

Ōruapaeroa / Travis Wetland News

October 2026



Dates to Remember

Help restore Travis Wetland

Travis Wetland Trust Work Days are an opportunity to help the Travis Wetland Trust and Christchurch City Council restore the wetland. Meet other people interested in restoring the native biodiversity of our city, share ideas and do some light physical work. Tasks vary according to the seasons and range from planting, release weeding and invasive weed control. Morning tea provided.

When: Usually third Saturday of every month 9am to 12.00pm (may be moved to another Saturday due to Easter or Labour Weekend, check dates below).

Where: Meet at the Education Centre near the Beach Road car park.

What: Bring gumboots or boots, gardening gloves and clothing suitable for the weather and season e.g. sun-hat, raincoat, warm hat.

Saturday Work day dates for 2026/27 are:

17 October (Trees for Canterbury planting day),
21 November, 19 December (including Xmas BBQ),
16 January, 20 February, 20 March, 17 April and 15 May.

A note from the Treasurer

The Travis Wetland Trust 2027 financial year began on 1 July. A subscription renewal form will be included with this newsletter if you have not already paid a subscription for the current 2027 year. The Trust account is Kiwibank 38-9018-0341728-00. Subscriptions may also be paid by credit card on the Membership website page or with cash at the AGM in October. Call the treasurer if you have no suitable way to make a payment. Please help the Trust continue its restoration work at Travis Wetland by paying an annual subscription and/or making a tax-deductible donation (a receipt will be issued). The Charities Services registration number is CC24462. Dave Evans treasurer@traviswetland.org.nz 021-043-7128

Sponsored boardwalk planks

Article and image: Sue Britain

In the late 1990s Travis Wetland Trust called for donations to help build a boardwalk over swampy ground close to what is now the Anne Flanagan Dell. Donors names were engraved on planks and put in place. Over the years, despite some cleaning and care, the engraving has become damaged and harder to read. The Trust Board has decided to continue with some basic care, while allowing boards to undergo 'dignified decay' in place.

Names of boardwalk donors have been recorded and made available on the Trust website. We welcome input from donors if we have made any spelling mistakes.

We would also love to hear from anyone who was a donor, or their family, who has a story to tell. It would be interesting to know if they have continued to enjoy the wetland and fostered similar interest for their children.

Long time Trust supporter and board donor Stuart Payne has very kindly written an account (page 2) of his involvement over many years.



Christchurch
City Council



Sponsor a Board

Article: Stuart Payne

The area, then known as Travis Swamp, first came to my attention when some newspaper articles were published in the late 70s about proposals to establish housing in the wetland area. At that time I lived in what is now called the Flockton Basin so I knew what serious flooding in suburban Christchurch looked like. My reaction to filling in the city's last remaining significant wetland and building houses on it was that it was both foolish and short-sighted.

Ten years later I was a member of Forest & Bird and they had lent their support to the campaign to stop the housing project and retain the area as a protected wetland area. In June 1988 I wrote to the then Canterbury United Council (with a copy to the then Christchurch Drainage Board). I argued several reasons with my final one being, "Travis Swamp (sic) itself is one of the last remaining natural wildlife areas close to the city and its preservation in its natural state is justified for this reason alone." The reply I received from the Regional Planning Manager rejected this with one reason given being that "studies in the mid-1970s showed that the area was not of great value for wild life purposes even at that time."

Fast forward another ten years and, with the purchase by the City Council of around 110 hectares, Travis Wetland was now a wetland heritage park. And in March 1998 I made my first volunteer contribution at Travis as part of Forest & Bird's 75th anniversary celebrations, when 75 kahikatea (plus other trees) were planted in the central willow stand.

The following year, Travis Wetland Trust launched its 'sponsor a board for the walkway' initiative. The cost was \$20-25 (\$40-45 in today's prices). So in planting the kahikatea and funding a board my rationale was that now we had this great asset, these were ways of adding value to it. With Travis Wetland offering so many intangible benefits to the city, the concept of 'value for money' wasn't a consideration, but nearly thirty years on, all I have to do to remind myself of the wisdom of all who have campaigned for, done volunteer work for, and funded the creation of Travis Wetland is circumnavigate the wetland on the pathway and the boardwalk. The wisdom is right before my eyes. I wonder what the Regional Planning Manager from the United Council would say now.

Saving a Swamp

Article: Denise Ford

Anne Flanagan was instrumental in the campaign for the preservation of Travis Swamp. For those of us who love Ōruapaeroa-Travis Wetland – we are forever grateful for the commitment of all those involved, especially Anne Flanagan. Sadly Anne passed away before the confirmation that her beloved swamp was saved. We must also acknowledge the Council at the time who had the vision and foresight to purchase the wetland.

Travis Swamp preservation 'memorial' to campaigner

Anne Flanagan, a Burwood/Pegasus Community Board member and leader of the campaign to preserve the Travis wetlands, died this week.

Mrs Flanagan was prominent in a variety of community activities in North New Brighton, but as chairman of the Travis Wetland Trust which she founded in 1991 she has been particularly associated with the debate over the swamp's future.

The proposed Travis heritage park which has council blessing will be a memorial to the efforts of Mrs Flanagan.

Burwood/Pegasus board chairperson Carole Evans said Mrs Flanagan had fought vigorously and fearlessly for the preservation of the wetlands for many years.

"Anne will always be remembered for her knowledgeable and persistent battle to make the city council aware of the need to preserve one of the last remaining wetlands of its kind in Christchurch," she said.

Mrs Flanagan served in the WAFF in World War 2, and married a New Zealand pilot. She and her late husband moved to North Brighton in the 1970s and were proprietors of a shop in Effingham St.

Teacher

She became well-known for her watercolours of birds and plants, and as well as her envi-



Anne Flanagan, who led a vigorous campaign to preserve the Travis wetlands.

ronmental interests was a cub leader and Sunday school teacher for 17 years and a tutor in arts and crafts at Handiscope, an organisation for the disabled.

She became president of the North New Brighton Residents' Association in 1985 and was elected as an independent to the community board in 1989.

She never missed a meeting and during a long illness before her death still followed up her community board work.

She represented the board on the Canterbury Horticultural Societies Garden competitions for five years because of her environmental interests.

Tracks



Pile driving near Anne Flanagan Dell.

Contractors have recently finished driving piles in the Anne Flanagan Dell area. This track will link the existing track to the Telecom reclamation land.

The Pages Road 'P D' crew have done a great job on building the track to Inwoods Rd from the Mairehau Rd carpark - We need more walkers along here please - to keep the spring weeds from smothering the track.



Welcome Swallow, Warou



NZ Passionflower , Kōhia, Passiflora tetrandra



Case moth on Tōtara

Images: Grahame

Fern of Many Names

Article and images: Sue Britain

At our August workday we planted numerous vigorous specimens of the fern *Zealandia pustulata* (previous genus *Microsorium*). This fern can be epiphytic or scramble across the ground or rocks. It is found from coastal to montane zones, likes some shade with air circulation and is drought tolerant. Its common names include Kangaroo Fern and Hound's Tongue Fern.



Mature fronds are large, green and glossy with distinctive segments that do not extend all the way to the midrib. Fronds connect to scaly, succulent rhizomes that can grow into new plants if broken off.

This fern is adaptable, resilient and ecologically important. It helps to stabilise soil and rock and acts as a shelter for small plants and invertebrates.

Z. pustulata has several Maori names including Kōwaowao and Pāraharaha. Young fronds may be eaten raw or cooked as greens. They also impart extra flavour when used to line or cover cooking baskets in a hangi.

Sources: Wikipedia, NZ Plant Conservation Network, NZ Native Plants

KCC Predator Programme

Article and image: Eleanor Bissell

Busy, noisy, hammering sounds from inside dominated after Ben's well-informed introduction to the Forest & Bird Kiwi Conservation Club about predators in our country. Enthusiastically, closely watched and with parent assistance the great turnout of participants put together traps to catch rats. All equipment was provided free by Predator Free NZ whose nationwide goal is to eradicate mustelids, rats & possums in NZ by 2050.

Following trap making the kids 'decorated' tracking tunnels with pictures of predators and our native creatures ranging from Wētā, to birds. Super pumpkin soup and other lunch goodies followed and were enjoyed by all.

To finish the programme kids put together peanut butter & birdseed 'cones' to take with them and hang on a tree of their choice. A reminder of the NZ garden bird survey starting 27th June ending July 5th. All made items were for the participants to take home.

Thank you to the helpers and big shout out to Ben for organising the programme and to the CCC for the use of Travis Wetland meeting room. Outside the rain fell!



Gallons of Sweat

Article: Sue Britain and image: CCC

Following the purchase of Travis Swamp in 1997 a plan was made to plant a tōtara-matāi forest of 7 hectares in the southern part of the wetland, by a bend in Angela Stream. This type of forest is rare in Canterbury and the aim was to have a patch in eastern Christchurch to attract birds such as bell-bird, kererū and tūi. Planting started in 2005.

The project was expected to take several years, thousands of plants and gallons of sweat. Amazing lush and varied bush now fills this section of the wetland (now referred to as the Southern Woods). We look forward to further enrichment over the next 20 years and beyond. The image shows it in 2020, the trees have grown a lot more since then.



Travis Wetland Trust Meetings

The Travis Wetland Trust board meets monthly on the Tuesday following the work day, from 6.30pm to 8.30pm at the Travis Wetland Education Centre. The board extends a welcome to all who wish to attend.

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