

LAND MANAGEMENT & FARM ENVIRONMENT PLANS

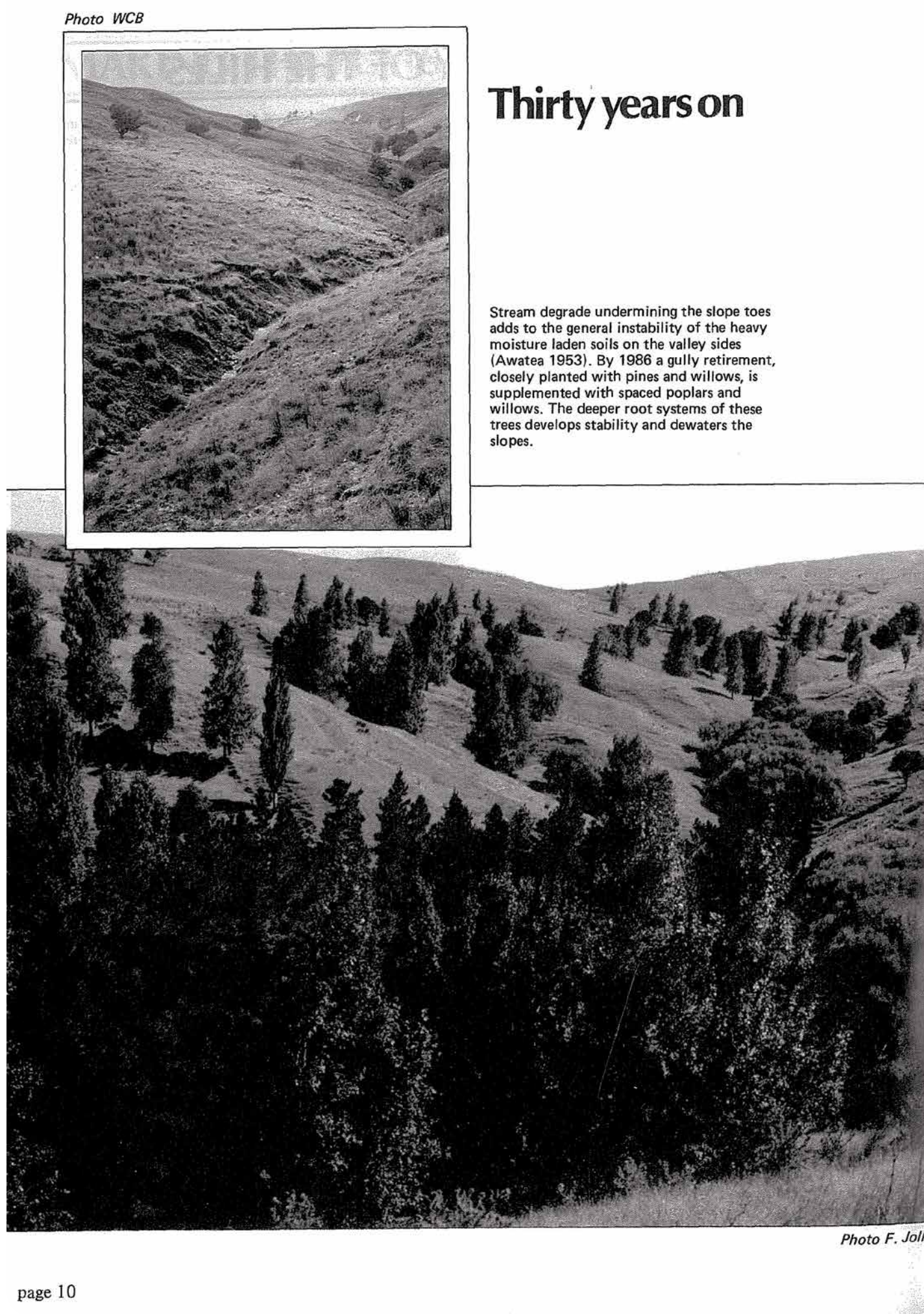


greater WELLINGTON
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Pane Matua Taiao

HISTORY

Greater Wellington Regional Council has a long history of offering farm plans to Wairarapa farmers. They started in the 1950s as part of a catchment protection scheme, after the Whareama area was subjected to severe flooding over several years. Farm plans were intended to cover works that were preventative in nature and had more of a private benefit to the farms involved than the larger, public, catchment works. The farm plans focused on erosion control and how farm management and development could support that.

One of the first farm plans in the region, Farm Plan 4 (Awatea), was, as the number suggests, the fourth to be written but was the first to actually undertake works. It continues to be active to this day.

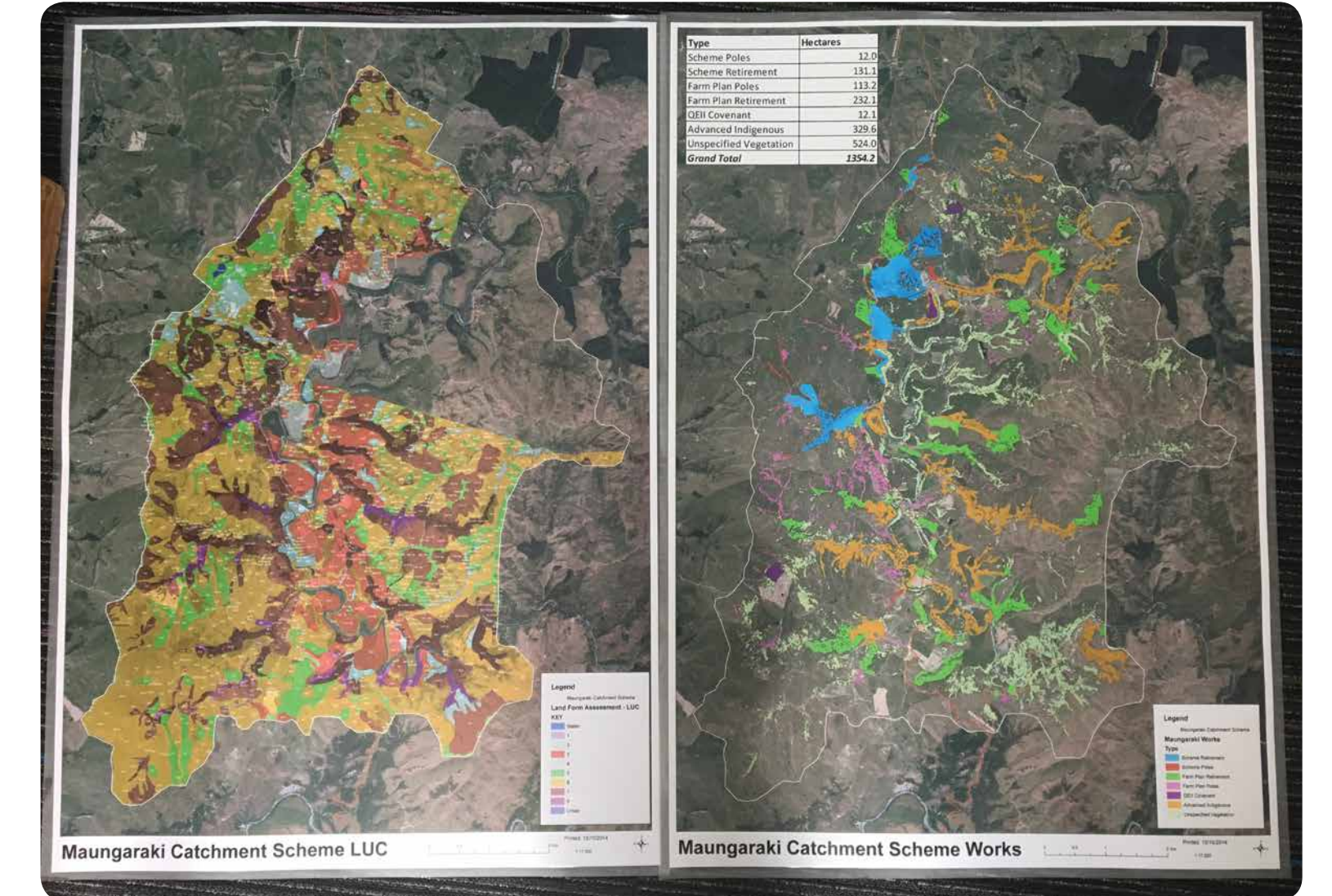


TODAY

More recently, Greater Wellington farm plans moved into the intensive land use space, offering them to dairy farmers and intensive sheep and beef farmers with a focus on reducing nutrients entering the waterways. The focus of these farm plans on critical source areas and flow pathways has morphed into the latest iteration of the hill country Farm Environment Plan (FEP).

The key goal of the new FEP is for it to be a 'one stop shop' for farmers in relation to water quality goals and works. To this end, it takes into account what the farmer wants to achieve on their property, looks at the farm in the context of the catchment, and includes budget information for works that the farmers want to do.

There is also a section on the proposed Natural Resources Plan which outlines how the plan is relevant to each farm, as well as activities the farmer wants to undertake. The programmes now have around 400 active farm plans. Many of the older hill country plans have been retired through farm amalgamations or forestry conversions.



FUNDING PROGRAMMES

FEP Programme: this is for soil erosion management. Spaced planting, permanent retirements, and conservation woodlots receive a grant rate if they occur on erosion-prone Land Use Classes 6-8.

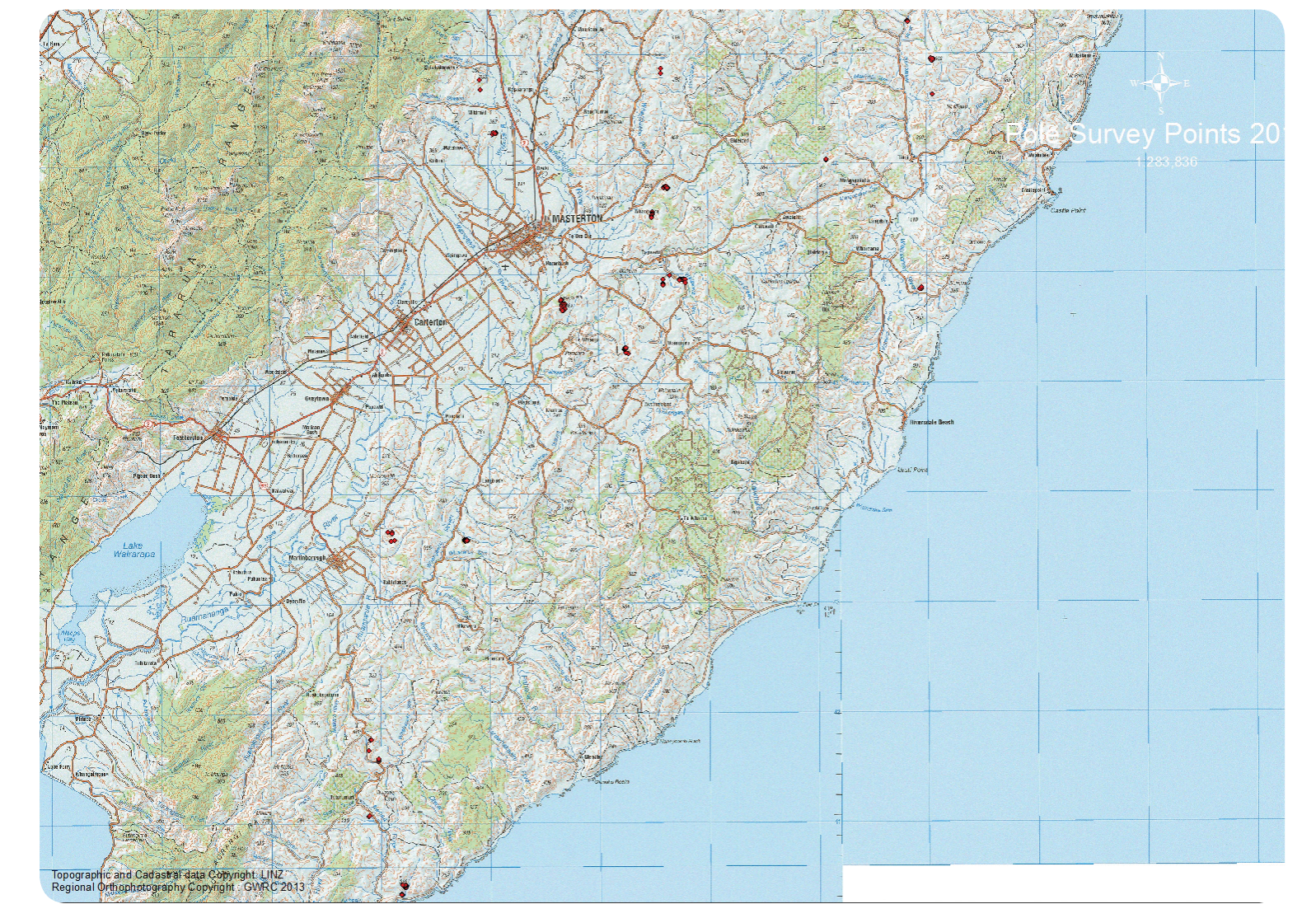
WRECI Programme: this is aimed at treating the high priority land use classes, so work in the FEP programme that occurs on the high priority LUCs receives this extra funding from MPI.

Intensive FEP Programme: this is for nutrient management on the intensive farms. Advice is given on current Best Management Practices available to manage nutrient leaching and runoff, particularly in areas of fertiliser and effluent application. Advice also covers identifying and managing critical source areas and pathways and high risk soils for different activities. Funding is offered for works related to managing nutrients entering the waterways, such as riparian retirements and alterations to raceways.

Riparian Programme: The proposed Natural Resources Plan requires certain waterways in the region to have stock access prevented within certain timeframes. A fund is available to landowners who have these waterways currently unfenced and who want to permanently fence and plant them. This fund is available to all landowners and not limited to farms with FEPs.

AUDITING

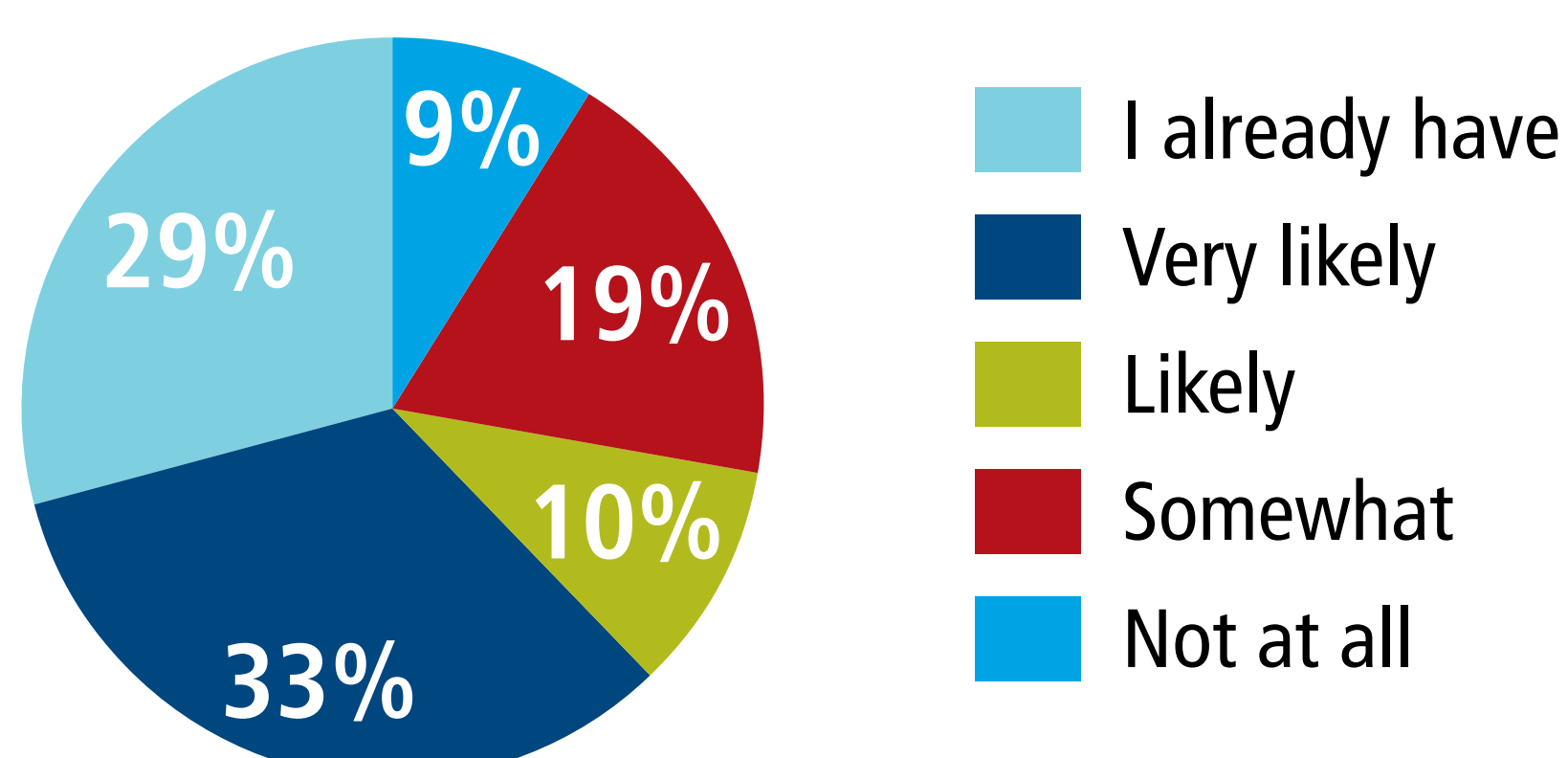
Part of our works monitoring includes survival auditing and more intensive auditing of trial or new varieties of poplars and willows. This information is collected and collated annually to show how well the trees are doing in different districts to help with decision-making on varieties that are suitable for our areas, as well as giving information on future demand for the nursery. It also gives us a more accurate picture on how much land is successfully treated. We have recently trialled the use of the Survey123 app for collecting our audit results. This has allowed us to collect, collate, and store the audit data spatially in our GIS system.



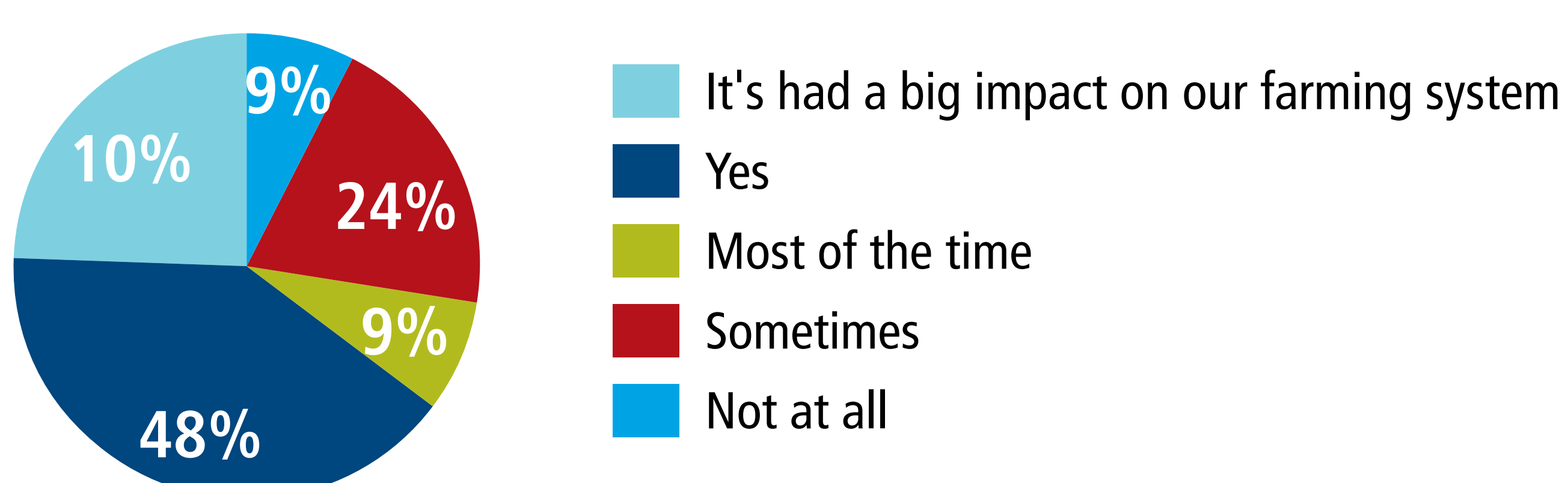
BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

We've developed strong one-on-one relationships with our farmers thanks to our area-specific knowledge, long history of farm plan provision, and level of service. We are able to use these good relationships to encourage behaviour change for environmental benefits. A recent survey of our farmer clients showed how successful this has been, with farmers telling us that they valued the partnership they have with their LMA and that their LMA's advice and FEP contents had influenced their actions.

How likely are you to recommend getting a FEP to a friend or neighbour?



Has having a FEP made you more likely to change what you do on the farm?



WORKS MANAGEMENT

Greater Wellington Regional Council are heavily involved in the planning, execution, and monitoring of works carried out under the FEPs. Our Land Management Department is made up of the Planning team (the LMAs) and the Operations team (the works supervisors and nursery staff). As a department, we coordinate with farmers to plan works, we order (and supply) the plants for jobs, we engage and supervise spraying and planting crews, we monitor the success of the works, and we liaise with farmers about less successful work in order to improve future planning.

The farmers consider this a valuable service as many plant large numbers of poles and do not have time to plant them themselves or to engage planting crews. They also appreciate the health and safety management we undertake in our selection and supervision of the crews, and the consistently high quality of plants and the high proportion of eco-sourced natives that our nursery Akura supplies.

The Regional Council also finds it valuable as we are able to closely monitor the quality of the works, able to record the exact location of works that we are providing funding for, and we become a lot more familiar with the properties we are looking after which helps with decision making and recommendations.

