

## 6 WATERWAYS AND MARGINS

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The major components of the District's open waterways include:

- the Grey River and its main tributaries (the Ahaura and Arnold Rivers) together forming the fourth largest valley system in New Zealand.
- the Taramakau and Punakaiki Rivers forming the southern and northern boundaries of the District.
- A large number of glacial lakes that contain significant natural habitats and provide for recreational use. These lakes are mainly concentrated around the Brunner/Haupiri area and include the following lake systems: Lake Brunner, Lake Haupiri, Lake Hochstetter, Lady Lake, Lake Ahaura and Lake Poerua. These lakes are largely contained within [land](#) managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC).
- [Wetlands](#), which have diminished in area with development of [land](#) for farming and other activities have significant water retention and purification functions and provide habitats for fauna.

While these are the larger systems it is recognised smaller waterbodies are also important in maintaining the life supporting capacity of ecosystems.

The responsibilities in respect of waterways are shared between the Regional Council and District Council. The former is responsible for water quality, water quantity (including takes, diversions and discharges) and activities in the beds of lakes and rivers as well as activities on [land](#) which may effect waterways, i.e. erosion and sediment. The District Council has responsibility in respect of activities in relation to the surface of water in rivers and lakes and also the “[land](#)” part of margins of lakes and rivers and also [wetlands](#). It is acknowledged that this somewhat artificial “distinction” requires consultation with the Regional Council.

The surface of waterways are valued for:

- recreation (boating, picnicking, walking, swimming, camping etc.)
- cultural, scenic and heritage values
- industrial use such as port activities, hydropower [utilities](#) and gold mining

Margins are valued for a variety of functions including:

- landscape qualities
- ecological values of wildlife and fish habitats
- prevention of natural hazards where vegetation cover is retained or flood mitigation structures erected
- water retention and purification function
- access to lakes, rivers or the coastline
- landbased recreational use

- economic value as farmland, for mining, forestry or gravel extraction
- the presence of heritage sites
- Spiritual and cultural value

The preservation of the natural character of lakes, rivers and [wetlands](#) from inappropriate subdivision, use and development and the maintenance and enhancement of public access to and from lakes and rivers are identified as matters of national importance.

## **6.2 ISSUES**

### **1. Conflict between activities on the District's waterways.**

The availability of waterbodies and the general low levels of use mean that there is little conflict between different uses or between recreation uses and amenity values. The general exception to this is Lake Brunner which is subject to significant recreational use, particularly during the summer months with such activities as yachting, water-skiing, powerboating, fishing and jet skis. Conflict has occurred between these different uses, particularly where intensive and commercial operations are proposed. Potential adverse effects include a reduction in public access and water quality and an increase in noise.

### **2. Activities on lakes, rivers and [wetlands](#) and their margins can adversely affect the natural character, habitats of indigenous fauna and flora, Iwi values, bank stability and amenity and recreation values.**

Activities on waterways, including [wetlands](#) and their margins, such as the erection of structures, excavation and deposition of material, the removal of vegetation and also weed invasion can have a number of adverse effects on ecological and amenity values. These effects can include a reduction in:

- water quality
- fish passage
- bank stability
- habitats and vegetation
- public access
- recreational value
- heritage sites

## **6.3 OBJECTIVES**

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects arising from conflicting activities on the surface of waters.</li><li>2. Preservation of the natural character of lakes, rivers and <a href="#">wetlands</a> and their margins from inappropriate use, development and subdivision.</li></ol> |
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## 6.4 POLICIES

1. Activities should be separated on the surface of water where there is a potential for conflict.
2. Activities on the surface of water should not adversely affect public access, water quality and amenities such as quietness.
3. The adverse effects of activities on natural character of margins should be avoided, remedied or mitigated in terms of:
  - a) recreation values
  - b) conservation values
  - c) continued public access
  - d) retention of indigenous vegetation and habitats
  - e) water quality
  - f) heritage sites
  - g) cultural and spiritual values
4. Structures that do not have a operational reason to be located on the margins of rivers and lakes, and in **wetlands**, should avoid this location, particularly in unmodified areas.
5. Any modification of **wetlands** is undertaken in a manner that protects their natural character and, in particular, those components of the natural character that comprise indigenous vegetation, habitat for indigenous fauna, life supporting capacity for indigenous ecosystems and ecological functioning.

### 6.4.1 EXPLANATION AND REASONS

Objective 1 and Policies 1 & 2 are intended to allow conflicting activities to operate without effecting each other. This is particularly applicable to recreation activities such as at Lake Brunner.

In respect of margins of waterbodies **Council** is required to recognise and provide for the items in Objective 2 in terms of **Section 6(a)** of the **Act** as a matter of national importance. Policy 3 sets out these matters which contribute to the natural character and the effects of activities which should be avoided, remedied or mitigated. In particular, **wetlands** are a natural resource that have diminished and adverse effects on them should be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

It is recognised in Policy 4 that structures such as bridges, culverts, launching ramps etc. may have an operational reason to locate near waterbodies. Other structures should not locate in these areas, particularly where there are significant natural values

## 6.5 IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

1. To promote public awareness of the requirements of the Water Recreation Regulations (or their replacement) for lakes and rivers within the District as promulgated by Maritime New Zealand.
2. To liaise with other parties with statutory and cultural interests regarding the lakes and rivers including Council, Iwi and in particular, Maritime New Zealand in respect of Lake Brunner.
3. To advocate appropriate speed restrictions for Lakes and Rivers within the District to relevant controlling authority.
4. Provisions in Regional Council Plans relating to vegetation clearance, earthworks and discharge of contaminants, and in the District Plan provisions relating to buildings, forestry and indigenous vegetation clearance.
5. Esplanade Reserves/Strips to be set aside as conditions of subdivision consents.
6. Encourage landowners to protect natural values by private agreement, conservation covenants, fencing and planting of margins.
7. To promote the benefits of riparian management and wetlands protection, including in respect of streams less than 3 metres wide, through education by such means as pamphlets and education days in conjunction with the Regional Council, DOC and Fish and Game and Royal Forest and Bird Society.
8. To continue the investigation of the rationalisation of road reserve on the foreshore of parts of Lake Brunner that adjoin areas containing natural values.

### 6.5.1 REASONS

There are a variety of methods available to implement the objectives and policies. In respect of regulating recreational activities the Maritime Safety Regulations administered by Maritime New Zealand applies at Lake Brunner where jet and ski lanes are gazetted. Given the presence of an existing authority Council sees little point in implementing rules in the District Plan. While there has been a lack of enforcement of the regulations this is a resourcing of people issue which requires further discussions with Maritime New Zealand and Iwi. Council does consider there should be speed restrictions.

The Regional Council already have controls in place restricting activities in and in proximity to waterbodies e.g. Proposed Land and Riverbed Plan. Many of the threats and impacts of the removal of vegetation from the margins of waterbodies are related to bank stability, water quality and in-stream values, i.e. discharges, sediment, temperature, light, oxygen demand. It is considered that for an integrated approach to be achieved the appropriate place for such matters is regional plans. This concept is already borne out through the current regional plans. There are also rules in the District Plan in respect of forestry and removal of indigenous vegetation from riparian margins. However, to avoid duplication with the Regional Council, resource consent is not required for these matters from the District Council where the Regional Council has granted resource consent to an application that addresses an issue that is common to the functions of both councils. Generally these plans do not control the location of buildings and it is therefore appropriate the District Plan has provisions in respect of this matter as it relates to rivers and lakes.

The setting aside of esplanades/strips on subdivision is also available to [Council](#). These can be set aside for a variety of purposes relating to conservation, public access or recreational values. (See Section 13 - Subdivision for more details on [Council](#) policy for esplanade reserves/strips).

Non-regulatory methods such as covenants, guidelines, education etc. are also important (Method 6). These methods can be highlighted by awards to good practice.

Small streams (less than 3 metres wide) are particularly valuable habitats for invertebrates and fish. Maintaining or restoring indigenous vegetation assists in maintaining or increasing habitat values through the provision of shade and shelter.

[Council](#) and DOC are continuing discussions on the rationalisation of the Lake Brunner foreshore.

## **6.6 ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS ANTICIPATED AND MONITORING**

<b>Anticipated Environmental Results</b>	<b>Monitoring and Review Data</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Existing natural character of the margins of waterbodies is retained including provision for public access.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Monitor the physical state of margins.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>There is no conflict between activities on the surface of water.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Monitor existing controls in respect of activities on the surface of water.</li></ul>