

## **Christchurch City Council Long Term Council Community Plan**

### **Submission on behalf of Cashmere Stream Care Group**

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**Please note: We do wish to be heard in respect of our submission.**

**This submission relates to the full version of the LTCCP.**

#### **Cashmere Stream Care Group background:**

Attached to this submission is a short description of the background and aims of our group.

#### **Relevant RMA provisions**

The Cashmere Stream Care Group (CSCG) considers the following Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) provisions support our submissions below in regard to the Cashmere Stream provisions of the Christchurch City Council Long Term Council Community Plan.

- While Section 5, the Purpose of the RMA provides for well being of people and communities in social, economic and cultural ways, it also provides for the **safeguarding the life-supporting capacity of air, water, soil and ecosystems and any adverse effects of activities on the environment are to be avoided, remedied or mitigated.**
- Section 6, considers it a matter of **national importance to preserve the natural character of amongst other things wetlands and rivers and their margins and to protect them from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.** In addition Section 6 provides for protection of significant habitats of indigenous fauna. In a recent discussion document prepared by Jeff Connell, Otago Conservator for the Department of Conservation, in relation to the Crown Pastoral Land Act 1998 (but relevant in this situation), the significance of indigenous habitats increases as their rarity increases. This is significant for the Cashmere Stream in the context of the extent of the loss of undeveloped lowland wetlands and rivers around Christchurch.<sup>1</sup>
- Section 7 provides for the **maintenance and enhancement of both amenity values and the quality of the environment, and protection of habitat of trout and salmon**
- Section 15 – provides for **protection from discharge of contaminants into water** – of particular relevance to the Cashmere Stream is contamination from sediment.
- Section 17 – makes a **duty of avoiding, remedying and mitigating adverse effects of activities on the environment**

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<sup>1</sup> Connell, Jeff. 2005. "Department of Conservation guidance on significant inherent values (SIVs) and related matters under the tenure review programme Crown Pastoral Lands Act 1998"

**Submission related to Capital works programme:***Pages 75 and 82*

We note the Cashmere Stream Living Streams Programme is designated a Discretionary project – non-priority capital item. We request that the priority of this project is increased and its implementation moved forward from 2010/2011. This project is linked to the Aidanfield Agreement which CCC has an agreement with ECan to honour. The group would request the CCC continue to support the Cashmere Stream Enhancement Strategy implementation by the wider community, including protecting stream values and working with owners to naturalise the Cashmere Stream and its tributaries. The degradation of the Cashmere Stream is happening now; therefore mitigation needs to be concurrent.

The CSCG is focussing on sediment as this appears to be the main source of degradation for the Cashmere Stream. The group has been monitoring of stream water clarity daily for one year and attached is a graph of those readings. It is significant that while water clarity is poor during high rainfall, it is also poor in periods when stream height does not alter (ie periods of no rainfall). Although no direct relationship was investigated for all individual pollution events, investigation of some events by ECan's pollution hotline has identified stock access and subdivision as contributing sediment to the stream. Catchment assessments carried out by ECan and CCC staff has identified stock access, subdivision, cultivation practises, poor riparian vegetation and collapsing stream walls as some of the sources of sediment into the stream.

The level of sediment in the stream is an important indicator of ecosystem health and the life-supporting capacity of the stream. It is a key factor affecting the presence, abundance, distribution, diversity, and condition of aquatic plants and animals. Fine sediment coats plants and the river bed, lowers light levels and slows plant growth. Sediment also smothers and displaces high quality invertebrates leaving only those such as worms and snails. Excessive sediment also prevents fish spawning and smothers the eggs that are laid.

Ecological surveys have shown that there are still sites of good ecological value in Cashmere Stream. Bluegill Bullies were found in Cashmere Stream in 2004. These native fish are fast water specialists and due to habitat changes are now generally rare in urban Christchurch. Freshwater crayfish have also been found in the Cashmere Stream. Freshwater crayfish are sensitive to habitat decline and so their presence increases the urgency with which degradation of Cashmere Stream must be stopped. The presence of these sensitive and rare species and the diversity of species at some survey sites in Cashmere Stream is encouraging for any enhancement or restoration plans. Effective conservation of such species can only be achieved by protecting the ecosystem that supports them, ie water quality, in-stream habitat and riparian habitat.

Sediment build up can also block channels leading to less efficient drainage in the drains and the stream itself. Controlling the sediment at source would not only result in an improvement of stream health but also in a reduction of the cost of stream maintenance for the Council.

The group would like to be involved with implementations for all tributaries including the following streams: Luneys, Stilwells, Ballintines, Sherrings, Hendersons Road, Days No 1 and No 2, Dunbars, Milnes, Connals, Bunz, Bowls, Quarry Road, Cashmere Road Drain No 1 and No 3, Van Aschs Drain.

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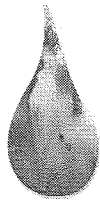
CSCG would like to see the inclusion of the purchase of Henderson's Basin for stormwater management in those areas considered strategic land purchases. The purchase of Henderson's Basin would stop untreated stormwater runoff reaching the Cashmere stream from the increasingly large areas of urban development in the upper catchment. The group has a proviso that the landowners are willing sellers.

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These items all have repercussions for biodiversity promotion which we note is disappointingly also considered discretionary – non-priority. In the light of our submission above regarding the low priority given the Cashmere Stream Living Streams Programme and the effect that sedimentation has on the ecology of the stream, we would like to see this priority increased.

**Parks, open spaces and waterways***Page 121*

We note that the CCC “provides and operates the city's stormwater system, manages the waterways into which it discharges, and it protects and enhances the life-supporting capacity of the cities water-ways and wetlands”. Once again the purchase of Henderson's Basin would stop untreated water reaching the Cashmere stream from the increasingly large areas of urban development in the upper catchment. Stream-side plantings that are group are implementing will help to protect and enhance life-supporting capacity of the stream by stabilising banks and providing shade and cover for the water margins which is beneficial for in-stream ecology. We would ask that the CCC continue to provide support personnel for our group and backup for streamside planting done.



# Cashmere Stream Care

- Cashmere Stream Care formed in May 2004, when residents approached Environment Canterbury concerned about the increasing sedimentation and declining health of their stream.
- Issues likely to be affecting the health of Cashmere Stream were identified by a stream walk undertaken by Resource Care Staff from ECan that mapped the entire length of the stream and its tributaries in June 2004.
- Over 70 members of the community attended a public meeting about the stream held in August 2004.
- The community decided that due to the high level of interest, they would form a stream care group.
- The initial aims of the group are to:
  - Improve water clarity
  - Identify sediment sources
  - Improve instream health
  - Enhance public areas
- A steering committee has developed an action plan that addresses the communities concerns in this catchment and is implementing this plan.
- The group held a community day in Francis Reserve in May 2005. This day was a great success with over 80 people turning out to learn more about the life in Cashmere Stream and the issues affecting it. Activities on the included electric fishing, invertebrate and water quality sampling, a demonstration of Environment Canterbury's pollution response equipment and Colin Meurk speaking on riparian planting.

## Contact

The group is open to anyone who is interested in Cashmere Stream. Currently representation in the group include landowners who bound the stream, Cracroft Residents Association, Westmoreland Resident Association, Cashmere Rural Landowners Association, Sunshine Rotary Club, Environment Canterbury and Christchurch City Council. The group always welcomes new members.

If you would like to become a member of the group, or to know more please contact Donna Woodley, 363-9382.

# Cashmere Stream - Clarity and Level - 4/2/05 - 15/11/05

