

3. PORT HILLS 2000 PROJECT REVIEW

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Corporate Plan Output: Turning Point 2000	

VISION AND OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT

This report describes what has been achieved by Port Hills 2000, an advisory group of Turning Point 2000, so that local authorities and decision-makers can build on the projects, from the hand-over date in March 2001 when Turning Point 2000 concludes.

Five years ago the Port Hills 2000 Advisory Group was formed to develop assets on the Port Hills to celebrate the year 2000 and Canterbury's 150th Anniversary. The long-term purpose of the Port Hills 2000 scheme was sustainable management. The aim of the Port Hills 2000 Advisory Group was also to raise awareness with children and residents of the values of the Port Hills. The advisory group selected a range of projects to provide geographic spread through the three local authority areas, and to provide projects to which different sectors in the community could contribute, and different groups could benefit.

The vision of the scheme is the protection and enhancement of the natural character and heritage of the Port Hills as a 'green crescent'. This involves farmers, residents, local authorities, the recreation community and other users working together to address impacts and create an increasingly biodiverse and healthy asset for the region. In this vision, catchments are stabilized, pests are controlled, visitors are provided for and facilities are managed for the future. A series of loop and interlinking multi-use tracks provide continuous access along the Crater Rim and link the open space with residential areas and access points. The landscape appears a patchwork of regenerating indigenous forest in gullies and wetter faces, open tussock pasture maintained by light grazing, plantation forests and mixed use farmland.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Awareness Raising

Projects completed have been:

- Three Arbor Day plantings with schools and scouts
- One track 'opening' with the Summit Road Society
- Bumper stickers, *I love the Port Hills*, (some still available for distribution)
- Displays, talks, papers, and information distributed
- Pamphlets on projects, also a short video
- Development of a Port Hills 2000 web-based information resource as part of the Turning Point 2000 website
- Presentations to Community Boards and service clubs
- An events day, 'Experience the Port Hills'
- Regular press releases to all local media to raise awareness of Port Hills 2000 projects
- The publication of a book, 'Enjoying the Port Hills'.

The book, *Enjoying the Port Hills*, written by Gordon Ogilvie and produced in conjunction with the Publications 2000 Advisory Group of Turning Point 2000, was the major awareness raising project. The guidebook was launched in November 2000. It is intended to expand knowledge and interest in the Port Hills for both users and visitors. Caxton Press reports that the book has been received with great interest and they appear likely to undertake a reprint early in 2001. A percentage of profit from sales is to go to projects on the Port Hills through the Summit Road Society. Port Hills' rangers are liaising with Caxton Press on use of the maps from the publication for park users.

The events day, 'Experience the Port Hills', held in March 2000, was intended to expand understanding and encourage participation in a range of activities that have or do take place on the Port Hills. Activities included Maori legends, story telling, kite flying, an inaugural 'Penny-Farthing Classic', an historic walk, rock climbing and sheep shearing. There were a total of 16 activities during one day. Some events, such as the Bridle Path walk, were well attended and greatly enjoyed. Others, such as the historic military display of guns, were less popular and it is likely that this was the result of limited and late publicity. Such an event had not been undertaken previously. It required a great deal of organisation for parking, OSH and guiding, and the experience of what proved popular is a useful basis for such events in the future.

Natural and Cultural Asset Development

This has included:

Track Formation at Castle Rock and Whakaraupo

Tracks have been 'flagged' and formed to Castle Rock and a memorial seat has been constructed near Castle Rock.

The Stan Helms Track and a link track to the Summit Road have been formed, with the valued support of the Summit Road Society, and signs have been erected.

Bridle Path Upgrading

The surface of the path has been upgraded on the Lyttelton side, planting undertaken, the Randolph seat rebuilt, and entry at the Heathcote end landscaped, in conjunction with the Port Hills rangers. This project has included a planting with the Catholic Cathedral College to commemorate the arrival of the pioneer nuns.

Penguin Colony Enhancement

Forty-six penguin chicks were transferred from Motunau Island to Godley Head to provide enhancement for the existing small colony, and a slightly safer future for the endangered species. A trust deed has been prepared for a White-Flipped Penguin Trust, which will continue with project development for species protection, education, and an eco-tourism asset to fund future conservation.

Revegetation and Fencing

Planting undertaken at Castle Rock, Whakaraupo, Bush Head, Kennedy's Bush and Halswell Reserve has amounted to some 36,000 plants in the ground. Whakaraupo Park, Castle Rock and Orongomai Reserve all required fencing, which has been completed.

In addition, plant and animal pest control has been undertaken at Castle Rock and Whakaraupo.

Whakaraupo Cultural Garden Development

The Cultural Garden is a special concept, the only other similar garden being in Nelson. It is designed to help preserve traditional knowledge of harakeke and medicinal plants and has received the backing of The Pacific Development and Conservation Trust and The Stout Trust. Flax and medicinal seedlings have been planted, re-fencing undertaken, and a plaque has been installed. A magnificent gateway at the entry to the garden, carved by inmates of Paparua Prison, has been unveiled and blessed. More flax planting is intended in 2001, using plants that will be made available by Landcare Research. This would be for Banks Peninsula District Council to organize, and the Lyttelton West School and Rapaki people would probably wish to be involved.

Integrated Pest Management on the Port Hills

The concept was initiated and a meeting held at the start of the scheme with landowners, managers and advisers. Environment Canterbury then took up the matter for the Port Hills and they have brought forward a pest management strategy. There is further work to be done on specific aspects of management.

Accessway for the Disabled

This project is being undertaken by the Port Hills Trust at Mt Vernon and is expected to be completed in February 2001.

Land Purchase for Protection and Recreation

Funding for four protected land areas has been raised and contributed as follows:

Orongomai Reserve: purchased from Living Springs and gifted to the Christchurch City Council for management as a scenic reserve.

Marley's Hill: subdivision has been undertaken for the vesting of Freedom TV land with the Christchurch City Council. Freedom TV retains a half-hectare area where their transmitter is located. Fencing, gates and track upgrading are being completed. The reserve protects the land on the northern side of the Port Hills from Dyers Pass Road, in front of the Sign of the Kiwi, to Marley's Hill and will enable track access to be formed.

Contributions have been made towards two further land purchases: one (shown on the map) to provide better access to the Port Hills from Governors Bay. This land is being purchased by the Summit Road Society. The other land is in Selwyn District near Kennedy's Bush and purchase is currently under negotiation.

The policy of willing buyer/willing seller was resolved at the beginning of the project and this addressed concerns that farmers had expressed.

Funding

The project was resourced with an initial grant of \$250,000 from The Community Trust through the year 2000 project grant to the Christchurch City Council. Additional funding for projects, specifically land purchases, the Port Hills book, Bridle Path upgrading, Arbor Days, penguin protection and the Cultural Garden, was raised by the Port Hills 2000 Advisory Group under the umbrella of the Turning Point 2000 Trust. Key funders have been:

- The Community Trust
- The Pacific Development and Conservation Trust for Cultural Garden and Godley Head penguin colony
- The Stout Trust for the Cultural Garden and Port Hills book
- Lottery Grants Board, the Spreydon Heathcote Community Board and John Rhind Ltd for Bridle Path upgrading
- Nature Heritage Fund for Orongomai Reserve
- Banks Peninsula District Council for park fencing and planting
- Oderings Nursery (for propagation)

Other contributors have been Riccarton/Wigram Community Board and Ron Greenwood Trust (Arbor Days), BCL, The Lyttelton Port Company, State Insurance, Summit Road Society, Mobil Oil, Rotary, Transplant Systems, Untouched World, Keith Laugeson Charitable Trust, the Lamar Trust, the Caxton Press, Forest and Bird Society, Environment Canterbury and organisations and members of the community. In addition, goods in kind such as plants, and morning teas for workers were donated to the project.

A total of \$383,730.60 has been raised through the Turning Point 2000 Trust for the development of events and projects by the Port Hills 2000 Advisory Group. Grants confirmed but not yet received are \$5,500 from The Stout Trust for the Cultural Garden and a further \$16,000 from The Pacific Development and Conservation Trust for development of the penguin colony.

Funds allocated but not yet paid include \$35,000 to the Christchurch City Council for the Freedom TV land and a contribution of \$20,000 for the purchase of a block of land by the Christchurch City Council at Burkes Bush.

If this parcel of land at Burkes Bush is not successfully negotiated then the \$20,000 held by the Parks Unit could be allocated to another land purchase on the Port Hills subject to the approval of the Summit Road Society.

Of the funds secured but not yet spent \$28,000 will be passed to the White-Flipped Penguin Trust as it was raised specifically for this project.

Approximately \$7,000 is held specifically for the development of the Bridle Path and if unspent at the time of closure will be passed on to the Summit Road Society to administer.

It is anticipated there will be approximately \$5,000 of general Port Hills 2000 funds unspent, which will be passed to the Summit Road Society for future projects.

Labour and Expertise

The work on the Port Hills could not have been completed without the assistance of the Summit Road Society Eastenders team, and the support of many other volunteers. This has amounted to hundreds of person days for the scheme.

Handover

There will be a need for on-going management and maintenance at Castle Rock, Bush Head and Whakaraupo. This will cover plant releasing and pest control until planting is established, as well as track maintenance of the Bridle Path and Marley's Hill. The preparation of a maintenance and inspection schedule is recommended, if not already in place, to ensure this is undertaken.

Further Work: Flax planting at Whakaraupo Park should be organized for autumn 2001 and plants are available from Landcare Research. Identification information, either as plant labelling or a pamphlet or booklet is also desirable in the long term for the Cultural Garden medicinal plants. An information resource on the carved gateway, weaving and plants is to be prepared and lodged with Lyttelton West School and for the Banks Peninsula District Council, library and Rapaki people.

The White Flipped Penguin Trust is to continue with the penguin conservation project. Funds raised will be made over to the new Trust for future development. Design plans and illustrations of the project are being prepared and will have been completed by the end of the Turning Point 2000 project.

Some funding will be available to the Summit Road Society to contribute to on-going maintenance. This will be passed to the Summit Road Society on cessation of Port Hills 2000 during March 2001. The funds will be held separately for maintenance of projects on the Port Hills, both by the Christchurch City Council and by the Summit Road Society. It is recommended that a small management committee, with a representative from each the Christchurch City Council and Summit Road Society, be formed to decide on the appropriate expenditure of the funds.

Comments and Discussion

Farmer/Land-Owners Concerns

When the scheme was commenced in 1996 local farmers had concerns that the project would limit their private property rights. By the time the specific projects were selected farmers agreed to take a watching role and have expressed no further concerns. In addition, they gave assistance with the events day and illustrations for the book.

Project Management

Project management using volunteers has involved many people, some over an extended length of time. While there has been a good range of expertise to call on, volunteer resourcing has inevitably meant that it has taken longer to organize and to achieve targets. The range of projects would not have been possible without loyal commitment from the Port Hills 2000 Advisory Group as well as the Summit Road Society and Port Hills ranger staff.

Funding

Not every idea or grant application was successful. There was keen competition for millennium funding and the community purse has a limit. However, the local community has willingly provided assets and some companies such as John Rhind Limited and Sign of the Kiwi have expressed interest in continuing with their involvement. John Rhind Limited is to contribute to the upgrading of the Cressy seat on the Bridle Path in 2001.

Implementation

The projects coped with drought then heavy rain over winter that stopped some planting events, rabbit damage, and finally a heavy storm that destabilized and buried some planting at Whakaraupo. This, though, led to other opportunities. Most projects have been successful and awareness, information and experience have been built up.

Thanks

Turning Point 2000, the Port Hills 2000 Advisory Group and project teams, as well as the Mayors and community representatives and staff of the three councils, have helped to make this ambitious project a success.

Action Plan for the Future

Access Links

There is a critical need to develop walkway links from the Port Hills to future residential (growth) areas, particularly at the Selwyn end of the Port Hills. This might best be achieved by a recreation use survey and a development report for the Port Hills, perhaps as a joint authorities project, with recommendations for multi-use tracks and walkways, access points, car parking, facilities and paper road closures where not required. The benefits of such a study are the provision of base information for planning for facility development, for development of policy such as for concessions, and substantiation for an acquisitions strategy. It would enable funding to be targeted where most needed and allow anticipation of pressure points.

Land Purchase

Considerable progress has been made on the Crater Rim Forest Park concept that was part of the original proposal. The most recent purchases have been the Marley's Hill land and a block at Governors Bay by the Summit Road Society, which enables access from Governors Bay as well as easier maintenance. This should be continued on a willing buyer and seller basis in cooperation with private protectors of natural resources, according to a Port Hills acquisition strategy.

Land Management and Maintenance

Stock encroaching into planted areas will continue to be a problem and regular checks and liaison with farmers will be required. Animal and plant pests from hares, rabbits, possums and goats to bone seed will also continue to be a problem and requires clear policy, vigilance and resources. Environment Canterbury is taking a lead in this and their policy guidance will be valuable.

Fencing around some planting areas to combat animal damage may be the soundest means of long term management. In addition, a length of fencing on the Bridle Path requires repair. The contractor will hopefully complete this before 'handover'.

The Salvation Army Horticulture Training Unit undertook planting at Whakaraupo Park and is available for future planting and maintenance on the site.

Ranger Service

As the park estate on the Port Hills expands, the ranger service should be adequately resourced and maintained to ensure that local authorities, private protectors and farmers are able to cooperate on sustainable management, and the area is well maintained. A single ranger service for the area, rather than three separate organisations, would seem an effective long term ideal. A singular Ranger Service, in conjunction with integrated policies for the Port Hills, would provide benefit in a consistent management approach, a more straightforward emergency response, and ease in public relations on the Port Hills. A 'Heads of Agreement' between local authorities and the Department of Conservation could establish the singular service. Such a service might also have responsibility for catchment management on the Port Hills, pest control and fire prevention. Again, clear planning for resourcing is advocated.

Policies for Protection

Each of the Councils is asked to give priority to the development of integrated policies for protection and management of the Port Hills as a natural resource, particularly for land that they manage. Such policies should include pest control, sign policies, track design and maintenance standards, the commercial use of park land, concessions, management for biodiversity, appropriate uses, access and management for events, vehicular access provisions, grazing policies, parking and planting.

Annual Plan

Budgeting for land purchase, track development and maintenance will be important for the immediate future. Councils are urged to give this priority in the next annual planning round.

Port Hills 2000 Advisory Group Members

Diane Menzies, Menzies Environmental, Chair, Port Hills 2000
Steve Brailsford, Brailsford Forest Management
Colin Burrows, University of Canterbury
Valerie Campbell, Environment Canterbury
Phil Claude, Claude Advertising
Graham Densem, Landscape Architect
David Drayton, Port Hills Trust
David Evans, Evans Douglas Consulting Engineers
Jillian Frater, Gillian Frater Consulting
Don Harkness, Rotary Club of Ferrymead
Gordon Kirk, Summit Road Society
Sally Tripp, Governors Bay resident
Paul Loughton, Summit Road Society
Jill McCaw, writer
Murray Parsons, ethno botanist
Huia Rhodes, Rapaki Runaka

Peter Ross, Environment Canterbury
David Round, University of Canterbury
David Simmons, Lincoln University
Ian Leggat, Turning Point 2000 Trust Chairman
Sheree Stevens, Turning Point 2000
Rae Finlay, Turning Point 2000

- Recommendation:**
1. That a single Ranger Service for the Port Hills be recognized, agreed and supported by the signing of a Heads of Agreement between local authorities and Environment Canterbury.
 2. That agreement be given to the funding of a recreation use survey, and development/access plan for recreation, for the Port Hills in 2001.
 3. That funding be allocated in the next annual plan for maintenance, pest and weed control, and policy development for the Port Hills.
 4. That a management committee, with a representative from each of Christchurch City Council and the Summit Road Society, be established to decide on expenditure of funds for on-going maintenance.
 5. That land acquisition for the Crater Rim Forest Park concept continue.
 6. That the on-going development items as listed below be noted:
 - Flax planting at Whakaraupo Park
 - Integrated pest management on the Port Hills
 - Maintenance and inspection schedule for Castle Rock, Bush Head and Whakaraupo
 - Identification information for the Whakaraupo Cultural Garden

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the above recommendations be referred to the Parks and Waterways Manager for report back to the May meeting of the Committee.