

## 18. THE STYX 2000 - 2040 COMMUNITY PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

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The purpose of this report is to obtain approval for the five inter-related visions for the Styx that have resulted from extensive public consultation. They build on the long-term vision for areas 3 and 4 of the Waterways and Wetlands Asset Management Strategy, an area that relates to the Styx River and its associated waterways and wetlands.

### BACKGROUND

The City's waterways and wetlands are sustainably managed in accordance with the Resource Management Act 1991 and the objectives and policies in the City Plan. Part VIIA of the Local Government Act 1994 also requires the Christchurch City Council to develop a long-term financial strategy for the management of drainage and waterways and wetlands within its locality. To address these requirements, the former Waterways and Wetlands Team developed a Natural Waterways and Wetlands Asset Management Strategy that was adopted by Council in October 2000. The strategy is based on values and the development of long-term visions. To assist in this process, the City was divided into 14 project areas. This report relates to project areas 3 and 4.

### THE PROCESS

Community involvement was initiated two years ago with the Styx River Happening at Spencer Park (March 1999). This was followed by a workshop, focus group discussions, newsletters, expert investigations, community planting and clean up days. Community interest in the Styx has resulted in the formation of the 'Guardians of the Styx' Charitable Trust and another group researching the local European history.

Consultation and research highlighted the issues and opportunities presented by the Styx and its environs. From these, a series of five inter-related visions has evolved, along with key actions for their implementation. These visions have been presented to the Shirley/Papanui, Fendalton/Waimairi and Burwood/Pegasus Community Boards, the Guardians of the Styx and the Parks and Recreation Committee. They were then presented to the wider community in the form of a document for comment. Submissions were received from both individuals and organisations. Except for some minor detail, overall they were very supportive. People were also able to indicate how they might like to be involved.

### VISIONS

The visions, together with key actions for their implementation are listed below.

#### *Vision 1*

To achieve a **"Viable Springfed River Ecosystem"** to complement the other representative protected ecosystems of Christchurch such as the Port Hills, Travis Wetlands and the Coastline.

#### **Key Actions**

- Protect, maintain and restore natural drainage patterns by:
  - Understanding natural surface and subsurface drainage patterns and processing through research and monitoring.
  - Ensuring that any development mitigates for stormwater quality and quantity and recognises and works with natural drainage patterns.
  - Recognising natural variations due to storm events and seasonal changes and allowing sufficient space for these to occur through building setbacks, zoning and land protection.
  - Avoiding filling and building within floodplains and ponding areas through education, working with landowners, regulation and enforcement.
  - Maximise ground soakage through minimising hard surfacing .
  - Monitor water abstraction and its impacts on waterways and wetlands.
  - Recognising and planning for the long-term effects of climate change and sea level rise.

- Protect springs by:
  - Identifying, highlighting and monitoring springflow.
  - Ensuring that spring flow from the underlying aquifers is maintained .
- Protect and enhance water quality by:
  - Identifying and mitigating against point source discharges.
  - Developing strategies to deal with non-point source pollution.
- Protect and monitor remnant indigenous vegetation and the effect of weed invasion on them.
- Identify and protect natural landforms.
- Restore a range of viable habitats that reflect the range of indigenous ecosystems in this area, based on the underlying soils.
- Increase native bird species richness through:
  - Protecting and restoring core habitat sites for wetland and bush bird species.
  - Ensuring that there are adequate buffer zones along waterway and wetland margins.
  - Developing green corridor linkages to areas outside the Styx area.
- Undertake predator control as necessary.
- Reintroduce native species in suitable locations (for example, fernbird at the mouth of the Styx River).
- Investigate methods to increase the number of trout and the number and range of native fish species within the Styx River system.
- Monitor, mitigate and remedy the effect of land use change on water quality and other ecosystem attributes.

## **Vision 2**

To create a “**Source to Sea Experience**” through the development of an Urban National Reserve.

### **Key Actions**

- Identify and protect:
  - Suitable routes along the Styx River, Kaputone Stream and other tributary waterways (this to be done in the spirit of partnership through negotiation with current landowners).
  - Provide improved road crossing facilities so that roads do not become barriers to pedestrians.
- Provide a range of experiences through the development of:
  - Walkway routes, boating facilities, cycleways.
  - A range of landscape experiences based on natural and cultural values.
  - Innovative interpretative material.
- Develop service nodes that will concentrate human activity and provide facilities for:
  - Parking for cars and bicycles.
  - Relaxation.
  - Eating facilities.
  - Learning activities.
  - Recreation facilities.
  - Accommodation/camping grounds.
- Monitor and remedy the impact of people and recreational activities on ecological values through:
  - Preventing or limiting access to core habitat or sensitive areas.
  - Use of design elements that will lessen the impact on wildlife (that is screening, moats, fences).
- Promote the source to sea experience through:
  - The development of promotional material.
  - On site interpretation, facilities, and learning experiences.

## **Vision 3**

To develop a “**Living Laboratory**” that focuses on both research and learning.

### **Key Actions**

- Develop partnerships with:
  - Other government organisations (for example, Environment Canterbury, Department of Conservation, Ministry of Fisheries, Fish and Game Council).
  - Iwi.
  - research institutions (for example, NIWA, Landcare).
  - tertiary institutions (for example, Lincoln and Canterbury Universities, Christchurch Polytechnic, Christchurch College of Education).
  - Schools and young people’s organisations.
  - Community groups and volunteers.

- Establish an inclusive working party to oversee the development and implementation of a research and learning programme.
- Develop an on-site research centre through the acquisition and development of a building that can provide:
  - Laboratory suitable for analysis of results.
  - Facilities for class and student visits.
  - Library.
  - Interpretation facilities.
  - Plant nursery.
- Develop a common accessible source of information that contains electronic databases of information and a GIS (geographic information system) that is regularly updated.
- Develop a website that:
  - Promotes the Living Laboratory, its concept and how to get involved.
  - Provides easy access to data and reports.
  - Provides on-line learning activities for students prior to and after visiting the area.
  - Promotes student projects, thoughts and ideas.
  - Encourages enquiries and discussion.
- Develop joint projects with communities in other areas to compare and contrast the Styx River and its environs with other ecosystems

#### **Vision 4**

To establish “**The Styx**” as a place to be through maintaining and enhancing the special character and identity of the area.

#### **Key Actions**

- Recognise, highlight and enhance the unique landscape character of the Styx River system through:
  - Improving public access, visibility and the growing of large trees along its margins.
  - promoting major road crossings of the Styx River as gateways into the city through signage, green corridors and other features.
  - a series of markers along the Styx River, to be based on the word Styx and the theme of ‘Sticks’.
  - protect and accentuate the stories of the land, its drainage and vegetation patterns, cultural patterns, cultural features and landmarks.
  - allow people to express their relationship to the area through consultation and participation.
  - develop and promote a design guide for all public land that will eventually be part of the urban national reserve, so that the smaller existing reserves are seen and recognised as being part of something bigger. This is particularly important for features that will occur regularly throughout such as signage, fencing, seating, rubbish bins, paths, and artworks.
- Promote the locality through:
  - regular newsletters.
  - media articles.
  - publications (for example, history book).
  - Christchurch City Council website.
  - videos, documentaries.
  - unique branding and identity based on the Styx logo of the white heron.
- Stage a series of events that will enhance this area as a place to be.

#### **Vision 5**

To foster “**Partnerships**” through raising the quality of relationships as we move through together.

#### **Key Actions**

##### *Tangata Whenua*

- Develop policies for mahinga kai specific values including habitat and species management.
- Recognise and protect sites of significance and where appropriate, mark these by signs or events.

##### *Locally*

- Work with private landowners in the development of the Vision while at the same time recognising:
  - Private property rights.
  - The need to use a range of protection methods to accomplish desired outcomes.
  - The need to achieve win-win situations.

- To work with a wide range of organisations and institutions in the development of the Living Laboratory.
- To work with private enterprise and community organisations in the development of the Styx as a place to be.
- To work with private enterprise, landowners and community organisations in the development of the source to sea experience.

#### *Nationally*

- To become involved in national research programmes using the Styx as a case study.
- To develop joint projects in order to compare and contrast the Styx with other ecosystems.
- To promote information sharing in order to learn from one another.

#### *Internationally*

- To develop and strengthen the Sister River relationship ties with Alabama, USA.
- To plan and develop other international links for the benefit of both parties.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The visions provide key directions along with actions for their implementation. This process will be an evolving one as more is learnt about the Styx River system through regular review and monitoring. The Living Laboratory will provide one means of doing this.

The development of partnerships with landowners, organisations and the community will be an important component with many of the projects. The wider community will be kept informed of progress via the Styx newsletter, proposed website and other media such as the local newspaper. Plans for Capital projects will be presented to the relevant Community Board(s) and Council committees as appropriate.

### **FUNDING**

Funding the visions has been identified in the Waterways and Wetlands Asset Management Strategy to be implemented over the next 40 years. The visions consist of many individual projects that will be identified and funded from the Parks and Waterways Budget.

Other funding opportunities have already been explored with some success. The Guardians of the Styx has received \$20,000 from the Community Trust for the Living Laboratory and restoration work. The Royal Society of Science and Technology is also funding a teacher fellow, Julia Tu'ineau. She is assisting in the establishment of the Living Laboratory.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Styx River and its associated waterways and wetlands is coming under increasing pressure as Christchurch City moves northwards. It is important that the Council work in partnership with the community to identify, protect and enhance the system's many values. The implementation of the specific actions associated with each vision will enable the Council to work closely with the community to maximise the many values and opportunities that the Styx River and its catchment presents.

- Recommendations:**
1. That the Board recommend to the Parks and Recreation Committee that the Council's Waterways and Wetlands Natural Asset Management Strategy be amended to include the detailed strategy that has been developed from the process outlined in the report.
  2. That plans for Capital projects be presented to the relevant Community Board(s) and Council Committee(s) as appropriate.

#### **Chairperson's**

**Recommendation:** That the abovementioned recommendations be adopted.