New recreation opportunities coming to The Willows

What’s going on?

The Willows, at the end of Thompsons Road, off Old West Coast Road in West Melton, is being developed for non-motorised recreation activities.

This development is being driven by Environment Canterbury, along with the Selwyn District Council, as there is a need to provide recreation and green space opportunities for the rapidly expanding population.

Plans are in place to develop the following recreational facilities:

- Picnic and parking areas with picturesque views out over the Waimakariri River and further out to the Southern Alps.
- River and fishing access points.
- A potential designated motorhome camping area with the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association.
- Native plantings throughout the park to enhance biodiversity and create educational areas for schools and families.
- Walking tracks and a forest mountain bike trail, with the potential to connect to the current trails at McLeans Forest in the future.
- Night gates at park entrances for increased security and protection of park assets.
- Public toilet facilities.

Improvements for Weedons Forest

Trail biking at Weedons Forest

With The Willows area no longer available for motorised recreation, the Weedons Ross Road end of the park will be developed into a dedicated area for trail bikes. We have worked with local clubs in planning the following:

- 130 hectares and up to 30km of enjoyable, managed trails, with varying levels of difficulty.
- The Weedons Forest trail bike area will link up with 28km of further motorbike trails heading downstream in Miners Forest to Haul Road.
- Improved car parking.
- A fun designated family area for beginner riders.

Where can four-wheel drive enthusiasts go?

Four-wheel drivers can access the river upstream of Intake Road on the south bank or the north bank of the Waimakariri River, along Harrs Road, and at The Willows via Thompsons Road. There will also be river access at Weedons Ross Road along the river frontage.

What about fishing access?

There will be maintained fishing access along the river frontage at The Willows and Weedons Forest, with access via Thompsons Road and Weedons Ross Road.

Where can I camp?

Freedom camping is permitted on the Waimakariri River's south bank, west of Intake Road up to the Gorge, and on the north bank, west of Diversion Road right up to the Gorge, for up to two weeks provided you are fully self-contained.