

4. LAND MANAGEMENT

4.1 Introduction

For the purpose of the provisions in this Plan, unless the context indicates otherwise, "land disturbance" refers only to activities on land beyond river, lake, or wetland beds, i.e. above their fullest flow/highest level. Activities in the bed of lakes, rivers, and wetlands are covered in other sections of the Plan.

The appropriate management of the effect of land disturbance activities is important to ensure erosion and soil loss within the West Coast region is minimised. The likelihood of erosion and soil loss depends on factors such as geology, slope, drainage, the frequency and intensity of earthquakes, as well as the scale and type of activity. However, it is impractical and inefficient to require all land users to assess these components prior to commencement of any land use activity. Therefore, for the purpose of this Plan the Council has utilised the New Zealand Land Resource Inventory 'Dominant Erosion Form' data for the West Coast region.

The Greymouth Earthworks Control Area incorporates special controls which cover land on the inland fringes of Cobden, Greymouth, and Karoro. Disturbance of land in these areas is a discretionary activity due to a predisposition to slope failure and the hazards associated with any failure in the urban environment.

For any activity affecting a wetland also refer to other provisions in the Plan, including Chapters 5 and 6. Where provisions in the Plan dealing with wetlands are at variance with those in Chapter 5, the provisions in Chapter 6 take precedence.

4.2 Objective

4.2.1 To avoid remedy or mitigate adverse effects from land disturbance so that the region's water and soil resources are sustainably managed.

Explanation

Land disturbance can cause adverse effects on both the land and water environments. The Objective seeks to ensure that the provisions within this Plan minimise the likelihood of significant impact on water quality and quantity, soil conservation, property, and infrastructure.

Land disturbance activities can impact on the water quality of adjacent water bodies due to the input of sediments and/or nutrients and will be managed in such a way to avoid or mitigate these effects. Sediment and/or nutrient inputs can cause changes to the characteristics of the receiving water which render the water body unusable and potentially allow harmful pathogens to reach levels where they affect human health.

Stock access to the coastal environment, wetlands, lakes and rivers and their margins can have significant adverse effects on soil conservation, land stability, water quality, in stream values, and the health and function of margins.

4.3 Policies

4.3.1 To manage the disturbance of land and vegetation in order to avoid remedy or mitigate any adverse effects on:

- (a) **The stability of land (e.g. slumping, subsidence, or erosion), river banks, and riverbeds and coastal margins;**
- (b) **Water quality, including clarity, turbidity, and temperature changes, and in stream values;**
- (c) **Changes in water level including water table;**
- (d) **Public access to rivers, lakes, and their margins and the coast;**
- (e) **Natural character, and aquatic ecosystems;**
- (f) **Soil depth and soil fertility;**
- (g) **The integrity of property, structures, or effects upon the operation or maintenance of regionally significant infrastructure;**
- (h) **Cultural and recreational values; and**
- (i) **Significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.**

Explanation

This Policy covers the range of factors or values that will be considered when assessing resource consent applications. This Policy is an overarching policy which should be applied in conjunction with other policies in this Chapter.

While this Chapter of the Plan concerns land that is outside riverbeds, it is important that the effects of disturbance of land on rivers are considered. Land use activities can cause accelerated erosion to occur. Productivity of eroded land is diminished and significant flow on effects may be produced. Policy 5.4.1 therefore, seeks to avoid or minimise soil losses and erosion from land use activities on land prone to erosion. It also covers activities in the Greymouth Earthworks Control Area (Schedule 4).

The Council has as one of its functions, the establishment, review and implementation of objectives, policies and other methods to maintain indigenous biological diversity. It is the function of the District Councils to control the use, subdivision, and development of land to maintain indigenous biological diversity.

In this Plan, the maintenance and enhancement of water quality, in stream values and the retention of riparian vegetation contributes to maintaining indigenous biological diversity of the coastal environment, wetlands, lakes and rivers and their margins.

Policy 9.2 of the Regional Policy Statement for the West Coast will be applied when deciding whether indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna are significant for the purposes of 4.3.1(i).

4.3.2 To manage earthworks (for example, mining) to avoid effects on the environment where the activity may produce any of the following geochemical processes, above background levels:

- (a) Release of acid rock drainage;**
- (b) Precipitation of iron oxides;**
- (c) Release of heavy metals.**

Explanation

The potential environmental effect of hard rock mining is predetermined by the geology of the material being excavated or disturbed. This may be overburden, tailings, or product. High concentrations of sulphur often occur in geological units such as Brunner Coal Measures and can result in acid rock drainage which lowers the pH enabling the solubilisation of heavy metals or metalloids such as aluminium, arsenic, copper, lead, and zinc.

The acid and heavy metals released into surface waters can cause adverse effects on aquatic life either by direct toxic response, contact with acidic water (usually less than pH 4.0), or by removal of habitat due to metal precipitation, in particular iron flocs. Hard rock mining associated with both gold and coal mining can result in acid rock drainage and the release of heavy metals or metalloids such as arsenic or antimony into the environment if the waste rock is not managed to avoid this.

4.3.3 To manage the disturbance of riparian margins to:

- (a) Maintain or enhance water quality (including clarity, turbidity, and temperature), and in-stream values, (including aquatic ecosystems);**
- (b) Promote soil conservation;**
- (c) Ensure that existing public access to water bodies is maintained or enhanced;**
- (d) Protect the natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, from inappropriate use and development;**
- (e) Enable the maintenance and safe operation of regionally significant infrastructure.**

Explanation

Riparian margins enable management of activities within a defined area and they are different to esplanade reserves or esplanade strips. They are areas where controls on land use activities are in place, primarily for soil conservation, water quality control, erosion control, natural hazard avoidance, and the protection of the beds of rivers, lakes, and wetlands. Unlike esplanade reserves or strips they do not affect land ownership or create public access or other interests in the land. Where riparian margins are disturbed to facilitate public access to water bodies, the location of such access should be determined having consideration to public health and safety, particularly where proximate to regionally significant infrastructure.

Managing the margins of water bodies (Policy 4.3.3) is an effective tool in reducing adverse effects on water bodies because the margins can be used to filter nutrients and microbes, and trap fine sediment. It may maintain and enhance amenity values. Inappropriate use of land in close proximity to water bodies can contribute to sediment loading, bank erosion, and increased run off.

Land and vegetation disturbance which causes the loss of riparian vegetation can adversely affect the healthy functioning of rivers and aquatic habitats. Maintaining and enhancing aquatic ecosystems contributes to maintaining indigenous biological diversity.

4.3.4 To manage the maintenance of existing land drainage activity to avoid, remedy, or mitigate adverse effects on receiving water bodies or property.

Explanation

Existing land drainage activities should be managed so that any adverse effects on people and their properties are avoided, remedied, or mitigated. Adverse environmental affects from further drainage activities or inadvertent over drainage should also be avoided.

While landowners are required under the Land Drainage Act 1908 to maintain watercourses on their property so that the water can flow through unimpeded from upstream properties, their duties under the RMA still apply. Any adverse effects must still be avoided, remedied, or mitigated.

4.3.5 Manage the development of new land drainage activities (including humping and hollowing) to ensure that:

- (a) Bed and bank stability of the receiving water body is maintained;**
- (b) Long-term water quality (including clarity, turbidity, and temperature changes) in the receiving water and in stream values (including aquatic ecosystems) are maintained;**
- (c) Sediment deposition is minimised and sediment armouring of the bed of any water body is avoided;**
- (d) The activity does not increase the flood flow carried by the receiving waters, so that it exceeds the carrying capacity of existing drainage structures, or result in inundation of any other persons property;**
- (e) The activity does not reduce the flow in the receiving water body by more than 10%; and**
- (f) The natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, lakes and rivers and their margins, is protected from inappropriate use and development.**

Explanation

Policy 4.3.5 recognises that where the resulting discharge into the natural watercourse can also have an impact on the water quality and flood carrying capacity of the receiving waters. In some cases flows have been reduced, in others flows are increased. This can also cause adverse effects on other properties if the existing infrastructure, such as culverts, are unable to cope with larger volumes of water.

4.3.6 To recognise the National Water Conservation (Grey River) Order 1991 and the Water Conservation (Buller River) Order 2001.

Explanation

The management of the waters protected under national water conservation orders must be provided for under this Plan. The two water conservation orders are reproduced in Schedule 5 and 6 of this Plan.

4.3.7 To promote the exclusion of farm stock from estuaries, wetlands, lakes and rivers and their margins by actively encouraging:

- (a) The establishment, maintenance and enhancement of vegetated riparian buffers;**
- (b) Land and riparian management to be undertaken in accordance with industry best practice;**
- (c) Fencing of waterways to prevent stock access; and**
- (d) Construction of bridges or culverts over regular stock crossing points.**

Explanation

In more intensively farmed areas stock access to water bodies and grazing of riparian vegetation is more likely to cause adverse effects such as faecal contamination, destabilisation and erosion of stream banks,

deposition of fine sediment, trampling of riparian and aquatic habitats and loss of natural character and amenity values.

4.3.8 To monitor stock access to estuaries, wetlands, lakes and rivers and their margins and to introduce new rules and other methods to control stock access if monitoring shows that the standards for water quality classifications for affected water bodies adjacent to and downstream of farmed land are not being met and/or the condition of riparian margins and stream habitat is declining as a result of stock access.

Explanation

Council will review the effectiveness of Plan provisions by every 5 years. If monitoring shows deterioration in water quality, such that the water quality class for the affected water body is not being met, and the condition of riparian margins and stream habitat is declining as a result of stock access it will introduce regulatory and other methods to control stock access to waterways. Monitoring is undertaken through regular State of the Environment sampling, which currently indicates that water quality in general is improving across almost all monitored catchments in the Region. Copies of these reports are available on the Council's website. The water quality classes are those set out in Policy 8.3.1 of this Plan.

4.3.9 To promote land management being undertaken in accordance with industry best practice, so that leaching of faecal material and nutrients, and loss of sediment to water is avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Explanation

Earthworks, land disturbance, and tracking can disturb the land so that soil is washed away by rainfall and ends up as sediment in surface water bodies. Suspended sediment reduces light penetration and water clarity. It can affect both water river ecosystems (e.g. by smothering the habitat for benthic invertebrates) and recreational uses.

Best practices in land management, including adopting good soil conservation practices, managing stock rates, establishing or maintaining a dense ground cover in the riparian margin, undertaking appropriate track placement and construction, implementing measures to reduce erosion before undertaking earthworks or forestry activities, and following industry Codes of Practice, where they exist.

Application of fertiliser or agricultural effluent can, if poorly managed, result in detrimental quantities of nutrients leaching into ground water or washing directly into surface water bodies. The current Code of Practice for Nutrient Management (with emphasis on fertiliser use) provides advice and guidelines that can reduce adverse effects on water bodies. Nutrient budgeting tools are also available.

4.3.10 To encourage the retention, maintenance, or planting of appropriate riparian vegetation.

Explanation

Riparian vegetation can have significant benefits in maintaining and enhancing water quality by stabilising the banks against erosion and by filtering and trapping the overland flow of sediment, phosphorous and faecal matter. Riparian vegetation also contributes to the maintenance of indigenous biological diversity by providing shade and keeping water cool and providing a source of food for aquatic life.

It is recognised that the establishment of riparian vegetation is not always appropriate if it enables the establishment or introduction of pest plants and animals, impedes public access or reduces the flood carrying capacity or causes adverse effects on the stability and performance of infrastructure. Information is available from the Council regarding guidelines and industry best practice for managing riparian vegetation.

4.4 Methods

4.4.1 In conjunction with resource users and other interested persons (e.g. Landcare groups, industry organisations, etc.), the Council will encourage the development of codes of practice and

environmental management systems in order to support sustainable land management practices. Existing codes of practice will be recognised if they meet the requirements of the RMA.

- 4.4.2 In conjunction with resource users and interested parties develop a code of practice to reduce the risk of the spread of pest plants within the region. For example, the spreading of pest plants through earth moving machinery.
- 4.4.3 Seek government funding to undertake further investigation in relation to riparian margins.

5. LAKE AND RIVERBED MANAGEMENT

5.1 Introduction

The West Coast has a dense network of streams and rivers. Many of the rivers are relatively short, with small catchment areas. Activities in riverbeds that involve riverbed disturbance or structures include:

- Alluvial gold mining;
- Gravel extraction;
- Flood protection and erosion protection works;
- Erection and maintenance of bridges and culverts;
- Whitebait stands and port structures (Grey/Buller rivermouth); and,
- Other structures.

Poorly managed activities can increase the rate of erosion of riverbeds and banks, change the alignment of river channels, cause loss of land, undermine stop banks, and increase maintenance costs. Effects on ecosystems need to be carefully managed to avoid significant impact on fish habitat and other values.

Where the effects of these activities are no more than minor the Plan makes them a permitted activity so that no resource consent is needed. For larger scale activities, where more significant effects might occur, a resource consent is needed.

Removal of gravel and debris from riverbeds is necessary and important for people and communities of the West Coast. Council records show that on the basis of past allocations, there is little to suggest that resource depletion has been, or is an issue, except for a few small rivers where natural transportation rates are low. This Plan therefore allows as a permitted activity the removal of debris obstructing riverbeds and low volume extraction of gravel from most riverbeds. Care is required to ensure that the integrity of structures and riverbanks is sustained. The use of structures to protect land from flooding is important for communities and the maintenance, repair, or reinstatement of flood protection works to desired degrees of safety is also provided for in this Plan.

Some significant wetlands on the West Coast include areas which are within the the beds of lakes and rivers.

For any activity affecting a wetland also refer to other provisions in the Plan including Chapters 4 and 6. Where provisions in the Plan dealing with wetlands are at variance with those in Chapter 5, the provisions in Chapter 6 take precedence.

5.2 Objective

5.2.1 To avoid, remedy, or mitigate the adverse effects of lake and riverbed activities on:

- (a) **The stability of beds, banks, and structures;**
- (b) **The flood carrying capacity of rivers;**
- (c) **The natural character of wetlands, lakes and rivers and their margins;**
- (d) **Indigenous biodiversity and ecological values, including fish passage;**
- (e) **Amenity, heritage, and cultural values;**
- (f) **Sports fish habitat values;**
- (g) **Water quality;**
- (h) **Navigation; and**
- (i) **Regionally significant infrastructure.**

Explanation

The construction, maintenance, alteration, or removal of in stream structures and bed disturbance activities can cause adverse effects on the West Coast environment, existing infrastructure, and other lawful uses. The Objective seeks to ensure that the provisions within this Plan minimise the likelihood of significant impacts while meeting the requirements of Section 5 of the RMA, which stipulates that natural and physical resources be sustainably managed and the requirements of Section 6 which require matters of national importance to be recognised and provided for.

National Direction – National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPSFM)

Part 1 Preliminary provision 1.7(1) of the NPSFM provides that Implementation Requirement 3.26(1) (Fish passage) must be added to regional plans without using the public consultation process in Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (the RMA).

Under Section 55(2A) of the RMA, Implementation Requirement 3.26(1) (Fish passage) is accordingly included in this Plan as Objective 5.2.2 below.

5.2.2 The passage of fish is maintained, or is improved, by instream structures, except where it is desirable to prevent the passage of some fish species in order to protect desired fish species, their life stages, or their habitats.

5.3 Policies

5.3.1 To provide for appropriate use and development in lakes and rivers and recognise the social and economic benefit particularly related to West Coast communities of maintaining existing structures and infrastructure.

Explanation

There are existing structures located in the beds of West Coast lakes and rivers that have significant positive effects for West Coast communities and visitors. Reliable transport links and network utility infrastructure provides essential lifelines for community health and safety. These benefits need to be given due weight when considering the avoidance, remedy or mitigation of adverse effects.

5.3.2 To manage bed disturbance, reclamation, deposition and the use, erection, extension, reconstruction, maintenance, alteration, demolition, or removal of structures in, on, under, or over the bed of any lake or river, so that the activity does not cause or contribute to significant adverse effects on:

- (a) The stability of beds and banks;**
- (b) The capacity of rivers to carry flood flow;**
- (c) Heritage, amenity or cultural values;**
- (d) Water quality;**
- (e) Existing structures or existing uses;**
- (f) Navigational safety;**
- (g) Aquatic ecosystem values (including habitat values and fish passage);**
- (h) The natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, rivers and lakes and their margins;**
- (i) Significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.**

Explanation

This Policy recognises the need for controls by way of regional rules to ensure that stability of riverbeds and banks is safeguarded, the capability of rivers to carry water is not impeded when in flood, and that other adverse effects are addressed appropriately.

Policy 9.2 of the Regional Policy Statement for the West Coast will be applied when deciding whether indigenous vegetation or habitat of indigenous fauna are significant for the purposes of 4.3.2(i).

5.3.3 To manage the construction and use of whitebait stands in a manner that avoids, remedies, or mitigates adverse effects on riverbanks and beds in a manner that is consistent with Schedule 17.

Explanation

This Policy is specifically intended to address the effects of erosion associated with whitebait stands, which are generally temporary structures, erected no earlier than 2 weeks prior to the commencement of the whitebait season and dismantled no later than 2 weeks after the season closes. This Policy only applies to stands upstream of the coastal marine area (CMA) because the Regional Coastal Plan contains corresponding provisions for the CMA.

5.3.4 In addition to the requirements of Policy 5.3.2, when considering an application to excavate gravel from a river or lake bed, to consider:

- (a) The sustainable yield of the lake or river system;**
- (b) Adverse effects on bed levels and channel location;**
- (c) Potential spread of pest plants.**

Explanation

Removing material from riverbeds has the potential to impact on Policy 5.3.2 matters plus (a) to (c) above. However, the significance of this impact will depend on numerous activity and site specific elements. Excessive build up of gravel due to natural processes may contribute to flooding or impacts on infrastructure (e.g. bridges and culverts) that may be mitigated by removal of those materials. Gravel removal from islands can have the benefit of reducing flow against riverbanks, thereby reducing the likelihood of erosion. Adverse effects of extraction activities can include dust and the spread of pest plants. It may be possible to prevent the spread of particular pest plants by not transporting material between some catchments and by high pressure cleaning of trucks and machinery between jobs.

5.3.5 To recognise the National Water Conservation (Grey River) Order 1991 and the National Water Conservation (Buller River) Order 2001.

Explanation

The management of the waters protected under national water conservation orders must be provided for under this Plan. The two water conservation orders are reproduced in Schedule 5 and 6 of this Plan.

5.3.6 Council will require the use of bridges, culverts, and other methods where a farmer causes a herd of cattle to cross any river or permanently flowing creek, at any farm raceway crossing, more than ten times in any month for herds larger than 500 cattle, or more than 20 times in any month for herds less than 500 cattle. A crossing is one-way only.

Explanation

In situations where the construction of a bridge would be unreasonably expensive compared to the effects of the discharge, Council may consider granting a resource consent to a farmer to continue to use a ford crossing, based on a detailed assessment of its effects on the environment including:

- (a) Frequency of use and herd size;
- (b) Measures of contaminant loadings and effects on water colour and clarity;
- (c) Likely effects on downstream in-stream values, and other river users;
- (d) Any cumulative effects and precedent effects, if applicable; and
- (e) Proposed mitigation measures, including farm race re-design.

6. WETLAND MANAGEMENT

6.1 Introduction

The management of wetlands is a critical biodiversity issue in many parts of New Zealand. Some regions have only 10-15% of their natural wetlands remaining, compared to wetland extent during pre-human times. As with other regions there have been losses of wetlands, but a higher proportion remains in the West Coast region than the New Zealand average. In addition to the quantity that remain, these wetlands are also diverse in terms of their types and values.

The sustainable management of wetlands is an important issue due to a range of values and attributes of wetlands. Wetlands provide important areas of indigenous habitat for many birds, plants and amphibians, sustaining the indigenous biodiversity of the West Coast

One value derived from the functions and attributes of wetlands is known as 'ecosystem services'. The term 'ecosystem services' refers to the benefits society derived by society. These are wide ranging and include flood storage and retention, groundwater recharge and discharge, the regulation of surface water flows, erosion protection, sediment trapping, nutrient assimilation and toxicant removal, and also as carbon sinks.

Quite separately, wetlands have other economic values such as commercial fisheries, and for peat extraction and plant harvesting. Wetlands also have recreational, educational, cultural and spiritual values.

Wetlands are vulnerable to a number of activities and threats including:

- Earthworks (including deposition of substances), excavation, reclamation, vehicle crossings, trampling by animals or people, fire or cultivation;
- Introduction or removal of vegetation and grazing of wetland vegetation;
- Taking, damming (resulting in inundation of wetlands), or diversion of water (including that for land drainage), discharge of water or contaminants (including sediment); and
- Installation and erection of structures.

Due to the higher proportion of wetland areas remaining on the West Coast, a priority is to protect those wetlands in the region that are significant as determined by the ecological criteria in Schedule 3. This is achieved through:

- Schedule 1 which identifies wetlands that are ecologically significant;
- Schedule 2 which identifies wetlands that either are, or are likely to be, ecologically significant; and
- When a resource consent is required for an activity affecting a wetland not on Schedules 1 or 2, consideration of whether the wetland is ecologically significant.

The wetlands identified in Schedules 1 and 2 have been arrived at using two separate processes and no hierarchical importance is to be accorded to one Schedule over the other.

Wetlands in Schedule 1 have been verified and include some of the significant wetlands in the region. Their values need to be identified in any resource consent process. Specified activities within Schedule 1 wetlands are non-complying activities, and require a resource consent.

Wetlands in Schedule 2 either are, or are likely to be, ecologically significant. Specified activities within Schedule 2 wetlands are discretionary activities and also require a resource consent.

Wetlands in Schedule 1 and 2 require an ecological assessment using the Schedule 3 criteria. This is to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified ecologist during any resource consent process. There may also be other wetlands not in Schedules 1 and 2 that meet the ecological criteria in Schedule 3 and are ecologically significant. An assessment of ecological significance is also to be provided by an applicant for activities in or affecting a wetland not on Schedule 1 and 2 but which may contain an area of ecological significance.

It is intended that over time as ecological assessments are undertaken wetlands identified as meeting the Schedule 3 criteria will all be included in Schedule 1. Where an assessment demonstrates that the ecological criteria in Schedule 3 are met, those wetlands will be included in the regional plan by way of a plan change.

Equally, where the criteria are not met, those wetlands should be removed from Schedule 2 by way of a plan change.

In addition to the resource consent requirements in this Plan, activities undertaken on public conservation land must also comply with any concession requirements of the Department of Conservation.

For any activity affecting a wetland, also refer to other provisions in the Plan, including Chapters 4 and 5. Where provisions in the Plan dealing with wetlands are at variance with those in Chapters 4 and 5, the provisions in Chapter 6 take precedence.

6.2 Objective

6.2.1. To recognise and provide for the protection of the natural character, indigenous biodiversity and other values of wetlands in the region.

Explanation

Part 2 of the RMA establishes a regime within which wetlands are to be managed in order to protect their natural character, indigenous biodiversity and other values. The objective provides a basis for provisions within the Plan which promote the sustainable management of wetlands in the region. The values present in the remaining wetlands on the West Coast include intrinsic values, natural character, and significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna.

6.3 Policies

6.3.1 To recognise the significant wetlands in Schedule 1 and to identify and protect their values by controlling activities in those wetlands and their margins to ensure their natural character and ecosystems (including ecosystem functions and habitats) are sustained.

6.3.2 To recognise the significant wetlands in Schedule 2 that are shown to meet any one of the ecological criteria in Schedule 3, and to identify and protect their values by controlling activities in those wetlands and their margins to ensure their natural character and ecosystems (including ecosystem functions and habitats) are sustained.

6.3.3 To recognise that there is no hierarchy of significance between wetlands included in Schedule 1, and wetlands included in Schedule 2 that meet any one of the ecological criteria in Schedule 3.

6.3.4 To provide protection for any wetlands not in Schedule 1 or 2 that are shown to meet any one of the ecological criteria in Schedule 3, and to identify and protect the values of those wetlands and their margins to ensure their natural character and ecosystems (including ecosystem functions and habitats) are sustained.

6.3.5 To recognise and provide for the protection of wetlands by promoting the maintenance and enhancement of the natural values of all wetlands in the region and by managing adverse effects of activities on the values present, including natural character, ecosystems (including ecosystem functions and habitats), aesthetic values or amenity values.

Explanations

Policy 6.3.1

Wetlands in Schedule 1 have been verified as ecologically significant and therefore are to be protected. Any wetland modification is likely to result in the degradation or loss of the values of the wetlands or the wetlands themselves.

Policy 6.3.2

Schedule 2 contains a list of wetlands that either are, or are likely to be, ecologically significant. Some of these areas and the particular values present have not been verified and therefore will be subject to an assessment of significance through the resource consent process.

Mapping of Schedule 2 wetlands has taken into account possible adverse effects of adjoining activities on the hydrology of a wetland (including those in Schedule 1). Mapping included sufficient margins where necessary to control adjoining land drainage activities that might otherwise affect the natural water level within the wetland itself and have adverse effects on the values present.

Policy 6.3.3

Policy 6.3.3 makes it clear that there is no hierarchy between the significance of wetlands in Schedule 1 and 2. The wetlands identified in Schedules 1 and 2 have been arrived at using two separate processes and no hierarchical importance is to be accorded to one Schedule over the other.

Policy 6.3.4

Due to the geographic extent and diversity of the West Coast region it is possible that not all wetlands with significant ecological values are identified in either Schedule 1 or Schedule 2. This Policy recognises and provides for the identification and protection of the values of those unidentified wetlands.

This Policy recognises the need to manage all wetlands sustainably, not just those listed in Schedule 1 and 2. This Policy is intended to provide guidance during the resource consent process if a wetland not identified in Schedule 1 or 2 is shown to have significant ecological values.

Policy 6.3.5

Policy 6.3.5 recognises the need to manage all wetlands sustainably, not just those in Schedule 1 and 2 and other with significant ecological values, and these are to be managed for a wide range of values. This Policy is intended to provide guidance during the resource consent process for wetlands and wetland values not covered in the preceding Chapter 6 policies. It is also relevant to non-regulatory methods like providing information on planting or otherwise enhancing wetland areas to improve their natural, amenity or aesthetic values.

National Direction – National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPSFM)

Part 1 Preliminary provision 1.7(1) of the NPSFM provides that Implementation Requirement 3.22(1) (Natural inland wetlands) must be added to regional plans without using the public consultation process in Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (the RMA).

Under Section 55(2A) of the RMA, Implementation Requirement 3.22(1) (Natural inland wetlands) is accordingly included in this Plan as Policy 6.3.6 below.

6.3.6 The loss of extent of natural inland wetlands is avoided, their values are protected, and their restoration is promoted, except where:

- (a) the loss of extent or values arises from any of the following:**
 - (i) the customary harvest of food or resources undertaken in accordance with tikanga Māori**
 - (ii) restoration activities**
 - (iii) scientific research**
 - (iv) the sustainable harvest of sphagnum moss**
 - (v) the construction or maintenance of wetland utility structures (as defined in the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020)**
 - (vi) the maintenance or operation of specified infrastructure, or other infrastructure (as defined in the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020)**
 - (vii) natural hazard works (as defined in the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020); or**

- (b) The West Coast Regional Council is satisfied that:**

- (i) the activity is necessary for the construction or upgrade of specified infrastructure; and**
- (ii) the specified infrastructure will provide significant national or regional benefits; and**
- (iii) there is a functional need for the specified infrastructure in that location; and**
- (iv) the effects of the activity are managed through applying the effects management hierarchy.**

Note: The terms "natural inland wetlands", "restoration", "loss of...values", "functional need", and "effects management hierarchy", are defined in clause 3.21 of the NPSFM. These definitions as used in the above policy relate only to Policy 6.3.6 and do not apply to the rest of the Plan.

6.4 Methods

- 6.4.1 To promote the enhancement and remediation of wetlands by encouraging land-owners to remove/exclude stock from these areas, control any weed growth, or manage any other activities that adversely affects their natural character.
- 6.4.2 To work with the Department of Conservation to facilitate land purchase or land exchange agreements that will enable protection of high value wetlands, while also providing access to areas of lower biodiversity value on land currently administered by the Department of Conservation for private sector use and development.
- 6.4.3 To assist land owners of wetland areas to gain funding for enhancement or remediation works by facilitating access to funding sources (e.g. biodiversity funds) and by liaising with the QEII National Trust and other agencies to assist landowners to formally covenant wetlands so their values are protected in perpetuity.
- 6.4.4 To liaise with District Councils to facilitate rates relief for any Schedule 1 or 2 wetland the landowner has placed under formal protection.
- 6.4.5 To provide advice to landowners who are interested in enhancing wetlands. This advice covers preparing planting plans, advice on funding sources, contacts for covenanting, identification and advice on pest and weed management, and advice on consents needed. The Regional Pest Management Strategy is relevant to the management of pest plant species within wetlands.
- 6.4.6 Where assessment of any wetland (whether in Schedule 1 or 2, or not yet identified in the Plan) is required under the Plan for a plan change, variation or resource consent, it shall be carried out in accordance with the ecological criteria set out in Schedule 3.
- 6.4.7 Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 were derived from two different planning processes. Where assessments of the wetlands in Schedule 2 demonstrate that the ecological criteria in Schedule 3 are met those wetlands should be included in Schedule 1. Equally, where the criteria are not met, those wetlands should be removed from Schedule 2. Changes to Schedule 1 and 2 to either include or remove wetlands will be the subject of a plan change process.
- 6.4.8 To avoid duplication of process, Council will encourage district councils to provide in their district plans that no consent is required for vegetation disturbance in a Schedule 1 or 2 wetland, if consent has been granted by the Regional Council for that activity.