



Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park

Management Plan



Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park

Contents

Introduction	2
Location	3
History	5
Biodiversity	6
25-year vision	7
Anti-social behaviour	8
Recreation	9
Park Zones – South Bank	10
West End – South Side	10
The Bridges	12
Coldstream – Tulls	14
Lower Ashley	16
Ecological value	19
Future Enhancement	19
Ashley Estuary	19
Park Zones – North Bank	20
Lower Sefton	20
Ashley Township	22
West End – North Side	24
Camping	26
Hunting and shooting	26
References	28



Introduction

The majority of the Ashley River/Rakahuri riverbed and berm area from the Okuku River confluence downstream to the estuary is vested in Environment Canterbury through the Ashley River Improvement Act 1925. The purpose of vesting this land under the Act was to allow river protection works or as an endowment to generate funds for river protection works. The vested land includes 280 hectares of land that is leased out to generate funds for river protection, and 137 hectares of protection pine forest, which generates funds and also provides value within the river protection system. The Ashley/Rakahuri Regional Park (the park) management boundaries also encompass some private land, particularly in the lower reaches. Some private land falls within the river protection stopbanks and must be considered for any future management and development of the park, particularly for planning continuous trail links along the length of the river and for managing public vehicle access near private land.

Because Christchurch City and the townships of Waikuku Beach, Ashley and Rangiora are close, the river and berm area of the Ashley/Rakahuri River have been used informally by the public for recreation and leisure activities for many years. Today, these populations are continuing to expand and place increased pressure and competing demands on the river and its ecology.

Until the passing of the Local Government Act in 2002, Environment Canterbury's management of this land was constrained to the functions authorised under the Soil Conservation and Rivers Control Act 1941. This Act limited the opportunities to promote, develop and manage recreational use of the river space. The Local

Government Act 2002 empowered local authorities to decide which activities they wished to undertake, including providing facilities and amenities. It also increased the accountability of local authorities to their local communities.

The Ashley River/Rakahuri Management Strategy began to take form in 2007. The strategy grew from a community desire to better integrate the protection and endowment management of this land with ecological values and recreational use. The process of producing the strategy began with public consultation meetings. From these, and through invitations to key stakeholders, an advisory group was formed that provided input during the strategy's formation. The advisory group represented many local interests and sectors, including:

- Ashley-Rakahuri Rivercare Group
- Ashley River/Rakahuri Liaison Committee
- Christchurch Ready Mix Concrete Ltd
- Combined 4WD Clubs
- Community representatives from Rangiora, Ashley and Fernside
- Department of Conservation
- Fish & Game Council North Canterbury
- North Canterbury Cycling Club
- Taggart Earthmoving Ltd
- Te Kōhaka o Tūhaitara Trust
- Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga
- Waikuku Community Group
- Waimakariri District Council.

The Ashley River/Rakahuri Management Strategy was completed and adopted into Environment Canterbury's Long Term Council Community Plan in 2009. It was the first step towards achieving a regional park at the Ashley River/Rakahuri.

Environment Canterbury formally approved the initial stages of developing the Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park in the Annual Plan 2010/11. Development of the first stage around the Ashley Loburn Bridge began in 2010, guided by the advisory group and management strategy. The first section of the Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park was formally opened by Environment Canterbury Commissioner Rex Williams on 14 October 2012. As part of the opening, a group of cyclists set off to use and enjoy the newly constructed Rakahuri Trail.

The Ashley River/Rakahuri has one major tributary from the Okuku River. The Okuku River confluence now marks the westernmost boundary of the Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park.



Environment Canterbury Parks and Forests Team Leader David Owen and Commissioner Rex Williams at the Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park opening, October 2012

Location

The Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park encompasses the Ashley River/Rakahuri and berm area from the Okuku River confluence downstream to the Ashley Estuary. This is a distance of roughly 21 kilometres. The land vested in Environment Canterbury under the Ashley River Improvement Act 1925 totals approximately 1700 hectares, although the park covers a slightly smaller area at around 1500 hectares. Some of the vested land is leased out for farming and therefore not included in the park.

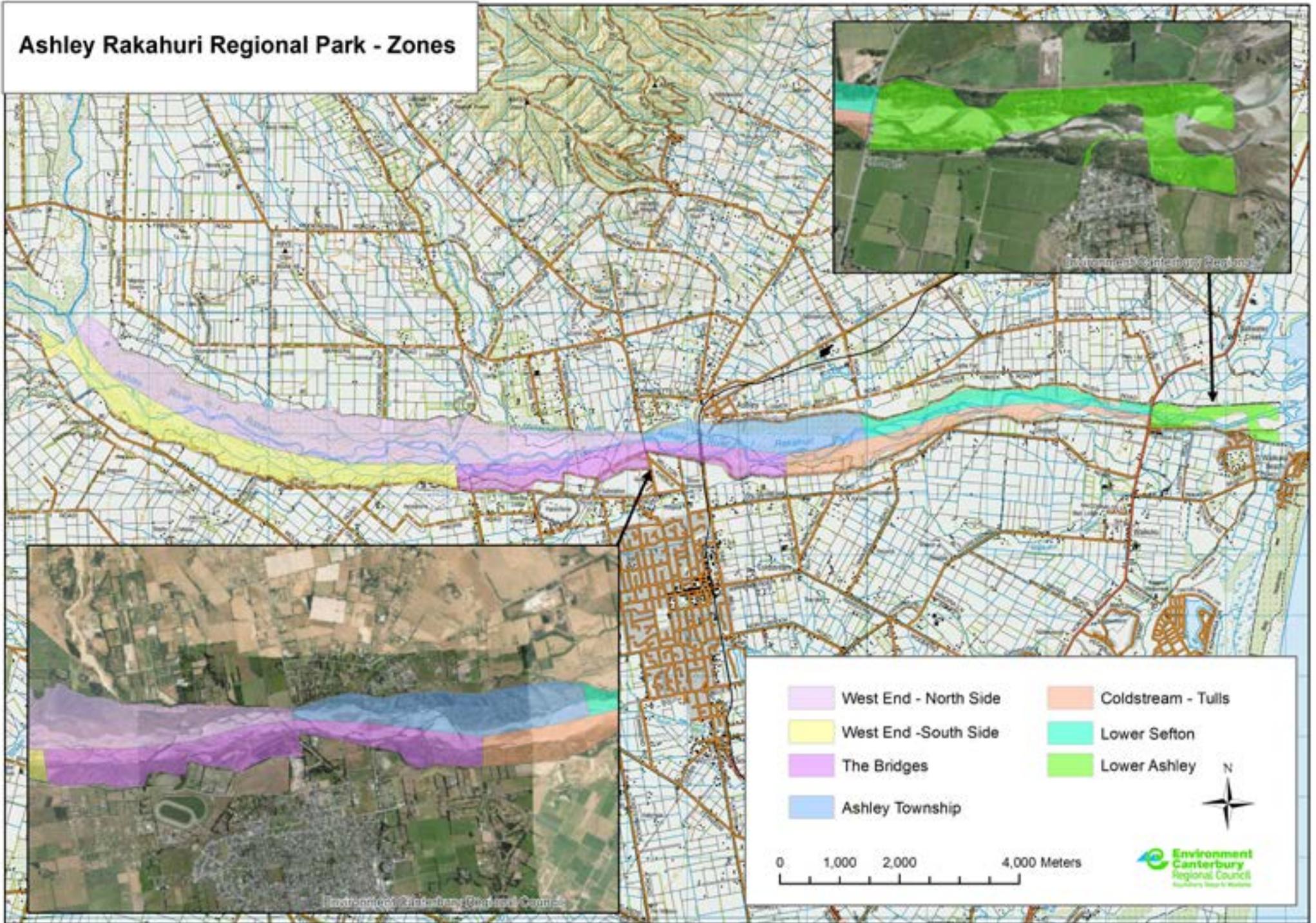
There are multiple access points to the park, but the most popular access points to the Ashley River/Rakahuri are at the Rangiora/Ashley traffic bridge and State Highway 1 bridge.



Legal description	Parcel area ha	Park area ha
RES 4937	0.7589	0.7589
Lot 2 DP 307689	0.8148	0.6166
Part Res 2431 SO 3083	46.8846	34.4767
Part RES 1921	0.7064	0.6676
Part Pt Res 3101	953.5945	920.8212
Part RS 11522	1.551	0.9313
Part RES 3503	76.6805	47.4494
Part RES 1921	22.8675	22.3732
Part RS 2942	2.1103	1.7671
RES 4998	2.7396	0.3436
RES 1382	2.1148	2.1054
Part RS 41888	677.9471	442.4433
Lot 2 DP 4033	0.0386	0.0332
RES 2850	17.135	14.5953
Lot 3 DP 307689	0.1657	0.1657

Legal description	Parcel area ha	Park area ha
Part RES 1921	45.4465	39.9804
Lot 1 DP 24205	4.831	3.1749
Part RS 2931	8.4983	3.6886
Part RES 1921	0.0032	0.0029
RES 2850	6.5137	0.4738
Part RS 9263	1.2795	0.8398
Part RS 9263	1.5661	1.5661
Lot 3 DP 81458	3.3779	3.3034
Lot 1 DP 44595	9.4501	0.0006
Lot 1 DP 4033	0.0973	0.0815
Lot 1 DP 307689	0.1696	0.1533
Lot 41 DP 37088	0.29	0.0349
Part RES 1380	31.1318	18.8712
Part Lot 2 DP 45554	0.8562	0.1288
Total park area		1561.8487

Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park - Zones



History

Rangiora is the district seat and largest town within the Waimakariri District, on the southern side of the Ashley River/Rakahuri. European settlement and farming around the Rangiora area began in the 1850s, with extensive stands of native bush being felled for timber and land cleared for agriculture. The first permanent European settler recorded in Rangiora was Mr Charles Torlesse, in 1851. In the 1860s a number of swamps around Rangiora were drained to increase the area of usable farmland and to create a road link with Christchurch. However it wasn't until a rail link arrived in 1872 that Rangiora's population started to increase significantly.

The Ashley River's official name was changed to the dual name of Ashley River/Rakahuri by the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998. Rakahuri can be translated as 'the sky turned round'. Local Māori Ngāi Tūāhuriri have a significant association to the Rakahuri and wider Waimakariri area based on historical occupation and Mahinga Kai. Before European settlement, there were several Ngāi Tahu settlements in the area known today as the Waimakariri District. The centre of Ngāi Tahu was the pa of Taurakautahi, known today as Kaiapoi. Today, the hapu Ngāi Tuahuriri remain and are based at Tuahiwi, to the north of Kaiapoi.

The Ashley River/Rakahuri starts with headwaters in the Puketeraki Range, northwest of Rangiora. This river is relatively steep compared with other braided rivers in New Zealand and moves a substantial amount of sediment. It also has a long history of flooding. The last time the Ashley River/Rakahuri breached its stopbanks was in 1953. The water broke out on the southern side of the river next to the Rangiora traffic bridge, in an area now known as 'Break Bank'. The waters flowed through Rangiora and out towards Kaiapoi, Woodend and Waikuku, causing large amounts of damage and forcing many people to abandon their homes. River engineering and protection works have since managed to prevent any major breakouts, although the river came close in 1986 and again in 2002.



Rangiora-Loburn traffic bridge at the height of the 25 January 1951 flood. Donated by Mrs C Tyler to Rangiora and Districts Early Records Society



The Coldstream area, showing the major overflows, and the extent of flooding between Rangiora Golf Course and the sea. Photo by L Ernle Clark for North Canterbury Catchment Board

Biodiversity

The Ashley River/Rakahuri hosts a rich array of valuable biodiversity through a range of different environmental conditions. While this is not the largest braided river in Canterbury, the Ashley River/Rakahuri has been described as an ecological treasure with value disproportionate to its size. Conditions at the Ashley River/Rakahuri range from high-rainfall forest conditions at the western end to an estuarine tidal environment in the lower reaches. Valuable pockets of native vegetation survive along the river edge mixed amongst the exotic plant species.

One of the most widely known and highly valued assets of the Ashley River/Rakahuri are its native braided river birds. Many endangered and threatened bird species travel the length of the river in search of food, and nest and breed in the river shingle. The Wrybill (*Anarhynchus frontalis*), Banded dotterel (*Charadrius bicinctus*), Black fronted tern (*Chlidonias albobristatus*), White-fronted tern (*Sterna striata*), Pied stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*) and the nationally critical Black-billed gull (*Chroicocephalus bulleri*) are the most widely recognised of the braided river birds. The Ashley-Rakahuri Rivercare Group takes the lead on advocating for these birds as much as possible, with support from Environment Canterbury Park Rangers.

Valuable native plants are widely dispersed along the length of the Ashley River/Rakahuri, with pockets of remnant native vegetation throughout the river berm. At the western end of the park, pockets of native grey scrub and dry tolerant species exist in the berm among

the exotic weed species, including *Carmichaelia robusta*, *Corokia cotoneaster*, *Coprosma propinqua*, *Sophora microphylla* and *Kunzea serotina*. Many of the wet spaces along the length of the park contain native remnant wetland vegetation, including *Cordyline australis*, *Carex secta*, *Phormium tenax*, *Austraderia richardii* and *Blechnum minus*.

In the lower reaches of the park where additional tributaries and drains add volume to the river, wet areas inside the stopbank become more frequent. Many of these wet areas host established populations of native wetland species including sedges and wetland grasses. Raupo Berm in Lower Ashley is a good example of historic backwaters containing remnant sedges (*Carex secta*, *C. flagellifera*, *Phormium tenax* and *Typha australis*) and scarce but valuable native shrubs (*Kunzea serotina*, *Ozothamus leptophylla*, *Coprosma robusta* and *Coriaria arborea*).

Future work in the park should focus on enhancing the existing remnant native vegetation pockets and valuable habitat types, particularly wetlands and minor waterway areas. Protecting and enhancing plant diversity provides more food and habitat for native fauna and can help increase invertebrate numbers and diversity, which can in turn boost the native bird and fish populations. Enhancement of native vegetation pockets on the river berm can have positive flow on benefits for the entire river ecosystem.



The Wrybill breeds in our braided river systems and is the only bird in the world with a beak that curves sideways



Native regeneration planting below a canopy of exotic trees

25-year vision

The Ashley River/Rakahuri will be valued as a recreation destination by locals and visitors alike. The increased value seen in the Ashley River/Rakahuri will be reflected in visitor numbers, community participation in river care projects and through a shift towards positive behaviour and activities within the park.

The park will provide a valuable recreation and biodiversity link between the coast and the mountains. Walking and cycling trails will link with adjoining Te Kōhaka o Tūhaitara trails.

The berm area will be well forested with a mixture of river protection species, pine forest blocks and established native plantings. The native plantings will provide self-sustaining core habitats along the length of the park for native fauna. A wide range of native birds will utilise the river as a breeding ground and as a passageway from the Pegasus Bay foreshore to the foothills and mountains.

Recreation, leisure and education opportunities provided at the park will enhance people's appreciation for the natural environment. People will primarily visit for these purposes, with anti-social behaviour having been largely displaced.

All park developments will fit together seamlessly with river engineering infrastructure, with both practices working with and supporting the other.

Each of the goals and objectives set under the original Ashley River/Rakahuri Management Strategy will be realised, through the careful management of the park guided by this longterm management plan.



Mixed native and exotic vegetation on the banks of the Ashley River/Rakahuri

Anti-social behaviour

Current anti-social behaviour at the park takes up resourcing and adds extra burden to day-to-day management. Implementing a longterm plan will help to address negative behaviour throughout the lower Ashley River/Rakahuri rather than just transferring it to different locations. Reducing negative behaviour will also help to free up resourcing that could be used for more positive purposes, and improve the public perception of the park.

Motorised recreation, particularly four wheel driving and off-road motorbike riding, causes a lot of damage to river protection infrastructure and creates conflict with people trying to engage in non-motorised recreation. Motor vehicles can also be particularly disturbing to braided river birds trying to breed in the river environment.

Many of the people involved in motorised activities are oblivious or indifferent to the conflict with other park users, river protection infrastructure and the environment. While motorised activities can be a valid form of recreation, management is needed to separate motorised from non-motorised recreation to reduce conflict between park users and protect the natural environment.

Car dumping and burning and litter dumping are also behaviours currently occurring at the park. These activities damage river control infrastructure and river ecology, use up resources and negatively influence public perception of the river space. Littering of all types will be discouraged by creating a positively valued, clean and well managed space that does not readily invite negative behaviours.



A newly grass seeded picnic area destroyed by a vehicle

Recreation

The Ashley River/Rakahuri has been home to a wide range of water and land-based recreation and leisure activities for many years. Most of the activities are informal, such as swimming, fishing and camping. However in recent years, particularly since the development of the Rakahuri Trail, some formally organised events have been held. The Rakahuri Rage cycle race is a popular local cycle race that has been held annually since the development of the Rakahuri Trail.

The original management strategy set a goal to provide for safe and balanced recreation with a minimum of conflict between widely different user groups. Within this goal, the strategy lists the following objectives for recreation:

- To protect and enhance the sport fishery of the Ashley River/Rakahuri
- Recreational users value the river environment and flood protection system and use them sensitively without causing damage
- Recreational river users will have clear understanding of what activities are welcomed and appropriate in different sections of the river
- Sections of the river are attractive, natural and safe areas to visit for family recreation
- Recreational opportunities are maintained and extended
- Noisy and dangerous misuse of vehicles is eliminated in the heavily used sections of the river and minimised elsewhere.

The purpose of this management plan is to set a framework for achieving these objectives.

Future management based on this plan will aim to separate motorised recreation from non-motorised recreation so that activities such as walking, cycling, picnicking and camping can be better promoted and utilised throughout the park. Motorised recreation is recognised as a valid form of recreation and will still be permitted in some sections of the park. The Combined 4WD Clubs were consulted during the creation of the original strategy and advocated for their recreational user base. Motorbike riding and 4WD activity will be permitted in some locations, although this will have to be monitored to make sure that no excess damage is happening to the river berm. There are several picnic spots identified in this plan as points for future development, which may also double as better managed and utilised camping locations. There is also a proposed extension to the south bank walking and cycling trail that would allow it to run from the coast to the west end of the park and beyond.

The mixture of river protection vegetation along the length of the river offers visitors a permanent semi-wilderness recreation area. The changing vegetation appearance with growth and replanting, as well as the mixture of different vegetation on offer, will keep the park fresh and dynamic for visitors.



Riders on the Rakahuri Trail for the 2016 Rakahuri Rage mountain bike race

PARK ZONES – SOUTH BANK

West End – South Side (Groyne 11–Groyne 2)

West End – South Side covers the area from Groyne 11 to Groyne 2 on the south bank of the Ashley River/Rakahuri. This zone offers a semi-wilderness natural setting, with potential spots for picnic area enhancement, walking trails and managed vehicle access points to the river.

Vehicle access should be controlled in this section of the park, with managed vehicle access to the river and picnicking and camping locations. Walking trails could be established along the river berm to link the picnic and camping sites.

The area available for development in this section may increase in future, with river engineering plans to extend the flood protection control line into the riverbed. This means that the river berm would be extended further out into the river. River access and tracks must be maintained as part of this development.

Future enhancement:

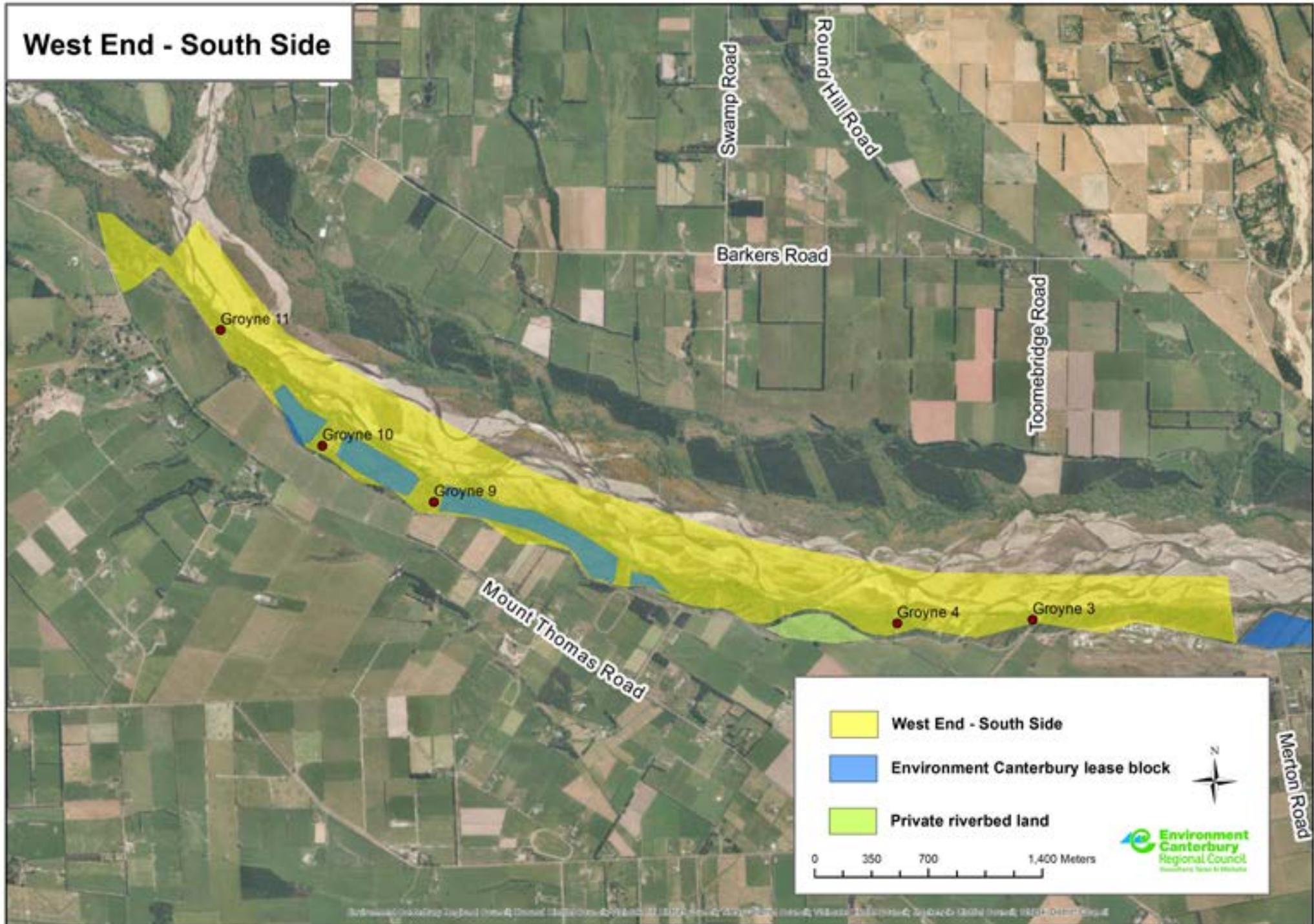
Several locations in this section would readily lend themselves for enhancement as picnicking and camping locations:

- Groyne 3: the open greenspace at the end could be enhanced as a picnic location.
- Groyne 4: has historically been a popular swimming spot, with a water hole at the end of the groyne. This could be a good location for managed river access.

- Groyne 9: offers one of the largest and most attractive greenspaces, which could be utilised for picnicking and camping. There is an extensive established native planting that could be further enhanced, plus good river access.
- Groyne 10: currently offers some open greenspace mixed with willow trees for good shade at the end, which could be enhanced as a picnic and possible camping location. Historically groyne 10 has offered a popular swimming spot in the summer months and would be a good location to maintain river access.
- Groyne 11: there is an open greenspace and some willow trees offering good shade at the end. This could be a good location to enhance for picnicking or camping and to manage river access. There are some small native plantings that could be further enhanced.

Category	West End – South Side	Reason for category
Permitted	Picnicking	Preferred activity
	Fishing	Preferred activity
	Portable gas BBQ	Preferred activity
	Walking	Preferred activity
Managed	Gamebird hunting (waterfowl only)	Open access but must comply with regulations
	Camping or campervans overnight	Self-containment required, encouraged to use preferred camping areas
	Dogs under control in all areas except where specifically prohibited	Protection of birdlife, conflict with other users
	Cyclists on identified tracks	Conflict with walkers and horse riders
Restricted	4WDs on managed river access tracks only	Protect river berm, allow managed river access, reduce conflict with other park users
	Horses on managed river access tracks	Protect river berm, allow managed river access, reduce conflict with other park users
	Events	Permit required
Prohibited	Commercial filming	Permit required
	Commercial operations	Permit required
	Trailbikes/ATVs	Conflict with other users, protection of the environment

West End - South Side



The Bridges (Groyne 21 – Groyne 2)

The Bridges covers the area from Groyne 2 to Groyne 21 on the south bank of the Ashley River/Rakahuri. This section of the park is already highly managed because of its closeness to Rangiora. There is infrastructure in place with fencing, carparks, park furniture and an established section of the Rakahuri Trail for walking and cycling, as well as the Mike Kean Walkway.

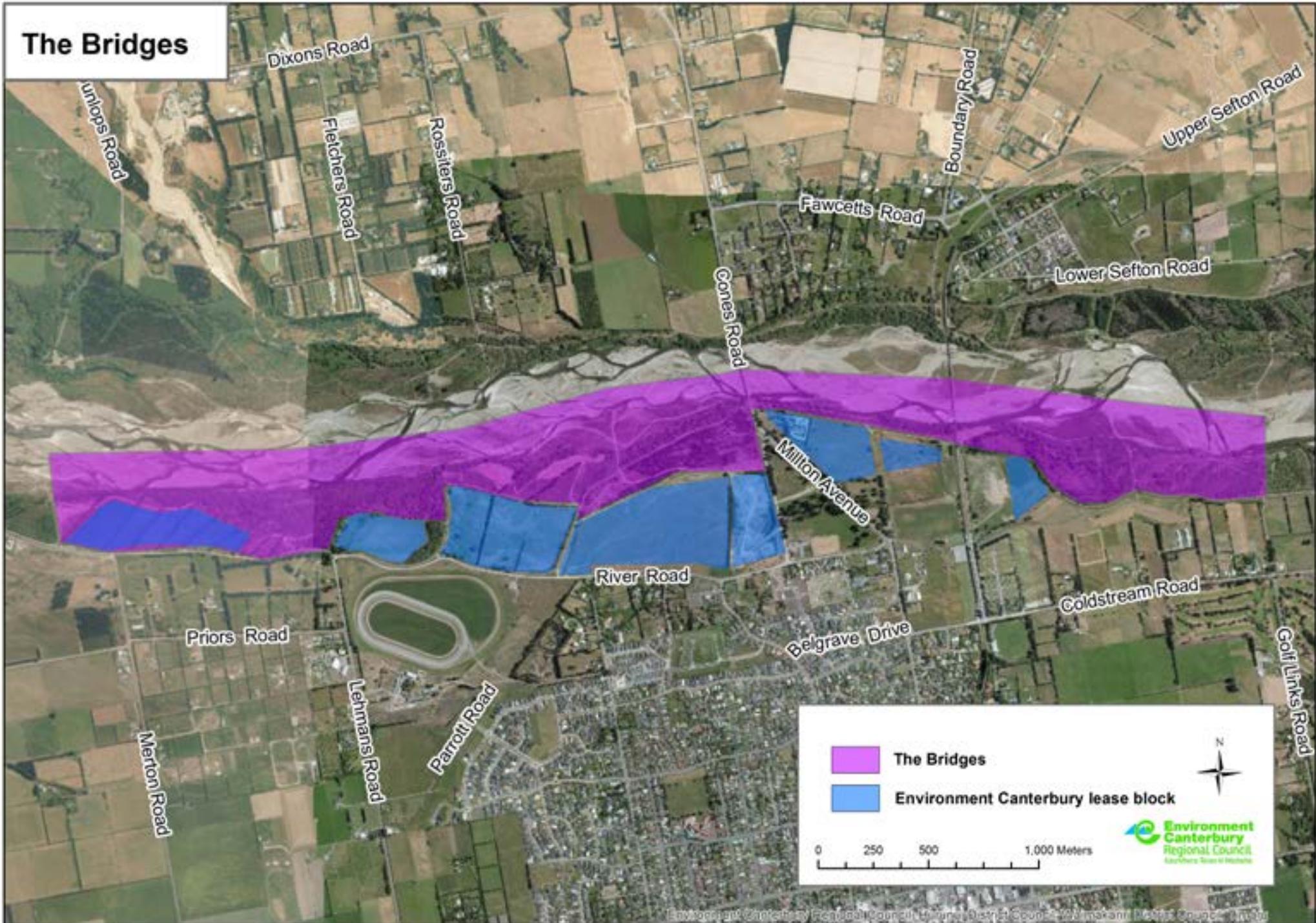
This section includes the 'Break Bank' picnic area, where the river broke through the stopbank in 1953. This section of river berm and stopbank is a noted weak point in flood events and highlights the importance of parks and river engineering staff working together to create a valued space where the river protection infrastructure is not damaged. Break Bank could benefit from night gate installation to further reduce any negative behaviours after hours.

As well as maintaining the existing infrastructure, further landscape planting and regeneration work could benefit this section.

The westernmost end of the Rakahuri Trail finishes in this section of park, leaving room for future development to continue the trail further west.

Category	The Bridges	Reason for category
Permitted	Picnicking	Preferred activity
	Fishing	Preferred activity
	Portable gas BBQ	Preferred activity
	Walking	Preferred activity
Managed	Dogs under control in all areas except where specifically prohibited	Protection of birdlife, conflict with other users
	Horses on managed river access tracks	Protect river berm, allow managed river access, reduce conflict with other park users
	Cyclists on identified tracks	Conflict with walkers and horse riders
	Camping or campervans overnight	Self-containment required, encouraged to use preferred camping areas
Restricted	Events	Permit required
	Commercial filming	Permit required
	Commercial operations	Permit required
Prohibited	Trailbikes/ATVs	Conflict with other users, protection of the environment
	4WDs	Conflict with other users, protection of the environment
	Gamebird hunting	Conflict with other users, close proximity to population centre

The Bridges



Coldstream – Tulls (Groyne 21 – SH1)

Coldstream – Tulls covers the area from Groyne 21 on the south bank east as far as the State Highway 1 bridge. There are several private land parcels among the Environment Canterbury-owned land in this section. This means that the park is not one continuous section, but must negotiate private land pockets that intersect it. Currently most of the private land parcels are not fenced off. The relevant private land owners should be consulted in management decisions as part of park development where those decisions could impact upon the adjacent private land parcel. These private land parcels should be fenced off to better manage vehicle and public access.

This section of park would benefit from improvement to the roads and managing vehicles to only use formed tracks. Vehicles should utilise controlled access points to the river and picnic locations.

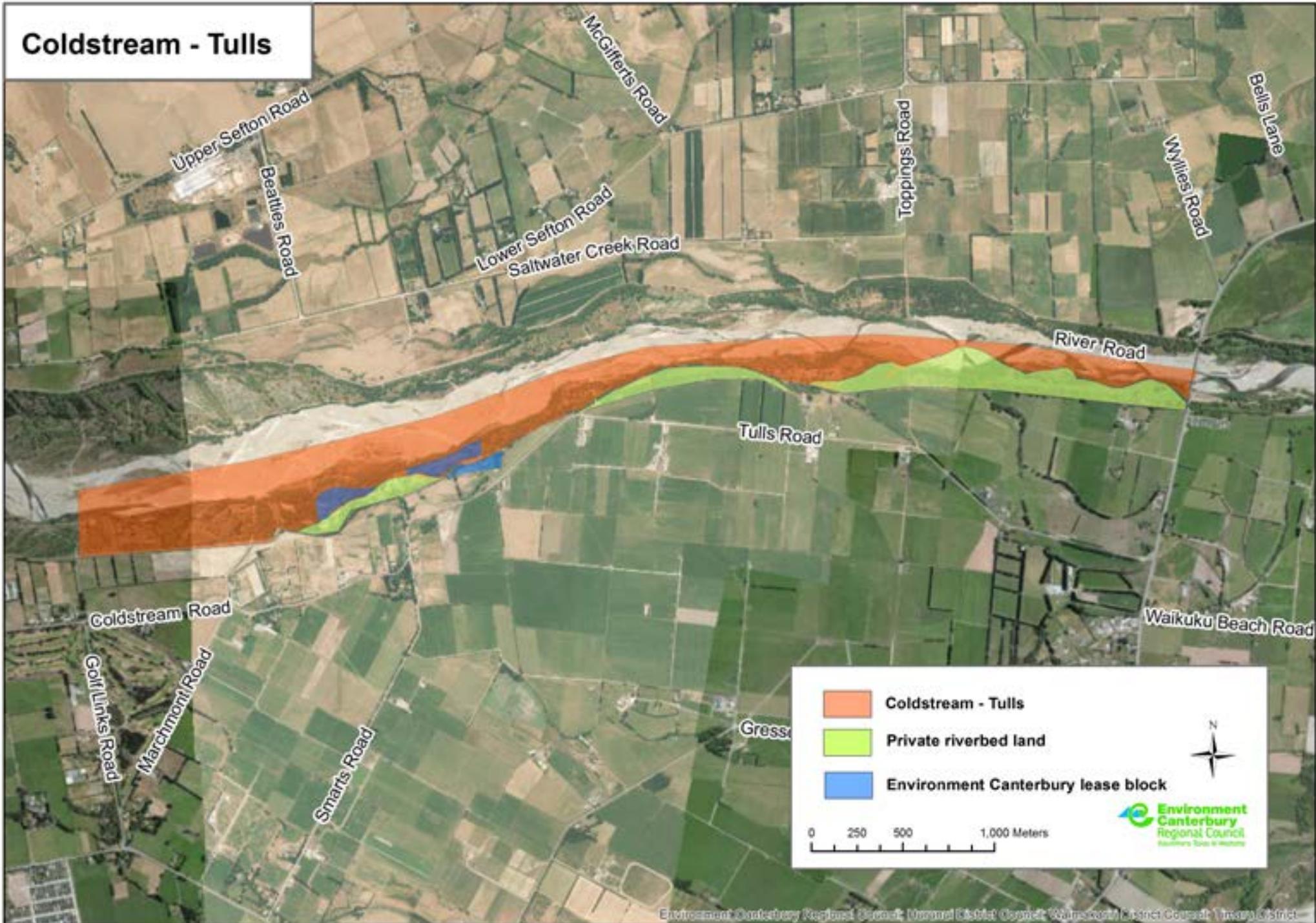
The Rakahuri Trail should be extended through this section to ensure east-to-west continuity of walking and cycling trails. The location of this trail extension would have to be carefully planned around the private land parcels and new fencing.

Groyne 22

Groyne 22 offers a large flat greenspace area with an established native planting that would provide a good base for further enhancement as a picnic or camping location. The groyne has potential as a park space but is currently very exposed to vandalism and damage from unrestricted vehicle access. Groyne 22 offers the easternmost point for potential development in this section of park, other than extending the walking and cycling trail link eastward.

Category	Coldstream – Tulls	Reason for category
Permitted	Picnicking	Preferred activity
	Fishing	Preferred activity
	Portable gas BBQ	Preferred activity
	Walking	Preferred activity
Managed	Camping or campervans overnight	Self-containment required, encouraged to use preferred camping areas
	Horses on identified trails	Managed river access, conflict with walkers and cyclists
	Cyclists on identified tracks	Conflict with walkers and horse riders
	Dogs under control in all areas except where specifically prohibited	Protection of birdlife, conflict with other users
	Gamebird hunting (waterfowl only)	Restricted hunting to avoid conflict with other users
Restricted	4WDs	Protect river berm, allow managed river access, reduce conflict with other park users
	Events	Permit required
	Commercial filming	Permit required
Prohibited	Commercial operations	Permit required
	Trailbikes/ATVs	Conflict with other users, protection of the environment

Coldstream - Tulls



Environment Canterbury Regional Council, Uruaro District Council, Waikuku District Council, Tairāwhiti District

Lower Ashley (SH1 – Estuary, north and south bank)

Lower Ashley covers all of the park between the State Highway 1 bridge to the start of the Estuary, including both the north and south banks of the river. Development in the Lower Ashley is limited by the low lying, flood prone nature of the land. The Estuary is not part of the park and is instead covered under the Northern Pegasus Bay Coastal Management Plan and Waimakariri District Council bylaws.

The Lower Ashley is particularly important to local rūnanga, especially the area known as Raupo Berm. Raupo Berm refers to the eastern most section of the Lower Ashley on the north bank of the river. This is a high value fishing site, and access for fishing and during whitebait season should be maintained for the public. Raupo Berm is also a popular overnight camping spot during summer. It is especially important to consider local rūnanga when undertaking any developments in Lower Ashley.

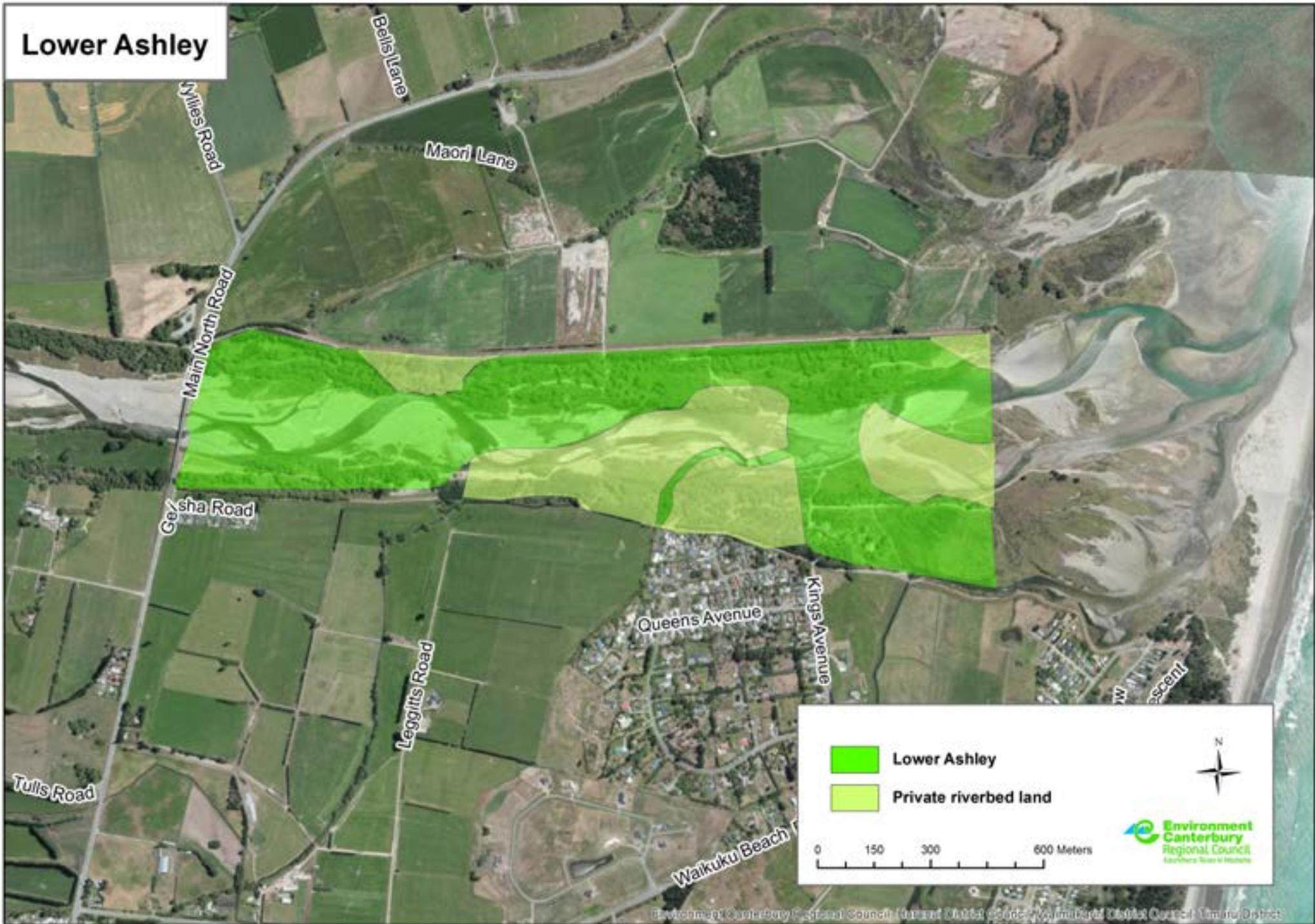
There is an established walking and cycling trail on the south bank in this section of park, known as the Taranaki Trail. Further extension of the Taranaki Trail would provide a vital link to connect the Rakahuri Trail to the west with the Pegasus Bay walking and cycling trail to the east, ensuring a continuous trail right along the south bank of the river.

There are several plantings already established along the Taranaki Trail, as well as pockets of remnant native vegetation with high ecological importance. Maintenance and enhancement planting in this area should be a priority.

There are private land parcels among the Environment Canterbury-owned land in this section. The relevant land owners should be consulted when making management decisions about the park that could affect adjacent private land pockets.

Category	Lower Ashley	Reason for category
Permitted	Picnicking	Preferred activity
	Fishing	Preferred activity
	Portable gas BBQ	Preferred activity
	Walking	Preferred activity
Managed	Gamebird hunting (waterfowl only), north bank	Open access but must comply with regulations
	Camping or campervans overnight	Self-containment required, encouraged to use preferred camping areas
	Cyclists on identified tracks	Managed to avoid conflict with other users
	Horses on managed river access tracks	Managed river access to avoid conflict with other users
	Dogs under control in all areas except where specifically prohibited	Protection of birdlife, conflict with other users
Restricted	4WDs	Protect river berm, allow managed river access, reduce conflict with other park users
	Events	Permit required
	Commercial filming	Permit required
	Commercial operations	Permit required
Prohibited	Trailbikes/ATVs	Conflict with other users, protection of the environment
	Dogs in the Estuary (outside the scope of this plan)	Prohibited under Pegasus Bay Bylaw
	Gamebird hunting (waterfowl only), south bank	Conflict with other users, close proximity to population centre

Lower Ashley



Future Work



Environment Canterbury Regional Council, Map of the Park, Town of Waikuku and District Council, Tiramoa District

Ecological value

There are several pockets of native planting and remnant vegetation in the Lower Ashley that should be considered for restoration and enhancement. The most significant of these pockets is highlighted. This area encompasses an important whitebait/inanga spawning site and should be a priority for restoration and enhancement.

Future Enhancement

There are several spots within Lower Ashley that are popular for camping and could benefit from further enhancement for this purpose.

Enhancement could include levelling and grassing of sites, enhancement planting and general tidying of the areas.

Ashley Estuary

The Ashley Estuary falls outside of the scope of the Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park management. The Ashley Estuary is a highly valuable ecological hotspot and any management decisions made for the park further upstream may have flow on impacts on the estuary environment further downstream that should be considered.

The Ashley Estuary provides internationally significant habitat for migratory birds like the Bar-tailed Godwit, as well as providing autumn and winter habitat and feeding grounds for several threatened braided river bird species. The Estuary is also an important habitat for many native fish species. Inanga (whitebait), eels, Koaro, flounder, common smelt, torrent fish and bullies are all known to spend part of their lifecycle in the Ashley Estuary. The freshwater-saltwater transition zones of many of the small tributaries feeding in to the Ashley Estuary provide important Inanga spawning habitat.



The Ashley Estuary is an ecological hotspot, providing habitat for a range of bird and fish species.

PARK ZONES – NORTH BANK

Lower Sefton (SH1 – Beatties Road)

Lower Sefton covers the area from the State Highway 1 Bridge to Beatties Road on the north bank of the Ashley River/Rakahuri. This area is largely open to most types of recreation, although none are specifically provided for. Existing tracks and natural areas are available for a variety of uses. This area is popular with motorbike riders and 4WDs and has minimal use as a non-motorised recreation destination. Enhancement of the park access point and parking area next to State Highway 1 plus enhancement of native plantings, especially at Toppings Road, should be a priority for this area.

Enhancement of Park Entrance

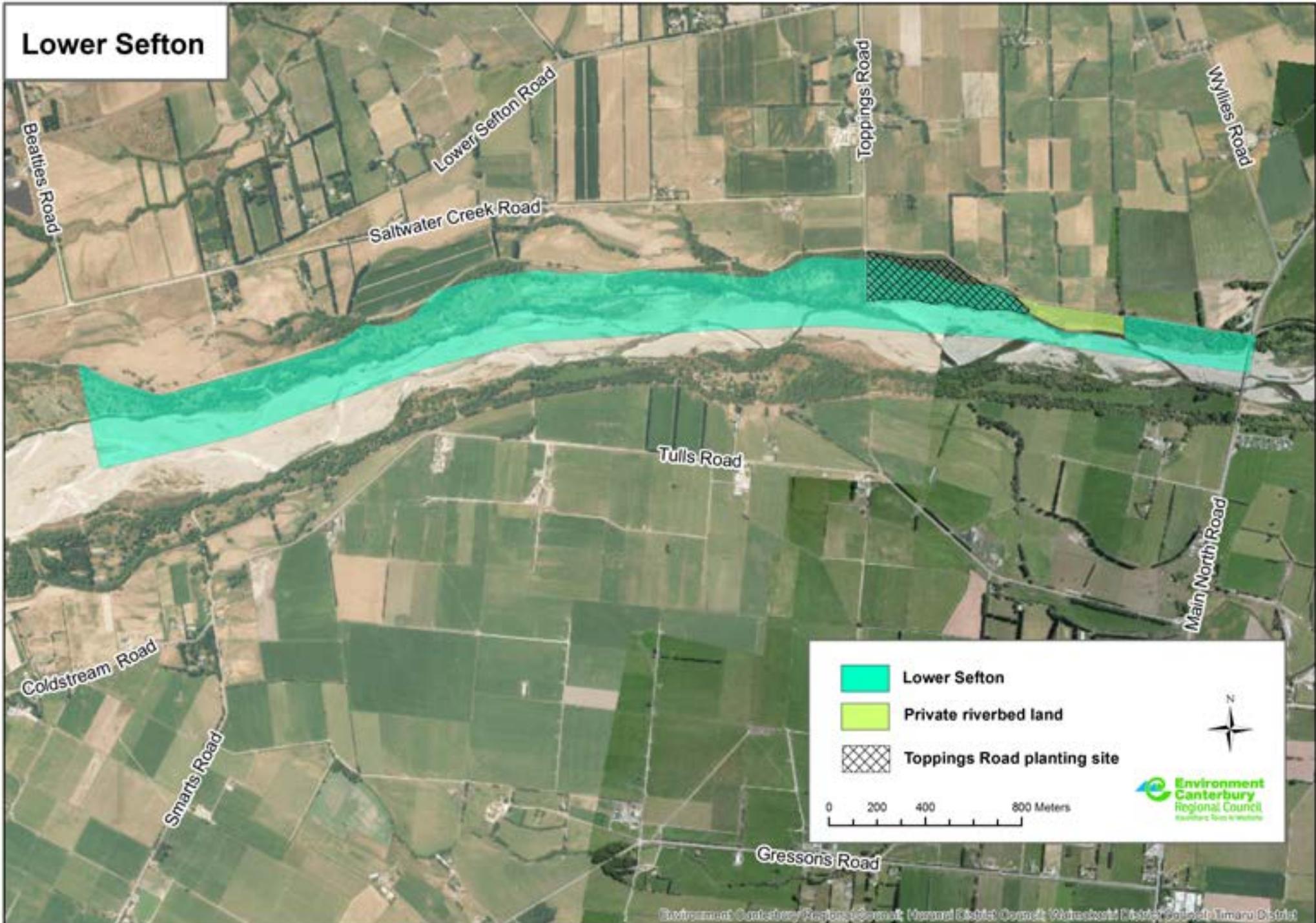
The current river access point on the north bank of the river, directly west of the State Highway 1 bridge, has potential to be enhanced as an attractive entrance point to the river. Currently the area is very underwhelming and prone to rubbish dumping and other vandalism. Enhancement planting and infrastructure could greatly improve the value of this location as a river access spot. This location could also serve as a launching point for trailbike riders to head west.

Toppings Road

A native planting has been established in a section of the river berm at the end of Toppings Road. Although there is still value in the remnant planting, the area has become overgrown and damaged by 4WD activity especially. Vehicle access should be blocked into the Toppings Road planting so the area can be managed and allowed to thrive. This planting has the potential to be a valuable ecological hotspot in the lower Ashley River/Rakahuri.

Category	Lower Sefton	Reason for category
Permitted	Picnicking	Permitted in the area
	Fishing	Permitted in the area
	Portable gas BBQ	Permitted in the area
	Walking	Permitted in the area
	Cyclists	Permitted in the area
	Horses	Permitted in the area
	Dogs under control in all areas except where specifically prohibited	Permitted in the area
Managed	Gamebird hunting (waterfowl only)	Open access but must comply with regulations
	Camping or campervans overnight	Self-containment required
	Trailbikes/ATVs	Excluded from planting sites
	4WDs	Excluded from planting sites
Restricted	Events	Permit required
	Commercial filming	Permit required
	Commercial operations	Permit required

Lower Sefton



Ashley Township (Beatties Road – Rangiora bridge)

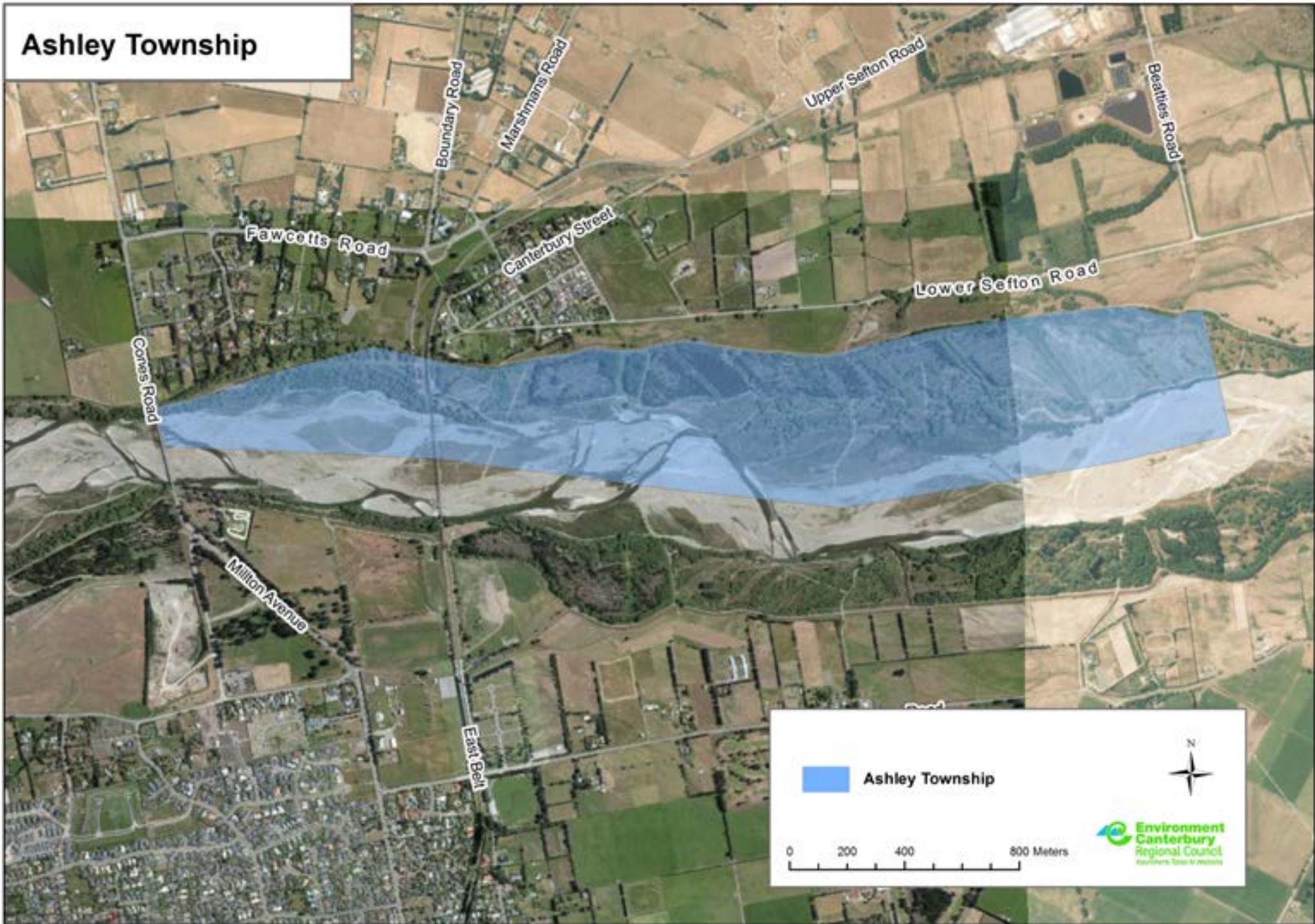
Ashley Township covers the section of park between Beatties Road and the Rangiora/Ashley bridge on the north bank of the Ashley River/Rakahuri. This section of park is directly adjacent to the small town of Ashley. The residents are likely to be some of the highest users in this particular section of park and would benefit from direct walking and cycling access trails from town. Ashley residents have expressed a desire for informal walking and cycling nature trails, especially down through the pine plantation at the eastern end of this section. Eventually Ashley and The Bridges sections of park should mirror one another, becoming desirable and well managed recreation spaces.

Current unrestricted vehicle access throughout this area means there is frequent undesirable behaviour like littering and reckless driving. Restricting vehicle access to this section is necessary to create a desirable park space with the walking, cycling and picnic facilities that the local community would like. The gravel riverbed in this section is a core bird-breeding stretch of river and would greatly benefit from controlled vehicle access.

This section can be popular during the summer months as people access local swimming holes in the river. The most popular access point is next to the Rangiora/Ashley bridge. When planning infrastructure, particularly carparking requirements, allowances should be made to facilitate people getting to swimming holes where possible. A carpark may be required at this access point, with vehicles prohibited from the remaining section of park.

Category	Ashley township	Reason for category
Permitted	Picnicking	Preferred activity
	Fishing	Preferred activity
	Portable gas BBQ	Preferred activity
	Walking	Preferred activity
Managed	Dogs under control in all areas except where specifically prohibited	Protection of birdlife, conflict with other users
	Horses on managed river access tracks	Protect river berm, allow managed river access, reduce conflict with other park users
	Cyclists on identified tracks	Conflict with walkers and horse riders
	Camping or campervans overnight	Self containment required, encouraged to use preferred camping areas
Restricted	Events	Permit required
	Commercial filming	Permit required
	Commercial operations	Permit required
Prohibited	Trailbikes/ATVs	Conflict with other users, protection of the environment
	4WDs	Conflict with other users, protection of the environment
	Gamebird hunting	Conflict with other users, close proximity to population centre

Ashley Township



West End – North Side (Rangiora bridge – Barkers Road)

West End – North Side covers the section of park between the Rangiora/Ashley bridge to Barkers Road near the Okuku River confluence, on the north bank of the River. This section sits below a river terrace and is predominantly tree-covered, including a pine plantation. Current infrastructure and management of this area is minimal due to low demand and relative isolation.

There is a popular picnic and swimming spot just upstream of the Rangiora/Ashley bridge which is accessed from the Ashley side of the bridge. This already popular spot would benefit from further enhancement as a picnic area including an upgraded entrance point and a night gate to control access.

Upstream access to the remainder of West End – North Side is from Rossiters Road and a number of unsealed roads running off Barkers Road, Loburn.

West End – North Side is currently utilised informally by 4WD vehicles, motorbikes and ATVs. Motorised recreation should continue to be permitted in this section, with intervening management only if the vehicles cause damage to property or infrastructure, or otherwise cause a nuisance. This area could also be earmarked for further enhancement as a motorised recreation destination if further demand was received from relevant local clubs.

Duck hunters are also known to use the ponds along this section during duck hunting season. Because of the demand from gamebird hunters and the relatively low local population base, this area is classified an 'open' restriction gamebird hunting area within the park.

Category	West End – North Side	Reason for category
Permitted	Picnicking	Permitted in the area
	Fishing	Permitted in the area
	Portable gas BBQ	Permitted in the area
	Walking	Permitted in the area
	Cyclists	Permitted in the area
	Horses	Permitted in the area
	Dogs under control in all areas except where specifically prohibited	Permitted in the area
Managed	Gamebird hunting (waterfowl only)	Open access but must comply with regulations
	Camping or campervans overnight	Self-containment required
	Trailbikes/ATVs	Excluded from planting sites
	4WDs	Excluded from planting sites
Restricted	Events	Permit required
	Commercial filming	Permit required
	Commercial operations	Permit required



West End - North Side



Camping

Camping is prohibited behind locked park gates. All campers are required to be self-contained. Littering or causing damage to surroundings is prohibited in all park areas.



Hunting and shooting

Environment Canterbury recognises game bird hunting as a legitimate form of recreation and along with Fish & Game New Zealand (North Canterbury Region) is working to ensure continued hunter access. However, as the number of visitors to the park increases, so too does the conflict between hunters and other park visitors. Guidelines are required for when and where gamebird hunting is permitted.

Criteria for hunting and shooting at the Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park:

- Only game bird hunting is permitted within the Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park, including the riverbed
- The hunting of small game such as rabbits and possums by the general public is prohibited
- Game bird hunting must only occur in designated areas
- Only shotguns may be used

- A valid Fish and Game hunting licence must be held
- Fish & Game Regulations and the 'Game Bird Hunting Code of Practice' must be adhered to.

Conditions that apply to gamebird hunting at the Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park:

- Open hunting – gamebird hunting is permitted, provided hunters follow the above criteria including adhering to Fish and Game Regulations
- Restricted hunting – gamebird hunting is permitted between dawn and gam, provided hunters follow the above criteria including adhering to Fish and Game Regulations
- Prohibited hunting – gamebird hunting is prohibited in these areas at all times.

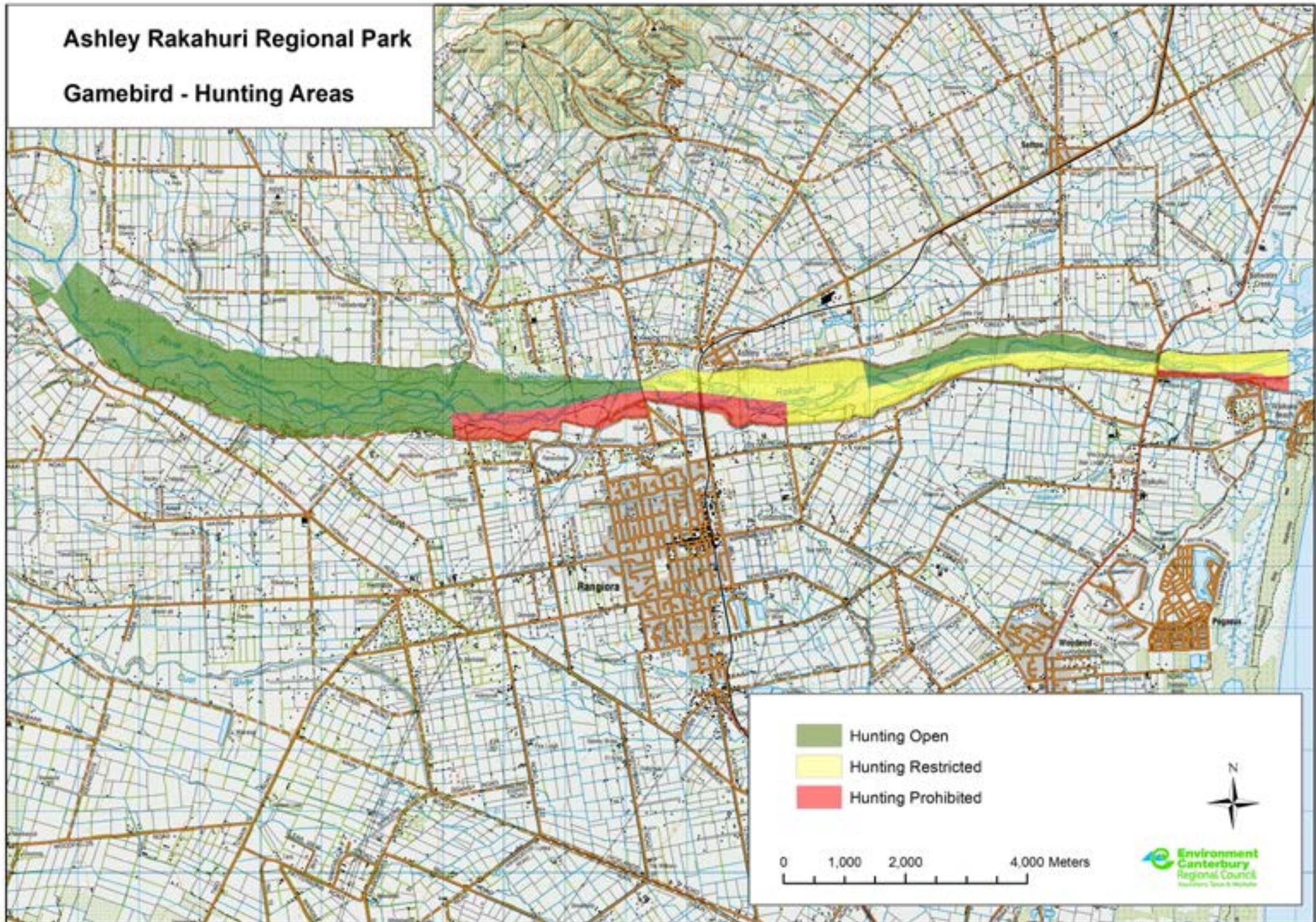
Target shooting with all types of firearm is prohibited within the Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park.



Gamebird hunting is a recognised form of recreation and is permitted at several locations in the Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park.

Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park

Gamebird - Hunting Areas



References

Annual Plan 2010/11. Environment Canterbury, 2010.

A J Boyle, M R Surman. Ashley River bed level investigation (R09/71). Environment Canterbury, September 2009.

G Byrnes. Ashley River/Rakahuri: Management Strategy – A Community Vision. Environment Canterbury, July 2008.

<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/1966/rangiora> An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand 1966.



The transition zone between the lower Ashley River/Rakahuri and the Ashley Estuary.

Please contact Environment Canterbury's Customer Services for further information:

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Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park
