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7th April 2009

Christchurch City Council
P.O. Box 237
Christchurch Mail Centre
Christchurch 8140
CHRISTCHURCH

To whom it may concern

Re: Submission on the Long Term Council Community Plan

I enclose a copy of a submission to the Christchurch City Council on its draft Long Term Council Community Plan. I would welcome the opportunity to speak to my submission in the future.

Regards

Wayne McCallum
Little River

Submitter Details

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Submission on the Long Term Community Plan of the Christchurch City Council

From: Dr. Wayne McCallum, Little River resident

Executive Summary

- That a site in Little River, currently owned by the Christchurch City Council, be set aside for a wetland project which integrates storm water management with biodiversity and cultural restoration.
- The Council includes policy and budget support for the planning and development of the site in the LTCCP.
- The proposal would create several benefits:
 - It would provide an asset for the management of storm-water and is consistent with proposals in the LTCCP to spend \$250,000 on drainage on Banks Peninsula over the next five years.
 - It would create benefits consistent with national and local strategies and priorities for biodiversity, including the Canterbury and Christchurch biodiversity strategies.
 - It would provide a culture resource for local iwi.
 - It would have amenity and destination value for people coming to Little River, including those using the Little River rail-trail.
 - It could be a project that would harmonise with other biodiversity initiatives underway in the area, including the restoration of Te Waiwera and the re-introduction of tui to the Peninsula.
 - The project need not be funds 'thirsty' and would integrate well with available funding source priorities including Environment Canterbury's wetland fund, the Community Conservation Fund (DoC), the Living Streams Initiative (Environment Canterbury) and the proposed Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust.
 - Given current community interest in ecological restoration on Banks Peninsula the project is anticipated to enjoy considerable buy-in and support from local residents, including hands-on participation.



Submission on the Long Term Community Plan of the Christchurch City Council

From: Dr. Wayne McCallum, Little River resident

1. Personal Detail: My name is Wayne McCallum and I have been resident in Little River for one year, although my association with the area goes back many years as a walker, cyclist and ornithologist. The appeals of the area to me are considerable, such that I chose to buy my present house in Little River over the internet while living and working in Cambodia.

My background is in natural resource management, particularly community engagement and conservation. I have a PhD in Environment Management and a Master of Science (Hons.) in Natural Resource Management. I have extensive experience in community-based environmental management, having worked and managed such programmes overseas and in New Zealand. I am the current regional biodiversity coordinator for Canterbury, although I am writing this submission as a Christchurch City rate-payer and Little River resident.

2. Background

Since living at 20 Barclays Road, Little River, I have become aware of how a section of land of approximately 1.5 – 2.5 hectares, situated between the unformed portion of Barclays Road and local road reserve, has periodically flooded during storm events (see Figure 1 and 2). In 2008 this occurred on at least two occasions and again in January of this year following a major down pour. Typically these events see water pool in large sheets across the area, with these slowly disappearing over the course of 24 – 48 hours following the cessation of rain.

These periodic events highlight the importance of the area for storm-water containment to Little River. Conversations with older residents have helped to explain these phenomena to me, their explanations suggesting that this land area occupies a hollow that gets deeper as one move from the highway towards the toe of the valley hillside. It is therefore a natural site for water to pool, especially that flowing from the Christchurch side of the valley's hills.

Presently the paddocks are subject to grazing – on last count by two horses and the occasional sheep – while the land itself is registered as council reserve. This latter point is of importance to this submission as it represents an opportunity for the Council to consider how this land is developed and managed, with the rest of my submission detailing a suggestion for this.

3. Submission Focus

The focus of my submission is an application to the Council to set aside within its LTCCP resources, financial, goods and services, to explore and instigate a wetland restoration project for the council land I have described. I believe there are several strategic benefits that could be

achieved by doing this that are consistent with the themes and aspirations captured by the LTCCP document and the other plans and strategies that the Council is a part of. These include:

- It is possible that the wetland site could become an integral part of any efforts to manage storm water in the Little River area. In particular a wetland system could be developed that integrates biodiversity, amenity and other values with a dry-basin system, one of the common means for managing storm water in Canterbury. The dry basin system could provide temporary storage for water during storm events while the periodic inflows could ensure the sustainability of a number of wetland species, notably harakeke (NZ flax) and a variety of rush and sedge species. Landscaping of the site, for example the creation of mounds ('islands') would allow less water tolerant species such as cabbage trees and kowhai to grow.

Given proposals to address storm water in Little River the environmental engineering opportunities provided by the site offer an excellent strategic vehicle for addressing both an asset need and the creation of a biodiversity hub in the area. At present the Council has scheduled \$250,000 of additional support for drainage activities in Banks Peninsula and \$190,000 there-after. The linking of the wetland site to storm water management would mean that any of this money directed towards Little River could benefit both this drainage and local biodiversity, while contributing to the creation of an amenity and cultural resource.

- The development and extensions of the rail trail has substantially increased the number of people coming to Little River. Unlike the traditional use of the area, which saw the area treated as a temporary stop-over, the area has now become a destination in its own right. Presently, however, Little River is not well endowed with facilities or activities for this new demographic to access and experience. Typically a rail trail user is a person who is interested in out-doors activities and is likely to be sympathetic, if not deeply interested, in the environment around them. Such people will find a wetland site appealing, both as an amenity resource (something they can walk around) and, if incorporated into the site, as a learning environment (e.g., through interpretative material).

This latter point is especially important, for while the Little River area and wider Te Waiwera basin has considerable natural values it is generally difficult for people to access natural locations and to experience them first-hand; this is in large part because they exist on private land. They can therefore be seen 'over the fence' but they can not be experienced close-up; the wetland project could alleviate this while creating a destination asset for visitors that adds to the current range in the area.

- Development of the wetland would link to wider efforts by the Te Waiwera runanga to restore Te Waiwera and to rejuvenate the cultural resources of the valley. The site, for example, could become a harvesting location for harakeke as well as a venue where the runanga, through interpretative material, could 'tell their story' and help to rejuvenate some of their taonga. The treatment of storm water through the wetland could, as a co-benefit, reduce the detrimental effects of run-off on the lake and its tributary rivers and streams.
- A flourishing wetland of flax and other indigenous species would provide an ideal environment supporting the rehabilitation and spread of bell-bird, kereru, tui and other native species found on the Peninsula. In this regard the development of the site would

harmonise and promote initiative already underway in the valley and wider Banks Peninsula, including efforts to re-establish a self-sustaining population of tui.

- In 2008 the Christchurch City Council adopted the Canterbury Biodiversity Strategy, while it has also recently adopted its own biodiversity strategy. Development of a wetland at the proposed site would be entirely consistent with the priorities of these two strategies and with national priorities for the protection and promotion of biodiversity. Wetland areas, as a case-in-point, are a focus system for protection under the national list of biodiversity priorities.
- A preliminary survey by my self and Iaeon Cramwell, of the Te Waiwera runanga, has suggested that the cost of wetland development on the site need not be considerable. The main expenses are likely to relate to consents and planning, site preparation (e.g., establishing contours and islands) and re-vegetation (planting and management). A number of funding opportunities exist to support such activities within Canterbury and the wider nation. The Council's own drainage budget for Banks Peninsula, referred to earlier in this submission, is one. Additional sources include Environment Canterbury's wetland fund and support from the Living Streams programme (through the Environment Enhancement Fund). The newly established Community Conservation Fund (DoC) is also another potential source. Into the future, the proposed Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust could yield a source of financial support. Support from within Environment Canterbury's wider budget for promoting biodiversity could also yield goods and services for the planning and restoration of the site. There is also considerable human and social capital within Little River itself that could be brought to the project, including a dedicated restoration group coordinated by local residents and operating under the tutelage of the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust.

4. Considerations

I anticipate that there might be some public concern over the term wetland. People might have views of large ponds of open water, which will become a haven for Canada geese and black swan and as a source of mosquitoes. In reality, a dry basin wetland proposal, especially once it becomes vegetated, would not prove attractive to these species. The percolation of water out of the site, based on current trends, suggest that its limited retention time will be insufficient to support a life cycle of mosquitoes. The present grass site has, meanwhile, proved unattractive to browsing birds and once the likes of flax have grown, it will be even less appealing to these species.

I think the way that this project is tackled would be very important. Little River comprises a community that is, on the whole, passionate about its environment and, on the other, weary of outside initiatives. In these features it is no different from a host of other peri-fringe communities in New Zealand. Because of this a 'top-down' Council directed approach might not draw the same positive response that a collaborative one could. Alternatively, if the community feels that it has co-ownership of something, then it will contribute and aid its development.

Little River and the wider Banks Peninsula area already has several community-based initiatives, including a local environmental restoration group, that the project could dove-tail with. I would also be a willing contributor to any restoration project developed on the site. In this context, Christchurch City would be invaluable as a facilitator and as a supplier of goods and services.

Providing resources and support to a community-level trust, set-up to develop and manage the project, would therefore be an ideal role for the Council. If undertaken in this way it would subsequently be possible for such a trust to access funds from the likes of the Environment Enhancement Fund (Environment Canterbury) and the Community Conservation Fund (Department of Conservation).

I wish to speak for my submission if the opportunity is made available.

Wayne McCallum 

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Figure 1: Potential wetland project site, Little River





Figure 2a: Wetland site ●

Figure 2:

Proposed dry-basin wetland site photographs



Figure 2b: Wetland site ●