration, earth sciences or ecology projects that protect our unique habits and biodiversity for the wellbeing of the wider rural community.



The process of construction we see as an important educational process to enable local community and particularly the coming generations of school students to learn the skills and material processes of building as a natural extension of their lives. This way people can work towards common goals and together build community facilities through collective effort and skill development. The hope is that this will catalyse community ownership of this project and lead to further phases of development in future.

# OUR SOCIAL MEDIA : 2023

In addition to using traditional social media platforms, the Trust also creates blog posts on the website [www.RRTrust.org.nz](http://www.RRTrust.org.nz) and links this to Twitter and Facebook.

## TWITTER X

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2023  
IMPRESSIONS 11,100  
TWEETS 31  
FOLLOWERS 168



## FACEBOOK

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2023  
PAGE REACH 17,651  
PAGE LIKES 404  
PAGE VISITS 1816  
FOLLOWERS 524



## INSTAGRAM

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2023  
PROFILE VISITS 481  
REACH 4151  
FOLLOWERS 263

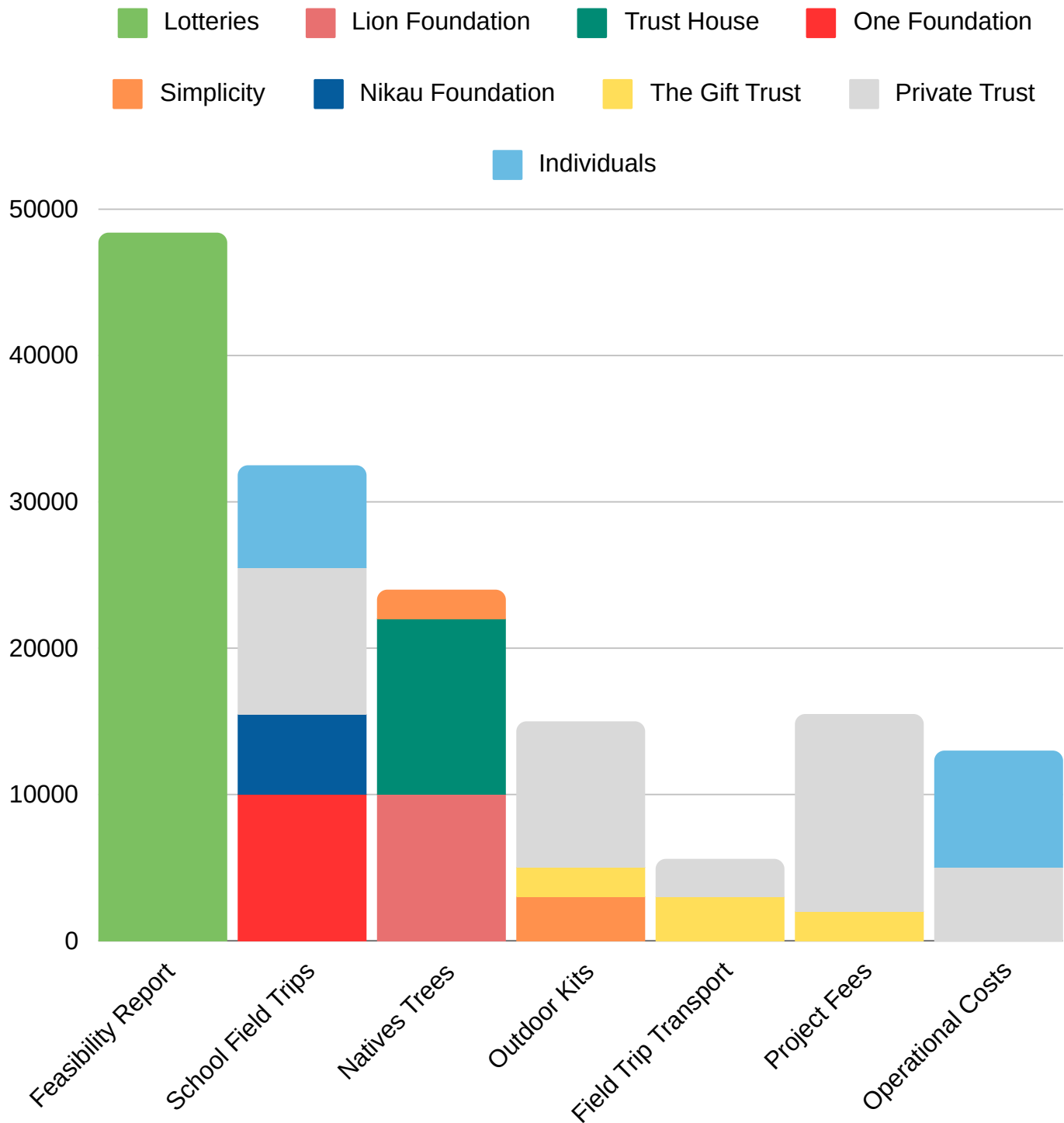




# 2023 FUNDING REPORT

The following chart indicates the source of funding for the 2023 calendar year how these funds were allocated.

Includes funding rolled over from 2022 financial year.



## 2024 & BEYOND

The Ruamahanga Restoration Trust will continue to develop working relationships with Greater Wellington Regional Council, DOC, and rural landowners with the aim to establish a network of restoration plantings along the Ruamahanga River, thereby encouraging the regrowth of 'biodiversity corridors' linking all areas of the wider catchment.

Engaging and including schools along with the wider community and landowners into supporting the restoration and planting of biodiversity corridors—from the mountains to the sea—will in turn offer productive benefits to the wider farming community and all those that live within the catchment.

In 2024, the trustees also hope to raise greater awareness about the need for clean water and water management and how the trust as a registered charity can possibly help.

Furthermore, our vision to create the Ruamahanga River Centre as a venue for students and community groups will hopefully play a key role in the sustainable development and economic growth of the Masterton district.

Key to all of our goals and vision will be our engagement and partnership with local iwi.







#### **TRUSTEES**

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Campbell McLean  
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#### **ADVISORY TEAM**

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#### **SUPPORTING PARTNERS**

Masterton Trust House  
Masterton Lands Trust  
Nikau Foundation  
Eastern & Central Community Trust  
One Foundation  
Lloyd Morrison Trust  
The Gift Trust (Tai Shan Foundation)  
Lion Foundation  
Simplicity  
Gibson Sheat Lawyers  
BackBlocks Environment Management  
Forest Protectors  
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#### **Cover Image**

Still waiting | Oil and wax on canvas | Artist: Jenny Keate.  
Created in collaboration with children from Te Kura O Paetūmokai Featherston School.