



22. PURCHASE OF RESERVE – KAPUTONE CREEK

Officer responsible Water Services Manager	Author Property Service Officer, Bill Morgan
Corporate Plan Output: New Assets (Waterways and Wetlands 9.3.45)	

This report is being referred to the Shirley/Papanui Community Board for its comment and to the Parks and Recreation Committee for its recommendation to the Council.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to consider the acquisition of a parcel of land to enhance and protect Kaputone Creek.

BACKGROUND

Kaputone Creek is a spring fed stream and is a major tributary to the Styx River. Its source is near the Groynes in Johns Road from where it then flows through residential Belfast to Sheldon Park and then eastwards to Marshland Road and its confluence with the Styx River.

Over the past three years the Council has been actively involved, as a consequence of a number of workshops held with local residents, with the enhancement of the stream, particularly through Sheldon Park and between Englefield Road and Tisch Place. In addition, it has secured an esplanade strip from the Chilton property in Belfast Road as part of an ongoing project to enhance the total stream and to improve the water quality.

Following discussions with the owners of the property situated at 587 Marshland Road, agreement has been reached to acquire part of the property as depicted as Lot 1 on the attached plan S3105/4 containing approximately 2.5508 hectares. It will be noted from the plan that Kaputone Creek forms the western and southern boundaries to the property, a stretch of waterway approximately 450 metres in length, which will make a valuable contribution to the long term sustainable management of the stream and the wider Styx catchment. It contains unmodified soils and natural land forms comprising a low lying flood plane and a narrow strip of higher terrace. Ecological restoration will enhance the habitat qualities of this area, particularly in the development of backwaters and swamp forest similar to Riccarton Bush. Existing large feature trees will be retained. Views from Marshland Road, a major road corridor will be enhanced and will become a feature for those people travelling along this road. In the long term this stretch of waterway will also form part of a walkway network associated with the Styx River linking up to such areas as Janet Stewart Reserve and Ouruhia Park.

The purchase of the property is consistent with the Waterways and Wetlands Natural Asset Management Strategy and the development of the large green corridor associated with the Styx River, Kaputone Creek and Smacks Creek, as depicted on the attached plan.

WILDLIFE AND ECOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The margins of Kaputone Creek as it passes through the property support a good diversity of common wetland birds including resident Pukeko, Mallard, Spur-winged Plover and New Zealand Kingfisher, as well as visiting Little Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Grey Duck, Harrier, Southern Black-backed gull, Red-billed Gull and Welcome Swallow.

Riparian habitats (particularly on the bends of the stream) are low-lying and offer ideal opportunities for restoration of wetland plant communities and the creation of small ponding areas. Enhancement of Kaputone Creek at this locality can be expected to potentially attract additional wetland bird species including Black Cormorant, Paradise Shelduck, New Zealand Scaup, New Zealand Shoveler, Grey Teal and Pied Stilt.

The existing trees and lower woody vegetation lining the river as well as the fruit trees in the orchard support a range of native and exotic land birds. Most notable among these are Fantail, Silvereye, Grey Warbler and Pheasant. With denser planting along parts of the riverbank and on the terrace (utilising native plant species and retaining some of the fruit trees) a sizeable area of high quality “bush” habitat could be created. This could potentially attract and support additional native bush bird species including Bellbird, Shining Cuckoo and Kereru (Native Pigeon).

Trees and wooded areas lining Kaputone Creek constitute an important movement corridor for both native and exotic land birds. The creation of a sizeable wooded area on the property (particularly one that holds significant food sources – fruits, berries, flowers, etc) will not only become a component of this corridor, but it will also attract birds in its own right (a “food magnet”) and can be expected to increase native bird abundance and species richness in areas adjacent to the Kaputone Creek flood plain at this site.

PROPERTY DETAILS

The property is located to the western side of Marshland Road with Kaputone Creek forming its southern and western boundaries and is approximately 200 metres north of the Belfast/Marshland Road intersection. Surrounding development comprises market gardens and orchards, although to the western side of Kaputone Creek there is a piggery and there are also a number of lifestyle blocks in the immediate vicinity.

The total property contains an area of 5.7920 hectares and is an established apple orchard. The area in question runs from the top of a bank to a low terrace adjoining the creek, most of which is currently in production trees. Along the top of the bank are a number of shelter belts while there are pockets of willows and elders adjoining the creek.

It should be noted that the apple trees are not being purchased by the Council and that these are to be retained in the ownership of the orchardist and with the land being leased back for a period of three years with the right of renewal for a further three years at the end of which time those trees not required by the Council are to be clear felled. In purchasing the land therefore, the value of the trees have been excluded from the assessment.

ZONING

Under the Transitional District Plan of the former Waimairi District Council the subject site is zoned Rural G (general rural) with the present use of the property as an orchard being a permitted activity under this zoning. The property is zoned Rural 3 under the proposed City Plan for the city of Christchurch publicly notified in June 1995. The primary purpose of the zone is therefore to maintain the farming operations and the present orchard use is therefore considered a permitted activity.

PROPERTY SETTLEMENT

The property was valued for the Council by Ford Baker, Registered Public Valuers, the details of which are included in the Public Excluded section of this report. An agreement has been entered into to be confirmed by 30 June 2000 to acquire the area concerned.

SOURCE OF FUNDS

The purchase will be funded from the Water Services Unit's Waterway and Enhancement Fund for which allowance has been made in the 2000/2001 financial year to provide for this purchase.

Recommendation: That Lot 1 on S plan 3105/4 containing approximately 2.5508 hectares be acquired on the terms contained within the Public Excluded section of this report.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the officer's recommendation be adopted.