



# Waikirikiri/Selwyn Near River Recharge

2022-2023 Project Update and Next Steps

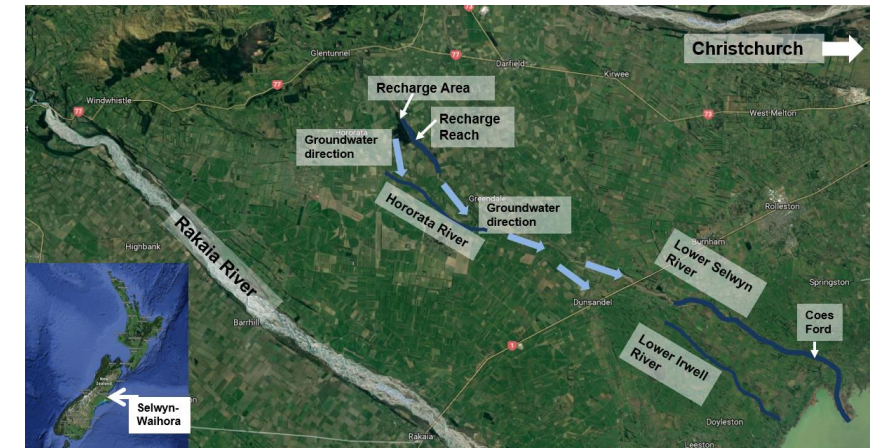


# Near River Recharge – Background

- Project supported by **Selwyn-Waihora Zone Committee** as part of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS) Environmental Infrastructure workstream
- **CWMS Environmental Infrastructure** workstream trials infrastructure concepts that rehabilitate and/or enhance Canterbury's ground and surface water systems
- The **Near River Recharge project** supplies water from the Rakaia River into the flood plain of the smaller Waikirikiri when the river is under stress (e.g. drought)
- Project **does not measurably stress** the Rakaia nor involve direct mixing of water between the river systems

# Near River Recharge – Background

- A **recharge facility** takes water from a Central Plains Water pipeline for discharge into an infiltration basin and overflow channel
- Discharge **increases downgradient shallow groundwater** levels and **surface flows**, e.g. Bealey Stream and Hororata River
- Supports **aquatic habitats** (incl. for at-risk Canterbury mudfish) and **valued swimming sites**, especially Coes and Chamberlain's Fords





# Near River Recharge – Background

- The site was **officially opened in September 2020** (news story [here](#))
- The facility was **successfully commissioned from 11-29 May 2021** (report [here](#))



# Near River Recharge – Updates

- Conditions **did not require discharge** between July 2022 and June 2023
- **Native were planted** in 2020 and 2022, covering about 1/3 of the ECan-owned 37ha site
  - Plants grow well and are maintained by a contractor
- ECan considers options for the remaining 25ha, with potential for **ecological restoration to braided riverbed and near-river vegetation**
- Ongoing **collaboration with Greendale School for on-site activities** via the [Enviroschools](#) programme



# Near River Recharge – Updates

- Following commissioning in May 2021, ECan worked with project partners to **finalise key documents for regular operation**, incl. a Project Management Plan, Operational Monitoring Plan, and Operation & Maintenance Manual
- ECan's Health, Safety and Wellbeing team completed a site risk assessment in March 2023 as part of creating an **operational Health & Safety Plan**
- ECan teams collaborate on integrating the project into a **Waikirikiri Environmental Infrastructure (WEI) portfolio**, which includes the Targeted Stream Augmentation (Raywell Farm) project and an electric fish barrier to protect Haldon Pasture Springs



# Near River Recharge – Next Steps

- **Finalise an integrated management plan** for the WEI portfolio to ensure effective long-term operation
- **Operate facility under different conditions** to refine operational planning and improve site benefits
- **Determine site's ecological restoration potential**, aligned with our Braided Rivers Revival efforts
- **Continue engagement with Greendale School** through the Enviroschools programme
- **Review project learnings to date** to evaluate the future strategic role of environmental infrastructure





# **Environment Canterbury Regional Council**

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