

12. TRAVIS WETLAND UPDATE

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Travis Wetland project.

This report was presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Travis Wetland Trust on 22 October 2002.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The coastal park ranger team takes this opportunity to thank all those people involved in the Travis Wetland project for their dedication and enthusiasm.

In particular the team would like to recognise the dedication of the Travis Wetland Trust members for the continuing successful partnership in the restoration and development of Travis Wetland Heritage Park. The monthly workdays are a continuing source of inspiration and the monthly meetings continue to be a valuable for the exchange of ideas and reviewing progress.

On 4 August 2002 a celebration event was held to acknowledge and thank individuals and sponsors for their contribution.

Travis Wetland Trust board members have more recently become involved in the strategic development planning of Travis Wetland, which is an exciting development.

VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Group/Individual	Project	Hours
Travis Wetland Trust	Management/planting/weeding	1,443
Christchurch Native Habitats	Kahikatea	500
Jim Payne	Harakeke/Ti	100
Christchurch Polytechnic	Ecological Restoration	180
YMCA Conservation Corps	Mairehau Track	30
Schools		40
Total		4,695

Estimated volunteer work hours for October 2001 to October 2002.

As can be seen from the table volunteers, work training groups and individuals contribute a significant number of hours to the Travis Wetland project. Without this input the project would not have achieved the state it has this year.

COMMUNITY WORK SCHEMES

Group	Project	Hours
Worksights	Weeding and general maintenance	4,650
Wai Ora Trust	Weeding releasing plants	1,176
Total		5,826

Worksights, an employment initiative of the IHC, have been in place for 30 weeks from late March. The group averages four people and one supervisor for six hours per day, five days a week. They have mainly been involved with maintaining the Millennium Planting, pond shoreline, education centre grounds, car park gardens and cleaning the public toilets. There have been a few minor hiccups involving losses of plants due to over enthusiasm but the net effect is positive for both parties.

VISITOR USAGE

A people counter was installed on the Anne Flanagan Walkway in August 2002 one month before the western boardwalk was complete. The counter is read monthly and reset to zero each time. For September, the month after the opening, user numbers had increased significantly.

Date	Number
6.08.02	installed
4.09.02	713
4.10.02	1,070

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Staff from the Christchurch City Council Parks and Waterways Unit and City Solutions have been involved in the following development projects during the year.

These facilities are now a major recreational asset for Christchurch City residents.

Boardwalk and Tracks

Two key pieces of the track network were completed in September this year. These are the boardwalk on the western side of the park and the hard surface track across the edge of the Telecom exchange land. The 400 metre wooden boardwalk traverses the willow forest and passes through the remnant manuka area, one of the most botanically important sites in the park. The boardwalk links the viewing tower with the new hard surface track that crosses the edge of the Telecom exchange land. A 10 metre wide strip of land was purchased last year from Telecom for the purpose of a walkway. Both the boardwalk and new track are built to meet Parks and Waterways accessibility guidelines. They have passing bays approx 40 metres apart and will have seating installed in the future. The new tracks make it possible to walk between Mairehau Road and Travis Road. In January a further section of track will be built to link Beach Road with the track from Inwoods Road; this will create a 3 km accessible walk around three quarters of the wetland. Funding for this section will be mostly by way of a grant of \$5000 from the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board.

Tracks linking the car park, information pavilion and bird hide were built before Christmas last year.

Information Centre

The interpretation display within the information centre was completed with the addition of a 'newspaper' the "City Times" which includes a time line of the history of the park and items on key personalities involved such as Anne Flanagan and Colin Meurk.

Bird Hide

The bird hide received a local Resene Design Award. Congratulations to City Solutions architect Chrispin Schurr.

Park Maps

Three large information signs have been placed at key areas around the park. These signs include a park map and care code signs and are located at Clarevale, adjacent to the Mairehau Road car park and adjacent to the park information pavilion.

New Brochure

A new information pamphlet for Travis Wetland has just been published. It covers the park history, concept and objectives, management issues and wildlife. The brochure also includes an up-to-date map showing tracks and facilities.

REVEGETATION PROJECTS

	Site	Plant No.
Christchurch Native Habitats	Kotuku Basin (Clarevale)	300
Arbor Day (volunteer park wardens)	SW of stock yard	595
Celebration Day	Information/education centre	300
Trees for Canterbury/Travis Wetland Trust	Mairehau Road old dunes	300
Millennium Planting (schools)	Central pond	200
Manuka Group	Western willows	1,200
Total		2,895

WEED CONTROL

A draft weed management plan has been put together by Jason Holland, a student worker last summer. Comments from key people are being sought to finalise the plan. This will help us manage the weed control programme more effectively.

Simon Johnson and his team, Habitat Restoration Services, have been busy maintaining the high value planted areas using mechanical and chemical techniques. In December and January ranger staff and students poisoned female grey willow in the western willows adjacent to the Manuka area. This appears to have been successful. Wai Ora Forest Landscapes targeted willow seedlings, gorse, and hemlock throughout the park. During the early summer monitoring was carried out for purple loosestrife *Lythrum salicaria* and beggars tick *Biddens frondosa*. Beggars tick was controlled by herbicide in the north west corner and by hand removal around the central pond. These plants are both invaders that threaten the biodiversity of the wetland. Only a handful of purple loose strife was found and these were removed. This season these weeds will again be monitored and controlled.

This September several weeks were spent identifying and marking female grey willows in through out the park. During the coming summer it is intended to use students to drill and poison all marked female grey willows marked in the western willow area. Wai Ora Forest Landscapes will fell and poison female grey willow in the south east corner adjacent to Frosts Road. This will reduce the seed source and lead to less herbicide use in the future.

PEST CONTROL

The bi-annual predator trapping and monitoring was carried out in May. Two male stoats were trapped just after the official programme. A monthly trapping programme was carried out from October 2001 to February 2002 around the central pond environs but nothing was caught.

Darren Peters, Department of Conservation National Predator Officer, visited the wetland in October to share best practice and offer his advice. This was a result of John Skilton attending the Department of Conservation annual Mainland Island Hui held at Boyle Lodge in July this year. These contacts will benefit our predator control operation and future bird reintroductions.

During the next 12 months a predator control regime based on Department of Conservation best practice and advice will be set up at the wetland. This will give us a robust predator trapping system which will enable us to look towards reintroductions of wetland bird species.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the information be received.