



## SNA Project Numbers

- **302**—the number of properties in Marlborough assessed for the presence of significant natural areas since 2001
- **708**—the total number of sites that have been identified covering about 45,000 hectares of land
- **88**—the number of protection projects, covering 1870 hectares of land in total, that have been carried out since 2003 – about 12% of the sites identified and 4% of the area identified
- **38**—is how many of the 88 protection projects covenanted through the QEII National Trust
- **2.1 million dollars**—the total budget for all these projects since 2003. Council’s share is about \$700,000, landowners about \$550,000, QEII about \$75,000 and the Central Government Biodiversity Fund \$800,000.

## \$\$ Funding to help Landowners Protect SNA and Wetland Sites \$\$

Council funding is available to help landowners to protect identified SNA or wetland sites. We can help with advice about site management and funding of fencing, weed control and native plantings. Together, we have completed over 85 projects since 2003, but there are plenty more sites that would benefit from active protection to safeguard them for the long term.

## Waima/Ure Valley - Old Mans Beard Control Project

The Waima/Ure Valley catchment of approximately 16,000 hectares has Old Mans Beard (OMB), present on both public and private land. In 2005 efforts stepped up to control OMB on several private properties in the catchment. The Waima Valley Ecological Restoration Society (WVERS), was established by local landowners in 2010 and a management plan for the eradication of OMB was prepared in 2012. This plan divided the catchment into eight project management areas and set goals and timelines for control works extending out to 2020.

This is an ambitious project with the goal to:

*“eradicate Old Man’s Beard from the Waima/Ure Valley so that areas of regenerating indigenous vegetation on private land, and the mature forest and special vegetation of Isolated Hill Scenic Reserve, can flourish.”*

Some funding support has been provided through Marlborough District Councils Significant Natural Areas Landowners Assistance Programme but the group has also been able to get more substantial funding from other sources (mainly the Biodiversity Fund and Lotteries Fund), over several years. Landowners have also contributed significant resources into the project. Experienced contractors have carried out the work.

If the flowering and seeding cycle of Old Man’s Beard can be interrupted, and regenerating seedling growth prevented from re-seeding, Old Mans Beard control is feasible within about a ten year period. The methods of control have included larger scale chemical control both aerially by helicopter and gorse gun on the ground, as well

as ground based knapsack and cut and paste methods at a finer scale.



Peggieh landowner Susan King and Council Biosecurity Coordinator Jono Underwood look over part of the Waima/Ure catchment

# Results of Landowner Questionnaire and site re-visits 2015/16

It is over ten years since the first significant natural area (SNA) surveys were carried out, some by the Council and some by the Department of Conservation through its Protected Natural Area (PNA) programme. While some landowners have been actively involved in protecting some of the sites identified through these ecological surveys, the Council has not had contact with many others, apart from through these annual SNA newsletters.

Over the past two years an effort has been made to re-establish contact with landowners through a telephone questionnaire. Also, a selection of sites that have not had any active protection or management applied have been re-visited to monitor their state and condition trend. Four ecological district areas were chosen, (see pink areas on map), the Kekerengu and Medway (where the Council carried out the original identification and reporting work) and the Wither Hills and Grassmere (where the Department of Conservation carried out the original identification and reporting work).



## Questionnaire

A total of 49 landowners completed this phone questionnaire, with either Paul Millen or Nicky Eade. A series of questions were answered to gauge the level of awareness and interest in the SNA sites and the assistance available for management and protection. It was good to make contact with a number of landowners and hear their thoughts and views.

In summary, awareness and attitudes were quite mixed. Some landowners were very positive about their SNA sites and the Council programme while others were less aware and interested in the sites and the programme. A few key points from the survey:

- Mixed views from positive to not very interested.
- All landowners wanted the voluntary approach to continue in Marlborough.
- About 50 % of landowners were not aware of the Council assistance programme to help protect sites.
- Landowners in the Kekerengu and Medway areas were generally more aware and more interested than those in the Grassmere and Wither Hills area - this may be related to the different ways the original ecological surveys were carried out and the type of information landowners received (Property specific SNA reports from the Council and a more general publication from the Department of Conservation).

## Site Re-visits

A total of 44 sites were visited by ecologist Geoff Walls and Councils Nicky Eade, 25 in the Kekerengu/Medway ecological districts in the 2014/15 year and 19 in the Grassmere/Wither Hills ecological districts in the 2015/16 year. This was a great opportunity to evaluate how these sites are doing within the rural landscape with little or no specific management or protection in place. Reports outlining the state and condition trend of the sites were sent to all participating landowners. The information collected showed that:

- Overall the sites were generally in reasonable condition (44% good or good/fair and 54% fair) which reflects the inherent resilience of most of these sites which have survived within the productive landscape for many years.
- However, while 53% of sites were in a stable state, a number of sites were deteriorating in condition (36%) and very few were improving (11%).
- Weed invasion (various including old mans beard, willows, plum, wilding pines) was the most common reason for deterioration, with damage from stock and feral animals in some cases.
- In some cases direct management intervention would be practical, in others, particularly where old mans beard in well established, management may not be practical.
- The condition of the sites was generally significantly poorer when compared to other similar sites that have been actively managed through the SNA landowner assistance programme (ie fencing, weed control etc).



Thanks to all those landowners who participated in the questionnaire and allowed the Council access to re-visit sites. Without this co-operation the voluntary method of managing SNA sites would not be possible.

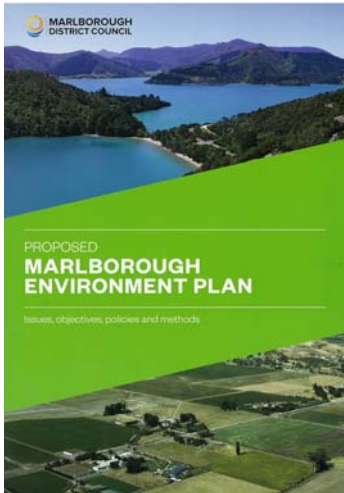
The results have provided some good information to help shape the future of the SNA programme and guide where Council should invest effort. While we have made a good start in protecting over 85 SNA sites since about 2003 in the Marlborough region, more needs to be done to encourage new protection projects if momentum is to be maintained into the future. Landowners need to be aware of the assistance that is available through the SNA programme, and the Council may need to prioritise efforts to make sure the most important and threatened sites are targeted, by working more closely with some landowners.

The SNA working group will be assisting the Council to review the way the SNA programme is carried out, to make sure it remains relevant and effective into the future. A copy of the full report is available online [marlborough.govt.nz/Environment/Biodiversity/Significant-Natural-Areas-Project](http://marlborough.govt.nz/Environment/Biodiversity/Significant-Natural-Areas-Project).



# Marlborough Environment Plan 2016

The Marlborough Environment Plan was publicly notified on 9 June and submissions are open until 1 September. The Council has reviewed the Marlborough Regional Policy Statement, the Marlborough Sounds Resource Management Plan and the Wairau/Awatere Resource Management Plan to create a single resource management document for the district.



The Proposed Marlborough Environment Plan (MEP) sets out what people can do on their land and how it may be developed for at least the next ten years. It also guides how individuals, businesses and the wider community can use public resources such as fresh water and coastal space.

The plan endorses the SNA programme as an effective way to achieve gains for indigenous biodiversity on private land. There are no specific rules or restrictions

on SNA sites. However, there are general restrictions around the clearance of indigenous vegetation and other activities which could affect indigenous vegetation whether it is in an SNA site or not.

In relation to the SNA project and the protection of indigenous biodiversity, the relevant parts of the Plan include:-

## Volume 1 - Objectives and Policies

Chapter 8 Indigenous Biodiversity

## Volume 2 - Rules on indigenous vegetation clearance

Rural Environment Zone rule 3.3.11 and Coastal Environment Zone 4.3.10

## Volume 3 - Appendices

3. Ecological Significance Criteria

## Volume 4 - Maps

Zoning maps, wetlands, Threatened Environments maps 1-9 (related to indigenous vegetation clearance rules)

The above is the basis for land based biodiversity and indigenous vegetation related issues. Many other parts of the plan are also indirectly related including chapters in Volume 1 on Use of Natural and Physical Resources, Natural Character, Use of the Coastal Environment, Use of the Rural Environment: and Resource Quality (Water, Air, Soil).

All landowners are encouraged to have a look at the Plan and make submissions, supporting or opposing provisions as you see fit. The Plan is available online [marlborough.govt.nz/Your-Council/RMA/The-Proposed-MEP](http://marlborough.govt.nz/Your-Council/RMA/The-Proposed-MEP).

## SNA Working Group



### Landowner representatives

The SNA working group landowner representatives are available to talk to landowners about the SNA programme at any time.

Their contacts are:

Ross Beech 5725083  
0274800337

Chris Bowron 5724839  
Kristen Gerard 5798232

From left to right, Geoff Walls (Contract Ecologist), Alan Johnson (MDC), Jo Gould (DoC), Paul Millen (Consultant), Mike Aviss (DOC), Nicky Eade (MDC), Tom Stein (QEII Rep), Ross Beech (Landowner Rep), Roy Grose, Jan Clayton-Greene, Simon Moore (DOC)

The SNA Working Group was established by the Council at the very start of the programme back in 2001 to help guide and manage the programme. The group meets at least annually, or more frequently as required. Membership includes Council staff and Councillors, Department of Conservation staff, along with a QEII and Federated Farmers representative and three landowners .

# Tui to Town Project Update — July 2016

## Tui to Town Natural habitat restoration for the Wairau Plain



seen and other useful information.

The Tui to Town programme is linked to the Council's Significant Natural Areas (SNA) programme which supports landowners to identify and protect existing areas of native habitat in the landscape. The Tui to Town programme recognises that in some parts of Marlborough there is very little habitat remaining and therefore new plantings are needed to create habitat for native birds and insects.

The Tui to Town programme began in the Wairau Plain area around Blenheim and Renwick in 2008 and was extended out into the Wairau Valley and Seddon/Ward areas in

The Tui to Town programme promotes native habitat restoration by helping with funding for new planting projects over 1000 square metres. It also records sightings of tui to build a picture of what habitat they are using, times of year they are

2015. One very visible new planting is right in the Seddon township and is a credit to all the hard work put into it by the local community. There have been 11 separate sightings of tui in the Seddon/Awatere area logged onto the Council's database since March 2015

Thanks to those who have taken the time to report sightings, please continue to report these sightings, either directly into the database via the Council's website [marlborough.govt.nz/Environment/Tui-to-Town/Native-Bird-Reporting-Form](http://marlborough.govt.nz/Environment/Tui-to-Town/Native-Bird-Reporting-Form), email [tui@marlborough.govt.nz](mailto:tui@marlborough.govt.nz) or by phoning the Council on 5207400.

Spring is the best time of year to carry out a native planting and now is the time to get planning for planting. The Council looks forward to some more applications for funding assistance coming through in the near future. All of the information, including funding guidelines and an application form is available on the Council's website but please don't hesitate to contact Nicky Eade at the Council if you need more information or assistance.

Contact: Phone : 5207400 Email: [nicky.eade@marlborough.govt.nz](mailto:nicky.eade@marlborough.govt.nz)



Seddon Tui to Town planting  
November 2015



Seddon Tui to Town planting July 2016

## Funding Opportunities—Details and Contacts

Financial assistance of between 50% and 66% of the cost of protecting significant natural areas is potentially available to landowners through the Council's Biodiversity Landowner Assistance Programme.

- Depending on the specific SNA site and its management objectives, protection work may include fencing to exclude farm stock, weed control, restoration planting to boost the habitat and occasionally, animal control. This is agreed between the landowner and MDC, with the input of an ecologist where needed.
- The MDC landowner assistance programme provides a 50% share of project costs. Where the landowner decides to covenant the site through the QEII National Trust, QEII will generally also contribute an equal share of any fencing costs, bringing costs down to 33% each.
- A simple "Landowner Agreement" document is prepared setting out the works to be completed. Contractors are generally used but landowners can contribute labour as part of their contribution (i.e. fencing work) - protection of SNA sites generally adds value to the property and often improves the adjoining grazing management options as well. Having a good quality natural area on the property, be it a vineyard, farm or forest, can add shade, diversity and interest.

Since 2003 about 85 protection projects have been completed and several others are in progress.

Check out the website for details ([www.marlborough.govt.nz/Environment/Biodiversity/Significant-Natural-Areas-Project/Landowner-Assistance-Programme.aspx](http://www.marlborough.govt.nz/Environment/Biodiversity/Significant-Natural-Areas-Project/Landowner-Assistance-Programme.aspx)) or contact Nicky Eade at the Council if you would like more information on what assistance is available [nicky.eade@marlborough.govt.nz](mailto:nicky.eade@marlborough.govt.nz) phone 520 7400.



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