

ASHBURTON WATER MANAGEMENT ZONE COMMITTEE AGENDA

A **Meeting** of the Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee will be held as follows:

DATE: Tuesday 23 July 2024

TIME: 1.00 pm

VENUE: Council Chamber, Te Whare Whakatare
2 Baring Square East, Ashburton

MEETING CALLED BY: Hamish Riach, Chief Executive, Ashburton District Council
Stefanie Rixecker, Chief Executive, Environment Canterbury

ATTENDEES: Chris Allen
Adi Avnit
Clare Buchanan
Angela Cushnie
Genevieve de Spa
Bill Thomas
Sidinei Teixeira
TBC (Te Runanga o Arowhenua)
Arapata Reuben (Te Ngai Tuahuriri Runanga)
Jess Hobbs (Te Taumutu Runanga)
TBC (Tangata Whenua Facilitator)
Councillor Richard Wilson (Ashburton District Council)
Councillor Ian Mackenzie (Environment Canterbury)
Mayor Neil Brown (Ashburton District Council)

Zone Facilitator

Jaimee Grant
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Environment Canterbury

Committee Advisor

Carol McAtamney
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Ashburton District Council

Tangata Whenua Facilitator

TBC

Environment Canterbury

Ashburton Zone Committee Meeting

Tuesday 23 July 2024

Meeting Commences: 1.00pm

Order of Business

- 1 Welcome, Karakia
- 2 Apologies
 - Mayor Neil Brown
- 3 Extraordinary Business
- 4 Register of Interest 4
- 5 Confirmation of Minutes 5
- 6 Correspondence
 - Inward
 - o Ecan Chair Dr Stefanie Rixecker 10
 - Outward
 - o Letter to Andrew Parrish, Environment Canterbury w. ZC Feedback
- 7 Public Contributions
- 8 Public Forum
- 9 Balmacaan Stream Diversion to Lake Camp proposal 12
- 10 Mixed protection assets installed in the Ashburton catchment 14
- 11 Zone Committee Updates 16
 - Project progress reports
 - 11.1 HHWET native plant maintenance 18
 - 11.2 Ashburton River native planting supplies (Adele Webb) 23
 - 11.3 Pudding Hill Stream weed control 24
- 12 Other business
- 13 Close Meeting and Karakia

4 Register of Interests

Chris Allen	Farm owner of sheep, beef, lambs, crop Water resource consents to take water from tributary of Ashburton River and shallow wells Member of Ashburton River Liaison Group
Adi Avnit	Mid Canterbury Community Vehicle Trust - Treasurer
Clare Buchanan	Head of Environment & Innovation at Align Farm Align Farms holds an irrigation resource consent to take water from shallow wells hydraulically linked to the Ashburton river Align Farms holds MHV water and Fonterra Shares Align Farms suffered significant flood damage on their support block
Neil Brown	Mayor Acton Irrigation Limited - Director Irrigo Centre Limited - Director Acton Farmers Irrigation Co-operative Limited - Director Browns Farm Limited – Director and Shareholder
Angela Cushnie	Kanuka Mid Canterbury Regeneration Trust - Trustee Hinds Reserve Board Committee member Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective – Coordinator Secretary for Hekeao Hinds Lowlands Catchment Group
Genevieve de Spa	Owner of Kakariki Camps focusing on ‘Head, Hands, Heart’ approach to biodiversity education Contractor and member of Staveley Campsite Committee (Previous recipient of Immediate Steps Funding) Rakaia Environmental Enhancement Trust
Jess Hobbs	
Ian MacKenzie	Environment Canterbury Councillor
Arapata Reuben	Trustee – Tuhono Trust Trustee – Mana Waitaha Charitable Trust Member - National Kiwi Recovery Group Rūnanga Rep – Christchurch – West Melton Water Zone Committee
Bill Thomas	Farm owner of Longbeach Estate Ltd (sheep, beef, lambs, arable, dairy) Member of Eiffelton Irrigation Scheme Hekeao/Hinds Water Enhancement Trust – Settler Director of Longbeach Estate & Longbeach Dairies
Sidinei Teixeira	Masters student at Lincoln University studying a Master’s in Water Resource Management Former Head of Science at Mt Hutt College and Chemistry teacher at Christ’s College Recipient of the Callaghan Innovation fund to conduct research on the impacts of the May/June 2021 rainfall event through MHV Water Passionate about the sustainable use of natural resources
Richard Wilson	Ashburton District Councillor Dairy Farmer at Hinds Shareholder in MHV Irrigation

5 Confirmation of Minutes

Unconfirmed Minutes

Minutes of a meeting of the **Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee** held on Tuesday 23 April 2024, commencing at 1.05pm in the Council Chamber, Te Whare Whakaterere, 2 Baring Square East, Ashburton.

Present

Mayor Neil Brown, Councillor Richard Wilson (via MS Teams), Councillor Ian Mackenzie, Chris Allen, Adi Avnit, Clare Buchanan, Angela Cushnie, Sidinei Teixeira (via MS Teams) and Bill Thomas (Chair).

Non attendance

Jess Hobbs (apology received but not noted at time) and Arapata Reuben.

In attendance

Environment Canterbury: Dave Moore (Acting Facilitator) and Carol McAtamney (minutes)
John Benn – DOC .

7 members of the public in attendance.

1 Welcome

Dave Moore opened the meeting with a Karakia.

2 Apologies

That apologies for lateness be received on behalf of Mayor Neil Brown and Councillor Ian Mackenzie.

Allen/Cushnie

Carried

Ian Mackenzie joined the meeting at 1.10pm

3 Extraordinary Business

Nil.

Darryl Butterick read a letter from the Friends of the Greenstreet Creek group and a copy of the letter was tabled for members.

That the letter from the Friends of the Greenstreet Creek group be received.

Thomas/Buchanan

Carried

4 Register of Interests

Nil.

5 Confirmation of Minutes

Amendments

• Ashburton Lyndhurst

First bullet point to be amended to: *Environmental Law Initiative (ELI)* undertook judicial review that went to the High Court

• Greenstreet Representation

It was noted that Ben Shearer was not part of the presentation.

That the minutes of the Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee meeting held on 26 March 2024, incorporating the above amendments, be taken as read and confirmed.

Allen/Cushnie

Carried

Matters Arising

Nil.

6 Correspondence

Inward:

Resignation letter from Gen de Spa.

That the Committee accepts the resignation of Gen de Spa effective 26 March 2024.

Thomas/Buchanan

Carried

The Chair will write to Gen advising of the acceptance of her resignation and thanking her for her input to the Zone Committee.

Outward:

Environment Canterbury Chair Dr Stefanie Rixecker – Tim Davie acknowledged receipt of the letter and advised there will be a formal response prepared by Environment Canterbury.

7 Public Contributions

Nil.

8 Ashburton/Hakatere Rivers Plan outcomes and consent review update

Tim Davie – Director of Science, Environment Canterbury

A memo was sent to Committee members on 18 April 2024 providing background information on the Hakatere/Ashburton plan and minimum flows and responded to some of the Zone Committee's queries put to Environment Canterbury on the consent review process.

The Chairman noted that whilst the Zone Committee was part of the initial Hakatere/Ashburton consent review update and gave their broad support it was with the understanding that this would need to be managed carefully to ensure there were no undue circumstances that weren't expected.

It has been indicated that there is a chance to review the consent in 2028, however there have been assumptions in the current model that have proved to be incorrect. There is a need to discuss the inaccuracies further with a view to finding a way forward to address the inaccuracies.

9 Greenstreet Update

Jenn Rochford, Zone Delivery Manager joined the meeting and gave an update on the Greenstreet Creek water levels.

Sarah Heddell has been undertaking community engagement:

- Has visited Greenstreet twice, both walking the creek and talking to the community
- Expressed thanks to the Greenstreet community, especially the Chair, for giving up their time to meet with her.
- The creek is not like a stockwater race or artificial drain running over a paddock with no habitat.
- The creek flows through a number of properties and contains stretches of mature native plants

Jenn has continued working with the Chair of the Greenstreet committee on emergency provisions to allow baseflow into Creek and gave an update to the Zone Committee.

- Continuing to monitor O'Sheas Creek, ensuring that it receives priority but it is continuing to drop

- Undertook a visit this morning and the flow was approx. 200L/sec in O'Shea creek, 220L/sec into irrigation race and 100L/sec into Greenstreet.
- Discussions need to be undertaken between Greenstreet residents, Environment Canterbury and Zone Committee members to establish a system to ensure that if the same scenario at Greenstreet presents again next year that process are in place to see that it is managed before it gets to a crisis point.

Dr Brett Painter

The Chair had requested that Dr Painter look at potential options to improve ecosystem resilience in the Greenstreet creek and to present these to the Zone Committee. Below is a summary of his findings:

The Environmental Infrastructure concept involves piggybacking onto existing water distribution and storage infrastructure plus existing water take consents (primarily deep groundwater) to provide environmental flows for maintaining aquatic life during dry periods. Where the potential supply is not enough to keep the target reach flowing during dry periods (due to losses to groundwater), then a lined irrigation pond, private pond or wetland may be required for salvaging fish into. Piggybacking off existing infrastructure involves agreements on complementary or subservient use. Piggybacking off existing consents involves shadow or subservient consents that allow water unrequired by the parent consent to be used for environmental enhancement. There are active examples of such concepts in the Selwyn District and Hinds Plains, where specific environmental augmentation LWRP rules exist. The following assumes that a consenting pathway can be agreed with Environment Canterbury for environmental augmentation in the Ashburton River catchment.

In the last day I have reviewed consents and infrastructure relating to Greenstreet Creek via Canterbury Maps and discussed options with Darryl Butterick (Greenstreet Irrigation Chair) and Ben Shearer. We have identified a potential option for the lower 4-5km of Greenstreet Creek that involves a shadow consent to Greenstreet Irrigation's global deep groundwater consent, a shadow discharge consent into and out of an irrigation pond, plus use of relevant existing infrastructure. Ben Shearer as representative of the pond and pump infrastructure owners has provided his support for the concept. There will be costs that include consenting, compliance, a flow meter, pump wear and tear, and pumping. Previous environmental infrastructure concepts in Canterbury have been funded by a combination of grant funding (e.g., a solar panel array as a contribution to pumping costs) and targeted rate funding.

The upper 4-5 km of Greenstreet Creek is more challenging to keep flowing during a dry period. There is one irrigation pond and a 70 l/s pump further up the Greenstreet Irrigation system, but I understand that about 250 l/s is required to ensure flow continuity down to the lower augmentation pond during a dry period. Shadow / subservient consents to the current Greenstreet Irrigation take, use and discharge consents from the south Ashburton River via O'Shea Creek could assist if the shadow / subservient consents allowed for all environmental enhancement water to be distributed to Greenstreet Creek. The current irrigation consents require the consent holder to augment O'Shea Creek up to the minimum flow before any water can be diverted to Greenstreet.

A third potential action is an effectiveness review of the current LWRP rules relating to the Ashburton River system. With a variety of wet and dry years since Plan implementation plus ecosystem health issues for Greenstreet Creek and Lake Hood, there should be sufficient evidence to inform such a review.

Agreed:

That a letter be written to Environment Canterbury outlining the proposals and opportunities as presented by Dr Brett Painter and the discussions that have been had today and request an investigation into what opportunities are available.

Thomas/Cushnie

Carried

Chris Allen left the meeting at 2.28pm

10 Zone Committee Action Plan Budget – Funding Considerations

Mayor Neil Brown joined the meeting at 2.42pm

- **Methven Lions Club – Methven Birdsong Initiative – Garden of Harmony Extension**

Mac McElwain joined the meeting and talked through the application

That the Ashburton Water Zone Committee recommend the allocation of \$7,306.03 to the Methven Lions Club to assist with costs associated to the planting aspect of the Methven Birdsong Initiative.

Buchanan/Thomas

Carried

- **Ashburton Aquatic Park Charitable Trust**

Leandra Fitzgibbon, Les McCracken

That the Ashburton Water Zone Committee recommend the allocation of \$10,483 to the Ashburton Aquatic Park Charitable Trust to assist with costs associated to implementing a trial in Carters Creek to establish whether phosphorous reductions can be made benefiting water quality in the creek and Lake Hood downstream.

Buchanan/Thomas

Carried

Ian Mackenzie departed the meeting 2.52pm

- **Hekeao Hinds Hill Country Catchment Group**

Nicole Lang (via MS Teams) and Mike Salvesen (via MS Teams) and Fraser McKenzie

That the Ashburton Water Zone Committee recommend the allocation of \$12,826 to the Hekeao Hinds Hill Country Catchment group to assist with costs associated to undertaking baseline testing.

Buchanan/Thomas

Carried

Angela Cushnie as coordinator for the Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective declared an interest in the resolution and took no part in the voting process.

- **Wakanui Beach Crew Group**

That the Ashburton Water Zone Committee recommend that the application for funding from the Wakanui Beach Crew Group to assist with costs associated to water quality testing collection and lab costs associated with the Baseline Water Quality monitoring for a 12 month period be declined.

Buchanan/Thomas

Carried

Agreed:

- That a letter be written to groups who have received funding for traps to obtain statistics and frequency of use of the traps.

- It was noted that a report had been prepared by ADC approximately four years ago in regard to restoring Wakanui Creek flow, a copy of this report to be circulated to members.

11 Other Business

It was agreed to request an update on the progress of the Rakitata Revival Steering group and to request Zone Committee representation on the group.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Ashburton Water Zone Committee will be held in the Ashburton District Council Chamber Hine Paaka at 1:00pm on Tuesday 23 July 2024.

The meeting closed at 3.32pm with a Karakia by Dave Moore.

Dated this 23rd day of July 2024 _____ (Chair)

10 May 2024

Customer Services
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200 Tuam Street
PO Box 345
Christchurch 8140
www.ecan.govt.nz/contact

Bill Thomas
Chair of the Ashburton Water Zone Committee
Sent via email: w.d.thomas@xtra.co.nz

Tēnā koe Bill,

Consideration of effects of drought and other pressures on farmer and community wellbeing

Thank you for your letter of 4 April 2024 on behalf of the Ashburton Water Zone Committee highlighting the stress the current drought is placing on farmers and the community, and the exacerbating circumstances with regards economic and social pressures. This is an important issue for our communities, and I understand Dr Tim Davie discussed this issue at the Ashburton Water Zone Committee meeting on 23 April. I trust that Tim's discussion and this letter will provide the Committee with confidence that the drought and the current conditions are being taken into consideration with respect to our work with communities.

Environment Canterbury is very aware of the specific water management issues facing the Ashburton community including the Ōtūwharekai/Ashburton Lakes, the challenges surrounding Greenstreet Creek, Carters Creek and Lake Hood. These issues arise from long-standing challenges of managing pressures on the water resource in the zone. The current El Niño pattern and resulting drought have served to highlight or exacerbate these challenges, as reflected in the 21 March 2024 Government announcement of the medium-scale adverse event for Canterbury and Otago regions.

As a first step, where communities or individuals are facing issues, I encourage them to contact Environment Canterbury early to discuss how we can assist. Understanding specific pressures will enable my staff to assess how they can help. Alongside this, my senior managers are working to ensure staff are informed about what's happening at the grass roots level so staff conversations and communications with rural communities are both timely and considered. It's important that our approach is guided by a long-term view while at the same time ensuring that immediate concerns are responded to appropriately.

In terms of our on farm advisory support, our staff are reaching out to the community through our networks to better understand and respond appropriately to the impact of drought in the near term and ensure we are cognisant of the long-term effects of drought on the community. We have also intensified our surface water monitoring to ensure we are monitoring environmental impacts through this dry period.

There will be circumstances where our ability to provide discretion is limited by statute, but we will do our best to provide support where we can or facilitate support from other appropriate agencies. For instance, if a critical operational consent requires renewal, it is important the auditing process is continued to ensure consent holders have certainty of consent continuation. To support this, we are proactively sending reminders to consent holders, and early discussion is encouraged.

Thank you again for raising this issue with me. I know that these challenges impact on the wellbeing of the community, and my staff will continue to review our approach to ensure it is considered and fair.

Ngā mihi



Dr Stefanie Rixecker
Chief Executive
Environment Canterbury

HUI/MEETING: Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee	
AGENDA ITEM NO: 9	KAUPAPA/SUBJECT: Balmacaan Stream Diversion proposal
KAITUHI/AUTHOR: Vanessa Wright	WĀ/MEETING DATE: 23 July 2024

Purpose

To provide the Ashburton Water Zone Committee with information on a proposal and gain advice from the Committee on how to re-instate the diversion from the Balmacaan Stream into Lake Camp.

Recommendation

That the Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee receives this presentation and provides advice and/or feedback on the proposal.

Report

1. Background

Lake Camp/Ōtautari is part of Ōtūwharekai, the Ashburton Lakes region. It is a popular area for recreational activities such as boating, swimming, and fishing. Ōtūwharekai is also a place of significance for mana whenua which is reflected in its status as a Statutory Acknowledgement in the Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

A diversion of water from the Balmacaan Stream had kept Lake Camp ecologically and recreationally healthy for at least 56 years. Fish & Game NZ previously held the resource consents that allowed for the diversion of water at 56 L/s from the Balmacaan Stream to top up Lake Camp for recreational purposes. In 2020, Fish & Game NZ surrendered the consent allowing the take and consequently, the lake level has dropped. Furthermore, a high flood event damaged the diversion in 2021 and since then, no water has been able to enter the diversion at that point.

In order to address the water level issue, it is proposed that consents allowing for the diversion be obtained. The Lake Clearwater Hut Holders Association (LCHHA) are seeking an organisation or party to apply for and hold the necessary consents to ensure the lake level is kept at a suitable level for safe recreational use.

Discussions have been undertaken with Environment Canterbury staff, the Ōtūwharekai Working Group, Ōtūwharekai/Ashburton Lakes Catchment Group, Arowhenua representatives, Department of Conservation and Fish & Game NZ on the issue and proposal to date.

A meeting was held earlier in July to discuss the different views on the proposal. It was attended by representatives from Environment Canterbury - staff and a councillor, Department of Conservation, Ashburton District Council, Arowhenua representatives, Fish & Game NZ as well as the landowner. These conversations have informed the current proposal.

2. Proposal presentation

As noted above, the LCHHA are seeking an organisation or party to obtain the necessary consents for the diversion to be reinstated. It has been suggested by the LCHHA that the Ashburton District Council could apply for and hold the necessary consents as it aligns with the goals outlined in the 'The Future of Lake Camp (Ōtautari) & Lake Clearwater (Te Puna a Taka) 30 Year Plan 2022 – 2052. However, the LCHHA is open to suggestions for other parties or organisations to obtain the consents.

Further details of the proposal and the rationale will be provided in the presentation to the Committee at the meeting.

3. Map showing location of Lake Camp/Ōtautari



HUI/MEETING: Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee	
AGENDA ITEM NO: 10	KAUPAPA/SUBJECT: Mixed protection assets installed in the Ashburton catchment under the berm transition project
KAITUHI/AUTHOR: Greg Stanley	WĀ/MEETING DATE: 23 July 2024

Purpose

To update the Ashburton Water Zone Committee on the works installed as part of the berm transition project between December 2020 and December 2023.

Recommendation

That the Ashburton Water Zone Committee receives this presentation for its information.

Background

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the New Zealand Government provided a fund to stimulate the economy and employment through the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment's Kānoa – Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit (Kānoa – REDIU). Environment Canterbury (CRC) received part-funding for six projects within their Climate Resilience and Flood Protection Programme (CRP). One of these projects - Berm Transition (BT) - sought to transform selected areas within the braided river berm into multi-functioning areas, increasing their diversity, resilience and flood protection function. BT focused on removing dense weed infestations in the active braid and lateral berm areas and installing native vegetation to increase habitat value and biodiversity. BT was an opportunity for CRC to deliver flood protection in innovative ways and to deliver a project at a scale sufficient to take the first step of change in a new direction.

The berm transition project was a large-scale rollout of native planting installations to both support flood protection and directly perform flood protection functions. Native vegetation is evergreen and stratifying meaning it provides shade in the berms throughout the entire year as well as forming layers of vegetation in dense arrangement. These characteristics are incredibly useful to displace and exclude Old Man's Beard and other pest plant species. This will reduce maintenance costs in future with more-stable managed berms requiring less maintenance. Increased native vegetation in berms improves habitat, vegetation stability, vegetation diversity and increases taonga species in the landscape.

Between December 2019 and December 2023 works were undertaken at more than 60 sites across 20 rivers resulting in weed control over more than 1200 hectares and the installation of more than 250,000 plants (Environment Canterbury Regional Council, 2024). Our installations are based on several clear strategies: Targeted weeding, Sub-canopy planting, Scour Bay installation and large-scale tree clearance. Substantial work has been performed and our assets are growing well.

Relevant Reports

Berm Transition Project: Targeted Weed Control, PU1C/8939; R24/23, Unique ID: 5229600
<https://api.ecan.govt.nz/TrimPublicAPI/documents/download/5229600>

Berm Transition Project: Large Scale Fairway Clearance in the Waipara River, PU1C/8940, R24/24, Unique ID: 5229833,
<https://api.ecan.govt.nz/TrimPublicAPI/documents/download/5229833>

Berm Transition Project: Scour Bay Regeneration, Native Plants as Flood Protection Assets, PU1C/8941, R24/25, Unique ID: 5229836,
<https://api.ecan.govt.nz/TrimPublicAPI/documents/download/5229836>

Berm Transition Project: Subcanopy Native Planting, PU1C/8943, R24/27, Unique ID: 5229845, <https://api.ecan.govt.nz/TrimPublicAPI/documents/download/5229845>

Berm Transition Project: Large Scale Island Clearance, PU1C/8942, R24/26, Unique ID: 5229841, <https://api.ecan.govt.nz/TrimPublicAPI/documents/download/5229841>

Presentation

A copy of the key slides from the presentation are circulated separately.

HUI/MEETING: Ashburton Water Management Zone Committee	
AGENDA ITEM NO: 11	KAUPAPA/SUBJECT: Committee Updates
KAITUHI/AUTHOR: Jaimee Grant	WĀ/MEETING DATE: 23 July 2024

Purpose

To provide the Ashburton Water Zone Committee with relevant updates including on actions from the previous meeting, relevant information, and upcoming engagement opportunities.

Recommendation

The Ashburton Water Zone Committee receives the following updates for its information.

Report

1. Zone Committee Action Plan Budget – Project progress reports

Progress reports for several projects that received funding from the Zone Committee Action Plan Budget in the Ashburton zone have been received from several recipients and are attached.

Financial year 2022-23:

- HHWET native plant maintenance project - Hekeao Hinds Water Enhancement Trust
- Adele Webb Ashburton River Planting – Adele Webb
- Pudding Hill Stream Weed Control – ADC
- Wairuna run-off project – Hekeao Hinds Lowlands Catchment Group – the Committee received a presentation on 25 June 2024 on the project. The presentation provided an overview of work done to date noting the area is now operational.

2. Waitaha Action to Impact Fund – now open for applications

The Waitaha Action to Impact Fund is a contestable fund to support community organisations to deliver projects that align with our work and priorities through community engagement and action. It's now in its fourth year and during this time, has contributed more than \$1.1M to community groups to deliver tangible outcomes for our environment.

For the 2024/25 year, the fund has \$300,000 available and we are once again taking multi-year applications for between \$5,000 and \$30,000 per year for three years. The funding round is now open and closes at **12 noon on Monday 2 September 2024**.

For more information and to apply, refer to Environment Canterbury's Waitaha Action to Impact page:

- [Waitaha Action to Impact Fund | Environment Canterbury \(ecan.govt.nz\)](https://ecan.govt.nz/waitaha-action-to-impact-fund)

3. Actions from previous meetings/workshops

#	Received	Who	What
1.	26/03	B Thomas/J Grant	Send letter to Environment Canterbury regarding impacts of drought on community and asking for these to be considered in work. <i>Completed.</i>
2.	26/03	S Heddell	Request for S Heddell to report back to Committee on Greenst progress. <i>Completed on S Heddell's behalf by J Rochford, Zone Manager - Environment Canterbury.</i>
3.	23/04	J Grant	Request an update on the progress of the Rakitata Revival Steering group and to request Zone Committee representation on the group. <i>Underway – written update supplied in June at closed session.</i>
4.	23/04	J Grant	Provide Wakanui Hāpua information Environment Canterbury and Ashburton District Council have on file to Wakanui. <i>Underway.</i>
5.	23/04	J Grant	That a letter be written to Environment Canterbury outlining the proposals and opportunities as presented by Dr Brett Painter and the discussions that have been had today and request an investigation into what opportunities are available. <i>Underway.</i>
6.	23/04	J Grant	A letter be written to groups who have received funding for traps to obtain statistics and frequency of use of the traps. <i>Underway.</i>
7.	23/04	J Grant	Circulate a copy of a report prepared by ADC approximately four years ago in regard to restoring Wakanui Creek flow, be circulated to members. <i>Completed.</i>

4. Zone Committee Calendar

27 Aug	Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hekeao Hinds Report – Environment Canterbury • Hekeao Hinds Water Enhancement Trust – update • Committee updates
24 Sept	Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda TBC

Project Progress Report – ZCAP Project FY2022/23

Zone: Ashburton Zone

HHWET native plant maintenance

Background

The Hekeao Hinds Water Enhancement Trust (HHWET) was formed in 2019 to facilitate a coordinated approach to water management in the Ashburton District in order to enhance its water systems for the environmental, recreational, cultural, domestic and agricultural benefit of the community. This pilot project was one of the recommendations of Ashburton Water Zone Committee's (AWZC) Zone Implementation Programme.

In addition to the MAR pilot project, HHWET are currently leading and/or supporting other water enhancement initiatives including Near River Recharge (NRR), Targeted Stream Augmentation (TSA), Irrigation Nutrient Recycling, Bioreactors and Constructed Wetlands. Since Central Government funding (through the Provincial Growth Fund) concluded in June 2022, HHWET's sole funding source has been from a targeted environmental infrastructure rate to Hekeao Hinds Plains landowners.

Biodiversity Planting

Biodiversity planting is being undertaken at key NRR and MAR sites as a value-add with over 17,000 native plants being added at or near NRR1 (South Hinds), 65 native plants at MAR12 (Maronan Ealing Rd) and 1300 native plants have been added at MAR17 (Lennies Rd). The most noticeable response to the new native plantings at NRR1 has been the arrival of bird species not previously seen nearby. In the last year, these species include Australasian Bittern, Marsh Crane, Bellbird and White Heron.

Zone Committee Action Plan Budget Funding – HHWET native plant maintenance

HHWET's contracted maintenance for the FY2022-23 year equated to \$20,000 plus GST. The AWZC recommended, and Environment Canterbury approved funding of \$8,000 plus GST to go towards these costs.

Funding update

- Maintenance of HHWET sites was completed at HHWET sites on time and on budget for 2023-24 (Figure 1).
- Growth rates through the 2023-24 summer have been very good, due to the NRR site keeping shallow groundwater levels high (Figures 2-5).
- The summer of 2023-24 was very dry across the Hekeao Hinds Plains, and by December 2023, the South Branch Hekeao Hinds River had effectively stopped flowing above the NRR1 site. An average of 118 l/s (maximum 200 l/s) at NRR1 through the summer months

maintained river flow for a few kilometres downstream from NRR1. An electric fish survey in mid-December 2023 identified large populations of native bullies and galaxiids (likely in their thousands), one adult trout with fresh eel bite marks, and one juvenile trout. This population would not have survived the summer without NRR1, and repopulation would therefore have been delayed until sustained high flows allowed connection to an existing population.

Figure 1. Invoice for plant maintenance at HHWET sites



Figure 2. NRR1 flax in flower.



Figure 3. NRR1 Toi Toi and Ribbonwood



Figure 4. NRR1 upper bank plants



Figure 5. NRR1 wetlands and native forest

Bill Thomas
Chair Ashburton Water Zone Committee
c/- Jaimee Grant
Zone Facilitator
Environment Canterbury
PO Box 345
Christchurch 8140

21/05/2024

Dear Bill

Zone Committee Action Plan Grant – Project Completion Report for Ashburton River native planting supplies (Purchase Order Number 152842)

In June 2023 I received a \$1,000 grant from the Ashburton Water Zone Committee Action Plan Fund for purchasing plants and equipment for site preparation, planting and maintenance of an area on the Northwest riverbank of the Hakatere Ashburton River.

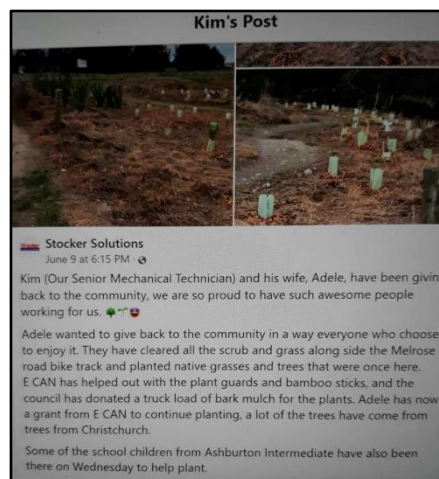
We have planted 600+ plants and it is looking substantially better down there. The rubbish dumping has also stopped. Although we did our best hand watering over the summer, we lost about 15 plants which we have recently replaced. We have also installed a rustic bench seat for people to rest on if they wish. People passing always stop for a chat and compliment our work.

ECan staff came and helped us one day and so did a group of children from the local intermediate school. Stocker Solutions loaned us their van to transport our wheelbarrow down there and then posted photos and did a wonderful write up on Facebook for us. We got the Guardian to do an article with photos of the kids planting, and I took a photo of ECan staff as well.

Basically, now all we plan on doing is maintaining the area and replacing any further losses over winter.

Please see the budget spreadsheet on the next page to account for the grant expenditure.

Yours sincerely
Adele Webb



Report on Pudding Hill Stream Weed Control

Preamble:

Pudding hill stream extends from Mt Hut forest and serves as a tributary to the Ashburton rivers. The surrounding riverbanks are made up of a mix of matai, podocarp and beech forest with native shrub undergrowth, extending into adjacent reserves and grasslands. The forest is managed by the Department of Conservation and adjoining land owned by Mt Alford Station and Ashburton District Council. The surrounding forested area along the riverbank is a healthy ecosystem with occasional landslides on the hills and weeds encroachment. Along the river and the native forestry is a vigorous regeneration of willows, sycamore trees, larches, Himalayan honeysuckle, and monkey musk. Recent flooding has also led to gravel deposition and clearing of the stream bed, resulting in downstream weeds dispersal, such as alders and poplars, and willows (grey, crack and basket willows).

Scope of the project:

The proposed project was initiated to remove, along the axis of the riverbank up to 5 km as shown in the attached map, all wilding trees growing along the riverbanks and on adjacent hillside, all willows, (crack, grey and basket willows), all alder and poplar saplings and all sycamore trees on the adjacent plantation forestry area that may potentially spread further to the riverbanks.



Purpose of the Project

To protect this pristine environment and prevent further weed dispersal into the native forest and regenerating scrub areas, there is a need for immediate control of all the weeds encroaching and competing with the native vegetation along the riverbank. These include the removal of wildings (larches and Douglas firs on the hillside and along the riverbanks, removal of the willows, alders and poplars seedings on the riverbanks.

Delivery

Weed control was undertaken by Lyndhurst Services over five days in March 2024 to remove the listed weed above. Daily work dairies supplied by the contractor are attached. Weed trees were cut, and stumps were treated with chemicals to prevent regrowth or sprayed using a knapsack sprayer. Chemicals used include mixtures of Grazon, T-max and dye.

The delivery was only within the approved grant. There are more weeds to be removed upstream, and we will revisit the project in Spring 2024 if funds are available.

Project cost

Requested grant: \$11,880 + GST.

Approved grant: \$8,000 + GST.

Final cost invoiced: \$8000 + GST (see the attached invoice).

Photos are attached below.





