

Friends of Taupo Swamp & Catchment (FOTSC)

The first six months since June 2018

..... over a coffee at Palmers Garden Centre, Jenny Brash (Greater Wellington Regional Council Councillor), Mike Jebson (QE11 National Trust CEO) and Bill McAulay decided that it would be a good idea to form a community-driven group to provide greater care and protection for Taupo Swamp. Judy McKoy promptly also took up the challenge as she had already been working on a Heritage Planting project for Plimmerton Residents Assn.

So what has happened since then and more importantly, what is in front of us?

- **FOTSC goals** include the protection, advocacy, restoration, monitoring, recreation and community engagement of the Taupo Swamp and Catchment. Note that parts of the wetlands system are in private ownership on Plimmerton Farm and other parcels of swamp are west of the railway line and north of Airlie Rd.
- Key stake-holders **QE11, PCC, GWRC** are fully on-board with our goals.
- The planned **urban development** of Plimmerton Farm has alerted FOTSC supporters to consider the potential risks to Taupo swamp and connected wetlands.
- **Predator Control** underpins all efforts to increase bird activity around the swamp. Pest Free Plimmerton and Predator Free Pukerua Bay volunteers plus GWRC contractors working will continue trapping mustelids and rats around the swamp.
- As most of the water from the catchment flows out of Taupo stream onto South Beach we are mindful of the current and future **water quality** in the stream. Monitoring by Wellington Water shows e coli contamination after heavy rain.
- QE11 have applied to GWRC to upgrade the **protection status** of the QE11-owned swamp.
- GWRC - **Collaborative Projects Contestable Funding**. Recently we were successful with an application for \$3.5k for the first year and \$6k for both years two and three. This is contingent on an approved restoration project plan.
- We have support from **PCC and GWRC** for commencing the removal of invasive plants - to be followed by riparian planting in the PCC-owned part of Taupo Swamp. ie the area north of Plimmerton Domain and west of the Ulric St industrial area. We have proposed that the work be done over a three to four year year period.
- Conservation Volunteers NZ is keen to provide volunteers for the weeding and planting.

What is next over the next three months?

1. **Memorandums of Understanding** with GWRC and PCC to be agreed and signed re 'business as usual' of FOTSC.
2. **Mapping** of the catchment is currently underway by Tim Clark.
3. A FOTSC **logo** is currently being designed by Sabrina Malcolm.
4. Sabrina is also working on a **website** for FOTSC.
5. Set up FOTSC as an **incorporated society** (we will need 15 signatures)
6. Set up a **bank account** for FOTSC
7. We need some '**starting point photos**' of key spots around the area. ie say 20 key places so we can continue a photographic record through future years.
8. We are seeking help with a **Planting Plan** for the area being targeted for restoration.
9. DOC will be opening up a new **community funding** round in February. *Funding will be directed toward community projects that restore the diversity of native plants and wildlife. Projects can include pest control, habitat restoration and weed management.*
10. We need support from neighbouring businesses around the industrial area. The Motor Homes Assn is on board with our goals.



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Newsletter #2... Quick Update of the First Three Months of 2019

- We are registered as an **incorporated society**. The **Charitable Trust** status is nearly complete.
- The above FOTSC **logo** has been finalised (big thanks to Sabrina Malcolm for her hard work). Sabrina has created an image that perfectly captures the imagery of flowering flax, a tui and the surrounding hill-lines of the Taupo Swamp catchment.
- We have our own **e-mail address** (tauposwamp@gmail.com)
- The **website** is nearly built...www.tauposwamp.org Thank you Sabrina and Judy.
- Another important communication tool has been the **drone footage** of the PCC part of Taupo Swamp. If you haven't seen it yet, have a look on youtube and appreciate the skills of FOTSC supporter Tim Prebble https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tal_8-OYISM
- We are currently fine tuning **the plan** for how we are going to work on the swamp area shown in the drone footage. It's the area north of Plimmerton Domain and west of the Ulric St industrial area. We have proposed that the work be done over a three to five year period.
- We have support from PCC and GWRC for doing this restoration. The grant from GWRC of \$16.5 k will be used to cover the initial costs of setting up FOTSC and purchase of plants, trees and protection. We have also made an application to **DOC for a grant** of \$20k for plants, trees and protection spread over the next three years. We will need more than this to fund future plant and tree purchases so will be approaching local businesses and environmental funders.
- We appreciate the input from **Te Rito Nursery** in Porirua. We intend to utilise their locally eco-sourced plants for our planting program.
- The Wellington branch of Conservation Volunteers NZ are going to provide **volunteers** for starting invasive weed clearance on April 17. Then continuing May 1/May 15/May 29. After the first day we will have a better idea of how to involve local volunteers in the weed clearance and then planting.
- A **bank account** has been set up with Kiwi Bank.
- Tim Clark has been very helpful with **GIS** (Geographic Information System) **mapping** of the catchment.

- Plenty of support has come from dedicated supporters of **local conservation groups** (eg QE Park restoration team, Kapiti Forest & Bird, Friends of Mana Island, Nga Uruora and QE11 National Trust)
- **PCC** has nearly completed shredding the **blackberry** and other weeds on the banks of Taupo Stream adjacent to Plimmerton Domain.
- **GWRC** have sprayed some of the accessible **blackberry** on the northern side of the domain and in the rail corridor.
- We made written and oral **submissions to PCC Growth Strategy** about the importance of protecting Taupo Swamp and associated wetlands during and after the development of Plimmerton Farm.

What is happening over the next three months?

1. Complete the scoping of the "FOTSC area 1 " including the choice of plants from Te Rito Nursery.
2. Engage the involvement of more community volunteers to work on the PCC swamp/wetlands.
3. Continue talking with the Plimmerton Farm developers to obtain the best result for Taupo Swamp & Catchment.
4. Ensure that FOTSC is involved with GWRC and PCC decision-makers about the protection and improvement of Taupo Swamp.