

Envirolink Newsletter

Newsletter – Autumn 2026



Coordinator's note

Greetings

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying a pleasant Aotearoa autumn. At this stage it is unknown if Envirolink will continue from 1 July 2026 but until then it is business as usual.

Tim Davie has retired from Environment Canterbury and has passed the Chair of the Envirolink Governance Committee to Jon Roygard (Horizons). Jon has been involved with Envirolink since the scheme began 21 years ago and is well placed to take on the Chair role.

Envirolink continues to deliver value to regional councils transferring environmental research knowledge from government-funded science providers. The annual budget from 1 July is \$2.0M (ex GST). Nominally \$1.4M is allocated to advice grants and the remaining \$0.6M to Tool projects.

The funding thresholds for the three advice grant classes remain at: Small (\$10K), Medium (\$40K), and Large (up to \$80K). It is anticipated that there will be a Tool round closing 7 October 2026. As per previous rounds the tool applications need to be submitted by a SIG. Details on how to apply are available on the website <http://envirolink.govt.nz/>.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

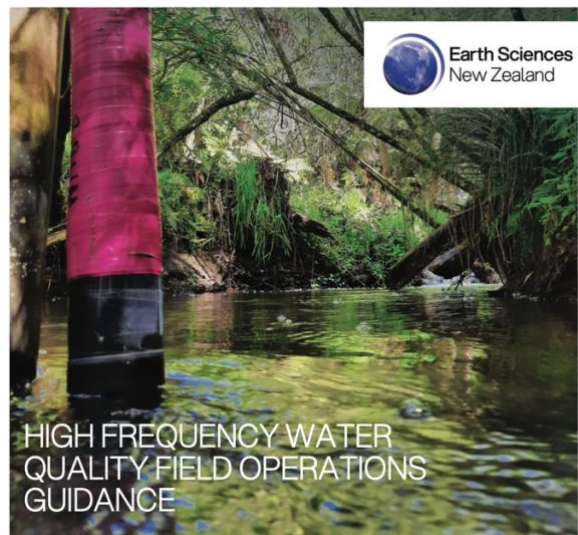
Bill - (BillDyck@xtra.co.nz)

New tools available

There are more than 60 resource management tools developed through the Envirolink scheme and available on the website, and more being developed. See <https://envlink.govt.nz/envirolink-tools/>

The most recent tools added are:

[R19-4 High frequency water quality monitoring guidance](#) – and for [more detail](#)



Prepared by Earth Sciences New Zealand (formerly NIWA) researchers in collaboration with regional councils as part of the *High Frequency Water Quality (HFWQ) Monitoring Guidance Project*, the guidance available here for download will help local authorities, environmental practitioners, community groups, and individuals to plan HFWQ monitoring.

R20-2 Improving soil health through improved implementation of soil quality indicators

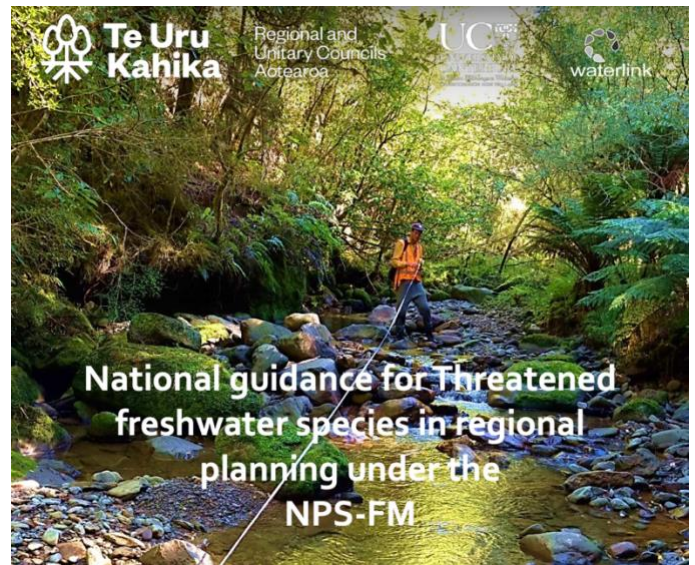


Regional council state of the environment (SoE) soil quality monitoring is the primary means by which councils monitor the health of soils in their regions. Monitoring has been conducted since the early 2000s, but there has been no robust review of the performance of the suite of soil quality indicators. This project reviews the performance and implementation of existing, and potential new, SOE soil quality indicators in terms of improving environmental outcomes.

New reports now available

Several new reports are available on the Envirolink website. There have been more than 1500 projects most of which have produced reports posted to: <https://envirolink.govt.nz/envirolink-reports/>. Newer reports include:

[2506-NLCC131 National guidance for threatened freshwater species in regional planning under the NPS-FM](#)



This report provides national guidance to assist regional councils in implementing action plans for Threatened freshwater species under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPS-FM). Prompted by knowledge gaps identified through Ministry for the Environment workshops, the project was led by the SWIM group. The document outlines a collaborative and scientifically robust framework that regional authorities can use to incorporate Threatened species values into regional plans, enhancing both biodiversity protection and freshwater ecosystem health.

[2527-ESRC304 Nutrient load histories for Haldane Estuary and Jacobs River Estuary](#)



This study examined long-term trends in nutrient loads to Southland's Jacobs River and Haldane estuaries from 1840 to the present. We reconstructed historical land use in each estuary's catchment using a series of land cover maps and used these data to estimate nutrient loads with the CLUES model.

[2528-TSDC197 Is mussel farming restoring degraded seafloor habitats](#)



There is growing recognition that, in certain contexts, aquaculture can contribute positively to the environment. To contribute to this discussion, we compiled and analysed 13 years of monitoring data with the aim of detecting whether mussel farms have improved benthic habitat quality and ecosystem function in a region with a long history of environmental degradation.

[2445-MLDC173 Guidance for Councils on choice and use of erosion and sediment models in regulation](#)



The Guidance can assist each Council to make its own decisions about erosion and sediment models, thus contributing to the PCE (2024) recommendation on guidance to support the use of models. Although a step forward, this guidance does not go as far as

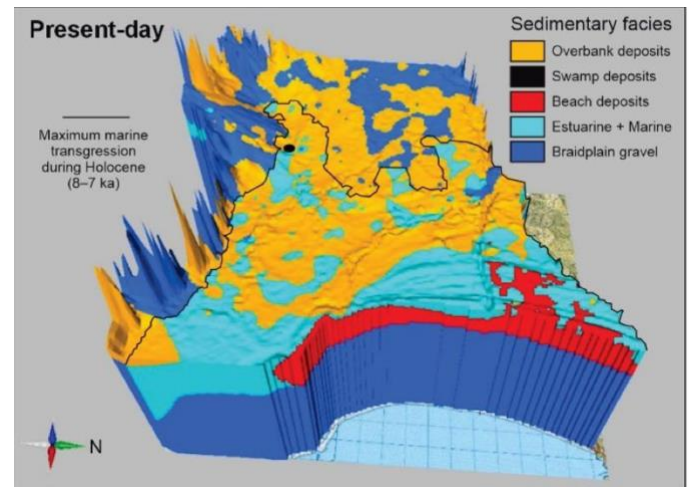
to set out the preferred suit of tools as recommended by the PCE (2024, recommendation 4).

[2518-ORC17 Determination and use of background concentrations of trace elements in soil in Otago and Southland](#)



The aim of the project was to develop a region-specific data set of natural and ambient concentrations of trace elements in soil for use in contaminated land assessment and the determination of clean fill acceptance criteria.

[2421-MLDC169 Wairau Plain Natural River-Bed Substrate Assessment](#)



The baseline model that is developed and presented in this study for natural (pre-anthropogenic) riverbed sediment cover in the Wairau Plain provides a simple and easy to use rapid assessment method to assist the MDC in identifying anthropogenically impacted sections of rivers and streams.

[2447-HZLC172 Workshop to establish a consistent method for determining the impacts of climate change on surface water flows](#)

[2429-ORC011 Alternative field-based approaches to animal wintering that deliver some improved environmental and animal welfare outcomes](#)



This report presents a synthesis of current knowledge about possible alternative approaches to intensive winter forage crop grazing, focussing on field-based systems that are feasible and affordable. This information has been requested by Otago Regional Council as a precursor to possible future initiatives that support farming communities to identify wintering approaches that have lower potential impacts on soil and water quality

[2446-TSDC195 Resilience of flood warning infrastructure](#)



This document provides guidance on the design, construction and maintenance of hydro-meteorological recording stations, their associated infrastructure and communication pathways, for resilience during severe weather.

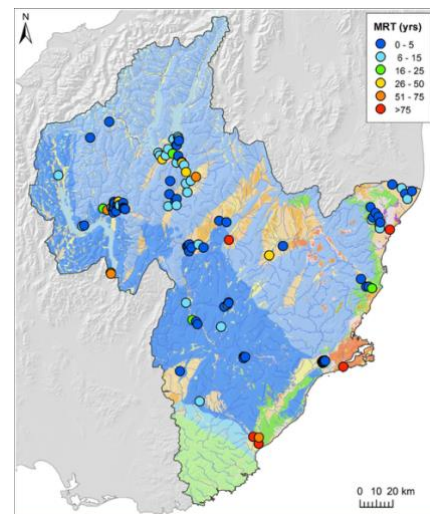
[2422-TRC006 Addendum to Modelling E. coli to support implementation of the NPS-FM](#)

[2438-MLDC172 Reasonable irrigation water use volumes - Wairau Plains](#)



Analysis of the modelling results suggest that the spatial variation in metered annual irrigation water use across the Wairau Plains can largely be explained by spatial variations in the capacity of soils to store and transmit water. Spatial variations in the depth to the groundwater table are also likely to explain some of the variation, though the influence of shallow groundwater wasn't specifically modelled in this project.

[2420-ORC009 Otago groundwater dynamics, source, and hydrochemical processes](#)



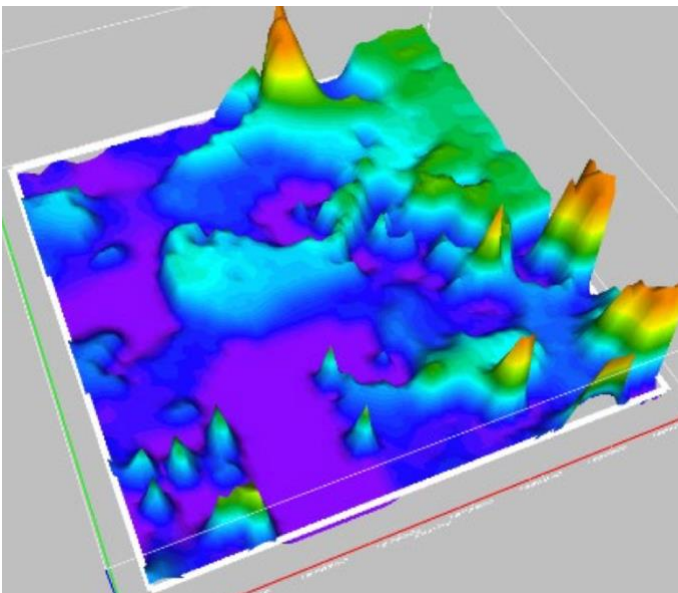
This study aims to holistically describe the flow sources, pathways and lag times of water through the rivers and aquifers of Otago region catchments. It brings together geochemical data from shallow and deep groundwater sources, providing an update to the last regional synthesis undertaken in 2001.

[2535-NLCC132 Kia mau te moana - a review of artificial aquatic habitats](#)



This report provides the first national assessment of purposeful and incidental artificial aquatic habitats (AAHs) in Aotearoa New Zealand, focusing on those AAHs that support ecological communities and restoration.

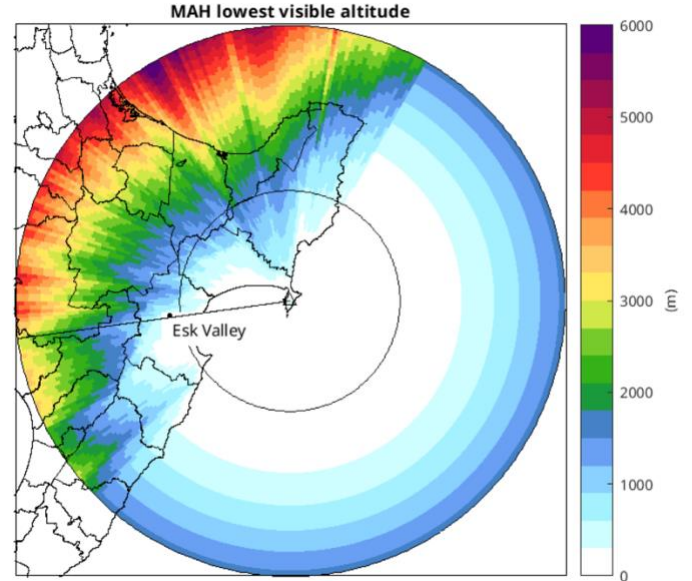
[2607-MLDC179 Thickness of aquifer cover in the Lower Wairau Plain](#)



[2411-HZLC170 Weeds of New Zealand](#)

An update on the publication.

[2515-HBRC276 Improving reliability and quality of rainfall information available during and after extreme events](#)



High quality rainfall information is an essential input into local government activities, such as planning and civil defence. The quality (potential errors) in rainfall information also needs to be well understood to minimise risks associated with acting on incorrect information.

[2507-HBRC274 Particulate Matter Sources and the Impact of Cyclone Gabrielle on the Hastings Airshed](#)



[2513-HBRC275 Understanding and mitigating seaweed forest change in Aotearoa NZ](#)



This project examined if seaweed forest community distribution and abundance have changed in Aotearoa New Zealand, and if so, how changes have impacted people who are associated with seaweed habitat.

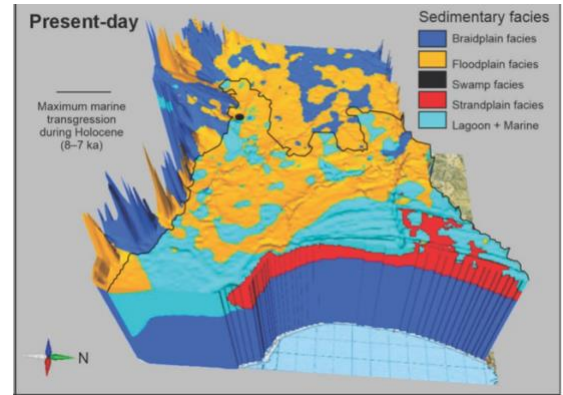
[2509-WCRC214 West Coast State of the Environment Report - groundwater quality 1998-2024](#)



This report includes: a summary of groundwater resources in the West Coast Region and their monitoring, an update on the state of and trend in groundwater quality in the region from the previous report, a state and trend assessment script for WCRC use, and recommendations for future monitoring.

[2504-MLDC 174 Wairau Plain Groundwater Prospecting Guidance](#)

This report provides guidance on the costs, benefits and methods for exploring the full extent of the hydrogeological sequence underlying the coastal Wairau Plain.



[2508-MLDC175 Blenheim Air Quality Evaluation](#)

This report evaluates air quality monitoring data for Blenheim. It includes an assessment of concentrations of PM10 and PM2.5 for the period 2017 to 2024 including trend evaluation and characterisation by time of day, season, day of week and by wind speed and direction.

[2532-ESRC306 Evaluation of the likely ecological impacts of aluminium, copper and zinc in Southland rivers](#)



This report summarises the survey-based work on metal concentrations in Southland rivers carried out by Environment Southland in 2023 and 2024.

And more at [Envirolink Reports](#)

