

Notice is hereby given of the

Integrated Catchment Management Committee

Wednesday 16 September 2026 at 10:00 am

Environment Southland Council Chamber, 220 North Road, Invercargill
26/ICM/81

Committee Members

Cr Jon Pemberton (Chair)
Cr Roger Hodson
Cr Phil Morrison
Cr David Rose
Cr Paul Evans

Cr Lyndal Ludlow
Cr Eric Roy
Cr Alastair Gibson
Cr Ewen Mathieson
Cr Maurice Rodway

Cr Geoffrey Young
Chair Jeremy McPhail (*Ex-officio*)
Rev Evelyn Cook (*Mana Whenua*)

Agenda

This meeting will be livestreamed through YouTube and will be available to view on our website.
<https://www.es.govt.nz/about-us/live-stream>

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Lucy Hicks
General Manager Integrated Catchment Management

RECOMMENDATIONS IN COUNCIL REPORTS ARE NOT TO BE CONSTRUED AS COUNCIL POLICY UNTIL ADOPTED BY COUNCIL

Terms of Reference

Integrated Catchment Management Committee | Te Komiti whaitua whakakotahi ā rohe

Council assigns to the committee responsibilities from time to time, and the committee provides advice and reports back to Council on:

1. Provide governance oversight and recommending programmes to advance the Council's Integrated Catchment Management approach including (but not limited to)
 - a. Catchment and floodplain management plans
 - b. The management of Council's lease land.
 - c. the Waituna catchment projects and programmes.
 - d. Delivery of flood protection and drainage maintenance works, including government- funded projects¹.
2. Provide governance oversight of the operationalisation and non-regulatory implementation of regional and organisational Strategies, Policies, Plans, and By-laws² including (but not limited to):
 - pollution prevention, environmental education and land sustainability.
 - promotion of sustainable resource management practices.
 - the delivery of Climate Change and Hazards programmes of work³
 - non-regulatory elements of the Regional Forum's recommendations.
3. Managing relationship of Council with the Catchment Liaison Committees and Catchment Groups.
4. Provide governance oversight of and recommending programmes of work related to the Biosecurity and Biodiversity activities including (but not limited to):
 - a. The Regional Pest Management Plan and Fiordland Pathways Management Plan.
 - b. Possum Control Areas and Wildings; and
 - c. Predator Free Rakiura.
5. Provide feedback reporting to the Strategy & Policy Committee and Regulatory Committee on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's Strategies, Policies, Plans and By-laws.

Chair: Cr Jon Pemberton

Deputy Chair: Cr Roger Hodson

Members: Cr Lyndal Ludlow, Cr Paul Evans, Cr Alastair Gibson, Cr Ewan Mathieson, Cr Phil Morrison, Cr David Rose, Cr Eric Roy, Cr Geoffrey Young, Cr Maurice Rodway, Chair Jeremy McPhail (ex officio), Mana Whenua Representation

Quorum: Seven

1 Welcome I Haere mai

2 Apologies I Ngā pa pouri

At the time of the agenda closing, no apologies had been received for this meeting.

3 Declarations of interest

At the time of the agenda closing no declarations of interest had been received for this meeting.

4 Public forum, petitions and deputations I He huinga tuku korero

At the time of the agenda closing, no public forum, petitions or deputations were received for the meeting.

5 Confirmation of minutes I Whakau korero

Attached are the minutes from the Integrated Catchment Management meeting held 9 July 2026.

Minutes of the Integrated Catchment Management Committee

Held at Environment Southland, 220 North Road, Invercargill
Thursday, 9 July 2026 at 10:00 am



Present:

Cr Jon Pemberton (Chair)
Cr Paul Evans
Cr Roger Hodson
Cr Ewen Mathieson
Cr Phil Morrison
Cr Maurice Rodway
Cr David Rose
Cr Eric Roy
Cr Geoffrey Young

In Attendance:

Ms Lucy Hicks (General Manager Integrated Catchment Management)
Mr Rob Phillips (Acting Chief Executive)
Mr David Adamson (Acting Operations Delivery Manager)
Mr Bruce Halligan (Strategic Regulatory Advisor)
Ms Karen Wilson (General Manager Science)
Ms Karen Botting (Programme Manager, Resilient Infrastructure Fund)
Mr Dave Burgess (Team Leader Biosecurity Animals)
Dr Ella Lawton (Regional Strategic Programmes Manager)
Ms Stephanie Gray (Team Leader Operational Planning)
Mr Jimmy Turnbull (Asset Management Planner & Scheduler)
Mr Keiran Young (Environmental Engineer Rivers)
Mrs Mikayla Wass (Executive Assistant) - *Minutes*

1 Welcome I Haere mai

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Integrated Catchment Management meeting for 9 July 2026.

2 Apologies I Ngā pa pouri

Resolved:

Moved Cr Rose, seconded Cr Hodson that apologies be accepted on behalf of Chair McPhail, Cr Gibson and Cr Roy.

Carried

3 Declarations of interest

Cr Young noted that he was a trustee of the Mid Dome Wilding Trust.

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4 Public forum, petitions and deputations I He huinga tuku korero

It was noted that Josh Spargo was unable to attend to present the findings of his research into local agencies' perceptions of a wetland task force for Southland.

A copy and summary of the report had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. It was noted that Mr Spargo would be invited to present at a future meeting.

5 Confirmation of minutes I Whakau korero

Resolved:

Moved Cr Ludlow, seconded Cr Morrison that the minutes of the Integrated Catchment Management meeting held on 27 May 2026 be confirmed as a true and accurate record.

Carried

6 Notification of extraordinary items/urgent business I He panui autaiā hei totoia pakihi

There were no extraordinary items or urgent business tabled for inclusion in the agenda.

7 Questions I Patai

There were no questions asked by the councillors.

8 Chairman and councillors reports I Ngā purongo-a- tumuaki me ngā kaunihera

Cr Hodson provided an update on work relating to the development of an Integrated Catchment Management reporting framework and catchment report card concept. It was noted that the framework could assist with communicating catchment outcomes, supporting decision-making processes, and providing a consistent means of tracking progress over time.

The following questions and comments were made:

- The importance of effectively communicating catchment health and outcomes in a changing government environment
- It was suggested that the framework could support farm planning and improve decision-making efficiency
- Consideration was given to how the framework could complement State of the Environment monitoring
- That the concept could provide a visual summary of catchment condition and help communities understand links to regulatory frameworks.
- Discussion was held on how the framework could complement existing catchment science summaries by providing a more accessible and regularly updated reporting tool.

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- Caution was expressed regarding the level of detail included, particularly if the framework was intended for external audiences.

It was agreed that councillors would review the discussion paper outside of the meeting and provide feedback to staff for further consideration.

Cr Pemberton reported on a field day hosted on his property that focused on infrastructure resilience and dairy farming. It was noted that the event attracted a diverse range of participants, including attendees from outside the region.

Cr Rose reported on a community board meeting attended by Southland District Council and Environment Southland staff regarding natural hazard planning matters.

To questions asked, the following was clarified:

- Section 73 notices were imposed by territorial authorities under the Building Act as part of the building consent process.
- Property owners had the right to challenge the notice.
- The notice served as a formal warning to current and future property owners regarding identified natural hazards.

Further discussion was held regarding responsibility for excavation and gravel extraction activities, and it was agreed that the matter would be followed up with the relevant teams for clarification.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Hodson, seconded Cr Rose that Integrated Catchment Management Committee accept the Chairman and Councillor reports.

Carried

9 Extraordinary/urgent business | Panui autia hei totoia pakihi

There were no extraordinary items or urgent business tabled for inclusion in the agenda.

10 Reports

10.1 Council RIF Workshop Summary

The purpose of this item was to provide a summary of the Council workshop held on 24 June 2026 regarding the Resilient Infrastructure Fund.

To questions asked, it was clarified that most identified actions and next steps were expected to commence within the following month and would be incorporated into existing work programmes and processes.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Morrison, seconded Cr Mathieson that Council receive the report – Council RIF workshop summary.

Carried

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10.2 Operations Delivery Report

The purpose of this item was to update the Committee on operational delivery across River Management, Drainage, Biosecurity and associated strategic projects since the previous meeting.

It was noted that progress continued to be made on recovery work arising from the October storm event, wilding conifer funding applications, and planning for future pest management initiatives. An update was also provided on current biosecurity matters, including avian influenza preparedness and wallaby management.

To questions asked, the following was clarified:

- Different bird species were affected differently by avian influenza, with particular concern for endemic species.
- Most wild bird populations overseas had recovered, and work was underway to investigate mitigation measures for vulnerable species.
- Staff would continue to follow established guidance and protocols when undertaking field work.
- Clear public messaging regarding disposal requirements would be important, and engagement with territorial authorities would assist in developing consistent information.
- Fish and Game was working directly with MPI on its own planning and response activities.
- Gravel management works at the Waiau Bridge continued to progress, with survey and design work underway. Similar investigations were being considered for the Ōreti Iron Bridge.
- Information regarding Waiau River expenditure associated with Meridian related works could be provided separately.

It was requested that future operational delivery reports include clearly specified reporting periods.

Resolved:

Moved Cr Rose, seconded Cr Hodson that Council receive the report - Operations Delivery Report.

Carried

11 Public excluded business I He hui pakihi e hara mo te iwi

Moved Cr Young, seconded Cr Rose that in accordance with section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest/s protected by section 7 of that act, it is proposed that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

- **Confirmation of public excluded minutes – Integrated Catchment Committee – 27 May 2026**
- **General Manger ICM Update**

The general subject matters to be considered while the public is being excluded, the reason for this resolution in relation to the matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public, as specified by Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 are set out below:

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GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER	REASON FOR PASSING THE RESOLUTION	GROUNDS UNDER S.48(1)
11.1 Confirmation of public excluded minutes – Integrated Catchment Committee – 27 May 2026	To enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.	S.7(2)(h)
11.2 General Manager ICM Update	To enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.	S.7(2)(h)

Carried

12 Termination

The meeting was closed at 12:04 pm.

6 Notification of extraordinary items/urgent business | He panui autaiā hei totoia pakihi

At the time of the agenda closing, no notifications of extraordinary or urgent business had been received for this meeting.

7 Questions | Patai

Question from Cr Gibson:

"Is geo-fencing (Halter) considered to be a legal fence? Example around a water way or boundary fence, as people expect the system to operate as if it is."

8 Chairman and councillors reports | Ngā purongo-a-tumuaki me ngā kaunihera

At the time of the agenda closing, no Councillor Reports were received for the meeting.

9 Reports

9.1 Whakamana te Waituna Charitable Trust Annual Report FY25/26

Report by: Ella Lawton, Regional Strategic Programmes Manager

Approved by: Lucy Hicks, General Manager Integrated Catchment Management

Report Date: 3 September 2026

Purpose

To provide an overview of the Whakamana te Waituna Charitable Trust's performance and activities during FY25/26, highlighting progress against its charitable objectives of improving freshwater quality, supporting land-use transition, restoring waterways and biodiversity, strengthening the connection between Awarua Rūnanga and Waituna, and outlining key priorities for FY26/27.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Integrated Catchment Management Committee resolve to:

- 1 Receive the report - Whakamana te Waituna Charitable Trust Annual Report FY25/26.

Report

FY25/26 was a productive year for the Trust. Activities undertaken during the year aligned with the Trust's charitable objectives of improving freshwater quality, supporting land-use transition, restoring waterways and biodiversity, and strengthening the connection between Awarua Rūnanga and Waituna.

Key activities completed during FY25/26 included:

- Transfer of the Webster Block from Environment Southland to Trust ownership, enabling direct stewardship of a key restoration site.
- Completion of the Trust's first large-scale restoration planting programme at the Webster Block, with more than 8,500 native plants established across 6.5 hectares to support biodiversity and freshwater outcomes.
- Progression of the Waituna Nature Credits Pilot, including participation in the Ministry for the Environment pilot programme, ecological baseline monitoring, and progress toward project registration to develop sustainable funding for future restoration.
- Advancement of the Pikiraurahi Cultural and Education Centre, with the building relocated to site and most infrastructure works completed, creating a future hub for cultural reconnection, education, and environmental restoration.
- Continued implementation of pest control programmes, removal of invasive species, and establishment of long-term maintenance programmes across restoration sites.
- Riparian planting at Lower Waituna Creek to reduce erosion.
- Ongoing freshwater improvement initiatives, including monitoring of the Jordan Creek Sediment Trap and advancement of the Moffat Creek enhancement project
- Reporting of Waituna Lagoon health indicators and community engagement through quarterly updates and scorecards.

The Trust received \$469,569 in partner funding during the year and total revenue of \$524,133. Expenses were \$784,160, and total equity (as of 30 June 2026) was \$1.59 million.

Priorities for FY26/27 include:

- Completing and opening the Cultural and Education Centre at Pikiraurahi
- Continuing restoration planting at the Webster Block
- Progressing the Nature Credits Pilot toward registration
- Supporting the transfer of the remaining WTW project land held by Environment Southland to the Trust
- Advancing land transition opportunities and supporting restoration initiatives in the catchment.

The full FY25/26 annual report will be available at the meeting.

Attachments

Nil

9.2 Floodplain Management Annual Report 2025-2026

Report by: Dr Ella Lawton, Regional Strategic Programmes Manager

Approved by: Lucy Hicks, General Manager Integrated Catchment Management

Report Date: 28 August 2026

Purpose

To report on progress in 2025–2026 developing Murihiku Southland’s floodplain management approach, and to outline the work programme planned for 2026–2027, including the Maitara ‘Blueprint’ Project.

Summary

A milestone of the 2024-27 Long-term Plan was to develop a floodplain management approach to guide how flood risk is understood and managed by catchment across the region over the long-term. The approach draws on the results of Murihiku Slow the Flow and the experience of other regional councils and is now in its final stages of development.

Two work programmes are testing and refining this approach in practice. The Maitara ‘Blueprint’ Project, funded through the Kānoa Regional Infrastructure Fund, is applying the approach to develop a long-term flood-risk pathway for the Maitara catchment. The Learning from the Land Programme and the Titiroa Catchment Pilot is building the organisation’s capability to include flood-risk data in decision-making. Findings from both will be used to improve the approach before it is applied more widely across the region.

Over the next 12 months, the Maitara ‘Blueprint’ Project will be finalised, community and partner engagement will take place over summer 2026/27, and the floodplain management approach will be applied and evolve through these pieces of work.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Integrated Catchment Management Committee resolve to:

- 1 Receive the report *Floodplain Management Annual Report 2025-2026*

Background

A Floodplain Management Approach Annual Report is a milestone of the Environment Southland Long-Term Plan 2024-2027¹. The Long-Term Plan 2024-2027 (page 77) explains that a “*Floodplain Management Plan leverages the data and modelling we have, to translate it into practical tools for shaping our future climate adaptation efforts. Its primary purpose is to pinpoint the areas of the catchment with the highest vulnerabilities and risks associated with various scales of flooding events.*” Added to this, is to identify the main cause of risk and as much as possible, reduce this risk at source.

Further reporting on a Floodplain management approach is also included in the Regional Framework for Action on Climate for Murihiku Southland, actions 6 & 9.

Floodplain management planning is a commonly used as an effective process for addressing flooding and erosion issues associated with rivers. The plan that results takes a long-term approach to managing risks and improving the security and quality of life for present and future generations of people living on the floodplain. It also helps prepare communities for coping with a flood when it occurs and aims to ensure that future development considers flood and erosion risks. Floodplain management plans are non-statutory, so their policies and flood-mitigation methods have no legal standing as regulations. The role of a floodplain management plan is to:

¹ [Environment Southland Long-Term Plan 2024-34 and Infrastructure Strategy 2024-54](#), pages 77-78

- Provide information on the catchment's rivers and associated tributaries, the risks of flooding and erosion, and what has been done to manage the risks so far
- Describe the catchment's environmental, cultural and recreational values, and how floodplain management can help to maintain or improve these values
- Provide catchment-wide options to reduce flood risk, including physical interventions and wider methods, and the extent to which they align with the catchment's values

Ideally this information is gathered from a range of people and organisations affected by the consequences of flooding, including the regional and district councils, iwi, government agencies, infrastructure providers, community groups and private land and business owners.²

Murihiku Slow the Flow

An annual report presented on 13 August 2025 to the Regional Services Committee³ focused on the results of Murihiku Slow the Flow, a two-year initiative funded by the Ministry for the Environment. The project generated insights into nature-based interventions for reducing flood risk at a catchment scale, tested indigenous research methods prioritising place-based knowledge and decision-making guided by te taiao, and demonstrated how Murihiku Southland Inc could work together to achieve an integrated catchment approach in future. The Murihiku Slow the Flow report⁴ is available on the Environment Southland website. The project provided useful inputs for the continued development of our floodplain management approach.

Draft Floodplain Management Approach

The draft floodplain management approach has been developed to provide initial direction for floodplain management. It draws on learnings from other regional councils with experience in floodplain management, and on our local experiences.

The approach is a starting point and will evolve as the region gains experience. Councils such as Greater Wellington Regional Council have spent decades refining their approach through the development of several floodplain management plans; Environment Southland will benefit from getting their experiences. The approach will continue to be updated as learnings arise from the Mātaura 'Blueprint' Project and the Titiroa Catchment Pilot, described below. The draft Floodplain Management Approach document is in its final stages of development.

The approach consists of four phases: 1) Establish the context, 2) Define risk, 3) Develop bundles of options, and 4) Implement the plan and monitor.

² [Te Kāuru Upper Ruamāhanga Floodplain Management Plan](#), Greater Wellington Regional Council

³ [Regional Services Committee Agenda 13 August 2025](#)

⁴ [MSTF Final Report](#)

Phases	Process	Participation / engagement role
Establish the Context	1.a Project plan	Confirm programme setup and immediate work programme.
	1.b Participation decision and start-up team	Agree who participates, at what level, and how decisions and community input connect to governance.
	1.c Governance and partnership arrangements	Confirm governance setup, partners, roles and measures of success.
	1.d Aspirations and values, define the problem	Establish partner and community aspirations, values, trade-offs and affordability / willingness to pay. Use a layered approach: survey, focus groups and targeted engagement with incentives where useful.
Define Risk	2.a Data and information stock take	Bring together existing technical evidence and community information; identify only critical gaps.
	2.b Modelling and mapping	Use existing modelling and mapping, supplemented only where a material gap is identified.
	2.c Hazard and risk assessment	Develop the shared understanding of current and future flood risk and its causes.
Develop Options	3.a Identify intervention options	Develop the long-list of interventions, including structural, nature-based, behavioural, policy and other non-structural interventions.
	3.b Bundle interventions and test against values	Consider complementary interventions and test options against agreed aspirations, values, criteria, affordability and regional priorities.
	3.c Develop bundles	Develop bundles of actions showing how interventions may be sequenced or changed over time.
Implement	4.a Implement the plan	Progress agreed interventions through the appropriate business cases, planning, funding and delivery mechanisms.
	4.b Monitor, evaluate and adjust	Track changing risk, outcomes, signals and community context; adjust pathways as required.

This planning process supports decision-making through an agreed level of communication and engagement with partners, stakeholders and the wider community.

Resilient Infrastructure Funded Maitara ‘Blueprint’ Project

This work, funded through the Kānoa Regional Infrastructure Fund, is the next stage in developing a catchment-based floodplain management approach for the Maitara. It will build from the lessons learned from the Murihiku Slow the Flow and the flood-risk modelling, engineering and business case work already completed in the catchment. The Maitara Project Plan is being developed and will bring together existing technical evidence, partner and community input into one agreed long-term pathway for managing flood risk, covering the full range of interventions and responses (protection, accommodation, retreat and avoidance - PARA).

This will be the first application of our draft floodplain management approach at a catchment scale, and will enable the approach itself to be tested and refined. Insights gathered from the Maitara Project will feed back into the approach for use elsewhere in the region. Community and partner engagement, including a social research programme over summer 2026/27, will inform this pathway and help build lasting public understanding of the wider flood resilience programme within the catchment. A further update, including the finalised Project Plan, is expected in November 2026.

Learning from the Land Titiroa Catchment Pilot

The Titiroa Catchment Pilot is building the team’s capability to use flood-risk data and hydrologic modelling in decision-making at a catchment scale, and is a second, complementary way of testing the floodplain management approach in practice. Its second phase will adapt existing flood modelling for the Titiroa and Lower Maitara so it can compare, at a strategic level, how different responses – such as changes to flood banks, land management and tidal and drainage infrastructure – affect flood levels and drainage, including under future sea-level rise. The model will enable a comparison of options, to inform decision-making.

Together, the Maitaura Project and the Titiroa Catchment Pilot are the two main ways the floodplain management approach is being tested on the ground this year. Lessons from both will directly shape how the approach is refined and applied as it is rolled out to other Southland catchments.

Next steps

- November 2026 – present the Maitaura Blueprint Project Plan to ICMC for endorsement.
- November 2026 to March 2027 – deliver the summer community and partner research programme
- July 2027 – complete draft Blueprint for the Maitaura catchment in line with RIF milestone requirements.
- Ongoing – finalise the Floodplain Management Approach document, incorporating learnings from the Maitaura Project and the Titiroa Catchment Pilot

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources	x		
Diverse opportunities to make a living	x		
Communities empowered and resilient	x		
Communities expressing their diversity	x		

Attachments

Nil

9.3 Snowpack Monitoring and Snowmelt Forecasting

Report by: Chris Jenkins, Principal Scientist Hydrology & Laura Somerville, Environmental Scientist Hydrology

Approved by: Karen Wilson, General Manager Science

Report Date: 15 July 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this item is to inform the Integrated Catchment Management Committee of improvements to Environment Southland's flood forecasting capability through the introduction of snowpack monitoring and snowmelt forecasting, and the wider benefits of this work for understanding future water availability.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Integrated Catchment Management Committee resolve to:

- 1 Receive the report – *Snowpack monitoring and snowmelt forecasting*.

Summary

Snowmelt is a significant contributor to flood flows in Southland. Analysis of flood events in the Aparima, Oreti and Mataura catchments indicates that approximately one in eight flood events have more than 10% of their flow originating from snowmelt.

Prior to this project, Environment Southland's flood forecasting models did not explicitly account for snowmelt. This increased uncertainty around forecast peak flows and created a risk that flood peaks could be underestimated. The September 2023 flood provided a clear example, with snowmelt estimated to have contributed 17% of flow in the Waikaia River.

To address this gap, a snowmelt forecasting model has been developed for the Waikaia catchment and a snowpack monitoring station established at Hyde Rock in April 2026, providing real-time information on snow conditions and weather variables relevant to snowmelt.

The Waikaia snowmelt forecasting system is now operational. It combines forecast weather data, satellite snow-cover information and observations from the Hyde Rock monitoring station to estimate snowmelt contributions to river flows and identify areas of the catchment receiving rainfall versus snowfall.

The project has now moved into a second phase focused on model calibration using data collected during the first winter season of snowpack monitoring. This will improve the reliability and confidence of future flood forecasts.

The benefits of this work extend beyond flood forecasting. Seasonal snow storage and snowmelt make important contributions to Southland's river flows, lake levels and groundwater recharge, meaning changes in snowpack conditions have implications for future water availability. The Murihiku Southland Climate Change Impact Assessment report (Earth Sciences New Zealand, 2026) projects reductions in snow volume of 40–50% under the SSP2-4.5 and SSP3-7.0 climate scenarios. The snowline is projected to rise by up to 300 metres across Southland by mid-century, with the Waikaia catchment expected to experience the greatest impact.

These changes have potential implications for water users, ecosystem health and long-term water resource management. Establishing snowpack monitoring now provides a timely opportunity to build a long-term record of snow conditions and improve understanding of the processes that drive snowmelt. Over time, this

information will strengthen Environment Southland's ability to assess changes in water availability and support more effective water resource and catchment management under future climate scenarios.

Background

Snowmelt is an important component of the hydrology of Southland's rivers and aquifers. It can contribute significantly to river flows and, under certain conditions, increase flood risk. The risk is particularly relevant during spring, when rising temperatures, rainfall and wind can accelerate snowmelt and runoff.

Historical and recent flood events demonstrate the potential significance of snowmelt. The October 1978 flood had major impacts on the Mataura River, while during the September 2023 event, heavy rainfall on the snowpack in the headwaters contributed to severe flooding in the Aparima catchment.

Environment Southland's existing flood forecasting models did not include a snowmelt component. This introduced additional uncertainty into forecasts of peak river flows and created the potential for flood peaks to be underestimated.

Environment Southland engaged Rainfall.NZ Ltd to assess the contribution of snowmelt to Southland catchments and provide advice on incorporating snowmelt into flood forecasting. The analysis found that snowmelt can be a significant contributor to flood flows in the Aparima, Oreti and Waikaia catchments. Approximately one in eight flood events were estimated to have more than 10% of their flow originating from snowmelt. The September 2023 Waikaia flood had the highest estimated contribution across the three catchments, with snowmelt accounting for approximately 17% of flow, the highest proportion of snowmelt estimated across the three catchments.

Project development

In November 2025, Rainfall.NZ Ltd was commissioned to develop a snowmelt model for the Waikaia catchment and to work with Environment Southland on identifying a preferred location for installing a snow monitoring site. The existing rainfall site in the Upper Waikaia catchment at Hyde Rock was selected due to its long-term rainfall and air temperature record dating back to 2006, and good site accessibility. The site was upgraded in April 2026 and now records snow depth, solar radiation, air temperature, barometric pressure, wind speed and direction, relative humidity and rainfall.

Model development was substantially completed by June 2026, and the Waikaia snowmelt forecasting system is now operational.

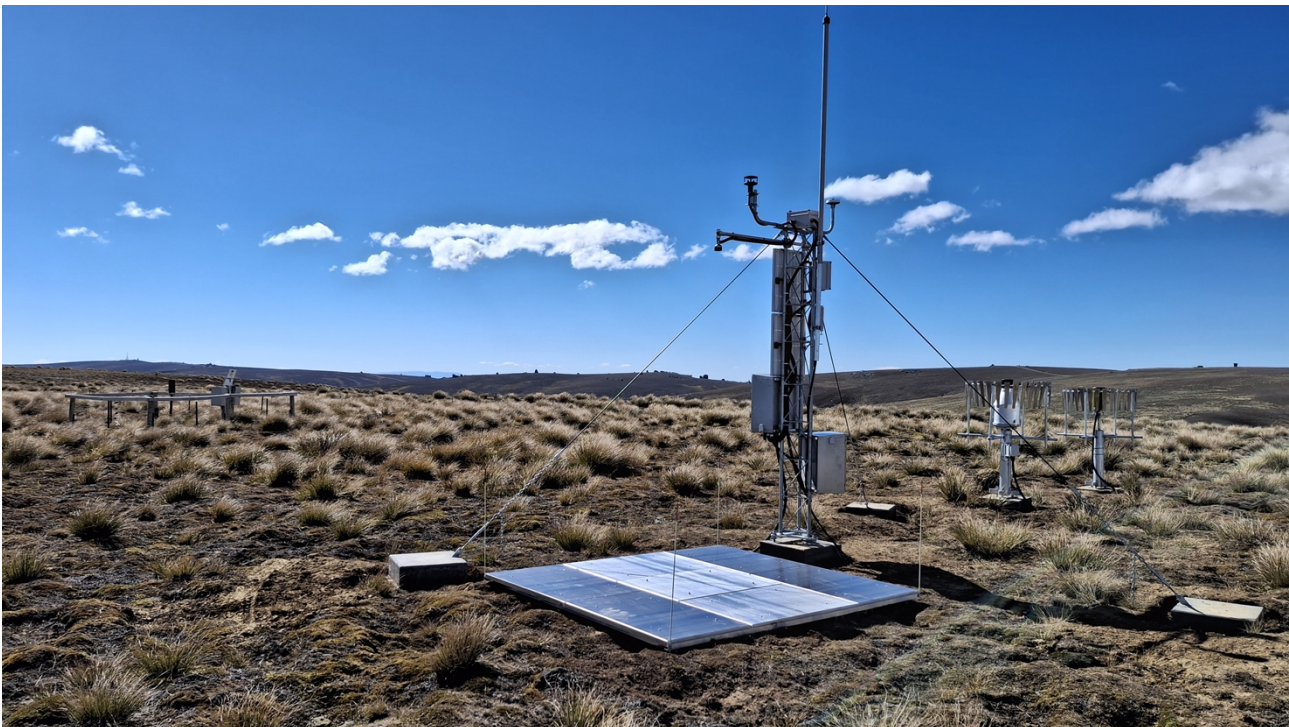


Figure 1: Upper Waikaia at Hyde Rock snowpack and climate site April 2026. The original rain gauge and air temperature is in the background.

Source: M McDonald, 2 April 2026.

The forecasting system combines three key information sources:

- forecast weather data
- satellite observations of snow cover
- real-time observations from the Hyde Rock monitoring station.

Together, these data are used to estimate snowmelt contributions to Waikaia River flows and identify the proportion of the catchment receiving rainfall versus snowfall.

The project is now in its second phase which focuses on maintaining and troubleshooting the forecast system, incorporating the first season of real-time snowpack observations, calibrating the model against observed conditions and improving the reliability of forecast outputs. The first winter of data from Hyde Rock provides an important opportunity to test and refine the model under observed snow conditions. Over time, this work will be extended to other catchments.

Incorporating snowmelt into flood forecasting reduces a known source of uncertainty and improves Environment Southland's ability to understand and forecast peak river flows during events where snowmelt is a significant contributor. The monitoring site will establish a long-term record of snowpack conditions at a time when climate change is expected to significantly alter Southland's snow regime. This will improve understanding of how changes in snow volume and snowline affect river flows, groundwater recharge and water availability.

The information generated through this work will contribute to a stronger evidence base for future decisions relating to flood risk, water allocation, catchment management and ecosystem health.

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources	✓		
Diverse opportunities to make a living			✓
Communities empowered and resilient	✓		
Communities expressing their diversity			✓

Attachments

Nil

9.4 Operations Delivery Group Update Biosecurity

Report by: Dave Burgess Team Leader Biosecurity Animals

Jolie Hazley Team leader Biosecurity Plants

Kathryn McLachlan Team Leader Marine

Rebekah Frampton Principal Biosecurity Officer

Michelle Powell, Operations Delivery Manager

Approved by: Lucy Hicks, General Manager Integrated Catchment Management

Report Date: 16 September 2026

Purpose

To update the Committee on the Biosecurity Annual Report and Operational Plan, and to provide an update on current biosecurity work programmes.

Background

This paper brings together the annual biosecurity reporting requirements and a broader update on current biosecurity work programmes. It provides Council with the Biosecurity Annual Report for 2025–26 that outlines progress against the Operational Plan and introduces the Biosecurity Operational Plan for 2026–27. These reports support Council's responsibilities under section 100B of the Biosecurity Act 1993 for the Southland Regional Pest Management Plan and the Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan.

Summary

This report updates the Committee on progress against the Biosecurity Annual Report and Operational Plan and provides an overview of biosecurity work programmes completed or underway since the previous meeting.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Integrated Catchment Management Committee resolve to:

- 1 Receive the report – Biosecurity Annual Report, Annual Plan and work programme update.
- 2 Receive the Biosecurity Annual Report 2025–26.
- 3 Receive the Biosecurity Operational Plan 2026–27 and update on current biosecurity work programmes.

Update

The following update provides an overview of recent biosecurity programme activity, including operational delivery, staff capability, preparedness work and emerging pressures across pest animal, marine, freshwater and pest plant programmes.

Biosecurity Week and Biosecurity Act training

Staff capability and public awareness have both been a recent focus. New staff have completed full Biosecurity Act training, while existing staff have undertaken maintenance training to ensure authorised staff and contractors remain current and confident in their roles. Biosecurity Week was also supported through communications and advertising that promoted the team's work and helped raise awareness of the role biosecurity plays in protecting Southland's environment, economy and communities.

Pest Animals

High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 remains a significant national preparedness issue. MPI is leading national response and surveillance work, with Environment Southland supporting regional planning, communication and readiness for potential local detections.

As at late August, New Zealand had three confirmed detections of H5 bird flu in wild birds, all in the Wellington region. There has been no mass mortality in wildlife and no poultry detection. The public health risk remains low, but preparedness remains important as the situation evolves overseas and in Australia.

In July, Environment Southland hosted a regional scenario workshop with local councils, iwi, DOC, Fish & Game and MPI. The workshop tested three bird flu scenarios and identified preparedness issues, agency roles, information needs and response gaps. Confirming practical disposal pathways for affected birds or wildlife remains a key unresolved matter.

Possum control

Two new Possum Control Areas (PCAs) were established in 2025–26, with strong post-control residual trap catch (RTC) results of 1.1% and 0.8%. Across the 16 PCAs monitored, the average RTC was 8.3%, above the Southland Regional Pest Management Plan (SRPMP) target of 5%. Excluding the two new PCAs, the average was 9.3%. One long-standing Eastern Southland PCA returned an RTC of 32.7%, the highest possum monitoring result recorded by Environment Southland. This highlights the challenges facing the PCA programme, particularly where suitable possum habitat, available funding and landowner capacity can limit sustained control after initial reductions have been achieved. While there was good support for the programme when it was established by Environment Southland, maintaining low possum densities has proved difficult in some areas and further support and follow-up will be needed to strengthen ongoing control. Environment Southland has provided monitoring information back to the relevant farmers and explained that further monitoring will be carried out within 12 months.

The monitoring results raise broader concerns about the current PCA delivery model. In several areas, the level of follow-up control required to consistently meet the SRPMP target appears to be beyond what can reasonably be achieved through landowner effort alone. Compliance action remains available under the SRPMP; however, the practical effectiveness of this approach is limited where landowners face significant control costs, where Council resourcing is insufficient to support the level of oversight required, and where default work costs may not be recoverable. There is also a risk that, in attempting to meet obligations within constrained budgets, some landowners may use less effective control methods, resulting in continued reinvasion and limited long-term improvement. These issues are compounded in PCAs where neighbouring public conservation land or other unmanaged possum habitat contributes to reinvasion, making it difficult to hold individual farmers solely responsible for achieving sustained low possum densities.

Staff consider that these results point to a need to review the PCA model, including the balance between landowner responsibility, Council compliance effort, practical support, funding mechanisms, and coordination with other land managers. Staff are currently working through options for the PCA delivery model, with a workshop discussion and further paper to be brought to Council in the next 2 months.

Staff are visiting farmers in the Hedgehope catchment group area to assess interest in establishing a new PCA and extending the programme. Feedback has been positive, with farmers noting increasing possum numbers and impacts since formal Bovine TB control ended more than 10 years ago.

Marine biosecurity

Staff attended a national marine biosecurity catch-up and the annual kuaka/Whenua Hou diving petrel hui, which covered the season's field report and future work for this critically endangered bird. Environment

Southland continues to support vessel-operator education on best-practice lighting management around Whenua Hou/Codfish Island.

Staff responded to a new *Undaria* report in southern Rakiura, with dive contractors reassigned to complete the initial delimiting survey in Easy Harbour. No further *Undaria* was detected, but the full report and surveillance coverage is being analysed to inform next steps and further surveillance sites are confirmed. The timely report from the fisher was appreciated, as early reporting is critical to response success.

Pest Plants

Wilding Conifers

The National Wilding Conifer Conference was held in Invercargill from 11–13 August, attracting more than 200 attendees from community groups, contractors, landowners, councils, government agencies and forestry from across the country. Field trips to Mid Dome and the Takitimu area, including West Dome, highlighted the growing wilding conifer challenge for Southland and Otago.

The Mid Dome Wilding Tree Charitable Trust also marked its 20th anniversary during conference week, recognising two decades of advocacy and work to control wilding conifers in Southland. Additional Government funding is yet to be confirmed; however, indications from MPI are that up to an additional \$2 million may be available this year, if this funding is confirmed they will be administered through variations to the service agreement (in line with the decision of Council 2 September). The funding is currently expected to support continued programme delivery at Mid Dome and, to a lesser extent, the Takitimu management unit.

Staff have been engaging with Gore District Council on pest plant matters and with Southland District Council on Mayten tree in Te Anau, where control work has started with landowners and managers.

Freshwater

Discussions with Biosecurity New Zealand/MPI have confirmed Southland will again have a Check, Clean, Dry advocate, continuing a successful programme delivered over recent years.

Biosecurity Annual Report 2025–26

The 2025–26 year shows solid biosecurity programme delivery, with most milestones achieved or partially achieved despite resourcing pressures and emerging response demands.

The attached Annual Report summarises work completed during the 2025–26 financial year, assesses progress against year two of the Operational Plan, and meets Council's reporting obligations under section 100B(2) of the Biosecurity Act 1993. Of the 25 milestones in the 2025–26 Operational Plan, seventeen (17) were achieved, six (6) were partially achieved, and two (2) were incomplete.

Key highlights from the 2025–26 season were:

- Marine surveillance and response capacity improved, supporting an efficient response to the confirmed Mediterranean fanworm (*Sabella*) incursion in Bluff Harbour and strengthening procedures and relationships for future responses.
- The Chilean flame creeper leaf beetle biocontrol application was accepted, with releases now underway at several sites in Southland and elsewhere in New Zealand.
- An old man's beard infestation was identified and controlled, with further surveys finding a larger upwind infestation. Control work has been completed with the Catchment Team and landowner, and the next phase will focus on site clearance, permanent grass cover and easier detection of regrowth.

- The Environment Southland Biosecurity Strategy 2025–30 was finalised, providing updated programme direction.

Several challenges have emerged during 2025–26 and will continue to be worked through as part of the current 2026–27 Operational Plan, and forward into the Council’s Long-Term Plan processes:

- The Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan review did not progress as planned due to internal resourcing pressures. It remains critical to marine biosecurity programme success, and resourcing will be reassessed in 2026–27.
- Pest plant surveillance remains constrained by limited resources and tools for widespread surveillance. This affects garden-based eradication species and back-country or high-country species such as wilding conifers, buddleia and heather, making it difficult to confirm eradication or containment outcomes.
- H5N1 preparedness affected pest animal programme delivery, with unplanned work redirecting staff time from the possum review, rabbit inspections, and farmer engagement in the Possum Control Area (PCA) programme.

Biosecurity Operational Plan 2026–27

The attached Biosecurity Operational Plan 2026–27 sets updated year three milestones for the five year plan and supports Council’s obligations under section 100B(1) of the Biosecurity Act 1993 for the Southland Regional Pest Management Plan and Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan.

Risks/Opportunities

The key risks are primarily delivery and preparedness risks. Resourcing pressures may continue to affect progress on priority work, including the Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan review (FMRPMP), pest plant surveillance, possum review work, rabbit inspections and farmer engagement through the Possum Control Area programme. Emerging biosecurity issues, such as H5N1 preparedness or new marine pest detections, may also require staff time to be redirected from planned work. The main opportunities are to use the 2026–27 Operational Plan to address these pressures, strengthen marine and pest plant surveillance, build on community and landowner engagement, secure additional wilding conifer funding, and continue improving regional preparedness, staff capability and public awareness.

The Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan (FMRPMP) review will be addressed through a separate paper, which will seek further direction on the review and the consideration of associated funding implications.

Views of affected parties

This report is for information only and does not ask the Committee to make a decision that directly affects specific parties.

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources	X		
Diverse opportunities to make a living	X		
Communities empowered and resilient	X		
Communities expressing their diversity			X

Compliance with Significance and Engagement Policy

This report is for information only. It provides an update on existing programmes of work and does not require any special consultation or engagement process.

Considerations

Financial implications

There are no new financial decisions required from this report. However, several matters raised in the paper have potential funding implications for future work programmes, including H5N1 preparedness, the Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan (FMRPMP) review, pest plant surveillance, wilding conifer control, and ongoing pest animal programme pressures. These matters will need to be considered through the 2026–27 Annual Plan work programme, a future Council workshop in the next two months and further papers to inform Long Term Plan budget processes.

Legal implications

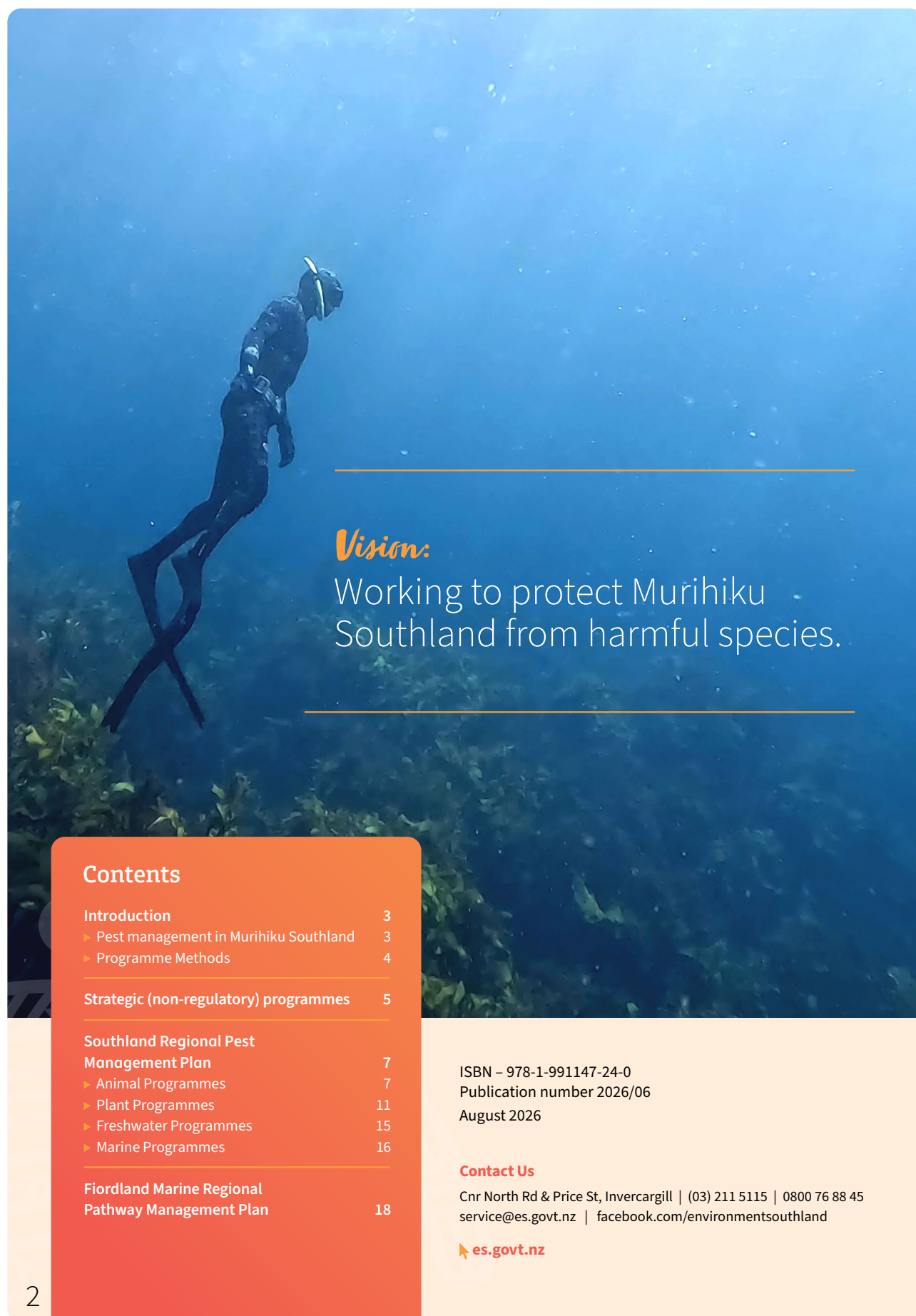
There are no new legal issues arising from this report.

Attachments

1. Biosecurity Operational Plan 2026-27 [9.4.1 - 20 pages]
2. Biosecurity Annual Report 2025-26 [9.4.2 - 12 pages]

Environment Southland **Biosecurity Operational Plan** 2026-27





Introduction

Pest management in Murihiku Southland

Regional councils have a mandate under Part 2 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 (the Act) to provide regional leadership in activities that prevent, reduce, or eliminate adverse effects from harmful species that are present in their region. Environment Southland (ES) holds this role in the Murihiku Southland region.

Biosecurity in Murihiku Southland is managed within Murihiku Southland's regional boundaries and across all natural systems, including land, water, air, and coast. The Biosecurity Strategy 2025-30 outlines the Council's strategic plan for biosecurity across Murihiku Southland. The Southland Regional Pest Management Plan (SRPMP) assigns pest status to harmful species and provides objectives that outline the intermediate pest management outcomes that the SRPMP is seeking to achieve. The SRPMP is the primary tool in pest management in Murihiku Southland, and alongside the Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan (FMRPMP), it establishes the monitoring and regulatory framework for managing pests. The ES biosecurity team has the primary responsibility for managing the adverse effects of pests.

The SRPMP and FMRPMP were created under the Act and as such an Operational Plan is required (Section 100B). This plan is the Operational Plan 2026-27 for the SRPMP and FMRPMP. It includes milestones for June 2025 to July 2029 for a comprehensive view of how Objectives will be achieved. A review of the Operational Plan is undertaken annually and changes made based on lessons learnt to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The Operational Plan also outlines the management work ES intends to carry out to implement the Biosecurity Strategy.

The Operational Plan should be read in conjunction with the Annual Work Programme (Te Mahi ā Murihiku).

Funding for this work is allocated via the Council's Annual Plan process.

Actions used to achieve the Operational Plan include:

- ▶ Collaborate with communities to protect places they value.
- ▶ Empower landowners, users and occupiers to take proactive biosecurity measures.
- ▶ Implement evidenced-based, practical and effective pest and pathway management work programmes.
- ▶ Respond to arising national and regional biosecurity issues using the tools and networks available.
- ▶ Assistance and advice is provided initially, followed by enforcement where required.
- ▶ Employ regulatory tools when required to manage threats and harmful species.

Programme Methods

Planning and alignment

Management programmes will be developed according to the requirements of the SRPMP and FMRPMP.

Annual work programmes will be developed for each outcome. These programmes will contain specific annual targets and be developed in partnership or collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

The ES biosecurity team will work with other divisions within Council to ensure programmes are meeting ES's wider objectives.

Biosecurity staff will be trained in pest control methods. Training will be kept up to date, and ES will support research and development into new control methods.

Staff will be easy to contact and be responsive to requests for support or information.

Staff will actively engage with national programmes including, but not limited to:

- ▶ Member of Te Uru Kahika including the Biomanagers and the Biosecurity Working Group Special Interest Groups;
- ▶ Accredited to National Pest Plant Accord to carry out annual nursery inspections;
- ▶ Biocontrol programmes;
- ▶ Check Clean Dry programmes;
- ▶ Protect our Paradise;
- ▶ National Wilding Conifer Control Programme; and
- ▶ Tipu Mātoro National Wallaby Eradication Programme.

Advocacy and education

Working with landowners and community groups will be a priority. Biosecurity staff will be available to provide advice and support. The pest hub will be maintained and updated regularly.

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

Staff will receive annual training in surveillance, detection, and monitoring techniques. Access to the herbarium will be maintained via an annual subscription and samples sent for ID when required.

ES will continue to investigate and adopt the new technologies such as drones and AI for species identification.

Control

ES will work to develop evidenced-based, practical and effective pest management work programmes. If appropriate, organisms of interest will be managed at selected regionally significant or strategic sites.

Enforcement

ES will have trained and warranted staff to deal with biosecurity enforcement and compliance issues.

Recording and sharing data

ES will keep a database of control work, complaints, reports and survey data for a wide range of species. This information will be used to create, update and maintain management programmes and assess emerging threats.

Biosecurity information will be published on the ES website, and this will be assessed and updated annually or as new information comes to our attention.

Strategic (non-regulatory) programmes

Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan review

The FMRPMP became operative in 2017, with an initial review required five years from the commencement date. A high-level review was undertaken in 2023, which concluded that although the plan has some effect, it could be improved by increasing alignment with other Council plans and by widening the geographical extent. Minor amendments were made to the FMRPMP Operational Plan, and a full review was recommended, alongside the Regional Coastal Plan review. The full review commenced in 2024.

Southland Regional Pest Management Plan review

The current SRPMP is valid from 2019 until 2029. Efforts to review the plan and make sure it continues to provide the best biosecurity outcomes for Murihiku Southland, align with RPMPs from neighbouring regions, and complies with the Biosecurity Act and National Policy Direction for Pest Management are already underway.

Predator Free Rakiura support

ES supports Predator Free 2050 and associated projects such as Predator Free Rakiura.

Organisms of interest (OOIs)

ES will monitor the distribution and impact of OOIs. To prevent harm to Murihiku Southland from these organisms, additional research, management or other actions may be required. Management of OOIs at high-risk and priority sites may be undertaken.

Advocacy and education

The OOIs programmes will rely on education and advocacy using media releases, flyers, digital tools, and liaison with stakeholders. ES will provide technical advice and support to land occupiers and community groups dealing with OOIs.

ES will:

- ▶ support research and development into new control methods;
- ▶ actively engage with and support Weedbusters and the National Biocontrol Programme;
- ▶ work with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI)/ Biosecurity New Zealand and other partners on the long-term management of marine OOIs; and
- ▶ actively engage with and support the Check Clean Dry Programme.

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

ES will use appropriate survey methods to identify infestations and new threats.

ES will use eDNA to identify and monitor freshwater species.

When needed, ES will work with MPI and other partners on the long-term management of OOIs such as freshwater clams.

Control

The ES biosecurity team will work with other divisions within Council to ensure pests and organisms of interest are managed in a suitable manner on its Lower Matura Land. If appropriate, organisms of interest will be managed at selected regionally significant or strategic sites. We will support Predator Free and community group projects alongside the Land Sustainability team.

Emerging threat assessments

ES will work to gather information about OOIs (such as reptiles, insects, ungulates, freshwater plants, and molluscs, including their range and extent in the region, the impacts they are having, the risks they pose, and the modelling of future risks due to changes in land use/climate change. If needed, ES will amend the SRPMP to include OOIs as pests.

Strategic milestones

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Biosecurity Strategy				
The Biosecurity Strategy is reviewed and updated (not achieved)	The Biosecurity Strategy is reviewed and updated	We better understand community biosecurity needs at a catchment scale	We better understand community biosecurity needs at a catchment scale	SRPMP 2029 and strategic work programmes link directly to Integrated Catchment Management
FMRPMP review				
Complete review (not achieved)	Undertake review, including proposal release and consultation	FMRPMP is reviewed and updated by 1 July 2027		
SRPMP review				
Complete CBAs for harmful species and provide recommendations on their status, future management and regulation Complete emerging threats assessments including the use of climate modelling Assessment of need for interim amendments to RPMP 2019 ▶ Wilding Conifers ▶ Undaria ▶ Velvetleaf	Complete CBAs for harmful species and provide recommendations on their status, future management and regulation Complete emerging threats assessments including the use of climate modelling	Develop new/ updated rules and objectives to form a proposal ES is involved in South Island and National initiatives for RPMP alignment	Proposal release and consultation	SRPMP is reviewed and updated by 1 July 2029 SRPMP 2029 Operational Plan is developed
Predator Free Rakiura support				
Rakiura Pathway Plan analysis	Rakiura Pathway Plan analysis	Contribute to the Rakiura Pathway Plan development including assessing rules and objectives versus voluntary actions	Proposal release and consultation	Rakiura Pathway Plan is adopted by 1 July 2029 Rakiura Pathway Plan Operational Plan is developed
Organisms of interest (OOIs)				
Determine the distribution and impact of 15% of OOIs	Determine the distribution and impact of 30% of OOIs	Determine the distribution and impact of 60% of OOIs	Determine the distribution and impact of 100% of OOIs	



Southland Regional Pest Management Plan

📍 *Blaptea elguetai*, a leaf-feeding beetle released to help control the highly invasive Chilean flame creeper

Animal Programmes

Exclusion pests

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Exclusion pests: Prevent the establishment of exclusion species (wallabies and rooks) in the region				
Robust incursion plans are in place and have been trialled	We have surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability	We have enough understanding of the distribution and potential impact of species not currently found in Murihiku Southland to assess their status during the SRPMP review	Incursion response plans have been updated as required based on an improved understanding of species distributions and potential impacts	There have been no populations established

Advocacy and education

Exclusion programmes will focus on education and advocacy using media releases, flyers, digital tools and liaison with stakeholders. Where possible our communication will be aligned to that of Otago Regional Council (ORC) and MPI.

Partnerships

ES will work with ORC and MPI, via the National Wallaby Programme, including:

- ▶ Using WALL-IS to report and manage wallaby sightings.
- ▶ Utilising skilled staff and contractors from Otago and wider South Island to support a wallaby incursion or investigation.

ES will work closely with neighbouring regional councils to respond to rook incursions including:

- ▶ Utilising skilled staff and contractors from Otago and wider South Island to support a rook incursion.
- ▶ Utilising skilled staff for surveillance.

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

Staff will receive training in surveillance, detection and monitoring techniques.

ES will carry out rook inspections of high-risk sites such as historic rook sighting locations as required.

ES will follow MPI Tipu Mātoro good practice guide for wallaby sightings and log and investigate all sightings on WALL-IS.

ES will continue to investigate and adopt the new technologies such as thermal imaging.

Response Capability

Early detection of incursions is a key part of our response. ES will respond to all sightings and/or reports (within 2 working days).

ES will maintain and annually review incursion response plans for wallabies and rooks.

Skilled contractors will be used when required for control operations and surveillance operations.

Emerging threat assessments

ES will work to gather information about OOs (such as reptiles, insects, ungulates, freshwater plants, and molluscs, including their range and extent in the region, the impacts they are having, the risks they pose, and the modelling of future risks due to changes in land use/ climate change. If needed, ES will amend the SRPMP to include OOs as pests.

Progressive containment pests

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Progressive containment pests: Contain and reduce the geographic distribution or extent of pests (Bengal cats) throughout the region				
There are no known un-permitted Bengal cats in the region	There are no known un-permitted Bengal cats in the region	There are no known un-permitted Bengal cats in the region	There are no known un-permitted Bengal cats in the region	There are no known un-permitted Bengal cats in the region

Advocacy and education

Progressive programmes will include education and advocacy using media releases, flyers, digital tools and liaison with stakeholder.

Enforcement

ES will maintain a Bengal cat exemption database and have trained and warranted staff, to deal with breaches of the SRPMP rules.

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

ES will regularly check regional pet sales (online and retail) for Bengal cats.

Sustained control pests

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Sustained control pests: Support the ongoing control of pests (possums and rabbits) and reduce their impacts				
Existing programmes including the PCA are reviewed and updated	PCA programme has been reviewed with recommended changes taken to council (not achieved)	PCA's continue to grow and be maintained. PCA programme has been reviewed with recommended changes taken to council	PCA programme continues to grow and be maintained. Greater communication region wide are implemented for the RPMP rules and objectives	Work has started on the 10% RTC areas highlands

Advocacy and education

Sustained control programmes will rely on occupier responsibility. To support land occupiers, ES will provide education and advocacy, support research and development into new control methods.

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

ES will carry out inspections as required in response to complaints at medium to high-risk sites.

Control

Enabling occupiers to work in a coordinated manner will be a focus of the sustained control programmes. The largest example of this is the Possum Control Area programme.

The ES biosecurity team will work with other divisions within Council to ensure pests and organisms of interest are managed in a suitable manner on its Lower Matura Land. ES will support community groups to carry out control.

Site-led programmes

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Site-led programmes: Prevent the range expansion of pest species (feral cat, feral goat, feral pig, hedgehog, house mouse, mustelids (ferret, stoat, weasel), possums, and rats (Norway, ship and kiore)) on Rakiura/Stewart Island				
Support PFR to complete pathway analysis and roles and responsibilities	Support PFR to design interventions	Support PFR to design incursion response management systems	Rakiura biosecurity border is in place and supported by ES	Rakiura biosecurity border is in place and supported by ES

Prevention of range extension through a risk-pathways approach to island border control that includes working with and supporting our partners

ES will work with partners to develop a pathway management plan for Stewart Island/Rakiura.

Incursion Response

ES will support the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Predator Free Rakiura with incursion responses as appropriate. ES will work with our partners to develop an incursion response framework.

Control of established species that can be eradicated or contained on Stewart Island/Rakiura

ES will support Predator Free Rakiura, via staff involvement in Te Puka Rakiura Trust, Predator Free Rakiura Limited, and the Engagement and Advisory group, as they work towards eradication.

Plant Programmes

Exclusion pests

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Exclusion pests: Prevent the establishment of exclusion species (boneseed, Chilean needle grass, and nassella tussock) in the region				
We have developed a surveillance plan Our incursion plans are in place and have been trialled	We have increased advocacy, and surveillance capacity and capability	We have enough understanding of the distribution and potential impact of species not currently found in Murihiku Southland to assess their status during the SRPMP review	There have been no populations established	There have been no populations established

Advocacy and education

Exclusion programmes will focus on education and advocacy using media releases, flyers, digital tools, and liaison with stakeholders.

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

ES will undertake surveillance at high priority sites identified for each species.

Response Capability

Early detection of incursions is a key part of our response. ES will respond to all reports (within 2 working days).

ES will maintain and annually review incursion response plans for boneseed, Chilean needle grass, nassella tussock.

Skilled contractors will be used when required for control operations. Where required experts from other regions will be utilised.

Eradication pests

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Eradication pests: Reduce the infestation level of pests (boxthorn, field horsetail, German ivy, parrots feather, purple loosestrife, smilax, and spartina) to zero levels				
All known sites are receiving control – control is working at all sites	We fully understand the sites, plant life cycle, and remnant seed bank of ES led programmes	We have control occurring at all known sites We are expanding our surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability	All sites are in a surveillance mode, e.g. we are dealing with the 'tail of the seed bank'	Eradication (reduction to zero levels) is achieved within 10 years

Advocacy and education

Eradication programmes will include promotion to encourage the public to report new sites.

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

Surveillance and monitoring the success of ES's control efforts is a key part of its response. ES will carry out inspections of high-risk sites and respond to all reports.

By 2028, ES will be confident we have located all sites, and all eradication sites are in a surveillance mode, e.g. we are dealing with the 'tail of the seed bank'.

Control

Effective control is key to ES's eradication programmes. ES will focus control on active sites and respond to new sightings.

DOC is the lead agency for Boxthorn and Spartina. ES will support DOC with these programmes.

ES or other organisations will undertake control work unless a land occupier agrees in writing with ES to carry out the control work themselves.

Progressive containment pests

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Progressive containment pests: Contain and reduce the geographic distribution or extent of pests (bomarea, buddleja, contorta (lodgepole) pine, cotoneaster, Darwin's barberry, giant buttercup, heather, Japanese honeysuckle, mountain pine, old man's beard, rough horsetail, Siberian lyme grass, and wilding conifers) throughout the region				
Containment control of: ▶ Wildings ▶ Cotoneaster ▶ Darwin's Barberry ▶ Buddleja – all known wild sites controlled ▶ Reed Sweet Grass – some sites ▶ Bomarea – all known sites controlled ▶ Old Man's Beard – all known sites are controlled ▶ Heather – visit all known sites ▶ Rough horsetail – wild sites ▶ Siberian Lyme Grass ▶ Japanese Honeysuckle – visit all known sites All species have a containment plan	We fully understand the sites, plant life cycle and remnant seed bank Containment sites are receiving control - control is working at all sites We have surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability Review the Cotoneaster and Darwin's barberry buffer programmes and decide on programmes future. Wilding Conifers programme expanded beyond biosecurity team	We controlling all priority management sites - we have a baseline	All outlying sites are receiving control	All outlying sites are receiving control and control is working - against the baseline

Advocacy and education

Progressive programmes will include education and advocacy using media releases, flyers, digital tools, and liaison with stakeholders.

ES will provide technical advice and support to groups working on progressive containment species, e.g. Mid Dome Wilding Trees Charitable Trust.

ES will work with its partners to help contain infestations. ES partners include (but are not limited to):

- ▶ Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu
- ▶ Mid Dome Wilding Trees Charitable Trust
- ▶ National Wilding Conifer Programme
- ▶ Southland District Council
- ▶ Department of Conservation

- ▶ Stewart Island Rakiura Community Environment Trust
- ▶ Fish and Game

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

Monitoring the success of our control efforts and identifying new infestations outside of the containment area will be needed. ES will carry inspections for targeted aerial and ground surveys for pest plants.

Control

Effective control is a priority for progressive containment programmes. ES will control, or work with others to help control.

Sustained control pests

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Sustained control pests: Support the ongoing control of pests (gorse, broom, nodding thistle, and ragwort) and reduce their impacts				
We respond to all sustained control complaints	We have collated data since 2019 and reviewed the effectiveness of the sustained control plant programmes	Sustained control programme is updated based on the results of the review		

Advocacy and education

Sustained control programmes will rely on occupier responsibility. To support land occupiers ES will provide education and advocacy, support research and development into new control methods.

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

ES will only carry out inspections in response to complaints and at medium – high-risk sites.

Site-led programmes

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Site-led programmes: Prevent the range expansion of pest species (African club moss, gunnera, hawthorn, heather, knotweed (Indian/ Himalayan), Spanish heath, and willow (crack, grey)) on Rakiura/Stewart Island				
All species have a control plan All known sites are controlled	We fully understand the sites, plant life cycle and remnant seed bank	We are controlling all management sites - we have a baseline	All eradication sites are in a surveillance mode, e.g. we are dealing with the 'tail of the seed bank' All progressive containment outlying sites are receiving control	All progressive containment outlying sites are receiving control and control is working - against the baseline

Control of established species that can be eradicated or contained on Stewart Island/Rakiura

ES will carry out control work gunnera, hawthorn, knotweed (Indian/Himalayan), willow (crack, grey), to contain or eradicate them from the island. DOC will control heather, Spanish heath. ES will support DOC to control African club moss.

Freshwater Programmes

Progressive containment pests

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Progressive containment pests: Contain and reduce the geographic distribution or extent of pests (lagarosiphon, and reed sweet grass) throughout the region				
We have determined the distribution of freshwater pests. We have surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability.	We fully understand the sites, plant life cycle and remnant seed bank. Containment sites are receiving control – control is working at all sites.	We are controlling all priority management sites – we have a baseline.	All outlying sites are receiving control.	All outlying sites are receiving control and control is working – against the baseline.

Advocacy and education

Progressive programmes will include education and advocacy using media releases, flyers, digital tools and liaison with stakeholders.

Control

Effective control is a priority for progressive containment programmes. ES will control, or help its partners to control, sites outside of the containment area. ES's partners include (but are not limited to):

- ▶ National Aquatic Weeds Partnership
- ▶ Department of Conservation
- ▶ Fish and Game
- ▶ Te Ao Mārama

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

Monitoring the success of our control efforts and identifying new infestations outside of the containment area will be needed. ES will work with DOC and Fish and Game to carry out river and lake inspections for freshwater pests.

Marine Programmes

Exclusion pests

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Exclusion pests: Prevent the establishment of exclusion species (Asian paddle crab, Mediterranean fanworm, clubbed tunicate, Australian droplet tunicate, pyura and carpet sea squirt) in the region				
We have increased surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability Review the Chlorine Discharge Contingency Plan and undertake chemical training if needed	We have increased surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability	We have enough understanding of the distribution and potential impact of species not currently found in Murihiku Southland to assess their status during the SRPMP review	Interregional MOUs in place (ORC and ECAN)	Interregional pathway management plans are in place

Advocacy and education

Exclusion programmes will focus on education and advocacy using media releases, flyers, digital tools, social media, and liaison with marine users and stakeholders.

Clean Vessel Passes will be a key promotional tool for marine exclusion pests. Marine pest identification workshops will be run on an annual basis, in partnership with neighbouring regions and partner agencies.

ES will work closely with its neighbouring regional councils, MPI, DOC and the Fiordland Marine Guardians, particularly on publicity programmes.

Response Capability

Exclusion pest incursions will be controlled quickly and effectively using the Southland Marine Biosecurity Incursion Response Plan.

ES will maintain and train staff in the use of the Faldock vessel quarantine facility. A Chlorine Discharge Contingency Plan and resource consent for the use of chlorine will be available.

ES will continue to investigate and adopt new technologies, such as eDNA and settlement plates, for improved detection.

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

ES will implement the Southland Marine Pest Surveillance Plan and will respond to all exclusion pest sightings. The frequency and time of inspections will vary depending on the behaviour and ecology of the species being targeted. Samples will be sent to the Marine Invasive Taxonomic Service (MITS) for identification when required.

Progressive containment pests

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Progressive containment pests: Contain and reduce the geographic distribution or extent of pests (Undaria) throughout the region				
Containment control at all known sites	Containment control at all known management sites (excluding Te Puaiahua/Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/Dusky Sound) – sites are getting progressively smaller Implement the revised Fiordland <i>Undaria</i> management approach – control at high-risk sites in Te Puaiahua/Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/Dusky Sound to reduce the likelihood of anthropogenic spread	Containment control at all known management sites (excluding Te Puaiahua/Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/Dusky Sound) – sites are getting progressively smaller Implement the revised Fiordland <i>Undaria</i> management approach – control at high-risk sites in Te Puaiahua/Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/Dusky Sound to reduce the likelihood of anthropogenic spread	Containment control at all known management sites (excluding Te Puaiahua/Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/Dusky Sound) – sites are getting progressively smaller Implement the revised Fiordland <i>Undaria</i> management approach – control at high-risk sites in Te Puaiahua/Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/Dusky Sound to reduce the likelihood of anthropogenic spread	Containment control at all known management sites (excluding Te Puaiahua/Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/Dusky Sound) – sites are getting progressively smaller Implement the revised Fiordland <i>Undaria</i> management approach – control at high-risk sites in Te Puaiahua/Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/Dusky Sound to reduce the likelihood of anthropogenic spread

Advocacy and education

Progressive containment programmes will include education and advocacy using media releases, flyers, digital tools, social media, and liaison with marine users and stakeholders.

Marine pest identification workshops will be run on an annual basis, in partnership with neighbouring regions and partner agencies.

Relevant national messaging and branding will be implemented as it becomes available, e.g. the national behaviour change 'Protect our Paradise' campaign.

Control

Effective control is a priority for progressive containment programmes. ES will work with partner agencies to respond quickly to population expansions and new incursions. ES's partners include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Fiordland Marine Guardians
- ▶ DOC
- ▶ MPI / Biosecurity New Zealand

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

Monitoring the success of our control efforts and identifying new incursions outside of the containment area is critical. ES will carry out vessel inspections, including hulls and gear, as well as marine pest surveillance on structures, in anchorages and at high-risk sites.

ES will continue to use and contribute marine pest and vessel information to the National Marine Vessel Portal.

ES will maintain and train staff in the use of the Fabbdock vessel quarantine facility. A Chlorine Discharge Contingency Plan and resource consent for the use of chlorine will be available.

ES will continue to investigate and adopt new technologies, such as eDNA and settlement plates, for improved detection.

The cover image features a scenic view of a fjord with steep, forested mountainsides and a calm body of water. A large, semi-transparent orange circle with a white geometric pattern is overlaid on the left side. The title 'Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan' is written in large, white, sans-serif font across the center.

Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan

 *Doubtful Sound*

Year 1 2024/25	Year 2 2025/26	Year 3 2026/27	Year 4 2027/28	Year 5 2028/29
Reduce the risk of marine pests establishing in Fiordland by addressing the threat of these organisms being transported into the area by vessels				
We have increased surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability	We have increased surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability	Increased pathway management within Murihiku Southland and we are working towards interregional pathway management	Increased pathway management within Murihiku Southland and we are working towards interregional pathway management	Interregional pathway management plans are in place

Advocacy and education

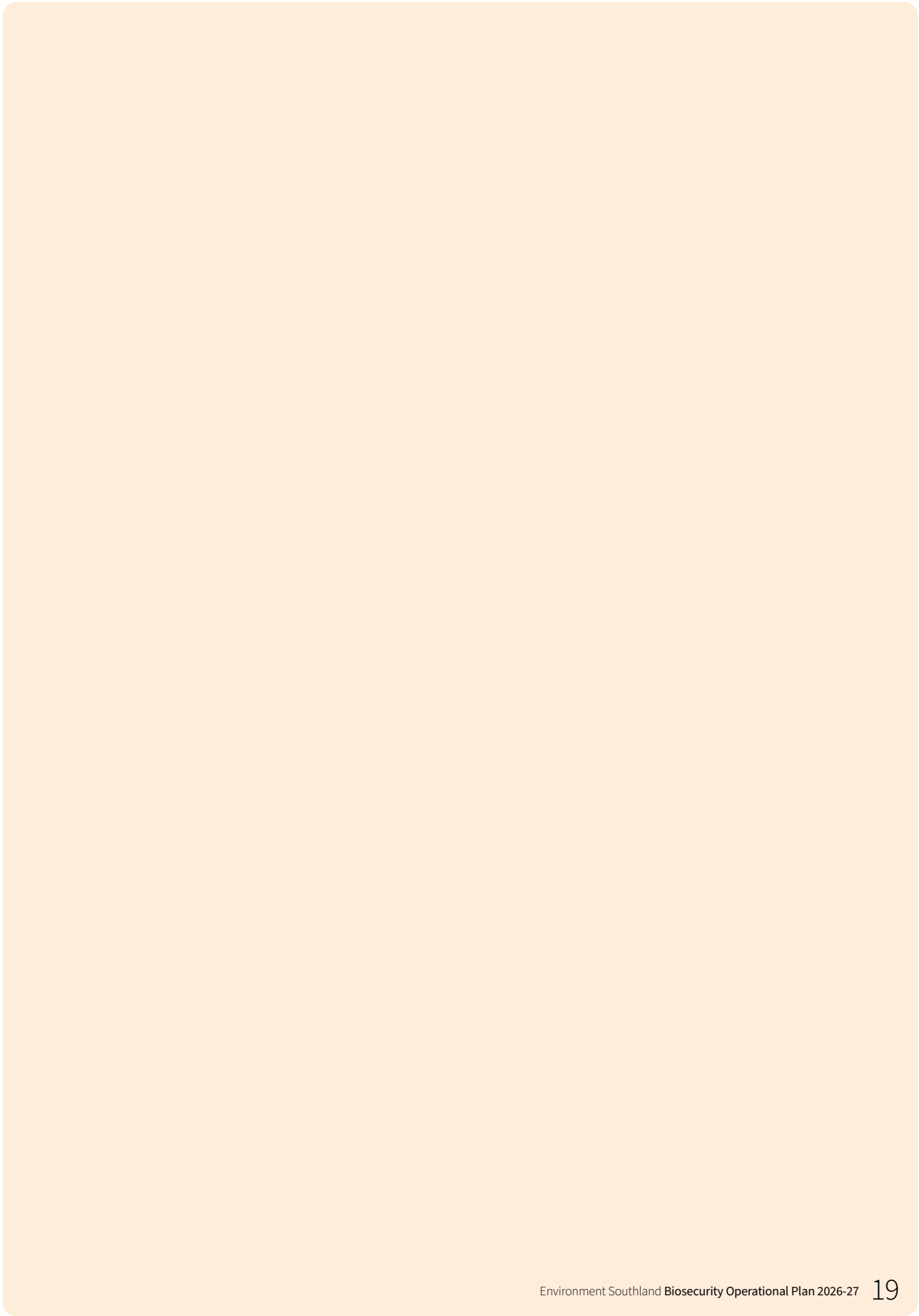
Marine programmes will focus on education and advocacy using media releases, flyers, digital tools, social media, and liaison with marine users and stakeholders.

Clean Vessel Passes will be a key promotional tool for the FMRPMP. Marine pest identification workshops will be run on an annual basis, in partnership with neighbouring regions and partner agencies.

ES will work closely with its neighbouring regional councils, MPI, DOC and the Fiordland Marine Guardians, particularly on publicity programmes.

Surveillance, detection, and monitoring

ES will carry out at least two Fiordland compliance trips a year and complete high-risk vessel surveillance at Bluff Harbour and Oban.





Environment Southland **Biosecurity Annual Report** 2025-26





Vision:

Working to protect Murihiku
Southland from harmful species.

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Background

Regional councils have a mandate under Part 2 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 (the Act) to provide regional leadership in activities that prevent, reduce or eliminate adverse effects from harmful species that are present in their region.

The Southland Regional Pest Management Plan (SRPMP) and the Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan (FMRPMP) are key to achieving this, in addition to the overarching Biosecurity Strategy 2025-30.

The Act requires operational plans are developed to implement pest and pathway management plans under section 100B, with an annual report on implementation provided within five months of financial year end.

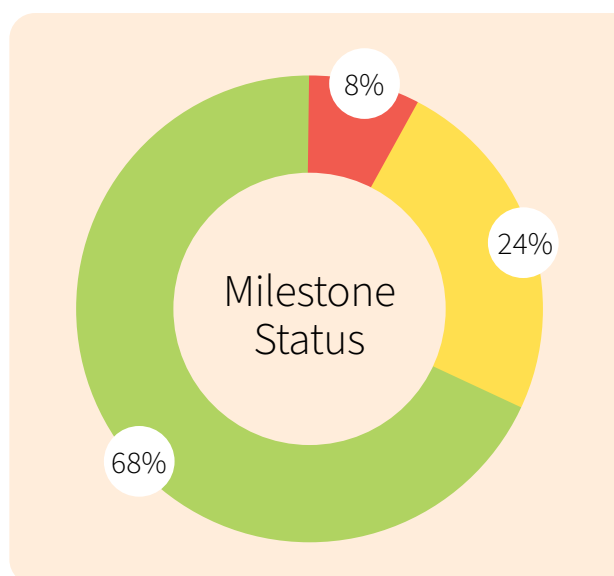
This report reviews performance against the Biosecurity Operational Plan 2025-26 objectives and milestones.



Summary of Milestone Status – all programmes

The Biosecurity Operational Plan 2025-26 included 25 milestones for programmes under the SRPMP and FMRPMP, as well as strategic (non-regulatory) programmes.

This chart and the table on pages 4-5 provide a summary of performance against all 25 milestones. In total 17 milestones were achieved, six were partially achieved, and two were incomplete.



Milestone	Status
Strategic (non-regulatory) Programmes	
Biosecurity Strategy	
The Biosecurity Strategy is reviewed and updated	Achieved
FMRPMP review	
Undertake review, including proposal release and consultation	Incomplete
SRPMP review	
Complete CBAs for harmful species and provide recommendations on their status, future management and regulation	Achieved
Complete emerging threats assessments including the use of climate modelling	Achieved
Predator Free Rakiura support	
Rakiura Pathway Plan analysis	Achieved
Organisms of interest (OOIs)	
Determine the distribution and impact of 30% of OOIs	Achieved
Animal Programmes	
Exclusion pests (wallabies and rooks)	
We have surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability	Achieved
Progressive containment pests (Bengal cats)	
There are no known un-permitted Bengal cats in the region	Achieved
Sustained control pests (possums and rabbits)	
The Possum Control Area (PCA) programme has been reviewed with recommended changes taken to council	Incomplete
Site-led programmes: Stewart Island/Rakiura (feral cat, feral goat, feral pig, hedgehog, house mouse, mustelids, possums, and rats)	
Support PFR to design interventions	Achieved

Milestone	Status
Plant Programmes	
Exclusion pests (boneseed, chilean needle grass, nasella tussock) We have increased advocacy, and surveillance capacity and capability	Achieved
Eradication pests (boxthorn, field horsetail, German ivy, parrots feather, loosestrife, smilax, and spartina) We fully understand the sites, plant life cycle, and remnant seed bank of ES led programmes	Achieved
Progressive containment pests (bomarea, buddleja, contorta (lodgepole) pine, cotoneaster, Darwin's barberry, giant buttercup, heather, Japanese honeysuckle, mountain pine, old man's beard, rough horsetail, Siberian lyme grass, and wilding conifers) We fully understand the sites, plant life cycle and remnant seed bank Containment sites are receiving control – control is working at all sites We have surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability Review the cotoneaster and Darwin's barberry buffer programmes and decide on programmes future Wilding conifers programme expanded beyond biosecurity team	Partly Achieved Achieved Partly Achieved Achieved Partly Achieved
Sustained control pests (gorse, broom, nodding thistle, and ragwort) We have collated data since 2019 and reviewed the effectiveness of the sustained control plant programmes	Partly Achieved
Site-led programmes: Stewart Island/Rakiura (African club moss, gunnera, hawthorn, heather, knotweed (Indian/ Himalayan), Spanish heath, and willow (crack, grey)) We fully understand the sites, plant life cycle and remnant seed bank	Partly Achieved
Freshwater Programmes	
Progressive containment pests (lagarosiphon and reed sweet grass) We fully understand the sites, plant life cycle and remnant seed bank Containment sites are receiving control – control is working at all sites	Partly Achieved Achieved
Marine Programmes	
Exclusion pests (Asian paddle crab, Mediterranean fanworm, clubbed tunicate, Australian droplet tunicate, pyura and carpet sea squirt) We have increased advocacy, and surveillance capacity and capability	Achieved
Progressive containment pests (undaria) Containment control at all known management sites (excluding Te Puaitaha/ Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/ Dusky Sound) – sites are getting progressively smaller Implement the revised Fiordland undaria management approach – control at high-risk sites in Te Puaitaha/ Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/ Dusky Sound to reduce the likelihood of anthropogenic spread	Achieved Achieved
Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan	
We have increased surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability	Achieved

Full Report

Strategic (non-regulatory) Programmes

Biosecurity Strategy		
Objective	Provide regional leadership Connect people to biosecurity solutions Ensure regulatory tools are in place	
Milestone	Status	Comment
Biosecurity Strategy: The Biosecurity Strategy is reviewed and updated	Achieved	The Environment Southland Biosecurity Strategy 2025-30 was endorsed by the Strategy and Policy Committee on the 8 July 2026.
FMRPMP review: Undertake review, including proposal release and consultation	Incomplete	The FMRPMP review did not progress as planned due to internal resourcing issues. Preliminary work was completed but the proposal and consultation was not completed.
SRPMP review: Complete CBAs for harmful species and provide recommendations on their status, future management and regulation	Achieved	A range of species have been assessed for their potential impacts on Murihiku Southland. ES continues to engage with neighbouring councils and others through the Biosecurity Working Group around alignment and consistency of Regional Pest Management Plans. This has assisted with assessment and analysis templates and rule structures that could be used in the SRPMP review.
SRPMP review: Complete emerging threats assessments including the use of climate modelling	Achieved	Additional modelling for plant species was commissioned and received as part of the Biosecurity Working Group national collective. This information is being used to assess organisms of interest and to complete harmful species assessments.
Predator Free Rakiura support: Rakiura Pathway Plan analysis	Achieved	Staff contributed to the Pathway Risk Analysis project. The Principal Biosecurity Officer position was shared between ES and PFR for the year. Staff were part of the Engagement and Advisory Group and attended Te Puke Rakiura Trust and Predator Free Rakiura Limited board meetings.
Organisms of interest (OOIs) Determine the distribution and impact of 30% of OOIs	Achieved	A range of organisms of interest have been assessed for their potential impacts and distribution across Murihiku Southland. Climate modelling data and scientific summaries from other Councils and resources have been used as appropriate.

Southland Regional Pest Management Plan

Animal Programmes

Exclusion pests		
Objective	Prevent the establishment of exclusion species (wallabies and rooks) in the region	
Milestone	Status	Comment
We have surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability	Achieved	Rooks - no rooks known to be present in the region, no rook reports received, no rooks found at historical sites inspected. Rook comms carried out during main breeding season (Sept – Nov) jointly with Otago Regional Council (ORC). Wallabies - working closely with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), Environment Canterbury and ORC to respond to reports, carry out comms and look for new ways of controlling wallabies. ES submitted on the MPI Wallaby strategy in June. Three wallaby reports were investigated in the Murihiku Southland region, they were unconfirmed sightings. Biosecurity pest animal staff attended a wallaby workshop in Dunedin with counterparts from all other South Island councils and the Department of Conservation (DOC).
Progressive containment pests		
Objective	Contain and reduce the geographic distribution or extent of pests (Bengal cats) throughout the region	
Milestone	Status	Comment
There are no known un-permitted Bengal cats in the region	Achieved	Only one Bengal cat permit actioned.
Sustained control pests		
Objective	Support the ongoing control of pests (possums and rabbits) and reduce their impacts	
Milestone	Status	Comment
PCA programme has been reviewed with recommended changes taken to council	Incomplete	Staff continue to look at the options. It is proposed to go back to council with a workshop to gain further feedback on direction of possum control for the region, not just the PCA program. All planned maintenance on the PCA programme was undertaken for the 2025-26 year. Two new PCAs were added, growing the programme by 14,800 ha to a total of 427,000 ha. Possum monitoring was completed on the planned 17 PCA projects with two community pest group areas monitored as well. Possum monitoring on the PCA's showed an average 8.3% RTC.

Site-led programmes		
Objective	Prevent the range expansion of pest species (feral cat, feral goat, feral pig, hedgehog, house mouse, mustelids (ferret, stoat, weasel), possums, and rats (Norway, ship and kiore)) on Rakiura/Stewart Island	
Milestone	Status	Comment
Support PFR to design interventions	Achieved	Staff were involved in the Rodent Pathway Analysis project. Important information about marine infrastructure and activities as well as rodent behaviour and impacts in Murihiku Southland were provided. ES supported the DOC response to the dead stoat found on Rakiura.

Plant Programmes

Exclusion pests		
Objective	Prevent the establishment of exclusion species (boneseed, Chilean needle grass, and nassella tussock) in the region	
Milestone	Status	Comment
We have increased advocacy, and surveillance capacity and capability	Achieved	We contacted stock agents, attended farm cultivation days, Southland field days and high-country farms days promoting farm biosecurity with a focus on Chilean needle grass and nassella tussock. Surveillance capacity and capability is based off the exclusion plans and known potential pathways.

Eradication pests		
Objective	Reduce the infestation level of pests (boxthorn, field horsetail, German ivy, parrots feather, purple loosestrife, smilax, and spartina) to zero levels	
Milestone	Status	Comment
We fully understand the sites, plant life cycle, and remnant seed bank of ES led programmes	Achieved	While we understand the plant life cycle and seed bank but we keep finding new sites of purple loosestrife which adds to the complexity of understanding sites, when we have not been able to find all sites across Murihiku Southland yet.

Progressive containment pests		
Objective	Contain and reduce the geographic distribution or extent of pests (bomarea, buddleja, contorta (lodgepole) pine, cotoneaster, Darwin's barberry, giant buttercup, heather, Japanese honeysuckle, mountain pine, old man's beard, rough horsetail, Siberian lyme grass, and wilding conifers) throughout the region	
Milestone	Status	Comment
We fully understand the sites, plant life cycle and remnant seed bank	Partly Achieved	Unable to fully understand the sites as we keep finding new sites for a number of species; old man's beard, heather, Japanese honeysuckle, wilding conifers.
Containment sites are receiving control – control is working at all sites	Achieved	We are having success with controlling containment sites and all planned control sites were completed.
We have surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability	Partly Achieved	We had surveillance capabilities to visit our prioritised species or planned control sites. However a number of species (heather, Japanese honeysuckle) do not have active surveillance and control, and for others (bomarea, buddleia, wilding conifers) it is ad hoc surveillance when undertaking other work. Extensive surveillance and monitoring programmes are not in place for a number of our species due to limited resources.
Review the cotoneaster and Darwin's barberry buffer programmes and decide on programmes future.	Achieved	Both the Fiordland and Rakiura reviews have been completed. Programme implementation will be confirmed and completed in 2026-27.
Wilding conifers programme expanded beyond biosecurity team	Partly Achieved	Council have signed off for more support across ES. A new internal forestry group has been started and indications made for further involvement across council.
Sustained control pests		
Objective	Support the ongoing control of pests (gorse, broom, nodding thistle, and ragwort) and reduce their impacts	
Milestone	Status	Comment
We have collated data since 2019 and reviewed the effectiveness of the sustained control plant programmes	Partly Achieved	A review of this has been started with final reports and recommendations due 2026-27.
Site-led programmes		
Objective	Prevent the range expansion of pest species (African club moss, gunnera, hawthorn, heather, knotweed (Indian/ Himalayan), Spanish heath, and willow (crack, grey)) on Rakiura/Stewart Island	
Milestone	Status	Comment
We fully understand the sites, plant life cycle and remnant seed bank	Partly Achieved	The baseline understanding has been achieved for most species however new sites are still being found and we are still working to understand the origins of these sites.

Freshwater Programmes

Progressive containment pests		
Objective	Contain and reduce the geographic distribution or extent of pests (lagarosiphon and reed sweet grass) throughout the region	
Milestone	Status	Comment
We fully understand the sites, plant life cycle and remnant seed bank	Partly Achieved	While we have a good understanding of these, a new reed sweet grass site was found in a new catchment, and we need to understand this more.
Containment sites are receiving control – control is working at all sites	Achieved	Planned control is working at the containment sites that we are actively working on (Waiau and Ōreti).

Marine Programmes

Exclusion pests		
Objective	Prevent the establishment of exclusion species (Asian paddle crab , Mediterranean fanworm , clubbed tunicate , Australian droplet tunicate , pyura and carpet sea squirt) in the region	
Milestone	Status	Comment
We have increased advocacy, and surveillance capacity and capability	Achieved	Capability was enhanced this year through the introduction of a new biosecurity dive company to assist with the Bluff Harbour Mediterranean fanworm response. Significant advances were made in the advocacy space via the inaugural marine biosecurity ambassador programme, aiming to educate marine users across Southern New Zealand.

Progressive containment pests		
Objective	Contain and reduce the geographic distribution or extent of pests (undaria) throughout the region	
Milestone	Status	Comment
Containment control at all known management sites (excluding Te Puaitaha/ Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/ Dusky Sound) – sites are getting progressively smaller	Achieved	Undaria surveillance and control was completed at known management sites in Murihiku Southland. No major range expansions or new incursions were identified.
Implement the revised Fiordland Undaria management approach – control at high-risk sites in Te Puaitaha/ Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/ Dusky Sound to reduce the likelihood of anthropogenic spread	Achieved	The revised Fiordland Undaria Control programme was successfully implemented and no new undaria incursions were identified outside of the Te Puaitaha/ Breaksea Sound and Tamatea/ Dusky Sound complex.

Fiordland Marine Regional Pathway Management Plan

Exclusion pests		
Objective	Reduce the risk of marine pests establishing in Fiordland by addressing the threat of these organisms being transported into the area by vessels	
Milestone	Status	Comment
We have surveillance and monitoring capacity and capability	Achieved	The Fiordland surveillance programme was successfully implemented this year, with inspections completed at all high-risks sites, including anchorages, moorings, lines and structures. Capability was improved through an increase in the number of scientific divers contracted to the programme and upskilling within the team.



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9.5 Operations Delivery Group Update River Operations

Report by: Paul Pollard, Team Leader River Operations
Dave Connor, Team Leader River Operations
Michelle Powell, Operations Delivery Manager

Approved by: Lucy Hicks, General Manager Integrated Catchment Management

Report Date: 16 September 2026

Purpose

To update the Committee on river management and land drainage work completed or underway since the previous meeting.

Background

This report provides an update on the progress of river management and land drainage activities. It covers maintenance completed since the last meeting, work still underway, bylaw applications received, and planning for future work programmes.

Summary

Work has continued across the region through the winter period. Staff have completed or progressed river maintenance, drainage cleaning, erosion repairs, vegetation control and floodbank maintenance. Planning is also underway for next year's river management and land drainage work programmes.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Integrated Catchment Management Committee resolve to:

- 1 Receive the report – Operations Delivery Group, River operations update.
- 2 Note the river management and land drainage work completed or underway during the reporting period.

Overview

Operational delivery has remained consistent across all catchments with maintenance programmes largely completed as planned for end of FY2025/26 and throughout the winter period.

Highlights for this period (July 26 – Sept 26) include:

- Completion of approximately **17,000 m³** of beach skimming and removal of **9,200 m³** of overburden at Whitestone.
- Approximately **8 km** of drainage channels cleaned within the Te Anau Basin.
- Completion of erosion protection works on the Fenham, Orauea and Lilburn Streams.
- Replacement of approximately **5.5 km** of Waiau berm fencing.
- Completion of the regional aerial vegetation control programme covering more than **2,200 hectares** across the major river systems.
- Willow control, bank protection and October 2025 storm damage repairs continuing across multiple catchments.

Financial performance for the reporting period will be reported through the relevant finance reporting process.

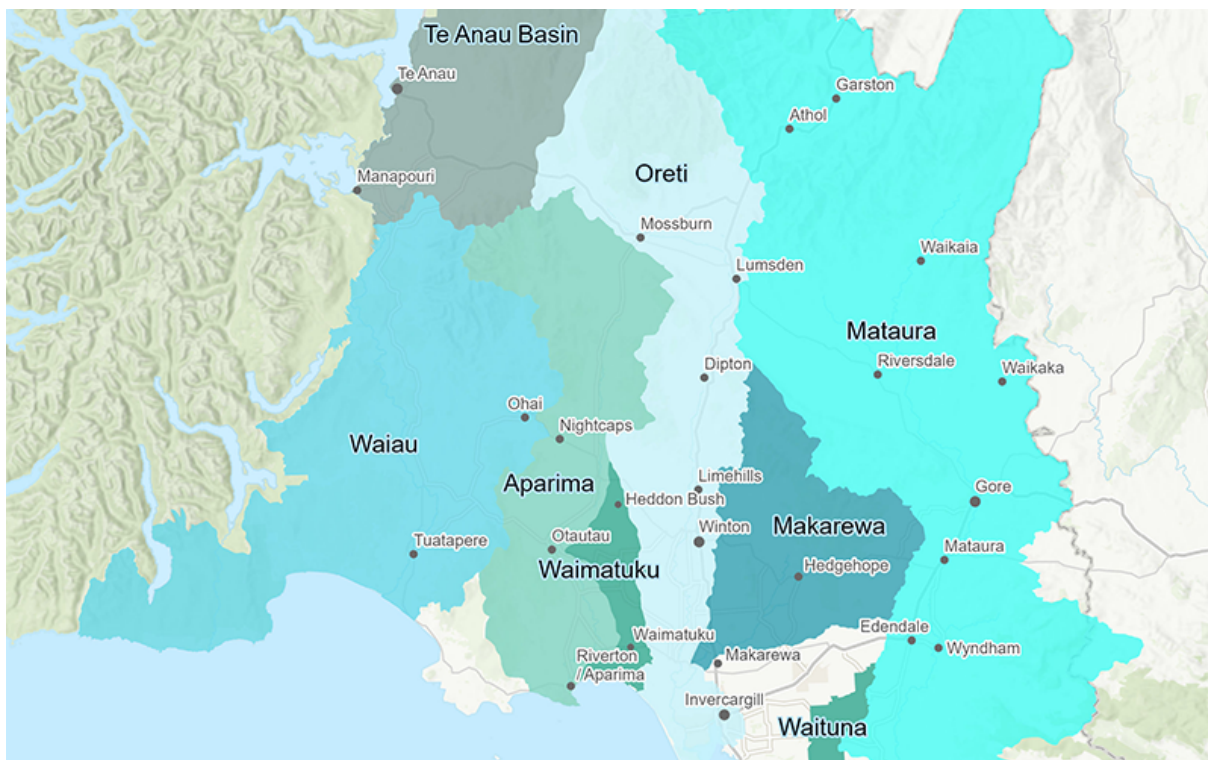
Catchment Liaison Committee and Community Boad Meetings

During the July to September 2026 period, staff attended a range of meetings to provide updates on river management and land drainage activities, respond to local questions, and hear feedback on operational matters. The meetings attended included:

- Southland District Council Winton Community Board Meeting on the 20 July 2026
- Southland District Council Tuatapere Community Board Meeting on the 21 July 2026

Staff are also progressing a number of follow-up actions arising from these meetings, including responding to local matters raised and working through operational issues where further investigation or action is required.

The map below shows the Operations Delivery catchment areas of responsibility and the associated catchment liaison committees.



Waiau main river and sub-catchments

The following work was progressed across the Waiau system and its sub-catchments during the reporting period.

- Erosion control Fenham, Orauea & Lilburn Streams
- Replaced 5,500m of the Waiau berm fence
- Topped 1.1km moutere willows Lilburn Stream
- Tuatapere optical bathymetry survey – waiting for suitable river conditions

Fiordland Te Anau Basin

Work in the Te Anau Basin focused on gravel management and drainage maintenance.

- Beach skimming programme completed with approximately **17,000 m³** of gravel removed and **9,200 m³** of overburden relocated.
- Approximately **8 kilometres** of drainage channels cleaned across the basin network.

Oreti River

Oreti River works focused on willow management, erosion protection and drainage maintenance.

- Willow layering completed at six priority sites.

- Willow removal undertaken at Dipton and Oporo.
- Rock armouring works completed at The Elbow upstream of Lumsden.
- Rock sorting undertaken at Andersons Quarry, Mossburn.
- Aquatic weed control completed across seven drainage channels.

Aparima Catchment

A range of river and drainage maintenance work was completed across the Aparima Catchment.

- River maintenance programme completed, including significant erosion protection, channel maintenance works and spraying program.
- Seven drainage schemes inspected with approximately 48.7 kilometres machine cleaned and 2.5 kilometres sprayed.
- Local landowner contributions continued to support delivery of river management works.
- Asset program included installation of a large culvert/flapgate, mulching of floodbanks (3.6km) and remediation of 240m of floodbank due to stock damage

Waimatuku Catchment

Waimatuku works focused on channel maintenance, drainage upkeep and removal of fallen trees.

- Channel maintenance programme completed, including beach openings at Flax Tributary, Tauanamau and Otaitai.
- Fallen tree removal and drainage maintenance undertaken throughout the catchment.

Invercargill

Invercargill works focused on maintaining flood protection assets, managing debris and completing routine maintenance.

- Routine vegetation control, grass mowing and walkway maintenance continued.
- Debris removal from the Waihopai and Otepuni detention dam structures following high flow events.
- Engineering inspections have been completed on all Invercargill flood control structures.
- Gravel accumulation below Queens Drive Bridge continues to be monitored pending resource consent and suitable river conditions for removal.
- Fence repairs completed along the Kingswell floodbanks following recent wind damage
- Mechanical cleaning of Kingswell scheme
- Wind damage (Trees/fences) repairs have now all been carried out
- Removal of defects such as gardens from floodbank assets

Waituna

Waituna drainage maintenance focused on mechanical cleaning of key parts of the scheme.

- Full mechanical clean Lower Waituna, hadn't previously been undertaken for 8 years. Also Maher trib total =30km

Duck Creek

Duck Creek work focused on mechanical cleaning and clearing trees after wind damage.

- A total of 38.5km of mechanical cleaning was undertaken on Duck Creek South. A number of trees were also removed after the large wind event

Makarewa

Makarewa works focused on storm damage repairs, erosion repairs and drainage maintenance.

- Storm damaged tree removal from the Lower Makarewa, Lora and Otapiri Streams following the October 2025 flood event.

- Erosion repairs completed on the Lora Stream.
- Channel maintenance completed on Gold Creek and tributaries, Sharkstooth Creek, Buchanans Outfall, College Stream and Horman Road Drain.
- Aquatic weed control undertaken on Watts Outfall.

Mataura Catchment

Mataura Catchment works included river maintenance, floodbank works and drainage scheme maintenance.

- Significant river maintenance programme completed including spray program, extensive willow removal, flood debris and erosion control works.
- Waimumu Floodbank Upgrade completed.
- Gorge Road floodbank mulching and tidy-up programme completed.
- 22 drainage schemes inspected, with mechanical maintenance undertaken on thirteen schemes and spraying on 9 schemes during the more significant scheduled three-year maintenance cycle.
- Approximately 96 kilometres of machine cleaning and 155 kilometres of spraying completed across the drainage network.
- Additional tree removal and drop structure maintenance undertaken across several drainage schemes.
- Planning underway for future maintenance works within the Pukerau Stream and Pyramid Block drainage systems.

Special Rating Areas

Special rating area works focused on drainage cleaning and spraying across the rated schemes.

- Approximately **173 kilometres** of machine cleaning and **47 kilometres** of spraying completed across the special rating drainage schemes, including Waihopai, Waikiwi, Waikawa and Otatara.

The following photos provide context for the detention dam assets, including the Waihopai and Otepuni detention dam structures referenced in this update.

Photo 1: Waihopai detention dam structure 20 June 2026



Photo 2: Otepuni detention dam structure 21 June 2026



Bylaw Applications and Gravel Extraction Evaluations

The table below summarises the bylaw applications and gravel evaluations processed during the reporting period. Overall, application activity has been steady, with most matters completed and only one gravel evaluation still ongoing.

Activity	Received	Outcome
Bylaw Authority Applications	43	All completed: 42 approved and one declined.
Gravel Extraction Evaluations	19	18 supported and one ongoing.

Gravel extraction evaluations form part of Environment Southland's consent process, with operational and technical input provided by staff across relevant functions.

FY2026/2027 operational works planning

Planning is underway for the FY2026/2027 river management and land drainage works programme. The team is taking a practical approach to forward work planning by bringing together current asset information, local knowledge, recent inspections and known maintenance needs. This will help identify priority work areas and provide a clearer basis for scheduling work across the year.

A key focus will be establishing quarterly work programmes that can be reviewed and adjusted as conditions change. This approach will support more visible planning, while still allowing the team to respond to urgent issues, changing river conditions and maintenance requests as they arise. The programme will continue to

be developed alongside asset management information so that priority works are guided by the best available information. This will help highlight urgent priority areas, support future funding decisions, and improve the way river management and land drainage works are planned, delivered and reported over time.

October 2026 weather event

The October 2026 weather event has placed additional pressure on parts of the river and land drainage network. Staff have responded by monitoring river and drainage conditions, checking priority assets, managing urgent maintenance issues and working through follow-up actions as conditions allowed.

The October 2026 wind event response has largely been completed, although some repair work remains ongoing. The financial impact will need to be addressed and reassigned to reserves from the FY2025/26 Annual Plan.

Risks/Opportunities

The main risks are the weather, river conditions, contractor availability and the need to prioritise work across a large network. The main opportunity is to use this year's work and inspections to help plan future maintenance and funding needs.

Views of affected parties

This report is for information only and does not ask the Committee to make a decision that directly affects specific parties. Staff continue to work with landowners, contractors and communities as needed when river and drainage work is planned or carried out.

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources	X		
Diverse opportunities to make a living	X		
Communities empowered and resilient	X		
Communities expressing their diversity			X

Compliance with Significance and Engagement Policy

This report is for information only. It provides an update on existing river management and land drainage work and does not require any special consultation or engagement process.

Considerations

Financial implications

There are no new financial decisions needed from this report. The work outlined is being delivered within existing approved budgets.

Legal implications

There are no new legal issues arising from this report. Staff continue to manage the work in line with the relevant rules, consents and bylaw requirements.

Attachments

Nil

9.6 Resilience Infrastructure Fund Update

Report by: Karen Botting, Manager, Resilient Infrastructure Fund

Approved by: Lucy Hicks, General Manager Integrated Catchment Management

Report Date: 18 August 2026

Purpose

To update the committee on the Resilient Infrastructure Fund (RIF) Programme. This includes progress of both Tranche 1 and 2 and an overall financial summary and a summary of the Council Risk workshop on the RIF Programme.

Summary

The Tranche 2 funding agreement conditions precedent is being worked through to become operational by the end of Q1 2026/27 to enable our initial loan draw down by 30 September 2026.

Tranche 1 works underway, with Aparima complete, Te Anau Basin to be complete by 31 December 2026, currently on pause awaiting restart in October 2026 due to winter weather.

The Oreti floodplain stage 1 floodbank works have been paused until late spring due to weather, the fencing and willow removal work was continued during winter.

Tranche 2 enabling work on the Maitara River at Gore creating channel capacity, has reached Practical Completion with some minor site works to be completed in spring; like grass re-establishment.

Tranche 2 Oreti floodplain stage 2 works combined for prioritisation with the remaining tranche 1 works, has progressed to landowner engagement and final design.

All projects are on track, with expenditure in line with budget expectations.

The risk workshop undertaken with council outlined what success looks like; and what strategic risks the programme needs to be aware of.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Integrated Catchment Management Committee resolve to:

- 1 Receive the report – Resilient Infrastructure Fund - Update.

Background

Environment Southland has two signed funding agreements with the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) for a total project cost of \$31.35M, with a funding share of 60% (\$18.81M) via the Government's Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF). Environment Southland's share is 40% being \$12.54M.

Tranche 1 signed in 2024, is a grant agreement for three flood resilience projects - the Aparima is complete, the Te Anau Basin is nearing completion, and the Oreti floodplain stage 1 has a completion date of March 2028.

Tranche 2 signed in April 2026 for two flood resilience projects. This funding was confirmed via a signed suspensory loan agreement. The Oreti scheme receives further funding for flood bank remediation, along with works within the Invercargill city. The final project is, Maitara River flood protection improvements, where channel capacity, rock walls and flood bank works are the main activities.

Important to note, all the tranche 2 projects include technical validation stages throughout the 2026/27 year, meaning that work for the 2026/27 construction season is likely to be smaller less complex work.

Tranche 1

Ōreti Floodplain Project

This project has work identified and undertaken in the Dipton West area covering the two major activities of Flood bank remediation and Willow removal. Due to the winter weather, the floodbank remediation is on pause until late spring. Works undertaken have been re-grassed and issues with deer damage have been an ongoing challenge, currently being resolved by River Operations team, with temporary electric fencing.

Priority areas at Centre Bush and Winton are being progressed along with the Tranche 2 locations. More detail within the Tranche 2 summary.

Photo1: Dipton West Remediation Floodbank Progress – July 28th, 2026



The willow clearance activity as part of the Oreti project had an initial contract awarded for the clearance of 15.96 hectares over 5 work sections. This work was practically completed this month, with one variation still being assessed. All associated access improvements, rehabilitation, and site reinstatement works have also been completed.

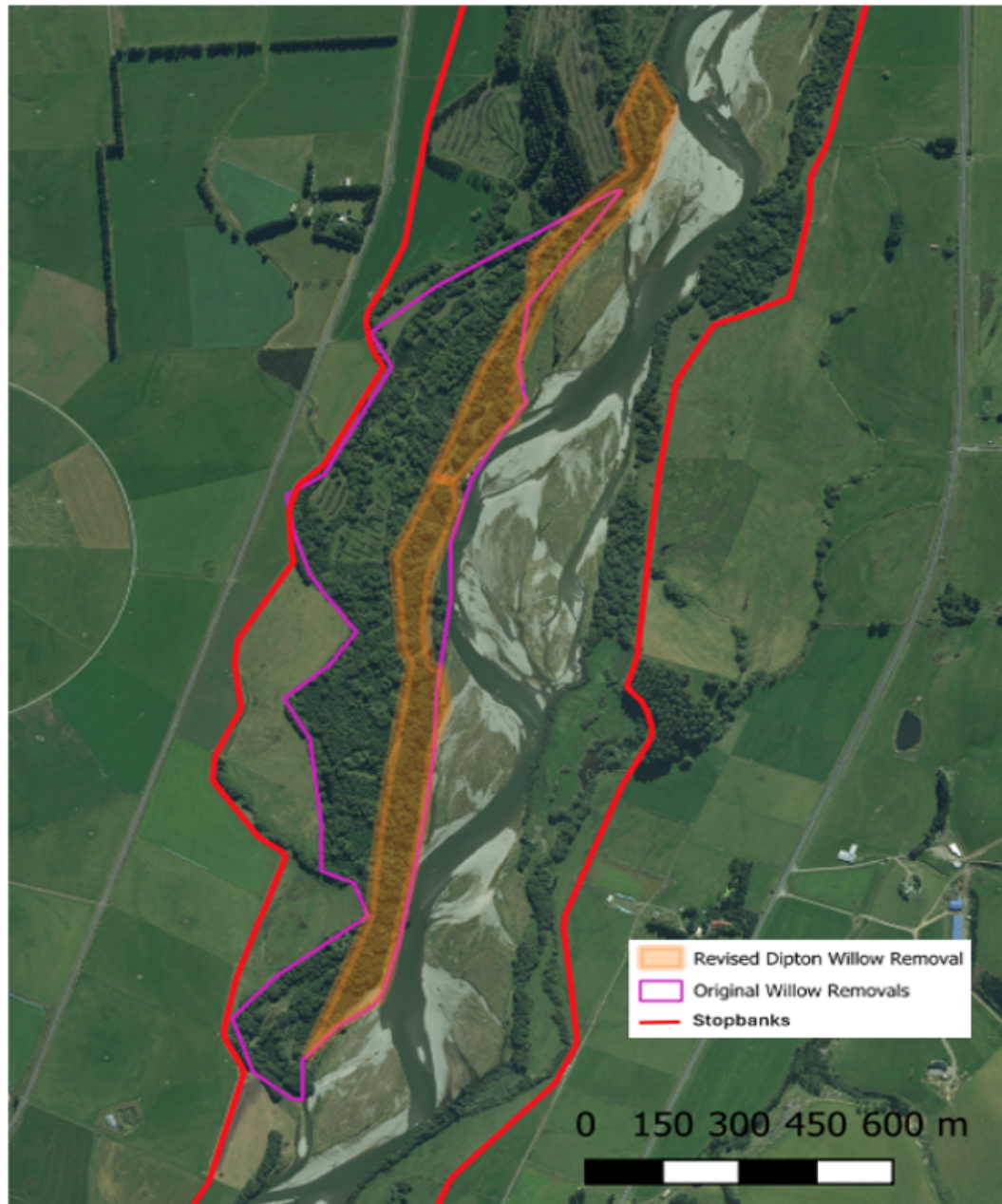
The contractor's health, safety, environmental and quality performance remained strong, with no material incidents, compliance issues or non-conformances identified.

Contract value was \$373,376.84 with the final claim to date reflecting a minor underspend of \$1,500. The variation being assessed is in the vicinity of \$50,000.

The image below reflects the area of scope completed and the area of variation (outside of the original scope).

Map1: Dipton West Willow removal scope

Aerial view of the Dipton West Willow Removal Site



Te Anau Basin flood resilience

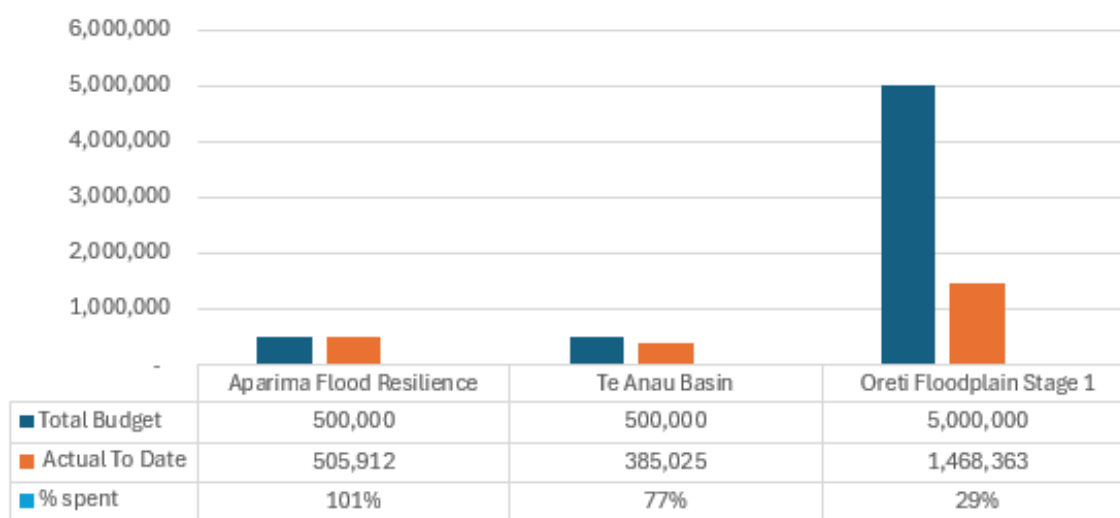
The project remains on pause awaiting suitable spring conditions to enable the completion of the remaining 4-5 weeks of work. Original contract commencement was January 2026 with closeout now expected by December 2026.

Tranche 1 Programme Expenditure

Table & Graph 1: Tranche 1 Financial summary to 31 July 2026

Tranche 1	Total Budget	Actual To Date	Variance	% spent	Status	Expected Completion	Months Remaining
Aparima Flood Resilience	500,000	505,912	- 5,912	101%	Complete	Mar-26	0
Te Anau Basin	500,000	385,025	114,975	77%	Pause	Dec-26	5
Oreti Floodplain Stage 1	5,000,000	1,468,363	3,531,637	29%	Pause	Mar-28	20
Total	6,000,000	2,359,300	3,640,700	39%	On Track		

Tranche 1 Programme
Total Budget vs Actual (as at 31 July 2026)



The overall tranche 1 programme is on track, with an agreement expiry date of 31 March 2028, meaning 20 months to complete all works.

Tranche 2

Ōreti Floodplain Project

A key principle for the business cases approved by MBIE for RIF projects was agreement that funding was for reinstatement of the current level of flood resilience. This fact is reflected in the prioritisation of the remaining Oreti works. The finalisation of documentation is underway.

Engagement

As per Council direction regarding the engagement and consultation approach for these projects, Councillors were briefed in July. Following that briefing the Catchment Liaison Chairs were updated, and we are beginning the next phase of targeted engagement with directly affected landowners to complete agreements to support design, access and an understanding of timing of works.

This involves individual letters; an overall project flyer, property specific maps, property visits, and an invite to a combined affected landowners meeting in September.

These steps enable the prioritisation of procurement for the following construction seasons. Delivery is looking to complete works not requiring consent, as soon as possible, along with areas where floodbank alignment is proposed.

Oreti Floodplain Remaining works	Facts
Affected Landowners	36
Prioritised packages of work	22
Priority rating	7 High, 7 Medium/High, 4 Medium, 4 Low
Work Types and meanings	
Floodbank Remediation	Reinstate shape per scheme design
Floodbank Realignment	Build new floodbank, on new site, as per current scheme design
Floodbank Removal	Original floodbank above ground height removal (possible material use in later construction seasons)
Willow/Vegetation and Tree Removal	Either in floodplain or on Floodbank Asset removal of vegetation that puts the structure at risk.

Otepuni Flood Infrastructure Project

The Otepuni creek has continued through a technical validation phase with a tender for design, released to the market in early August. The procurement stage is still within the evaluation phase at the time of writing this report. The intent is that a designer will review the current modelling, to support the ability to design a solution to provide a flood level of service for the creek from SH1 to the Waihopai River.

Mataura River Flood Resilience Improvement Project

This project has a 1-year technical investigation timeframe, to be completed by June 2027. The total budget based on the current milestones for the technical validation period is a total cost of \$3.91M.

During this period, the project will have 2 major workstreams, the 'Blueprint', which is nearing the scope completion phase; and the investigation into all technical information needs and the procurement of these.

The technical validation evolves around the current condition of our infrastructure assets. The current year's investigations are complete (every metre of floodbanks walked and visually inspected). Data is being checked for consistency and preliminary reports due in 4-6 weeks. Along with this information, a memo is being prepared on the models and scenarios run; survey and geotechnical information gathered on the Mataura, to enable a technical assessment of next steps.

The first item of work was the channel widening south of the Mataura bridges. This work has received practical completion for the 21,850m³ of sediment removed. This equates to 93% of the original estimate of 23,500m³. The elevated river levels over the last 6-8 weeks have caused this decision.

Before the contract is closed, the regrassing of the river berms will be undertaken; a report on the works will be prepared covering the challenges, options for further assessment and consent requirements.

Photo2: Mataura Left Floodbank, Area 4, completed level – 28/7/26



National Telemetry Project

The national project is administered by Environment Canterbury for \$7.7M of which Environment Southland has a budget of \$0.5M to upgrade the Mataura River telemetry system. The project timeline expects completion by June 2029. Currently investigation and resourcing of materials is underway.

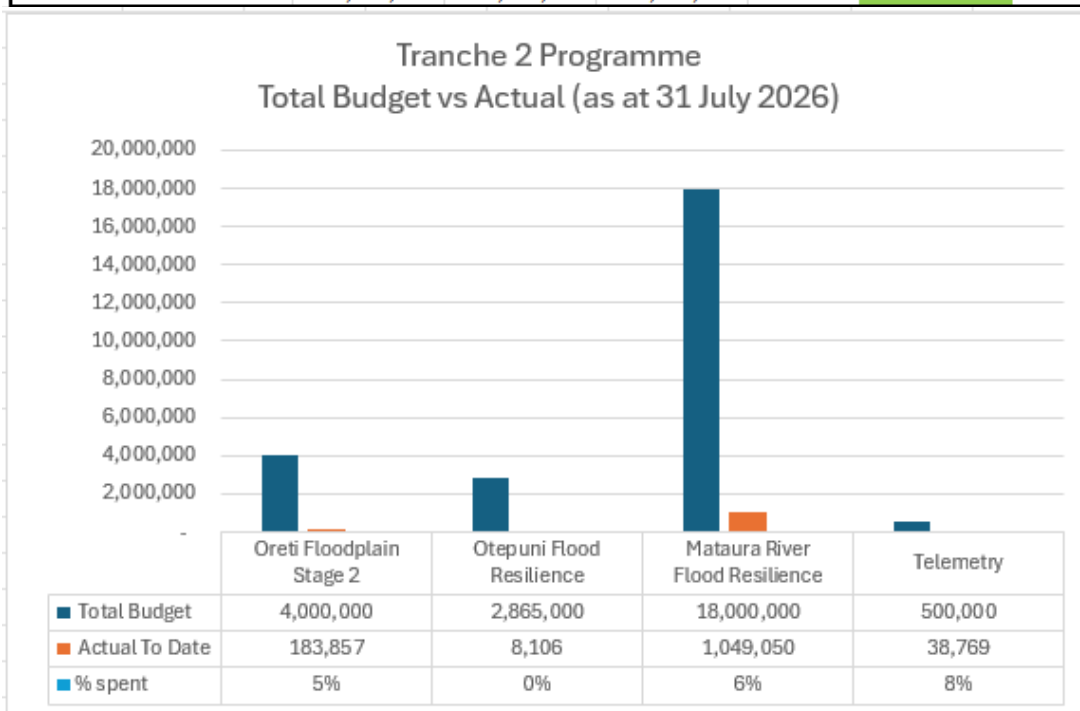
The below image shows an example rainfall recording site, similar to what this project will be installing.

Photo 3: Example rainfall site



Table & Graph2: Tranche 2 Financial summary to 31 July 2026

Tranche 2	Total Budget	Actual To Date	Variance	% spent	Status	Expected Completion	Months Remaining
Oreti Floodplain Stage 2	4,000,000	183,857	3,816,143	5%	Design	Dec-30	54
Otepuni Flood Resilience	2,865,000	8,106	2,856,894	0%	Investigation	Jun-29	35
Mataura River Flood Resili	18,000,000	1,049,050	16,950,950	6%	Investigation	Dec-31	66
Telemetry	500,000	38,769	461,231	8%	Procurement	Jun-28	23
Total	25,365,000	1,279,782	24,085,218	5%	On Track		



The tranche 2 programme is underway with progress made on planning, investigation and delivery.

Risk Workshop – Council summary

On the 22 July 2026 council undertook a risk workshop on the Kanoa Programme, independently facilitated by Bruce Robertson. The outcome was a summary of 6 Success Factors and 8 Strategic risks. During the process the council also undertook a review of their understanding of their risk appetite and what the next steps look like. The following tables represent the outcome.

Success Factors	
Delivers resilience to the Community	- Protects life and property - Improves ability to insure property - Increases awareness of community hazards and readiness for emergencies
Delivered on time	Work is done in a way that maximises opportunities
Delivered within budget	- The suspensory load is converted to a grant - Costs do not exceed budget (including contingencies) - Maximise/optimize funding opportunities
Build to requisite scope	- Scopes are met - Design and build enable who of life cost
An engaged local market	- Local contractors are enabled to participate in procurement - Facilitate development and sustainability of local markets

Internal capacity and capability is developed and maintained	Ensure teams build and retain experience and capacity for capital works and this becomes BAU
Strategic Risk	Programme mitigation
Weather (and natural disaster)	Allow time contingency in all contract and overall programme
Decision-Making lack of alignment with governance and management	Decisions reported through Programme Control Group to Senior Management via Programme Sponsor
Kanoa, High-quality relationship	Kanoa membership as observer on PCG and regular catchups
Retention of capability	Roles and responsibilities clear, provide opportunities for mentorship/cross roles learning and celebrate success.
Local Government reform may impede core progress on delivery AND uncertainty on how programme fits within Rates cap regime	Be clear about pathways and raise concerns early.
Inflation and other cost pressures	Maintain tight scope to enable clear pricing.
Local Market – inability to make work programme attractive.	Create various levels of packaged works.
Delivery Failure – inability to maintain delivery programme and/or deliver a scheme that impedes future security.	Investigate multi-year contracts and ensure design is reviewed and approved by technical and asset management.
Alignment to corporate planning.	Ensure programme is engaged at corporate planning level.
Market disruption – externally driven events impact delivery.	Utilise escalation pathways including agreement variation process to complete delivery.

The next steps include monitoring the risk profile through reporting to Council and PMGG and the Risk and Assurance Committee.

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources	X		
Diverse opportunities to make a living	X		
Communities empowered and resilient	X		
Communities expressing their diversity	X		

Attachments

Nil

9.7 2025-26 Operational Update from Land Sustainability, Biodiversity and Freshwater Farm Plan Programmes

Report by: Simon Stokes, Land Sustainability Manager

Approved by: Lucy Hicks, General Manager Integrated Catchment Management

Report Date: 24 August 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this report and accompanying presentation is to update Council of the Land Sustainability, Biodiversity and Freshwater Farm Plan programmes operational results for 2025-2026.

Summary

The Land Sustainability, Biodiversity and Freshwater Farm Plan programmes deliver services to support Council's outcomes. They provide integrated and enduring on-the-ground advisory services and education to our community and landowners.

The volume of work is extensive across the three teams, with the 2026-2027 year set up, to achieve more.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Integrated Catchment Management Committee resolve to:

- 1 Receive the report - 2025-2026 Operational Update from Land Sustainability, Biodiversity and Freshwater farm plan programmes.

Background

The Land Sustainability, Biodiversity and Freshwater Farm Plan programmes deliver integrated and enduring on-the-ground advisory services and education to our community and landowners, to implement the change required in their businesses and support Council's outcomes.

This report updates the results for 2025-2026 financial year delivering the programmes targeted services. The model for delivery of the work is based on the current Freshwater Management Unit (FMU) structure, specifically in the four major river catchments, the southern Catlins area, and estuarine areas.

Biodiversity Programme

The Biodiversity programme has a new ten-year core focus which was presented to Council previously. The programme was in transition early in 2025-2026 following on from the successful five-year programme in partnership with the government's Jobs for Nature programme.

Four key programmes have been established and started in the 2025-2026 year. They are:

1. Key Native Ecosystems (KNE) programme providing a focused emphasis on biodiversity management plans (BMP) at key native ecosystems on private land.
2. Community Grants programme provides support and funding to community groups (\$100,000) across the region up to a maximum of \$10,000/group annually.
3. Biodiversity Educational Workshops programme provides annual delivery of specific biodiversity topics to upskill and create greater capability in managing our habitats and species.
4. Ecological survey programme provides a benchmark to the condition and extent of Murihiku Southland's native biodiversity for sites that request a survey.

2025-2026 Results

Community Groups Grants

Twenty-six Community Groups were supported with advice throughout the year. Fifteen received community grants totalling \$102,781, which is 17% of the total value committed by the Groups at \$492,659. Appendix 1 lists the 2025-2026 and current fiscal years community grant fund recipients.

Combined the Community Group's achieved the following results:

- Weed control 111 ha
- Pest Animal control 37,533 ha
- Restoration planting 4 ha
- No. Plants 7,027
- No. People 216
- No. Hours 3,719

Biodiversity Educational Workshops

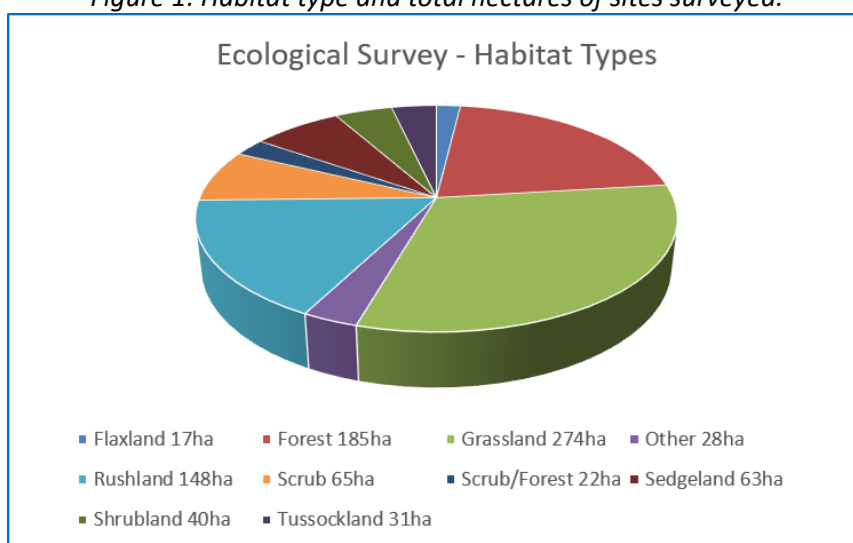
Three workshops were held:

1. 'Growing from here': a seed collection and propagation workshop at Lumsden (26 attendees) provided attendees with an understanding of how to collect seed from a range of native species, including the concept of eco-sourcing, and how to propagate them successfully for future planting.
2. 'Root of the Problem': a pest plant management workshop was held at Thomsen's bush (18 attendees) providing details on how to manage various pest plants.
3. 'Signs of Life': a workshop on monitoring methods to understand restoration success at a site was held in Riverton (10 attendees). For example, using pest animals and vegetation change monitoring.

Ecological surveying

Eight properties had surveys completed totaling 837ha by habitat type shown in Figure 1. The location of the sites is listed in Appendix 2. This survey information adds value to the Council's knowledge of valuable indigenous sites across Murihiku Southland. The 2026-2027 ecological surveys will only be provided for sites and properties that are going to enter our Key Native Ecosystem programme or gain a QEII Trust covenant or kawenata. The reason for this is to ensure Council funds for surveying are being used to develop a biodiversity management plan to protect and enhance the site, or the site will be protected by a covenant long-term.

Figure 1: Habitat type and total hectares of sites surveyed.



Note: flaxland, rushland and sedgeland are specific ecological habitat types, however in general terms are considered types of wetlands.

Key Native Ecosystems (KNE) programme

The programme was in development in 2025-2026, and staff began searching for landowners keen to join the programme following the summer period. There were no sites entered into the programme in 2025-2026. For this current year there are 17 KNE sites that staff are collaborating with the landowners to get them to commit to a biodiversity management plan and the funding it will provide. Appendix 3 contains a map highlighting the current location of potential KNE projects.

The Biodiversity team also manages and administers the Biodiversity Technical Group, which brings together Murihiku Southland stakeholders who work in biodiversity management. They chaired 5 meetings. The team also responds to general requests which totaled 46, seeking advice on funding for biodiversity projects and general biodiversity information.

Land Sustainability Programme

The Land Sustainability Programme's ten-year core focus which was presented to Council is based on current and future risks and issues for land, soil, and water of Southland. It is a suite of programmes all interrelated and with a core focus on dairy and sheep, beef and deer farmers and foresters implementing work to secure their businesses into the future and ensuring that compliance with our rules occurs. The programme was revised in 2025-2026 to bring more structured focus to the programme delivery.

The key work delivery areas are:

1. Intensive Winter Grazing (IWG) programme is a proactive on-farm advisory service – focusing on the farm system, smart wintering re cultivation and grazing, and when necessary, preparing plans.
2. Catchment Improvement Fund (CIF) programme providing funding to projects on farm to improve freshwater quality and reduce erosion such as fencing and riparian work.
3. Catchment Groups programme is an integrator programme – whereby it allows us to deliver and communicate all our programmes into the community or catchment group as trusted advisors.
4. Land Management Advisory Service programme providing a service to external and internal requests and general advice, especially supporting our compliance requirements.
5. Forestry Sector programme providing an advisory service and support to the compliance and consent requirements of Council and to increase our role through engagement and leadership with the Southland based forestry industry (e.g. Southland Wood Council and Forestry Companies).

New for 2026-2027:

6. Freshwater Farm Plan programme providing support to the Freshwater Farm plan project/team using our aligned programmes, to increase the implementation of the plan and actions.
7. Waihopai Catchment Project delivers a coordinated rural and urban response at a catchment scale, aligning community engagement and operational activities to support long-term environmental resilience.
8. Under the umbrella of the Learning from the Land program delivering a leasehold land management programme that partners with property management and leaseholders to complete requests, undertake on farm inspections and coordinate maintenance.

2025-2026 Results

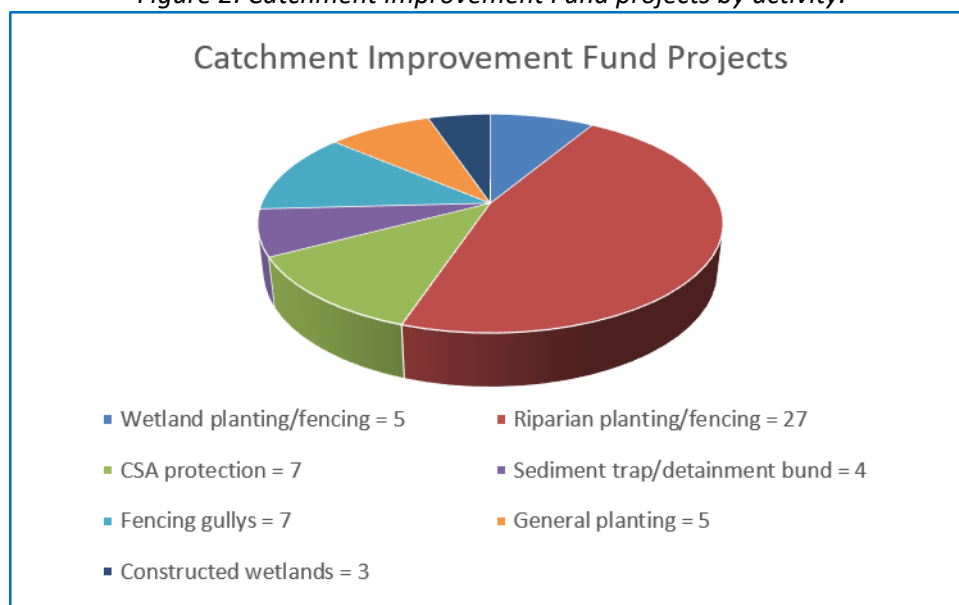
Catchment Improvement Fund

Sixty-five Catchment Improvement Fund projects were supported throughout the year. Fifty-eight received funding completing their projects. Seven were not completed but have been transferred to 2026-2027. Council funding totalled \$224,489, which is 28% of the total value committed by landowners at \$794,838. Figure 2 shows a breakdown of the types of projects funded.

Projects by catchment:

Waiau 8
 Aparima 11
 Ōreti 24
 Maitara 15

Figure 2: Catchment Improvement Fund projects by activity.



Intensive Winter Grazing

Thirty-five requests were received to support farmers with intensive winter grazing. Twenty were general advisory requests on farm looking at how to implement their winter grazing with buffer zones and CSA management and 6 were for intensive winter grazing plans. Five visits were supporting the compliance team for issues of non-compliance.

Eight field days were delivered in 2025-2026. The 4 spring field days had a focus on cultivation practices and options to manage the impact and soil health. They were held in Fairfax, Wyndham, Te Anau and Riverdale. 125 people attended in total.

The four intensive winter grazing field days were held in autumn and a total of 70 attendees. They were held in Otautau, Lochiel, Pukerau, and at Jericho Station in the Waiau Catchment. Numbers were down at two of the events which was disappointing. The key lesson learnt is to work with our Catchment Groups and agricultural professionals to choose the subject and set up a more meaningful field day.

All the field days are well supported by the MPI On-Farm Support team.

Catchment Groups

The combined teams of Land Sustainability and Biodiversity staff responded and supported 76 Catchment Group requests throughout the year, supporting Thriving Southland. 49 requests were attendance at meetings, field days, and workshops providing general advice and support and 27 were specific catchment group projects supported where staff provided a greater degree of support and implementation such as with the Waikawa (biosecurity on farm), Makarewa Headwaters (deer monitoring), and Upper Aparima (deer/possum programme).

Overall, the combined teams respond to Catchment Groups and Thriving Southland requests consistently.

Land Management Advisory Service

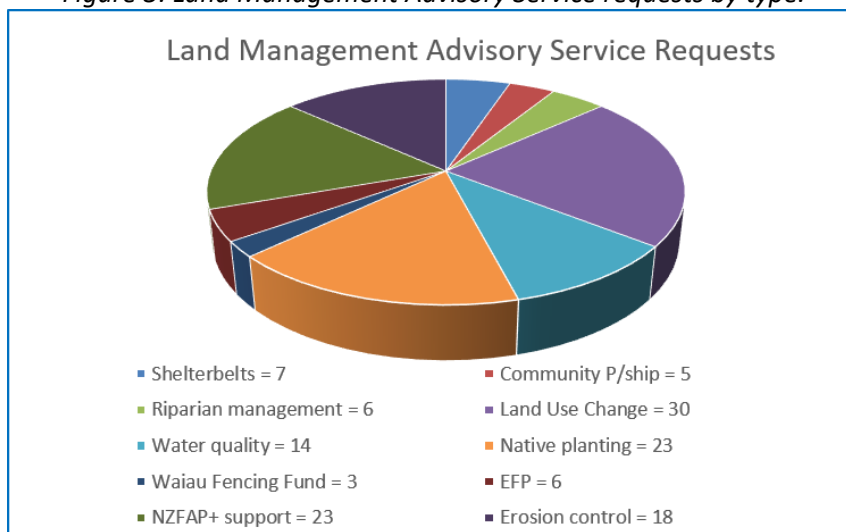
Staff were requested or followed up with clients 112 times throughout the year for general enquiries relating to the land sustainability programmes and our advisory service. The breakdown of those requests is shown in Figure 3. The Homecreek project near Manapouri is a good example of the staff's work in the community, supporting their initiatives to create recreational and educational spaces whilst protecting the environment.

Staff supported 18 secondary school events educating the students on a range of topics in line with their curriculum requirements. Examples were:

- Sacred Heart School - Enviro-Schools exercise
- Southland Girls High School – SHA at Waihopai
- Southland Girls High School – Visit to Waituna lagoon and farm
- Southland Boys High School - Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Clash of the Colleges – 10+ southland High school young farmers teams
- Fiordland College – Environmental education – supporting Homecreek planting

A new initiative is increasing our relationship with Silver Fern Farms with regards to supporting the New Zealand Farm Assurance Programme Plus (NZFAP+) which has a large component of environmental standards for farmers to meet. We have been in touch with Alliance Group to work with them also. The staff mostly provide advice and training on water quality (stream assessments) and biodiversity assessments as per the assurance programme requirements. We are looking to grow our advisory work across more of the standards such as the soil health standard. This work is important and a growth area which brings together the meat processing companies, landowners, and ourselves to improve on farm environmental management, especially via farm planning. It is an initiative that ORC is also supporting.

Figure 3: Land Management Advisory Service requests by type.



Forestry Sector programme

The Land Sustainability team has a large responsibility and role with our Southland Forestry Sector. In 2025-2026 we serviced 199 notices from 14 companies which they are required to provide us based on a range of activities. Breaking down those notices - afforestation notices were down from previous year (45) with only 33 in 2025-2026 year. Harvesting notices were up this year with 78 as opposed to 61 the previous year. Replanting notices did not match the previous year's 61 harvest notices, and there is an expectation that replanting will occur this year. Other notices related to earthworks and quarrying related activity.

The team has a new focus for this year in that they must contact and visit every forestry company in Southland. In 2025-2026, seven visits to companies were made. They were to KF Lindsay and Dixon, Southern Forests New Zealand, Log Marketing, Matariki, Forest Management, IFS and John Turkington Limited. These visits are important to sustain the excellent working relationship with these companies to keep them abreast of Council activity.

Staff attended two Southern Environmental Working Group (Forestry) field day/meetings. This group is a combined Otago and Southland sector group. One field day was held at Milton and visited nearby forests that were being harvested looking at skid sites and earthworks, with the second field day held in Invercargill.

Land Sustainability Programme Additional Activity

The staff also continue to extend themselves by being involved in a range of external and internal activities. Staff are involved and support the annual Ballance Farm Environment Awards – participating on the committee and on-farm judging. We also support our own Community Awards with promotion and participation. We chair the annual IWG meetings with external stakeholders and participate in the IWG internal meetings.

We also manage the Southern Pest Eradication Society (SPES) programme. Key activity during 2025–2026 included operating across the entire programme area where no new hotspots of rabbits were identified. This is an area of 143,268 ha. Appendix 5 contains a map of the control area. Rabbit numbers remained stable with total culled 522 from 392 locations. The contractors have maintained positive landowner relationships, especially in the Wyndham, Mimihau, and Redan area. The approach to rabbit control is still a mixture of using dogs, daytime shooting and targeted night shooting.

Freshwater Farm Plan Programme

The Freshwater Farm plan service is focusing on every farm who requires a freshwater farm plan to have one. The Freshwater Farm plan team was stood-up in 2025-2026 and have been developing and delivering the programme since.

The key work delivery areas are:

1. *Southland Farm Plans Programme* – is a farmer focused support service that helps farm operators develop fit for purpose farm plans aligned to environmental outcomes and regulatory readiness.
2. *Southland Farm Plans - Leasehold land* – providing a farmer focused support service for farm operators leasing land owned by Environment Southland.
3. *Southland Farm Plans - Quality Assurance project* – supporting a quality assurance process that provides consistent and credible farm plan certification by working with certifiers and auditors.

2025-2026 Results

Southland Farm Plans Programme

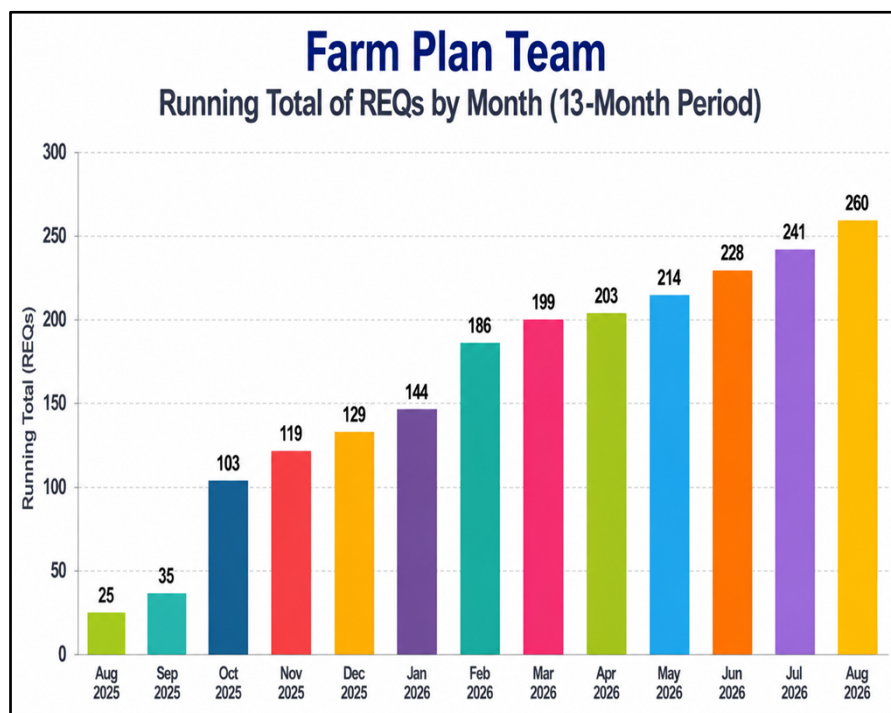
Demand has increased steadily throughout the 2025-2026 year, reaching 260 requests by August 2026. This highlights a growing interest from landowners and the staff efforts in communicating the need and requirements of a freshwater farm plan.

Catchment Group engagement has grown significantly with the following groups holding workshops and meetings with staff to understand more about the process and requirements. The 18 Catchment Groups are: Waikawa, Waikaka, ACE, Aparima, Otamita, Dipton, Waimatuku, Ōrepuki, Lower Waiau, Edendale, South Coast, Waituna, Hedgehope, Makarewa, Lower Ōreti, Otama, Wendon side and Wendon catchment groups.

Nine Farm Plan Drop-In Sessions generated 35 additional one-on-one engagements. Two workshops were delivered with ACE Catchment Group members with eight attendants, and further catchment-based training is planned with Waikaia and Waikawa Catchment Groups.

Significant effort has been invested in developing high-quality resources for farmers including a Farm Plan Developers Guide, example farm plan, guidance materials, video instructions, an online Catchment Context Tool and collaboration with the GIS team to develop new mapping tools and systems.

The team completed 81 stakeholder engagement activities and maintained strong partnerships with Thriving Southland, iwi, industry organisations and government agencies.



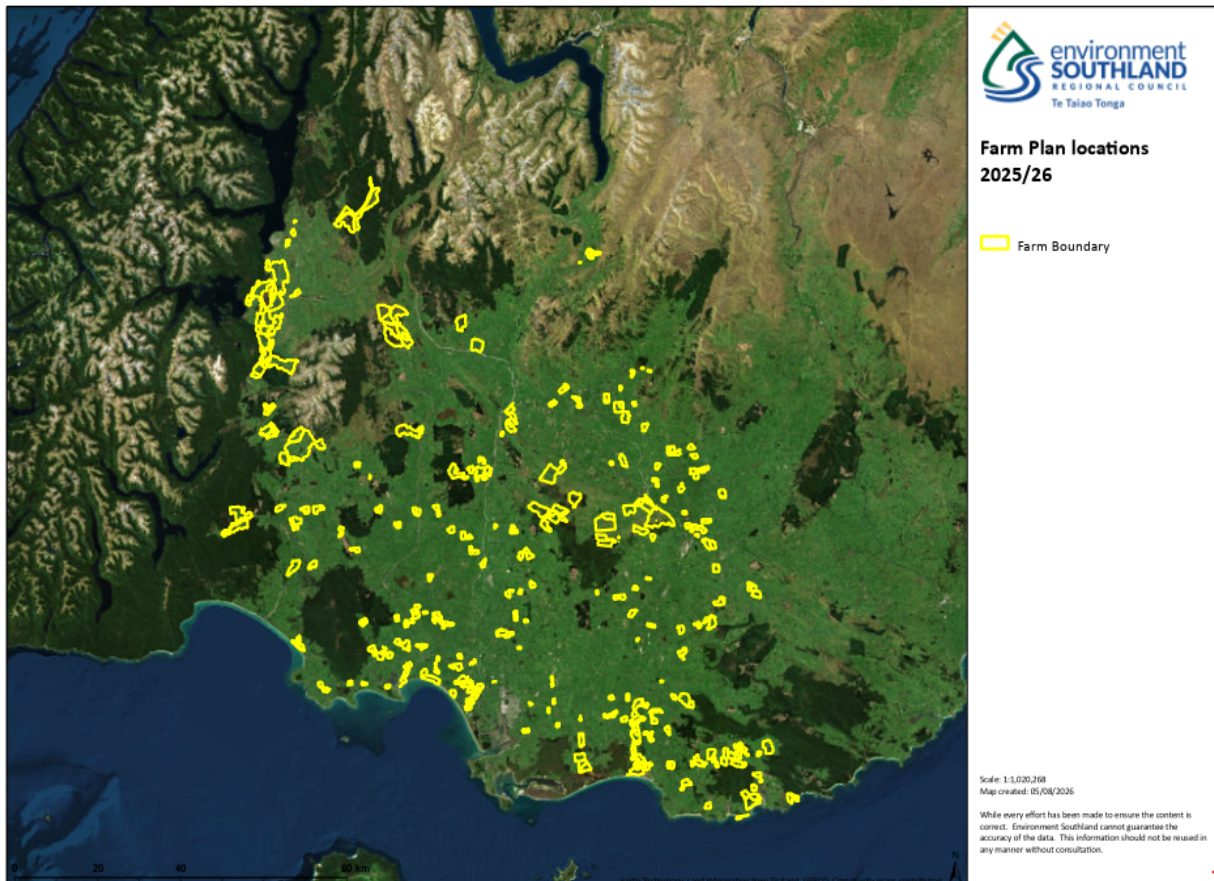
Southland Farm Plans - Quality Assurance

In partnership with Te Ao Marama Inc, the team has delivered regional Freshwater Farm Plan certifier training in May 2026. Southland now has 24 approved certifiers. The team also conducts professional development and file review processes to provide feedback, improve consistency and build confidence so certifiers can champion freshwater farm plans and their value to businesses, communities and water quality.

The team works closely with Asure Quality to meet quality assurance obligations and identify emerging risks.

Geographic Reach Across Southland

The farm locations map demonstrates that support is being provided across virtually all of Southland. Activity is concentrated through central Southland, Southland Plains, eastern catchments, western farming areas and southern coastal districts, highlighting the regional reach of the programme.



Council Outcomes Results

The Land Sustainability, Biodiversity and Freshwater Farm Plan programmes are supporting the Council in achieving Te Mahere Wā-Roa 2024-2034 Long-Term Plan outcomes and Healthy Environment Group of Activities outcomes.

The following results are examples of working towards those outcomes:

- Communities empowered and resilient; for example, working with catchment and community groups
 - Number of connections by the combined programmes to support the outcome = 183
- Communities expressing diversity; for example, working with communities protecting taonga species
 - Number of community group connections to support the outcome = 27
 - Potential KNE projects = 17
 - Number of Catchment Groups supported = 94
- Protect, restore and enhance indigenous biodiversity and health of ecosystems including areas of significant native vegetation and habitats.
 - Number of community group connections to support the outcome = 27
 - Potential KNE projects = 17
- Control or eradicate harmful species – related to the impact on species and habitat

- SPES rabbit programme 522 rabbits (143,268 ha)
- Community Group Pest Animal control (37,533ha)
- Safeguard the health of freshwater in the region and its life-supporting capacity.
 - Catchment Improvement Fund projects = 58
- Safeguard the health of soils in rural areas and its life-supporting capacity and Sustainable use of rural land resource.
 - Intensive Winter Grazing and Cultivation field days which focus on soil loss and management = 8
 - Intensive Winter Grazing plans and advice = 35
- Protect, restore and enhance indigenous biodiversity and health of ecosystems including areas of significant native vegetation and habitats.
 - Number of community connections to support the outcome = 27
 - Potential KNE projects = 17
 - Catchment Improvement Fund wetland projects = 3

Fit with strategic framework

OUTCOME	CONTRIBUTES	DETRACTS	NOT APPLICABLE
Managed access to quality natural resources	✓		
Diverse opportunities to make a living	✓		
Communities empowered and resilient	✓		
Communities expressing their diversity	✓		

Appendix 1

List of 2025 2026 Community Group Grant recipients

BCG 25-26 - Tuatapere Reserve Pest Control Group - Tuatapere Domain
BCG 25-26 - Friends of Kew Bush - 551 Elles Road
BCG 25-26 - Aparima Pest Busters Charitable Trust - Te Wai Korari Wetland
BCG 25-26 - Valleys Group - Fiordland National Park
BCG 25-26 - Big Bay Awarua Conservation Trust - Big Bay
BCG 25-26 - Bluff Hill Motupohue Environmental Trust - Bluff Hill
BCG 25-26 - Bush Haven - 53 Martin St
BCG 25-26 - Clifden Suspension Bridge Reserves Planting Project - Clifden Suspension Bridge
BCG 25-26 - Native Forest Restoration Trust - Oreti Totara Dune Forest Reserve
BCG 25-26 - Hollyford Conservation Trust - Lower Hollyford Valley, Fiordland National Park
BCG 25-26 - Otatara Landcare Group - Bushy Point
BCG 25-26 - Te Waiau Mahika Kai Trust - Blackmount
BCG 25-26 - SIRCET - Rakiura / Stewart Island
BCG 25-26 - Waiau Fisheries & Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Trust
BCG 25-26 - Manapouri Weedbusters 2025-30

List of 2026 2027 Community Group Grant additional recipients

BCG 26-27 - Waikaia Forest Trapping Group
BCG 26-27 - Limehills Home & School Assoc - Kowhai Reach

Note that all the community groups who applied in 2025-2026 have been approved for grant funding for 2026-2027.

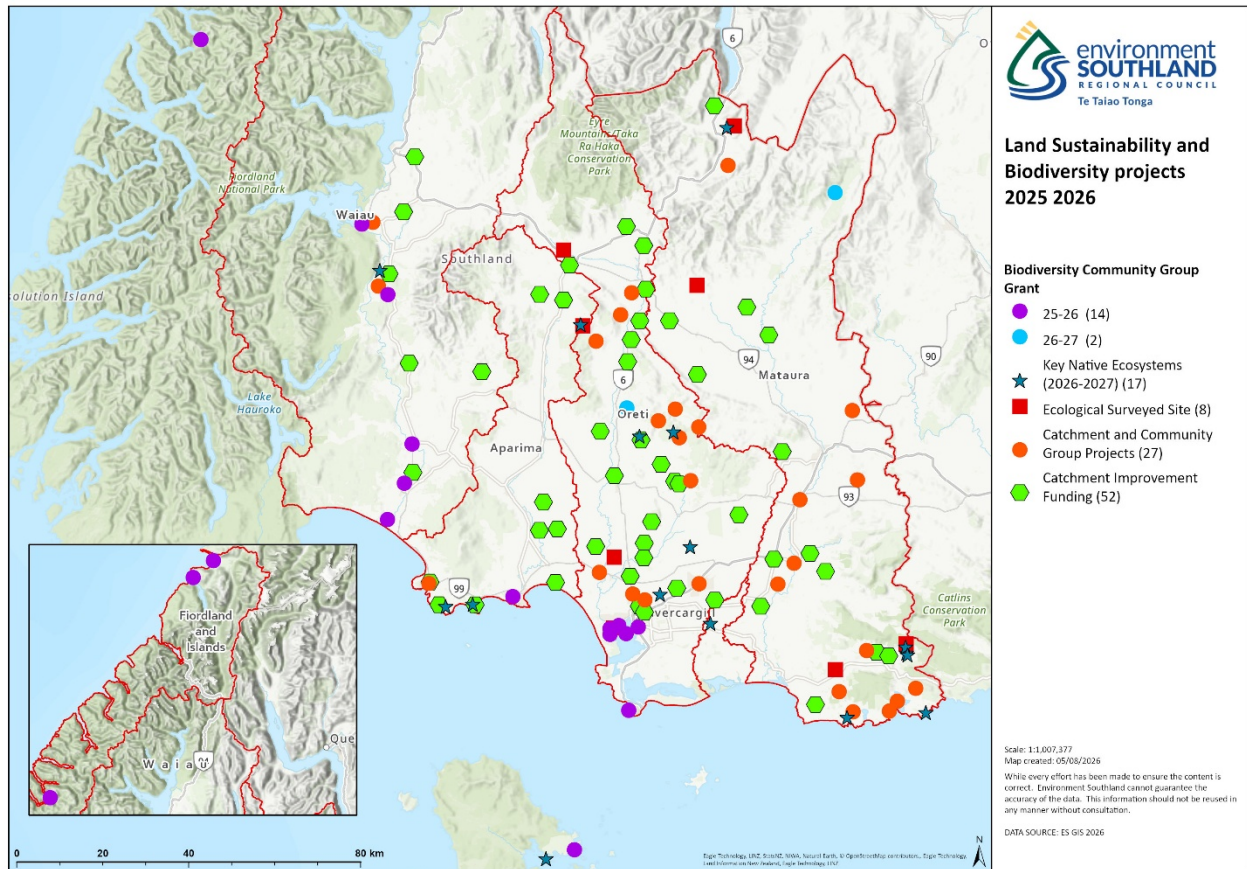
Appendix 2

List of locations for ecological surveys in 2025-2026.

1. Lorne Peak Station
2. 1106 Lochiel-Branxholme Road, RD 4, Invercargill 9874
3. 355 Gallagher Road, Acton, Mossburn, 9793
4. 173 Neill Road, Tokanui, 9884
5. 24c Matua Road, Otatara
6. 409 Castle Downs Road, RD 1, Dipton 9791
7. 545 Tomogalak Road, RD 6, Gore 9776
8. 221 Buckingham Road, RD 1, Tokanui 9884

Appendix 3

Map showing the location of the Land sustainability and Biodiversity projects for 2025-2026.



Appendix 4

Map showing the location of the Southern Pest Eradication Society control area.



10 Extraordinary/urgent business | Panui autia hei totoia pakihi

No notifications of extraordinary or urgent business were received for this meeting.

11 Public excluded business | He hui pakihi e hara mo te iwi

In accordance with section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and the particular interest/s protected by section 7 of that act, it is proposed that the public be excluded from the following parts of the proceedings of this meeting, namely:

- 11.1 Confirmation of public excluded minutes – Integrated Catchment Committee – 9 July 2026
- 11.2 Wilding Conifer Programme Update
- 11.3 Fiordland Pathways Plan Review
- 11.4 Bluff Haul Out
- 11.5 Stead Street Update

The general subject matters to be considered while the public is being excluded, the reason for this resolution in relation to the matter, and the specific grounds for excluding the public, as specified by Section 48(1) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 are set out below:

GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER	REASON FOR PASSING THE RESOLUTION	GROUND UNDER S.48(1)
Confirmation of public excluded minutes – Integrated Catchment Committee – 9 July 2026	To enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.	S.7(2)(h)
Wilding Conifer Programme Update	To enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.	S.7(2)(h)
Fiordland Pathways Plan Review	To enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.	S.7(2)(h)
Bluff Haul Out	To enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.	S.7(2)(h)
Stead Street Update	To enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities.	S.7(2)(h)