

Centennial Park Bush Society Inc

P O Box 31 677, Milford, North Shore City 0741
www.centennialparkbushsociety.org.nz



Annual Report 2010

Summary

- Membership stands at 147
- Finances are healthy with a snapshot balance end of year of approx \$8000
- Volunteers put in 2287 hours of work in the 2009 calendar year and over 780 year to date
- We have continued to deal with council over the revision of the management plan.
- CPBS has continued to work proactively on the native forest restoration of Centennial Park in Campbells Bay. We do this by controlling invasive weeds, mulching, and planting both with volunteer and contractor input over numerous sites.
- The Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary has seen work continue outside the main bush block on sites throughout the catchment
- We continue to grow ecosourced plants
- Erosion continues to be a serious issue with nothing proactive being done about it
- Volunteers continue to maintain the track network, including rerouting the mamaku track around the slip
- We continue to trap for possums, rats and stoats and have increased our trapping effort
- We continue to monitor water quality, bird life, weed invasion and other markers

Membership

Current membership stands at 147.

Finance

Our accounts show minimal expenditure this year. The \$20,000 grant from the DOC Community Conservation Fund is being spent on the Kowhai Rd restoration project and Park Rise bush. We have been unable to spend the section on acmena removal due to the revision of the management plan.

Volunteers

Volunteer work days continue with "Wednesday Workers" meeting every week, weeding, mulching, planting and maintaining tracks. "Weekend Workers" work days occur every month with excellent support of up to 21 people at a time. Our main focus has been a progressive systematic sweep of the main bush block from the tennis club up to the golf course removing invasive plants. We have had support from Milford Rotary. Peter Bioletti has supervised Community Service referrals from youth justice. Jan Knight has been supervising a small crew of workers on Wednesdays who have been concentrating on weed control of our planting areas – absolutely essential work. We held a combined Residents and Ratepayers and CPBS picnic at Huntly Rd in December. Attendance was patchy largely due to timing I suspect.

Campbells Bay Urban Sanctuary (CBUS)

CBUS is about working with the community to improve the ecology of Campbells Bay, to provide a weed and pest free environment to welcome native birds and wildlife. In practical terms this has meant weed control in the golf club lease, particularly Park Rise bush, at All Hallows church, the corner of Huntly and Red Bluff Rise. We have also kicked off a rhamnus removal project and offered to assist removal of acmena on private land. The school has removed a large row of acmena, a major plant pest.

Management Plan

The revision of the park management plan has become a de facto review of our resource consent to remove wattles, pines and acmena trees from Centennial Park. From the outset the issues were largely confined to large tree management. The argument has been between those who want the status quo to remain and deny the significant adverse impacts of invasive species vs those like us, who feel that

plants with invasive habit including big trees have to be actively managed. Our argument was that we have to sacrifice some landscape/amenity values to safeguard the long term health of the regenerating native bush.

We have serious concerns about how council has gone about this review. An independent ecologist report commissioned by council fully supports our resource consent to remove some pines, wattles and all the acmena in the park over a 5+ year time frame. This report has been ignored by the council. It is important to realise that the original consent was supported by the Parks Department and the Takapuna Community Board. CPBS complained to the Ombudsman about several procedural issues with no success. The draft Centennial Park management plan was sent from the Takapuna Community Board to the Council Community Services and Parks committee for approval, only to be rejected not once, but twice, as the council had serious concerns about the content of the management plan.

In February, Joe Greig and I met with the CEO of North Shore City council and the Parks manager to express our concerns over the progress of the plan.

Finally in May 2010, the parks department suggested to the TCB that they approve removal of 3 pines per year to foster native forest restoration. This was passed by a vote of 3 to 2. This is yet to be approved by the full council. The plan still includes blatant falsities such as "*the shade pines provide encourages the regeneration of native bush*". It is disturbing that a modern council would consider including such garbage in a park management plan. The new management plan continues to protect some of the wattles in the park, unless they end up on the main pest plant list. It does permit the removal of acmena trees! The plan does not address any of the issues on the golf course part of Centennial Park including tree or water course management.

Of great concern to us was the extreme waste of resources this review of our resource consent has been. Numerous legal opinions, hours of meetings could have been avoided if a healthy dialogue had occurred at an early stage. At no time did the parks officer in charge of the review or any of the TCB members meet with us on site to get a better idea of what we are about.

Bush restoration work in the catchment

1. Avenue of Remembrance

Weed control has continued with a new weed *Carex divulsa* being a particular target. The "Dugdale gully" planting is doing well. We are continuing to slowly replace agapanthus in this gully with native plants.

2. Acmena replacement program

In a two month period, volunteers removed more than 600 acmena seedlings from the bush in Centennial Park. This is dramatic evidence of the serious invasive nature of *Acmena smithii*. There has been no further removal of the large acmena due to the revision of the management plan. Most of the replacement planting from previous removals is doing well. A particularly dry summer has seen a large miro die. Last summer a kauri and rimu died from lack of water. The 2008 planting is mainly doing very well. Three new large trees were mysteriously planted in the area, including a puriri, magnolia and plane tree. Some were planted inappropriately near existing new plantings and should be removed. Hopefully when the management plan is finalised more acmena will be removed. The parks department planted several large grade deciduous trees in the general area adding to the arboretum.

3. Pine reduction program

Over the last 3 years, 40 pines have been removed and more than 400 native plants planted in their place. This year we removed none. Most of the pine felling sites are regenerating well. Weeds and native plants flourish when light is let in as pines are felled. Our volunteer crew have worked hard to keep the weeds under control and foster the growth of planted and naturally regenerating bush. Some of the sites are still rather barren but should improve with time. No further pines were felled this year due to the revision of the management plan. Once the plan is finalised we will need to think carefully about which pines would be best removed to foster the restoration of the bush.

4. Wattles

The new management plan allows removal of more than half the wattles on the ridge below the Aberdeen track. It will be interesting to see who funds this work.

5. Wetland

The wetland restoration area is growing really well. Steve Cook has a contract to control tradescantia regrowth in this area. Cabbage trees and kahikatea are taking off. Bindweed and kikuyu is making a come back and will need work. Several of the willows in this area are looking very sick for an unknown reason.

6. Aberdeen Track

Rae Rd gully has been weeded from top to bottom, removing jasmine, tradescantia, and agapanthus particularly.

We have carried out weed maintenance work on the jasmine infestation on "Joe's ridge" below the large rewarewa.

We have continued weed control in "Harvey gully". Weed control here is difficult due to constant reinvasion of setaria (palm grass) and trad from private land upstream.

Under the flame trees, Steve Cook has been controlling trad under a council contract. This area was planted last year. On the left of the track below Dorothy Anderson's house, *Phormium tenax* (harakeke) and *Cordyline australis* (ti kouka) are doing well where elephant ear's were removed. A large kauri has died here, presumably due to the drought. The taraire, which the kereru love, has been nominated as a city notable tree.

From here through to the swimming pool in the area of Mary Hardwick-Smith's macrocarpa seat, trad regrowth has been controlled by Steve Cook.

Under the pool, the jasmine has been controlled and hand removed, with planting of mahoe, carex, wharariki (*Phormium cookianum*), and ti ngahere (*Astelia banksii*). Nearby a cedar has been deliberately poisoned and now illegally felled. We removed 4 bags of empty bottles from the bush below the pool!

Further along the area on the left where the bamboo was removed several years ago is regenerating well. More plants were put in here last year and more weed control carried out including removal of lots more jasmine. An uncommon weed, *Callistachys*, is a problem along here.

7. 16th tee

Our 16th tee restoration project is doing well despite the drought.

8. Top end kohekohe track

At the top of the kohekohe track, below the driving range building used to be a monoculture of bamboo. We removed this in 2004 and this area is now in maintenance weed control mode with straggler bamboo being controlled annually.

9. 15th tee

The planting area below the old workshop and adjacent to the 15th tee has struggled with the drought. We did not mulch this bank due to access issues. Several plants have died and replacement planting will occur this year. Luckily the giant redwoods survived.

10. 17th fairway bank

Peter Bioletti and his community service crew have controlled cotoneaster and pampas along this bank above the 17th fairway. The crew also removed privet with the assistance of the golf club near the 17th tee.

11. Golf club acmena

There are now only 4 significant acmena in the whole of the golf course near the 6th tee. These are on "death row", awaiting growth of replacement planting. This year 2 more were removed by the golf club with our assistance. A large titoki was planted here funded by the 9 hole ladies group. All the replacement trees we planted in 2008 have survived the dry summer, a testament to the species selection by Geraldine Bayly.

12. 14th tee

Our planting area at the 14th tee continues to mature. The riparian planting in the slip site on the 14th fairway is doing really well.

13. Park Rise accessway

At the top of the path the planting site continues to struggle slowly with severe competition from the large gums nearby. We managed to get a large wattle on the path removed freeing up a northern rata growing on the side of the path.

At the 11th tee fence line, planting of 2007 is doing well. One tree was attacked to free up the visibility of a real estate sign!

14. Park Rise bush

Natural regeneration is the theme here. Controlling large weed trees has meant a flush of new native and non native plants taking off. Persistence with weed control has meant a natural regenerating area. We have made several forays into this bush.

Steve Cook, weed contractor, has been hard at work on "Park Rise gully", which runs from the redwoods on the 7th fairway to the steep drop off to the main gully. This has cost \$4500 funded by the DOC grant.. Volunteers planted this area in June 2010 with 400 plants.

A fire caused some damage to the bush near the chipping green.

Steve Cook has controlled some tradescantia sites. Volunteer control of climbing asparagus in the Kowhai Rd plantation has seen initial success.

We plan to remove agapanthus along the edge of Tree Fern trail with neighbour consent, replanting as we go.

15. 4th tee

The golf club removed some pines in the vicinity of Peter's patch at the 4th tee. More weed control and planting is needed here.

16. Kowhai Rd restoration

We had a very well attended planting day in June 09. Heavily mulched, the plants have grown very well despite the drought. This area has been maintained particularly by Jan Knight and her crew who work on Wednesday mornings maintaining our planting sites.

The inaugural "Park Care Day" saw about 20 volunteers removed 3 skips full of weeds from the area under the conifers and around the entry to the golf course workshops.

Bruce Rogers has been spraying out the kikuyu and bindweed in the next area (second of three stages) to be planted this year.

17. Kohekohe track

We had a team from BNZ come and help us manually removed selaginella on the kohekohe track. This will need follow up. It has been suggested we spray this with vinegar following some successful trials by DOC.

18. All Hallows Church bush

This is now in weed maintenance mode with one site visit in the past year and volunteer control of tradescantia.

19. Huntly Rd

With council and neighbour permission we removed honeysuckle, ginger and other nasties from the roadside at the corner of Huntly and Red Bluff Rise. This is a CBUS initiative. Planting will occur this winter with further weed control as time permits.

Council installed a 5m deep buried retaining wall on the west side of the stream below Huntly Rd bridge due to slope instability. Members were instrumental in saving some large trees here which were going to be felled to allow access. We were also concerned about damage to recent riparian planting.

Damage has been minimised, replanting has occurred and the new retaining wall is now invisible. A good outcome. Congratulations to the engineers involved.

20. Rhamnus

Rhamnus alaternus or evergreen buckthorn is becoming widespread in the private properties in Campbells Bay. We have picked a block of sections on Aberdeen Rd to target for Rhamnus removal. Jan Knight has door knocked and gained support from most residents. ARC initiated what we hope will be a Community Initiatives Program here. Volunteers will help remove rhamnus.

21. Ecosourced plant propagation

Stan Knight continues to grow up to 3000 plants on his property, mainly ecosourced locally. This is saving us thousands of dollars. John Chapple in View Rd is also growing a few.

22. The main bush weed sweep

The main bush block in Centennial Park has been the subject of a systematic sweep carrying out a thorough blitz on all weeds found. So far we have worked the south side of the kohekohe from the tennis club up as far as the golf course and along the 14th fairway on the north side as far as the 14th tee. We have been manually removing ginger as the vigilant gel supplied by council does not seem to be killing the roots of ginger. The most common weeds otherwise are chinese privet, honeysuckle, pines and wattles as well as new weeds such as loquat, bangalow palm and cherry seedlings. Honeysuckle is particularly thick in the Flame tree gully. Pines felling sites have been visited more than once. Climbing asparagus continues to be a real concern, thriving in the acid environment under pines.

23. Campbells Bay School

In the spirit of partnership with the CBUS project, Campbells Bay School have removed a row of large acmena trees on the northern boundary of the playing field. They will be planting titoki there to replace them. Thanks CBS!

Erosion

The catchment management plan has not yet started and is desperately needed. We have approached the golf club about waterway management and will be looking at getting expert input into best practice. The slump on the 15th fairway has been repaired. Elsewhere the gullies in the park are eroding out badly. We are carrying out riparian planting as fast as we can to help mitigate this.

Morton Way

The cobbles at the Beach Rd entrance remain loose and a hazard to walkers.

Rae Rd

Several meetings have been held to discuss our plans for a landscape upgrade of the Rae Rd entrance. The plan, designed by landscape architect Geraldine Bayly, is to soften the clutter of signs and railings with a simplified planted entrance. Paul Woodruffe has his own plans for the Avenue of Remembrance. He has drawn a number of options for structures at the Rae Rd entrance and along the Avenue to emphasise the history of the Avenue. Paul was awarded \$5000 by the Takapuna Community Board to research the history of this avenue. We were not consulted about this grant despite holding considerable research on this Avenue already. People at the site meetings expressed concern about more hard structures in the park.

The track network

Volunteers continue to do most of the track maintenance in the park. We created a new route on the mamaku track at the Aberdeen Rd end to bypass the slip affected gully, which has now had the track and bridge removed and planting carried out.

We have opened up a rough track between Park Rise and Kowhai Rd. A metal-moving work day was held in March, well supported by Milford Rotary, with about 200m being metalled and drained. We will get contractors to look at a detour of the steep Park Rise end.

Off the mamaku track are 2 pillboxes from World War 2. We have marked rough tracks to them making these historic sites open to park users. We hope to be able to install some interpretive signage at some stage.

Nature Trail

The new nature trail guide remains available at Rae Rd. We hope to get a pamphlet holder at the start of the trail and have some available at the Campbells Bay dairy.

Website

Our website at www.centennialparkbushsociety.org.nz needs improving and adding to. If anyone wants to be "Webmaster" please put up your hand.

Animal Pest Control

We now have two trap lines, patrolled by 4 volunteers, covering about 40 rat traps, 6 possum traps and 2 stoat traps. We continue to kill rats and mice. We have caught no possums this year and one weasel. We hope to establish a ring of rat bait stations in private properties bordering the park.

Bird Counts

Monthly bird counts are carried by Alan Emmerson, Jenny Chamberlain and Liz Goodwin. They have seen 6 kereru at once on a gum branch! Suzi Phillips is sure kereru are nesting in the park.

Looking ahead

With the management plan review almost over (we hope) we will be able to devote more of our time on practical management rather than bureaucracy. We will move ahead with removing wattles, pines and acmena. In addition we will be continuing weed control in all the restoration sites including the main valley and Park Rise bush. We will work on stage 3 of the Kowhai Rd restoration project and progress the Park Rise to Kowhai Rd track.

Thankyou

Special thanks to our committee and the hard core of volunteer workers. Special thanks to Stan for all the plants he grows so well. Also special thanks to Daphne for all the morning tea sustenance, Joe Greig for dealing so effectively with council, and Jenny Chamberlain for her secretarial and newsletter skills. Thanks to Max Thomson and Marg Palmer for handling the funds. Marg Palmer is leaving the committee this year and we thank her for all her input over the last 5-6 years. Thanks to the golf club for working with us. Thanks also to Nicki Malone and Paul Cliffe, Parks Officers for support and the parks department and Actionline for removing multiple piles of weeds and supplying plants, spray gear and tools.

In summary CPBS is working hard to make a positive difference in Centennial Park. Our effort is sustained and based on sound ecological principles. Thanks to everyone for their support.

Richard Hursthouse
Chairman
June 2010