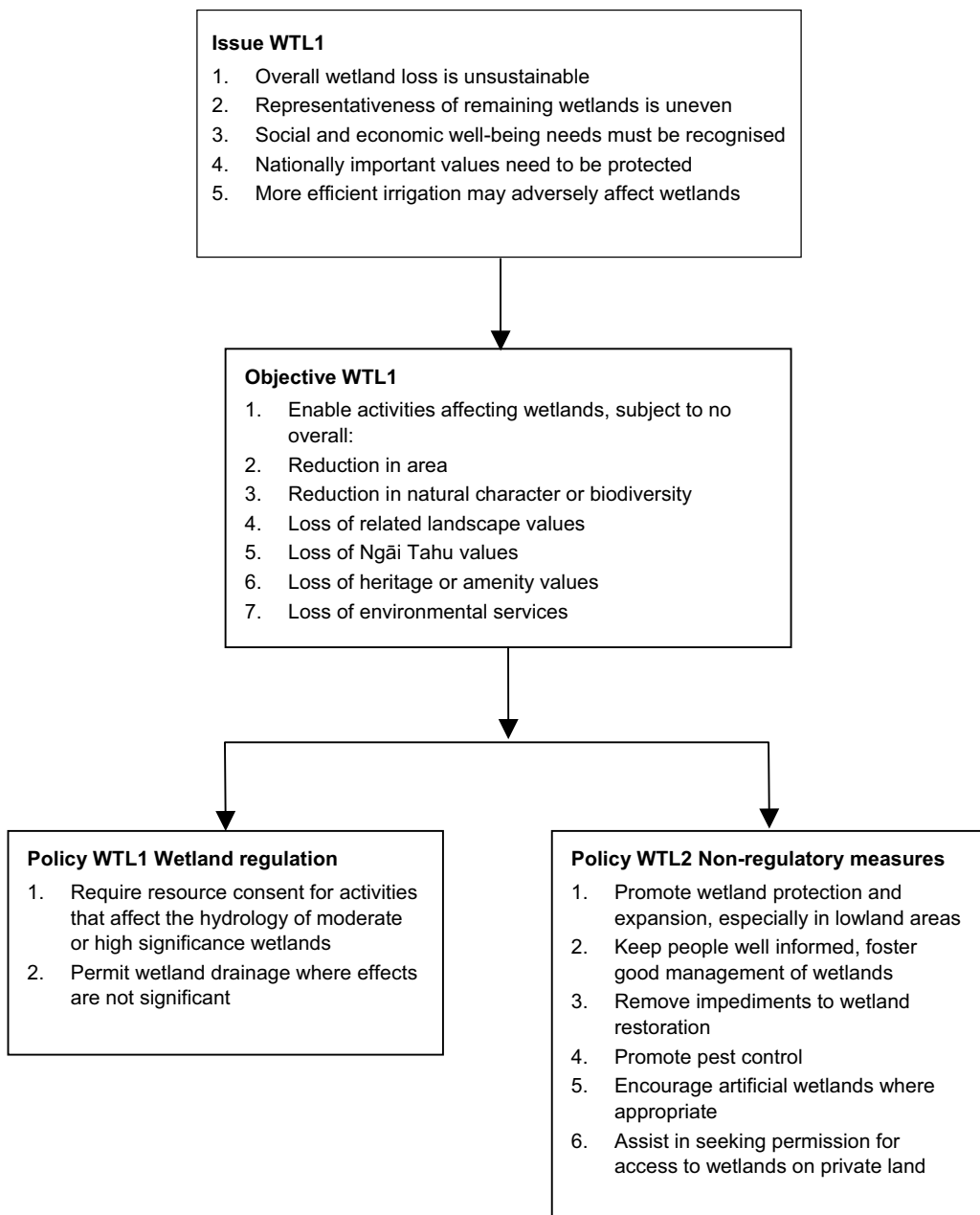


7.5 Issue resolution

Resource management begins with identifying issues. Issues are significant matters of concern. Objectives are then formulated, which if achieved should resolve the issues. Policies outline how to achieve the objectives. This diagram shows how these three steps connect together.

This is only a summary, the detailed issue resolution process forms the substance of the whole plan.



Issues WTL1

The wetland issues include:

- (1) A very serious decline in the total area of wetlands in the region, with wetlands continuing to lose wetness, biological diversity, and go out of existence. The loss of wetland area has also adversely affected water quality, quantity, and levels and flows, including groundwater recharge. Factors to have contributed to this include:
 - (a) lowered water tables due to:
 - (i) drainage (both direct and indirect);
 - (ii) the interception of water flowing into wetlands;
 - (iii) abstraction; and
 - (iv) changed vegetation composition—from plants that retain moisture to plants, such as willows, that remove it.
 - (b) infilling/reclamation/waste disposal;
 - (c) vegetation clearance;
 - (d) grazing by both domestic and feral animals;
 - (e) contaminants from animals and adjoining land uses;
 - (f) invasion by undesirable species of plants and animals (predation and/or competition); and
 - (g) a general loss of ecological integrity and function accompanied by a continuing downward spiral of wetland decline.
- (2) A non-uniform decrease in wetlands, with coastal, lowland and inland basin wetlands now most seriously under-represented. Protecting all that remain will not alter that imbalance, there are just too few left. Under-represented wetland types need to be augmented, thereby increasing the populations of wetland species and the numbers of wetland communities not found or well represented in other types of wetlands.
- (3) Most wetlands occur on private land where the landholder may have plans to convert them into pasture or for other non-wetland uses. There is occasionally conflict between regionally or nationally important development and wetlands. As well as protecting wetlands, sustainable management requires consideration of the need to enable people and communities to provide for their social and economic wellbeing.
- (4) A diminished contribution to the region's identity as expressed in its wetlands, due to a long-term decline in the area and quality of Canterbury's wetlands. Aspects that are in decline include:
 - (a) the natural character of wetlands and their margins;
 - (b) areas of significant indigenous flora and significant habitats of indigenous fauna;
 - (c) the role of wetlands as outstanding natural features or parts of outstanding natural landscapes;
 - (d) the value of wetlands to the culture and traditions of Ngāi Tahu; and
 - (e) the role of wetlands in Canterbury's cultural heritage, history, amenity and recreation values, including the significant habitats of trout and salmon.

- (5) Improving the efficiency of irrigation and some stockwater systems may adversely affect some wetlands and wetland values associated with water races.**

Objective WTL1

- (1) Canterbury's wetlands are managed in ways that enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing, while meeting the constraints listed (a) to (d) below:**
- (a) no overall reduction in the area of moderate or higher significance wetlands in the region, increasing that area where possible, especially in coastal, lowland and inland basin parts of the region;**
 - (b) no overall reduction in the natural character of wetlands and their margins, and in particular no overall loss of significant⁴ areas of indigenous vegetation or significant⁴ habitats of indigenous fauna;**
 - (c) no overall reduction in the contribution wetlands make to outstanding natural landscapes or as outstanding natural features; and**
 - (d) no overall reduction in the contribution of wetlands to the relationship of Ngāi Tahu and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and wāhi taonga.**
- (2) In addition, the quality and quantity of wetlands is enhanced where possible, particularly in areas where wetlands are most depleted, and as a minimum there is:**
- (a) no overall reduction in the cultural, heritage, and recreational values of wetlands, or the maintenance and enhancement of their amenity values, or their value as significant habitats of trout and salmon; and**
 - (b) no overall reduction in the role that wetland ecosystems play in water capture, groundwater recharge, water storage and flow attenuation, and in maintaining water quality.**

Explanation and principal reasons

The objective has two main threads:

- (a) to protect wetlands where a range of values still remain in good condition; and
- (b) to enhance or restore wetlands where possible, particularly in areas where wetlands have become most depleted.

Use of the qualification "no overall" in this objective is necessary to allow a case-by-case judgement of whether effects on a wetland are consistent with the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

The "no overall" concept allows losses provided they are offset by equivalent gains. This is consistent with Objective 1 in Chapter 8 of the CRPS, which includes a similar notion expressed as "protection or enhancement of ... the gross area of wetlands". (And also their ecological integrity and functioning, cultural, amenity and recreational values, and natural character). "No overall reduction" implies that a kind of wetland ledger must be kept, with debits and credits and a running balance of overall wetland area and other wetland qualities.

In setting its broad policy direction, the CRPS placed no qualification on the word "wetlands". Among other things, however, this plan must determine an appropriate level of regulatory

⁴ Assessed using the criteria and methodology in Appendix WTL1.

intervention. To do that requires differentiation between areas that justify regulatory protection, and those that do not. Accordingly, the objective here is to achieve no overall reduction in wetlands of moderate or higher significance.

After one and a half centuries of change, lowland Canterbury's character has come to be dominated by pastoral and arable land uses. This contrasts with these areas' original character, which included substantial areas of wetland. What has occurred has been crucially important to the region's economy but has marginalised the original species and ecosystems, and depleted environmental services that wetlands once provided. (These included water capture, groundwater recharge, water storage and flow attenuation, and acting as filters to maintain water quality.) Through the loss of wetlands, some species and even ecosystem types have already become extinct and others rare or threatened. The aim in seeking to increase the area of coastal, lowland and inland basin wetlands—which can only be achieved by voluntary means—is to begin redressing the balance, albeit in a comparatively small way.

Natural character depends on a variety of natural elements, the most easily threatened of which include the flora and fauna. These biological elements rely for their existence on the ecological integrity and functioning of wetlands, which in varying degrees depend on a certain level of water quantity and quality. Achieving this objective is thus linked with objectives, policies and methods in Chapter 4 Water Quantity and Chapter 5 Water Quality, but it also depends heavily on appropriate wetland management.

In addition to their hydrological or habitat value, wetlands can also be distinctive elements of the landscape. Often cultural values may add further to that distinctiveness. The traditional value of wetlands to Ngāi Tahu is the longest standing cultural value, but there are now many others. People visit wetlands for their pleasantness, scientific and educational interest, sometimes to hunt or fish, and for many other reasons. The objective is to keep these values to at least their present levels.

Wetland vegetation and associated microfauna remove nutrients and other contaminants from water passing through, and the low water velocity characteristic of wetlands also traps suspended sediments. These properties are being maximised in some artificial wetlands but are also present in varying degrees in natural wetlands, providing a natural remedy for degraded water quality. The ability of wetlands to store water, and their natural tendency to impede flows can lower flood peaks and delay the onset of drought. There should be no overall reduction in these environmental services.

Policy WTL1 Wetland regulation

In exercising control of the taking, use, damming and diversion of water, the quality, quantity, level or flow of water, and discharges of contaminants into water or onto land where any area of wetland may be affected:

- (a) Environment Canterbury will use rules to regulate some or all of the above activities:
 - (i) where the affected wetland has not had its significance assessed in accordance with this plan⁵; or
 - (ii) having been assessed in accordance with this plan, is considered to have moderate or higher significance; or
 - (iii) has cultural value to Ngāi Tahu; or
 - (iv) is a significant salmon or trout habitat.
- (b) Environment Canterbury will require as a condition of any resource consent granted in accordance with this policy, an enforceable arrangement to offset any loss or reduction of moderate or higher significance wetland pursuant to that consent.
- (c) Environment Canterbury will, where possible without risk of adverse effects on the environment, use rules to permit the taking, use, damming or diversion of water, minor discharges of water into water or onto land, and the minor disturbance of stream beds where the purpose is wetland enhancement, restoration or creation.
- (d) Environment Canterbury will use rules to permit the taking, use, damming or diversion of wetland water, but only where there is no adverse effect on any area of moderate or higher significance wetland.
 - (i) A moderate or higher significance wetland is a wetland identified as such in accordance with the methods and criteria in Appendix WTL1.
 - (ii) The reduction of wetland area permitted under this policy is:
 - 1. Unlimited where Environment Canterbury has assessed the significance of wetlands in the area as being of less than moderate significance.
 - 2. Otherwise limited to 0.5 hectares of each separate wetland area. In this case it must be certified by a suitably qualified person that there would be no adverse effect on any moderate or higher significance wetland.
 - (iii) In any case:
 - 1. any relevant water quantity and quality standards shall also be met; and
 - 2. Ngāi Tahu cultural values and any significant habitat of salmon or trout shall be safeguarded.

⁵ Using the criteria and methodology in Appendix WTL1.

Explanation and principal reasons

Under section 14 of the RMA, all taking, use, damming or diversion of water requires resource consent unless permitted by a rule in a regional plan⁶. The RMA also requires resources to be managed in a way or at a rate that enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing, so long as the environment is safeguarded.

Many other factors are required to ensure a healthy functioning wetland, but water is the most basic necessity. With the original stock of wetlands so depleted, few risks can be taken with those that remain. This makes it difficult to justify much liberalisation of the existing controls on the water on which wetlands depend. There is a case, however, for bringing more guidance and certainty to that control, which is a major role of this chapter.

Not all of Objective WTL1 will be achieved through control of the taking, use, damming or diversion of water. Sometimes consent conditions can require a degree of improvement in the existing state of wetlands, but in the majority of cases regulation can only protect the existing water quantity or restrict contaminant discharges. Controls may go a long way to achieving the most readily measurable part of Objective WTL1—protecting the overall area—but will seldom achieve better care or the objective's other aims to any great degree. That is the purpose of Policy WTL2.

Part (a) of the policy acknowledges that the complexities and the differing circumstances of each case generally demand the flexibility and detailed examination that only a resource consent process can provide. The information requirements of this process can be kept to a practical minimum, and attention focused on the essential issues by restricting Environment Canterbury's discretion where appropriate.

Part (b) of the policy requires any resource consent that will result in the loss of some moderate or higher significance wetland to include a condition to offset that loss. This may be achieved by enhancing, restoring or creating wetland on the same property as the original wetland or on another property, or take the form of a financial contribution as specified in Chapter 7.13 Financial Contributions. Any such arrangement is intended to provide an offsetting wetland area as nearly as possible equivalent in every respect, including area, type, condition and location, to the original wetland.

Part (c) of the policy recognises that rules, such as those requiring resource consent to take, use, dam or divert water sometimes act as a disincentive to people who would otherwise be willing to enhance or restore a wetland. These disincentives can be reduced by permitting the necessary activities, subject to conditions to ensure any adverse effects are minor.

Part (d) of the policy acknowledges that it is not justified to require resource consent where the affected wetlands have low significance and any other adverse effects can be excluded. In cases where Environment Canterbury has not had the opportunity to assess a wetland in its wider context, any risk of unforeseen consequences is minimised by limiting the scale of the permitted activity. It is important to note that many areas that at present have little significance still have excellent potential for wetland restoration.

⁶ A General Authorisation in the Transitional Regional Plan for the Canterbury Region (TRP) permits takes of between 10m³/day and 20m³/day from any type of water body. The Proposed NRRP when it becomes operative will no longer permit such takes from wetlands. Note that under the TRP, takes must be for the purpose of obtaining water, not disposing of it. In other words, drainage is not a form of take.

Methods

Methods used or to be used to implement Policy WTL1 are:

Method WTL1(a) Wetlands inventory

In consultation with landholders, Ngāi Tahu and a range of community organisations, Environment Canterbury has prepared a methodology and criteria to classify the significance of different wetlands. These are included as Appendix WTL1. Over time they will be used to prepare an inventory of wetlands in the region by visiting and assessing so far as practicable each wetland. The resulting inventory will identify, locate, and describe the principal natural values and hydrology of each wetland. It will also assess levels of hydrological and ecological significance, record any threats, and suggest actions needed to retain existing wetlands and avoid any decline in their present condition.

Method WTL1(b) Sites of significance to Ngāi Tahu

Environment Canterbury will, in conjunction with rūnanga and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, identify sites or areas of significance to Ngāi Tahu in or adjacent to water bodies, or in areas where water related activities could cause significant adverse effects on sites or areas of significance. As appropriate, these sites and areas will be brought into the Proposed NRRP by way of RMA Schedule 1 processes.

Method WTL1(c) Regional rules

Regional rules WTL1 to WTL10 inclusive give effect to Policy WTL1.

Method WTL1(d) Compliance and enforcement

Environment Canterbury will:

- (a) monitor compliance with conditions for any activity affecting wetland water quantity or quality. To achieve compliance Environment Canterbury may apply for enforcement orders, issue abatement notices, issue infringement notices or use any other enforcement mechanisms available to it;
- (b) maintain a confidential database recording details of any complaints received about activities adversely affecting wetlands; and
- (c) report regularly on the response to complaints, including the results of any investigations and/or subsequent enforcement action.

Method WTL1(e) Resource consents

When considering resource consents for the taking, use, damming or diversion of water, Environment Canterbury will have regard to Policy WTL1.

Policy WTL2 Non-regulatory measures

In achieving integrated management of the natural and physical resources of the region, in relation to wetlands Environment Canterbury will:

- (a) promote the protection and expansion of wetlands in the region, giving particular priority to the most depleted wetland types;**
- (b) keep people, especially private landholders, well informed about the value of wetlands, and foster good wetland management;**
- (c) recognise that the cost of land uses foregone, resource consents and other costs can be a barrier to landholders protecting, enhancing or restoring wetlands, and will, where appropriate, consider helping to meet a share of these costs;**
- (d) promote control of undesirable plants and animals within wetlands, together with steps to minimise exotic plant spread from one water body to another;**
- (e) encourage the development of artificial wetlands, either as new habitats or for water treatment purposes; and**
- (f) where necessary, assist Ngāi Tahu or members of the general public to seek permission from landholders for reasonable access to wetlands on private land.**

Explanation and principal reasons

No part of the Canterbury region can afford to lose significant wetlands, and there is a need in many parts to expand those areas. This is because originally the region's wetlands were much more extensive in type and area and were much more interconnected than they are now. Although wetlands have disappeared from all parts of the region, proportionately more have gone from coastal, lowland, and inland basin areas. For Canterbury to achieve anything like a true representation of the original range of naturally connected wetland habitats it will be necessary to expand existing wetlands, restore or even create more wetlands.

The overall intent of this policy, then, is to retain what still exists, promoting increases wherever possible. The number one priority for wetland expansion is in coastal, lowland and inland basin areas where wetland loss has been greatest.

The push in part (a) of the policy towards a more representative range of wetlands is important because of the differences, sometimes marked and sometimes subtle between wetland types and functions in different settings. These differences include climate, topography, soil types, water sources, water levels and rates of flow, vegetation, fish and bird life, and invertebrates. Improving ecological connections within and between natural systems is another important factor.

Unless given priority, wetlands characteristic of the most depleted locations will remain very much under-represented. So long as that is the case, flora and fauna adapted to those areas will remain at a disadvantage and increasingly at risk.

Part (b) of the policy recognises that it is fundamental to motivating voluntary action that people see wetlands as assets—that they appreciate the full range of wetland attributes and the potential for restoration as well as enhancement. In addition to being conscious of the true value of wetlands, to be able to manage them well requires knowledge and understanding.

This calls for methods that raise people's awareness of the biological and other values associated with Canterbury's remaining wetlands, and promote the message that preserving

wetlands is important. It will often require the exchange of problem-solving information.

Part (c) recognises that there must also be tangible forms of encouragement, including financial and other incentives, such as wetland assistance grants, enhancement fund grants, public recognition, and direct assistance through various forms of partnership. Wetland owners may then be motivated to take a generally more active interest in their wetlands. This may include maintaining the proper wet conditions, restricting livestock access, controlling pests and other undesirable species, and if planting is necessary, mainly choosing locally-sourced native species.

The costs of foregoing the use of land or obtaining resource consent to take, use, dam or divert water sometimes act as disincentives to people who would otherwise be willing to protect, enhance or restore a wetland in accordance with these policies. In these cases Environment Canterbury will consider giving assistance towards meeting these costs. In doing so it will consider grants in lieu of rates relief and/or reimbursement of Environment Canterbury’s resource consent processing charges. Environment Canterbury will have regard to the value of what is being done in terms of the objectives and policies of this chapter, together with any prevailing financial constraints.

Control of undesirable plants and animals within wetlands (part (d) of the policy), while it includes control of many of the undesirable species associated with other environments, also includes plants or animals not formally identified as pests. For example, introduced species such as common pasture grasses can become pests in a wetland context, threatening to out-compete native species.

Most wetlands in Canterbury have long since acquired a considerable exotic plant component. These and the remaining native vegetation co-exist sometimes more, sometimes less comfortably. In some wetlands, exotic plants have assumed a degree of ecological importance, but most exotics are of little value from that perspective, and many are simply undesirable in these particular situations. In purest terms, introduced plants are at odds with the ecological integrity of wetlands. So also is the wider introduction or spread of cattle, deer, goats, cats, undesirable fish or other exotic species that can degrade the habitat values and native biodiversity of wetlands.

This policy may be implemented in a number of ways. In some cases landholders may be responsible under a regional pest management strategy for controlling certain recognised pest plants and animals. In other cases they may qualify for assistance. In part the policy may be implemented by providing information on undesirable species, and appropriate methods of control. Incentives or a degree of direct assistance from Environment Canterbury may also be needed.

The policy also focuses on the risk from accidental introductions of exotic species, particularly undesirable aquatic plants, when people use machinery near rivers, drains or streams, or move recreational equipment from one wetland to another. People in these situations need reminding of these risks and the necessary precautions.

Artificial wetlands—wetlands created by people—can have definite benefits. Under part (e) of the policy these should be encouraged, provided their limitations are also recognised. The benefits and limitations of created wetlands include:

Purpose	Benefits	Limitations
Water treatment/flood attenuation	Effective nutrient stripping, sediment/heavy metal trapping. Flood control Some amenity values	Maintenance routinely destroys natural values Maintenance prevents development of true ecological complexity
Replacement of lost natural wetlands	Restore connectivity Provide habitat Improve representativeness Provide amenity values	Require long time and careful management to develop ecological complexity in any way comparable to natural wetlands

As the CRPS notes, the same artificial wetland seldom provides both habitat and water management advantages.

Wetland creation can be encouraged by providing incentives, and in some cases may be required as a condition of resource consents.

Part (f) of the policy recognises that Ngāi Tahu value access to wetlands for mahinga kai, weaving materials, and other cultural reasons (Proposed NRRP Chapter 2), but many traditional wetlands are on what is now private land. There is also a desire among members of the general public for greater access to wetlands on private land. It may sometimes help facilitate this access if Environment Canterbury acts as a go-between. This would be appropriate where people have not been able to make their own approaches to the landholder, perhaps through not knowing who that person is or for some other reason.

It would be contrary to this policy to apply any pressure on landholders to allow access, and any access that is allowed must be on terms set by the landholder.

Where this policy results in improved access, in addition to enhancing traditional cultural practices, it will increase opportunities for people to experience the aesthetic, educational, contemplative, sporting and other possibilities of a wider variety of wetlands.

Methods

Methods used or to be used to implement Policy WTL2 are:

Method WTL2(a) Wetlands on public land

Environment Canterbury will seek out opportunities for improved wetland management on public land and land that public agencies or community groups own or could acquire, and also promote improved wetland management to other local authorities in the region.

Environment Canterbury itself has reserve lands that include areas of wetland. Its management of these wetlands increasingly reflects an aim to lead by example. As resources permit, Environment Canterbury will also support wetland maintenance, restoration and enhancement by other public bodies and community groups on other publicly owned land.

Method WTL2(b) Enhancement funding

Environment Canterbury will provide funding through its Environment Enhancement Fund for, among other things, enhancement or restoration of the ecological, cultural or amenity values of wetlands. Full details of this fund and how to apply are available on request, or from the Environment Canterbury website, www.ecan.govt.nz. Environment Canterbury may encourage groups large enough to form an incorporated society to apply instead to funding bodies such as the various community trusts, with Environment Canterbury assisting to prepare the application if requested. Territorial authorities will be informed of Environment Enhancement Fund grants being approved in their respective areas and may be invited to consider making a supplementary contribution.

Method WTL2(c) Wetland assistance grants

In the spirit of a working partnership, Environment Canterbury will each year consider applications for grants towards the costs of wetland enhancement or restoration, and the costs of forgoing other uses of the land involved. The contribution towards enhancement or restoration is generally limited to reimbursing some of the costs incurred when resource consent is required, but grants in lieu of rates relief continue for as long as the wetland is properly managed.

Method WTL2(c)(i) Reimbursement of resource consent processing charges

- (a) Subject to meeting the criteria below, applicants for resource consent, may when applying for resource consent, also apply for reimbursement of part or all of the Environment Canterbury resource consent processing charges. Only charges incurred in obtaining resource consent for a wetland enhancement, restoration or creation project are eligible. In considering applications for these grants, the following conditions shall apply:
- (i) the dominant purpose of the resource consent must be to enhance or restore a wetland;
 - (ii) there must be a long-term commitment to maintaining the wetland in its enhanced or restored state;
 - (iii) grants will only take into account Environment Canterbury's consent processing charges and not any other costs associated with obtaining resource consent, such as the cost of obtaining information, expert witnesses, etc, or complying with conditions placed on the consent;
 - (iv) where some other benefit or purpose is also served by the resource consent, the particular grant may be reduced in direct proportion to the other benefit or purpose; and
 - (v) in any given year budgetary processes govern the total amount Environment Canterbury has available for reimbursement grants. Any reductions this makes necessary will be made on a strictly pro-rata basis.
- (b) Nothing in this method guarantees that consents will be granted or costs reimbursed.

Method WTL2(c)(ii) Wetland protection grants

- (a) Environment Canterbury shall consider applications for grants in lieu of rates relief from the party responsible for paying Environment Canterbury general rates where land has been set aside for wetland management. The following conditions shall apply:
- (i) a wetland protection grant shall only be made in respect of wetlands and other land set aside for any purpose consistent with the objectives and policies of this chapter; and
 - (ii) for a wetland protection grant to be considered there must be satisfactory evidence that the subject land has been set aside, that stock are ordinarily excluded from that land, and that it is being managed primarily to maintain or improve its indigenous values in accordance with a management plan.
- (b) Applications for wetland protection grants shall be considered once a year no less than 60 working days after advertising for applications;
- (c) Approval, once granted, shall continue from year to year so long as none of the circumstances leading to the original grant have changed; and
- (d) In any of the following cases Environment Canterbury shall be informed, and if a wetland protection grant is still required, a new application may have to be made:
- (i) the original landholder changes; or
 - (ii) the original area set aside changes; or
 - (iii) the approved management of the area set aside changes.

Note: The subject land shall not be used at any time for any economic activity. However, limited grazing for conservation purposes is allowed. Any fees charged to visitors shall only be sufficient to recover the costs of installing and maintaining relevant visitor amenities. No

wetland protection grant shall be available where the wetland being managed is one of the attractions of a commercial tourist venture.

- (e) Wetland protection grants shall be equivalent *pro rata* to the amount of Environment Canterbury general rate levied on the subject property.
- (f) To be eligible, the amount that may be applied for annually shall exceed \$50.
- (g) Areas eligible for any other remission of regional rates or equivalent payment of any kind are not eligible for this grant.
- (h) Wetland protection grants will be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

$$W = G * F/A$$

Where:

G = Environment Canterbury general rate on the capital value for the whole property for the year concerned.

F = area fenced out or otherwise set aside for conservation purposes.

A = total rateable area.

Method WTL2(d) Territorial authorities

Environment Canterbury shall encourage territorial authorities in the region to increase their commitment to policies and methods generally similar in intent and effect to Policy WTL2 and its methods.

Method WTL2(e) Information/awareness programme

Environment Canterbury shall, within two years of this chapter of the Proposed NRRP becoming operative, set up a Wetland Information/Awareness Programme for the region. This programme will regularly disseminate information to private landholders and anyone else who requests it about the value and importance of the region's wetlands. The programme will advise on the following important values associated with Canterbury's remaining wetlands, and how to manage them:

- (a) functioning and value as water bodies;
- (b) biological diversity;
- (c) natural character;
- (d) historical and cultural heritage;
- (e) traditional value to Ngāi Tahu, including current or potential value for cultural harvest; and
- (f) amenity, recreation and landscape values.

The programme will give priority to raising awareness of existing and former wetlands in coastal, lowland and inland basin areas, and will encourage the restoration or creation of wetlands in these areas.

Method WTL2(f) Field days

Environment Canterbury will, as part of its Information/Awareness Programme, arrange field days when and where there appears to be sufficient interest, for the purpose of demonstrating aspects of wetland management. These need not be limited to hydrological or ecological aspects but could also include Ngāi Tahu cultural values, or commercial aspects compatible with this chapter's objective and policies.

Method WTL2(g) Partnerships and co-ordination

Environment Canterbury will act as a co-ordinating agency for parties willing to join its integrated approach to wetland management. These parties include but need not be limited to other local authorities. Ngāi Tahu, the Department of Conservation, any individual or

agency might also play a part. The programme will have a minimum of formal structure, and participation will be voluntary. Each party will, however, be expected to bring as much as it can to what is essentially a partnership. For the most part, members will be expected to subordinate their own particular interests to the agreed goals of the partnership.

Method WTL2(h) Co-operation

Environment Canterbury will promote co-operation among other bodies in the region with an interest in conserving wetlands and/or an ability to contribute to that aim. Environment Canterbury will co-operate with and where appropriate assist these other bodies. They include: landholders, territorial authorities, Ngāi Tahu, Federated Farmers, Nature Heritage Fund/Nga Whenua Rahui, QE II National Trust, NZ Landcare Trust, Fish and Game NZ, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Water Rights Trust, landcare and other community groups, Department of Conservation, Ministry for the Environment, recreational groups, ornithological groups, Transit New Zealand and Land Information New Zealand.

Environment Canterbury will offer ongoing co-ordination, co-operation and where appropriate leadership to these parties, looking where possible for opportunities to work together and where not actually working together, to be working towards generally similar goals.

Method WTL2(i) Technical advice

Wherever possible, Environment Canterbury will, on request, provide technical advice on wetland management good practice factors including:

- (a) water levels and flows that may be needed by a particular wetland;
- (b) the desirable water quality;
- (c) pest control and any necessary grazing regime;
- (d) the appropriate range of plants to choose from in any planting programme; and
- (e) any re-introduction of wildlife.

Method WTL2(j) Regional pest management strategies

Environment Canterbury has prepared two regional pest management strategies under the Biosecurity Act 1993. These strategies recognise several pests with direct or indirect effects on wetland biodiversity. The Regional Pest Management Strategy (1998) obliges landholders to control specified pests on their land in certain circumstances, while the Regional Pest Management Strategy (Biodiversity Pests) (RPMS—Biodiversity) recognises a further range of pests that threaten biodiversity. The RPMS—Biodiversity does not oblige landholders to take action, but may fund programmes to control certain pests in high-value environmental areas, or facilitate and assist community and landholder self-help programmes in other areas.

Included among the pests recognised in the RPMS—Biodiversity are possums, mustelids (ferrets, stoats, weasels), feral cats, pigs and deer, wilding conifers, and the aquatic plants *Phragmites* and *Egeria*. Between them these pests threaten trees and native birds, skinks and geckos, native invertebrates such as giant wetas and grasshoppers, and existing aquatic and aquatic-margin plants.

One of the criteria used in the RPMS—Biodiversity for prioritising control work in high-value environmental areas is to recognise partnership opportunities between and within individual landholders and community groups. Such partnerships will also complement this chapter. The RPMS—Biodiversity criteria recognise sites where an individual or group is already making progress with other aspects of wetland management.

When applications for Environment Enhancement Fund grants are being processed, any need for pest control assistance will also be considered (although this does not imply that assistance can always be approved).

Method WTL2(k) Aquatic pest education programme

Environment Canterbury will, within 12 months of this chapter of the Proposed NRRP becoming operative, implement an Aquatic Pest Education Programme. This programme will encourage landholders, users of earthmoving equipment and recreational users of wetlands to avoid assisting the spread of aquatic species, especially aquatic plant material, from one water body to another. The programme for doing this will work through recreational bodies, regular publicity, distributing printed material and erecting warning signs.

Method WTL2(l) Wetland access liaison

Environment Canterbury will consider either of two possible approaches to landholders to facilitate controlled access to wetlands on private land. In most cases Environment Canterbury will provide assistance to people who have failed in their own attempts to make contact with the landholder, either by supplying contact details or by making contact on their behalf. Where it has the full support of the landholder, and as resources allow, Environment Canterbury may provide basic access facilities such as stiles over fences, signage and a marked track to a wetland on private land.

Landholders will be under no pressure to agree to any form of access, and may instruct Environment Canterbury not to provide any contact information.

Figure WTL 1: Generalised relationship between rules and resource consents

