

Friends of Taupo Swamp & Catchment Inc

Project Report – GWRC Collaborative Project Contestable Fund.

2019-2020 funding year

Our group continues its role in action and advocacy for the Taupo swamp, its Catchment and all the contiguous wetlands which feed into the Taupo stream and flow out to the harbour at Plimmerton beach. We are busier than ever on many fronts. **Thank you for your support.**

Scope of our work & Community engagement

While we are now well set up as a very busy local environmental group, our work load has continued to expand far beyond that which we ever imagined when we founded the organisation. We continue to have very close working relationships with PCC parks and horticulture staff, with local DOC staff, Forest and Bird, QEII National Trust, with various very helpful GWRC staff, PHACCT, GOPI and other local and regional like-minded individuals & groups.

We continue to build on connections with local businesses. We have had success in funding applications to the NZMCA GreenFund two years in a row (They are on the north side of the current restoration area (see below). We have a work day planned (5 September) when campers from all over NZ are coming to Plimmerton to help plant the Taupo Stream edges leading up to the ponds - with Harekeke purchased by us and paid for by them. They are hosting a BBQ for us all that day.

We are also negotiating with Tatana Contracting who own the land immediately west of them: a very encouraging onsite visit and meeting with Tatana family members has assured us of support for the restoration, and a willing commitment to add to the work already happening down there.

Our volunteer base continues to grow. We send out regular newsy updates, have a very active social media page and work to keep our website current. We are very fortunate to have the skills and dedication of the CVNZ crews onsite for 5 of our 10 workdays this season. The Porirua Crew particularly is one we put energy into re planning – giving a hand up to individuals like this rewards us in so many ways-and we know they benefit too. Likewise the gentle souls at Te Rito (so ably corralled by Steve Wilson) whom we love to visit and thank with chocolates at the end of the season.



1. **The 5+ year restoration of the PCC owned part of the Taupo stream wetlands:** we have now cleared (and worked with PCC/GW to have sprayed and mulched) significant areas of blackberry to the point where we are now only limited by the current supply of wetland stems as to what we can get in the ground. Last year's funding enabled us, after much clearing and ground prep, to get around 1800 stems planted in the areas you see in the aerial view below. Despite several major flooding events most survived. (The road on the far right is Ulric Street, Plimmerton). Some of the flax, cordyline, Ngaio, Manuka are now getting up to 2 metres high. All plants are staked and protected. In fact we are now having to light-well some plants because of carex regrowth.



Around 10 volunteer days took place in 2019, with a steadily growing number turning up each time. We continue to interplant and weed. Now the blackberry has gone (Prior to clearance it filled the area between the NZMCA bund virtually to the stream - refer to the photos in the gallery. This planting season will see us getting a further 1900 stems planted. We are really pleased that PCC has now cleared and planted the side of Taupo Stream on Plimmerton Domain. It's looking great- and we hope that all the visible FOTSC effort and results just 10 metres away on the other side of the bridge might have pushed things along.

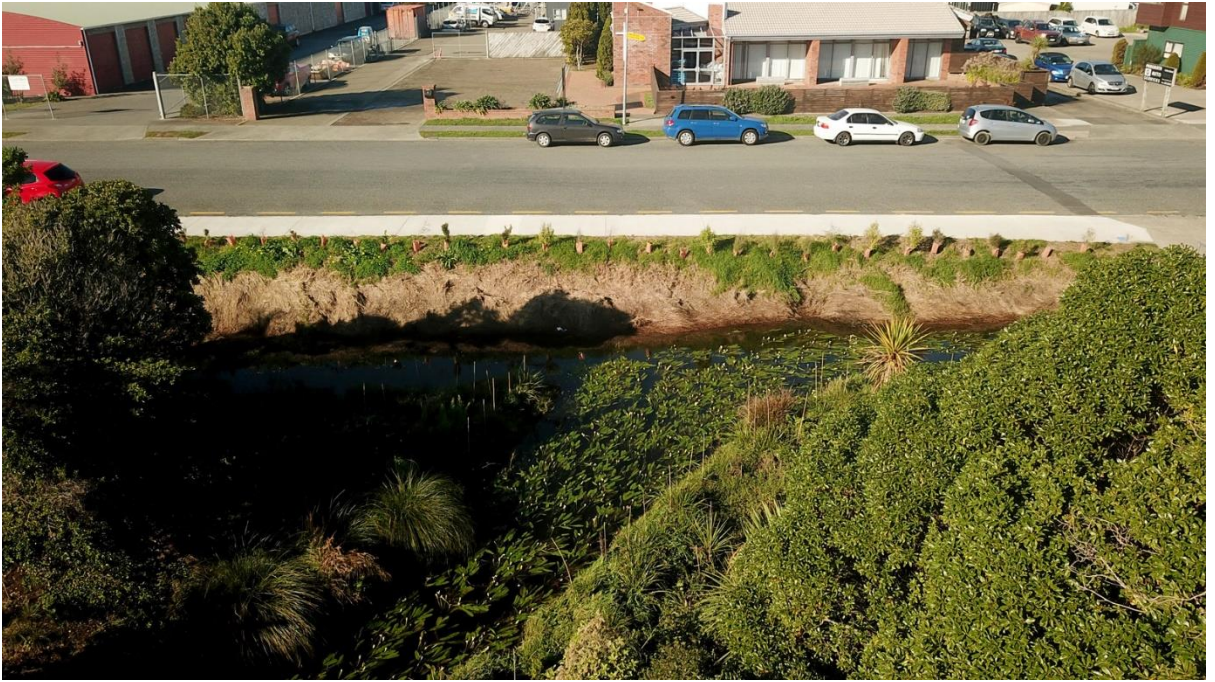
The site has its hazards (deep water being one) which is why we have not engaged with schools down there. However, a local well chaperoned scout group are now keen workers.



Above & Below: The 2019-20 planting sites (Photo taken this month). Note the carex regrowth around the stream and alongside the NZMCA bund. No blackberry!



Below: The 'Gulch' and Ulric Street. Banks sprayed ready for donated flax planting which will stabilise the edges and stop debris from entering the stream.



Gorgeous! Now lots of cleared & mulched blackberry on the left and on the sides of the ponds



2. In March (prior to lockdown) we were asked to host onsite a group of 25 Masters students from the **VUW School of Architecture**. Their brief was to look at best practice urban planning in areas where environmental concerns were paramount. Naturally we were delighted to have the opportunity to have some input onto their thinking about the proposed Plimmerton farm development which sits right in the middle of the FOTSC Catchment. Covid means that their planned local exhibition is instead going up on a website, but the chance to air current concerns about wetlands was very timely. We are hoping to build on this connection. Academic interest is to be encouraged.

3. The Proposed Plan Change and the Plimmerton Farm development.

For the past 18 months this has involved us in literally hundreds of hours of meetings, emails, submissions to GW and PCC and generally being the 'go to' organisation for connecting the dots, connecting potential submitters, unpacking the process etc etc . You can see some of our back end work here: <https://www.tauposwamp.org/plimmerton-farm-development>

This has sat outside the FOTSC restoration project, but there is no doubt on our minds that public awareness has hugely increased *because* of it. There is much at stake for the wetlands if this development is not done massively better than any Porirua development to date.

4. **The Rotary 100,000 Trees Project** (accessing the billion Trees MPI funding). This 'grew' out of the restoration work GWRC is funding for FOTSC. Plans for 8000 wetland stems (and many big trees) to go in around the 'ditch' dividing Plimmerton Domain, behind and around the new dog park down there (areas 1,2,3) . Some in the KNE, much of it adjoining the planned FOTSC planting.



Above: Rotary Project - The KNE area behind the new dog park.



Above: Rotary planting will be in areas 1,2,3 which it is since been agreed, will be much enlarged

Bill McAulay & I never imagined that the formation of FOTSC 2 years ago would lead to all this.

It has proved to be a very timely move.

FOTSC Forward Planning for 20/21

- Continue to plant @2000 ordered locally grown eco sourced trees. (First planting day this month interplanted the 2019 areas, & the edges of the gulch & stream - 700 stems)
- With the acceptance of this report, and with 2020-21 funding, to order wetland plants/trees for winter 2021
- ongoing onsite weeding of all planting
- continue to pursue/ support plant and animal pest control (we may fund some of this from the GW grant)
- support for the Rotary project where we can- 2020-21
- continue to connect with businesses adjacent to the wetlands – funding/ awareness etc
- and continue to lobby for best outcomes for the Plimmerton Farm Development which has the potential to have extremely adverse effects on the FOTSC restoration in terms of sedimentation and runoff

2020-21 Restoration Project: Below is a recent aerial view of the sprayed and mulched areas of the wetland which we intend to start planting this season with our ordered plants.

Our 2020-21 exact planting plan is evolving as we wait to see what blackberry regrowth there is on some of those areas, but will consist of plants from the list below.

Below: large areas (South side of the *Tatana Contracting* Bund) on both sides of the ponds now cleared and mulched and ready for planting 2020-2021. Ngaio, cordyline, kahikatea, harekeke, Manuka, Kanuka, *Plagianthus regius*, *Plagianthus divaricatus*, *carex secta*, Putaputaweta, Mahoe, *Sophora chathamica*, *Sophora microphylla*...



All drone photos taken in June 2020 by FOTSC supporter, Tim Prebble.

Judy McKoy. Project management/ Funding. FOTSC. June 30th, 2020.

GALLERY

December 2019 - 3 floods in a fortnight. Spot the planting markers! Very few plants lost.





Above and below: Community volunteers late 2019



An onsite visit from VUW Masters Architecture Students. February 2020

Post floods clean-ups with CVNZ – Porirua crew.





2019 planting- stage one. These are now up to 2 metres high & the carex is making a comeback now the blackberry is gone.

Below: and this was the start.....



And now..... same area. April 2020 after what was a long dry summer. The NZMCA installed an irrigation line along their boundary so we/they could water the new plants



And the weeding goes on.... March 2020

