

[Canterbury CMS development drafts - Place 2.6 O Tu Wharekai – 29.10.09 - see www.doc.govt.nz/canterburycms/]

2.6 Ō TŪ WHAREKAI

Ō Tū Wharekai is part of Arawai Kākāriki, a wetland restoration programme focusing on three very different, nationally important wetlands: Whangamarino (Waikato), Ō Tū Wharekai (Canterbury) and Awarua/Waituna (Southland). Launched in July 2007, the programme aims to restore these three wetlands with the assistance of the community, and learn more about methods to use on other wetlands.

The project has an integrated catchment approach, so the project's 'intensive management area' is set within the 'catchment influence area' of the upper Rangitata River and the twelve Ashburton lakes (see [Figure OTW](#)). Because of this catchment approach only parts of the Hakatere and Te Kahui Kaupeka Conservation Parks are included within Ō Tū Wharekai; to get the full management picture for these two parks then 2.5 Conservation and Forest Parks needs to be read as well.

Ō Tū Wharekai is one of the best examples of an unspoiled, relatively intact, inter-montane wetland system remaining in New Zealand, and is nationally important for wildlife. It contains a mosaic of diverse wetland habitats nestled amongst high-country tussocklands and set against the towering Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o te Moana.

The project area is significant for threatened bird, plant, lizard and native fish species, sports-fish populations and spawning streams, geopreservation sites, widespread kettle hole wetlands and associated ephemeral turf, and some of the best examples of red tussock /pūkio wetlands in Canterbury.

For early Māori, the area supported a major kaik/village and was part of the seasonal mahinga kai and resource-gathering trail. Mahinga kai taken include: tuna/eels, weka, kākā, kererū, tūi, pūkeko, freshwater mussels, fern root/aruhe, kiore, native trout/kōkopu, mountain daisy/tikumumu and cabbage tree/ti kōuka. The area was also part of the pounamu trails and an ara to Poutini/West Coast.

The historic resources of Ō Tū Wharekai include the former Hakatere Station buildings complex, several former musterers/out-station huts, the former Mount Harper ice-skating rink, some early climbing club huts [*& other features?*]. The huts now provide for public use and the Hakatere buildings complex has potential for Departmental and public use, with historic and other interpretation at the road entrance to central Ō Tū Wharekai.

The Ashburton lakes landscape is noted as outstanding for its many relatively unmodified vistas, geological formations and water bodies. The lakes provide for extensive recreation including wind surfing, sailing, bird watching, kayaking and swimming, and provide a regionally-significant sports fishery. The wider area provides opportunities for climbing, tramping, hunting, horse riding, mountain biking and walking.

Camping in the area occurs at the basic-facility but very popular campsites at Lakes Clearwater and Heron (both with some long-term occupancy and on-site caravan storage), and informally at Lake Camp and other roadside localities. The Lake Heron campsite (on nature reserve, legal road and pastoral lease) requires land status and administration resolution; roadside camping as elsewhere in New Zealand raises issues of waste disposal and fire risk. Additional camping opportunities and/or further opportunities for short-term, low-impact occupancy could be considered.

[Ref to 1.5.1 public use analysis?]

Threats to the area include farming intensification which exacerbates sediment and nutrient inputs to the wetlands, weed invasion in the upper Rangitata braided riverbed, increased and new weed sources from settlements, and grey and crack willow affecting the hydrology of lakes, streams and swamps by increasing sedimentation. Didymo is a potential threat.

Swamps, bogs and ephemeral turfs can be damaged by vehicles, rabbits and hares and stock, with disturbance opening up wetlands to weed invasion. Predators such as stoats, cats and hedgehogs threaten birds, lizards and invertebrates.

The work involved in the Ō Tū Wharekai project includes compiling species and cultural inventories and undertaking monitoring, pest control, research on species breeding success and habitat use, protecting riparian margins such as by fencing, planning for compatible public use, determining wetland management tools for local and national use, and raising awareness of wetland values.

In managing Ō Tū Wharekai, the Department works closely with Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, Environment Canterbury, Central South Island Fish and Game Council, Ashburton District Council, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Rangitata Landcare Group, Land Information of New Zealand, Lake Clearwater bach owners, landowners and recreational groups, as well as many interested individuals.

Land and water status and management

The Ō Tū Wharekai intensive management area includes a variety of land status areas. The wider catchment influence area also includes the Adams Wilderness Area but management of this is dealt in 1.5.1 Planning and Management for People's Benefit and Enjoyment.

The public conservation land involved includes:

- Parts of Hakatere and Te Kahui Kaupeka Conservation Parks (including additional conservation areas to be added to the park, see 2.5 Conservation & Forest Parks, [Table Z](#)).
- Lake Heron and Māori Lakes Nature Reserves (overlying wildlife refuge status)
- Lake Clearwater Government Purpose Reserve (overlying wildlife refuge status)
- Lake Emma Government Purpose Reserve
- Various marginal strips
- [*Various access easements*]

Other land involved, to the extent supported by landowners, includes:

- Crown riverbeds (e.g. Rangitata, Ashburton, Havelock, Clyde, Lawrence, Cameron, Potts, Stour, Swin, Growler, Forbes) and lakebeds (Emily, Denny, Manuka, Seagull) administered by Land Information New Zealand.
- Legal roads (formed and unformed¹) administered by Ashburton District Council
- Pastoral lease high country stations under freehold ownership or administered by lessees and Land Information New Zealand.
- Lake Camp Recreation Reserve, vested in Ashburton District Council.
- Lake Clearwater bach settlement, Ashburton District Council leasehold.

Through the Ngāi Tahu Settlement Act 1998, a Statutory Acknowledgement and Deed of Recognition is in place over Māori Lakes and Lakes Heron, Emily, Clearwater and Emma to formally acknowledge the association and values Ō Tū Wharekai holds for Ngāi Tahu; see 1.1 Treaty of Waitangi Responsibilities.

As part of The National Water Conservation (Rakia River) Order 1988, the quantity and level of natural water in Lake Heron, and the quantity and rate of flow of natural water in its tributary streams, shall be retained in their natural state. The Water Conservation (Rangitata River) Conservation Order 2006 provides substantial protection from damming and alterations of river flows and form, for a variety of outstanding characteristics and features, of the Rangitata River and its tributaries.

Environment Canterbury administers *Environment Canterbury Navigation Safety Bylaws 2005 (Incorporating Amendments)* under the Local Government Act 2002 to manage watercraft activities, including on lakes and rivers within Ō Tū Wharekai.

¹ Unformed legal roads (“paper roads”) are generally those where no district council funding has been used to develop a vehicle roadway.

Management Outcome

The intrinsic values of Ō Tū Wharekai as one of the best remaining high-country montane basin freshwater wetland and braided-river ecosystems are protected, enhanced and appreciated in a collaborative programme between the Department and the wider community. *[Expand to give word picture of what the basin may look like in future? E.g. Visitors, primarily entering the basin at Hakatere or above the Rangitata River gorge, will be greeted by wide vistas of intact tussocklands interspersed with sustainable high country farming and intact river and wetland systems largely free of problem weed species. Opportunities for public recreation and use are extensive, with vehicle access to key points, and land and water access beyond these points by non-motorised means. Facilities ranging from backcountry huts to commercial accommodation, in and near the basin, provides for overnight visitors.]*

Management Objectives

1. To maintain intact natural hydrological systems and high water quality.
2. To protect intact wetland habitat and rehabilitate degraded wetland habitat.
3. To protect and enhance indigenous species diversity and threatened flora and fauna.
4. To protect historic and cultural sites, including through their use and interpretation where feasible.
5. To promote sustainable land use on lands adjoining the public conservation lands.
6. To improve facilities and opportunities for the public to visit the site and increase awareness and appreciation of, and community involvement in the project
7. To support research that increases understanding of wetland management.

[Update once recreation plan completed.]

Management Policies

The Department:

1. Will acknowledge the Ō Tū Wharekai Deed of Recognition and the Department's wider responsibilities under the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, through agreement to support a Ngai Tahu cultural inventory and a state of the takiwa cultural monitoring for Ō Tū Wharekai, in partnership with Arowhenua Runanga. *[The state of the takiwa report should be completed by end 2009; update this CMS 'place' accordingly]*
2. Should work with the community through:
 - a. maintaining a forum for community participation in the Ō Tū Wharekai programme through such as educational opportunities, public meetings, working bees, and consultation on management issue decisions;
 - b. liaison with non-statutory and statutory stakeholders for involvement in the management of wetland values;
 - c. Canterbury Water Management Strategy, Environment Canterbury regional plan and Ashburton District Council district plan processes, to seek effective protection of the heritage landscape and natural values of Ō Tū Wharekai; and
 - d. liaise with landholders and Land Information New Zealand to avoid adverse effects on Ō Tū Wharekai of land use, and in particular to promote riparian protection.
3. Should maintain a biodiversity programme including:
 - a. compiling inventories of species and habitats;

- b. monitoring programmes for threatened and indicator indigenous species;
 - c. increasing the abundance of threatened and key species, by reducing threats to them and improving their habitats;
 - d. undertaking predator control, in particular to protect threatened bird species; and
 - e. undertaking weed control by eliminating the spread and reducing the cover of existing weeds, and preventing the establishment of new weeds.
4. May investigate the feasibility of developing a native fishery area, through investigation of possible sites and management options.
 5. Should protect and manage the historic resources of Ō Tū Wharekai through:
 - a. protecting the Hakatere Station buildings complex for a combination of low impact public, local community and commercial use, and staff accommodation;
 - b. including the historic huts within the Department's visitor assets management system; and
 - c. for other historic sites, undertaking site recording and avoiding human impacts on the sites, providing interpretation if feasible in conjunction with other facility development, but otherwise undertaking no site management.
 6. Should manage recreational opportunities, including those provided by concessionaires, in accordance with the recreational opportunities settings as shown in Figures AA to BB, and as described and given criteria in Table DD, as given effect in 1.5.1 People's Benefit and Enjoyment *[These figures and table will be attached to part 1.5.1 of the CMS]*.
 7. Should allow and/or limit vehicle access within Ō Tū Wharekai in accordance with **Table OTWV** below, through the use of education, physical constraints, concession conditions and/or regulations; and monitor resulting vehicle use.
 8. Should allow and/or limit horse and pack animal access within Ō Tū Wharekai in accordance with **Table OTWH** below, through the use of education, concession conditions and/or regulations; and monitor resulting animal use. *[NB Section 39(1)(ca) Conservation Act need for authorisations, down to AM level.]*
 9. Should work with Ashburton District Council and Arrowsmith Station to clarify the land status at the Lake Heron campsite, and establish an appropriate land status and administration for the camp site; also with Council regarding potential additional camping opportunities at Lake Clearwater and to resolve any adverse camping-wildlife refuge interactions.
 10. May investigate the feasibility of establishing new camping opportunities.
 11. *[May need policy re providing for road-side camping within Hakatere CP, but may be able to cover this within the 1.5.1 People's Benefit and Enjoyment chapter. Similarly, in conjunction with Ashburton District Council, for road-side road-reserve camping.]*
 12. Should work with Ashburton District Council, Land Information New Zealand, *[and the Min Agr & For/public walking access & Min Local Govt/unformed legal roads proposals]* to either:
 - seek the stopping of unformed legal roads surrounding or accessing lakes and wetlands, where a change in land status would better protect riparian and other natural values and/or where alternative vehicle access is being provided, or
 - seek active management by council to protect natural and historic resources and to facilitate recreation on the unformed legal roads in a way that is compatible with or recognises adjoining lake and wetland management.
 13. Should work with Environment Canterbury to maintain navigational safety bylaws that reinforce reserve legislative and wildlife refuge gazettal provisions relating to the Ō Tū Wharekai lakes.

Table OTWV: Vehicle² access (excluding aircraft³) within Ō Tū Wharekai

Land/water area	Vehicle access
Part Hakatere Conservation Park	<p>All vehicles: Hakatere-Heron Road to Lake Heron carpark; Lake Emma access easement; roadside car parks and picnic areas.</p> <p>4WD: controlled⁴, seasonal access from Lake Heron carpark to Harrisons Bight; Lake Clearwater western (inlet) and eastern/northern access; Paddle Hill Creek access; Lake Emma to Balmacaan Stream access.</p> <p>Mountain bikes (non-motorised): as for All vehicles and 4WD above, Swin River to Double & Manuka Huts, Lake Clearwater circuit, Lake Emma to Lakes Camp & Clearwater, [<i>Mystery Lake - Boundary Hut - Potts River - Lake Clearwater loop, Mount Potts Ski Field access road</i>], otherwise as limited by park topography but primarily on former farm tracks.</p>
Part Te Kahui Kaupeka Conservation Park	<p>4WD: Forest Creek and Mistake Flat Hut (both access primarily on Crown riverbed).</p> <p>Mountain bikes (non-motorised): as limited by park topography.</p>
Lake Heron & Māori Lakes Nature Reserves & Wildlife Refuges	<p>Watercraft: as consistent with the <i>Environment Canterbury Navigation Safety Bylaws 2005 (Incorporating Amendments)</i>, which reflect the wildlife refuge gazettal, i.e. boats wholly propelled by oars or paddles.</p>
Lakes Camp, Clearwater and Emma	<p>Watercraft: as consistent with the <i>Environment Canterbury Navigation Safety Bylaws 2005 (Incorporating Amendments)</i>, which for Clearwater reflects the wildlife refuge gazettal, i.e. overall a variety of provisions for boats propelled by motor, sail, oars and paddles.</p>

Table OTWH: Horse and pack animal access within Ō Tū Wharekai

Land/water area	Horse and pack animal access
Parts Hakatere and Te Kahui Kaupeka Conservation Parks, and Lake Camp Recreation Reserve	<p>Access roads, 4WD tracks, mountain bike tracks, otherwise as limited by park topography but primarily on former farm tracks; avoid wetlands.</p>

Map showing area & main features & land status

² See Glossary definition. Also note that by Transport (Vehicle and Driver Registration and Licensing) Act 1986 provisions, unregistered vehicles are not allowed on any place to which the public have access; this excludes vehicles such as unregistered trail and quad bikes or snow mobiles from public conservation land.

³ Aircraft access within the Parks is covered in 1.5.2 Vehicles (including aircraft) [*see draft Aircraft Guidelines on DoC website*].

⁴ 'Controlled' access is where public vehicle access is allowed, but with conditions such as obtaining a key for a locked gate and/or seasonal restrictions due to snow/wet or fire risk.