

## **Marlborough Significant Natural Areas Project**

# **Guidelines for Marlborough District Council's Landowner Assistance Programme to Protect Significant Natural Areas on Private Land**

### **Background**

The Council has a role in promoting the protection of Significant Natural Areas (SNA's), on private land in Marlborough. The Council is committed to working to achieve this through a voluntary partnership approach with local landowners.

Since 2001, ecologists employed by either the Council or the Department of Conservation have carried out extensive ecological surveys, covering most of the south Marlborough area and currently continuing in the Marlborough Sounds. These surveys have identified a good proportion of the remaining natural areas on private land (SNA and PNA sites), and landowners have received a report which provides information about the sites on their properties.

The Landowner Assistance Programme has been established by the Council to promote the protection of these identified sites and to provide practical support to help landowners to achieve this. Assistance may also be available for ecologically oriented restoration projects in areas where remaining natural areas are very fragmented and scarce, in particular the lowland areas of south Marlborough.

The Council is working with other relevant agencies that offer support, including the QEII Trust which works with landowners to legally covenant sites, and through making applications to central government's "Biodiversity Fund" on behalf of landowners. This can enable a substantial level of financial support to be available to landowners who are willing to protect SNA sites.

### **Support Available to Landowners from the Council**

- 】 Advisory Service - specialist ecological and environmental management advice is available at no cost to landowners.
- 】 Financial Assistance - the Council may provide financial assistance and can also coordinate funding from other sources (such as the government's "Biodiversity Fund" or the QEII Trust). Financial assistance from between 50% to 87.5% may be available for fencing, native plant re-vegetation and pest and weed control work, depending on sources of funding.
- 】 South Marlborough Planting Guide - this has been developed to assist with re-vegetation projects and is available free of charge.
- 】 Farm Plans - "Guidelines to Manage Native Vegetation and Habitats on Farms" have been developed and are freely available – advisory assistance is also available to help tailor these guidelines to specific properties.

## Fund Guidelines

Any area identified through either the Council's Significant Natural Areas Project or the Department of Conservation's Protected Natural Areas Survey (SNA and PNA sites), will be considered for protection work.

In addition to identified SNA or PNA sites, native re-vegetation projects in lowland areas, including suitable riparian sites and coastal sites, with a focus on ecological restoration, will be considered for funding assistance.

Projects will be considered on a case by case basis, and criteria to prioritise projects would include: the existing ecological value of the site; the restoration potential and long term sustainability of the site; and the degree of landowner commitment to the protection project.

Where financial assistance of more than \$1000.00 is being made available a formal written "Landowner Assistance Agreement" setting out the terms of the assistance may be required to be signed.

Projects where a formal covenant arrangement is to provide long term legal protection will be given preference over projects where no long term legal protection is put in place. (Covenants could include QEII covenants or conservation covenants under the Conservation or Reserves Acts)

As a general rule a limit of \$15,000.00 per site and \$30,000.00 per property will apply to funding provided by the Council.

Where the total project costs are less than \$10 000.00, the Council will provide a 50% contribution alongside a landowner contribution of 50%. Where a covenant is approved by the QEII National Trust, QEII may also contribute up to half the landowners remaining share of the cost (i.e. 25% of the total project cost).

Where the total project costs are greater than \$10 000.00, the Council will, on behalf of the landowner, apply to the central government Biodiversity Fund for up to 33% of the project costs. The remaining 66% of the costs will be divided between the Council and the landowner (33% each). Where a covenant is approved by the QEII National Trust, QEII may also contribute up to half the landowners remaining share of the cost (i.e. 16.5% of the total project cost).

If landowners wish to make their own applications to the central government Biodiversity Fund, or other similar funding agencies, for protection projects of total costs of any amount (above or below \$10 000.00), the Council will consider providing a letter of support and making a contribution of up to 33% to the total project costs.

**Contact Nicky Eade at the Council for more information Ph 5207400  
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## Procedure For Providing Financial Assistance to Landowners for Site Protection Work on Significant Natural Areas (Fencing Work / Revegetation / Pest and Weed Control)

- ∫ Financial assistance of between 50% and up to 87.5% may be available for protection work depending on the value of the project and the mix of funding sources (as set out in the Fund Guidelines section above).
- ∫ The Council's environmental consultant will visit the site before and after the fencing/planting/pest/weed control work, and will be available to provide assistance in planning and costing the work.
- ∫ The landowner and the Council will sign a "Landowner Assistance Agreement" setting out the objectives and scope of the assistance to be provided. This will include a budget and timetable of work to be carried out.
- ∫ The landowner will obtain competitive quotes for materials (plants/fencing etc), and contractors, to undertake the fencing/planting/pest/weed control work. The landowner will appoint contractors and will organise and oversee the work.
- ∫ If the landowner wishes to supply labour this can be calculated based on \$15.00 per hour, with a maximum number of hours as agreed by the Council. Fencing materials supplied by the landowner can be included at current commercial rates, based on price lists provided by an agreed supplier. Second hand fencing materials can be used, provided they are in sound condition. Their value can be included at 50% of current commercial rates.
- ∫ The landowner is responsible for the payment of all associated invoices (ie fencing materials, plants) direct to the supplier in the usual way.
- ∫ On completion of the work the landowner will provide the Council with a GST inclusive tax invoice for 50% to 87.5% (depending on the value of the project and the mix of funding sources), of the actual total project costs (including fencing materials/plants and labour etc). The Council will pay this amount to the landowner within a one month period.
- ∫ The landowner will be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the site.
- ∫ **Notes:** All re-vegetation work will be expected to be carried out to a standard as set out in the South Marlborough Planting Guidelines book. Planting projects will only be considered if the site is already fully fenced and stock proof. Each case will be considered on its merits for funding approval.
- ∫ Fencing will generally be a standard 7 or 8 wire post and batten design, although this may be varied to suit local conditions and circumstances.