



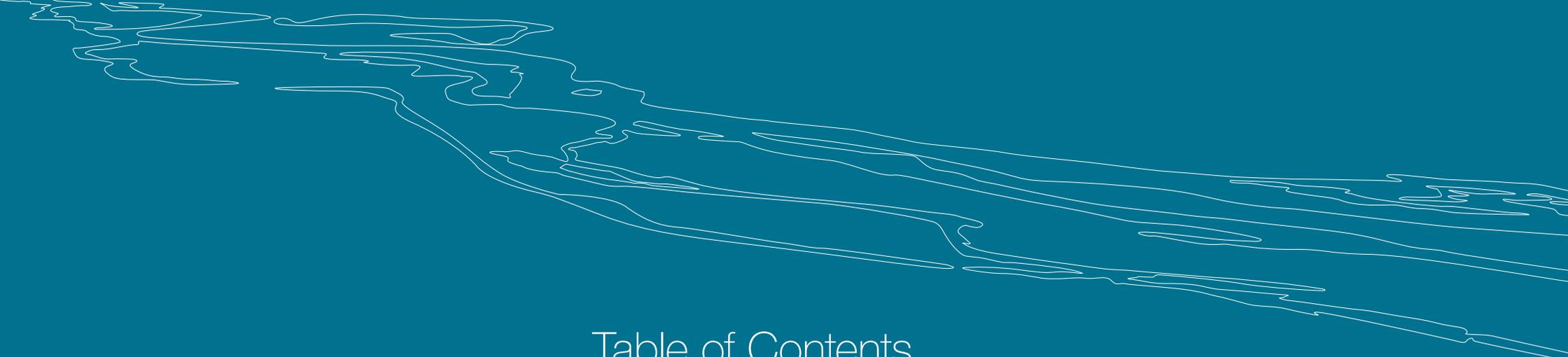
# Ashley River/Rakahuri

Management Strategy  
A Community Vision

Prepared for: The Ashley River/Rakahuri Advisory Group July 2008

Adopted for: Inclusion in the Environment Canterbury Long Term Council Community Plan 2009/19





# Table of Contents

What is the Ashley River/Rakahuri Management Strategy?	2
Introduction	3
Terms of Reference	4
The Process	4
Summary of Goals and Objectives	5
Goal 1	6
Goal 2	9
Goal 3	11
Implementation and Monitoring of the Plan	17
Advisory Group Summary of Findings	17
Public Meetings Input	20
Outline of Proposals by River Section	22
Map 1 - Strategy Area	25
Map 2 - Okuku River to Rossiters Road	26
Map 3 - Rossiters Road to Tulls Road	27
Map 4 - Tulls Road to Waikuku Beach	28



# What is the Ashley River/Rakahuri Management Strategy?

## This management strategy

- is an outcome of the investigation into the establishment of an Ashley Rakahuri Regional Park
- has been prepared by community representatives
- sets goals and clear objectives which are intended to guide Environment Canterbury's future management of the Ashley River/Rakahuri
- describes the many actions necessary to achieve these goals with indications of priority and timing.

The essential elements of the strategy are contained in the tables of goals, objectives and actions.

There are three overall goals for the strategy. Some of the objectives which follow and many of the actions which are intended to achieve these, will help to achieve more than one of the goals.

## Area covered

The strategy covers both sides of the Ashley River/Rakahuri from the Coastal Marine Reserve (approximately one kilometre upstream of the river mouth) to the confluence of the Okuku River. See Map 1

*This strategy does not include the Ashley River/Rakahuri Estuary.*

# Introduction

The significant majority of the Ashley River/Rakahuri bed and adjacent berm within the river protection stopbanks from the Okuku confluence downstream to the Coastal Marine Reserve is vested in Environment Canterbury through the Ashley River Improvement Act 1925, for river protection works or as an endowment to generate funds for river protection works. The land totals approximately 1700 hectares. This includes 280ha of leased land which helps finance river works and 137ha of protection pine forest, run as a commercial forest. There are also sections of the riverbed and adjoining berm that are in private ownership. These are shown on Map 1.

The boundaries for the strategy, which include the Environment Canterbury (ECan) and private land associated with the Ashley River/Rakahuri, are shown on Map 1 and fall within the Waimakariri District Council territory.

Due to the close proximity of Christchurch City and the townships of Waikuku Beach, Ashley and Rangiora, the river and berm land has always been used by the public for recreation and leisure activities. Today, these populations have expanded and new forms of recreation have developed placing considerable pressure and competing demands upon the river and its ecology. Additionally with the development

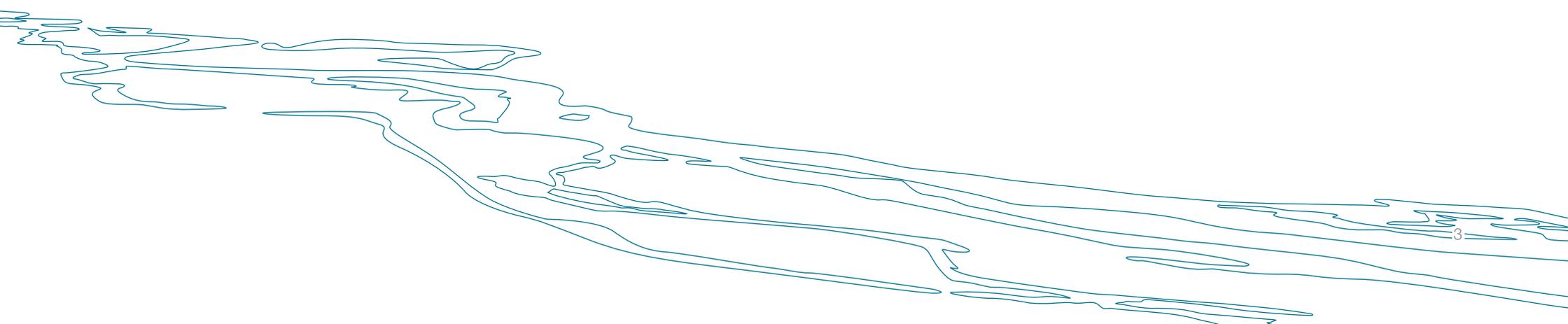
of the Waimakariri River Regional Park, a proportion of the anti-social behaviour previously experienced there including rubbish and car dumping has transferred to the Ashley River/Rakahuri.

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

This management strategy has grown from a community desire to better integrate the protection and endowment management of this land and ecological values with recreation use.

The programme to produce the strategy included public meetings followed by a consultative process with an advisory group which was formed from the initial public meetings and invitations to key stakeholders. The advisory group includes representatives from:

- Ashley River/Rakahuri Liaison Committee
- Ashley River/Rakahuri Rivercare Group
- Combined 4WD Clubs
- Community representatives from Rangiora, Ashley and Fernside
- Department of Conservation
- North Canterbury Fish & Game
- North Canterbury Cycling Club
- Christchurch Readymix
- Taggarts Earthmoving
- Te Kohaka o Tuhaitara Trust
- Te Ngai Tuahuriri Runanga
- Waikuku Community Group
- Waimakariri District Council



# The Process



## Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the Ashley River/Rakahuri Advisory Group are:

The Advisory Committee shall meet as necessary to:

- help determine ways of managing the sustainable development of recreational use of the Ashley River/Rakahuri providing for flood protection and natural values
- advise on how to enhance the public's understanding and value of the flood protection system and the river environment
- advise on how to lead the public to use Ashley River/Rakahuri sensitively
- provide information to ECan relating to the natural values in the Ashley River/Rakahuri
- provide information to ECan relating to present and future recreational opportunities in the Ashley River/Rakahuri
- comment on draft documents leading to the preparation of a non-statutory Concept Development Plan

It is hoped that this group or others from their organisations will stay on to assist in the development of detailed proposals and their implementation.

# Mission Statement: “Enhance Ashley River/Rakahuri Diverse Values”

## Summary of Goals and Objectives

### GOAL 1:

TO PROVIDE FOR ESSENTIAL RIVER MANAGEMENT AND FLOOD MITIGATION OPERATIONS SAFELY AND EFFECTIVELY WHILE CAUSING A MINIMUM OF DISTURBANCE TO NATURAL AND RECREATIONAL VALUES AND USERS.

#### Objective 1

Recreational users and residents understand the flood protection system and the necessity for protection operations including shingle extraction.

#### Objective 2

Develop detailed procedures for the management of river protection operations in association with wildlife and habitat protection.

#### Objective 3

Separate machinery and truck movements from other river users wherever practicable.

### GOAL 2:

TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

#### Objective 4

Restore, maintain and protect the river's mauri (life force).

#### Objective 5

Protect the full range of distinctive bird populations and habitats of the lower Ashley River/Rakahuri.

#### Objective 6

Protect and enhance populations and habitats of native plant and animal species.

### GOAL 3:

TO PROVIDE FOR SAFE AND BALANCED RECREATION WITH A MINIMUM OF CONFLICT BETWEEN WIDELY DIFFERENT USER GROUPS.

#### Objective 7

Protect and enhance the sport fishery of the Ashley River/Rakahuri.

#### Objective 8

Recreational users value the river environment and the flood protection system and use them sensitively without causing damage.

#### Objective 9

Recreational river users will have a clear understanding of what activities are welcomed and appropriate in different sections of the river.

#### Objective 10

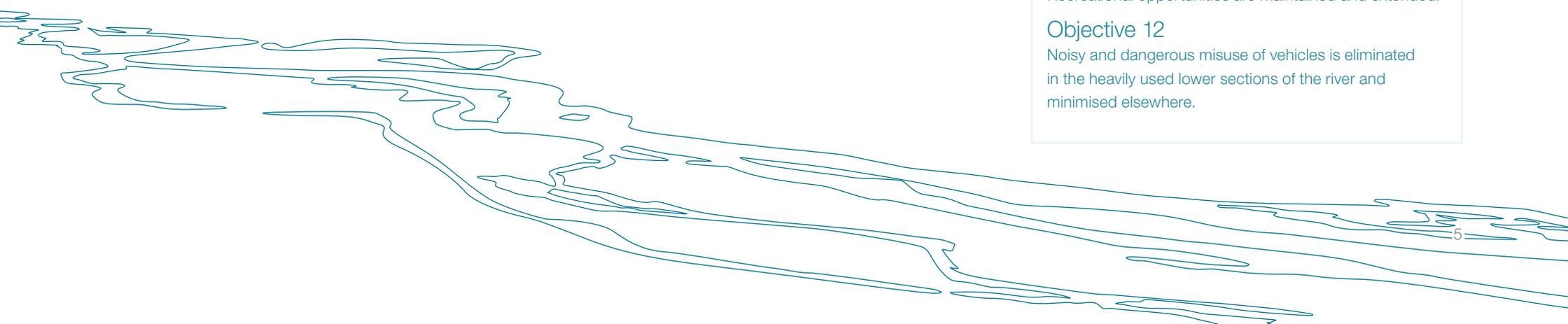
Sections of the river are attractive, natural and safe areas to visit for family recreation.

#### Objective 11

Recreational opportunities are maintained and extended.

#### Objective 12

Noisy and dangerous misuse of vehicles is eliminated in the heavily used lower sections of the river and minimised elsewhere.



# GOAL 1: To provide for essential river management and flood mitigation operations safely and effectively while causing a minimum of disturbance to natural and recreational values and users.

**Objective 1:** Recreational users and residents understand the flood protection system and the necessity for protection operations including shingle extraction.

**Performance measure:** An increasing trend in river users' understanding of the protection system and shingle operations. Measured by annual survey.

No.	Action	Explanation	Priority	Map Number	Funding
1.1	The main entrances to the river will be upgraded to reflect its high community value. The upgrade will include integrated traffic management, planting, signage, information kiosks and night gates.	The existing entrances are open, dusty and industrial, inviting misuse of the river and its surrounds. The entrances need to be welcoming with appropriate information readily accessible.  Information kiosks will be located at the main entrances on either side of the river. These will inform the public on a wide range of issues including river management and flood mitigation.	High	2-4	This is one of the more expensive actions. The progress and scale will be determined by the funding stream available. This action will be a priority if a Regional Park is established.
1.2	ECan will continue to work with a wide range of recreational and resident groups to minimise conflict with river protection operations.	Different sections within ECan are responsible for different aspects of ECan's work and these groups will work with the community depending on their responsibilities.	Immediate	1	Existing budget
1.3	Interpretive material by way of the ECan website, leaflets, information panels.	The works required to manage the river are not well understood. For example trail bike riders damaging stopbanks due to ignorance.  The various ways of reaching diverse user groups are covered in Actions 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3.	Staged as per Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP)	1	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.

## GOAL 1 continued

**Objective 2:** Develop detailed procedures for the management of river protection operations in association with wildlife and habitat protection.

**Performance measure:** Procedures are available by June 2009 to guide management of ECan's protection operations.

Procedures are also in place by June 2009 to guide shingle operators and specialist recreation user groups.

No.	Action	Explanation	Priority	Map Number	Funding
2.1	ECan will co-operate closely with the Ashley Rakahuri Rivercare Group (ARRG) as they work to improve the understanding of riverbed bird species' habitats, requirements and threats.	Much of this work has been completed by the ARRG so that our understanding of the Ashley River/Rakahuri bird populations and their interactions with river users is already greatly improved.	Ongoing	1	Existing budget
2.2	ECan river engineering staff will continue to work with the ARRG to enhance practical procedures to govern their operations and those of their contractors during the nesting season of September to February.	The ARRG and ECan have developed procedures with shingle extraction contractors to govern their operations during breeding season. These will need to be reviewed regularly and as more information on impact of the operations on the riverbirds is obtained.	Ongoing	1	Existing budget
2.3	ECan staff will continue to work with the ARRG and holders of shingle removal consents to assist the consent holders to operate with a minimum of disruption to birdlife.	The ARRG and ECan have developed procedures with shingle extraction contractors to manage their operations with the minimum disruption to birdlife.	Ongoing	1	Existing budget
2.4	ECan will work with specialised recreational users to develop practical procedures to minimise the impacts of their use.	Examples include trail bikes and 4WDs. Work to be undertaken by an expanded ranger service.	Ongoing	1	Budget for extended ranger services Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.

## GOAL 1 continued

**Objective 3:** Machinery and truck movements will be separated from other river users wherever practicable.

**Performance measure:** A reduction in truck movements on tracks shared with other river users. To be measured in conjunction with Objective 1 performance measures.

No.	Action	Explanation	Priority	Map Number	Funding
3.1	Wherever possible destination-based design will be used to separate shingle truck movements from other river users.	Areas will be set aside for specific compatible activities. See Action 9.2	Staged as per LTCCP	1	Existing budget
3.2	Access through the riverbed will be closed where shingle extraction is occurring to ensure public safety. Alternative access may be arranged.	When the large shingle operations are taking place there are frequent truck movements across the berm. Where it is possible, through public access will be restricted while this work is underway and the area treated as a work site.	Staged to coincide with shingle extraction works	1	Existing budget
3.3	Planning for the re-development or relocation of the Milton Avenue western entrance will include separation of machinery and shingle truck movements if possible.	Taggarts shingle yard is located in this section and truck access to the riverbed is across the berm. There is also a high use vehicle entrance off Milton Avenue increasing the potential for accidents.	Staged as per LTCCP	3	Included in Action 1
3.3	A system of sharing information between river managers and specialist recreational groups will be initiated to ensure recreational users know when work is being planned and undertaken.	Some groups will have areas of the river and berm where they operate. Inevitably from time to time protection operations will be required in these areas. When this occurs the groups need to be warned. Depending on circumstances the systems to be put in place may require ECan to contact the group or vice versa.	Ongoing	1	Budget for extended ranger services. Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.

## GOAL 2: To protect and enhance the natural environment

**Objective 4:** Restore, maintain and protect the river's mauri (life force).

**Performance measure:** Degree of satisfaction among Te Ngai Tuahuriri Runanga.

No.	Action	Explanation	Priority	Map Number	Funding
4.1	Establish observation-based programmes to enable Te Ngai Tuahuriri Runanga to assess the river's mauri.	Each water body has its own mauri, guarded by separate spiritual guardians, its own mana and its own set of associated values and uses.	High	1	Existing budget

**Objective 5:** To protect and restore the full range of threatened bird populations and habitats of the Ashley River/Rakahuri.

**Performance measure:** Periodic survey of the bird population

No.	Action	Explanation	Priority	Map Number	Funding
5.1	Actions 2.1 - 2.4 cover fitting river management protection operations around threatened bird populations and habitats of the Ashley River/Rakahuri.	ECan and the ARRG will continue to work closely to facilitate required outcomes.	High	1	Existing budget
5.2	Actions 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 cover environmental education for river users.	ECan will work closely with other agencies, specialist groups and users to identify and facilitate education opportunities.	High	1	Possible external funding opportunities eg ARRG
5.3	ECan will work with the Dept of Conservation, ARRG, specialised recreation groups and users to develop practical measures to minimise effects on bird populations and habitats.	A single incident can impact greatly on the river's threatened bird populations. One measure to be used is to exclude vehicles in sections of the riverbed during bird breeding season.	High	1	Existing budget
5.4	ECan will work with ARRG and shingle extractors to improve bird breeding opportunities within extraction sites.	Much of the successful bird breeding takes place in former shingle extraction sites. Large area weed removal is an example of an activity better suited to machinery.	High	1	Existing budget

## GOAL 2 continued

**Objective 6:** To protect and enhance populations and habitats of native plant and animal species.

**Performance measure:** Annual report on progress each July by the ECan Ecologist.

No.	Action	Explanation	Priority	Map Number	Funding
6.1	Protect areas of high conservation value.	Areas of high conservation value will be identified and managed to reflect their significance.	Ongoing	1	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.
6.2	Protect the remaining indigenous plant communities in the Lower Ashley River/Rakahuri.	There are a number of indigenous plant communities surviving in the lower Ashley River/Rakahuri. These areas have been mapped and now require means to prevent damage eg fencing to restrict 4WD and trail bike access.	Ongoing	1	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.
6.3	Prepare reports to guide the enhancement of key indigenous plant communities.	As these reports are prepared, opportunities for the restoration of indigenous plant communities will also be investigated.	Medium	1	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.
6.3	Implement indigenous plant communities' enhancement projects.	As per report recommendations.	Ongoing	1	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.

## GOAL 3: To provide for safe and balanced recreation with a minimum of conflict between widely different user groups

**Objective 7:** To protect and enhance the sport fishery of the Ashley River/Rakahuri.

**Performance measure:** The provision of a report on the sport fishery in the Ashley River/Rakahuri.

Future performance measures to be set based on recommendations in this report.

No.	Action	Explanation	Priority	Map Number	Funding
7.1	Complete an investigation into the Ashley River/Rakahuri sport fishery with emphasis on habitat enhancement and impact upon native biota.	Fish & Game tell us that the sport fishery is in decline. Information is required in order to develop recovery strategy. A partnership with Fish & Game is anticipated for this initiative.	Medium	1	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.
7.2	Implement the recommendations with regard to enhancement of the sport fishery if these are consistent with objective 6.	A partnership with Fish & Game is anticipated for this initiative.	Medium	1	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.

## GOAL 3 continued

**Objective 8:** Recreational users value the river environment and the flood protection system and use them sensitively without causing damage.

**Performance measure:** Increasing understanding by users of the river environment and flood protection measures. To be assessed by Annual Survey.

No.	Action	Explanation	Priority	Map Number	Funding
8.1	Information will be available at key access points in the form of leaflets and display panels.	The objective will be to inform the public about the river environment including its frailties and strengths. Information will also be available on the various enhancement projects including how people can get involved.	Staged as per LTCCP	2-4	Possible external funding opportunities eg ARRГ
8.2	Environmental education opportunities with a focus on the river corridor will be investigated.	The need for more education to resolve many of the river's conflicts was a constant theme during the community consultation. Target schools as children are the long term river users.	Ongoing	1	Possible external funding opportunities eg ARRГ
8.3	Both organised and non organised specialist users will be informed about the river environment.	Information will be provided for 4WD, ATV, trail bike and buggy clubs by way of leaflets, maps and ranger talks at club nights. Non club members will be reached by having the same material at access points and in relevant retail outlets.	Ongoing	1	Possible external funding opportunities eg ARRГ

## GOAL 3 continued

**Objective 9:** Recreational river users will have a clear understanding of what activities are welcomed and appropriate in different sections of the river.

**Performance measure:** A decreasing trend in the count of trail bikes, buggies and speeding or reckless driving on access roads and in the riverbed.  
To be assessed by Annual Survey.

No.	Action	Explanation	Priority	Map Number	Funding
9.1	Improve the ECan presence in the area at weekends by extending the ranger service as the workload expands.	During the public process, the community repeatedly told us that the single largest problem with the use of the river for recreation was the reckless and inconsiderate behaviour of some drivers. It is critical that we have more staff in the area if we are going to reduce this activity further.	High	1	Expanded ranger service Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.
9.2	Destination-based design will be used to have complementary activities located together along the river and margins.	Examples include : 4WD - Okuku confluence – Rossiters Rd Trail bike area - North Bank downstream Ashley township Walking/cycle tracks – South bank Mountainbike track – South bank	Staged as per LTCCP	2-4	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.
9.3	Work with specific user groups to develop and implement standards for operation and maintenance for specialty areas.	Areas have been set aside in the past but maintenance has tended to be infrequent. These areas need agreed standards for operation and maintenance which will be a partnership between ECan and the user group with inputs from both parties.	Ongoing	1	Part of the development of standards to be undertaken by an expanded ranger service.
9.4	Improve signage throughout the area with more detailed information available at key entrance points including Rapid numbers on access gates.	Part of this action will include the information kiosks located at the main entrances on both sides of the river. It will extend to improved signage in more remote sections of the river to assist users with location and increase safety.	High	2-4	\$10,000 annually (signage only) Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.

## GOAL 3 continued

**Objective 10:** Sections of the river are attractive, natural and safe areas to visit for family recreation.

**Performance measure:** An increasing trend in the count of numbers of picnickers/passive users. Measured by Annual Survey.

A reduction in the number of rubbish pick ups and litter infringement notices issued annually.

A reduction in the number of abandoned/stolen cars recovered from the river annually.

No.	Action	Explanation	Priority	Map Number	Funding
10.1	Landscape and design proposals will be completed for key entrance and amenity areas.	There is enormous potential to develop and enhance these areas both from a natural/ecological perspective and for recreation.	Staged 2009/13	2-4	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.
10.2	Vehicle speed and use will be moderated by Actions 12.2, 12.3 and 12.4.	Vehicle speed and use was identified as a major contributor to river visitor dissatisfaction.	High	2-4	Nil
10.3	River protection operations will be separated from recreational river users. See Actions 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4.	This is desirable for river visitors and assists shingle extractors and river engineering staff with their health and safety responsibilities.	Ongoing	1	Existing budget
10.4	ECan will work with Fish & Game and hunting groups to resolve conflict between licensed game bird hunters and other river users during the game bird season.	Some river users have expressed concern regarding shooting when other people are about. Hunting will be restricted in high use areas and during core hours. A partnership with Fish & Game is anticipated for this initiative.	Ongoing	1	Existing budget

## GOAL 3 continued

**Objective 11:** Recreational opportunities are maintained and extended

**Performance measure:** Annual survey identifying significant new opportunities and maintenance completed.

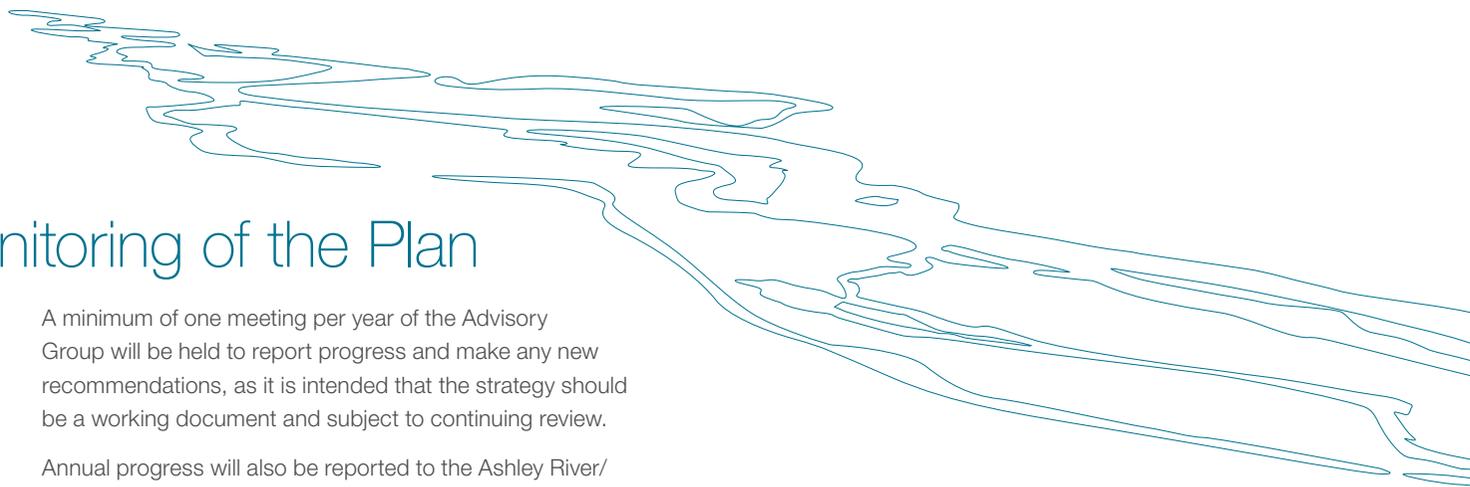
No.	Action	Explanation	Priority	Map Number	Funding
11.1	Work with Waimakariri District Council to extend walking and cycling opportunities both to and along ECan land to maximise recreation opportunities.	The Waimakariri District Council Walking and Cycling Strategy seeks to increase the frequency people will choose to walk and cycle.  Eg establish cycle/walkway linkages from adjoining townships to the river.	Medium	2-4	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.
11.2	Develop a detailed proposal for the development of walking, running, mountainbiking and related activity opportunities.	The river and adjoining lands offer many opportunities for walking, mountainbiking and related activities eg dog walking. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the south side stopbank provides a linkage from Waikuku Beach to Rangiora.</li> <li>the berm downstream of East Belt Rangiora which could provide a similar experience to McLeans Forest.</li> <li>the Waimakariri District Council Rangiora dump site provides an opportunity for related activities eg a dog activity park.</li> </ul>	High	2-4	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.
11.3	ECan will continue to work with shingle extractors to provide safe swimming opportunities.	Swimming is one of the most appreciated uses of the river. The establishment of seasonal swimming holes provide a safe environment for swimmers while managing the impact of people upon the river ecology.	High	1	Existing budget.
11.4	ECan staff will work with specific user groups to enhance recreation opportunities.	There are many instances where co-operation with specific groups should lead to improved recreation facilities eg walking and mountain-bike trails.	Ongoing	2-4	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.

## GOAL 3 continued

**Objective 12:** Noisy and dangerous misuse of vehicles is eliminated in the heavily used sections of the river and minimised elsewhere.

**Performance measure:** Measured by Annual Survey.

No.	Action	Explanation	Priority	Map Number	Funding
12.1	Main entrances to the river are redesigned to reflect its high community value and give the immediate impression of a cared for environment.	The existing entrances are open, dusty and industrial, inviting misuse of the river and its surrounds. The entrances need to be welcoming with appropriate information readily accessible. Night gates will be installed to effectively close the river to motor vehicles over night. This has proved successful in reducing anti-social activities at the Waimakariri River Regional Park. Action 1.1	High	2-4	Dependent on Action 1 and scale. Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.
12.2	Ranger presence is increased with a special focus on problem areas such as south bank Ashley Picnic Ground to downstream of rail bridge, north bank Toppings Road entrance.	See action 9.1	High	1	See Action 9.1 Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.
12.3	Increased enforcement of traffic regulations by NZ Police.	Local police are keen to see structural changes before they attempt increased policing as they believe there should be a balance between the three Es, education, engineering and enforcement.	Will follow other development especially the main entrance changes.	1	Progress will depend on Ashley Rating District or Regional Park funding.
12.4	Recreational users will be encouraged to displace vehicle vandals from areas currently being misused.	Almost all the actions which are documented in the strategy will have the effect of making the Ashley River/Rakahuri a more pleasant place to visit.	Ongoing	1	No additional funding required.



## Implementation and Monitoring of the Plan

The strategy is subject to approval by Environment Canterbury, the Canterbury Regional Council. Specific measures have had indicative dates placed against them but the new initiatives in this plan will be budgeted as part of the normal LTCCP process, and may or may not be approved for the year indicated.

Staff will continue to work with members of the Ashley River/Rakahuri Advisory Group as the strategy is implemented.

A minimum of one meeting per year of the Advisory Group will be held to report progress and make any new recommendations, as it is intended that the strategy should be a working document and subject to continuing review.

Annual progress will also be reported to the Ashley River/Rakahuri Liaison Committee.

## Ashley River/Rakahuri Management Strategy Advisory Group Summary of Findings

### Ashley River/Rakahuri Advisory Group

- Recommends the establishment of the Ashley River/Rakahuri Regional Park.

### Ashley River/Rakahuri Rivercare Group

- The group mission is to “protect birds & their habitat in the Ashley River / Rakahuri, while recognising essential river control works & sympathetic recreational uses.”
- The river is home to rare and endangered bird species including ngutupare/wrybill, tarapiroe/black-fronted tern and tarapunga/black-billed gull.
- More common birds breeding on the river include tuturiwhatu/banded dotterel, poaka/pied stilt and torea/South Island pied oystercatcher.
- Main issues impacting on the river birdlife include predation, disturbance and weed infestation.

- Want to see motor vehicles stopped from driving in sections of the river, at least during breeding season.
- Community groups such as the ARRG can access funds not available to agencies such as ECan and DOC.

### Combined 4WD Clubs

- See three priorities over the river, its uses and its users. Priority 1 the river and its environs, Priority 2 recreation in all forms, Priority 3 commercial users, either vehicle or non-vehicle related.
- Comfortable with status quo.
- Very reluctant to see any area closed off for exclusive use of any commercial operator.
- Support education programmes to make river users aware of the river and its ecosystems.

- Support clean up plans.
- Greater presence from Environment Canterbury Ranger and a major increase in Police presence to enforce the Road Transport Act.
- Support a close working relationship with Environment Canterbury.
- Status quo should remain with the north bank track remaining from Rossiters Road to the Okuku River with the possibility of an extension south to the Rangiora Bridge.
- Many of the club's interests are also represented by others on the group ie anglers, jet boaters, motor cyclists, motor homes/caravan enthusiasts, mountain bikers, walkers, dog owners and environmentalists.

# Ashley River/Rakahuri Management Strategy Advisory Group Summary of Findings *continued*

## Jet Boating NZ

- The Ashley Rakahuri is a smaller, confined river compared to other Canterbury rivers. However it is not appropriate for new or inexperienced boaters as it is tricky.
- Boaters entrance at the Rangiora Bridge or above the Highway Bridge.
- The Okuku is not used for jet boating.

## North Canterbury Cycling Inc (NCCI)

Desired outcomes are:

- The opportunity to participate in the planning, development and implementation of the Ashley-Rakahuri River Management Strategy.
- The development of any single or multi-use track appropriate to the intended user/s and to the level of support available with funding, maintenance, enforcement etc.
- NCCI as a group and as individual members have interests outside “cycling” will fully support the needs of other groups and organisations.
- NCCI is aware of the need to legitimise the Strategy and will be supportive of any enforcement role carried out by ECan and its staff. As regular riders within some of the subject area, we would be happy to assist with monitoring of dangerous and undesirable activities.
- NCCI recognises the unique and accessible educational values of the area and would be supportive of developing

these values as “points of interest”, nodes alongside and adjacent to proposed biking and walking tracks (nesting sites, information boards, ponds).

- The development of any recreational facilities will need to be considered in context with existing and possible future adjacent developments, ie track networks.

## North Canterbury Fish & Game

- The river has a regionally significant trout fishery and locally significant Chinook salmon fishery.
- Mallard/Grey duck, Canada geese and pukeko are common to numerous along the riverbed and adjacent farmland. Quail and pheasant are also present on the riverbed.
- River drying has worsened by drainage of wetlands in upper catchment and by cumulative effects of water abstraction.
- Concerns about the adverse effects of gravel extraction activities. These concerns extend to flood protection works. Gravel takes affect quality of riverbed substrate, reduce habitat diversity and food productivity through channelisation and smoothing of floodplain, affect ‘solitude’ and natural character of river environment, remove habitat for quail, pheasant and remove cover for gamebird hunters.
- Positive attributes include ease of access, good quality riverbed substrate, ‘Solitude’ – plenty of quiet, ‘wild’ places, habitat diversity – pools, riffles and runs, tributaries increase food production and provide

spawning opportunities and in-river vegetation provides habitat for quail, pheasant and also for hunting.

- Threats include restrictions on access, lack of connectivity restricting fish passage to spawning grounds in tributaries and gravel takes.
- Recommend recreational use survey is completed to both ‘ground truth’ current assumptions and fill gaps in understanding.

## NZ Motor Caravan Association

- The NZ Motor Caravan Association has reported that their members are happy with the current use of the site as an overnight self-contained freedom camping location.

## Taggarts Earthmoving

- It is important to remove shingle in order to minimise protection works. This is a big financial saving to ECan and the community. Taggarts work closely with other river users including the ARRG eg forming islands, removing weeds, digging swimming holes at Christmas.
- Taggarts have three consents ranging from 800m downstream groyne 1 to 50m above the highway bridge. They have applied for additional consents to operate above the Okuku confluence as a long term measure.
- Some current consent conditions include maximum depth of two metres, cannot extract from the water, shingle must be extracted from right next to the channel and they cannot operate in the stretch from their yard upstream from August 1 to December 31.

# Ashley River/Rakahuri Management Strategy Advisory Group Summary of Findings continued

This means they must extract enough shingle to cover this period and costs are higher due to double handling.

## Te Kohaka o Tuhaitara Trust

- The Trust sees the plan in tandem with their management plan and the benefits of the Ashley River/Rakahuri River Regional Park concepts as a very exciting recreational, environmental and social opportunity for the wider community.

## Te Ngai Tuahuriri Runanga

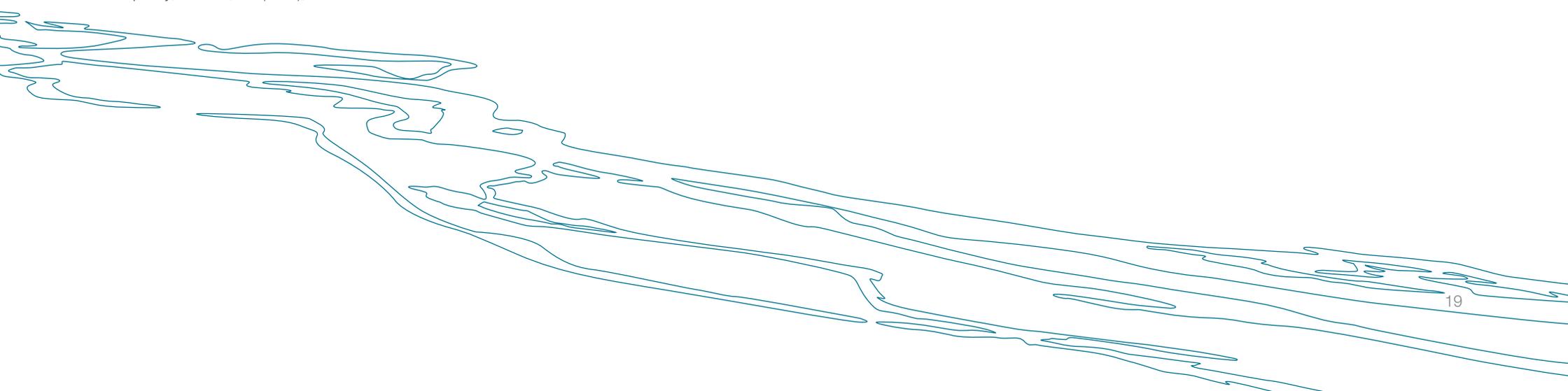
- The main reason for the location of the Kaiapoi Pa was the river and estuary and the abundance of food. The pa was the political centre of Ngai Tahu. There is archaeological evidence supporting occupation between the Ashley/Rakahuri and the Waimakariri from 600 – 800 years.
- Modern day river and estuary issues include water quality, access, kai (food), restoration of native

vegetation and habitats for native species, and opportunities to establish traditional values in their young people by 'stirring the dust of this land' eg involvement in restoration projects and traditional practices including rongoa (medicine) etc.

- Important that the Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu fresh water policy is recognised and values including Mauri, Kaitiakitanga and Rahui are understood.

## Ashley township

- There is a swimming hole which is very popular over summer. Would like the area to be landscaped and picnic settings included.
- Trail biking is popular downstream of the township on the river berm near the pine plantation.



# Ashley River/Rakahuri Management Strategy

## Public Meetings Input

### Positive values

Small enough to manage well	
Safe swimming holes	easy access, away from vegetation snags, calm water, flowing water, value of choice/variety for different age groups/wants
Safe environment for recreation	
Freedom camping	created areas, natural areas, Ashley Bridge
Dog exercising	
Bird breeding sites	managing 4WD access, three very rare and endangered species including wrybill, black fronted tern, black billed gull
4WD	special tracks, freedom driving, north bank Rossiters Rd to Okuku
Walking, running and cycling along stop banks	close to town, no people, many opportunities/variety
Trail bike tracks	designated areas (south side Ashley Bridge upriver to opposite Okuku/sunken road, north side Railway bridge to SH1)
Environment	trees, views, tranquillity, native plant enhancement, landscape values, back to nature "off the beaten track" experience, clean water, great views
Good courtesy from other users	
High school involvement	educational aspect, involvement of individuals, cross country, general recreation because of accessibility
Fishing	mainly estuary/mouth
Shooting	game bird hunting, rabbits
Access	many points, proximity to several towns/settlements
Gravel extraction	commercial extraction not a cost to ratepayers, creating bird habitats, manipulating river flows, creating swimming holes
Horse trekking	all over river
Canoeing / rafting	short sections for beginners
Jet boating	
Picnics	Ashley Bridge area very good
Environmental education	

# Ashley River/Rakahuri Management Strategy

## Public Meetings Input continued

### Negative values

Trail bikes	lack of signs, should have designated areas
4WD in riverbed	bird breeding/nesting sites, vehicles in water/conflict swimmers, fear of didymo
Willows prevent access above Okuku	
Budget	resources, lack of
Vandalism/rubbish / burnt out cars	broken bottles, graffiti on bridge piers
Car and bike 'hooning'	
Damage to stopbanks	
Barriers/gates	well marked, warning
Very soft sandy areas in riverbed	caused by gravel extraction, problem for walkers and vehicles
Interruption to bird breeding	people (slow movers), weeds / old mans beard, lupins, in riverbed, predators, lack of public understanding
Access to easy for hoons and vandals	
Poisonous algae/toxic bloom	lower river
Shooting	although not often encountered
Lack of native plants	
Noise	4WD, motorcycles
Dogs	no leads
River dries up	Railway bridge to Lowes corner and others
Conflict between users	
Channelling of the lower river	

# Ashley River/Rakahuri Management Strategy

## Public Meetings Input continued

### Comments / Suggestions

Fishing	encouragement as an activity in the area, interpretation panels, information about good fishing areas
Environmental education	
Policing	needs more, community cops and rangers
Car dumping	prompt removal , fire risk if left overnight

## Outline of Proposals by River Section

The following proposals are based on community and user group input and in some areas' existing use. Many of the proposals are straightforward and will be implemented as part of normal operations. In others, additional expenditure is required to develop detailed plans. In these cases the information in this outline is included to provide background and ideas for those plans. As these plans are developed their implementation will be budgeted through the LTCCP process. For the purpose of this outline the river has been broken down into six sections where there is a similarity in nature and usage. The sections are:

North Bank - Okuku confluence to Ashley Bridge

North Bank - Ashley Bridge to State Highway 1

North Bank - State Highway 1 to Raupo Berm

South Bank - Fernside to Ashley Bridge

South Bank - Ashley Bridge to State Highway 1

South Bank - State Highway 1 to Waikuku

Some of this area is privately owned. If the proposals outlined are to go ahead, partnerships with private landowners will be required.

### North Bank Okuku confluence to Ashley Bridge - Map 2

The gravel riverbed here is one of the two core bird-breeding stretches of the river, specifically between Dalziels and Rossiters Roads. It is also utilised mainly by 4WD vehicles with a track established between Rossiters Road and the Okuku River, as well as quad bikes and duck hunters who make use of the ponds in this area. There is a popular picnic and swimming spot just upstream of the Ashley Bridge.

The section sits below a terrace and is predominantly tree covered including pine plantation. Access to the picnic spot is at the Ashley Bridge. Upstream of this, access is from Rossiters Road and a number of unsealed roads running off Barkers Road Loburn.

### Proposed key developments

- Link with gravel extractors to improve bird breeding sites
- Minimise disturbance during breeding season, including prohibiting motor vehicles in the gravel riverbed between Dalziels and Rossiters Roads from August to late December.
- Berm area focussed on 4WD and ATV opportunities
- Game bird hunting
- Continued grazing on leased lands
- Enhanced picnic/swimming area upstream of the Ashley Bridge
- Upgrade entrance and install a night gate on the access road into the river berm at the Ashley Bridge.



## Outline of Proposals by River Section continued

### North Bank Ashley Bridge to the State Highway 1 Bridge – Map 3

The gravel riverbed here is the second of the two core bird-breeding stretches of the river, specifically between the Railway Bridge and Marshmans Road. This section also has a very popular swimming hole and picnic spot adjacent to the Ashley township. The berm downstream of the Ashley township to the SH 1 Bridge has been heavily damaged by 4WD and trail bike use. ECan engineering staff have been fencing off areas of the berm and enhancing the native plant communities through planting and old man's beard weed control.

#### Proposed key developments

- Link with gravel extractors to improve bird breeding sites
- Minimise disturbance during breeding season, including prohibiting motor vehicles in the gravel riverbed between the Railway Bridge and Marshmans Road from August to late December.
- Enhance indigenous plant communities
- Develop an enclosed trail bike area
- Enhance picnic/swimming area adjacent to the Ashley township
- Eliminate noxious and undesirable plants
- Upgrade entrances and install night gates on access roads into the river berm

### North Bank State Highway 1 Bridge to Estuary – Map 4

This area of the river has high usage during the annual whitebait season. It is also a popular overnight camping site during the summer months. There are shingle extraction works below the bridge. Access to this section is from the upstream side of the State Highway 1 Bridge running on top of the stopbank downstream to the Raupo berm picnic area adjoining the estuary.

#### Proposed key developments

- Area focussed on river activities including fishing, swimming and picnics
- Permit self contained overnight freedom camping at the Raupo berm picnic area
- Upgrade entrance and install a night gate on the access road into the river berm at the State Highway 1 Bridge.

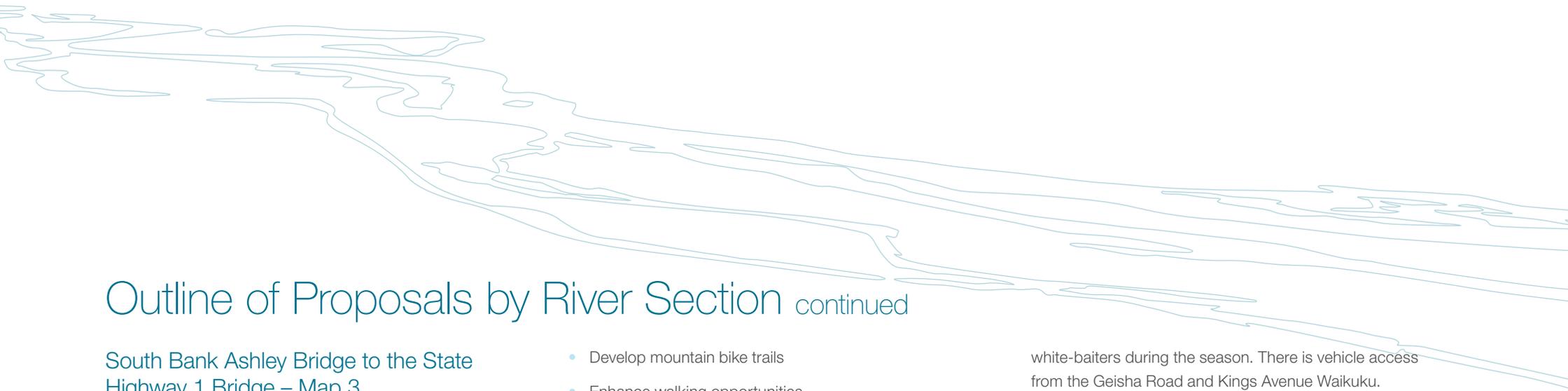
### South Bank Fernside to Ashley Bridge – Map 2

The gravel riverbed here is one of the two core bird-breeding stretches, specifically between Dalziels and Rossiters Roads. This section also has a high level of motor vehicle related activities which have a negative impact on the river environment and other river users including damage to stop banks, high speed and rubbish dumping. There is also a high use area for shingle extraction vehicles.

There are a number of camping sites upstream in the Fernside area which are utilised over summer months and some popular picnic and swimming spots. The area is also popular for trail-bike riding.

#### Proposed key developments

- Link with extractors to improve bird breeding sites
- Minimise disturbance during breeding season, including prohibiting motor vehicles in the gravel riverbed between the Dalziels and Rossiters Roads from August to late December.
- Link with extractors to improve bird breeding sites
- Minimise disturbance during breeding season, including prohibiting motor vehicles in the riverbed between Dalziels and Rossiters Roads from August to late December.
- Separate shingle extraction vehicle access to the river from other motor vehicles
- Restrict motor vehicle access on stopbanks
- Develop cycle/ walkways between Fernside and Rangiora
- Install interpretation signage eg riverbirds and shingle extraction
- Permit self-contained overnight freedom camping
- Enhance Groyne 1 as a nature viewing area, swimming and picnic location
- Develop an enclosed trail bike area
- Upgrade entrances and install night gates on access roads into the river berm.



## Outline of Proposals by River Section continued

### South Bank Ashley Bridge to the State Highway 1 Bridge – Map 3

The gravel riverbed here is the second of the two core bird-breeding stretches of the river, specifically between the Railway Bridge and Marshmans Road. This section also has the highest proportion of privately owned land within the flood protection stopbanks. The private land is used predominantly for grazing. There is motor vehicle use along the length of this section of stopbank with numerous access points down into the river berm area. There is significant car and rubbish dumping along this section especially around the East Belt entrance.

#### Proposed key developments

- Link with extractors to improve bird breeding sites
- Minimise disturbance during breeding season, including prohibiting motor vehicles in the gravel riverbed between the Railway Bridge and Marshmans Road from August to late December.
- Area focussed on water and river berm activities although this is the first area to dry up in summer.

- Develop mountain bike trails
- Enhance walking opportunities
- Liaise with Waimakariri District Council regarding dog park opportunities on adjoining land
- Enhance indigenous plant communities
- Restrict motor vehicle access on stopbanks
- Develop cycle/walkway on and below the stopbank between Waikuku and Rangiora
- Link cycle/walking trails to Waimakariri District Council urban trails
- Upgrade entrances at Tulls Road, Marchmont Road, Golf Links Road and East Belt and install night gates.

### South Bank State Highway 1 Bridge to Kings Ave Waikuku – Map 4

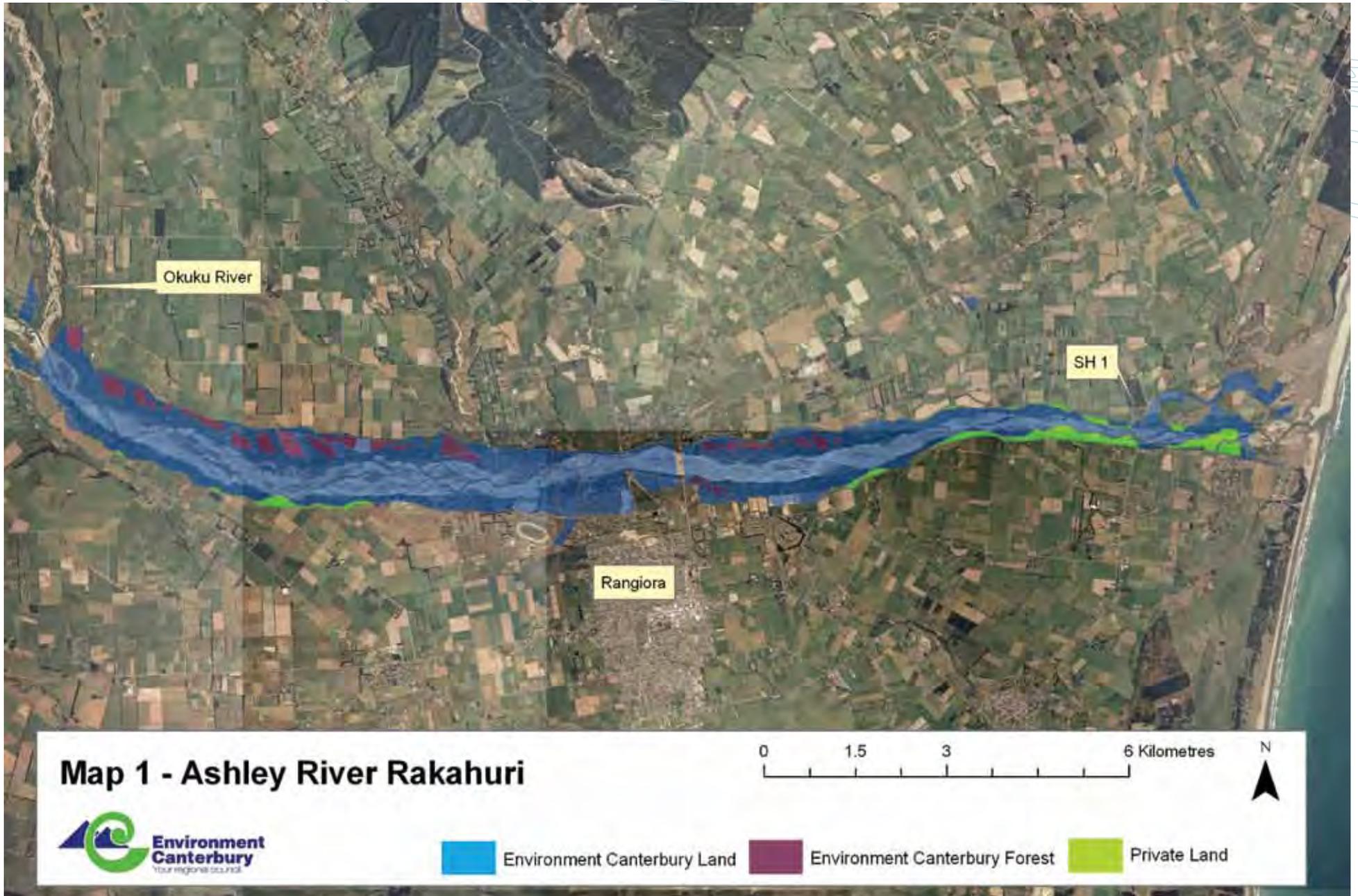
This area is consistently one of the most popular access points to the river due to the proximity of the State Highway and the Waikuku settlement. The section is popular for walkers, anglers and for access to the estuary for

white-baiters during the season. There is vehicle access from the Geisha Road and Kings Avenue Waikuku. The Geisha Road access leads down to the rivers main jet boat launching area.

There are numerous indigenous plantings along this section of the river especially towards the estuary end. There is active community participation in native plant whitebait enhancement projects. ECan holds gravel extraction consents for the purposes of reducing gravel inflow into the estuary.

#### Proposed key developments

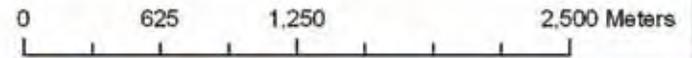
- Area focussed on water and river berm activities
- Enhance indigenous plant communities
- Restrict motor vehicle access on stopbanks
- Develop cycle/walkway on the stopbank between Waikuku and Rangiora
- Enhance the Rakahuri walkway
- Upgrade entrances at Kings Avenue and Geisha Road and install night gates.







**Map 3 - Rossiters Road - Tulls Road**







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