



TRAVIS WETLAND

September 2004

A newsletter from Travis Wetland Trust and the Christchurch City Council

PARK NEWS

Dates to Remember!

Travis Wetland Trust Workdays

All welcome! Workdays are held on the 3rd Saturday of every month from 9.00 am to 12.30 pm. Meet at the Beach Rd car park, bring gum boots or boots. The work days are an opportunity to become involved in and learn about the restoration of Travis Wetland.

- 23 November 2004
(wetland walk opening)
- 18 December 2004
- 15 January 2005
- 19 February 2005
- 19 March 2005
- 16 April 2005
- 14 May 2005
- 18 June 2005

Wetland Walk Opening Event

A public event to mark the opening of the Wetland Walk will be held on the 20th November 2004, starting at 10.30 am at the Travis Information Centre. Further details will be announced in the local papers.

Travis Wetland Contacts

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Wetland Walk Complete

The bridge over Angela Stream is complete and was opened on August 15th. A mesh fence is still to be fitted to the posts and gate on the south side to deter cats and dogs and to help define the park boundary.

The opening of the bridge completes the Wetland Walk, a 3.5 km accessible circuit which is quickly becoming popular. It is planned to install seating at several points along the walk. The park information maps have also been updated to take into account the new developments over the past 3 years as well as being orientated to each site. Several sections of track which were subject to flooding have been reformed.



Revegetation

Over 6000 plants will have been planted in the park this financial year, with most already having been planted. Some of the main planting projects include:

750 plants along the Telecom exchange site to replace last years losses;
750 plants along the path between the stock yard and Angela Stream bridge by the Travis Wetland Trust.

On the 18th September 1500 were planted as part of a kanuka dominated coastal bush at the Beach Road entrance by the Christchurch City Council, Travis Wetland Trust and Trees for Canterbury, staff and families from Gunns New Zealand and Armco. Trees for Canterbury donated 1000 of these plants as part of their commitment to supporting restoration projects in Canterbury.

Birdlife

A single Coot was seen on Sunday 4th July in Travis Stream just below the bridge weir. This is a new species for Travis Wetland... let's hope more arrive and establish a population.

Pukeko numbers are being monitored during their peak population times within Travis wetland in June, July and August. Scott Butcher and myself have been accompanying Andrew Crossland so that we can replicate Andrews' work over the past decade. Pukeko numbers were well down on counts in earlier years, 252 in July 2004 compared to over 700 in past years. Andrew suspects this is due to changes in habitat at Travis but also possibly due to dispersal to other sites around the city as the total city population has not diminished. A Bittern was seen during the winter Pukeko census on July 15th. The last sighting of the Glossy ibis was on the 23rd of August.



Changing scenes at Clarevale Reserve, Dave Evans

The Christchurch Native Habitats group looks after an area of the Travis wetland adjacent to Clarevale Reserve. They have reported on their kahikatea trial plots in earlier issues of this newsletter, but kahikatea is only one of the species they have established in this area.

Some of the other native wetland species planted are now well advanced, ranging from the common flax and cabbage trees to less common species such as wineberry and kaikomako. The wineberrys grew rapidly over the spring and summer seasons after being planted, but were hit hard during their first winter. Subsequently they have recovered and now seem to get through the winter frosts without losing many of their leaves. Each year they increase in height.

Even more encouraging are the native species that have introduced themselves without any help. There is now a substantial patch of bracken that is spreading rapidly and little karamu are popping up here and there. Of course the competition from willow, gorse and blackberry is still intense, but as the ground is covered the weed seeds are less likely to succeed. The winter was a welcome respite from the continuous weed control necessary for the survival of new plantings and it is pleasing to take this time out to reflect on the excellent growth achieved last autumn.

Some flax plants are now truly enormous and when you find that walking through some plantings means pushing between native bushes well over head height, then it's hard to visualise how it was when they were planted five years ago. Another season is just beginning and some of the more subtle signs of spring are appearing, such as the local harrier hawks circling high over the wetland and calling plaintively. Soon the little green frog will be back on its perch on a willow trunk leaning over the drain and summer will be back again.

William Henry Travis Denise Ford (Travis Wetland History Group)

William Henry Travis arrived in New Zealand in 1856 aboard the James Fletcher. He was by trade a watchmaker but began purchasing and developing land in the Eyreton/Rangiora districts. By 1882 he owned more than 1800 acres spread widely between North and Mid Canterbury. In 1883 he brought a large block of land bordered by Travis, Burwood, Frosts and Mairehau Roads from E.W. Corser for a sum of almost 3500 pounds. The area still keeps the family name and now is Travis Wetland. After purchasing the swamp he spent a lot of money trying to drain it, having to purchase further land to ensure effective drainage. A story is told of him walking from his home in Merivale and passing men fishing in the Avon River, a sight which prompted him to think that without a swamp to drain, he would be a happier man.

William Travis died in 1910 and left his farm at Burwood to his two sons, the eastern to William Travis Jnr and the western half to his brother living in New South Wales.

William Travis Jnr died in 1927 a wealthy man having had a successful leather tanning business in Woolston. The bulk of his estate was left in trust for the support of scientific research mainly TB and cancer. The bulk of the Burwood properties were sold off in the late 1940s.

The above information was obtained the Christchurch Public Library:

William Henry Travis 1853 – 1927

The W.H Travis Trust 1927- 1987 by John Wilson Ph.D (Harvard) M.A.(Canterbury) June 1987

The Travis Wetland Trust is still interested in hearing from anybody with information they would like to share on Travis Wetland. Has anyone got old photos they would be happy to lend to us so we can copy and return them?

Please contact Denise Ford after 5.30 at 981 3805 or email me at deniseford@paradise.net.nz.

Any information would gladly be accepted.

Travis Wetland Trust Board Positions

There are up to 4 positions needing to be filled on the Trust board including the position of Secretary. Please give consideration to the position yourselves and/or think about who you know could be a replacement. If there were 2 people interested but unsure of time commitments, it would be possible to separate the Minute Secretary and Correspondence Secretary.

It would be better if we could have nominees before the meeting.

Subscriptions

A friendly reminder that subscriptions are due for the coming year and can be paid at the AGM or sent to the secretary.

Travis Wetland Trust 2004 AGM Tuesday 19th October, 7.00 pm

Venue: Travis Wetland Education Centre, Beach Road. (West of Frosts Rd)
AGM Guest Speaker: Bryan Jenkins CEO Environment Canterbury