



Covenantors Newsletter

Issue 4, February 2018

COVENANT MILESTONES

BPCT now has 65 registered covenants protecting 1132 hectares across Banks Peninsula. Two large blocks are in the final process stages which will add a significant 268 hectares to this total in the near future.

Twelve further active projects are underway and there has been a consistent stream of new interests expressed over the last six months.

WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 4. Last year was a thoroughly enjoyable and productive year working with everyone involved in the covenanting process. I'm fortunate to have visited several outstanding old forest remnants and stunning waterways, playing a hands-on role in helping to secure their protection for future generations. Thank you to the whole BPCT team, the landowners, funders, supporters, and other Trusts and agencies who make this valuable protection possible. Thank you also to the fencing contractors, land surveyors, and ecologists who work in often tricky but rewarding field conditions. 2018 is set to be an exciting year with several excellent projects lined up.

COVENANT WALKS

The weather was perfect for our Kaituna Basin covenant walk through Vicky and Chris Parr's property in September. The views climbing up through existing old forest patches and regenerating new areas, combined with guest host Ruud Kleinpaste's informative bug spiels created a memorable experience. Over 45 people enjoyed clear views from the top ridge near Mt Herbert overlooking both sides of the Peninsula while stopping for lunch, making the three hours walking well worth the effort.

Held throughout all weekends in November and coordinated by the Rod Donald Trust, the annual Walking Festival was a huge success. Several BPCT covenants featured; Kaituna Basin as part of a Harry Ell-based historical tour led by Rosemary Baird, French Farm wetland led by Alice Shanks and Tom MacTavish, Panama Reserve led by Robin Burleigh, Western Valley Multi led by the Pikelharings, Johnsons, David Cameron and Jo Hewitson, Waipuna Saddle led by Bob Webster, and Fisherman's Bay led by Marie Haley. Many other interesting reserves and projects were included along the way. If you are interested in having your property included in future contact Suky Thompson, Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust manager and festival organiser suky@roddonaldtrust.co.nz. If you simply want to take part as a walker next year, be sure to book early due to the festival's growing popularity.

COVENANT SUPPORT – WEEDING BEES

In November, 60 Christ's College boys and staff assisted with weed control on several covenants. This work will become an annual event within the school's new community work programme. Old man's beard and sycamore were targeted at Balguerie Stream in Akaroa – a nice surprise to find seedling tōtara underneath masses of tangled vines that would have otherwise been smothered. Fence lines were cleared at Tikapomo Rahui in Puaha Valley, banana passionfruit and boneseed were removed from Streat's Bush in Cashmere, and woody weed control was undertaken on the Lyttleton Port Company site. It's great to connect with landowners especially when they need support with problems. Though ongoing maintenance is primarily the landowner's



Ruud Kleinpaste describes a carabid ground beetle to onlookers on the Mt Herbert ridge at Kaituna Basin, part of the Te Ara Pātiki - flounder trail.



Silver ferns amongst regenerating ground floor species under an older kanuka canopy at Balguerrie Stream.



Fox and Associates team members planting native trees in the fire-affected area of Seb's Block at Allandale.



Visitors enjoy exploring the stream and bush in Mabel Hope Reserve.

responsibility, if you have covenant issues you'd like a hand with, we can coordinate volunteer assistance. Please contact enquiries@bpct.org.nz.

RESTORATION PLANTING DAYS

In addition to the generously donated plants from Trees for Canterbury, funding was secured from Oil and Gas company SGS for extra supplementary plantings in covenants affected by the Port Hills Fires earlier in the year. Species were chosen for their role in early forest succession and to increase bird habitat. Two planting days were carried out in Early Valley on Lansdowne A and B; one by South Baptist Church volunteers, and the second by SGS staff. In total around 2000 trees were planted. The Fox and Associates land survey team put in a sterling effort at the Parish property next to Ohinetahi, planting over 500 trees in only a couple of hours. McPhail covenant at Allandale near Living Springs also received donated trees for a small fire-affected area.

In addition to fire-affected covenant plantings, significant plantings were established at the Lyttleton Port Company restoration site in mid-August by volunteers, LPC staff and Enviroschools. It was great to see last year's plantings thriving further up on the exposed saddle while on site. A big thank you to everyone involved in all of these days!

FEATURE COVENANTS

Seb's Block owned by the Parish-Double family at Allandale provides an important linkage between Ohinetahi Reserve above it reaching the Summit road, and a key stream flowing out through Ohinetahi gardens to the sea below. It is close to two other BPCT covenants plus Living Springs. In time, it is hoped that the complete waterway will be fenced providing a full summit to sea/*ki uta ki tai* protection. The 2.5ha east-facing site has magnificent views over Governors Bay and around to Lyttleton. The regenerating kanuka and mixed broadleaf bush is now flourishing in the absence of stock grazing, a sheltered microclimate, good soil moisture levels and by being adjacent to a brilliant mature-bush seed source.

The owners are keen possum and mustelid trappers; vital for protecting vulnerable new soft understory species and birdlife. Ohinetahi Reserve provides an important habitat for NZ falcon, tui, tomtits, kereru and fantail to name a few, which will visit and breed in Seb's block more as it matures. Despite being partially fire damaged in February's Port Hills fires, natural recovery is already evident in the swards of emerging poroporo –one of nature's first successional species. This process has been aided by under-planting an affected kanuka gully with trees generously donated by Trees for Canterbury and planted by the enthusiastic Fox and Associates Surveyors team –wonderful support which was much appreciated.

Balguerrie Stream is an 8.5ha area of regenerating bush close to Akaroa township owned by Warwick and Pam Beatson. In addition to protecting and enhancing biodiversity, the owners recognise the double importance of excluding grazing stock, as this gully encloses Akaroa township's water source. There is an impressive array of regenerating native tree and shrub species, including fuchsia, kōwhai, māhoe, five finger, lacebark, wineberry, and silver ferns. Recently and encouragingly seedling tōtara were discovered. There are also kahikatea in the area. Of note recently was the beautiful white-flowering native clematis *C. paniculata*, not to be confused with its pest cousin *Clematis*



An original Rhodes cottage replica in front of Mabel Hope Reserve where Banks Peninsula track walkers can stay to enjoy the regenerating bush, stream and birdsong.



Pretty pest; Spur valerian flowers and foliage (above). Photo credit: Naturewatch.



Banana passionfruit - a serious threat to local biodiversity being covered in an upcoming weed-workshop in Akaroa. Photo credit: Weedbusters (fruit above) and Landcare Research (flower below).

vitalba –old man’s beard. The latter is also present in isolated patches which were recently tackled by teams of Christ’s College students on a community work week. They made great progress cutting, clearing and stump poisoning. Controlling early incursions is crucial to preventing the spread of this nuisance weed which can smother and kill developing young bush. We are excited about working with the owners of this special place in 2018 to complete the ecological survey, secure the remaining fence funding needed, and develop a management plan to guide protection of this beautiful place.

Mabel Hope Reserve at Flea Bay/Pōhatu is named in memory of an inspirational aunt of Shireen Helps’. In addition to a beautiful waterway, valuable regenerating bush, and white-flipped blue penguin nesting habitat, there are fascinating historical and cultural aspects to this corner of the Peninsula. A notable feature beside the covenant which Banks Peninsula track walkers can stay in and enjoy the bush from, is a replica cob hut painstakingly hand-built by Shireen. It is based on an original cottage built by the Rhodes brothers who pioneered sheep farming here in the early 1800’s. The bush has been cleared several times from this site since, though due to the favorable climate and surrounding seed sources, it is incredibly resilient and has kept growing back! Fortunately, several podocarps (beautiful tōtara and mātai) were spared which will now be protected in perpetuity. A diverse range of broadleaf species and vines are now repopulating the area which also supports a small wetland area. The Helps family are already the proud owners of existing BPCT and QEII covenants. The general Flea Bay area has many protected areas providing valuable habitat and healthy waterway linkages, including Tutakakahikura, Misty Peaks, and Armstrong Reserves, plus the Pōhatu Marine Reserve.

WEED ALERT –SPUR VALERIAN

Spur valerian *Centranthus ruber* is a garden escape originally from the Mediterranean, which has adapted particularly well to rocky coastal sites. This makes it a major threat to Bank’s Peninsula’s coastal cliff and coastal shrub vegetation. It flowers twice a year from September to December, and from February to April. Its fine seeds are easily wind-dispersed. The CCC are aiming for a containment strategy to keep it within urban areas and prevent it spreading to the Port Hills summit ridge outcrops. Currently, small populations exist in Birdlings Flat, Akaroa and Takamatua. With community support, it is hoped that these populations will be contained and reduced over time.

The easiest control method is to cut and stump-treat the main woody stem with a suitable herbicide gel. Foliage can be sprayed with Grazon (plus surfactant for best results). Spraying three times a season is needed to prevent seeding. For further information on helping to reduce the spread of this pest, please contact Di Carter, CCC Park Ranger: Di.Carter@ccc.govt.nz.

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Thank you for continued communication from landowners regarding outstanding management plans, and to those working through current ones. It’s a key part of the covenanting process to complete and sign these off. Plans can be reviewed as requested, and it’s particularly useful to do so when land with a covenant changes ownership. Please advise the BPCT office if you are buying or selling land with a covenant on it. For further information and



(Covenant photo credits: Marie Neal)

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resources about this please contact the BPCT office enquiries@bpct.org.nz or visit our website www.bpct.org.nz.

WEED WORKSHOP

In early March we are holding a hands-on weed workshop in a local Akaroa covenant. All interested are welcome. The session will highlight the worst weed threats to Banks Peninsula including members of the infamous 'Dirty Dozen' list as identified by DOC and the collaborative Weedbusters group in their 'War on Weeds' national campaign in 2016. Several species will be covered including old man's beard, sycamore, yellow (banana) passionfruit, grey willow, chilean flame creeper, Darwin's barberry, cotoneaster, spur valerian, pigs ear and others. Please feel free to bring along any weed samples of concern for identification and advice.

Control options will be outlined and various techniques demonstrated by Ian Hankin and Tom Hitchon from DOC, including how to operate a specific tree-drill for poisoning large trees. This drill is kept at Le Bons Bay and is available for community use as required. Please contact the BPCT office for details at enquiries@bpct.org.nz

Ian and Tom have a wealth of weed knowledge gained from many years of experience on Banks Peninsula. In addition to addressing current weed issues, they will share information on potential new weed threats. With community support we can remain vigilant together over significant areas to further protect Banks Peninsula's valuable biodiversity. Invitations will be sent out soon providing further details for the day.

Acknowledgements

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