

7.9.13 Aquatic pest education programme

Given the limited range of practical methods to reduce the risk of undesirable aquatic species being spread, publicity and warning signs are an appropriate choice.

7.9.14 Wetland access liaison

Both Ngāi Tahu and a range of individuals and groups in the community would like greater access to wetlands on private land. In many cases these parties are able to negotiate their own arrangements with landholders. However many do not know who to approach or there can be other difficulties. Environment Canterbury can play a small part in overcoming any such difficulties by acting as a go-between.

7.10 Principal reasons for rules

7.10.1 Rule WTL1: Restoration of wetlands (permitted activity)

Often voluntary efforts to restore or enhance wetlands involve the taking, use, damming or diversion of water, and possibly stream bed disturbance, and thus require resource consent. With adequate conditions to protect the environment, making small-scale hydrological adjustments and associated activities carried out in the course of wetland restoration a permitted activity removes an important disincentive to wetland restoration.

This (and other permitted activity rules) require written notice to be sent to Environment Canterbury 10 days prior to commencing the activity. This creates a record for monitoring purposes. It does not imply that Environment Canterbury is able to exercise any kind of discretion over the activity.

7.10.2 Rule WTL2: Reduce area of certain classified wetlands (permitted activity) and Rule WTL3 Up to 0.5 hectare reduction of certain unclassified wetlands (permitted activity)

The essential purpose of Rules WTL2 and WTL3 is to permit drainage of areas many people would regard as wet pasture, but which have very basic remnant or exotic wetland vegetation. In these areas, provided conditions to avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects are met, the need for a resource consent process can be avoided. Limiting the scale of the permitted activity in Rule WTL3 to 0.5 hectares of any separate wetland area, takes account of the lesser reliability of one-off assessments of wetland significance, and the absence of a Schedule 1 consultation process.

Wetland plant density is a useful indicator of wetland boundaries. The range of plants to be used in this role is wide enough to ensure that at least one listed species will be present at the boundary of most wetlands.

7.10.3 Rule WTL4: Permanent reduction of wetland area (discretionary activity)

Without Rule WTL4 any taking, use, damming or diversion of water that affects a wetland, other than where permitted by Rules WTL2 or WTL3, would require resource consent under section 14 of the RMA. The condition that requires an offsetting wetland is necessary to ensure the objective of no overall loss of wetlands is achieved. Activities in the nature of drainage, reclamation, dumping and infilling are considered to be damming or diversion of water, and are subject to this rule.

It is important to note that the qualities and biological complexity acquired over many years by natural wetlands can seldom be fully offset. It is therefore preferable to avoid wetland loss wherever possible. Where that cannot be achieved the loss must be offset to the greatest possible degree.

The rule provides a wide choice of means to offset the loss of wetlands, from wetland enhancement, restoration or creation on the same property, to similar actions on some other property, to making a financial contribution to Environment Canterbury's wetland enhancement programme. In some circumstances, the offsetting wetland will itself require resource consent, and any such application should normally be considered at the same time as the application under this rule.

7.10.4 Rule WTL5: Enhancement, restoration or creation of an offsetting wetland (permitted activity)

Conditions in this permitted activity rule ensure that any possible adverse effects associated with wetland enhancement, restoration or creation are avoided, remedied or mitigated. Although the activity permitted will generally help to achieve the plan's objectives, it is important that the scale of any adverse effects is kept within predictable limits. Restricting the size of stream and the amount of flow that may be taken and not returned does this.

7.10.5 Rule WTL6: Enhancement, restoration or creation of an offsetting wetland (discretionary activity)

This discretionary activity rule applies where the conditions for a permitted activity under Rule WTL5 are not met. The focus on matters that could be particularly important in assessing the effects of measures necessary to enhance, restore or create an offsetting wetland does not mean that other matters cannot be considered.

7.10.6 Rule WTL7 Non-compliance with certain permitted activity conditions (discretionary activity)

Where an activity is permitted subject to conditions but those conditions are not all met, some other provision must be made for dealing with the intended activity. Certain conditions are of key importance and if not complied with must be assessed through a resource consent process tailored to that specific issue. Under this rule, the question of non-compliance can be looked at in a more general way. The information requirements for this rule ensure that the permitted baseline remains well defined.

7.10.7 Rule WTL8: Continue activities beneficial to wetlands (permitted activity)

Maintaining enhanced and restored wetlands assists in achieving this chapter's objectives, but having to replace the resource consents periodically is an important disincentive. This rule removes that disincentive. There are conditions to prevent any increase in adverse effects and ensure that relevant conditions of the original consent still apply.

7.10.8 Rule WTL9: Activities to control unwanted organisms (permitted activity)

This rule permits temporary alterations to wetland hydrology (mainly drainage) in order to assist in controlling unwanted plants or animals. The conditions in the rule provide adequate mitigation of any possible adverse effects, making resource consent unnecessary.

7.10.9 Rule WTL10: Non-compliance with certain rules (prohibited activity)

Under this rule activities that do not meet the requirements of Rule WTL4 become prohibited activities, meaning that resource consent cannot be applied for or granted. This removes doubt in situations where conditions in Rule WTL4 are not met.

7.11 Environmental results anticipated

Within ten years of this plan becoming operative:

Environmental result anticipated WTL1

Fifty percent of landholders on properties where the wetlands have been assessed will be implementing management plans to protect and enhance their moderate and higher significance wetlands.

Environmental result anticipated WTL2

Some general improvement will have occurred in the ecological integrity and functioning of wetlands in the region.

Environmental result anticipated WTL3

Ngāi Tahu will be enjoying greater access to some traditional wetlands on private land where mahinga kai and other cultural values are important.

Environmental result anticipated WTL4

Recreationists and other members of the general public will have greater access to wetlands on private land where recreation and other amenity values are important.

Environmental result anticipated WTL5

The range and diversity of wetlands in the region will have begun to increase, with particular improvement in the proportion representing coastal, lowland and inland basin wetland types.