

Leveraging existing 'catchment communities' to implement te mana o te wai



Eliza Cowey, Water Engineer & ESG Influencer, AECOM

The mess we're in

Indigenous freshwater bird species

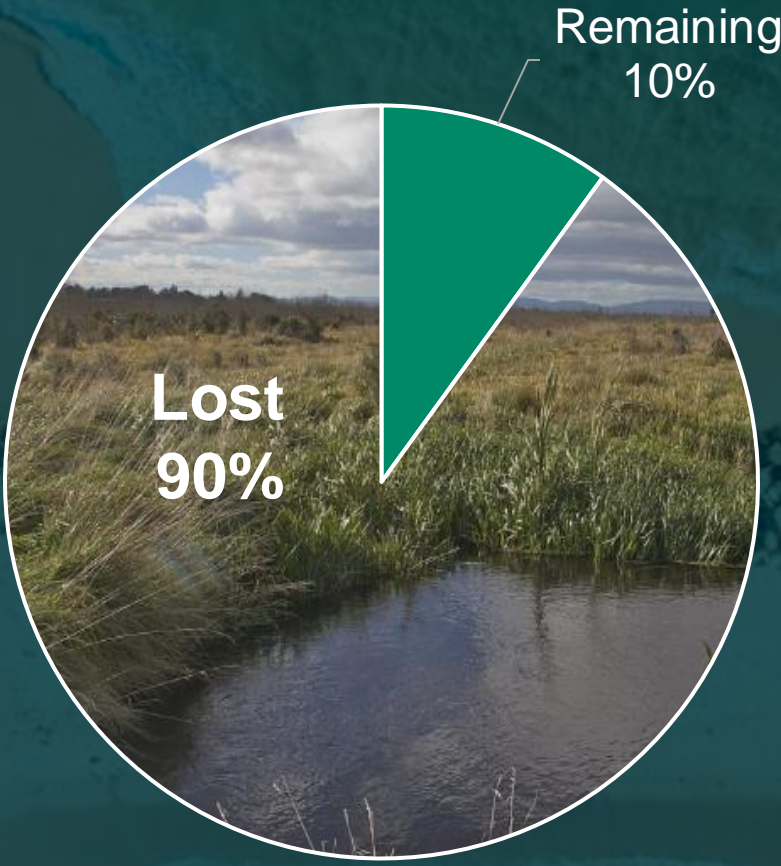


Indigenous freshwater fish species

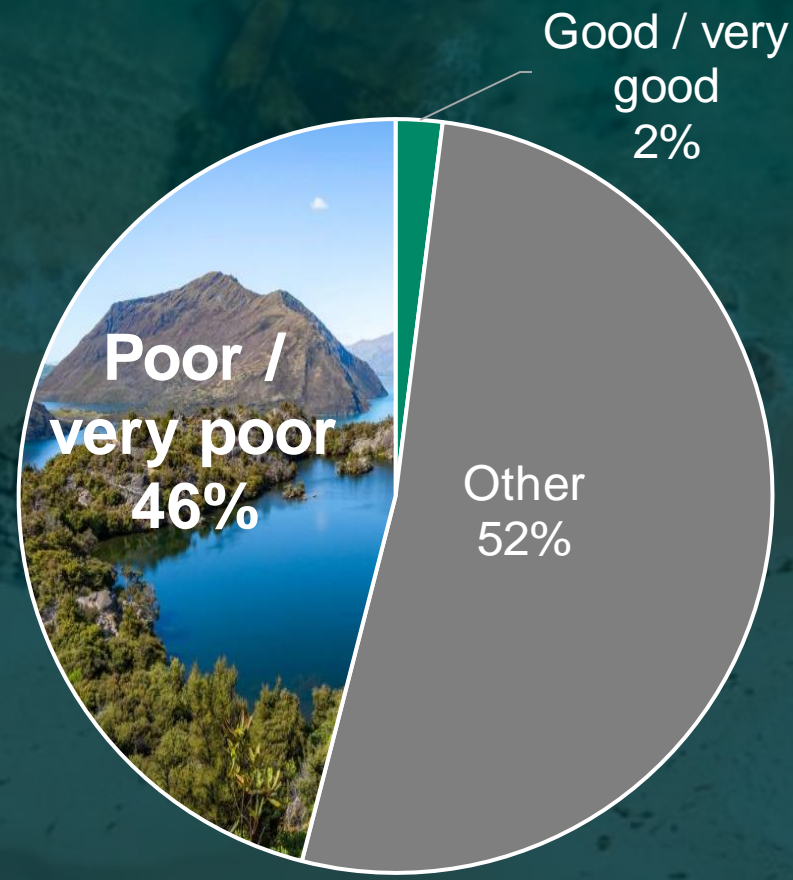


The mess we're in

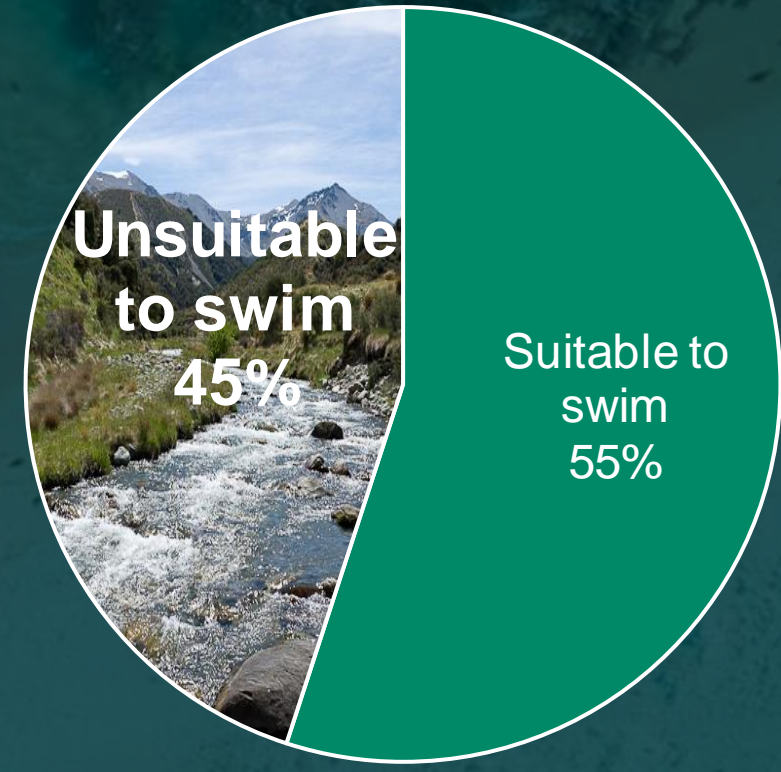
Historic wetland area



Health of Lakes > 1 ha



Swimmable rivers (by length)



The mess we're in



“Stop tying farms up in **red tape** and **impractical regulations**.”

“The **complexity of rural water** scheme ownership and operations has got rural people **worried**.”

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/opinion/132353720/forget-the-red-tape--farming-has-only-got-itself-to-blame-for-its-crises>

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/federated-farmers-opposed-to-three-waters-reform/PHVZLKBV54345A6B7WTFLUOSME/>



Agenda

- Meet NZ's 'Catchment Communities'
- Support needed
- Te Mana o te Wai
- Connecting the dots

How can we better utilise volunteers to give effect to Te Mana o te Wai?

NZ's 'Catchment Communities': Who are they?

- 240 grass-roots groups across NZ were surveyed in 2022
- Urban catchments, communities, collectives, catchment groups
- Main focus: biodiversity and / or waterways
- Number of members: range from <10 to >1000
 - “Member” = an individual who has either contributed financially to the group via membership fees, or volunteered at least twice in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- 37% contain tangata whenua, 69% interact with Māori entities (e.g. iwi, hapū, marae, Māori land trusts)

NZ's 'Catchment Communities': What do they do?

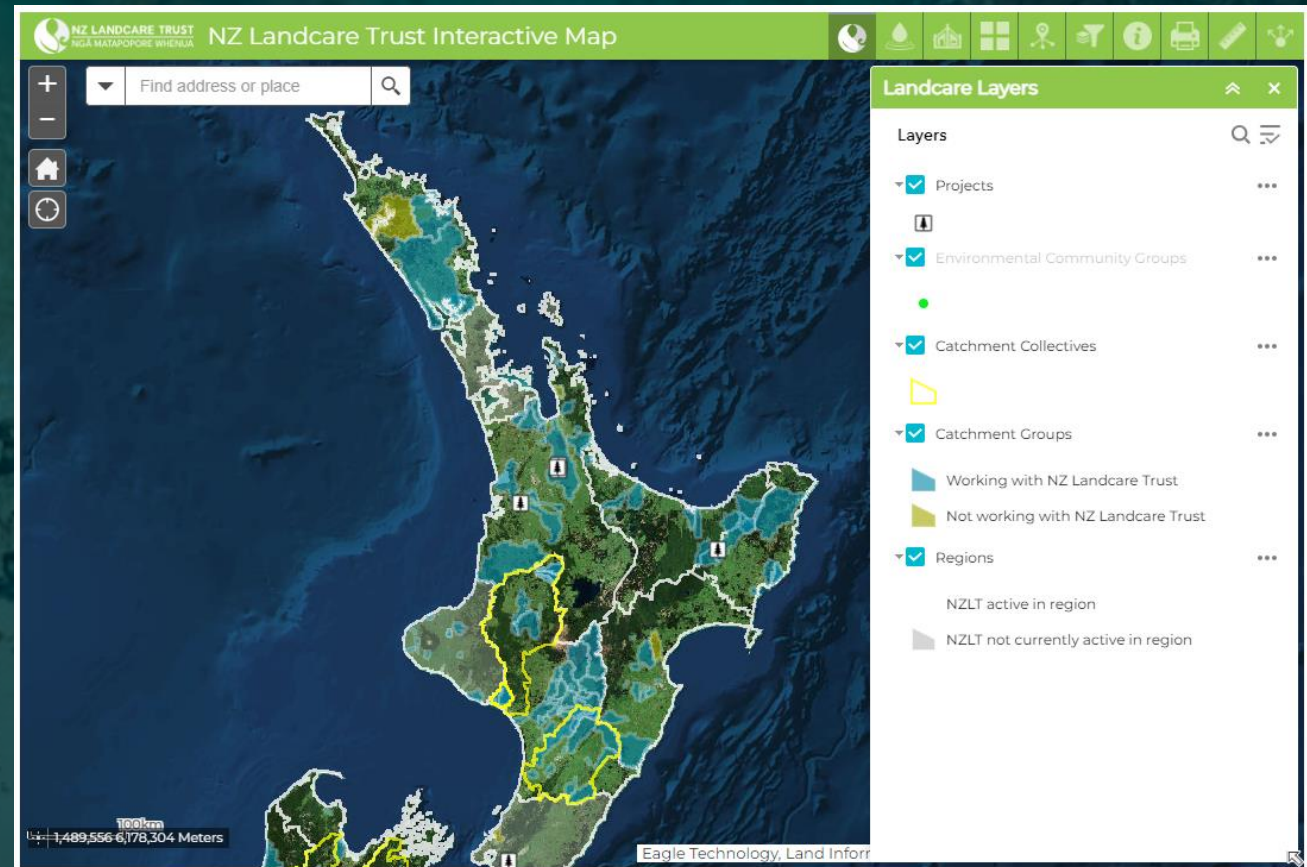
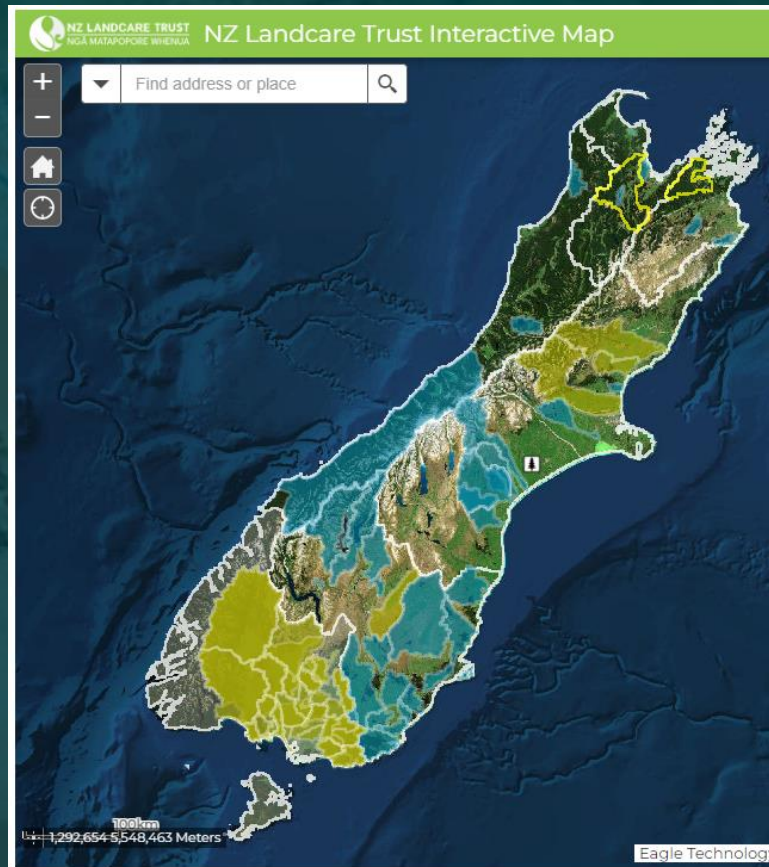
- Pest / weed control
- Planting
- Environmental monitoring
- Wetland restoration / protection / construction
- Improving local amenities
- Advocacy to government / industry
- Soil conservation
- Fencing
- Farm environment management plans
- Investigating land use / retirement

Reported reduction in:

- Nutrient & sediment point source loading
- Pathogens from runoff
- Flood generation & impacts
- Loss of biodiversity

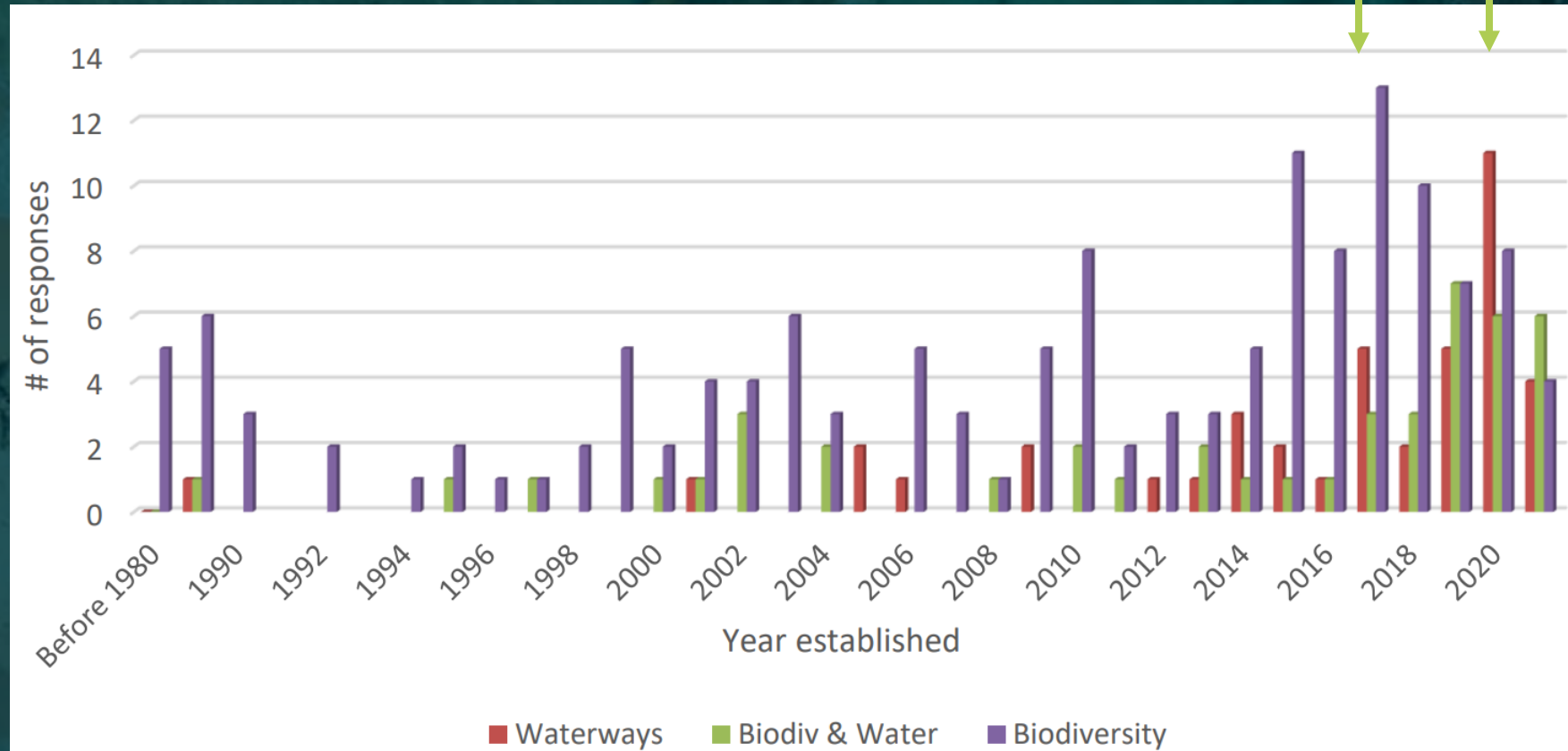


NZ's 'Catchment Communities': Where are they?



NZ's 'Catchment Communities': Since when?

National Policy Statement for Freshwater
Management versions released



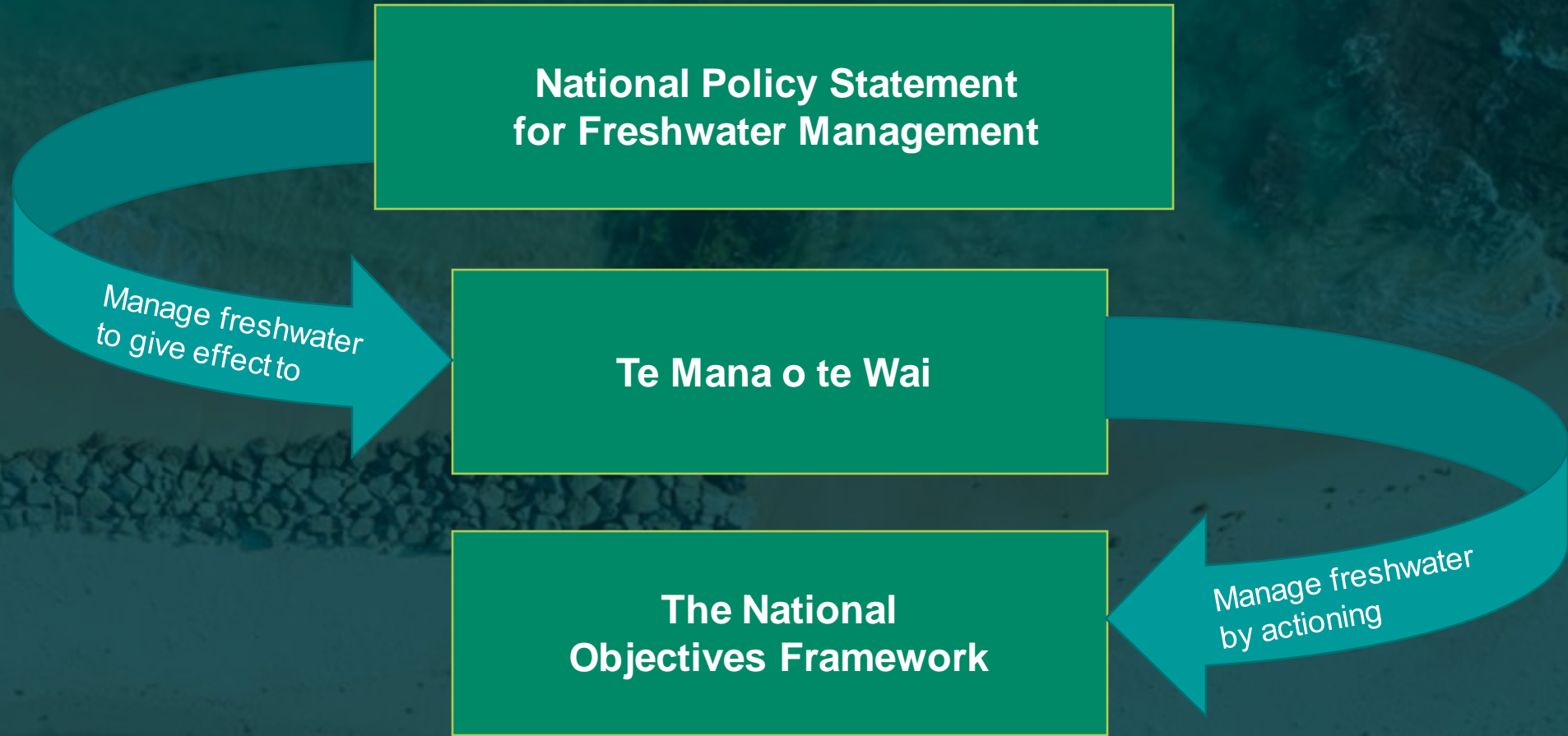
Support needed



- Funding
 - Proposals take time
 - Short-term vision
 - Inflexible spending
- Clear guidance
 - Technical expertise
 - Admin support
 - Apply Mātauranga Māori



Policy & Legislation



The Six Principles of Te Mana o te Wai

- **Mana whakahaere:** the power, authority, and obligations of tangata whenua to make decisions that maintain, protect, and sustain the health and well-being of, and their relationship with, freshwater
- **Kaitiakitanga:** the obligation of tangata whenua to preserve, restore, enhance, and sustainably use freshwater for the benefit of present and future generations
- **Manaakitanga:** the process by which tangata whenua show respect, generosity, and care for freshwater and for others
- **Governance:** the responsibility of those with authority for making decisions about freshwater to do so in a way that prioritises the health and well-being of freshwater now and into the future
- **Stewardship:** the obligation of all New Zealanders to manage freshwater in a way that ensures it sustains present and future generations
- **Care and respect:** the responsibility of all New Zealanders to care for freshwater in providing for the health of the nation

tangata
whenua

Authorities

All
of
us...

The National Objectives Framework (NOF)

*Requires that every regional council identifies values for **each freshwater management unit** in its region;*

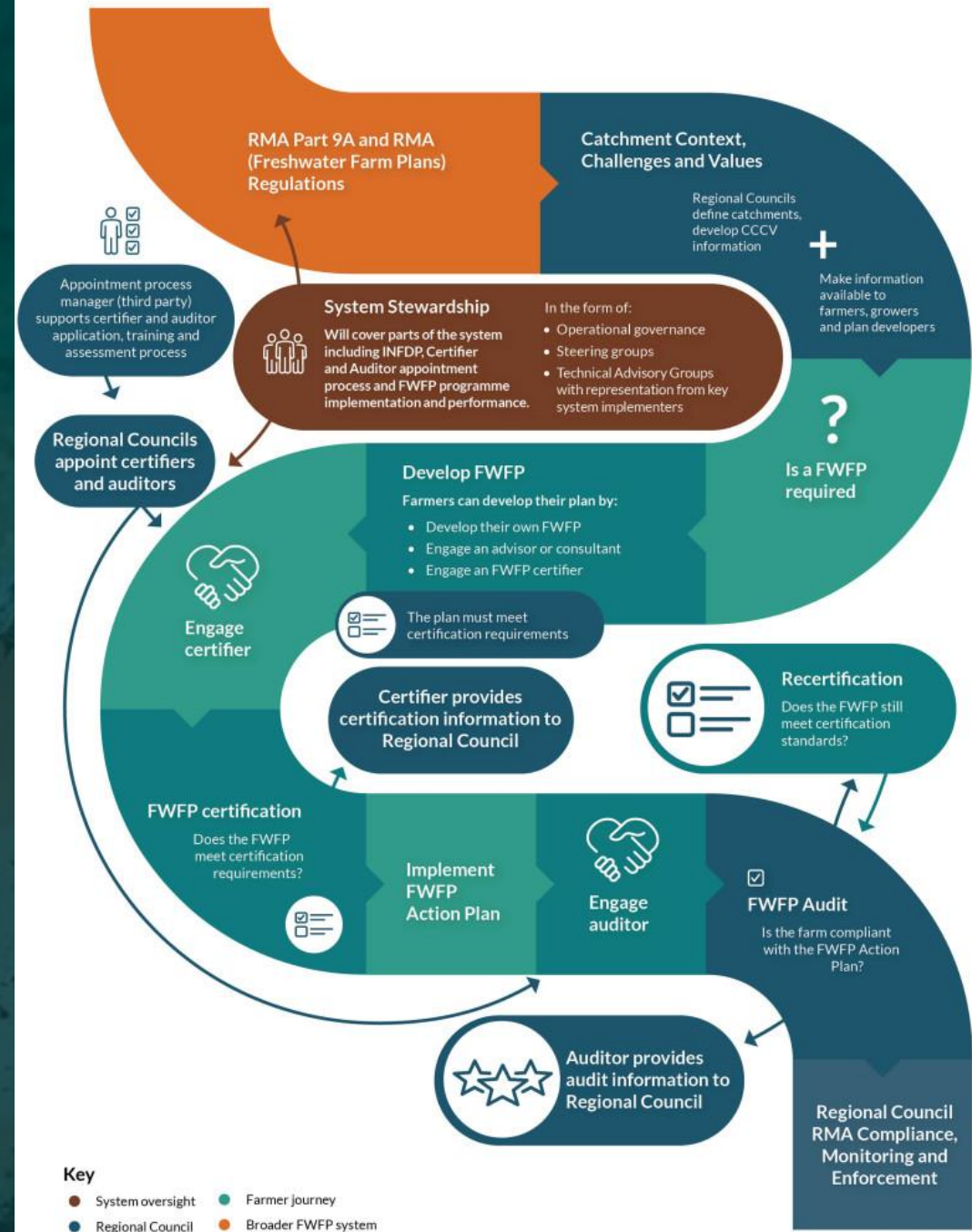
- **sets target** attribute states, and flows and levels, for waterbodies;
- **develops interventions** (limits specified in rules, or **action plans**) to achieve the target attribute states, flows, and levels;
- **monitors** waterbodies and freshwater ecosystems;
- and **takes steps** if deterioration is detected.

More Legislation since 2020, responsibility remains fractured

In lieu of the Regional Councils' plans, **Farmers** need to develop, certify, audit & enforce **Freshwater Farm Plans**...

- + Plus **Farm Environment Plans**,
- + Plus compliance with **Resource Consents**,
- + Plus compliance with **Industry Programmes**

Plus the new **Water Service Entities** will have “**primary responsibility** for managing and maintaining urban watercourses (natural or man-made open channels where water flows and collects e.g., rivers, gullies, ditches, and culverts) that have a stormwater function, including those located on private land.”



Connecting the dots... A call to action

Reform is an opportunity for each Water Entity, alongside Regional Councils to:



1. **Develop catchment-specific action-plans for community groups.**

Proactively provide coordination, support and communication regarding:

- Catchment-specific limits, monitoring methodologies, equipment, and centralised reporting (e.g., flow, sediment, nutrients, E. Coli, ecological markers, and dissolved oxygen).
- Appropriate tangata whenua contacts
- Interpretation of pre-settlement ecological markers to direct planting / restorative work



2. **Rationalise existing, diverse funding streams.**

Facilitate long-term direction, implementation and growth of catchment community projects.

Stewardship

The obligation of **all New Zealanders** to manage freshwater in a way that ensures it sustains present and future generations.

Care and respect

The responsibility of **all New Zealanders** to care for freshwater in providing for the health of the nation.

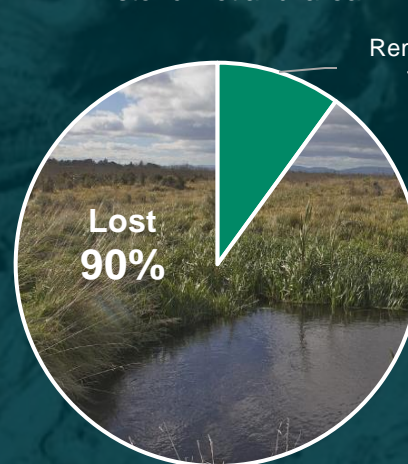
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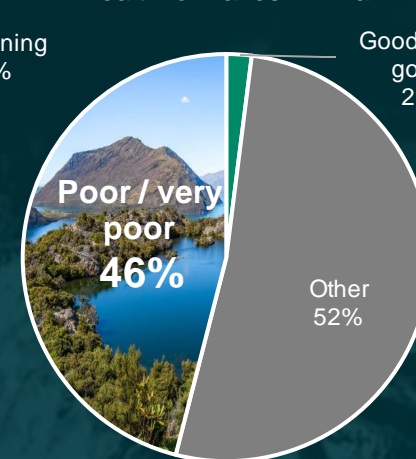
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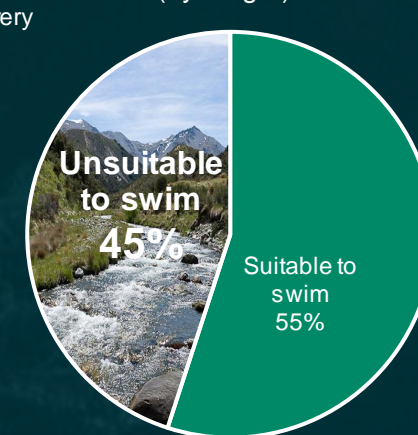
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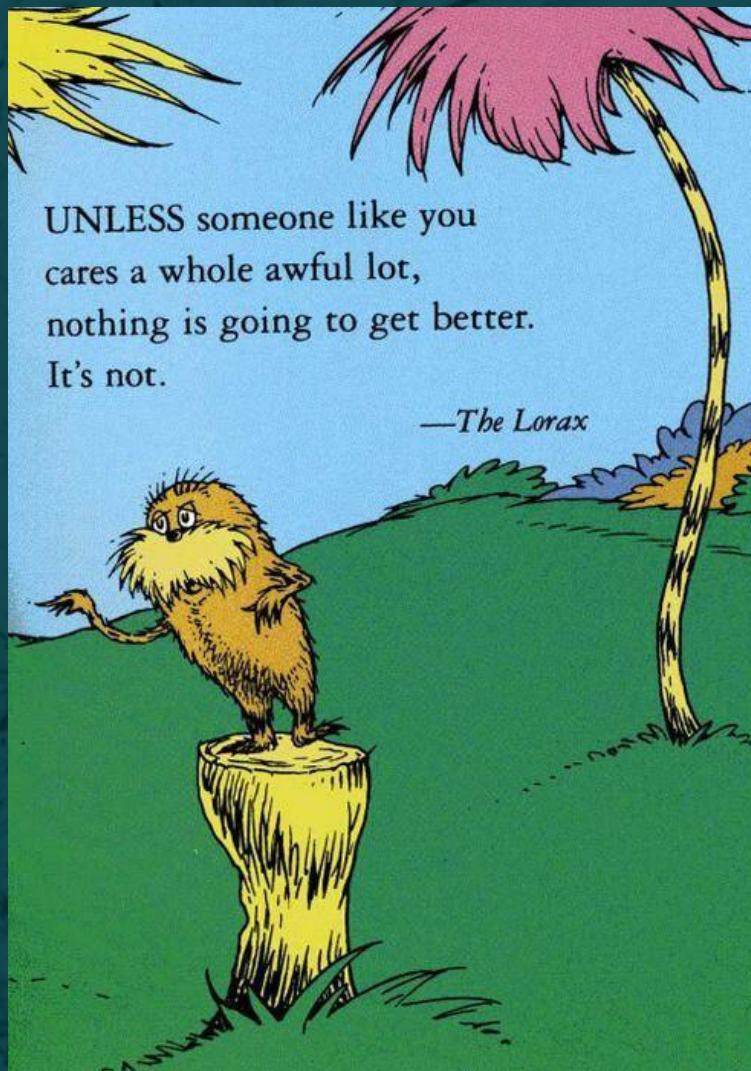


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Swimmable rivers (by length)





UNLESS someone like you
cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better.
It's not.

—*The Lorax*

Thank you