

Image: Waiou River showing extent of braidplain converted to agriculture

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Google Earth

GOING... going... almost gone

Recent braidplain based on terraces

Historic/relic braidplain based on the terraces both sides.
Old river channels clearly visible below.

Current braidplain

Defined a 'riverbed' under the RMA

Image: Hurunui River showing extent of braidplain converted to forestry & agriculture

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Google Earth

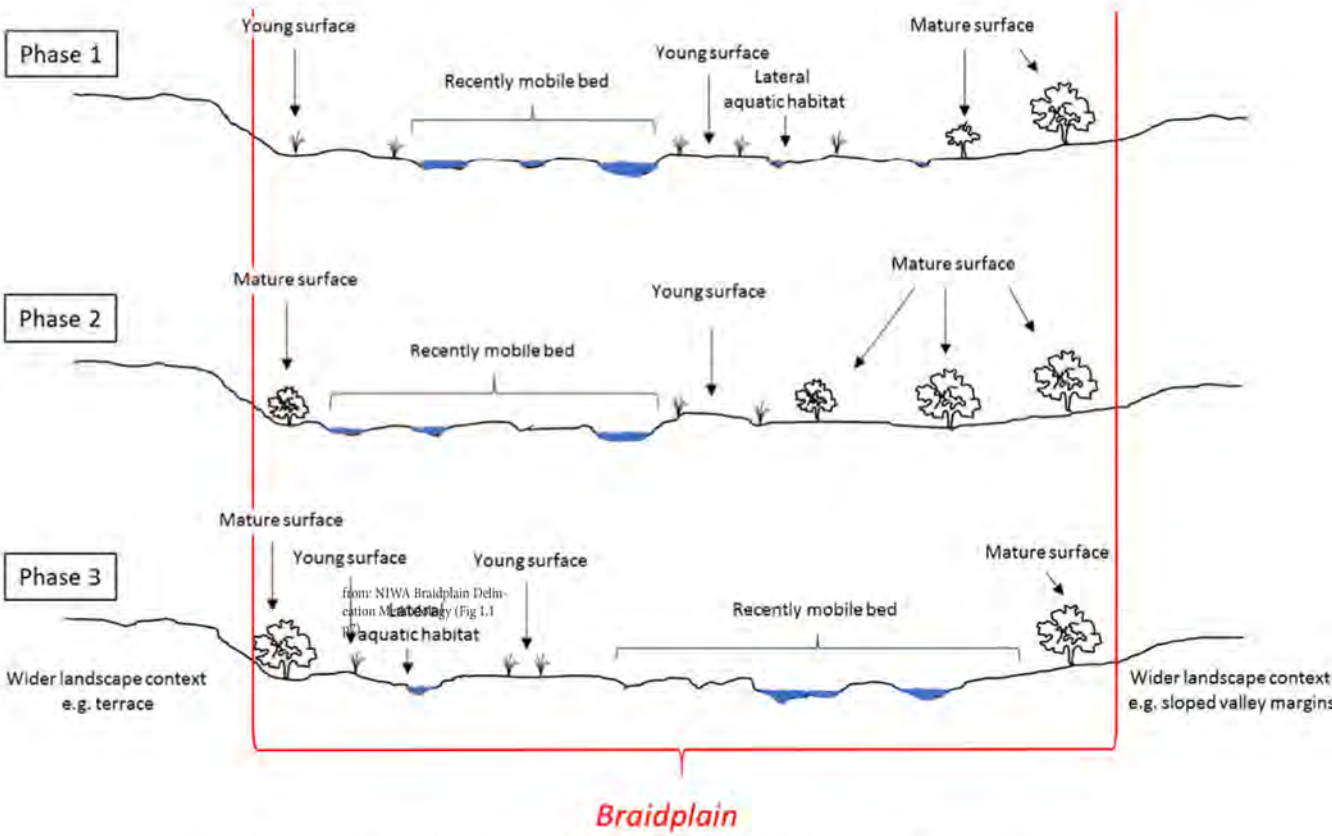
Imagery Date: 8/25/2018 42°49'33.88" S 172°40'50.15" E elev 262 m eye alt 4.23 km

Historic attitude towards rivers as water sources to be exploited and hazards to be controlled combined with the perception that braidplains are 'wastelands' to be converted into 'productive' forestry and agriculture, has forced these once-mighty rivers into ever-narrowing confined spaces.

Between 1990-2012 an astonishing 11,630ha of braid river margins was converted to intensive agricultural use.

Under the Resource Management Act, riverbeds are defined as "...the space of land which the waters of the river cover at its fullest without overtopping its banks."

Braidplains are not recognised as being the space in which 'braided' rivers occupy. Unprotected, they and the extraordinary biodiversity that depends on them is systematically being destroyed.



Source: NIWA Braidplain Delineation Methodology (p7: 2018)