



Covenantors Newsletter

Issue 1, April 2016

COVENANT MILESTONES

Since the Trust started out 15 years ago, 58 covenants have been registered. A further 13 are being actively progressed, and there are many more landowners expressing their interest in protecting native biodiversity.

Our landowners have now protected over 1000 ha of biodiversity in the Banks Ecological Region, which includes the Port Hills, by covenanting through BPCT.



Manny's Reserve - headwater source of the Okains Bay drinking supply, now fenced to exclude stock.

WELCOME

Welcome to BPCT's first e-news specifically for covenant holders. We will be keeping in touch with you on covenant issues three times per year. We'd love your feedback on the type of info you would enjoy reading about.

The BPCT Covenants Committee is appointed by the Trustees and currently has seven members led by Chairperson Francis Helps. My role as the Covenants Officer is to support the covenanting landowners, report to the Covenants Committee, and manage the covenanting process. The Committee is fortunate to have a wealth of experience and skills in diverse areas contributed by its members: Francis Helps, Kit Grigg, Richard Simpson, Pam Richardson, Kate Whyte, David Miller, and Philip Helps.

SUPPORT PROGRAMME

The Trust is currently developing a Covenant Support and Engagement Programme (CESP) to better support our covenant holders. This programme will include regular covenant visits to touch base with our landowners, take stock of positive achievements, and offer support on a range of issues including management of weeds. We'll update you with more info on this project when it is launched later in the year.

FEATURE COVENANTS IN PROGRESS

'Kaupu' is located off the Summit Road. This 6 ha block is an example of old forest remnant alongside new plantings. Of note are giant tōtara and matai trees several hundreds of years old, with original gnarled old fuchsia and broadleaf trees mingled throughout. Ground floor regeneration will be assisted by a predator trapping programme the owner has recently organised, supported with funding from ECan.

'Panama Reserve' near Le Bons Bay is a 200 ha block being protected by the Rod Donald and Josef Langer Trusts. The iconic Panama Rock (Keller's Peak) towers over the regenerating forest within the site. At the turn of the century much of this hillside was cleared by early settlers, but is now returning to its natural state under careful management. Public access will be available so our community can enjoy the diverse ecological values found in Panama Reserve.



An original forest matai hundreds of years old near the Hilltop.



This beautiful photo of a perching Morepork was taken locally by Pierre Sellier.

‘Manny’s Reserve’ which encompasses the headwater supply for Okains Bay settlement has been recently fenced with funding support from the owners, ECan’s Immediate Steps programme and DoC’s Biodiversity Condition Fund. Eight hectares of remnant and regenerating bush are now safe from stock grazing and contamination to help support a pure water source for future generations.

BUYING A PROPERTY WITH AN EXISTING COVENANT

If you are thinking about buying or selling a property with a BPCT covenant registered on it, please refer to our one-page guide ‘Buying land with an existing conservation covenant’ available on our website, or from the office, to ensure you are familiar with what’s involved –including responsibilities for fence maintenance. Other resources are available on the website about the Trust in general and some specifically on the covenanting process itself. Please feel free to visit the office or ring with any further queries.

TRAPPING WORKSHOP

It was fantastic to see so many covenant holders at the BPCT trapping workshop held in Akaroa during August last year. As this event was so popular we are intending to hold a follow-up workshop this year. If you would like more information on starting a predator control programme in your covenant, contact enquiries@bpct.org.nz.

MOREPORK STUDY

A distribution and abundance study of Morepork is being carried out over Banks Peninsula. Volunteer Alison Evans organised ‘Morepork Mondays’ –a community programme to assess Morepork calls in different areas from listening slots each Monday through October and November. Moira Pryde, DoC scientist and Alison have also been radio-tracking these charming owls. Ways to encourage Morepork include predator trapping, reducing poison use, and providing good habitat.

Morepork like to nest in tree holes but due to habitat loss these are not as plentiful as they once were. To imitate holes, nesting boxes are being made (a big thank you to all of our volunteer morepork box builders!). The aim is to place one in each suitable covenant and many have already been distributed. Please contact the office if you would like a morepork nesting box for your covenant.



Trapping demonstration by Phil Crutchley, CCC ranger at the recent workshop in Akaroa.



Pig's ear *Cotyledon orbiculata*, an invasive weed toxic to stock

COVENANTORS SOCIAL FUNCTION

We are looking forward to celebrating our landowners' success protecting biodiversity on the Peninsula at our annual Covenantors Social Function being held at Koukourarata (Port Levy) on Saturday 30 April. You should have already received your invitation by email. If you haven't please contact the office.

PIG'S EAR WEED WARNING

The succulent plant pig's ear is invasive on the headlands and coastal areas of Banks Peninsula. It originated in South Africa and was introduced to New Zealand as an ornamental plant in the late 1800's but has spread rapidly and was added to MPI's Unwanted Organism list in 2008. Pig's ear was observed in Pigeon Bay in the 1960's. Slowly it spread to Little Akaloa and now it has reached Le Bons Bay.

Di Carter, Port Hills/Banks Peninsula CCC Ranger has asked for any observations landowners can offer in relation to browsing and poisoning. Sheep browse on pig's ear and may be more at risk during dry summers. She's interested to know how death rates compare in blocks with and without pig's ear. A classic symptom of chronic poisoning to look out for is stock hunching.

Control has started in the Port Hills Regional Parks to prevent spread from Barnett Park and Scarborough Reserve where it is abundant. Grazon™ and Boost™ are effective at label rates for brush weeds. The seed is viable for at least 4 years. To protect the flora on Banks Peninsula's coastal cliffs, the Council would like to hold a containment line at Le Bons Bay and Oashore to prevent further spread of this pest into the south-east and south-west of the Peninsula. Di has also started spur valerian control on the coastal cliffs, and hopes to talk with landowners about pig's ear in the near future.

Please forward any relevant information to Di Carter (CCC) on 03 941 7572 or 027 201 5653 or Di.Carter@ccc.govt.nz.

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Conservation Covenants



Acknowledgements

Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust Partners:



