

SNA PROJECT NUMBERS

- **300**—the number of properties in Marlborough assessed for the presence of significant natural areas since 2001
- **706**—the total number of sites that have been identified covering about 45,000 hectares of land
- **80**—the number of protection projects, covering 1865 hectares of land in total, that have been carried out since 2003 – about 10% of the sites identified and 4% of the area identified
- **32**—is how many of the 80 protection projects covenanted through the QEII National Trust
- **1.8 million dollars**—the total budget for all these projects since 2003. Council's share is about \$500,000, landowners about \$450,000, QEII about \$75,000 and the Central Government Biodiversity Fund \$800,000.

LAKE ELTERWATER RESTORATION PROJECT

John Hickman, along with his family, has farmed the northern shores of Lake Elterwater for a long time. They had a vision to start restoring the area around the Lake and approached the Council for help though the Significant Natural Areas

project. Ecologist Geoff Walls did an initial assessment and confirmed the high natural values and potential of the area and made some restoration suggestions. Weed control (mostly willows), fencing to keep stock away from the margins, and new planting to reintroduce native species back into the landscape, have all taken place over the past couple of years with funding help from the Marlborough District Council and the central government Biodiversity Fund. Earthquakes, wind storms, and extremes of wet and dry have all contributed to the challenge of working on this already challenging site! However John's tenacity and optimism have held firm and some able assistance from contractors Dave Barker and Steve Dower have made the workload manageable. The fences are up, most of the willows are dead, the existing native plants within the area are recovering with more light and no pressure from stock, and the new plants that have managed to survive the odds are putting down roots and will eventually transform this area back into a native plant dominated habitat for a range of birds and insects to utilise.



John Hickman and his planting team enjoying a lunch break in the sun.



Native Planting and Restoration Guides

Reports summarising the results of the significant natural area ecological surveys carried out by the Council on private land from 2001—2009 are available on the Council website, also free from the Council if you would like a hardcopy.

Native Planting and Restoration Guides (see below), are also available for both the north and south Marlborough areas, both on the web and free of charge from the Council.



COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROJECTS ...

There are plenty of community conservation projects to get involved in around Marlborough.

Kaipupu Point Mainland Island Project—contact Jenny Keene Ph 5727288
jennymkeene@gmail.com

Rarangi Beach Landcare Group—contact Christine Baker Ph 5705834
Baker.Rarangi@xtra.co.nz

Grovetown Lagoon Restoration Project—contact Jenny Keene Ph 5727288
jennymkeene@gmail.com

Pelorus Bat Recovery Project—contact Jenny Easton ph 035471613
jennym.easton@gmail.com

Waima Valley Ecological Restoration Society—contact Susan King Ph 5756788
king.hope@wave.co.nz

Endeavour Inlet Conservation Trust - contact Judy Hellstrom Ph 5798382

MIRZA DOWNS FARM FENCING PROJECT

The coastal faces and gullies on Mirza Downs near Ward have high ecological values and sensitive farming over the years have kept them in fairly good condition. Recently, the Council and the QEII National Trust, with funding from the Biodiversity Fund, have worked with owners Rick and Angela Stolwerk to complete the fencing of two major gully systems near the east coast totalling about 55 hectares of regenerating forest habitat. Renners Contracting did a great job of the fencing and Scott Morrissey and his team followed with wilding pine control within the site. Putting a QEII covenant on the site means that it is legally protected for the long term and the local QEII rep will always be available to help the landowners with management decisions and advice.



A corner of the new fencing showing the spectacular coastline in this locality.

TUI TO TOWN PROJECT - FIVE YEARS OLD

The Tui to Town project is part of an effort to promote the restoration of natural habitat for native birds and insects on the Wairau Plain area surrounding Blenheim and Renwick. It involves:-

- reporting sightings of tui in and around town and the Wairau Plain and:
- planting suitable native plants to create more habitat areas for native birds and insects.

Ecological studies show that there is less than 1% of the natural vegetation left and because of this native forest birds like tui, bellbirds and wood pigeons are few and far between.

Tui will travel up to 30km to feed on nectar especially during winter – that is generally when we see them in and around Blenheim and the Wairau Plain, travelling over from the Northbank native forest areas, a distance of about 5-10 kilometres. Many people are very keen to help restore some balance back into the Wairau Plains so that native ecosystems can function alongside urban areas and rural land uses like viticulture and horticulture.

During the five years that the Tui to Town project has been going many hundreds of local people have participated in different ways, by reporting sightings and planting native trees in their gardens, schools and rural properties.

Sightings—Over 600 sightings of tui in and around town have been reported over the five years. Australian Eucalyptus species have been most popular with tuis (35% of sightings), kowhai the next most popular (23%) and after that sightings were scattered amongst a range of species, flax, banksia, camellia, fruit trees and so on.

Plantings—Over 30 new plantings of 1000 square metres or larger have been funded through the Tui to Town project, creating approximately 3 hectares of new habitat. Combined with other plantings and restoration projects to protect existing areas of native habitat (mostly wetlands), there is about

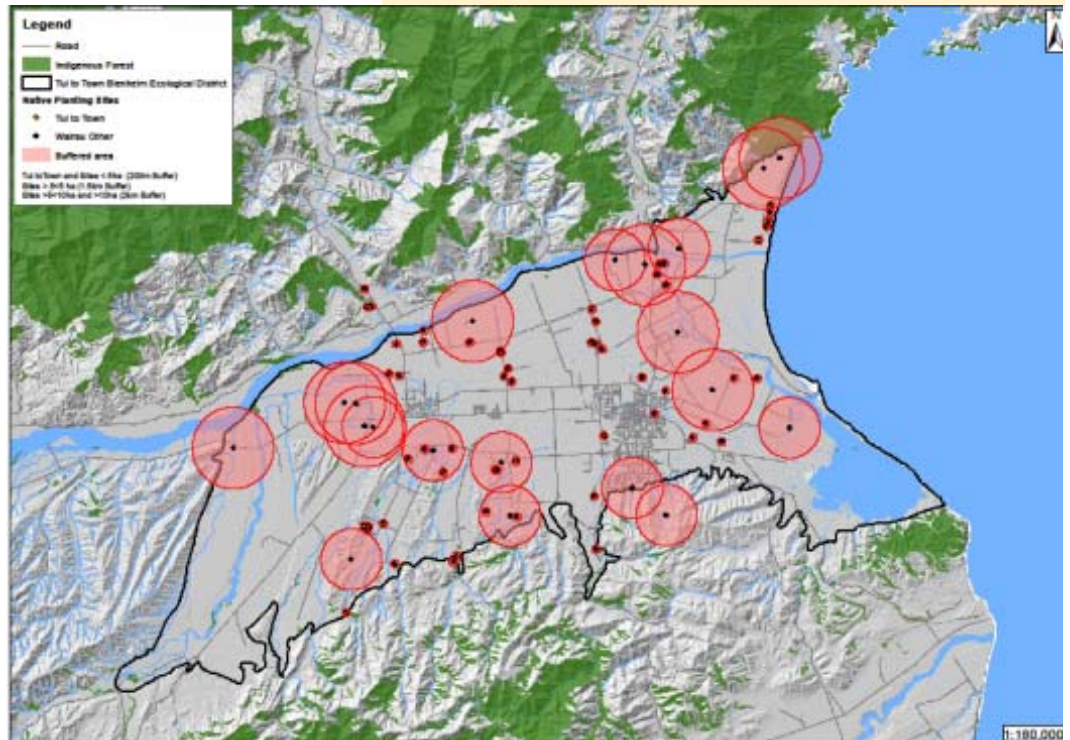
188 hectares of potential existing habitat on the Wairau Plain.

These are shown as black dots on the map below. The pink circles around them show the potential area of ecological influence depending on the size of the planted habitat area. The small dots are plantings of less than half a hectare, while the larger ones are restoration projects of between 1-10 hectares in area. The aim is to have enough areas of habitat created so that the pink zones are joined. This would mean that there were corridors and linkages right across the Wairau Plain. **It is great to see the progress made but there are still plenty of blank areas waiting to be filled in.**



How can you help?

- Report tui sightings within the project area – phone, email or use website (see details below)
- Plant suitable native trees to provide food and habitat areas for tui and other native species – up to \$1000.00 of funding is available to help with larger plantings of 1000 square metres or more in area (this is one tenth of a hectare or an area of about 35 x 30 metres).



Sightings - online www.marlborough.govt.nz/Environment/Tui-to-Town/Report-Tui-Sighting-Form.aspx

by email to tui@marlborough.govt.nz or phone the Council on 5207400.

Planting enquiries - contact Nicky Eade email nicky.eade@marlborough.govt.nz phone 520 7400

QEII MARLBOROUGH FIELD DAY OCTOBER 2013

The QEII National Trust is an independent organisation which helps landowners to protect significant natural and cultural features on their land through permanent legal covenants.

Every year the QEII board meets in a different part of the country and holds a field day to meet local covenantors and interested landowners.

This year was Marlborough's turn and on 13 November 2013 a good sized group gathered at the Balfour property to the southeast of Blenheim to have a look at the large hill covenant and take in the wider views. Farm manager Paul Leedon talked about some of the features of the site and local QEII rep Tom Stein

described some recent weed control work (mostly wilding pine) carried out on site.

The second property visited was Rose and Will Parsons place on



Dillons Point Road beside the Lower Opawa River. Their large shed provided a great lunch venue and place to listen to

presentations from the Marlborough Falcon Conservation Trust and Dr Peter Williams on weed control, before heading outside to visit the restored wetland area. Will Parson outlines some of the management challenges they have experienced and also some of the highlights and avian visitors they have hosted on the wetland over the years. The day was a great chance for landowners to meet up with each other and QEII staff and board members and have a look at other covenants in the district.

Contact: Tom Stein
Ph 035742978 or 0274453890
tstein@openspace.org.nz
www.openspace.org.nz

WETLANDS IN MARLBOROUGH

The Council has completed a survey of all significant wetlands in Marlborough with about 1400 identified in total. Landowners should have received a letter confirming that they have a significant wetland and may qualify for financial assistance through the SNA programme if they wish to carry out protection work—see details below.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION MDC LANDOWNER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

Financial assistance of between 50% and 80% of the cost of protecting significant natural areas is available to landowners through the Council's Biodiversity Landowner Assistance Programme.

- Generally if a project is worth less than \$10,000 the Council and landowner share the costs equally although because the landowner share can be for labour (for instance for fencing), their cash contribution can be very minimal.
- For larger projects worth more than \$10,000 the Council generally applies to the central government Biodiversity Fund for a 33% contribution and then splits the other 66% with the landowner. If the landowner decides to covenant the site through the QEII National Trust, QEII will sometimes also contribute some cash to the project. The landowner generally contributes between 33% to 22% of the total cost.

This is a good deal given that most of the fencing or restoration planting work involved adds considerable 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.

Check out the website for details (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 phone 520 7400.



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