

Freshwater Farm Plans

Process and timing FAQs

What are freshwater farm plans (FWFP)?

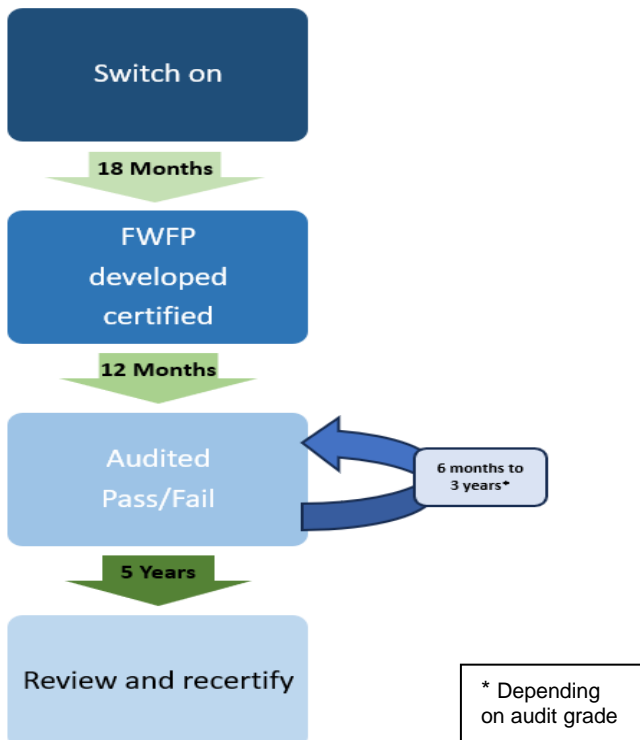
Freshwater farm plans will help protect and restore New Zealand’s freshwater by assessing each farm’s potential impact on freshwater. Mandated by central government, each landowner is required to produce an action plan to improve water quality. These plans will be certified and submitted to Council and are specific to a particular farm’s circumstances, physical environment and what is important to the catchment that farm is located in.

Who will need a FWFP?

- farms larger than 20ha
- horticulture/viticulture farms larger than 5ha
- farms of 20ha or more of combined use

What is the process and timeframe for needing FWFPs?

Implementation will be staged between July 2024 and Dec 2025, depending on which catchment the farm is in. Farm operators then have 18 months from “switch on” to develop, certify and submit their certified farm plan to Council. Within 12 months of certification the plan must be audited to ensure progress on the action plan.



* Depending on audit grade

Dates for catchments to begin FWFPs

| Date process begins | Catchment Care units |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 July 2024 | Are Are Creek |
| 1 Jan 2025 | Koromiko/Tuamarina River |
| | Te Hoiere/Pelorus River + tributaries |
| | Linkwater streams |
| | Mill Creek |
| | Flaxbourne River |
| | Taylor River |
| | Omaka River |
| | Ōpaoa River |
| | Kenepuru River |
| Spring Creek | |
| 31 Dec 2025 | remainder of region |

What will FWFPs need to include?

- geospatial farm maps identifying features such as farm boundaries
- areas of land use, waterways, landforms, slope, winter grazing, irrigated areas, contamination and nutrient runoff zones (critical contamination areas), and stream crossings
- details on how the FWFP will meet the National Environment Standards for Freshwater and the rules within the proposed Marlborough Environment Plan (includes synthetic nitrogen cap, intensive winter grazing, stock exclusion, fish passage, wetlands etc)
- the catchment context – including challenges, values, ecosystem, and community outcomes (CCCV). This will be provided by Council for farm operators to reference
- a risk assessment across farming and growing activities and an associated action plan to manage those risks to freshwater.

Can farmers write their own FWFP?

There are a range of options farm operators can choose from to develop a FWFP and meet the certification requirements:

- update an existing farm environment plan (or similar)
- use an industry programme (e.g. Tiaki, NZGAP, SWNZ) or the Ministry for Environment template available online
- online resources (e.g., QCONZ farm tool)
- engage a certifier, advisor or consultant to write a FWFP
- independently develop a FWFP that meets the certification requirements.

All FWFPs will need to meet certification requirements that are specific to Marlborough. These will be identified through catchment context, challenges and values (CCCV) that will be available on Council website before catchments are switched on.



Where do I find a certifier/auditor?

Certifiers and auditors are engaged by the farm operator from a list of approved providers, which will be listed on Council’s website once certifiers and auditors have been trained. On completion of a FWFP plan, the certifier is required to share the FWFP maps, administrative details and the action plan with Council.

How can Council help with FWFPs?

- support catchment groups with advice, information about risks to water quality, and help to establish new catchment groups where needed
- providing up to date information on Councils website www.marlborough.govt.nz to support landowners in the process of developing FWFPs, along with providing maps, data and CCCV information
- advise on farm of risks to freshwater or advice on understanding specific vulnerabilities to freshwater in each catchment

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