



Orari, Temuka, Opihi and Paerora (OTOP) Zone - “Current Pathways” Planning Overview – November 2016

Purpose

This paper summarises the regional plans that currently manage the freshwater resources of the OTOP Zone

The planning framework is complex. Regional plans must comply with the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). The plans must give effect to national policy - the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management 2014 (NPSFM), New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010 (NZCPS), and regional policy - the Canterbury Regional Policy Statement 2013 (CRPS). Regional plans must also take into account other planning documents recognised by iwi and management plans prepared under other statutes.

The government has also issued five National environmental standards¹ (regulations under the RMA), including a national standard to protect ‘Sources of Human Drinking Water’.

In Canterbury, regional freshwater plans must also meet the requirements of the Environment Canterbury (Transitional Governance Arrangements) Act 2016. Appendix 1 shows how the regional plans fit with in the planning framework. Appendix 4 summarises the key features of the NPSFM.

The ‘Healthy Catchments’ project

This project is about managing the surface and groundwater resources in part of the OTOP zone. The ‘Current Pathways’ scenario poses the question:

if there the existing regional plans were fully implemented would they achieve the outcomes sought by the Zone Committee and the community?

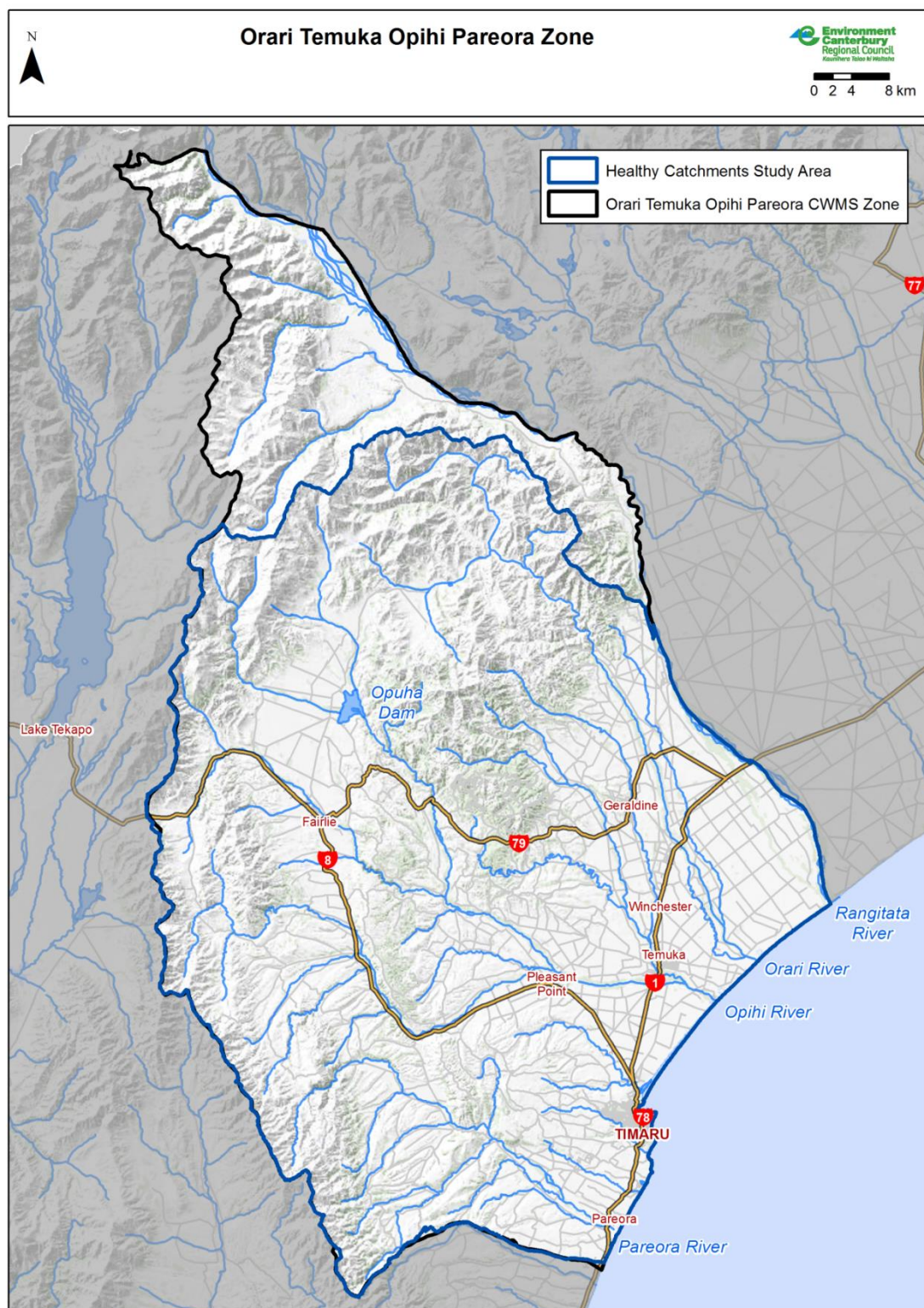
The boundary of the Healthy Catchments Project largely coincides with the sub-region boundary of Section 14 of the LWRP. It follows the Pareora catchment, the headwaters of the Opihi and Orari Rivers, and the boundary of the Rangitata River (Figure 1). The northern part of the sub region planning boundary, however, lies to the south of the Rangitata River and follows the boundary of the Red and Green Nutrient Allocation Zones along Edgar Road. The inland part of the OTOP Zone lies within Section 12 - Central Canterbury Alpine Rivers of the LWRP, and is covered by the Rangitata Water Conservation Order 2006. The Coastal Marine Area forms the seaward boundary of the project area.

The project falls within the takiwa (area) of two Ngai Tahu rūnanga – Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua and Te Rūnanga o Waihao.

¹ <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/rma/rma-legislative-tools/national-environmental-standards>



Figure 1. Boundary of the Healthy Catchments project



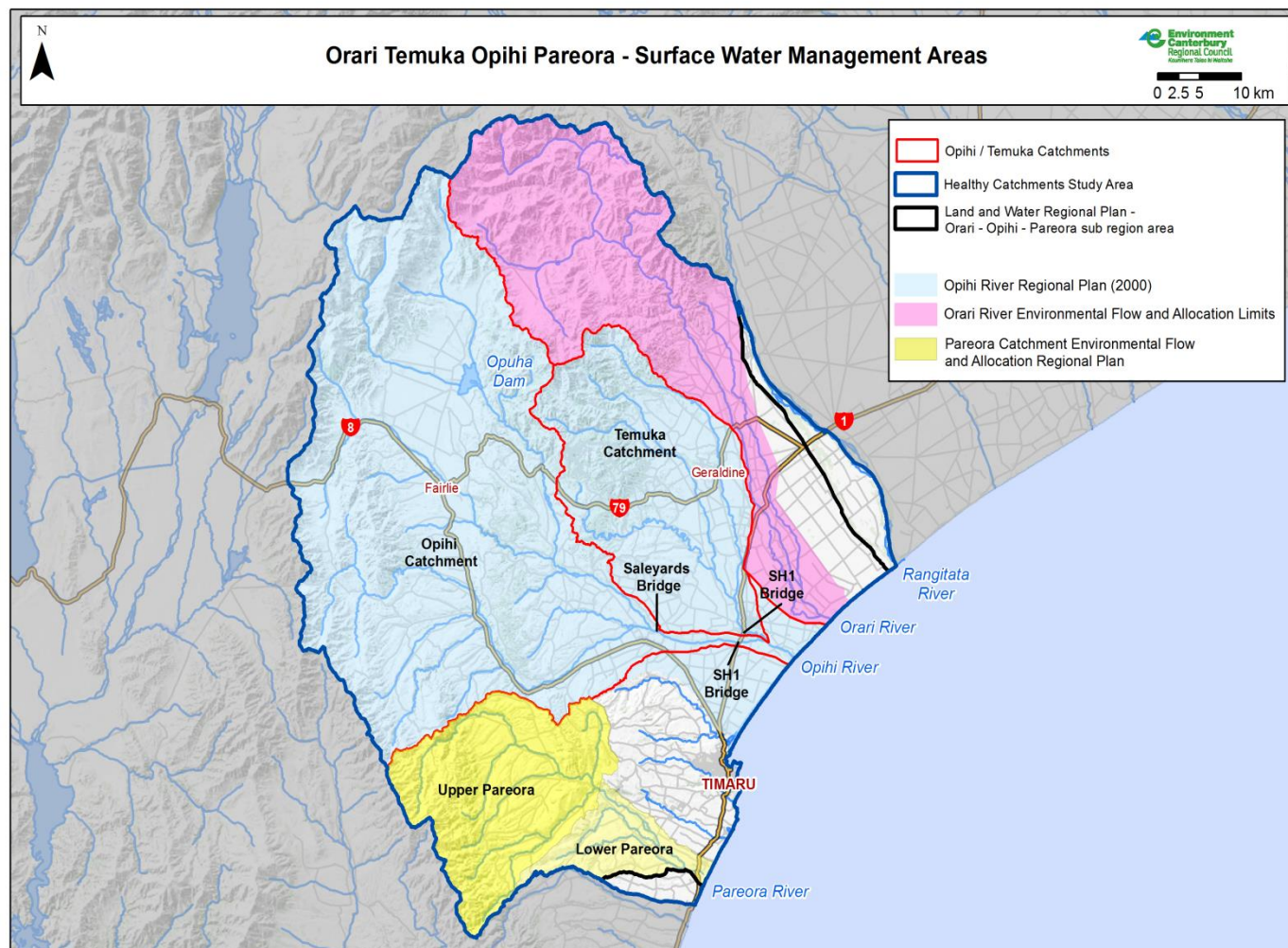
The Zone comprises three main catchments - Orari, Opihi, and Pareora rivers and their associated spring fed streams, lowland lagoons and hapua.

Under the current plans – three surface water allocation zones are used to manage the Pareora River (Upper and Lower Pareora SWAZs) and the Orari River (Orari SWAZ), while the Opihi catchment is



managed in two parts – the Opihi River and Temuka River – according to the flows at Saleyards and State Highway 1 bridges and the level of Lake Ophua (Figure 2).

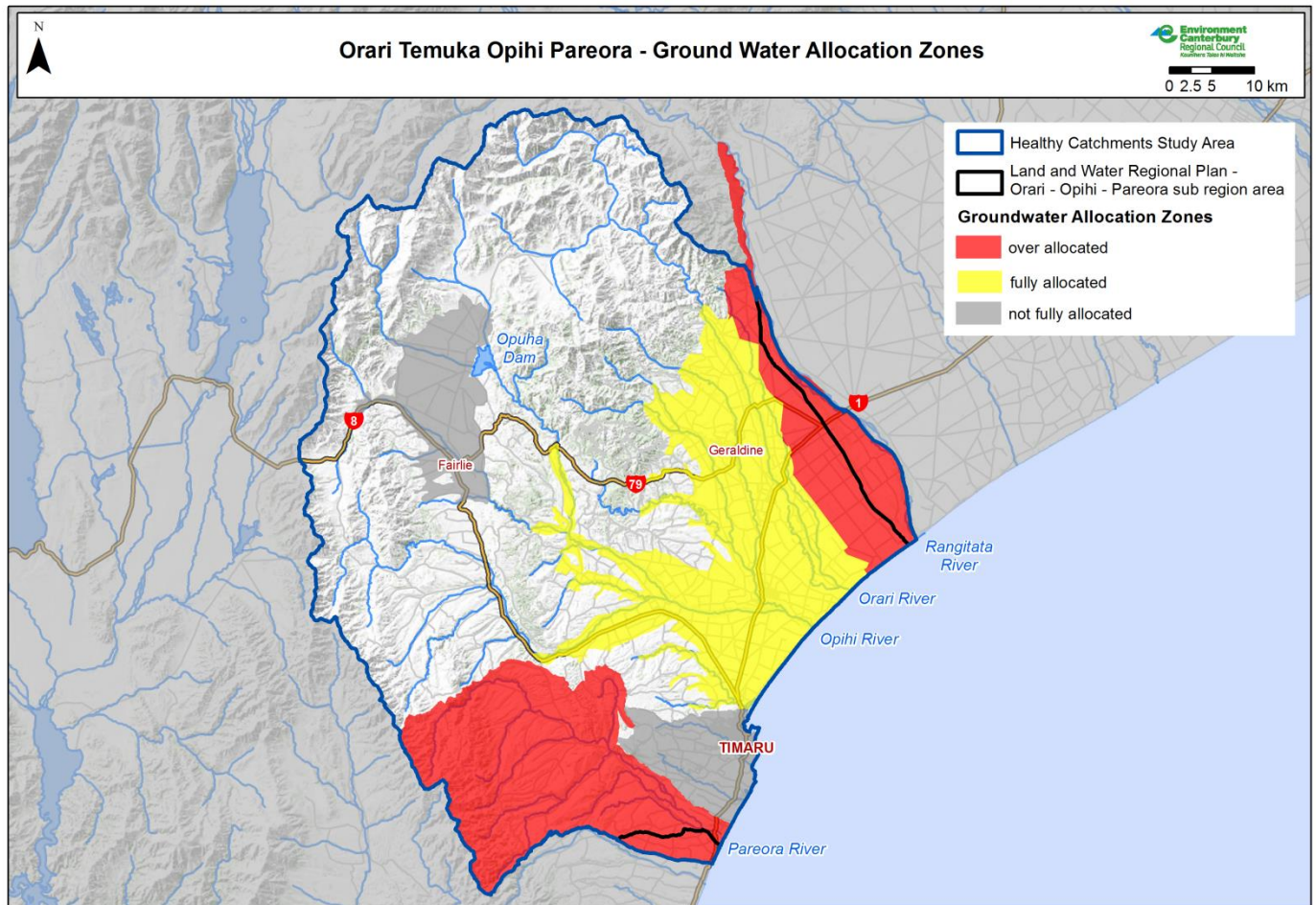
Figure 2. Surface Water Allocation zones in the Healthy Catchments project area



Seven allocation zones are used to manage the groundwater resources in the zone (Figure 3). Three zones (Red) are over allocated – Upper and Lower Pareora and the Orari –Rangitata South GWZ. Two groundwater zones (Yellow) are either fully allocated or close to being fully allocated – Coastal Groundwater and Levels Plains GWZ. Two zones (Grey) are not yet fully allocated – Ashwick Flat –Fairlie and Timaru GWZ



Figure 3. Ground Water Allocation zones in the Healthy Catchments project area



What Regional Plans Apply in Healthy Catchments project area?

Three regional plans currently apply in the project area (Figure 4).

Regional plans	Date the current version of plan became operative
The Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (LWRP).	1 December 2015 ²
The Opihi River Regional Plan (ORRP)	16 October 2000
The Pareora Catchment Environmental Flow and Water Allocation Plan (PCEFAP).	21 July 2012

The Rangitata River is covered by the Water (Rangitata River) Conservation Order 2006.

² LWRP is partially operative, except for region wide rules controlling take and use of surface water and dams



The LWRP is a two tier plan with region wide provisions and a series of sub region sections that contain additional policies and rules which apply to specific catchments. Section 14 of the plan applies to the OTOP Zone.

The LWRP regulates the following:

- the use of land for a farming activity (see the next section on the LWRP nutrient management rules)
- damming or taking of surface water or hydraulically connected groundwater and the taking of groundwater.
- the over allocation of the water resources in the Orari River catchment and to protect the high natural character of the upper catchment,.
- activities in the margins and beds of rivers (such as vegetation clearance and earthworks).
- stock access to rivers, lakes and wetlands.
- activities in Community Drinking Water Protection zones.
- forestry in flow sensitive catchments.
- discharges to water, e.g. stormwater, domestic waste and community wastewater systems.
- other activities that are within the functions of a regional council under the RMA 1991³.

The ORRP establishes flow and allocation limits for the Opihi River and its tributaries and water quality standards for point source discharges. The plan provides for the following:

- the abstraction and allocation of water from the Opihi and Temuka rivers, including hydraulically linked groundwater bores.
- the application restrictions to irrigation, domestic and stock water supply consents based on the Opuha Dam storage level and flows in the main stem of the Opihi and Temuka rivers.
- the release of water from the Opuha Dam to augment flows in the Opihi River.
- a policy setting out the trigger levels when the Opihi River mouth may requiring opening.⁴
- the establishment of the Opuha Environmental Flow Release Advisory Group (OEFRAG) which is responsible for modifying the environmental release flows from the Opuha Dam.
- the cessation of treated or untreated human sewage discharges from the Opihi River and its tributaries by 31 December 2003.
- water quality standards for the Opihi River and its tributaries.

The PCEFAP establishes an environmental flow and allocation regime for the Pareora River catchment. The plan provides for the following activities:

- the abstraction, and allocation of water from the Pareora River, including hydraulically linked groundwater bores by capping run of river takes to lawfully established takes at the time the plan was notified.
- the diversion of flows or damming on the mainstem of any waterway in the catchment.

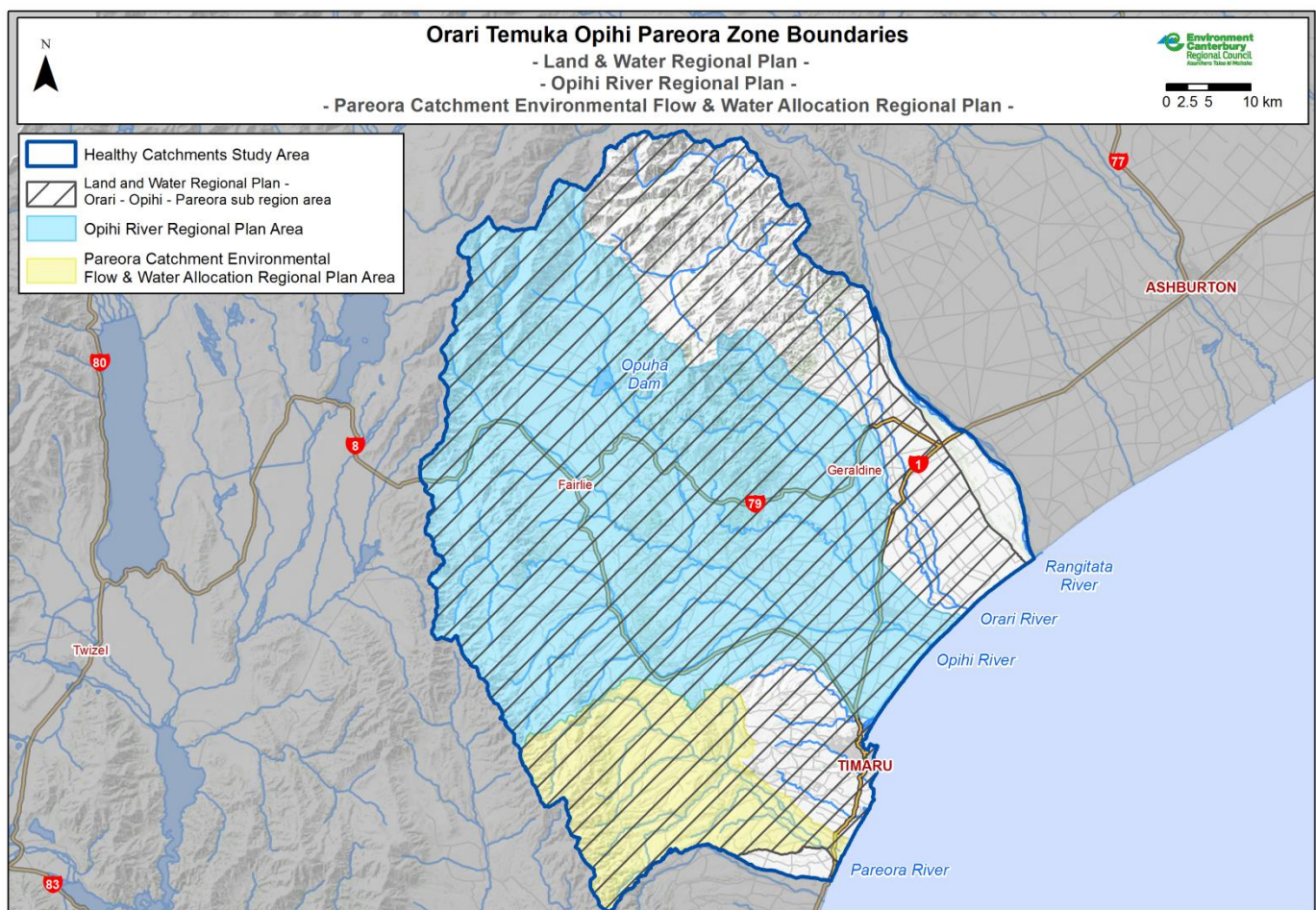
³ The functions of regional councils are set out in section 30 of the Resource Management Act 1991.

⁴ The opening of the Opihi River mouth is controlled by the Regional Coastal Environment Plan



- to increase the minimum flows in the Pareora River, 5 years after the plan becomes operative (21 July 2017).
- the transfer of surface and groundwater takes with the same allocation zone.
- The efficient use of water, including metering of water takes
- the augmentation of the Pareora River from the Timaru District Council water supply during October and November.

Figure 4 – Areas covered by the regional plans



Activities in the Coastal Marine Area are regulated by the Coastal Environment Plan.

Current Pathways - Rules

The current rules to manage freshwater in the OTOP Zone are summarised under the headings:

- Nutrient management for farming
- Stock exclusion
- Groundwater allocation limits
- Surface water minimum flows and allocation limits
- Stream depletion and hydraulically connected groundwater takes
- Flow sensitive catchments



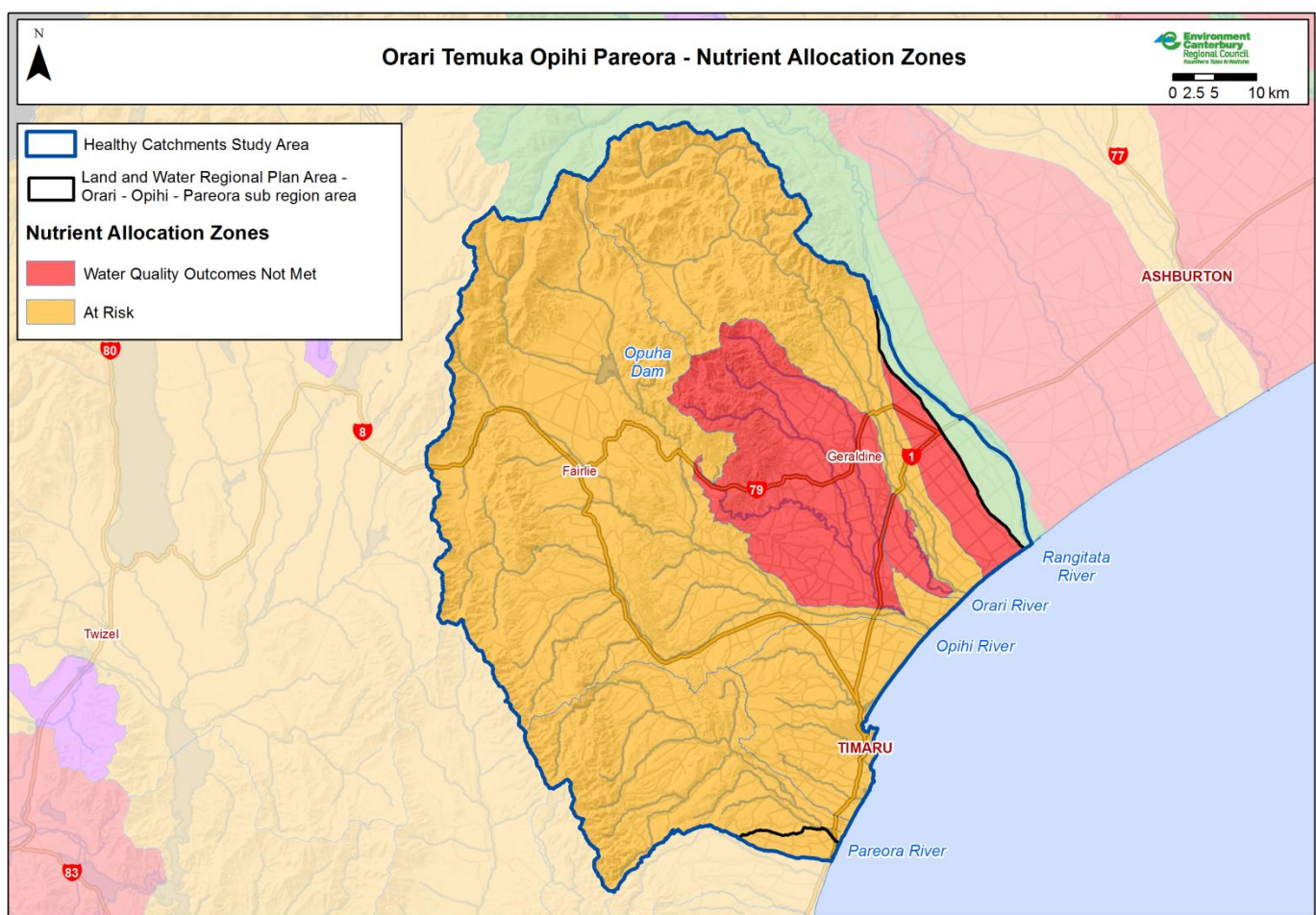
- Resource management issues not reflected in modelling

Nutrient Management for Farming

The LWRP classifies Canterbury into different “Nutrient Allocation Zones”. Figure 5 shows the area covered by the Healthy Catchments Project:

- The red area - “Red nutrient allocation zone”, means that outcomes⁵ for water quality are not currently being met.
- A large part of the zone is an “Orange nutrient allocation zone”, where water quality outcomes are at risk of not being met.

Figure 5 – Nutrient Allocation Zones in the OTOP Zone (Black line)



The LWRP has specific rules for each nutrient allocation zone (refer to the summary in Appendix 2). These are operative and apply to landowners in the zone now.⁶

⁵ Fresh water outcomes are defined in Table 1 and Policies 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 of the LWRP

⁶ Further up to date information for farmers in the zone can be found at: <http://www.canterburywater.farm/>



Plan Change 5

The nutrient management rules in the LWRP are currently being reviewed through the Nutrient Management Plan Change (Plan Change 5).

The Plan Change retains the existing LWRP concepts of nutrient allocation zones, audited Farm Environment Plans, the use of Overseer and managing farming activities according to risk, but it:

- brings industry agreed 'Good Management Practices'⁷ and good management practice nitrogen loss rates⁸ (through the Farm Portal) into the rules
- reduces the uncertainty caused by OVERSEER[®] version changes by replacing consenting thresholds that were based on fixed numeric nitrogen loss rates with consenting thresholds based on areas of irrigated land and winter grazing
- addresses inequality and inefficient historic high nutrient losses by holding farming activities to their baseline nitrogen loss rates as if they were operating at Good Management Practice in the 2009 – 2013 baseline period.

What Plan Change 5 may mean for farmers is also summarised in Appendix 2. However, please note that:

- Plan Change 5 is part-way through the hearing stage of the RMA process. The final version may not be the same as the version initially notified in February 2016
- The proposed rules will not have any legal effect until the changes are made operative (after the hearing process in 2017)
- Any significant changes resulting from the hearing process will be assessed once the decision is known.

The “Current Pathways” scenario assumes that the notified rules in Plan Change 5 are in place.

Stock access to waterbodies

Livestock can damage the bed and banks of waterbodies and adversely affect stream life. The discharge of dung and urine to rivers and streams, can introduce pathogens that can create a health risk where a river or stream is used for mahinga kai gathering or recreational activities. Cattle, deer and pigs are particularly attracted to water and can have a serious impact on water quality.

The LWRP has strict rules that cover livestock access to waterbodies. In summary farmed cattle, deer or pigs are **prohibited** from entering inanga and salmon spawning sites, Community Drinking Water Protection Zones, waterways 1000 metres upstream of a freshwater bathing site; and the bed or banks of a spring-fed plains river.

⁷ Good Management Practices are those described in the September 2015 document “Industry-agreed Good Management Practices relating to water quality”

⁸ Plan Change 5 introduces a new concept – the “Baseline GMP Loss Rate” which means the average nitrogen loss rate below the root zone, as estimated by the Farm Portal, for the farming activity carried out during the nitrogen baseline period (2009-2013) if operated at good management practice.



Stock access to waterways and wetlands is **permitted** if it does not result in pugging or de-vegetation that exposes bare earth in the bed or banks, a conspicuous change in clarity or colour of the water outside the mixing zone or cattle standing in any lake. There is an exception to these conditions for stock crossing points.

A **resource consent** (non-complying) is needed if intensively farmed stock⁹ require access to any waterway over 1 metre wide or 10 centimetres deep, or to a wetland.

The “Current Pathways” scenario assumes the LWRP stock exclusion rules are fully complied with

Groundwater Allocation Limits

The LWRP defines seven Groundwater Allocation Zones (GAZs) in the OTOP Zone: Rangitata-Orton, Fairlie, Levels Plain, Orari-Opihi, Pareora and Timaru. The groundwater allocation limits for these zones define the maximum amount of groundwater that can be abstracted over the course of a year. The PCEFAP defines an additional Groundwater Allocation Zone for the Upper Pareora catchment (i.e Cannington Basin).

The LWRP rules prohibit further allocation from fully or over-allocated zones.

The “Current Pathways” scenario assumes the “current” groundwater allocation remains the same for GAZ that are not over allocated. For the over allocated GWZ, it is assumed that the total groundwater abstractions are reduced to 90% of the current allocation for the zone

Surface Water Minimum Flows and Allocation Limits

The current environmental flow and allocation regimes for the rivers and streams within the OTOP Zone are set out in the three regional plans. These plans are fully operative and have legal effect.

Section 14 (Orari – Opihi- Pareora) of the LWRP introduces a three stepped approach for managing flows and allocation in the Orari River Ohapi Creek and Rhodes Creek 10. Specific provisions include, no damming of the mainstem of the Orari River above the mouth of the gorge and environmental flow and allocation limits for the Orari River, Ohapi Creek, and Rhodes Creek. A three stepped process will be used to progressively increase environmental flows in these rivers and reduce allocation. The first step caps the current allocation, the next step occurs three years after the LWRP becomes operative (1 December 2018) and the final step is a vision for 2040.

The ORRP contains the flow and allocation limits for the Opihi River based on the Opuha Dam Storage Level and calculated unmodified flow at State Highway 1, and the Temuka River based on the flow at Manse River Bridge¹¹.

⁹ Intensively farmed stock are cattle or deer grazed on irrigated land or contained for break-feeding of winter crops, dairy cattle of any class including cows, whether dry or milking, and whether on irrigated land or not, and farmed pigs.

¹⁰ LWRP Section 14.6.1 Table 15: Orari River Environmental Flow and Allocation Limits

¹¹ Policy 3, Policy 4 and Schedule A and B in the Opihi River Regional Plan.



PCEFAP defines two Surface Water Allocation Zones – Upper Pareora River and Lower Pareora River. Minimum flow and allocation limits for the months October to November and December to September are set based on the flows at the Huts flow recorder¹².

Older resource consents may have different minimum flow conditions to those in the LWRP, ORRP and PCEFAP. Minimum flows were historically set on a consent by consent basis. However, on renewal these consents would be required to comply with the minimum flow conditions in the regional plans.

LWRP rules prohibit further allocation of water once limits are reached. In the PCEFAP it is a non-complying activity to apply for water beyond the limits in the plan while in the ORRP activities that do not comply with the rules are discretionary.

Though not reflected in the modelling, it is important to note that the LWRP should result in a progressive reduction in over-allocation over time in the Orari catchment as consents are renewed. Policy requires that where water consented for abstraction exceeds the allocation limit for surface water and stream depleting groundwater, that replacement of existing resource consents are for no more than 90% of the previously consented rate of take and seasonal or annual volume¹³.

The “Current Pathways” scenario assumes that the minimum flow restrictions in the LWRP, ORRP and PCEFAP are fully applied. It also assumes the “existing” surface water allocation remains the same irrespective of whether the river or stream is over or under-allocated relative to the allocation limits in these plans.

Stream Depletion and Hydraulically Connected Groundwater Takes

Some groundwater abstractions are connected to surface water and directly deplete the flow in the stream. The degree to which a groundwater take is hydraulically connected to a stream determines how much water is counted against the allocation limit for the stream and whether the groundwater take is subject to minimum flow restrictions or not.

The method for determining the degree hydraulic connection with a river and resulting stream depletion effect (in litres per second) varies between the LWRP, ORRP and PCEFAP. The stream depletion effect in the ORRP and PCEFAP is calculated on the effect of a 30 day continuous pumping period. Takes with a stream depletion rate greater than 5 L/s are subject to the surface water minimum flow restrictions set out in these plans.

The stream depletion effect in the LWRP is calculated on the effect of a 7 day and 150 day continuous pumping period. Groundwater takes are categorised as having a Direct, High, Moderate or Low stream depletion effect. Takes with a Direct or High (greater than 5 L/s) stream depletion effect are subject to the surface water minimum flow restrictions set out in the LWRP.

The “Current Pathways” scenario applies the relevant plan stream depletion rules to groundwater takes within the areas covered by the LWRP, ORRP and PCEFAP.

¹² PCEFAP Table 1, Appendix 1

¹³ LWRP Policy 4.7, & Policy 4.50



Flow sensitive catchments

In dry upper catchments, changing the vegetation cover from short to tall vegetation, such as large forestry plantations, can significantly reduce low flows in rivers as a result of trees intercepting rainfall and evaporating it back into the atmosphere.

Seven sub catchments or parts of these catchments are identified as flow sensitive catchments¹⁴. Under the LWRP, new areas of plantation forest in flow sensitive catchments would require a resource consent, existing areas of plantation forestry in a flow sensitive catchment may be replaced provided it occurs in the same location and within five years after the previous forest was harvested.

The “Current Pathways” scenario assumes that the current area of plantation forestry in flow sensitive catchments remains the same.

Elements of Plans not reflected in Modelling of “Current Pathways”

In addition to the above there are many other resource management issues and activities that take place in the OTOP Zone that are controlled by region-wide rules in the LWRP, but have not been explicitly modelled¹⁵. These activities would continue to be managed in accordance with the LWRP under the “Current Pathways” scenario. A few significant examples include:

- Discharges from wastewater, drainage water and stormwater systems.
- Discharges of industrial and trade wastes.
- Protection of community drinking water sources.
- Works in and around rivers, lakes and wetlands.

Looking Ahead

The LWRP has a set of region-wide objectives, policies and rules that were made operative only last year, and has already been subject to plan changes to improve it from the original version notified in 2012. The sub-region sections allow for catchment-specific limits and other provisions to where required to meet the NPSFM requirements and where region-wide provisions may not offer the best solution at a local level.

Later on in the process we will need to determine catchment-specific water quality and quantity limits and decide if the rules in the current plans i.e. ORRP, and PCEFAP, do the job, need to be tweaked, or if new policies and rules are needed to respond to the water issues in the zone.

Whilst a plan change is a likely outcome from this process, it is important to recognise that plan changes create uncertainty and are challenging time consuming exercises. Non-statutory options will also need to be looked at, such as significant on-the-ground environmental enhancement projects to achieve the freshwater outcomes being sought by the local community.

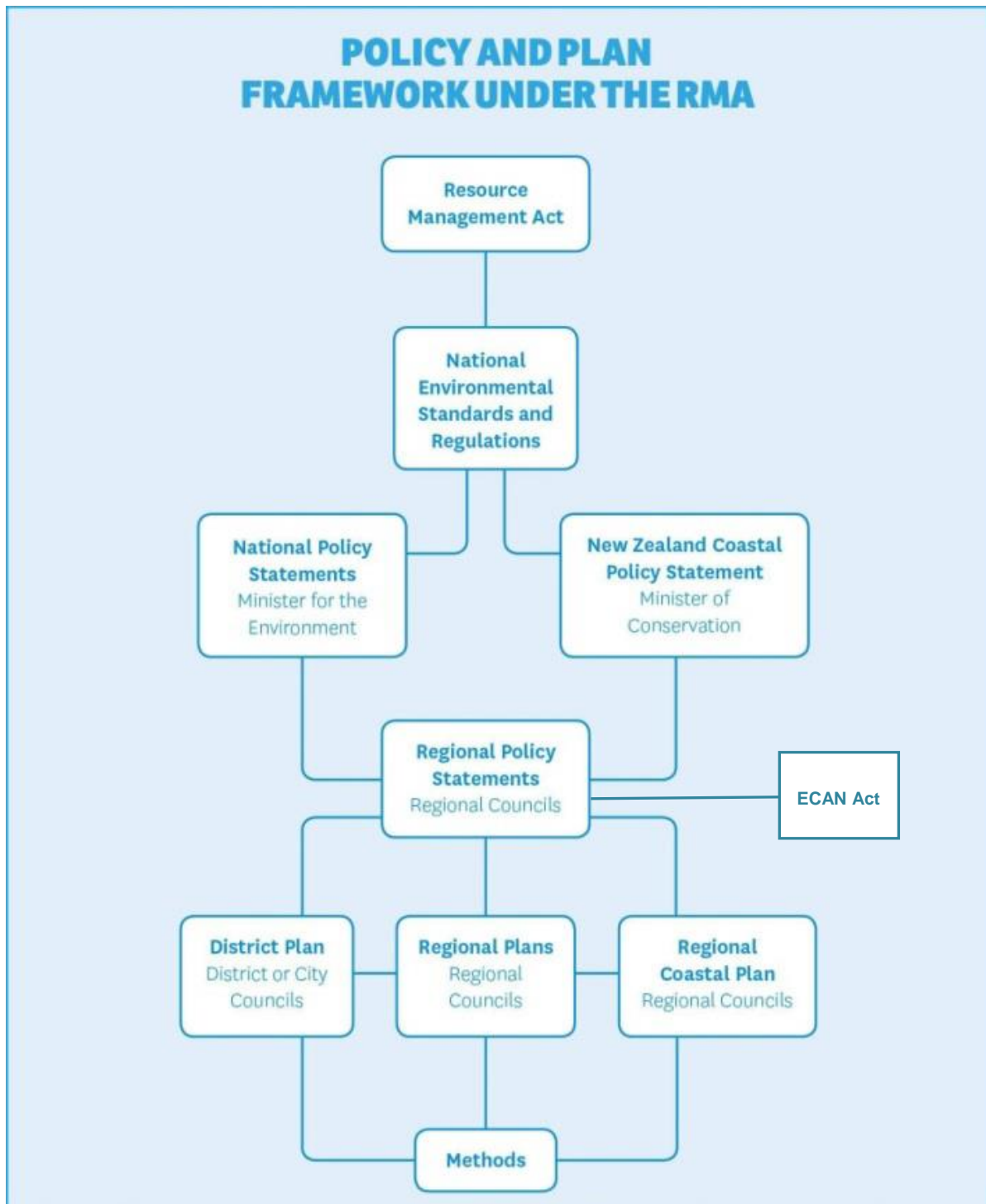
The package of solutions that the Zone Committee settles on in 2017 will set out the “drafting instructions” for the Orari - Opihi –Pareora sub-region section of the LWRP and recommendations for non-statutory actions. It will be the Council’s responsibility to make sure that these solutions work within the legal framework and are based on sound technical evidence.

¹⁴ LWRP Section 14.6.1 Table 14.7 Flow Sensitive catchments – Gooseberry Stream, Halls Creek, Hae Hae Te Moana River, Kakahu River upstream from Hall Road, Tengawai River, Pareora River upstream from Pareora Huts, Taiko Stream.

¹⁵ See Section 5 Region-wide Rules in the LWRP for the full list of activities covered by the rules



Appendix 1 – Hierarchy of Planning Instruments





Appendix 2 – Summary of LWRP Nutrient Management Rules

Current Nutrient Management Rules

The LWRP defines five categories of Nutrient Allocation Zones (NAZ):

- Red – Water Quality Outcomes Not Met
- Orange – Water Quality Outcomes At Risk
- Green – Meets Water Quality Outcomes
- Purple – Lake Zone
- Light Blue - Unclassified

The LWRP applies specific sets of rules for each zone. Within the Healthy Catchments project area there are two Nutrient Allocation Zones - “Red” or “Orange” zones.

Red Zone rules do not require a resource consent to use land for a farming activity on a property (i.e. it is a permitted activity) where:

- the property is irrigated with water from an irrigation scheme or a principal water supplier, and the irrigation scheme or a principal water supplier holds a discharge permit that specifies the maximum annual amount of nitrate-nitrogen that may be discharged or leached; or
- the property is less than 5 ha, or where the “nitrogen loss calculation”¹⁶ does not exceed 10 kilograms per hectare per year (kg/ha/yr); or
- the nitrogen loss calculation is greater than 10 kg/ha/yr but does not exceed 20 kg/ha/yr and the “nitrogen baseline” for the property; or
- up to the 1 January 2017, the nitrogen loss calculation is greater than 20 kg/ha/yr and does not exceed the nitrogen baseline for the property.

After 1 January 2017, farmers in the red zone with nitrogen losses greater than 20 kg/ha/yr (that are not operating under a qualifying irrigation scheme discharge permit) will require resource consent to use the land for a farming activity. Consents will require the preparation and implementation of a Farm Environment Plan that is subject to auditing requirements, and will require that the nitrogen loss calculation does not exceed the nitrogen baseline.

Orange Zone rules do not require a resource consent to use land for a farming activity on a property (i.e. it is a permitted activity) where:

- the property is irrigated with water from an irrigation scheme or a principal water supplier, and the irrigation scheme or a principal water supplier holds a discharge permit that specifies the maximum annual amount of nitrate-nitrogen that may be discharged or leached; or

¹⁶ The terms “nitrogen loss calculation” and “nitrogen baseline” are both defined in the LWRP. In summary, the term nitrogen loss calculation means the average nitrogen loss over the past four years, while nitrogen baseline means the average nitrogen loss in the baseline period of 2009 – 2013.



- the nitrogen loss calculation does not exceed 20 kg per hectare per annum; or
- the nitrogen loss calculation exceeds 20 kg per hectare per annum but the property is less than 50 ha and the nitrogen loss calculation does not exceed the nitrogen baseline.

After 1 January 2016, farmers in the orange zone with nitrogen losses greater than 20 kg/ha/yr and greater than the nitrogen baseline (that are not operating under a qualifying irrigation scheme discharge permit) require resource consents to use land for a farming activity. Consents will require the preparation and implementation of a Farm Environment Plan that is subject to auditing requirements, and will require that the nitrogen loss calculation does not exceed the nitrogen baseline by greater than 5 kg/ha/yr.

Plan Change 5 Nutrient Management Rules

If the proposed rules are made operative, some farmers will be required to obtain resource consent to use land for a farming activity. This will include farming on properties which:

- In **Red nutrient allocation zones**, irrigate more than 50 ha of land or, if irrigating less than 50ha, propose to increase the area of irrigated land by more than 10 ha; or
- In **Orange, Green or Light Blue nutrient allocation zones**, irrigating more than 50 ha of land; or
- In **all nutrient allocation zones** except lake zones, using more than 20 ha of land for winter grazing of cattle.

The resource consent includes a requirement for the preparation and implementation of audited Farm Environment Plans. These plans are a vital part of the approach taken in Canterbury to effective water management. They provide a mechanism that ensures Good Management Practices are followed, without being overly prescriptive and limiting farmer innovation.

For other farmers on properties of 10 hectares or more, consent will not be required, but it will be necessary to register and report farming activities to the new online Farm Portal¹⁷, and to prepare and implement non-audited Management Plans. The Portal requirements enable Environment Canterbury to gather useful information at a catchment level about nitrogen losses, which will be used to inform future sub-region processes. The Management Plans are another mechanism to ensure that Good Management Practices are followed on-farm.

The use of land for a farming activity on properties less than 10 hectares is a permitted activity, without conditions.

Note:

Plan Change 5 received 129 submissions is currently at the public hearing stage in the RMA process. It may be reasonable to assume that the intent of Plan Change 5 will be retained, but it is likely that the detail of rules will be different to those that were notified. We will not know what the independent hearing panel's final recommendations look like until sometime in the second quarter of 2017.

¹⁷ <https://farmportal.ecan.govt.nz/>



Appendix 3 – Summary of Planning Assumptions modelled for “Current Pathways”

Plan Change 5 Nutrient Management Rules

Some of the assumptions below are “approximations” of the rules in Plan Change 5 and may not reflect the “precise” requirements of the rules.

- All properties are assumed to be operating at Good Management Practice
- All properties are modelled at current land use
- No permitted intensification is modelled under the PC5 rules, as this is limited by water availability

LWRP Stock Exclusion Rules and Riparian Management

- All farmed cattle, deer and pigs are excluded from rivers in line with the LWRP
- Intensively farmed stock assumed to be fenced from rivers where their access is classified as a non-complying activity
- Where non-intensively farmed stock are allowed access through the permitted activity rules in the LWRP it is assumed that those stock are not excluded from waterways.

LWRP Groundwater Allocation Limits

- Assume that the “existing” amount of allocation remains the same for the “under or fully allocated GAZ
- For over allocated GAZ – Pareora and Rangitata – Orari Zones – groundwater takes are reduced so that total allocated volume of groundwater is no more than 90% of the allocation limit in Table 16, Section 14 of the LWRP

LWRP / ORRP/ PCEFAP - Surface Water Minimum Flows and Allocation Limits

- Where existing surface water and stream depleting groundwater takes have different minimum flows to those in the LWRP, ORRP and PCEFAP, they are assumed to be brought into line with the relevant plan minimum flows over time
- Assume that the “existing” amount of allocation remains the same irrespective of whether the river or stream is under or over-allocated relative to the environmental flow and allocation limits in the LWRP, ORRP and PCEFAP.

LWRP / ORRP/PCEFAP Stream Depletion Calculations

- Relevant plan stream depletion rules applied to determine the stream depletion effect (L/s) for groundwater takes hydraulically connected to surface water bodies (WRRP calculation based on 30 day continuous pumping period and LWRP calculation based on 7 day and 150 day continuous pumping period) irrespective of any current consents with different requirements.



Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora
Healthy Catchments Project



Appendix 4 – Summary National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014

The summary information below is taken from Ministry for the Environment's website. For more detailed information about the NPS-FM see the guide to implementing the NPS-FM or the NPS-FM itself.

- A guide to the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014
<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/node/20320>
- National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014
<http://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/fresh-water/national-policy-statement-freshwater-management-2014>

What the NPS-FM is about

National policy statements are issued by the government to provide direction to local government about matters of national significance. The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2014 (NPS-FM) is about recognising the national significance of fresh water and Te Mana o te Wai (the mana of the water).

What it does

The NPS-FM provides direction about how local authorities should carry out their responsibilities under the Resource Management Act 1991 for managing fresh water. It's particularly important for regional councils, as it directs them to consider specific matters and to meet certain requirements when they are developing regional plans for fresh water.

What it requires

In a nutshell, the NPS-FM directs regional councils to set objectives for the state their communities want for their water bodies in the future and to set limits to meet these objectives.

Some of the key requirements of the NPS-FM are to:

- safeguard fresh water's life-supporting capacity, ecosystem processes, and indigenous species
- safeguard the health of people who come into contact with the water through recreation
- maintain or improve the overall quality of fresh water within a region
- protect the significant values of wetlands and outstanding freshwater bodies
- follow a specific process (sometimes referred to as the National Objectives Framework or NOF) for identifying the values that tāngata whenua and communities have for water, and using a specified set of water quality measures (called attributes) to set objectives
- set limits on resource use (eg, how much water can be taken or how much of a contaminant can be discharged) to meet limits over time and ensure they continue to be met
- determine the appropriate set of methods to meet the objectives and limits
- take an integrated approach to managing land use, fresh water, and coastal water



- involve iwi and hapū in decision-making and management of fresh water.

How it is being implemented

The NPS-FM must be fully implemented no later than 31 December 2025 (or 31 December 2030 in certain circumstances).

If councils cannot implement the NPS-FM by the end of 2015 they must identify a programme of time-limited stages to meet the 2025 date, known as a progressive implementation programme. They must report annually on their progress towards their progressive implementation programme.

Read about Regional councils' implementation programmes. <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/node/18885>

The parts of the NPS-FM

Part A and Part B

Give direction on what must be provided for, or addressed, in a regional plan in terms of managing water quality and quantity. Part A is about water quality and Part B is about water quantity.

Central to these sections are requirements for:

- maintaining or improving overall water quality across a region
- safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of fresh water, and the health of people and communities
- the efficient use and allocation of water
- protecting the significant values of wetlands and outstanding freshwater bodies
- setting freshwater objectives, limits, and methods.

Part C

Gives direction to regional councils about managing freshwater in an integrated way. Councils must manage the relationship between land use and development, and fresh water. Councils must also manage the effects of land use and development, including cumulative effects, on freshwater and coastal water.

Part CA

Provides the process for setting freshwater objectives. This section has two appendices which provide lists of national values (Appendix 1) and attributes (Appendix 2) that regional councils must use to set freshwater objectives.

Part CB

Provides direction on how to monitor progress towards, and achievement of, freshwater objectives.

Part CC



Orari-Temuka-Opihi-Pareora Healthy Catchments Project

Gives direction to regional councils about the requirement to account for freshwater takes and discharges. This means that when it comes to setting freshwater objectives and limits, councils and the community know what water is being taken and what contaminants are being put into freshwater bodies.

Part D

Provides direction on involving iwi and hapū in reflecting tāngata whenua values and interests in water management.

Part E

Provides information on the timeframe for implementing the NPS-FM.