

MINUTES

Title	Reservoir Creek: Enhancement of an Urban Taonga Public Forum
Date	12-11- 2007
Time	12:30 pm
Venue	Heaphy Room Tasman District Council (TDC) 189 Queen Street Richmond

Present

Jeremy Butler Environmental Education Officer (TDC), Tom Kroos Project Coordinator (TDC), Melanie McColgan Waimaori Streamcare and Tiakina, David Burt Keep Richmond Beautiful, David Stevenson Engineering (TDC), Chris Hemi Ngati Kuia, Brad Myer Te Ngahere Forest Management, Martin Rutledge (DOC), Residents: John and Maureen, Shirley Marshall, Joan Inwood, Malcolm Gilbert, Jim and Cath Aitken.

Apologies

Rob Smith (TDC), Ann Sheridan Tiakina, Caroline Shirtliffe Salisbury School, Paul Daubney Waimea College, Beryl Wilkes (TDC), Roger Young Cawthron Institute, Steve Richards (TDC), Helen Campbell Forest and Bird, Richard Kempthorn Mayor (TDC).

1. Introduction

Tom Kroos welcomed those present. Following a round table of introductions Tom provided a list of apologies and overviewed Stage 2 of the Reservoir Creek Project. A photo album was then circulated that illustrated the various activities on Reservoir Creek.

2. Stage 1

Tom reported on the TDC website for those interested in further details of project reports. A copy of the sign panels was also circulated.

3. Stage 2

A. Mel presented a background on the Waimaori Streamcare that involves five local schools from primary to college level. All sites have been sampled with the exception of the top station above the Reservoir. Part of the monitoring was about teaching and much about identifying and raising concerns of the community. A common theme in all of the lower stations was the need to plant shading over the creek to prevent weed growth and keep the temperatures cooler. One student from Garin College had recently won an award for monitoring on Reservoir Creek. Another student from Salisbury School entered a New Zealand wide national competition run by NiE with two years of results from Reservoir Creek monitoring and won the competition.

B. Brad Myer was contracted to identify the forest type above the reservoir and to consider the effects of pine forest removal and other ecological threats to the site. Brad reported that the area along Reservoir Creek was vulnerable to weed infestations and possums but that the tier of the forest was largely and structurally intact. There were significant examples of tawa not commonly found in the ecological district and that these trees were important for kereru nesting. Bellbirds, tuis, fantails and silver eyes were also observed and a good range of food bearing plants was available. The biodiversity values are however at risk from invading pest plants such as old man's beard and banana passion fruit. A member of the public said he had heard pigs in the catchment and that there were likely stoats preying on the birds.

C. Chris Hemi reported on the principals of Cultural Health Index assessments and from this process it was recognised that improvements have already been identified on Reservoir Creek especially at the Aqua centre site. For stage two 4 sites are being investigated and the spring survey had been carried out last week. Chris also said that another harakeke clean-up demonstration would be held at Easby Park and that the public would be advised in advance of the event.

D. David Stephenson then updated the meeting on status of the Reservoir. There has been no change to the operation of the dam. The Reservoir is nearing 100 years of age and TDC has public safety concerns. For this reason the vegetation was cleared at the dam face to inspect seepage and most importantly to prevent the tree and shrub roots from destabilising the structure any further. A pipe has been fitted to lower the water level quickly in the event of an emergency without compromising the safety of the structure. It is unlikely that the dam will remain in its current form and the water level will be lowered significantly. Any changes will require resource consent.

Channel work and widening of Reservoir Creek is also envisaged for the reach at Stillwater Gardens to improve the flood capacity. This work will be carried out within the next nine months and TDC is preparing resource consent for this work.

David then responded to a number of questions from the floor;

Q. What is the increase in creek flow below the Reservoir after decommissioning?

A. 10-25 %

Q. What are the 4 bags of concrete for?

A. I will investigate

It was also acknowledged that as a result of forest milling the creek flow would increase. This together with the Reservoir decommission would result in reviewing the stormwater pipe capacity further downstream to accommodate enhanced flood flows.

Tom stated that the project was an opportunity to work together for a balance between amenity and ecological values. David agreed and added that managing a public risk for safety was paramount.

4. Public Forum

Many of the public participants at the meeting were concerned about the amount of weeds growing along the margins of Reservoir Creek and the dense concentrations of watercress on the stream bed. The area below Hill Street was especially in bad order. To illustrate the point Tom was given two bouquets of various weeds collected from this site. Brad commented that most of the species brought in could be controlled. The following points were noted;

- weeds are growing higher and are no longer be mowed
- grass clippings are being disposed into the creek
- when can residents expect appropriate plantings to suppress the weeds
- watercress catches and collects the silt

- weeds are so thick residents can no longer view the stream
- how serious of a threat are buttercups

In response to some of the questions Tom replied that the best way to control the watercress was to shade the creek bed with proper planting. A restoration planting plan was available for Reservoir Creek and would be available on the TDC website in the near future. It was agreed that representatives from TDC's Parks and Reserves Department would be available at the next public forum to report on the timing of the various plantings.

Brad stated that there was a need for a better mix of plants. Carex species were good for the water edge but recognition should be given to mid size trees and early successional species in the wider band especially Coprosma. Plant species that are important food resources for birds should also be considered. Tom cautioned that some residents might feel differently if their view of the water was blocked by vegetation. One resident said this was already the case with the amount of weed growth. Brad added that planting mid range species could be done in patches which would provide for views of the water. Mel stated that in the absence of native plants TDC were asked not to mow the grass and weeds down to the waterline. The existing vegetation provided some overhead cover and shade keeping the water temperature lower in critical summer periods. The plants also provided a lot of habitat for damselflies. Martin added it was also good escape cover for shortfin eels.

In response to a question from Tom residents in attendance living below Hill Street supported the concept of TDC relinquishing the mown grass strip on the true right of Reservoir Creek in favour of utilising this area for native plantings.

Residents also expressed concern about track work extensions on private property between Keith's Walkway and the Reservoir. Jeremy advised that this work did not require resource consent and that the track was only returned to what it previously was before being overgrown in gorse. However TDC compliance officers did speak to the owner about the potential of sediment runoff into Reservoir Creek. Tom commented that the landowner had been very good to the public in respect to providing access up to the Reservoir though he should be approached for formal easement arrangements. It was noted that his cattle had not been observed above the Reservoir in recent times. One resident commented that cattle were still gaining access into the TDC reserves at Dellside and Easby Parks. Tom suggested that TDC be contacted in the first instance when these observations are made.

Several residents identified cats as a major predator of native birds. The feline problem was particularly noticeable in town along Reservoir Creek and at Templemore Pond. The question was put as to the effectiveness of cat collars with bells. Martin replied that in one DoC study the collars were only effective 30% of the time. Tom thought there may be an opportunity to educate urban cat owners about the effect of cats on native fauna. David Burt confirmed that some predator trapping was being carried out above the Reservoir.

The meeting closed at 1430 hours.