

Canterbury Land & Water Regional Plan

What does it mean?



Wairewa / Lake Forsyth Catchment - Plan Change 6

Frequently Asked Questions

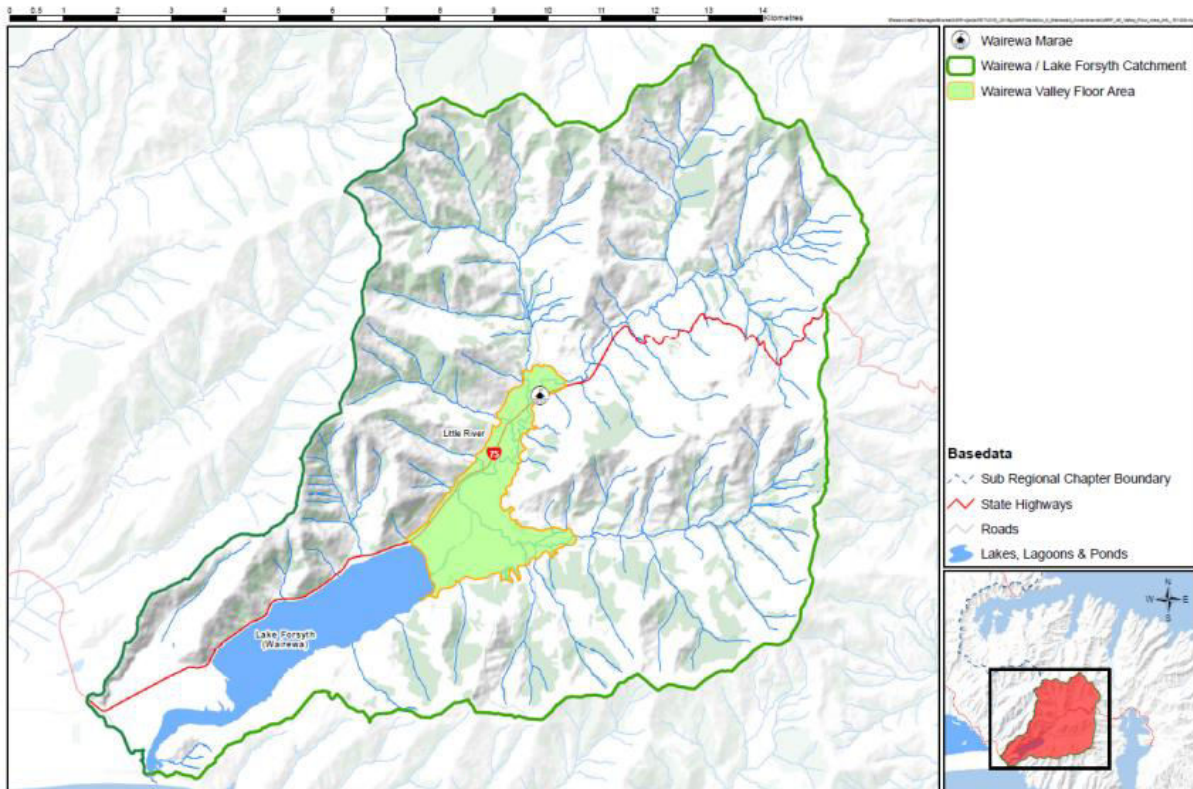
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What is the Wairewa / Lake Forsyth Catchment Plan Change?

The Wairewa / Lake Forsyth Catchment Plan Change is a change to Section 10 of the Canterbury Land & Water Regional Plan. It addresses water quality and water quantity issues, and introduces policies, rules and limits specific to the Wairewa / Lake Forsyth Catchment from recommendations made by the Banks Peninsula Zone Committee.

What area does this Plan Change cover?

This Plan Change relates to the Wairewa Catchment and covers Birdlings Flat to the south, Mount Fitzgerald and Mount Sinclair to the north, High Bare Peak to the west and Saddle Hill / Wainui Pass to the east. It includes the townships of Little River, Birdlings Flat and Cooptown.



What status does the Plan Change have?

The Plan Change is currently in the decisions stage of the planning process. This means any activity in the catchment will be required to comply with the policies, rules and limits in the Plan Change and those in the regional section of the Land & Water Regional Plan. The stricter rule will take precedence.

Why does this catchment need a Plan Change?

The focus of this Plan Change is to improve water quantity and quality in the catchment, especially relating to phosphorus-rich sediment entering the low-lying waterways and Te Roto o Wairewa/Lake Forsyth. Phosphorus is a significant factor in the frequent cyanobacteria blooms which can be a serious health issue for lake users and animals.

The policies, rules and limits in the Plan Change address these issues by encouraging bank stabilisation and planting of native species, enabling construction of a sediment basin and/or wetland at the head of the lake, excluding stock from waterways, and setting flow and allocation limits. There are also provisions permitting investigation of legacy phosphorus in the bed of Te Roto o Wairewa/Lake Forsyth.

What are the key aspects of the Plan Change?

Stock exclusion

From 1 January 2020, stock will be prevented from accessing Te Roto o Wairewa/Lake Forsyth and the beds (including banks) and riparian margins of the Ōkana, Ōkuti and Takiritawai Rivers (and their tributaries) located in the Valley Floor Area (the management area outlined in the Plan Change).

There are some exceptions to these rules that permit stock access to the riparian margin in limited situations where properties have existing fencing. Another exception allows sheep within the riparian margin with a resource consent.

Bank stabilisation

The Plan Change allows for works in the Valley Floor Area for the purpose of reducing bank erosion and collapse if in accordance with a River Bank Erosion Plan. As part of these works, applicants will be required to show the location of the bank stabilisation, outline existing riparian vegetation and fencing, and provide maintenance programmes and post-flood actions.

Environment Canterbury is currently investigating ways it can support landowners in carrying out these works.

Water quantity

The Plan Change introduces water quantity limits for the Ōkuti, Ōkana and Takiritawai Rivers and their tributaries. These flow and allocation limits are set to avoid over-allocation, protect flows and protect ecological and cultural values.

Although there are no rules in the Plan Change relating to water takes, the rules in the regional section of the Land & Water Regional Plan refer to these limits.

Phosphorus levels

Phosphorus is a key factor affecting water quality in the Wairewa / Lake Forsyth Catchment. The Plan Change provides several ways to manage this:

- Guidance to decision makers when processing consents for community wastewater in order to ensure phosphorus losses are minimised and prevent inundation of septic tanks in flood-prone areas
- Enabling development of a wetland and/or sediment retention basin upstream of the lake
- Enabling opening and closing of Te Roto o Wairewa/Lake Forsyth
- Permitting disturbance of the lake bed for the purpose of investigating the re-mobilisation of phosphorus bound to sediment already accumulated in the lake.

What should land occupiers do now?

If you have stock in the areas mentioned above, you should consider your mitigation options and start implementing these so stock can be excluded from the waterways by 2020. Look into ways you can reduce sedimentation discharge into waterways from your property.