

The Forest Bridge Trust Strategic Direction, September 2022

A Short History of the Forest Bridge Trust

The seed of The Forest Bridge Trust was planted when founders Kevin and Gill Adshead— who reintroduced kiwi to their family farm at Glorit in 2013— discovered that for the new residents to spread their flightless wings and thrive, they would need 10,000 hectares of predator-controlled habitat. This would be a challenge in itself, but they had an even bigger dream that one day, these west coast kiwis could safely roam and eventually meet up with their cousins over in Tāwharanui Regional Park. It was clear, to make the dream a reality, a team was needed to work with farmers and other landowners and the wider community to connect the landscape through fencing and planting and to improve the habitat by controlling pests and predators.

Gill and Kevin sought out other like-minded people with similar aspirations and in 2014 a farmer-initiated environment trust, The Forest Bridge Trust (TFBT) was created. The vision and mission of the trust were developed by farmers, other landowners, and local groups working to protect and enhance the environment where they live. Since those early days it has been recognised that more specialised people and many more resources were needed to turn the dream into reality. From a largely voluntary base of a few people with a big dream, the trust is now a substantially resourced and effective organisation actively achieving the vision of connecting, protecting and enhancing the landscape from coast to coast.

Our Vision

“A connected landscape with healthy forest and flourishing indigenous wildlife from the Kaipara Harbour to the Pacific Coast”.

Strategic Aims and Objectives

- To create practical landowner-centred support systems and approaches that are inclusive and long lasting that protect and enhance a safe habitat for indigenous wildlife.
- To work collaboratively and to engage and inspire the community recognising the diversity within our rohe and building a sustainable programme of work that is built on *their* expectations and needs.
- To mobilise and inspire a wide range of partners from key organisations and departments to help access resources, support and enhance the sustainability of the vision of the trust and its community partners
- To support and help mana whenua in their role as kaitiaki
- To be value based; To be respectful, to have empathy and to work with integrity

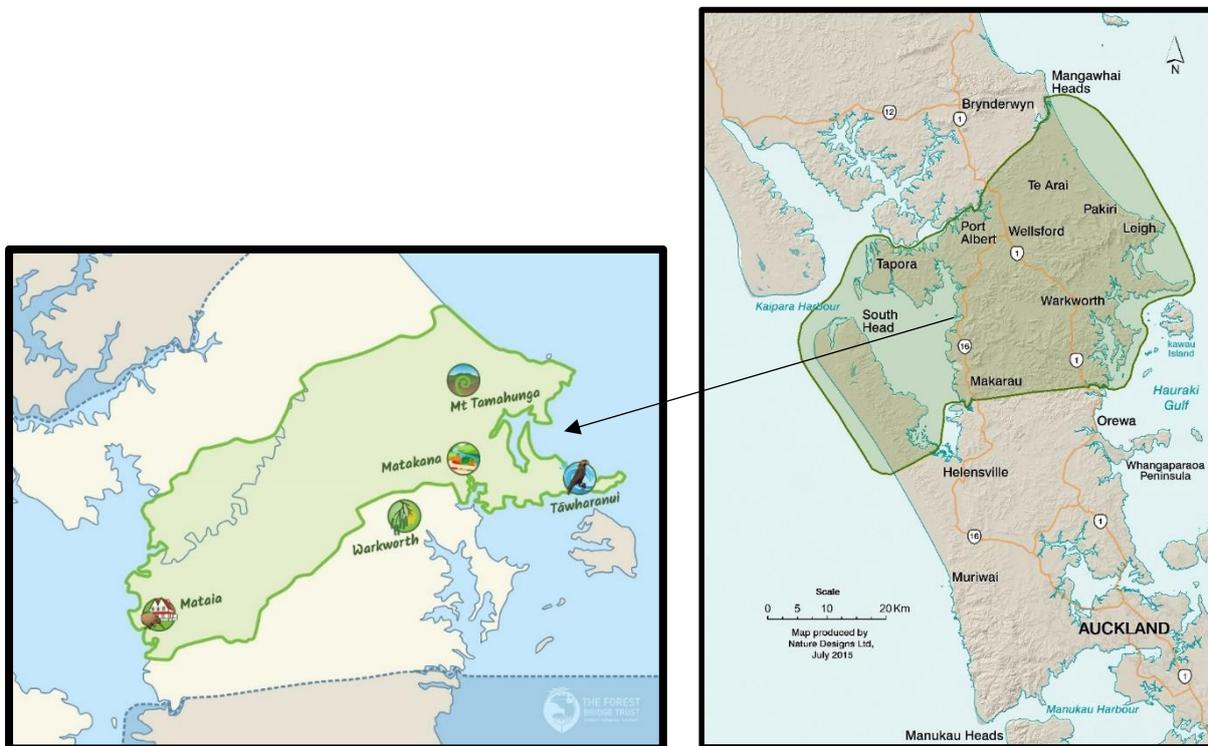
Scope of the Forest Bridge Trust

Our area of interest, as shown below on the map to the right, extends from just above Wellsford and Te Arai in the north, to just above Waiwera and Kaukapakapa in the south. An area of 130,000 hectares encompassing both rural and residential Rodney, this referred to as the “Wider Bridge”.

However, our focus until 2025 is on building a “Central Bridge” (see map on the left below) connecting the existing wildlife sanctuaries at Mataia Restoration Project in the west to the Tawharanui Regional Park and Mt Tamahunga in the east.

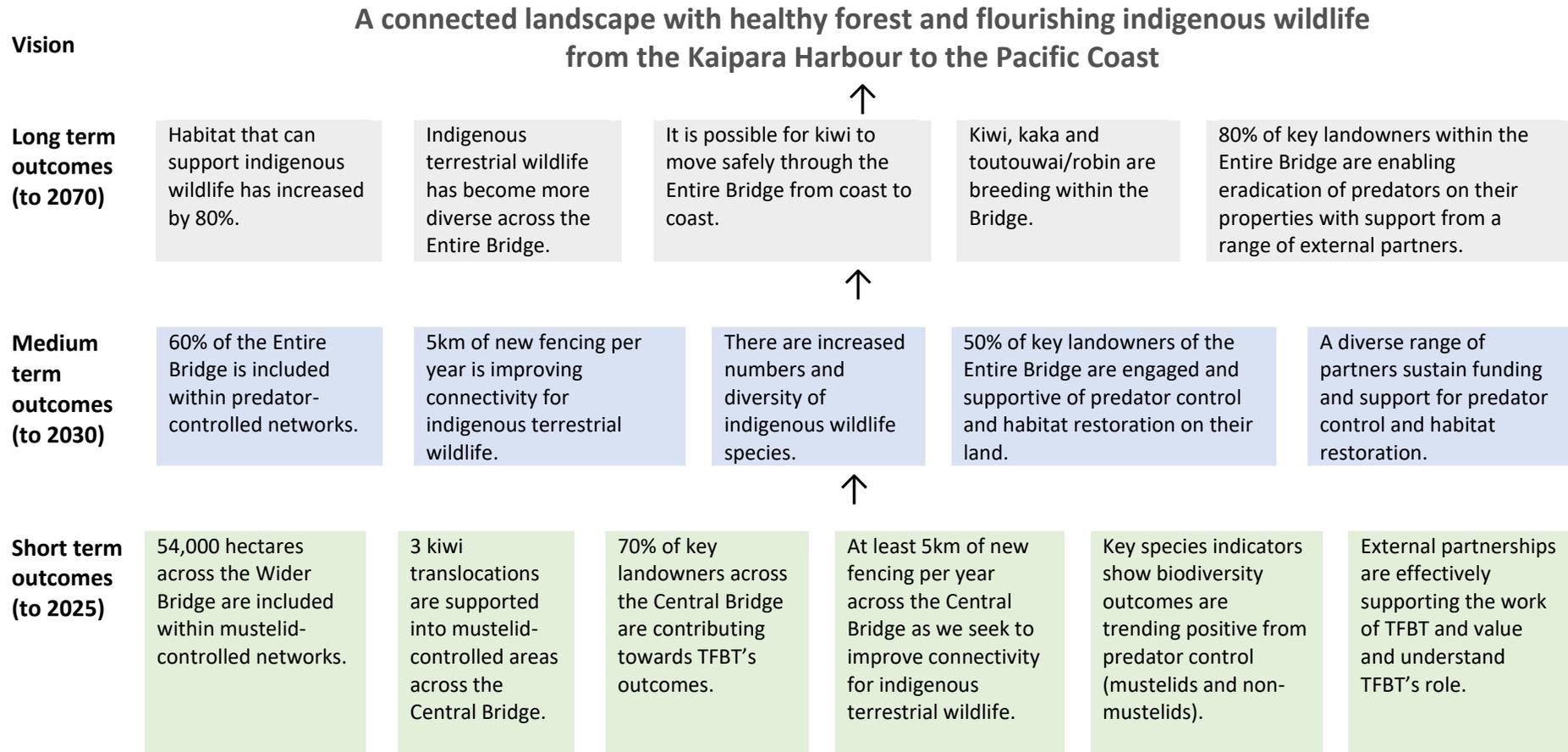
A key short-term goal leading up to June 2025 is to achieve 54,000 hectares within mustelid-controlled networks across our Wider Bridge, with a strong focus on our Central Bridge, noting that mustelids include ferrets, stoats, and weasels. Here we include both TFBT traps and those set, monitored and maintained by a range of community groups, TFBT supporters and volunteers whereby TFBT has provided some form of input or value add eg. the provision of traps, mustelid control training and planning, trap maintenance (including baiting), ecological advice, and community liaison support.

In addition, we also provide a good level of predator control involving non-mustelids across the Central Bridge eg. possum, rats, mice, hedgehogs, feral cats and wild dogs.



Our Long Term Plan

We plan that our vision will be fully realised by 2070. To achieve this we have a three stage plan:



Our Values

The Forest Bridge Trust is a value- based organisation built upon respect, empathy and integrity. These values provide a framework for how we operate as an organisation and how we work with others.

VALUES	
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We act with respect in all that we do.• We respect what makes people different, recognising and valuing the multiple and diverse perspectives of those we work with.• We respect the mana and tapu of individuals, and the communities we work with
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will always listen to the point of view of others and try to reach a common ground where possible.• We continually try to understand the culture and environment of the communities we are working with to enhance our empathy.
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We act with integrity, openness and honesty at all times.

Mana Whenua

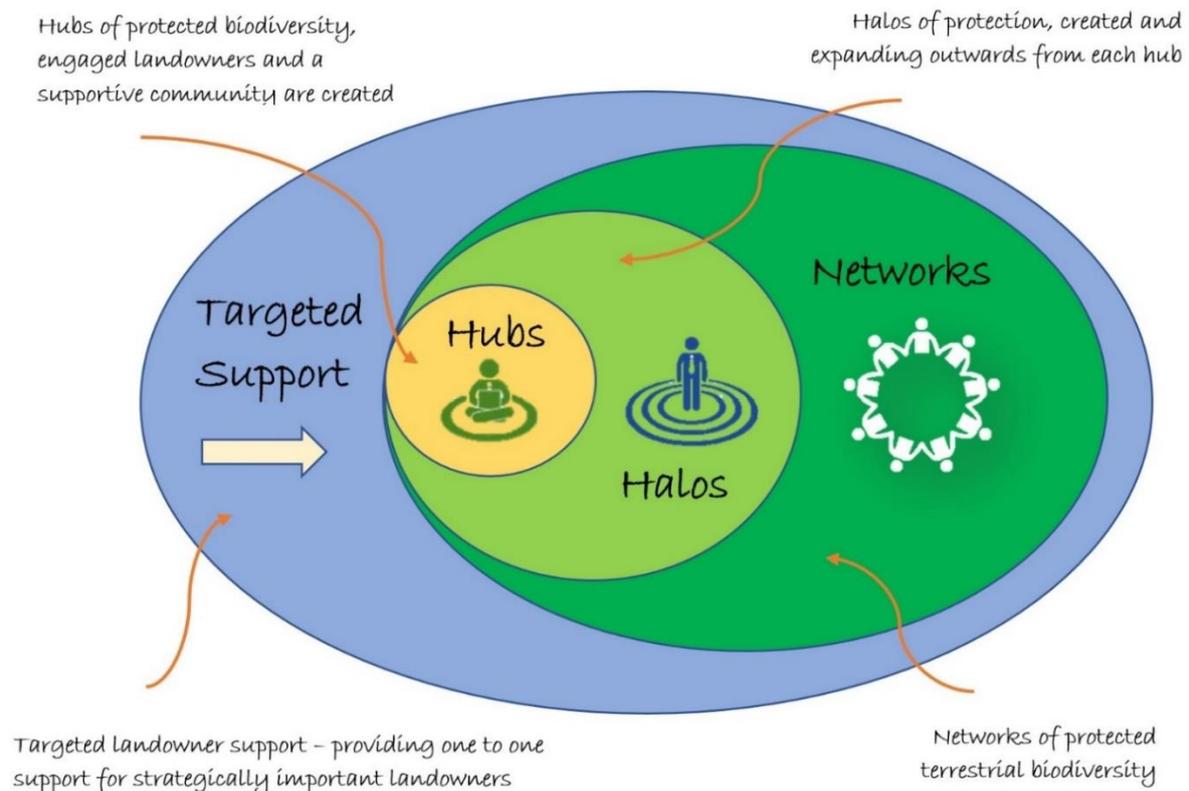
Our relationship with mana whenua is critical in the achievement of our vision. Since the conception of the Forest Bridge Trust we have seen them as key partners and worked with them in a range of diverse ways. We acknowledge and recognise:

- that Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand and we recognise the rights of, and our responsibilities towards tangata whenua
- our actions should be shaped by Manaakitanga (the caring for those around us in the way we relate to each other) and Whanaungatanga (recognising the importance of kinship and lasting relationships)
- We strongly value Kaitiakitanga as a core principle (valuing the stewardship and guardianship and our relationship with the natural world) and see this as essential to our practice and our organisational vision.

Collaboration and Engaging Our Community

The Forest Bridge Trust is a landscape scale initiative. This means working collaboratively at a scale which natural ecosystems tend to work best and where there is greatest opportunity to deliver real and lasting benefits - thinking BIG! Working in this way makes it possible to deliver greater environmental, and social benefits that are more difficult to achieve when focusing on smaller, individual sites. It also improves functional links between habitats so they are more resilient.

Working **collaboratively and engaging with all members of the community** underpins the work of the Trust. As our aims and objectives states we recognises the diversity of the communities within our rohe and looks to work with them based on their expectations and needs. To achieve this TFBT has developed a place-based connectivity approach to engaging with landowners with the aim of inspiring, enabling and supporting people so they may become active stewards, guardians or kaitiaki of the area they live within.



Individuals are supported to take action. Individual action is connected to form hubs of action protecting strategically important areas. Halos of protection are created around hubs, which slowly expand outwards. Interconnected networks are created across the landscape.

The Forest Bridge Trust recognises the important work being done by the many groups and initiatives within the Forest Bridge rohe and the value to be gained from connecting and working with these groups and initiatives to achieve common goals. TFBT also acknowledges that the vast number and diversity of group's means there are many ways to work together.

Below is a diagram showing the types of relationships TFBT will (and has) developed with other groups.



This does not include relationships we have statutory or legal authorities, such as mana whenua, agencies or funders

Volunteering for the Forest Bridge Trust



The Forest Bridge Trust is very keen to involve volunteers into its programme. In fact, volunteering is critical to what we do. Volunteers can be involved in a wide range of ways, and we actively encourage them to be involved not only in delivering our programme but also in developing our longer-term plans.

Our Philosophy towards volunteering is:

“Volunteering is at the heart of the community engagement work of the Trust. The Forest Bridge Trust volunteers bring unique talents, skills and knowledge to assist in the protection, enhancement and connection of forests, wetlands and other landscapes that help provide a safe habitat for our indigenous wildlife. In return we provide a unique experience that values the volunteer’s skills and contribution and recognises that without them, the Trust would not be able to achieve its goals”.

