

Waimea River Park Management Plan

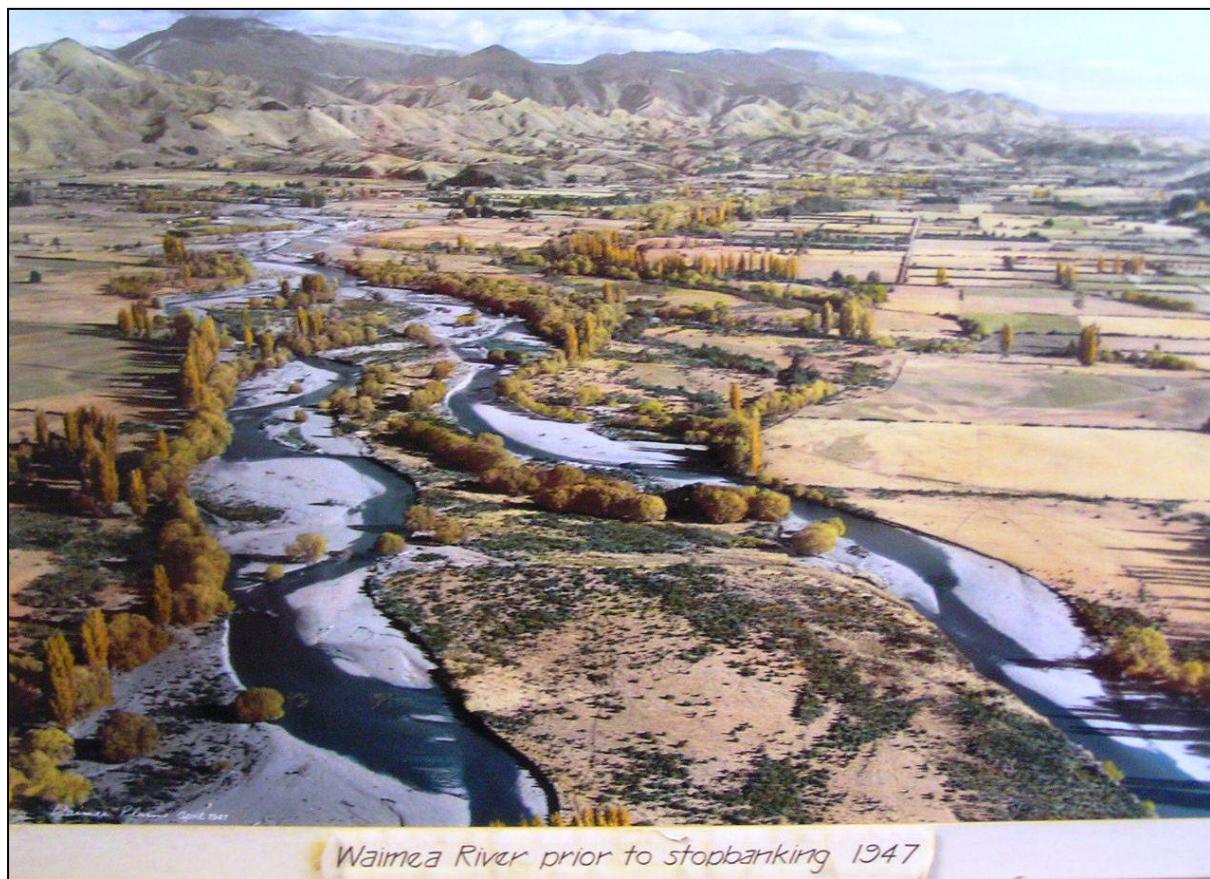


August 2010

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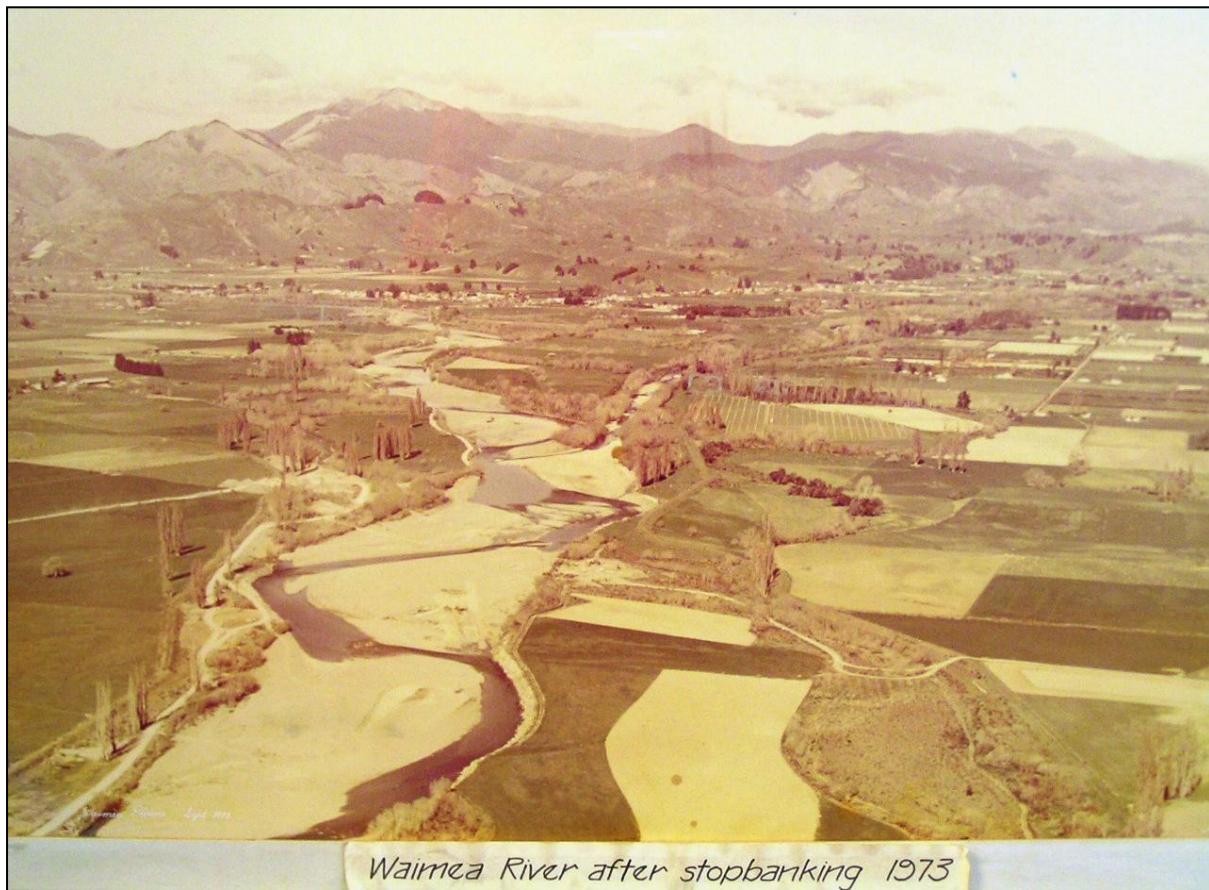
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This management plan provides for the management and development of river berm land alongside the Waimea River and lower Wairoa and Wai-iti rivers in Tasman District. These lands are held by Tasman District Council for the primary purposes of river control and soil conservation. This management plan has been prepared in response to public enthusiasm for these lands to be managed for a wider range of uses, such as nature conservation, historic resource protection, public access and recreation. To facilitate this objective, the lands have been grouped together as the Waimea River Park.

Tasman District Council is obliged to continue to manage lands within the Waimea River Park for river control and soil conservation. This management plan identifies other values and uses of the park lands and outlines how these values and uses can be provided for while not compromising the primary management objectives. The plan seeks to give guidance and clear direction for management of the park by Tasman District Council for the next ten years, while remaining flexible enough to provide for changing circumstances within that period.



Waimea River Park



Waimea Berm - Title ref 281547 & 282676

10 November 2008



0 0.5 1 1.5 2 km

TDC Tasman
District Council

2.0 THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.1 Purpose and Structure of this Plan

The purpose of this plan is to provide for the management and development of lands held by Tasman District Council along the Waimea River. The two parcels of land comprising the Waimea River Park were acquired by Council for river control and soil conservation purposes. Council is obliged to manage the lands for these purposes. This management plan aims to identify uses of the park that are compatible with these primary purposes and to outline how the uses will be provided for and how any conflicts between these uses will be managed. The plan also identifies proposed developments in the park.

The first part of this plan (section 3) describes the Waimea River Park and its values and uses. The next part (section 4) sets out the primary objectives for park management. The final part of the plan (sections 5 to 10) sets out the policies for park management, firstly general policies and then policies for each of the management objectives. A map illustrating the location of proposed activities and developments is appended to this document.

2.2 Land Covered by this Plan

Waimea River Park is located on the Waimea Plain in Tasman District. It covers land alongside the Waimea River and the lower reaches of its major tributaries: the Wairoa River (downstream from Bryant Road at Brightwater) and the Wai-iti River (downstream from Waimea West Road). (*maps, pages 40-42*). These riparian (river-side) areas are commonly described as berm lands; a term that is used in this plan.

Waimea River Park lands are held in two freehold (fee simple) titles by Tasman District Council: title 281547 (392.6 ha) and title 282676 (1.7 ha). The larger parcel (title 281547) comprises lands acquired by Council under the Public Works Act for river control purposes. The smaller parcel (title 282676) is land more recently acquired by Council and classified as Local Purpose (Soil Conservation) Reserve. The small part of Appleby Bridge Recreation Reserve that lies within the stop bank is included in this management plan.

The full legal description of the land is:

- 281547: Lot 5-6 Deposited Plan 363658; Lot 1-2 Deposited Plan 368437; Lot 1 Deposited Plan 368439; Lot 1-4 Deposited Plan 370973; Lot 10-13 Deposited Plan 5969; Section 202 Waimea Survey District; Section 203 Survey Office Plan 10988.
- 282676: Lot 3 Deposited Plan 363658
- Part Appleby Bridge Recreation Reserve: Part Section 2, Block II, Waimea Survey District.

2.3 Planning Context

Although only a small part of the lands covered by this plan have been classified under the Reserves Act 1977 (the 1.7 ha Local Purpose Reserve and Appleby Bridge Recreation Reserve), this plan provides for the management of all the park land in accordance with the Act. Where land is classified, the policies are enforceable under the Act. Where the land is not classified as reserve, the policies have the same standing as other Council policies.

Tasman District Council has statutory and other obligations when managing land. These obligations are summarised below:

Reserves Act 1977

The purpose of the Reserves Act 1977 is to protect land, identify and protect natural and cultural values and provide for public access. Under the Act reserves are classified according to their principal or primary purpose.

The smaller of the two land parcels of Waimea River Park is classified as Local Purpose (Soil Conservation) Reserve. Local Purpose Reserves are classified “*for the purpose of providing and retaining areas for such local purpose or purposes as are specified*” (s.23, Reserves Act 1977). The primary objectives of management are determined by the defined purpose (in this case, soil conservation). The Act also requires that Council, while having regard to the primary purpose for which the reserve has been classified, administers the reserve to: protect other (scenic, historic, archaeological, biological or natural) features; enable public access; and, maintain its value as a soil, water and forest conservation area. The local purpose classification allows Council to restrict public access.

Council may make bylaws for reserve land under its control under section 106 of the Reserves Act 1977. Bylaws made by a Council do not have any force or effect until they are approved by the Minister of Conservation (section 108).

Local Government Act 2002

The purpose of the Local Government Act 2002 is to provide for democratic and effective local government that recognises the diversity of New Zealand communities. To that end the purpose of the Act (section 3) is to:

- state the purpose of local government;
- provide a framework and powers for local authorities to decide which activities they undertake and the manner in which they will undertake them;
- promote the accountability of local authorities to their communities;
- Provide for local authorities to play a broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of their communities, taking a sustainable development approach.

Council may make bylaws under sections 145, 146 and 149 of the Local Government Act 2002. Council bylaws that are relevant to this plan are:

- Chapter 2: Dog Control Bylaw 2009
- Chapter 6: Trading in Streets and Public Places Bylaw 2005

The provisions of these bylaws are reflected in the policies in this management plan.

Resource Management Act 1991

The purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 (section 5) is: to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

In the Act, “sustainable management” means managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources in a way, or at a rate, which enables people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety while:

- (a) Sustaining the potential of natural and physical resources (excluding minerals) to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of future generations; and
- (b) Safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil, and ecosystems; and
- (c) Avoiding, remedying, or mitigating any adverse effects of activities on the environment.”

The Resource Management Act is implemented through the Tasman Regional Policy Statement 2001 and the Tasman Resource Management Plan 2008. Relevant objectives of the Tasman Regional Policy Statement are:

- 7.4: The Council will: (i) preserve the natural character of wetlands, rivers and lakes; and, (ii) protect and enhance or support the protection and enhancement of natural, recreational, cultural, intrinsic and in-stream features and values of wetlands, rivers (including karst rivers) and lakes, in particular those that are of international, national or regional significance.
- 8.1: The Council will seek to maintain the stability and efficiency of river channels and floodway land.
- 8.2: Council will avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects of activities in rivers and in lake beds on intrinsic, recreational, cultural and in-stream values of rivers, lakes and streams.
- 8.3: The Council will avoid or minimise conflicts between recreational and other activities on the surface of rivers and lakes.
- 11.1: The Council will seek to reduce risks to communities in relation to land use and development on floodplains that are subject to flooding.
- 11.2: The Council will seek to reduce risks: (i) to the use and development of land subject to erosion, inundation or instability; and, (ii) to the use and development of any other land that may be affected as a result of such erosion or instability.

The Tasman Resource Management Plan has been prepared to assist Tasman District Council to carry out its functions under the Resource Management Act 1991. Under this Act, Tasman District Council has the functions of both a regional council and a territorial authority, so the Tasman Resource Management Plan is a combined district and regional plan. The provisions of Tasman Resource Management Plan are reflected in the policies in this management plan.

Tasman-Nelson Regional Pest Management Strategy 2007-2012

The Tasman-Nelson Regional Pest Management Strategy has been prepared under the Biosecurity Act 1993. This is a joint strategy between Tasman District Council and Nelson City Council. It is implemented by Tasman District Council. The strategy declares certain plant and animal species as pests. These pests (listed in Table 1 of the strategy) are banned from sale, propagation, breeding, distribution and commercial display.

The Strategy aims to avoid or reduce the incidence of adverse effects of pests on the environment, assist with the protection of significant biodiversity values and to protect amenity and recreational values of the region. The strategy requires land occupiers to undertake control and management of plant pests on land for which they are responsible. Council, as occupier, is required to control pests on land it owns and administers in accordance with Part II of the strategy.

Riparian Land Management Strategy 2001

The purpose of the Riparian Land Management Strategy is to:

- Identify the priority actions for the Council to enhance water quality and habitat values, and public access through improved riparian management.
- Outline where further investigation and consultation is required to provide guidance on the management needs of riparian areas in the Tasman District.

The strategy is a policy document to guide the actions of Council and other parties when implementing the relevant objectives, policies and methods contained in the Tasman Resource Management Plan. The Waimea River Park Management Plan is compatible with the Riparian Land Management Strategy and will help implement the objectives of the strategy.

Regional Cycling and Walking Strategy 2005

The vision of this strategy is to progress Tasman District towards being a safe and enjoyable place to walk and cycle. Its objectives are to increase the percentage of people cycling and walking, reduce the number of injuries involving pedestrians and cyclists, and to increase understanding and response to the identified

needs of cyclists and pedestrians. The strategy proposes the following cycling and walking routes within or close to the Waimea River Park:

- Proposed pedestrian trail at Brightwater to and along the Two Rivers Walkway
- Proposed shared-use trail (pedestrian and cycle) between Lower Queen Street and Redwoods Road (Rabbit Island) via the east bank of the lower Waimea River, Appleby Bridge and the west bank of the lower Waimea River.

River Assets Management Plan

The River Assets Management Plan determines appropriate management of river channels in the District and contains objectives for future river management. The river channel is defined as the area between the normal river level and the water level during an annual flood event. The management plan is reviewed every three years. Management of the river channel within Waimea River Park must be compatible with the management proposed in the River Assets Management Plan. If there is any conflict between these plans, the River Assets Management Plan policies take precedence.

Waimea River Flood Control Area and Pearl Creek Discussion Paper

This document is a draft Recreation Use and Asset Management Discussion Paper for the area covered by the Waimea River Park and the adjacent Pearl Creek. The purpose of the paper is to identify and assess the range of issues relating to the use and management of these lands. The information contained in and the recommendations proposed by the discussion paper have been taken into consideration during the preparation of this management plan. The Waimea River Park Management Plan does not cover Pearl Creek, as that area lies outside the Park.

Waimea Estuary Management Strategy

A management strategy has been proposed by Tasman District Council and Nelson City Council for the Waimea Estuary. The management objectives for the Waimea River Park and the Waimea Estuary should be compatible, especially in the Waimea River delta area.

2.4 Public Consultation

Council resolved that, although this management plan is a non-statutory document, the plan be prepared following the process outlined in the Reserves Act 1977. Council advertised its intention to prepare the draft plan in April 2009. Written suggestions from the public were received by July 2009. These suggestions were taken into consideration during the preparation of the draft management plan. The draft management plan was released for public comment in December 2009. Public submissions were received by March 2010 and Council provided an opportunity for people to speak in support of their submissions at a hearing in April 2010. The draft plan was amended in response to these submissions and the final management plan approved by Council in August 2010.

3.0 WAIMEA RIVER PARK

3.1 Location and Description

Waimea River Park covers approximately 394 hectares of land alongside the Waimea River in Tasman District. The park is long and narrow, due to its origin as land set aside for river control purposes. Its upstream (southern) boundaries near Brightwater are the Wairoa River at Bryant Road and the Wai-iti River at Waimea West Road. These rivers join to form the Waimea River a few kilometres downstream. The park continues downstream on both sides of the Waimea River to its northern boundary at the Waimea Estuary.

The park is low-lying, with a maximum elevation of approximately 20 metres above sea level at Waimea West Road to sea level at the estuary margin. The river berms within the park are extensively altered by years of engineering works, including gravel extraction, to control flooding. Stop banks and riverbank protection works are present for much of the length of the river within the park. Roads traverse both banks of the river. Three gravel-processing plants and associated gravel stockpiles are located within the park on the east bank of the river. Two walkways traverse parts of the park and informal tracks provide access through other areas. Several formed roads provide public access to the park boundary. Transpower New Zealand Limited has two high voltage transmission lines (including support structures) traversing the park, just north of Appleby Highway.

Substantial parts of the park support developed pasture and are leased for grazing. The Tasman District Council Tree Nursery is located within the park near River Road. Other parts of the park support river protection plantings and areas of rough vegetation dominated by introduced woody weeds. Restoration plantings of native species have been established adjacent to the park at Pearl Creek, at the Challies Island back channel and alongside the river walkways. Wildlife habitat has recently been created at Challies Island and whitebait spawning habitat has been protected and restored at Pearl Creek.

Waimea River Park lies close to Richmond and Brightwater. It is the largest area of land readily available for informal public recreation on the Waimea Plain. It also provides a relatively extensive area of habitat for birds on the otherwise highly modified Waimea Plain. The park provides tremendous potential for the protection and restoration of natural values while providing for a range of uses, including recreation and commercial activities while still providing for river protection and soil conservation.

Lands within Waimea River Park were set aside for flood protection and river control. Works associated with these functions have dramatically altered the natural character of the river and its berm lands. This management plan sets out how the primary goal of flood protection will be achieved while enabling development and use of the park for a range of other activities and protection of other values.

3.2 River Control and Soil Conservation

Control of flood flows of the Waimea River has been the primary goal of management of the berm lands and bed of the river for the past fifty years. The purpose of this goal is to protect the productive and closely-settled Waimea Plain from flooding. Works undertaken to achieve this goal include the construction of stop banks (mostly in the early 1960s) along both river banks. These stop banks are between 250 and 1150m apart and are designed to contain a one-in-fifty year flood while maintaining a 0.6m freeboard¹. The stop banks are kept free of vegetation or maintained to support only shallow-rooted vegetation, as deep-rooted vegetation can weaken the structure. This management has created an artificially straight river confined between raised stop banks that are dominated by exotic vegetation.

The bed of the Waimea River has been for many years an important source of gravel for the aggregate and construction industries. However, gravel extraction has exceeded the rate of deposition of new gravel by the river. As a consequence, gravel extraction from the riverbed was reduced to 3000m³ in 2008 and ceased in 2009. Gravel is still extracted from the river berms.

Construction of stop banks and extraction of gravel have altered the hydrological character of the river, replaced riparian plant communities, modified in-stream and riparian wildlife habitat and changed the natural character and aesthetic appeal of the river and its margins. These works have also created vehicle tracks on both sides of the river that provide access for recreation, encouraged the growth of areas of naturalised vegetation that provide habitat for game birds, and enabled river works for other activities.



Stop bank and berm lands leased for grazing

Protection of the productive and closely-settled Waimea Plain from flooding has been the primary goal of management of the berm lands and bed of the river, primarily through construction of stop banks and extraction of gravel. Another goal has been protection of the Waimea Plain aquifer. Water resource data shows that the connection between river flows and groundwater during low flows is more critical than previously believed. River flows affect the availability of water for intensive land uses on the Waimea Plain and, conversely, abstraction of water from the Waimea Plain aquifer affects flows in the Waimea River. Council is obliged to continue to manage these lands for river control and soil conservation.

3.3 Natural Values

The Waimea Plain was almost certainly forested prior to human settlement. The fertile soils and mild climate would have favoured a rich lowland podocarp-hardwood forest dominated by kahikatea, matai, totara, lowland ribbonwood, titoki and a range of other hardwood trees. Areas of wetland vegetation would have been present at poorly drained sites, in old river channels and adjacent to Waimea Inlet. When in flood, the Waimea River is likely to have flowed into and occasionally carved new channels through the riparian (river-side) forest. The river would have meandered over a wider bed than it does at present with more extensive gravel beaches and flood channels.

The river berm lands are now dominated by introduced vegetation, including invasive plant pests such as old man's beard, gorse, broom, barberry and crack willow. Despite the almost complete absence of indigenous plant communities, the riverbed and berm lands provide a relatively large area of useful habitat for indigenous and introduced wildlife within an otherwise developed landscape.

The river bed and berm lands provide feeding, roosting and breeding habitat for populations of indigenous birds and introduced game birds. More than 50 bird species were recorded from the vicinity of the Waimea River Park between 1999 and 2004². The open gravel bed of the river provides useful habitat for black-fronted tern (nationally endangered), banded dotterel (nationally vulnerable) and black-fronted dotterel. The lower reaches of the river, especially the estuary margin, provide habitat for Australasian bittern (nationally endangered), banded rail (at risk), spotless crake (at risk), marsh crake (at risk) and fernbird (at risk).

The river supports populations of indigenous fish and introduced sports fish. Indigenous fish species recorded from Waimea River include longfin eel (threatened), shortfin eel, upland bully, redfin bully, common bully, bluegill bully, common smelt, inanga and torrentfish. Brown trout are also present and there are records of yelloweye mullet and Chinook salmon.

The value of the Waimea River catchment, including the area within the berm lands along the lower river, is reaffirmed by its proposed designation as a 'Type 1 Waters of National Importance' in a recent assessment of freshwater ecosystems of national importance for biodiversity³. The Waimea River has been previously assessed as providing wildlife habitat of moderate value⁴. The potential value of the lower Waimea River berm lands is indicated by their location in a Land Environment within which more than 90% of the original indigenous vegetation cover has been lost⁵. Any indigenous vegetation within this land environment is regarded as acutely-threatened⁶ and therefore a national priority for protection⁷.



An example of restoration plantings at Pearl Creek, adjacent to Waimea River Park

One area adjacent to the park, in and around Pearl Creek near where the river enters the estuary, has been protected and vegetation has been restored to protect native fish habitat. More recently, commercial extraction of gravel from an abandoned channel of the river at Challies Island has been used to create wildlife habitat and opportunities for game-bird hunting. Ponds have been created and vegetation established as part of this wetland restoration project. Some predator trapping has been undertaken in the park by the Animal Health Board and local bird enthusiasts. There is considerable potential for the creation of further areas of wildlife habitat and restoration of indigenous plant communities.

Public submissions received during the preparation of this plan are overwhelmingly supportive of nature conservation and biodiversity protection in the park, including restoration of wildlife habitat and an emphasis on native species in planting programmes. In particular, submissions identify the need for secure protection of wildlife habitat, whitebait spawning habitat and threatened bird species in the lower reaches of the river adjacent to Waimea Estuary.

3.4 Historic Values

Early human settlement of the Waimea Park area is indicated by the presence of cultivated soils (Maori gardens) and the presence of early Maori pa on the Waimea Plain. The Maori gardens were created by cultivation of the soils and the addition of ash, sand and gravel to enhance their fertility, drainage and warmth. These gardens covered approximately 400 hectares of the Waimea Plain on both sides of the Waimea River near Appleby, and at Waimea West between the Waimea River and Eves Valley Stream. The gardens were created by the Waitaha and Rāpuwai people and date from the period 1460 to 1650⁸. The only locations where these gardens appear to be present within or close to the Waimea River Park are just upstream from the Appleby Bridge.

A Maori pa was located near the Appleby School in the 1500s, when the Ngai Tara people from Hataitai established outposts at Waimea Estuary⁹. This pa site lies outside the Waimea River Park. There may also have been a pa at the confluence of the Wairoa and Wai-iti rivers. Confirmation of this is complicated because the confluence was formerly downstream from its present location. Paths were present along the river and the river was ancestrally important¹⁰.

Early Europeans records note the presence of three Maori pa on the Waimea Plains near the coast in 1828¹¹. However, Maori were no longer resident when the Waimea Plain was first explored by European settlers in 1841¹². The first written accounts of the Waimea Plain describe it as covered with fern and scrub, with patches of swamp, grass and bush¹³. Forest was present along the Wai-iti River some way above its confluence with the Wairoa, presumably the same forest that is now represented by scattered remnants in this location today.

Farms were established on the Waimea Plain during the early settlement of Nelson. Cotterells Landing at Pearl Creek, beside the lower reaches of the Waimea River, was an important crossing point for travellers between Nelson and Moutere. The Waimea River itself enabled travel up-valley to Waimea West. Public submissions received during the preparation of this plan are supportive of historic resource protection.

Extensive modification of the river berm lands began in the early 1960s following vesting of the land in the Nelson Catchment Board for “soil conservation and river control purposes”. Stop banks were constructed during 1963 and 1964¹⁴, straightening and confining the river to its existing narrow channel. Intensification of land use in the river’s upper catchment, including the removal of forest, has probably increased nutrient flows into the river and is likely to have altered the frequency and nature of flood events. Establishment of the Waimea East Irrigation Scheme has also affected river flows.

Gravel has been extracted from the river bed and berm lands for years, affecting adjacent aquifers and riparian wetlands. The Wildlife Refuge status of a 60 hectare wetland along the Wairoa River was revoked in the early 1980s after falling groundwater levels led to drying of the wetland¹⁵. River engineers have now concluded that it is no longer sustainable to extract gravel from the river bed due to the very small quantities of gravel being deposited from upstream sources.

3.5 Public Access and Recreational Use

There appears to be little information about early recreational use of the Waimea River but it has presumably been long used for picnicking, swimming, fishing, walking, game-bird hunting and other informal recreational activities. Nowadays it provides a relatively large area of semi-natural country within an otherwise intensively developed and closely-settled area. The presence of a wide range of other highly natural recreation settings close by in the Tasman District has probably limited the popularity of the Waimea River. Nevertheless, the area provides good opportunities and considerable potential for both informal and organised recreation.

Walking is one of the most popular recreational activities. Vehicle tracks, the recently developed Two Rivers Walkway along the lower Wairoa and Wai-iti rivers, the Waimea River Walkway and the river bed itself provide good opportunities for walking. The formed tracks also provide opportunities for cycling

and driving (vehicle use), though are not in good enough condition to provide a useful alternative to nearby roads for through traffic. The roads and river bed are also used for horse-riding and off-road vehicle use.

The berm lands, especially the undeveloped parts, provide opportunities for hunting pheasant, California quail and other game birds. This area provides the best pheasant hunting resource in the region and one of the best in the South Island¹⁶. Game bird hunting and associated activities are popular though largely seasonal uses of the berm lands. Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council has enhanced habitat for game birds on some parts of the berm lands. The area is one of the few accessible areas of public land close to Nelson that is available for hunting.



Walkers on Waimea River Walkway near the Challies Island back-channel

Swimming, fishing and boating are also popular uses of the Waimea River. There are usually good pools for swimming in the Waimea River near Appleby Bridge and in the lower Wairoa River. The river is popular for fishing, largely because it is so close to Nelson and Richmond. Trout fishing occurs throughout; white-baiting and mullet fishing occur in the lower reaches. Boating activities are restricted by the low river flows at most times of the year and the river is not as popular as some other nearby rivers. Sections of the river have been occasionally modified to create opportunities for organised jet-sprinting events.

Informal recreational use of the berm lands is largely unmanaged. Apart from at developed sites, such as Appleby Bridge and the walkways, recreation management consists primarily of enabling access along existing roads and removing dumped rubbish. Removal of domestic rubbish, car bodies and occasionally commercial waste, is undertaken weekly and costs Council approximately \$50,000 each year. Vehicle use has caused considerable damage to parts of the area, such as recent damage at the picnic area at Appleby Bridge.

Public submissions received during the preparation of this plan are mostly supportive of improved public access and facilities, restrictions on motor vehicle use and restrictions on dog access. Submissions are evenly divided on the appropriateness of game-bird hunting.

3.6 Commercial Activities

The main commercial uses of the river bed and berm lands have been livestock grazing, extraction of gravel, processing of gravel and rock (from the river and other sources) in crushing plants located on the berm lands, and commercial recreation. A significant proportion of the berm lands are leased for commercial uses, mostly grazing. Lease rents provide considerable income (c. \$200,000 annually), mostly from gravel processing. This money goes into the Rivers Account, where it is used for works on the berm lands in the District. Leases have terms ranging from five to 20 years, with no automatic right of renewal.

Parts of the river berm lands have been leased for grazing for many years. Many of these leased areas are now paddocks with cultivated pasture and are little different from farmed land on adjoining properties. Grazing is useful for weed control, and provides revenue to Council. Leasing of land for grazing or other uses does in effect impose restrictions on public access.

Gravel has been extracted from the river bed and berm lands for many years. This commercial use has provided a valuable resource for the local construction industry and provided a means by which the berm lands have been shaped and contoured, including the excavation of ponds for wildlife at Challies Island. In some places, excavated areas have been back-filled with waste hard fill. The effects of back-filling are addressed by resource consents. Due to the lack of replenishment gravel is no longer extracted from the river bed, except for river management purposes. Opportunities to extract gravel from the berm lands are diminishing and finite.

The historic supply of gravel from the Waimea River and proximity to markets has prompted the construction of gravel processing plants on the berm lands. There are three gravel-processing leases, all on the east bank of the river. These leases comprise large rock-crushing plants, stockpiles of gravel and rock, and ancillary structures such as fences and buildings. The plants process gravel from the berm lands and nearby private land, and from quarries elsewhere in the District. Rock-processing plants and stockpiles within the stop banks are not compatible with the maintenance of an open river floodway.



Gravel extraction from a site adjacent to Waimea River Park

Approximately three hectares of the park is occupied by Council's tree nursery and approximately four hectares is leased by Paintball Adventures for recreation. The present location of the paintball lease conflicts with the proposed development of the Challies Island wetland complex. Consent has previously been granted on a case-by-case basis for activities associated with jet-sprinting and other uses.

Public submissions received during the preparation of this plan are supportive of continued commercial use (such as livestock grazing) though mostly opposed to the continued presence of gravel-processing plants.

4.0 OBJECTIVES FOR PARK MANAGEMENT

4.1 River Control and Soil Conservation

Protection of the productive and closely-settled Waimea Plain from flooding is the primary goal of management of the berm lands and bed of the river. Another goal is protection of the Waimea Plain aquifer. River flows affect the availability of water for intensive land uses on the Waimea Plain and, conversely, abstraction of water from the Waimea Plain aquifer affects flows in the Waimea River. Council is obliged to continue to manage these lands for river control and soil conservation.

- Objective 1:** Manage the riverbed and berm lands within the park to protect surrounding lands from flood flows of the Waimea River, to assist in maintaining the Waimea Plain aquifer and to maintain water quality.

4.2 Nature Conservation

Nature conservation has not been a primary objective of berm land management. However, management of the area for flood protection works has by default maintained or created some nature conservation values. The most important values that have been retained are wildlife habitats. Areas of undeveloped land in areas of otherwise intensively developed land, especially areas with open water, open gravel riverbed or good vegetative cover, are important for birdlife. These areas provide a refuge for birds in which they can feed, roost and breed with minimal disturbance.

In recent years an area adjacent to the park at Pearl Creek has been protected and restored to protect native fish habitat, and gravel has been extracted from an abandoned channel of the river at Challies Island to create wildlife habitat and opportunities for game-bird hunting. There is considerable potential for the creation of further areas of wildlife habitat, including opportunities for restoration as part of mitigation of the effects of activities elsewhere in the catchment (e.g. Waimea Water Augmentation proposals).

The Waimea River berm lands also provide opportunities for the restoration of indigenous plant communities. Indigenous plant species have been almost completely displaced from the berm lands by engineering works and invasive naturalised species. However, seed sources of most of the original plant species are still present in the wider area. It would be relatively easy to propagate indigenous plant species from local sources and possible, though ambitious, to re-establish plant communities similar to those originally present. Restoration of indigenous plant communities in this area would be particularly worthwhile, as lowland riparian areas such as these are among the most seriously depleted indigenous ecosystems in the country.

- Objective 2:** Manage the riverbed and berm lands to protect existing areas of wildlife habitat and to restore, wherever practicable, indigenous vegetation and habitats within the park, so long as such management is compatible with river control and soil conservation (Objective 1).

4.3 Historic Resource Protection

The lands within Waimea River Park are likely to contain historic occupation sites, early walking routes and early food-gathering and possibly cultivation sites. The location and significance of these sites awaits further investigation and consultation with Tiakina te Taiao and the Department of Conservation. Protection of evidence or sites of early human activity is an important management objective.

- Objective 3:** Manage the riverbed and berm lands to ensure the protection of historic sites and resources, so long as such management is compatible with river control and soil conservation (Objective 1).

4.4 Public Access and Recreational Use

The Waimea River Park provides a relatively large area of semi-natural country within an otherwise intensively developed and closely-settled area. Walking is one of the most popular recreational activities on the berm lands. The vehicle tracks, the Two Rivers and Waimea River walkways and the river bed itself provide opportunities for walking and cycling. The formed tracks are used for cycling and driving. Other activities on the berm lands and river are game-bird hunting, fishing, swimming, horse riding and boating. The park offers great potential for the provision of further opportunities for recreational use.

- Objective 4:** Manage the riverbed and berm lands to provide opportunities for public access and recreational use in a way that such activities do not conflict with one another or with adjacent landowners and are compatible with river control and soil conservation (Objective 1) and other objectives.

4.5 Commercial Use

The main commercial uses of the river bed and berm lands have been livestock grazing, extraction of gravel, processing of gravel and rock (from the river and other sources) in crushing plants and commercial recreation. A significant proportion of the berm land is leased for commercial uses, mostly grazing. Lease rents provide revenue to Council.

Commercial use provides for effective management of parts of the berm lands and provides useful revenue for park management (e.g. soil conservation and flood protection). However, some commercial activities, such as gravel processing, may conflict with other uses of the park.

- Objective 5:** Manage the riverbed and berm lands to provide opportunities for commercial use providing such use is compatible with river control and soil conservation (Objective 1), beneficial to park management and does not conflict with other management objectives.

4.6 Waimea Inlet

Waimea River Park has hydrological and ecological links to the Waimea Inlet. Management of these two areas should be integrated wherever possible.

- Objective 6:** Manage the riverbed and berm lands in a way that is compatible with and wherever possible integrated with management of Waimea Inlet, while consistent with other Waimea River Park management objectives.

5.0 GENERAL POLICIES

5.1 Management Plan Review and Amendment

The purpose of this management plan is to give guidance to Council for management of the Waimea River Park for ten years following approval of the plan. The plan needs to be specific enough to provide clear direction to Council yet flexible enough to accommodate changing circumstances and demands within that period. If unexpected circumstances arise, all or part of the management plan may require review at an earlier date. Any review of the management plan should provide for consultation with the public and affected agencies and organizations.

1. Undertake a comprehensive review of this management plan within ten years of its adoption by Council.
2. Amend or review parts of this management plan within ten years of the adoption of this plan by Council, if the plan is unable to accommodate changing circumstances or does not provide guidance regarding new activities or uses.
3. Follow the process outlined in the Reserves Act 1977 (section 41) for any review of the management plan.

5.2 Tangata Whenua

The Waimea River Park has special significance to tangata whenua. It includes or lies close to early Maori pa, cultivation (Maori gardens), food-gathering sites and access-ways. Respect for the wishes of iwi and the involvement of iwi in park management are important to Council.

4. Ensure full consultation with iwi during review of this management plan and prior to implementation of any substantial development in the park.
5. Provide opportunities for iwi participation in park management activities, including restoration projects.
6. Consult iwi prior to the dissemination of any interpretive material (signs or other written material) that provides information about sites of importance to iwi, iwi heritage values, past and present cultural activities or tupuna (ancestors).

also see Historic and Cultural Policies (section 8) and Signs and Interpretation Policies (section 9.11)

5.3 Community Involvement

The Waimea River Park owes its existence to the enthusiasm of individuals in the community, notably Martin Conway of the Tasman Environmental Trust, and the support of Council. Continued community involvement is expected to be an essential part of park management. Members of the public, including those involved in community groups and other organisations, can make a valuable contribution to the formulation of management plan policies and to hands-on management and development within the park.

Community groups have already assisted with restoration planting beside the Two Rivers Walkway, Tasman Environmental Trust has assisted with protection and restoration adjacent to the park at Pearl Creek, Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council has assisted with the development of wetland habitats at the Challies Island back channel, individuals are undertaking predator trapping, and many other individuals visit and care for the lands and river within the park.

7. Encourage individuals and groups to participate in park management, protection, enhancement and development, through support groups, casual work parties or individual initiatives.

8. Adequately service any approved support group so as to allow meaningful involvement in park management and development.
9. Consult or liaise with support groups over significant development proposals.

5.4 Land Acquisition and Disposal

The boundaries of the Waimea River Park are those determined by the requirements of river control and soil conservation when the land was originally set aside for those purposes. The objectives of this plan require that the park boundaries still satisfy these primary purposes. However, parts of the park may be identified as surplus to the river control and soil conservation functions and therefore available for disposal. Conversely, it may be desirable to add land to the park to assist with the river control and soil conservation functions or to help meet other park management objectives, such as nature conservation or recreation. It is expected that land disposal will be unlikely and that opportunities for land acquisition will be limited.

10. Acquire land for addition to Waimea River Park where such addition will assist in achieving the objectives of park and river management.
11. Give priority to land acquisition that will assist Council in providing river control and soil conservation, complement nature conservation or restoration initiatives, or assist in the provision of public access and recreational opportunities.
12. Where land acquisition is not achievable or practical, seek formal agreements with adjoining land owners to provide for management plan objectives, such as agreements for public access.
13. Consider disposal or exchange of park land only where such disposal will not compromise park management objectives.
14. Any disposal or exchange of park land shall be subject to consultation with the public.

5.5 Compliance and Law Enforcement

This Waimea River Park Management Plan is a non-statutory document. It has been prepared following the process set out in the Reserves Act 1977 but, because most of the park land is not classified under the Reserves Act, its policies are not enforceable under that Act. Compliance with management plan policies will be achieved by the plan guiding Council actions, such as those proposed through Annual Plans and the Long Term Community Consultation Plan.

The activities or behaviour of visitors to the park may affect park values or other park users. Inappropriate activities or uses can be controlled through Council bylaws or through law enforcement by the police. Existing Council bylaws that are relevant to the control of activities in the park are the Dog Control Bylaw 2009 and the Trading in Streets and Public Places Bylaw 2005. Council is able to make other District-wide bylaws or bylaws specific to the Waimea River Park under the Local Government Act 2002.

15. Ensure the objectives and policies of this management plan are considered during the preparation of other Council plans, such as the Annual Plan and Long Term Community Consultation Plan.
16. Make bylaws, if required, to give effect to the provisions of this management plan.
17. Give precedence to Waimea River Park bylaws if there is any conflict between these bylaws and Council bylaws.

5.6 Park Closure and Exclusive Use

The primary objectives of park management are river control and soil conservation. Achievement of these objectives requires creation and maintenance of river control structures such as stop banks and ongoing management of the riverbed. Heavy machinery is used for these activities and for other activities, such as extraction and transporting of gravel from and through the park and adjoining lands. To enable these activities to continue, it may be necessary to close or restrict access to parts of the park at certain times.

Substantial parts of the park are leased for commercial uses, such as grazing. These leases provide for undisturbed use (“quiet enjoyment”) of these lands. Public access to these leased areas is subject to the consent of the lessee. Leases are listed in Appendix 1.

Council occasionally receives requests from community organizations or commercial operators to undertake one-off or annual fund-raising or commercial activities on Council land. These events or activities may require exclusive use of defined areas of Council land for a limited time.

18. Permit closure of parts of the park to public use for pre-determined periods to enable river control/soil conservation works to be undertaken without posing a threat to public safety.
19. Permit exclusive use of parts of the park for community or commercial events or activities, provided such events or activities do not unnecessarily inconvenience the public or disturb wildlife.
20. Restrict closure of the park as permitted by policies 18 and 19 to the area directly affected by the event or activity and to the minimum period required to undertake the event or activity.
21. Ensure that proposals to close parts of the park are publicly notified prior to the event and are clearly sign-posted during the event.

also see River Control and Soil Conservation Policies (section 6) and Commercial Use Policies (section 10)



A typical area of berm land leased for grazing

5.7 Network Utilities

Transpower New Zealand Limited has two high voltage transmission lines traversing Waimea River Park north of Appleby Highway. Occasionally, Transpower will require access to the park to inspect, maintain, operate or upgrade its existing assets. The Electricity Act grants the right of access for these activities subject to certain conditions, including giving reasonable notice.

22. Allow network utility operators conditional access to the park for the purpose of inspection, maintenance, ongoing operation and upgrading of utility infrastructure.
23. Ensure adverse effects of network utility infrastructure on the park, park values and park users are avoided, remedied or mitigated.
24. Allow network utility operators to remove or trim vegetation, subject to compliance with the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003 and in consultation with Tasman District Council (except in emergencies).
25. Ensure that national standards requiring safe separation distances from network utilities for activities and developments are complied with in the park.
26. Ensure that activities and development within Waimea River Park do not generate adverse effects on existing infrastructure.



Electricity transmission lines at Appleby Bridge

6.0 RIVER CONTROL AND SOIL CONSERVATION POLICIES

6.1 Riverbed Management

River control and soil conservation objectives require the maintenance of a clear river channel to enable efficient passage and discharge of flood water. This includes the removal of obstacles from the riverbed, management of riverbed levels, modification of active river channels to prevent scouring of riverbank protection structures, and maintenance of riverbank protection structures. Removal of gravel in excess of the rate of natural deposition of gravel lowers the riverbed and affects water levels in aquifers beneath the surrounding Waimea Plain. The present rate of natural deposition of gravel is very low, so no gravel is presently extracted from the riverbed.

Riverbed management work may involve the use of heavy machinery, excavation and movement of riverbed gravels and carting of gravel or rock. These activities, while essential for river control, may affect aquatic fauna (notably fish) and riverbed birds. They also may affect public use and enjoyment of the river park. For example, straightening of river channels to prevent scouring of riverbanks may eliminate natural riffles and pools that provide swimming holes and habitat for fish and birds. Riverbed management should, wherever practicable, enhance and restore aquatic habitat.

27. Permit modification of the riverbed and riverbanks for the purpose of river control works.
28. Limit the use of heavy machinery and vehicles in the riverbed to those that are essential for river control activities and authorized gravel extraction and cartage.
29. Undertake, wherever possible, riverbed management works at times which limit the disturbance to aquatic fauna and riverbed birds.
30. Attempt, wherever possible, to allow natural river meanders and pools to remain for the benefit of wildlife and recreation.
31. Investigate methods of managing the riverbed and riverbanks to provide a more natural river environment while ensuring river control functions are not compromised.
32. Ensure that riverbed management has as little impact as possible on indigenous species and habitats.



River bed at the confluence of the Wairoa and Wai-itī rivers

6.2 River Berm Management

The Waimea River berm lands within the park have been managed for river protection and soil conservation purposes. The berm lands and stop banks have been contoured and constructed to enable efficient passage and discharge of flood water. The stop banks are designed to contain a one-in-fifty year flood while maintaining a 0.6m freeboard. The strength and integrity of the stop banks can be affected by deep-rooted trees, vehicles and trampling by heavy animals. Management of the stop banks includes vegetation control and the maintenance (including mowing) of public walking tracks.

The river berms between the stop banks and the river have been managed to ensure that obstacles to water movement (such as trees) are reduced or removed. Large parts of the river berms have been leased for grazing and gravel processing. These leases provide revenue to Council and can assist in the management of the berm lands, such as the removal and control of weeds. However, the presence of shelterbelts, gravel stockpiles and structures can compromise river control objectives by hindering the efficient passage of flood water.

The river berms provide great potential to provide for a range of activities and uses, including restoration of indigenous vegetation, creation of wildlife habitat, provision of opportunities for public access and recreation (notably walking and cycling), historic resource protection and continued commercial use. An important purpose of this management plan is to provide for these uses while not compromising the river control and soil conservation objectives.

33. Ensure that management of the river berms does not compromise river control and soil conservation objectives.
34. Remove, or require the removal of, vegetation, structures and any other obstacles that compromise river control objectives.
35. Provide for other activities and uses on the berm lands wherever these activities and uses do not conflict with one another or with river control objectives.
36. Investigate methods of managing the berm lands to provide a more natural environment while ensuring river control functions are not compromised.

also see Nature Conservation Policies (section 7), Public Access and Recreational Use Policies (section 9) and Commercial Use Policies (section 10)

7.0 NATURE CONSERVATION POLICIES

7.1 Species and Habitat Protection and Management

A history of modification and the presence of aggressive introduced plant species have largely displaced indigenous plant species from the Waimea River Park except where deliberate restoration has occurred, such as at Challies Island and beside the Two Rivers Walkway. Indigenous animals have also been displaced, though important populations of bird and fish species are present (including threatened species), especially in the lower reaches of the river and at the adjacent Waimea Estuary.

Degradation of habitats and the effects of introduced plant and animal pests are the main threats to the health and survival of indigenous species in the area. Habitat restoration and animal pest control are the two most important management actions for the protection of indigenous animal species. Tasman Environmental Trust, Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council and other groups and individuals have undertaken habitat restoration and species protection work within the park.

The berm lands provide opportunities for the protection of wildlife habitats. Priority areas for the protection of existing wildlife habitats are both sides of the Wai-iti River, Challies Island and both sides of the Waimea River between Appleby Bridge and the estuary.

37. Protect indigenous plant and animal species that are present in or dependent on habitats in the park (except for hunting of game-bird species).
38. Protect wildlife habitats along the Wai-iti River, at Challies Island, along the lower Waimea River (below Appleby Bridge) and wherever else they occur.
39. Ensure that the protection of threatened indigenous plant and animal species is a priority for park management.
40. Liaise with the Department of Conservation and, where appropriate, Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council for species and habitat protection work.
41. Encourage the involvement of other agencies, groups and individuals in species and habitat protection work.

7.2 Restoration of Indigenous Vegetation and Habitat

The vegetation of Waimea River Park is dominated by planted river-protection species, naturalised weedy species and developed pasture. The original indigenous plant communities have been displaced by a long history of modification. Small areas of indigenous vegetation have been restored or protected at Challies Island and alongside Two Rivers Walkway. There is considerable public enthusiasm for further tree planting and the restoration of indigenous plant communities.

Habitats for indigenous species have also been modified in the park. However, wildlife habitat has been created for water birds at Challies Island back channel. One pond has been excavated and its margins planted. Excavation of other ponds and further planting are planned within the back channel at Challies Island.

The berm lands provide considerable potential for the restoration of indigenous vegetation. River control objectives restrict the location of restoration projects and in places the type of species that can be planted. Areas where restoration of indigenous vegetation could occur without compromising river control objectives are:

- both sides of the Wai-iti River
- confluence of the Wai-iti and Wairoa rivers (low-stature vegetation)
- east side of the Wairoa and Waimea rivers between Clover Road West and Bartlett Road
- the agro-forestry (pine plantation) area near the Council tree nursery

The berm lands also provide considerable potential for the restoration of wetlands and the creation of wildlife habitats. Natural backwater channels are still present (though modified) on the west (true left) side of the Waimea River above and below Appleby Bridge and on the east (true right) side of the river below Appleby Bridge. Areas where restoration of wetlands and wildlife habitats could occur without compromising river control objectives are:

- Challies Island back channel
- the agro-forestry (pine plantation) area and the Council tree nursery
- both sides of the lower Waimea River (below Appleby Bridge)

Tasman Environmental Trust and Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council have previously provided funds for restoration work in and adjacent to the park. Funding for restoration work is also available from the proceeds of gravel extraction at Challies Island. Funds for restoration work may be available in the future from other sources, such as the Waimea Augmentation Scheme.

42. Restore or encourage the restoration of indigenous vegetation at locations where restoration will not compromise river control objectives or conflict with other uses.
43. Continue development of ponds and restoration of wildlife habitat along the old back-channel at Challies Island, linking the existing pond with the Waimea River, in consultation with adjacent landowners.
44. Create or encourage the creation of wetlands and other wildlife habitats at locations where habitats will not compromise river control objectives or conflict with other uses.
45. Ensure that locally-sourced indigenous plant species are used in restoration projects.
46. Liaise where appropriate with the Department of Conservation, Tasman Environmental Trust and Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council in vegetation and habitat restoration work.
47. Encourage the involvement of other agencies, groups and individuals in vegetation and habitat restoration work.
48. Encourage restoration of vegetation and habitat that enhances protection of Waimea Inlet and/or enhances links between the mountains and the sea.



Recent planting on the bank of Wai-iti River alongside Two Rivers Walkway

7.3 Plant and Animal Pest Control

Waimea River Park has extensive infestations of plant pest species, including old man's beard, crack willow, barberry and broom. Areas of rough weedy vegetation provide useful cover for game-bird species such as California quail and pheasant. Crack willow was traditionally used for riverbank protection works though is now regarded as a weed along rivers; its removal is required by the Rivers Asset Management Plan. The presence of these infestations of plant pests poses a threat to adjoining farmland, may in places compromise the integrity of the riverbanks and stop banks, prevents access over the berm lands and is frequently unsightly.

Animal pest species are also present in the park, notably rabbits, possums and small predator species. Animal pests threaten indigenous and introduced animals, including game birds, and may threaten restoration plantings.

Council, as a landowner, has an obligation to control plant and animal pests. The legal obligations for plant and animal pest control are set out in the Tasman-Nelson Regional Pest Management Strategy. Council, as a park manager, has obligations for plant and animal pest control to protect other values and uses of the park.

49. Eradicate or control plant and animal pests as required by the Tasman-Nelson Regional Pest Management Strategy.
50. Prepare a Plant and Animal Pest Control Plan to identify priorities for pest control in the park.
51. Replace crack willow on riverbanks with less invasive (preferably native) species (see Rivers Asset Management Plan).
52. Undertake plant and animal pest control in the park where such pests pose a threat to the natural values (including restoration plantings and wildlife habitat) or to public enjoyment of the park.
53. Coordinate, wherever practicable, pest control activities with those of other agencies, such as the Department of Conservation, Animal Health Board and Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council.

7.4 Protection and Maintenance of Game Bird Habitat

Waimea River Park supports good populations of game birds, notably California quail and pheasant. It provides the best pheasant hunting resource in the region and one of the best in the South Island. Areas of rough vegetation provide good cover for these game birds. The Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council are keen to protect and enhance game-bird habitat in the park. Proposed enhancement includes planting of food-trees such as oak, planting of seasonal food crops such as maize, creation of wetlands for water birds, and retention of vegetative cover. The most favourable areas of existing game bird habitat in the park are on the west side of the Waimea River between and including the confluence of the Wairoa and Wai-iti rivers and Challies Island. Maintenance of game bird habitat is generally compatible with river control objectives.

54. Manage the part of the park on the west side of the Waimea River between the confluence of the Wairoa and Wai-iti rivers and Challies Island to protect and enhance populations of game birds.
55. Permit planting of food trees and seasonal food crops in the park provided such planting does not compromise river control objectives or conflict with other park values and uses.
56. Consult with Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council before clearing any substantial areas of vegetation.

also see Restoration of Indigenous Vegetation and Habitat Policies (section 7.2) and Hunting and Fishing Policies (section 9.5)

8.0 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL POLICIES

8.1 Protection of Historic Resources

The lands within Waimea River Park are likely to contain historic occupation sites, early walking routes and early food-gathering and possibly cultivation sites. It is likely that past disturbance, including river control works, have removed or disturbed evidence of much early occupation and use. However, consultation with Tiakina te Taiao, the Department of Conservation and the Historic Places Trust may reveal the presence of sites. Further investigations may discover artefacts or sites. Proposed disturbance of any previously undisturbed parts of the park should be preceded by an archaeological investigation. Protection of evidence or sites of early human activity is an important management objective.

57. Ensure known historic sites within the park are protected from unnecessary disturbance.
58. Identify, record and mark (if appropriate) important historic sites in the park.
59. Investigate archaeological and historic values of previously unmodified parts of the park prior to any earthworks or other disturbance.

also see Tangata Whenua Policies (section 5.2)

8.2 Cultural Use

Lands and waters within the Waimea River Park have a history of human use dating from the 1400s¹⁷. Some of the resources that were probably utilized by Maori and early European occupants are still present within the park, notably freshwater fish and birds, fertile soils and river stones (for gardens). Other resources, such as harakeke (flax) and ti (cabbage tree) could easily be established within the park. Waimea River Park offers one of the best opportunities in the wider area for the establishment and use (harvest) of resources such as harakeke. Many of these uses would be compatible with river control objectives.

60. Permit the establishment of resources (such as harakeke) for cultural use (including harvest) within the park, provided this establishment and use does not conflict with river control and nature conservation objectives.
61. Permit gathering or harvest of other cultural resources (such as river stones for gardens) provided the activity was a traditional use of the area and provided the activity does not conflict with river control and nature conservation objectives.

9.0 PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATIONAL USE POLICIES

9.1 Foot Access, Walkways and Tracks

Walking is one of the most popular recreational activities in the park. Walking tracks within the park are also used for cycling. The Two Rivers Walkway along the Wairoa and Wai-iti rivers, the Waimea River Walkway along the stop bank on the west side of the Waimea River and the roads within the park provide good opportunities for walking and cycling. Further development of walkways and tracks is necessary to improve opportunities for public access within and through the park. Proposed track developments are:

- extension of Waimea River Walkway to Waimea West Road at the Wai-iti River Bridge.
- a walking/cycling track on the west side of the lower Waimea River north of Appleby Bridge.
- a walking/cycling track on the east side of the lower Waimea River north of Appleby Bridge.
- a walking/cycling track between Challies Island and Appleby Bridge.

These proposed track developments would provide linked walking and cycling tracks that would help meet the objectives of the Regional Cycling and Walking Strategy. An important improvement to this walking and cycling network would be provision of foot/cycle access across the lower Waimea River.

62. Maintain existing walkways within the park (Two Rivers and Waimea River walkways) for pedestrian and cycle use.
63. Extend Waimea River Walkway to Waimea West Road at the Wai-iti River Bridge.
64. Investigate provision of a walking/cycle track on the west side of the Waimea River between Appleby Bridge and the northwest corner of the park, in consultation with affected lessees, and provided adverse effects on wildlife can be mitigated.
65. Investigate provision of marked public foot and cycle access along the Right of Way between Cotterell Road and the northwest corner of the park, in consultation with affected landowners.
66. Construct a walking/cycle track on the east side of the lower Waimea River between Appleby Bridge and Lower Queen Street.
67. Provide linkages between the existing walkways and the river.
68. Permit public foot access to all other parts of the park, except areas that are clearly fenced or otherwise defined for grazing or other commercial uses.



Waimea River Walkway near Appleby Bridge

Many areas adjacent to walkways and tracks are leased for grazing. Fences, especially electric fences, and gates can be an obstacle or inconvenience to pedestrians and cyclists. These structures should be erected and maintained in a way that causes the minimum possible inconvenience to pedestrians and cyclists using the walkways and tracks, while excluding motor vehicles.

69. Ensure gates across walkways do not unnecessarily hinder walking or cycling access.
70. Require electric fences alongside defined walkways and tracks to be set back from the cleared path of the walkway or track.

also see Mountain Biking Policies (9.3)

9.2 Motor Vehicle Access and Roads

Motor vehicle access to the park is largely unrestricted. Several roads provide access to the park boundaries. Formed roads are present along the east side of the river within the park between Clover Road West and Blackbyre Road and between Appleby Bridge and Lower Queen Street, and on the west side between the Wairoa River confluence and River Road at the existing pine plantation and downstream from Appleby Bridge. Rough vehicle tracks are present in other places. The open bed of the Waimea River is also accessible for motor vehicle use during periods of normal or low river flows.

Motor vehicle use has encouraged misuse and vandalism in the park, notably dumping of garden waste and rubbish (including vehicles) and destruction of facilities such as the picnic area at Appleby Bridge. A majority of public submissions received during the preparation of this management plan were opposed to continued motor vehicle access within the park. This management plan proposes that unauthorized motor vehicle use will be progressively phased out as car parks and other facilities are established at key access points at park boundaries. Motor vehicle access and some roads will be maintained within the park for management purposes and where required by existing lessees.



Motor vehicle parking at Lower Queen Street

Proposed key park access points, with car parks and other facilities, are proposed at:

- Clover Road West
- Lower Queen Street
- Waimea West Road (Wai-iti River Bridge)
- Challies Road
- Coastal Highway (Appleby Bridge, both sides of Waimea River)

Other access points, with no proposed developments (primarily for pedestrian/cycle access), are proposed at:

- Bryant Road
- Bartlett Road
- Blackbyre Road
- Aldourie Road
- Livingstone Road
- River Road (at the existing pine plantation)
- Cotterell Road

71. Provide car parks and other facilities at key park access points to the river.
72. Restrict unauthorized motor vehicle access to parts of the park where such restrictions will benefit or help protect park values or facilities present or developed in these areas.
73. Allow motor vehicle access within the park for park management purposes, including river control works.
74. Allow motor vehicles within park where required for the effective operation of commercial lease agreements, such as gravel processing and grazing.
75. Authorize other motor vehicle use of the park as required for approved activities.

9.3 Mountain Biking

Cycling is presently provided for within the Waimea River Park on existing walkways and roads. These are shared tracks designed for pedestrian or motor vehicle access. Other parts of the river park are accessible for more challenging or adventurous cycle use such as mountain biking. Purpose-built mountain bike tracks established elsewhere, such as at Rabbit Island, have proved very popular. The park offers good potential for the development of such tracks, for example in the Challies Island area.

76. Permit mountain bike access to all parts of the park that are not set aside for other uses such as restoration projects, grazing or other leases, or where such access does not compromise sensitive wildlife habitat.
77. Develop a dedicated mountain bike track on the west side of the river between Challies Road and Appleby Bridge, in consultation with lessees and other users of the park.

also see Foot Access, Walkways and Tracks Policies (section 9.1)

9.4 Horse Riding

Horse riding is presently provided for in the park informally on roads and open ground. A submission received from the Nelson Riding Club during the preparation of this management plan requested the provision of trails for horse-riding and provision of areas suitable for parking vehicles and horse-floats. The park has potential to provide better opportunities for horse riding. However, horses can damage stop banks and can conflict with other recreational activities or conservation projects. This plan proposes to provide a horse-riding trail along the east side of the river between Clover Road West and Appleby Bridge and provide suitable parking for horse-floats at Clover Road West and Lower Queen Street. This horse trail will also be available for use by pedestrians and cyclists.

78. Provide a horse-riding trail along the east side of the river between Clover Road West and Appleby Bridge.
79. Provide suitable parking for vehicles and horse floats at the park boundary at Clover Road West and at Lower Queen Street.
80. Permit horse-riding in other parts of the park that are not set aside for other uses such as restoration projects, grazing or other leases, or where riding will not adversely affect wildlife and wildlife habitat.
81. Prohibit horses on stop banks, because the presence of horses conflicts with walkers and cyclists and with the integrity and management of the stop banks.

9.5 Hunting and Fishing

Game bird hunting and associated activities, such as gun-dog trialling, are popular though largely seasonal uses of the berm lands. Good habitat for upland game birds (pheasant and California quail) is present on the west side of the river between the confluence of the Wai-iti and Wairoa rivers and Challies Island. Habitat restoration, such as that under development at Challies Island, may enhance opportunities for game bird hunting. Fishing and white-baiting are popular activities in the lower reaches of the river. Game bird hunting and recreational fishing are managed by the Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council.



Hunting has the potential to conflict with other recreational uses of the park. However, the most important game bird hunting in the park is for upland game (pheasant and California quail), the season for which is restricted to three weekends during June and July. Other game bird hunting tends to be concentrated early in the season (during May). Public submissions received during the preparation of this management plan were evenly divided between those supporting continued hunting and those seeking greater restrictions on hunting.

82. Permit continued game bird hunting in the park, provided this activity is managed (by Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council) in a way that ensures there is no unacceptable risk or inconvenience to other users of the park.
83. Require hunters to gain permission from lessees prior to hunting on land leased for grazing or other uses.



Habitat restoration at Challies Island back-channel

Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council has suggested that small shelters be constructed on the stop bank at Challies Island for use as maimais during the game-bird hunting season and for use as bird-watching hides at other times. Another request received during the preparation of this management plan was the provision of a stocked fish pond and facilities at Challies Island to be managed as a put-and-take fishery for introducing young people to recreational fishing. This proposal would be developed in consultation with Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council.

84. Permit construction and maintenance of structures on the lower stop bank adjacent to the Challies Island wetlands for use as maimais during the game-bird hunting season and for use as bird-watching hides at other times provided such structures remain open for public use.
85. Permit the establishment of a contained put-and-take fishery (in consultation with Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council) for the purpose of introducing young people to recreational fishing. The fishery is to be restricted to rainbow trout and Chinook salmon.
86. Permit continued fishing (managed by Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council) and white-baiting (managed by the Department of Conservation) in the park.

also see Protection and Management of Game Bird Habitat Policies (section 7.4)

9.6 Picnicking, Camping and Overnight Stays

Picnicking facilities at Waimea River Park are presently restricted to those at Appleby Bridge (Appleby Bridge Recreation Reserve). Camping and overnight stays in the park appear to be restricted to occasional overnight parking by campervans. This management plan proposes that picnic facilities be established at some of the key access points to the park and at two other locations as follows:

- Clover Road West
- Lower Queen Street (subject to flood protection)
- Confluence of the Wairoa and Wai-iti rivers (Two Rivers Walkway)
- Waimea West Road
- Challies Island
- Appleby Bridge (both sides of Waimea River and upstream of the bridge on the west bank)

The risk of flooding precludes camping or overnight stays in the park.

87. Develop and maintain picnic facilities at the following six locations in the park: Clover Road West, Lower Queen Street, Wairoa/Wai-iti confluence, Waimea West Road, Challies Island and Appleby Bridge.
88. Prohibit camping and overnight stays in the park.

also see Toilet and Water Facilities Policies (section 9.7)



Picnic facilities at Appleby Bridge

9.7 Toilet Facilities

No toilet or reticulated water facilities are presently provided in the park, except for the toilet at Appleby Bridge. These facilities are required at popular locations to maintain hygiene and to limit the effects of human use on the environment. Toilets will dispose into contained chambers. This management plan proposes that toilets be provided at picnic areas in or adjacent to the park, as follows:

- Clover Road West
 - Lower Queen Street
 - Confluence of the Wairoa and Wai-iti rivers (Two Rivers Walkway)
 - Waimea West Road
 - Challies Island
 - Appleby Bridge
89. Develop and maintain toilets at the following six picnic areas in or adjacent to the park: Clover Road West, Lower Queen Street, Wairoa/Wai-iti confluence, Waimea West Road, Challies Island and Appleby Bridge.
 90. Require commercial recreation operators to provide toilets for clients at their facilities.
 91. Ensure toilet wastes are deposited in approved and contained systems.
 92. Require organizers of activities or events in the park to provide portable toilets for the duration of the activity or event.

9.8 Rubbish Disposal

Disposal of rubbish, especially garden waste, abandoned vehicles and occasionally commercial waste, is an important management issue. Rubbish is removed weekly from the park at an annual cost to Council of approximately \$50,000. Restrictions on motor vehicle access and improvements to park facilities are expected to eventually lead to a reduction in unauthorized rubbish dumping in the park. Conversely, increased public use of walkways, tracks and other facilities is likely to lead to an increase in demand for rubbish disposal facilities in parts of the park.

93. Prohibit unauthorized dumping of rubbish in the park.
94. Maintain the park clear of rubbish, through regular rubbish collection.
95. Provide suitable rubbish disposal facilities at key access points, picnic areas and other locations within the park as required by demand.
96. Encourage park visitors (through signs and interpretation) to take their rubbish with them when leaving the park.
97. Require lessees, commercial recreation operators and other activity or event organizers to remove all rubbish associated with their activity from the park.

9.9 Barbecues and Fires

There are presently no barbecues or fireplaces in the park. The extensive areas of rank vegetation in the park are likely to pose a fire risk during dry conditions. Any wildfire in the park would threaten river control plantings, restoration plantings, fences, structures and public safety. This management plan proposes that fires be prohibited in the park, except in permanent fireplaces or barbecues at appropriate picnic areas.

98. Prohibit fires in the park, except in approved fireplaces and for park management purposes, subject to any local or regional fire restrictions.
99. Allow provision of gas-fired or electric barbecues at picnic areas.

9.10 Domestic Animals

Waimea River Park is a popular location for dog owners to exercise their pets. The walkways, tracks and open space provide extensive areas for dog exercising. Dogs are also used by game bird hunters. A substantial majority of public submissions received during the preparation of this management plan supported greater restrictions, or a prohibition, on dogs in all or parts of the park and especially in the Pearl Creek-Waimea Estuary area. Dogs may intimidate other park visitors, threaten wildlife, disturb stock and leave faeces.

Dog control in Tasman District is governed by Tasman District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2009. Under this bylaw, Waimea River Park is a public place. The bylaw requires that the owner or person in possession of a dog in a public place must keep that dog under effective control at all times. Effective control is defined under the bylaw to mean the dog is not causing a nuisance or danger and that the person in charge of the dog is able to obtain an immediate and desired response from the dog. The bylaw also requires that the owner or person in possession of a dog in a public place must remove any faeces deposited by the dog.

The main areas of sensitive wildlife habitat identified in public submissions received during the preparation of this management plan lie outside Waimea River Park.

- 100.Allow dogs in the park subject to the Tasman District Council Dog Control Bylaw 2009.
- 101.Prohibit the taking of domestic animals other than dogs and horses (and domestic stock on leased land) into the park.

9.11 Signs and Interpretation

There are no 'Waimea River Park' signs in this new park. Existing signs are those marking the walkways and signs with instructions to discourage activities such as dumping of rubbish. The provision of standard park signs would inform visitors of the park and its facilities and of activities that are appropriate or restricted in the park. Interpretation panels would inform visitors of the purpose and values of the park, reflect the special character of the park and encourage respect and support for protection and appropriate use.

- 102.Develop an Interpretation and Sign Plan for the park, which:
 - Includes consultation with iwi.
 - Ensures that walkways, tracks, horse trails and other facilities are adequately and appropriately sign-posted.
 - Provides for interpretative panels at key access points outlining the park's purpose, values and uses.
 - Provides sufficient signs to inform visitors of activities that are restricted or prohibited in the park.

9.12 Public Safety

River control works, gravel extraction and the use of firearms may pose a risk to visitors to the park. Adequate public notice, warning signs and restrictions of the use of firearms are required to mitigate this risk.

- 103.Ensure that all unsafe structures and equipment in the park are removed, made safe, or clearly identified by signs.
- 104.Ensure that known hazards in or adjacent to the park are adequately identified and risks to the public mitigated wherever appropriate and practical.
- 105.Prohibit the erection of structures in the park where such structures may cause injury.

106. Prohibit the carrying or use of firearms or any other weapon in the park, except firearms that are being used for the purposes of game bird hunting or authorized pest control operations.
107. Ensure that adequate warning (through signs or other public notice) is given of any activity that involves the use of large vehicles or heavy machinery.

9.13 Landscaping and Amenity Planting

There is considerable potential to enhance the natural and amenity values of the park through landscape development and planting. This management plan permits such developments provided they do not detract from natural and amenity values.

108. Require all significant park development proposals, other than river control work, to include a Council-approved landscape plan.
109. Ensure that existing or potential plant pests are not planted in the park.
110. Include indigenous species, propagated from locally-sourced material, wherever practicable in park planting programmes.
111. Plant amenity and shade trees in the park, where compatible with river control and restoration projects, and where such planting does not adversely affect enjoyment of neighbouring properties.
112. Ensure that all trees and vegetation planted near high voltage transmission lines are selected and/or managed to comply (including when maturity is reached) with the Electrical (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003.

9.14 Buildings and Structures

The erection of buildings and other structures in the park is generally incompatible with river control objectives. This management plan provides for the erection of buildings and other structures only if they are compatible with river control objectives and necessary for use and enjoyment of the park.

113. Prohibit the construction or relocation of buildings or structures in the park unless:
 - compatible with river control objectives;
 - necessary for the ongoing operation, maintenance and upgrading of existing electricity transmission lines;
 - necessary to meet a demonstrated demand for public or lessee use; and,
 - compatible with other park objectives.
114. Require all proposals to construct or relocate buildings in the park to be accompanied by an assessment that shows how the building and its colour will be compatible with the landscape and amenity values of the park.
115. Remove abandoned or unused buildings and structures from the park, subject to an assessment that they do not have archaeological, historic or cultural significance.

10.0 COMMERCIAL USE POLICIES

10.1 Gravel Extraction and Processing

Gravel has been extracted from the riverbed and berm lands within the park for many years. The lack of replenishment means that gravel is not presently extracted from the riverbed, and is unlikely to be extracted in significant quantities in future years. Gravel is still being extracted from the berm lands, though opportunities for further gravel extraction are finite. Three gravel-processing plants are present in the park, all on the east side of the river between Bartlett Road and the Coastal Highway (Appleby Bridge). These plants process gravel from local sources and sources elsewhere in the District. Gravel extraction and processing are authorized through lease agreements.

Gravel extraction can be managed so that it is compatible, and even beneficial, to river control. It can also assist with the restoration of wildlife habitat, such as at Challies Island, and the contouring and shaping of the berm lands for other uses. However, gravel processing plants are largely incompatible with river control objectives and other objectives for park management. The presence of large processing plants within the stop banks may obstruct the river floodway, increase heavy vehicle traffic, disturb wildlife and conflict with public access and recreational use. The presence of large stockpiles of gravel within the stop banks is also incompatible with river control objectives.

This management plan proposes to allow continued gravel extraction where it is compatible with park objectives.

- 116. Permit extraction of gravel from the riverbed where necessary for river control purposes, as determined by Council's river engineers (and as proposed in the River Assets Management Plan).
- 117. Permit gravel extraction from the berm lands where such extraction is compatible with river control objectives and does not conflict with other park objectives.
- 118. Ensure that opportunities to meet other park objectives, such as habitat restoration, are considered when applications for gravel extraction are granted.
- 119. Discuss with gravel processing plant operators, prior to lease renewal, possible relocation from the park.
- 120. Work with gravel processing plant operators to minimise the adverse effects of the plants on other park values and activities.



Stock pile at gravel-processing plant

10.2 Grazing

Parts of the river berm lands have been leased for grazing for many years. Many of these leased areas are now paddocks with cultivated pasture and are little different from farmed land on adjoining properties. Grazing is useful for weed control, and provides revenue to Council. Grazing is generally compatible with river control as it maintains berm lands in open low-stature vegetation. However, grazing can conflict with other park management objectives, such as public access and nature conservation.

- 121. Permit continued grazing of pastoral land within the park, provided such grazing is compatible with river control objectives, does not conflict with other park objectives and does not affect water quality in the river.
- 122. Require lessees to ensure that grazing and activities associated with grazing are contained within the grazing lease area and do not affect areas or activities outside the lease boundary.
- 123. Ensure that potential uses of the land other than grazing are considered before issuing new leases for grazing.
- 124. Prohibit the filling or any other modification of old river channels or ponds as part of grazing activities or pasture development.

10.3 Commercial Recreation

The only commercial recreation presently authorized in the park is a four-hectare paintball operation at Challies Island. It comprises rough vegetation, fences, a few structures and a shipping container. This management plan proposes that the area occupied by the paintball operation will eventually be used for habitat restoration, as part of the Challies Island wetland restoration project.

A commercial paintball operation, depending on its location, need not conflict with other objectives for park management. However, it does require exclusive use of land, similar to other commercial leases, and a 40 m buffer (or some other screening) between it and other uses. This management plan proposes that the commercial paintball lease be relocated from Challies Island. One possible location is the pine plantations north of Challies Island, where the pine trees are in poor condition and proposed for removal.



Existing paintball operation at Challies Island

No other commercial recreation leases are presently proposed within the park. One-off approval has been previously provided to conduct jet-sprinting events in the Waimea River. This activity involves creating sprint channels in the riverbed. Jet boat events are incompatible with the management plan policy that prohibits unauthorized motor vehicle use in the park.

- 125. Review the paintball operation at Challies Island back-channel when this area is required for wetland restoration. Permit establishment of a paintball operation elsewhere in the park, provided the adverse effects of the activity can be avoided or mitigated.
- 126. Progressively remove trees from the plantations and replace with other plant cover, preferably native species.
- 127. Permit new commercial recreation activities in the park, provided such activities are compatible with other park management objectives and do not require exclusive use of land that is presently available for public use.

10.4 Leases

There are sixteen existing leases for the use of land within the park. These comprise leases for grazing, gravel processing and commercial recreation (Paintball Adventures). A list of these leases is attached to this management plan as Appendix 1.

The lease agreement allows Council to terminate a lease if the land is required for river control purposes or public recreation.

- 128. Ensure that actual and potential natural values, including wildlife and habitats, and other potential uses of the land are considered before renewing leases or issuing new leases.
- 129. Include restrictions as part of new or renewed leases so as to meet the objectives of this management plan.
- 130. Ensure that all new or renewed leases include provision for Council to terminate the lease, either in whole or part, if the land is required for planned park development.
- 131. Review the terms and conditions of grazing leases when they are due for renewal to ensure they are compatible with objectives and policies of this plan.

11.0 APPENDICES

11.1 Schedule of Leases

Leases for land within Waimea River Park at November 2009 are:

Lease	Lessee's Name	Expiry Date
33302L1	O'Connor (3).....	30-09-2012
33303L1	O'Connor.....	01-03-2012
33306L1	Ford (2)	02-12-2013
33307L1	St Clair (3)	
33310L1	Paynter.....	31-10-2011
53301L1	Taylor.....	01-11-2013
53301L2	Vickery.....	14-12-2024
53307L1	Polglase.....	31-03-2013
53309L1	Oldfield Group	30-06-2014
53310L2	Oldfield Asphalt.....	31-10-2010
53311L1	Fulton Hogan	31-07-2012
53319L1	Downer EDI	14-01-2017
53320L1	Eden Rd Farm.....	01-05-2012
53321L1	Seifried.....	30-09-2022
53322L1	E & R Eden.....	30-06-2012
53330L1	Higgins	31-10-2010

11.2 Scientific Names of Species

Common Name	Scientific Name
Australasian bittern	<i>Botaurus poiciloptilis</i>
banded dotterel.....	<i>Charadrius bicinctus bicinctus</i>
banded rail.....	<i>Rallus philippensis</i>
barberry.....	<i>Berberis glaucocarpa</i>
black-fronted tern	<i>Sterna albostriata</i>
bluegill bully	<i>Gobiomorphus hubbsi</i>
broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>
brown trout.....	<i>Salmo trutta</i>
cabbage tree/ti.....	<i>Cordyline australis</i>
Chinook salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i>
common bully.....	<i>Gobiomorphus cotidianus</i>
common smelt.....	<i>Retropinna retropinna</i>
crack willow	<i>Salix fragilis</i>
fernbird	<i>Bowdleria punctata punctata</i>
gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>
harakeke/flax	<i>Phormium tenax</i>
inanga	<i>Galaxias maculatus</i>
kahikatea	<i>Dacrycarpus dacrydioides</i>
longfin eel	<i>Anguilla dieffenbachii</i>
lowland ribbonwood	<i>Plagianthus regius</i>
marsh crake	<i>Porzana pusilla affinis</i>
matai	<i>Prumnopitys taxifolia</i>
old man's beard	<i>Clematis vitalba</i>
pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
possum.....	<i>Trichosurus vulpecula</i>
rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus cuniculus</i>

rainbow trout	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>
redfin bully.....	<i>Gobiomorphus buttoni</i>
shortfin eel	<i>Anguilla australis</i>
spotless crake	<i>Porzana tabuensis plumbea</i>
titoki	<i>Alectryon excelsus</i>
torrentfish.....	<i>Cheimarrichthys fosteri</i>
totara	<i>Podocarpus totara</i>
upland bully.....	<i>Gobiomorphus breviceps</i>
yelloweye mullet	<i>Aldrichetta forsteri</i>

(This is not a complete species list: it is a list only of species cited by common name in this document)

11.3 References Cited

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11.4 Endnotes

¹ Simmonds, R. 1997.

² Robertson *et al.* 2007.

³ Chadderton *et al.* 2004.

⁴ Walker, K. 1987.

⁵ Leathwick *et al.* 2003.

⁶ Walker *et al.* 2004.

⁷ Ministry for the Environment. 2007.

⁸ Mitchell, J; Mitchell, H. 2004.

⁹ Mitchell, J; Mitchell, H. 2004.

¹⁰ Minutes of Tiakina te Taiao Ltd meeting, October 2007 (Ann Sheridan, *personal communication*).

¹¹ Mitchell, J; Mitchell, H. 2004.

¹² Gregory, K. 1976.

¹³ Allan, R.M. 1965.

¹⁴ Simmonds, R. 1997.

¹⁵ Simmonds, R. 1997.

¹⁶ Neil Deans, Nelson/Marlborough Fish and Game Council, *personal communication*, April 2008.

¹⁷ Mitchell, J; Mitchell, H. 2004.