

**Wairau Plain Landscape Concept**  
**GUIDELINES**



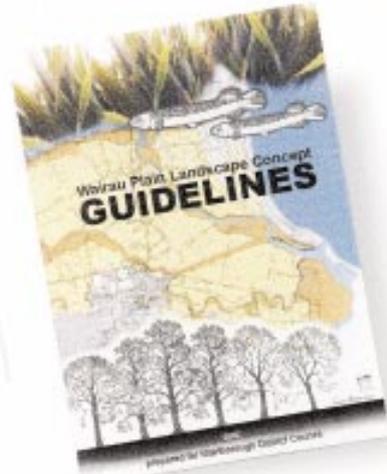
*Lucas Associates*

2002  
prepared for Marlborough District Council

# Wairau Plain Landscape Concept A VISION AND HOW TO GET THERE...



**THE PLAN**  
(including **GUIDELINES**)



**GUIDELINES**  
(this document)



**THE ANALYSIS**

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native plant species lists compiled with the assistance of the  
Department of Conservation, South Marlborough Area Office



## WHY GUIDELINES?

Considerable public concern has been expressed at large vineyard expansion causing rapid landscape change on the rural Wairau Plain. A key concern is the loss of trees. As a result, the Marlborough District Council resolved to develop a landscape concept plan.

A community consultation process has been undertaken to clarify issues and identify possible solutions. The concerns are generally about management of developed private land. People want more, and more diverse, vegetation in the area. Looking after the landscape and ecology of the Wairau Plain is considered of local and international importance.

The Council does not wish to dictate what vegetation people either establish or remove. Rather than a "Master Plan" trying to dictate what is wanted, Guidelines have been developed to encourage and guide Plain's landowners in their plantings and vegetation management. Landowners are encouraged to each take some responsibility for the character and health of the Wairau Plain landscape.

Sketches are included of various opportunities for plantings, particularly in the vineyards, along waterways and roads (pages G5-12). As well as native plants, a list of exotic deciduous trees is proposed for use on the Plain (pages G31-32). The preferred conditions and potential tree heights are noted.

This Guidelines booklet is intended for use in the field, to be a practical hands-on guide. It tells you what sorts of plants to purchase for different conditions, and then it tells you how to prepare, plant and manage them (pages G30,G35-36). Finally, there is a guide to what you don't want - the pest plants (pages G37-39), the ones to avoid, even if you are given them!

The Guidelines address the band of Rural 3 Zone land, from the Wairau River along the northern boundary to the Wither Hills on the south; and, from the Waihopai River to the coast. The Guidelines recognise that the characteristics of this Plain area varies from dry plains to very wet, and, from alluvial lands to dunes. To provide practical guidance as to the desired landscape character, the Plain has been divided into four types of country:

- DRY PLAIN seaward of the Waihopai River down to Rapaura and St. Leonards;
- SPRING COUNTRY around Blenheim and down to about S.H.1;
- OLD DUNE COUNTRY from S.H.1 down to Rarangi; and,
- COASTAL LANDS toward the shore of Cloudy Bay.

These types of country have been mapped (page G14) and the guidance recognizes these differing conditions. For each of these types of country, the native plants that belong there have been identified. Thus, if people want to recreate natural stream-sides or patches of woodland, shrubland,

grassland or forest, the appropriate local native species are all listed for each type of country (pages G16-28). Instead, you may want to develop non-natural designs but using species chosen from these lists.

A 'short list, a list of 24 native plant species that should suit anywhere on the Wairau Plain, has been included too (page G15). This list, with 9 trees, 5 shrubs and 10 different groundcovers (including grasses and ferns), provides a useful palette for all types of designs, whether naturalistic, formal or modernist. The accompanying notes provide lots of information on the look and usefulness of each plant. As a suggestion, plants from the 'short list' are shown in a sample planting design (page G11), which groups and masses the different species.

The Plain has such a complex network of waterways of various types that a specific guide for stream management has been included (page G13). Then there are plant lists specifically for native riparian planting (pages G33-34). Most of the waterways have been modified and have cleared banks. There are extensive opportunities for more vegetated riparian zones to help prevent contaminants washing into streams, to provide shade to reduce weed growth and improve fish habitat, and, to provide vegetated corridors through the landscape.

For all the native plant lists, there are "tolerance" charts, showing how much each plant tolerates sun, shade, moist, dry or windy sites. Because some species can cope with being planted out in an exposed open site, a guide is included as to whether a species is for use as a "first stage" or a "second stage" planting. A second stage plant needs to be planted in amongst existing vegetation that provides shelter. So in an open area, plant the 1<sup>st</sup> stage plants, and a few years later establish the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage plants in their shelter. Perhaps just pop the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage plants in between the established ones.

With each landowner making an effort to provide maximum non-crop vegetation on their land - not just grapes! - then the Wairau Plain can be enriched and made more healthy ecologically and a more attractive and interesting landscape. So, enjoy your planting.

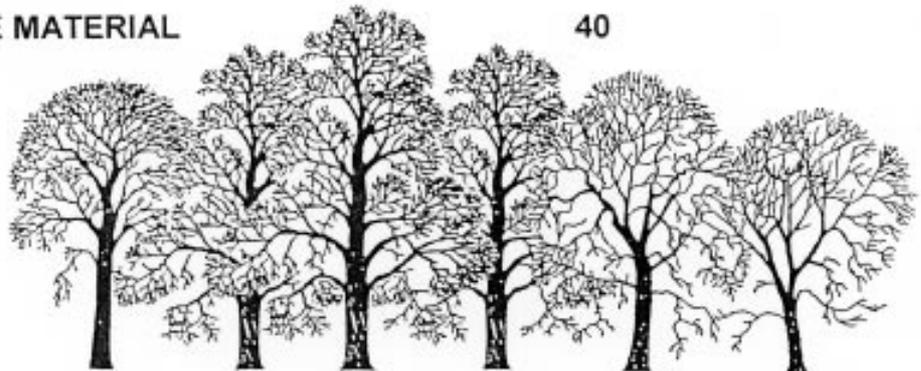
# Wairau Plain Landscape Concept **GUIDELINES**

This document is a hands-on practical guide to be used 'in the field'. It divides the Wairau Plain into 4 different landscape types based on landform and soil type and provides informative native and exotic plant lists for each. It suggests some basic planting styles and advice on planting technique and maintenance. Alternative landscape treatment of the waterways has also been addressed. This **GUIDELINES** booklet enables the individual to work on a level great or small to progress towards realising the vision for the Wairau Plain as developed during the public participative process.

*It is important to note that at any time there may be rules in the Operative Resource Management Plan that limit or direct the ability to plant beside watercourses*

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## Wairau Plain Landscape Concept GUIDELINES

Through a local planning exercise (see described in **The Plan**), long-term visions were suggested for the Wairau Plain landscape. One of the long-term visions is shown below, and the drawing conveys something of this character. Whilst using characteristics that have been or are an important part of this place, the description and image is of a very different character to what is there today.

The many people involved in the planning exercise realise that to achieve such a vision, a lot of different effort by many different parties will be needed. As well as effort by individual persons, co-ordination and co-operation will be valuable.

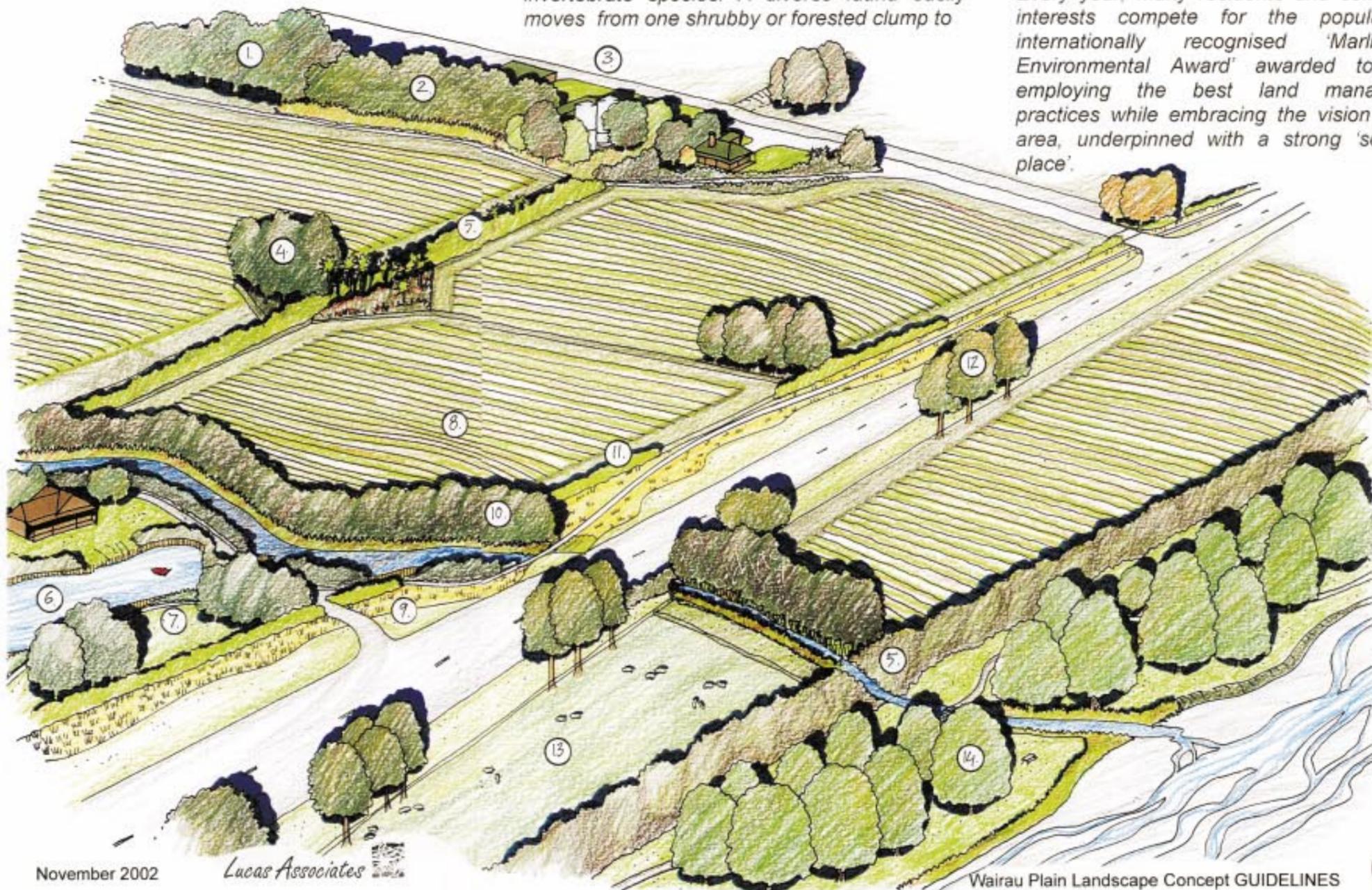
The Guidelines that follow provide some practical advice for persons wanting to make their contribution to achieving this visionary landscape of the Wairau Plain. These Guidelines recognise the diversity of lands, waters and limitations of the Plain.

It is intended the Guidelines be continually added to and updated, that there is support and encouragement to implementing them, and that progress toward achieving the vision be monitored and reported.

The team welcomes feedback on the usefulness of the guidelines, and on where there is room for improvement or the need for further information.

### KEY to sketch of 'Vine Country'

- 1 A percentage of each land holding = trees (not forestry)
- 2 Opportunity to plant up effluent disposal areas
- 3 Buildings nestled into 'treed' nodes
- 4 Occasional corners in exotic or native plantings
- 5 Terrace risers planted in native vegetation, providing wildlife corridors and links to riparian strips and other planted clumps
- 6 Creation of water holding areas to reduce the need for drains
- 7 Cycleway and walkway links
- 8 Enhance subtle ground contours – don't flatten during site development
- 9 Road verges planted in 'soft' native planting of low stature, small stemmed (e.g. native grasses)
- 10 Riparian strips planted in native mix to trap nutrients, shade stream, increase habitat and provide strong links through the productive landscape
- 11 Occasional native hedgerows to 'soften' fencelines – leave some gaps to provide vistas.
- 12 Clumps of exotic trees break vineyard monotony and provide 'islands' for wildlife
- 13 Vary land use where possible
- 14 Plant lower wide river terraces in substantial amenity tree planting incorporating picnic areas, cycle / walkways



## A Wairau Plain VISION

*Imagine arriving in the Wairau Plain, where one is welcomed into a prosperous balanced landscape. A sense of community well being and pride in their place is strongly evident. The land is well managed, productive, and home to a diverse range of activities. Viticulture is by far the most prevalent land use but is tempered with a rich matrix of vegetated waterways, public parks, field copses of healthy exotic and native trees, well-mannered road verge plantings, and clearly responsible and forward thinking farming practices. The many rivers, streams, and small watercourses run clear and weed free, kindly shaded by sinuous ribbons of flax, shrubs, trees and grasses, providing home to a plethora of fish and invertebrate species. A diverse fauna easily moves from one shrubby or forested clump to*

*the next, which is never far away – strong vegetated corridor links have been formed, nurtured and maintained. Walkways and cycleways are abundant, locals and tourists alike enjoying the scenery, or sampling the local cuisine accompanied by a wide range of world famous wines at the winery stop of your choice.*

*The many who have been attracted to the Wairau Plain to live, reside in small 'hamlets' on the lower footslopes of the Wither Hills benefiting from expansive seasonally changing views across the plain to the Richmond Range, Wairau River and Cloudy Bay.*

*Every year, many residents and commercial interests compete for the popular and internationally recognised 'Marlborough Environmental Award' awarded to those employing the best land management practices while embracing the vision for the area, underpinned with a strong 'sense of place'.*