



# **Submission to the Clutha District Council Annual Plan 2011**



**Presented by the Lake Waihola  
Waipori Wetlands Society**

## Introduction

The Lake Waihola Waipori Wetlands Society was formed to undertake and implement the sustainable management and habitat restoration of the Waihola/Waipori catchment. The Society has worked hard at the consultation, fundraising and public advocacy for the catchment, and sees such work as bringing significant environmental, economic and social benefits to the region. Part of the Society's programme is to undertake a major weed control programme that will eradicate detrimental species from the catchment. This programme is a long term one project, but essential in any wetland management. Along with eradication the Society have an active programme of advocacy and education on weed management that is designed to inform, educate and promote the restorative nature of weed control.

## Background

The Lake Waihola Waipori Wetlands Society has identified Reed Sweetgrass (*Glyceria Maxima*) as a significant threat to wetland and waterway health in the Waihola Waipori Catchment. Its removal is a major part of the weed control programme being implemented by the Society over the next three years.

*Glyceria Maxima* is a large perennial grass that was introduced to New Zealand as a stock fodder. It grows aggressively around waterways and nutrient rich wetlands. Typically of weed species it forms a dense monoculture that will overtop its slower growing native counterparts. It has the ability to produce a significant waterborne seed source and also disperses by vegetative means, breaking off a portion of its rhizome to be dispersed by moving water into new open habitat. This can be found around culverts, ditches and damp road edges, and is becoming more common in the Clutha District road network.

## Submission

The Lake Waihola Waipori Wetlands Society seeks the co-operation of the Clutha District Council in controlling this weed species along road culverts, ditches and in road reserve areas around the Clutha District. The Society has noted its spread in roadside areas around the catchment and in order to protect wetland and waterway values it is essential to control these areas. With vegetation control an existing part of the management of the District road network it would be a relatively simple matter to ensure that *Glyceria maxima* is part of that normal maintenance. Control methodology is simple and cheap and would not add any significant costs to the existing contracts or works that the Council already undertakes. The Society would be happy to work with Council staff providing identification material and information on this weed species so that it could be included into the existing road network maintenance schedule.

The Society trust that the Clutha District Council will look on this submission favourably and assist its work in the Waihola Waipori area by being proactive in the control of this weed species in the Clutha District.



Figure 1 Reed Sweetgrass (*Glyceria maxima*) Detail showing the dense rhizomatous root system that creates a dense carpet and depletes native waterway and wetland species.



Figure 2 & 3 Detail of Reed Sweetgrass. The plants ability to create dense mats is shown in the figure on the right. The high rate of seed production and its ability to reproduce from vegetative dispersal make *Glyceria maxima* a highly adaptable and virulent weed species that can do considerable damage to wetlands and waterways.