

Land

Environment Canterbury's role is as the lead agency for soil conservation and a joint lead agency, in collaboration with land holders, industry groups, territorial authorities and other agencies, for managing land resources



» Delivering on community outcomes

Desired outcomes

- The environment, in general, is to be looked after.
 - Air, beaches and ocean and land are all in a healthy condition.
 - Native plants and animals can thrive.
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- Rural land is mainly for farming and horticulture.
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- Recreational needs are met.
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- Business and farming activities do not harm the environment.
 - Water is in a healthy condition, clean and plentiful enough to support life.

Progress this year

Environment Canterbury has continued to promote sustainable land-management practices to individual farmers and the farming industry.

Environment Canterbury has continued to protect biodiversity and aquatic habitat in the Waimakariri River Regional Park and on leased land.

Agreement was reached in the Urban Development Strategy to protect versatile soils where practicable.

The opening of the second stage of the Waimakariri River Regional Park (Kaiapoi Island) has added another 15km of mountain biking and walking tracks. Visitor numbers have increased at McLeans Forest.

1082 resource consents were issued, with conditions, for activities on land. Conditions monitored for compliance totalled 2570. Action was taken in the cases where significant non-compliance with consent conditions was found.

Effect on the four well-beings:



SOCIAL



ECONOMIC



ENVIRONMENTAL



CULTURAL

The cost of complying with consent conditions could negatively impact on the economic well-being of some individuals. This is offset by wider benefits to environmental well-being.

» Highlights

We opened the second stage of the Waimakariri River Regional Park (Kaiapoi Island) on the north side of the Waimakariri River, including new toilets, picnic areas, bike and walking tracks, and trail biking tracks.

We continued to work with communities to improve land-management practices affecting water quality in Living Streams catchments. New catchment investigations were carried out on the Kaiapoi River, Ohoka River, Orakipaoa Creek, Taumatakahu Creek and Dobies Creek.

We recognised commitment to improving indigenous biodiversity by awarding \$150,000 to individuals and community groups for 46 projects. An additional \$49,000 was allocated from the Honda Treefund to a further 19 projects.

» We also . . .

- Progressed establishment of a land-management index, in conjunction with the Sustainable Farming Fund, with support from Crop and Food Research, other regional councils, the Foundation for Arable Research and the New Zealand Vegetable and Potato Growers Federation.
 - Monitored rural land-use change in the region.
 - Monitored the spread of wilding conifers in the Ashburton and Rangitata catchments and updated the database of wilding conifer control works that have been carried out in the region.
 - Monitored coastal wetlands and forest remnants at sites on the Port Hills and Banks Peninsula.
- Continued to establish sites to study long-term changes in soil depth.
 - Continued to establish long-term soil quality monitoring sites representing a range of land uses and soil types on the Canterbury Plains and downlands.
 - Monitored hill and high country vegetation cover and bare land, using field sites, particularly in South Canterbury. Satellite images were analysed for changes in vegetation cover on Banks Peninsula (1990-2006).

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Environment Canterbury acknowledges and thanks the volunteers on the regional park community advisory groups providing invaluable local input and feedback to guide planning for park facilities. Also, the contribution made by members of resource care groups on addressing local land use issues is greatly appreciated.

- Managed 2700ha of forestry established for river bank protection, including 40ha of new planting.
- Supported coastcare groups in Northern Pegasus Bay – Pegasus Bay Coastcare Network, Amberley Beach Coastcare, Waikuku/Rakahuri River and Coastcare Group and Ashley River/Rakahuri-Saltwater Creek Estuary Group.
- Assisted the Hurunui Hills Landcare Groups and Rangitata Gorge on pest and biodiversity programmes.
- Assisted the Ashley/Rakahuri Rivercare Group with protecting endangered river nesting birds–wrybill, black fronted tern and black billed gull.
- Worked with the Amuri Irrigation Company to prepare farm plans to mitigate against adverse effects of border-dyke irrigation land.
- Recognised outstanding examples of sustainable farming practice and water efficiency by supporting the Ballance Farm Environment Awards.
- Worked with Meat and Wool New Zealand, Dairy New Zealand and the Deer Industry Association on environmental management initiatives.
- Worked with Irrigation New Zealand on advancing the concept of audited self management in the Opuha Catchment.
- Issued 1082 resource consents with conditions to protect land and monitored 2570 conditions for compliance. Action was taken to resolve the 134 that were graded as having significant non-compliance.
- Responded to calls on the 24-hour Pollution Hotline. All cases were investigated and follow-up action implemented as required.
- Lodged submissions on 23 notified city/district plan changes to ensure consistency with regional policies, and 32 resource consent applications notified by city/district councils to address land-related issues.
- Measured pre and post-burn soil quality on some high-country land subject to land management fires.
- Participated in a collaborative trial with the Canterbury Waste joint committee and Transpacific Industries to investigate the effects of compost from municipal green-waste on crop productivity and soil quality.
- Developed a draft plan for a Lake Tekapo Regional Park with the Lake Tekapo Regional Park Advisory Group to turn the Lake Tekapo Soil Conservation Reserve into a recreational area and regional park. Developed the Regional Biodiversity Strategy in conjunction with an external stakeholder advisory group. The strategy has been adopted by 18 other agencies throughout the region.

>> Levels of service This section reports on performance for 2007/08 against Annual Plan targets

1. Maintaining and improving soil quality and quantity

Measure 1

The average annual rate of soil loss from wind erosion.

Target 2007/08

Less than 0.25mm a year by 2030.

The first remeasurements at benchmark sites established in previous years (1998, 2000 and 2002) will be undertaken in the next two years.

The focus this year was on establishing further benchmark sites to enable future determination of soil loss rates.

Measure 2

The percentage of the area of non-arable farmland with more than 20% bare ground.

Target 2007/08

The percentage is reducing.

Measures are due to be next taken in 2008/09.

% of areas of non-arable farmland with more than 20% bare ground	
1990	69%
2001	68%

Measure 3

The percentage change in soil quality factors including organic carbon, aggregate stability, readily available nitrogen and fertility.

Target 2007/08

Soil quality is being maintained or improved. (Thresholds are still being developed in association with the National Soil and Land Use Research Initiative.)

The first reassessment of soil quality monitoring sites will be undertaken in 2008/09.

Measure 4

The percentage of areas with identified soil quality and quantity issue that are being addressed by resource care, community or industry groups.

Target 2007/08

100%

Achieved

What's changed since the 2006-16 LTCCP?

The 2006-16 LTCCP proposed that additional measures and targets to more comprehensively reflect the contribution made by the level of service towards the community outcomes would be included in the 2007/08 Annual Plan. Measures 2, 3 and 4 have been added.

2. Protecting key infrastructure¹ from the impact of settlement

Measure

The extent to which the efficient operation, use and development of key infrastructure is impacted by settlement, other than through a Resource Management Act process, where the extent of impact is known, and acknowledged.

Target 2007/08

No impact.

Achieved

A report was compiled in 2007/08 which records population and household changes around selected regionally significant infrastructure.

¹ The RPS defines key infrastructure as: roading, the Christchurch International Airport, Timaru Airport, Port of Lyttelton, Primeport Timaru, telecommunication facilities, military establishments, the rail network, and other network utilities (including electricity transmission and distribution).

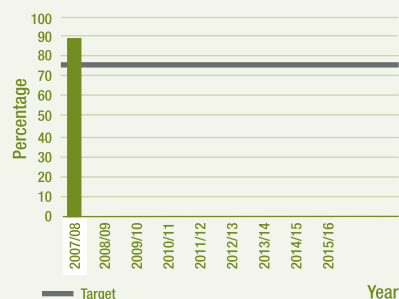
3. Providing open space leisure opportunities on council-owned land

Measure
The level of visitor satisfaction.

Target 2007/08
75%

Achieved (89%)

Level of visitor satisfaction



Waimakariri River Regional Park



What's changed since the 2006-16 LTCCP?

This is a new measure and target that was proposed in the 2006-16 LTCCP.

4. Authorising resource users to use natural and physical resources so that the environmental effects remain acceptable to the community

Measure 1

The percentage of resource consent applications processed in compliance with the statutory timeframes set down in the Resource Management Act 1991.

Target 2007/08
90%

1082 applications were processed. Continued high demand for consents from water, dairy and subdivision related activities, coupled with increased numbers of notifications and hearings in water resource constrained areas, and some large individual applications, has resulted in many consent applications across all portfolios not being able to be completed within statutory timeframes. *Not achieved (44%).*

Processing of applications



Source: Resource Management Act Database.

Measure 2

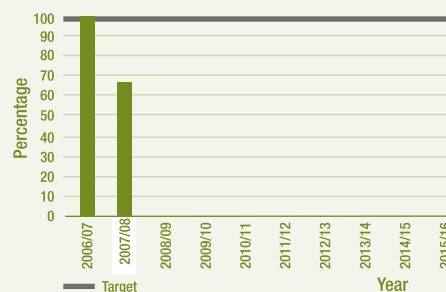
The percentage of resource consents consistent with Resource Management Act 1991 requirements, including proposed and operative regional plan requirements.

Target 2007/08
100%

An external audit of consent decisions determined that all decisions to grant consent were appropriate and that generally appropriate conditions were applied. The audit also found that the majority of consent conditions met best practice requirements; however, there was some scope for improvement in their certainty and effectiveness.

For many of the consents audited, consideration of specific objectives, policies, rules or effects that required consideration for decision-making were not adequately documented, and for that reason alone, were graded as non-compliant. *Not achieved (67%).*

Consents consistent with RMA



Source: External audit of sample of issued consents.

Measure 3

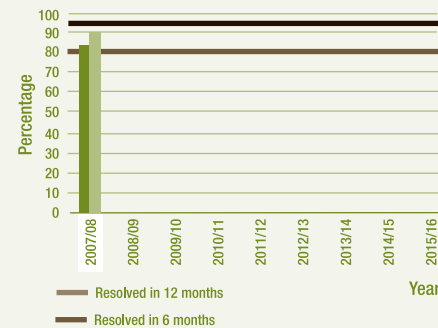
The percentage of significant or major non-compliance¹ with resource consent conditions resolved (no further action is required).

Target 2007/08

80% are resolved in six months.
95% are resolved in 12 months.

Achieved. 85% of non-compliances were resolved in six months. 92% of non-compliances were resolved in 12 months, just short of target. *Not achieved.*

Consent conditions - non-compliance resolved



Measure 4

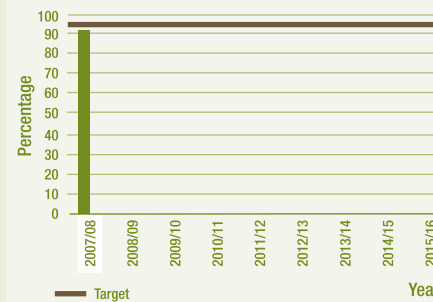
The percentage of environmental incidents resolved (no further action is required).

Target 2007/08

95%

The result is close to target (92%) and represents 428 resolved incidents. *Not achieved.*

Incidents resolved



¹ Significant non-compliance means there have been moderate, serious or persistent adverse environmental effects. This also includes repeated minor non-compliance with nil or short-term adverse environmental effects, and unauthorised activities.

What's changed since the 2006-16 LTCCP?

The 2006-16 LTCCP proposed that additional measures and targets to more comprehensively reflect the contribution made by the level of service towards the community outcomes would be included in the 2007/08 Annual Plan. Measure 3 replaces measure 2 in the 2006-16 LTCCP and new measures 2 and 4 have been added.

>> Financial summary

\$000	Actual 2007/08	Budget 2007/08	Actual 2006/07
Total Expenditure	7,535	7,840	5,526
<i>Funded by:</i>			
General rates	4,250	4,250	3,932
Targeted rates	899	888	958
Grants	-	-	-
User pays and other	1,817	2,552	982
Total Funding	6,966	7,690	5,872
Reserves Increase/(Decrease)	(569)	(150)	346

The Urban Development Strategy has progressed rapidly this year during the year and consultancy costs are higher than expected as a result.

5. Ensuring cattle, farmed deer and pigs are excluded from specific rivers and lakes

Measure 1

The percentage of Living Streams catchments (listed below) with agreed programmes of action to exclude cattle and farmed deer and pigs from at least 80% of the length of rivers and lakes in those catchments within five years of implementing the programme.

Target 2007/08

100%

Seventeen of the 36 named Living Streams (47%) have agreed plans of action and include the following: Cam, Lyell Creek, Taranaki Creek, Kaiapoi, Smithfield, Orakipoo, Taumatakahu, Saltwater, Harts Creek/Birdling Brook, Boggy, Waikewai/Coopers Lagoon, Cashmere, Staveley, Ohapi, Silverstream, Dobies, Wairepo/Willowbank. The balance of the streams on the list have either had the streams assessment undertaken and the plans are being prepared, or the plans of action are under review. *Not achieved.*

Measure 2

The number of Living Streams catchments where cattle and farmed deer and pigs have been excluded from at least 80% of the length of the rivers and lakes in those catchments.

Target 2007/08

Four catchments.

Achieved. Cattle and farmed deer and pigs have been excluded from at least 80% of the length of the rivers and lakes in the following catchments: Smithfield, Orakipoo, Taumatakahu, Kaiapoi, Lyell Creek, Harts/Birdling, Boggy, Staveley, Ohapi, Wairepo/Willowbank, Waikakahi.

Living Streams catchments: Ohapi Creek, Cam River - including North, Middle and South Brooks, Lyell Creek, Waikakahi Stream, Smithfield, Waikuku Stream, Little Ashley, Taranaki Creek, Silverstream, Boggy Creek, Harts Creek/Birdlings Brook, Middle Creek, Raukapuka, Worners, Saltwater Creek, Boundary Drain, Coopers Lagoon, Waikewai, Cashmere Stream, Staveley Stream, Okuti and Okana, Wainui, Wairepo and Willowburn, Orakipoo, Taumatakahu, Dobies Creek, Jollies Brook, Coopers Creek, Ohka Stream, Kaiapoi Stream.

Capital Expenditure

Refer to Appendix 1, page 118, for more information on capital expenditure associated with this activity. Capital expenditure associated with this group of activities was funded from general funds and included as depreciation expense.