

8. STYX MILL RESERVE – WET LANDS MAINTENANCE ISSUES

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The purpose of this report is to advise the Community Board of maintenance issues related to the wetlands within the Styx Mill Reserve. Problems are noted and future management plans are discussed.

BACKGROUND

A number of residents adjoining the Styx Mill Reserve complained to the Board earlier this year about problems arising from increased insect and Pukeko populations which in their view, originated in the reserve area. The Board sought a report on the matter to clarify issues and possible management options.

ACTIONS TAKEN

Reserve staff obtained a permit from the Fish & Game Council to relocate the excess Pukeko population and approximately 20 birds were transferred to Boggy Creek, Lake Ellesmere.

Waterways, Environmental Services and Reserve staff jointly inspected the site in mid January to investigate the insect problem. A number of potential breeding areas were noted and included wet areas in the paddocks and along the pond margins. A small paddock drain near Hussey Road was identified as a possible source of insect breeding and has now been placed on a regular maintenance program to improve water flows. Some work was also undertaken to reduce areas of shallow water around the existing pond margins and within the Styx River to improve water flows.

FUTURE WETLAND MANAGEMENT PLANS

The Styx Mill Reserve has been included in a monthly mosquito surveillance and monitoring program being carried out on the Council's behalf by Crown Public Health. This program commenced in December 2000 and up to mid March (the most recent survey), no larvae had been found. Waterways staff will continue to check the results of the monitoring surveys and take remedial action if larvae are found.

Water levels of the Styx River will continue to be monitored as this has some influence on the wet river margins and can in turn provide insect breeding habit. When appropriate aquatic weed and sediment will be removed selectively to maintain flows and control water levels.

The recent merger of the Parks and Waterways and Wetlands Units maintenance role into a new Greenspace Maintenance Team will assist in the management of the reserves and adjoining waterways such as Styx Mill Reserve and ensure prompt reaction to complaints of this nature

However in the long term, the problems reported by the residents are really part of the natural environment in the area and there is little that can be done about them. With the development of the areas surrounding the Styx Mill Reserve into residential housing, wildlife such as the Pukeko, tends to migrate into less disturbed reserve land. This process will continue into the future and illustrates the need for adequate buffers between private land and public land.

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairperson's Recommendation: That the officer's recommendation be adopted.