



# Braided Rivers

## BRaid Symposium 2020

Councillor Grant Edge

David Owen

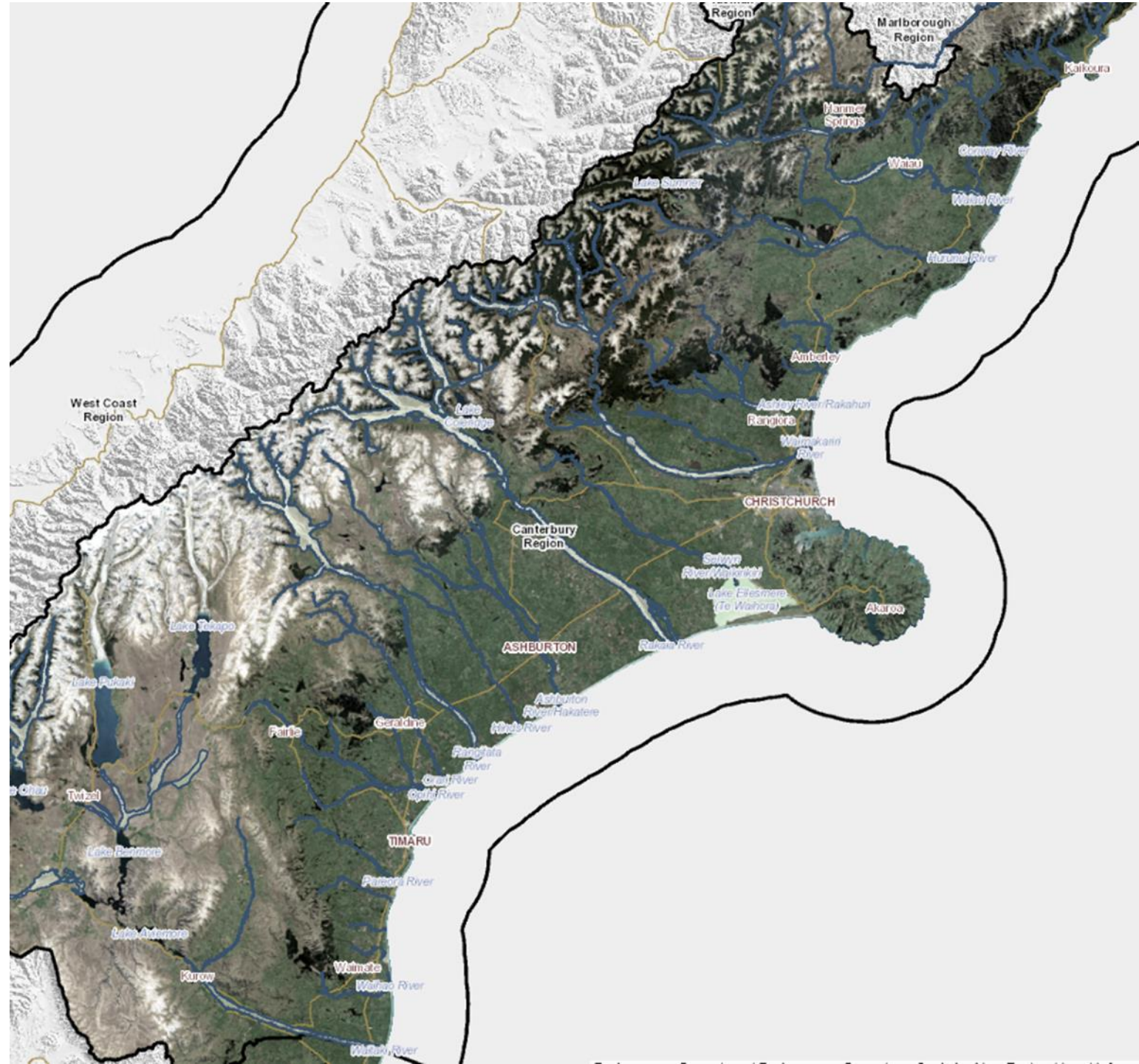
Frances Schmechel





# Braided river values

- Globally rare, iconic Canterbury features
- Dynamic, biologically rich ecosystems
- Vital link & corridor from mountains to sea
- Significant to Ngāi Tahu
- Irrigation, energy, recreation, amenity



# Environment Canterbury roles & responsibilities

## Regional Leadership

- Tuia / CWMS / Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy
- Community engagement / landholders / other agencies

## Regulator

- RMA policies, plans, consents, compliance, monitoring & enforcement
- Biosecurity Act

## Waterways Management

- Flood protection for assets & communities / rating / gravel extraction / navigation

## Landowner

- Endowment purposes / Regional Parks / reserves

## On- the-ground investment

- Biodiversity & biosecurity





# RMA riverbed definition

## Issue

- RMA definition of the bed of a river ‘...fullest flow without overtopping its banks’
- Environment Canterbury sought clarity on definition

## BRIDGE project

- Purpose – to identify the values, how they are managed & the extent of the river bed
- Zone committees, rūnanga, wider community meetings & workshops
- 4 representative river reaches - Waiau Uwha, Waihao, Ashburton / Hakatere and Ahuriri
- Intent – to include riverbed in a plan change

## High Court / Court of Appeal - Dewhirst

- Bed is narrower than Environment Canterbury applied it
- Plan change couldn't continue

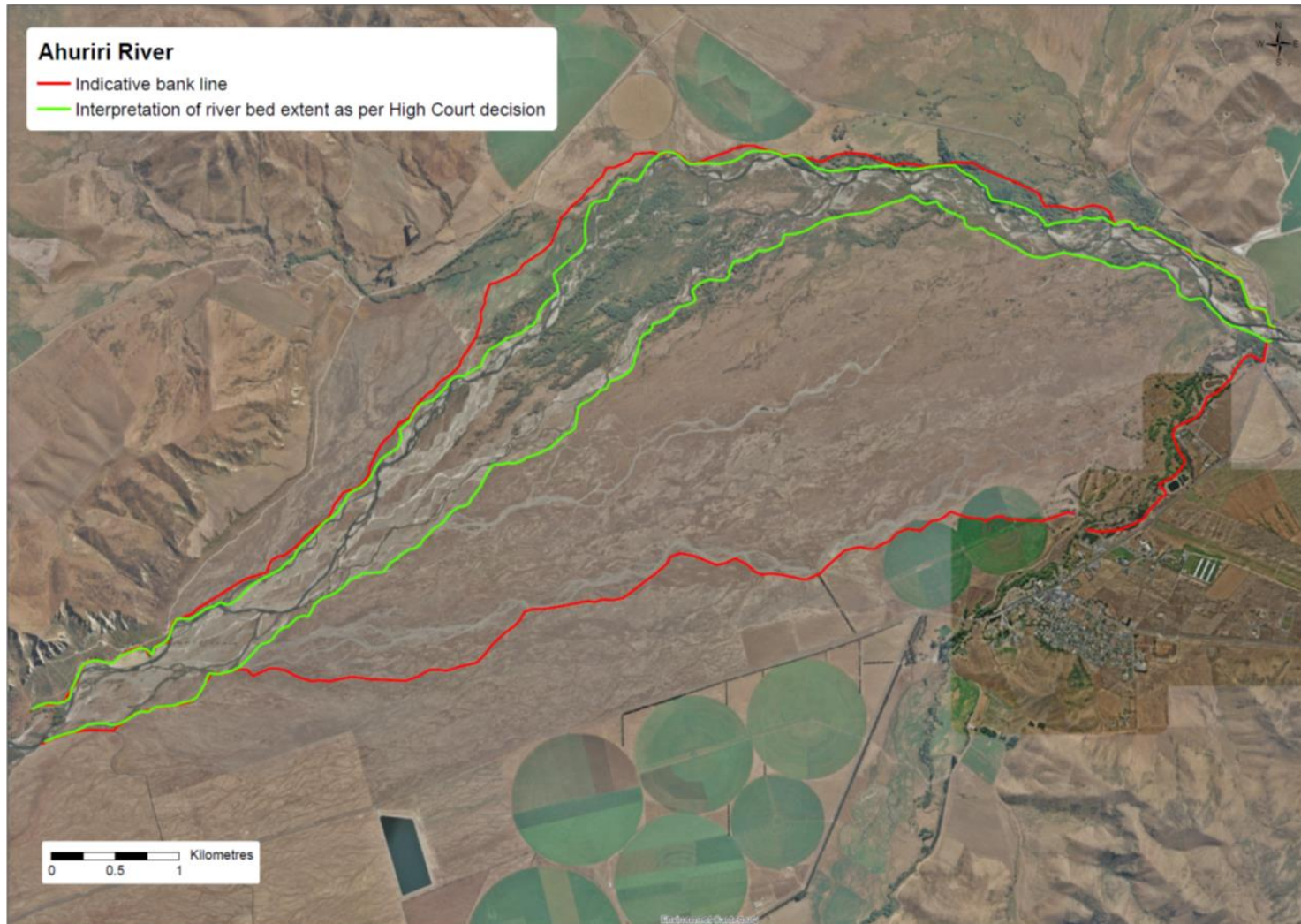
## Next steps

- Seek RMA amendment
- Consider change to Canterbury Regional Policy Statement
- Work with TAs to manage





# Previous and current interpretations of riverbed



The red line is **Pre-High Court** understanding of the bed of a braided river based on 1-in-50-year flood modelling (where available) and consistent with earlier caselaw.

The green line is where the **High Court and Court of Appeal** interpretation would place the RMA riverbed



# Flood Protection - waterways management

## Rating Districts

- 59 in total
- 32 on braided rivers
- All of the alpine rivers except the Waiau Toa/Clarence
- Most on the lower reaches
- Sometimes several on one river





# Flood Protection

## Typical works

- Riverbed vegetation control, maintains channel capacity and natural character
- Lateral erosion control, protects farmland while reducing sediment
- Berm weed control - old mans beard
- Stopbanks





# Flood Protection - waterways management

## Arising Issues

- Increasing investment and value on flood plains
- Relatively low levels of protection from floods
- Affordability and risk
- Encroachment
- Uncontrolled channel vegetation
- Climate Change





# Environment Canterbury land management

30,000 ha (most associated with braided rivers)

- 3,000 ha for river protection
- 12,000 ha leased
- Balance riverbed and berms

Recreation - two river parks

- Waimakariri River - gorge to the sea
- Ashley Rakahuri - Ōkūkū confluence to the sea





# Braided Rivers Action Group (BRAG)

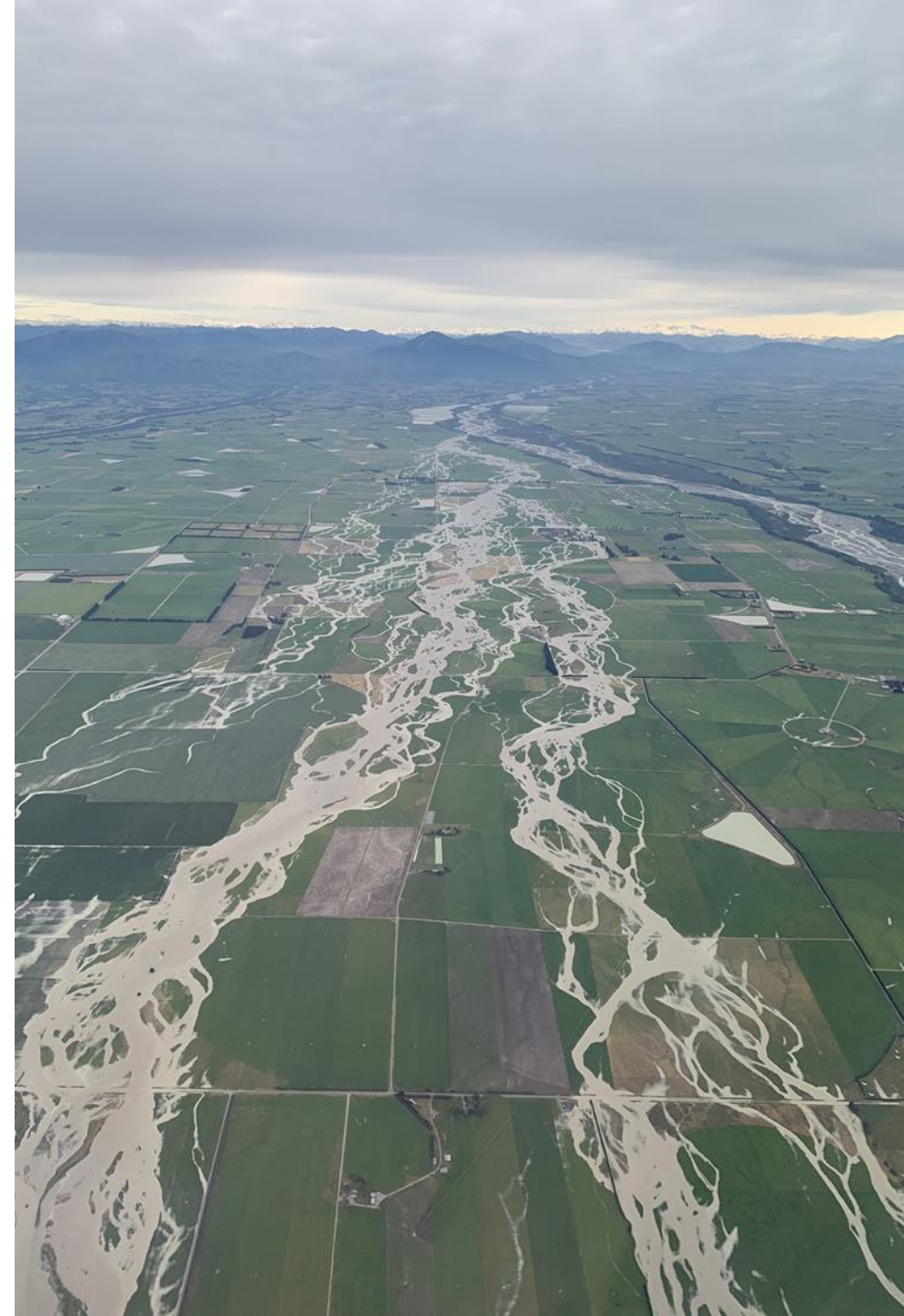
- Land use change
- Poor Crown land management leading to poor outcomes for rivers
- Objective - best practice management





# Braided River Action Group Progress

- Key issues - data & land management
- Identified numerous opportunities for improvement
- Next step - agree best practice management with rūnanga & BRAG and implement
- Pursue further alignment





An aerial photograph of a river delta system. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, flowing through a network of dark, sandy channels and bars. The landscape is flat, with some green fields and trees visible in the background. The sky is clear and blue. The text "On-the-ground work" is overlaid in white at the bottom left.

On-the-ground work



# On-the-ground work –delivering outcomes

## CWMS goals and targets

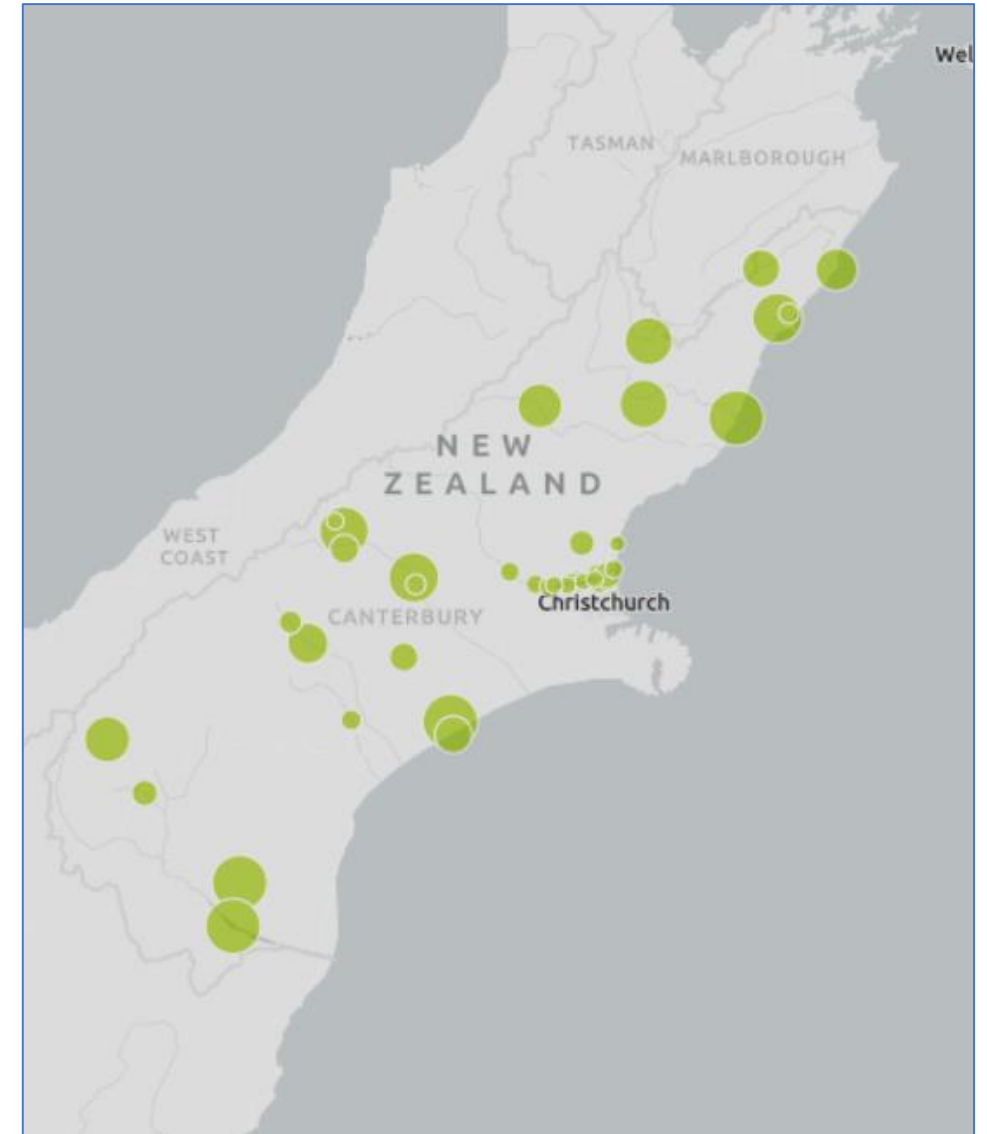
- Braided Rivers
  - Bird habitat increasing,
  - Active management for indigenous plants and wildlife habitats
  - Natural character
- Ecosystem health/ biodiversity improving

## Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy goals

- Protect and restore habitats and ecosystems
- Enhance public awareness and understanding
- Improve knowledge and information

## Regional strategic priorities

- Accelerate regeneration of the natural environment





# Threats, actions, how we work

## Weed encroachment - control work

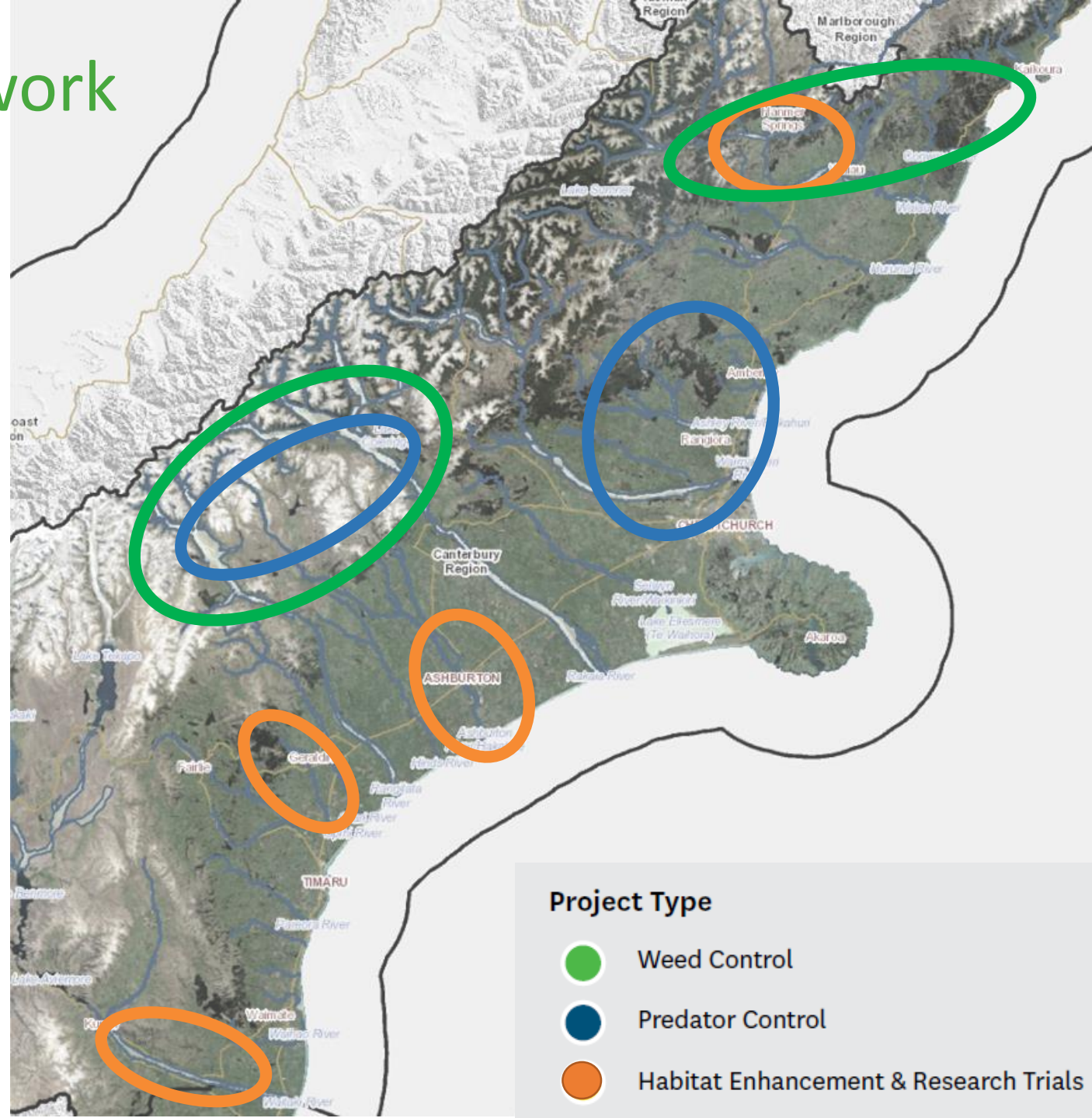
- Coordinated work with other agencies and landcare groups / landowners
- Strategic, landscape scale
- Online mapping

## Predators – control work

- Major collaborative projects (DOC, Universities)
- Working with rivercare groups
- Leading by example on Waimakariri

## Weeds, predators, disturbance - habitat enhancement trials, management

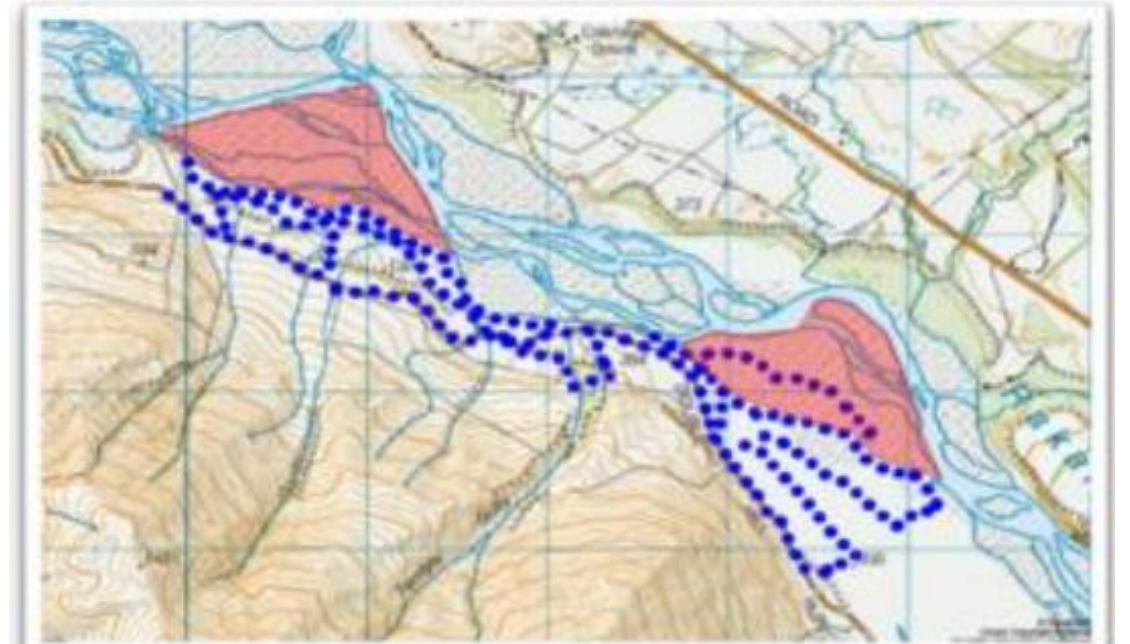
- Testing new methods - island enhancement
- Work with agencies, groups, & zones
- Leading by example - Ashburton Zone Team





# Upper Rangitata and Rakaia – weeds and predators

- Goals: habitat for breeding birds (wrybill, BFT), ecosystem health, & natural character
- Actions: weed control, predator control, monitor success
- How: landscape scale, upper catchment (protect), joined up approach
- Updates: Rangitata predator control in 5<sup>th</sup> year, review to determine direction for 2022 and onwards





# BRaid – community engagement and information

- Goals: awareness, understanding, community engagement
- Actions:
  - Symposium/ workshops – information, networks
  - Website, newsletters, social media
  - Supporting other groups
  - Graphics, signs
  - Working with businesses





# Other projects

- Islands (Clarence River/Waiau Toa, lower Waitaki River)
- Wider ecosystem (invertebrates, etc)
- Ashburton River mouth and lower river (management, predator control, island enhancement)
- Waimakariri River (Regional Park)
- Hurunui & Waiau Uwha
- Mahinga kai





# Braided River Plans

## Purpose

- To contribute to a major improvement in biodiversity with special attention to mahinga kai and recreation

## Scope

- Non statutory
- mountains to sea - ki uta ki tai (lowland streams and wetlands)

## Process

- Co-design with rūnanga
- Engagement with stakeholders

## Progress

- Ashley River / Rakahuri
- Working to align with DoC and Arowhenua Runanga

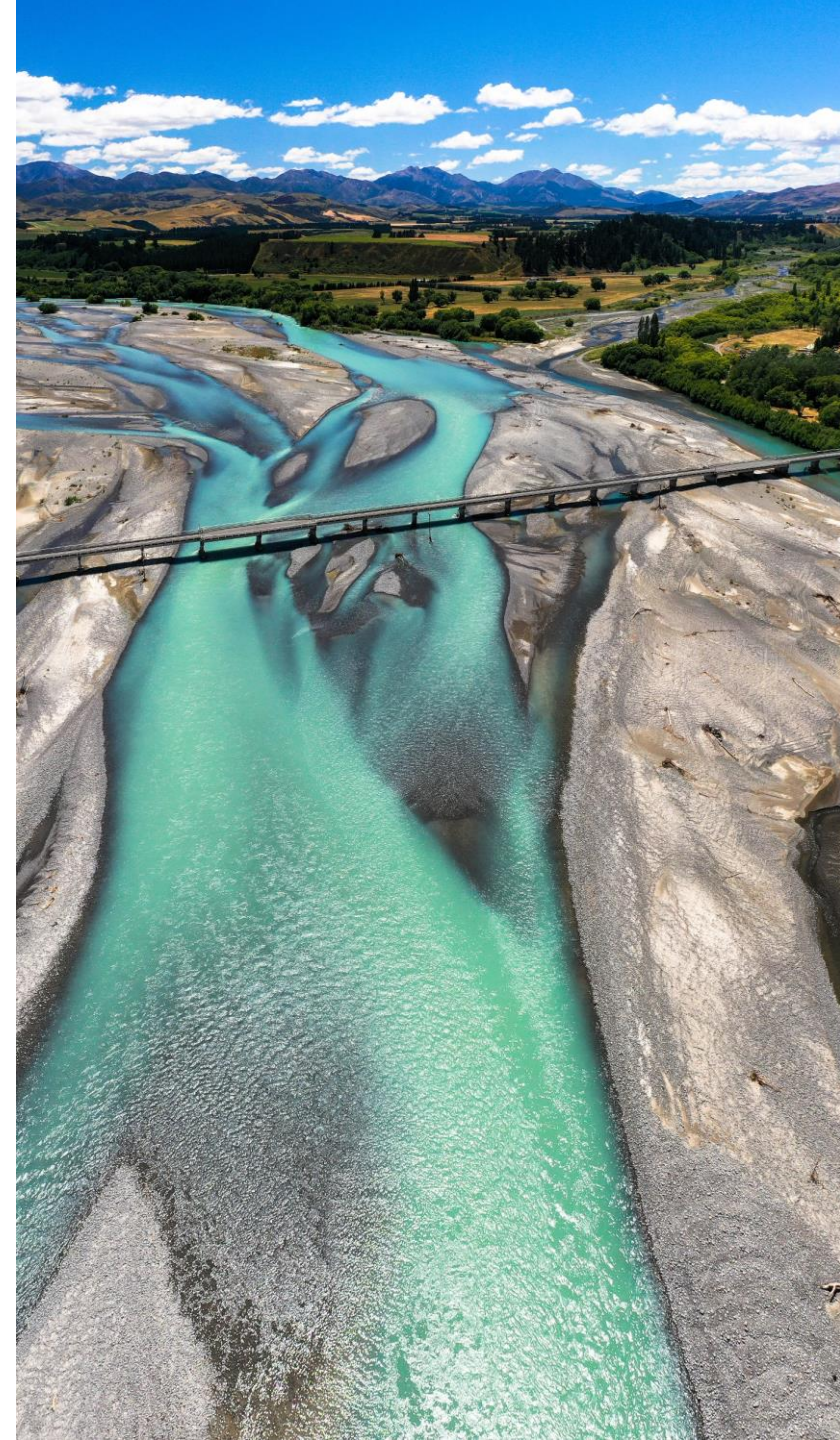




# Braided River Plans

## Next Steps

- Complete the Ashley River / Rakahuri Braided River Plan
- Identifying key early projects for delivery with agency partners
- Work with DOC & Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua on Rangitata Plan development
- Support Me Uru Rākau







# Braided River Revival

Whakahaumanu ngā awa ā pākihi



# Braided River Revival

whakahaumanu ngā awa ā pākihi

Regulator

Leadership

Waterways  
management

Landowner

On-the-  
ground  
investment



# Alignment Objectives

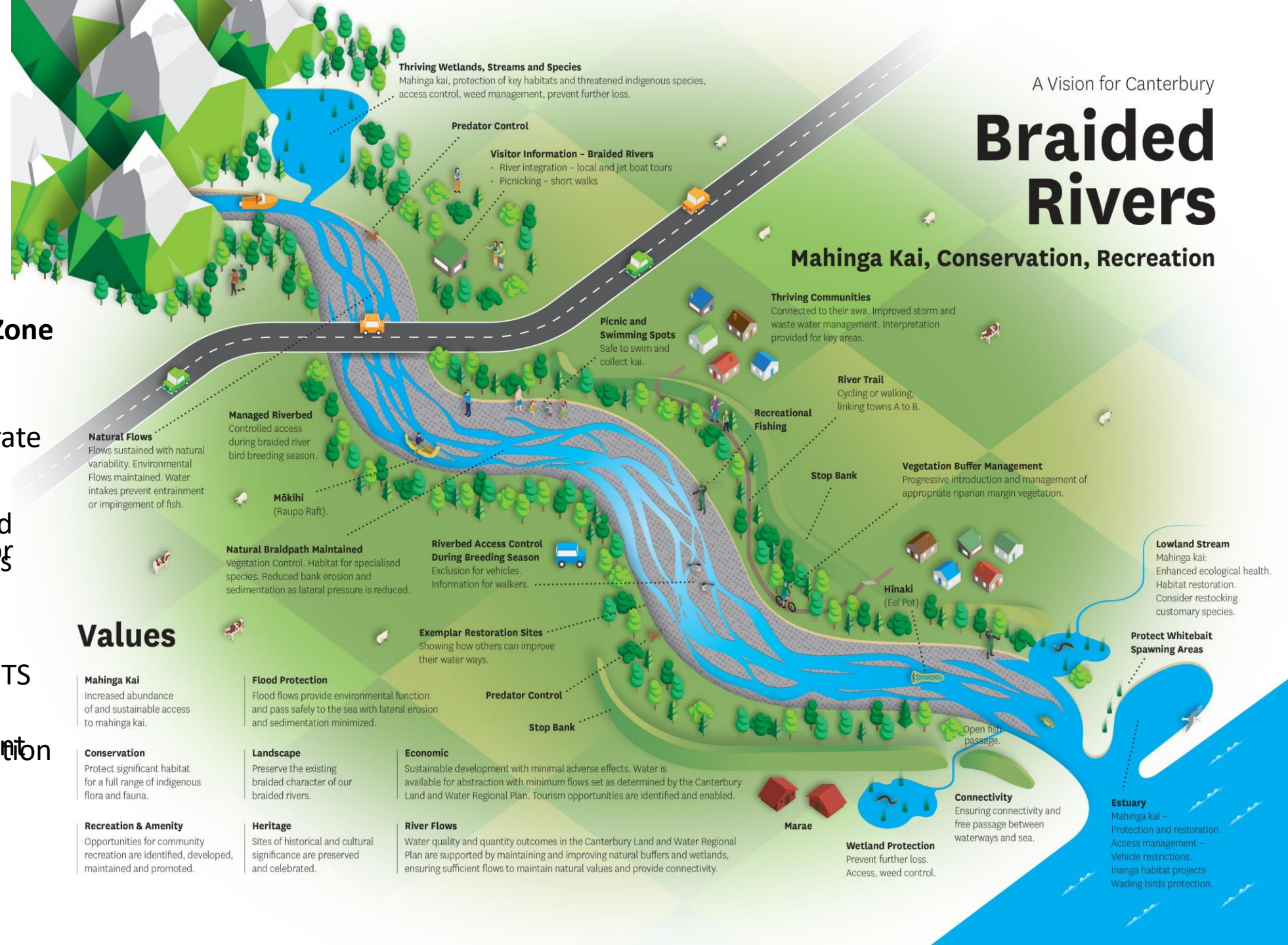
## Agency and Rūnanga

- shared vision

## Land Owners, Community, Zone

## Committees and Partnership

- Opportunity to demonstrate  
border projects  
Community alignment
- Recreation and access
- Addressing climate and  
Long term programmes or  
ecological emergencies
- Shorter term projects  
Enhanced community  
understanding and value  
Links to strategic
- Business and marketing  
programmes, eg IBP ETS
- Opportunities, habitat  
conservation, habitat  
protection & enhancement
- Staff involvement
- Leveraging funding





# Mission – Revival

To revive and secure the health of Canterbury's braided rivers

Shared vision - statutory and non-statutory

- Aligned on-the-ground delivery under a shared brand
- Natural character, mahinga kai, biodiversity and recreation
- Balanced within community values





# The future...

- Council strategic direction & Long-Term Plan
- Ongoing leadership role
- Relationships and partnerships
- Braided River Revival
- Rakahuri and Rangitata
- Ongoing work on the ground









**Environment  
Canterbury**  
Regional Council  
*Kaunihera Taiao ki Waitaha*

*Facilitating sustainable development in  
the Canterbury region*

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