

2005/06 DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN SUBMISSION

Submissions close on 13 May 2005

I do not wish to make a personal submission at the hearings.

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Your Submission: LOSS OF FLOW IN HEADWATERS OF KAPUTONE CREEK - FUNDING FOR REMEDIAL ACTION

The Guardians of the Styx Incorporated was established in 1999 to liaise with Christchurch City Council (and other agencies) on all matters related to the Styx River Catchment, and to act as a lobby group on behalf of residents. In these capacities, we supported the Shirley-Papanui Community Board in its action to request the bringing forward of funding to carry out research on the problem. We understand that following the research, several options for remedial work have been proposed. We believe that at least \$50,000 should be set aside for such action and associated studies. Some of the options were presented to us for the first time at our meeting last night, and we understand that today is the final one for submissions. For that reason, our submission is brief!

We have been aware of the variable flow, followed by loss of flow, in the headwaters of Kaputone Creek since the first signs of problems during "dewatering" (in 1999) associated with the start of the development of the Northwood subdivision. The permanent loss of spring flow appeared to coincide with developments in the upper reaches of the stream in 2003. We believe that the problem is one that is common to all of the city's spring-fed streams (the systems of the Styx, Avon, Heathcote and Halswell Rivers). It is a well-known fact that urban development takes shallow groundwater away via the shingle in which pipes (sewers, water mains, etc.) are buried. The writer was once advised by a Council staff member that "the old timers will tell you that if the practice was not carried out, Christchurch would still be a swamp". There is good evidence to confirm that the actions of man have destroyed shallow aquifers in the upper reaches of the Styx River (and elsewhere). To quote from the writer's book ("The Styx Story", 2002), 'The dry swale running through Nunweek Park today was once a flowing river. There is anecdotal evidence that there were "ponds" as well as the river, and that is what attracted early settlers to the area. . . Springs that rose in the Nunweek Park area 60 years ago are now dry'.

There is a 40-year plan in place for the Styx catchment. In 1999, a discussion document ("Project Areas 3 & 4 - Styx River", Water Services Unit discussion document for Community Boards) had: 'Retain and protect the natural and physical environments which together contribute to the gentleness, peacefulness and wilderness of the Styx catchment, while providing both rural and urban land uses'.

After considerable input from the community and many agencies, the document "Vision 2000 - 2040: The Styx - Community Planning for the Future", Christchurch City Council, 2000) was produced. One of the visions was: 'Vision 1 - To achieve a "Viable Spring-Fed River Ecosystem" to complement the other representative protected ecosystems of Christchurch, such as the Port Hills, Travis Wetlands and the Coastline'.

That vision, along with the other four, was adopted by the Council in 2001. Failure to take the appropriate action over the loss of flow in the headwaters of Kaputone Creek would be contrary to Vision 1. The Kaputone Creek west of the Main North Road is now no longer viable, no longer spring-fed, and no longer a river! The appropriate remedial action and associated study is of great importance to all of the City's rivers. Lessons learned on the Kaputone Creek will be relevant to other rivers, where loss of flow has occurred or could occur under similar circumstances. We agree that groundwater flows vary even where rainfall and evaporation rates remained unchanged. However, prior to the actual loss of flow, figures presented in 2004 showed a gradual loss of flow (irrespective of rainfall) over the period of development (for housing) of the area between the Styx River and Johns Road.

We give our strong support to the affected residents, and urge the Council to set aside a sum of at least \$50,000 for the appropriate urgent remedial and study work on Kaputone Creek.

For any clarification, the writer may be contacted on 358-6199 (Tuesday - Thursday) or 352-5545, or at 6 Creese Place, Christchurch 5.

Dennis Hills, ONZM, JP
Chairman, Guardians of the Styx Incorporated 13 May 2005