

<b>Officer responsible</b> Water Services Manager	<b>Author</b> Christine Heremaia
Corporate Plan Output: Waterways and Wetlands Restoration (Volume III Page 9.3.40)	

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the proposed Mount Vernon Farm Park waterway restoration project.

Mount Vernon Farm Park is located on the Port Hills. It is owned by the Port Hills Park Trust Board and managed by the Mount Vernon Farm Park Management Committee, a Sub-committee of the Port Hills Park Trust Board. The Management Committee has Parks Unit, Department of Conservation and Community Board representation.

The land is zoned Conservation 1 in the Christchurch City Council, Proposed City Plan and is regarded as having high recreational and ecological values. The area is extensively used by the public for hiking, tramping, mountain bikes and other recreational activities. The area also has ecological significance, due to the existence of a silver tussock grassland, and is listed as such in the proposed City Plan.

Hillside tributary waterways within the farm park flow into the Heathcote River via Victory Drain. This waterway has been channelised and starts on the flat portion within the park and then passes residential property before entering the Heathcote River. Scouring has occurred on this waterway within Mount Vernon Farm Park.

The Trust Board is gradually enhancing the ecological values of the Farm Park with extensive plantings of native trees and shrubs on the lower slopes. The Trust has also developed a car park adjacent to the waterway near the entrance to the park from Hillsborough Terrace.

At the time when the carpark was being designed, the opportunity was taken to prepare an overall plan for the area in order to ensure that existing and potential waterway restoration opportunities were not compromised. The following team of people worked together on the developing the concept – Wayne Rimmer, Landscape Architect; Howard Simpson, City Design Unit; Alan Wooster, Mount Vernon Farm Park Management Committee and Christine Heremaia, Water Services Unit. The integrated enhancement plan that evolved from these discussions is attached to this report.

The main features of the proposal include:

- Bank regrading along the waterway margin to stabilise the bank and to allow easier and safer access to the water.
- Planting to complement the native plantings that have already been undertaken by the Mount Vernon Farm Park Management Committee.
- Incorporating pools and riffles using basalt rock as appropriate without compromising waterway efficiency.
- Regrading and stabilising the waterway channel in existing areas of high erosion.

- Re-establishing indigenous wetland planting of predominantly grasses and sedges with canopy trees on upper bank levels.

A major element of the design is to remedy and prevent further bed scouring and erosion along this stretch of Victory Waterway. Historically Christchurch City Council and the former Christchurch Drainage Board have carried out erosion control works of a hard “engineering” nature on the Victory waterway including reaches within Mount Vernon Farm Park. The current proposal to “naturalise” the channel is considered a more appropriate approach within a public area.

Excess excavated waterway material will be mounded on the eastern side of the waterway and planted with native tree and shrub species. This will result in an extension to the toe of the existing hillside on that side of the valley.

A large proportion of the cost of the development relates to the physical works necessary to reform the banks and modify the waterway areas. However, bank maintenance will not be such a major problem in the future with this more sustainable approach to waterway management.

The cost of the Victory Waterway Enhancement proposal is estimated at \$95,000, being \$65,000 for the earthworks and \$30,000 for plants. Funds are available within the Water Services budget for Waterways and Wetlands Restoration. Earthworks will be undertaken during 1999 once the resource consent has been granted. Planting will be staged over three years with three community planting days.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Spreydon Heathcote Community Board support the proposed waterway restoration work in Mount Vernon Farm Park, estimated cost \$95,000 spread over three years.
  2. That the Spreydon Heathcote Community Board work in partnership with the Water Services Unit and the Port Hills Park Trust Board in organising the community planting days.