

PO Box 18-786, New Brighton

Newsletter

October 2012

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www.avon.org.nz

Manaaki Whenua Care for the Land

BIODIVERSITY NETWORKING DAY

I HAD THE PRIVILEGE of representing AvON at a biodiversity networking event at Landcare Research on 27 June. About 15 people with huge expertise and knowledge from throughout Canterbury participated. During the morning there were 2 excellent presentations, and a field trip.

Professor Mark Hostetler, (University of Florida) spoke on the "Green Leap: Increasing the uptake of biodiversity conservation practices". Then Colin Meurk (Landcare Research) presented on "Green Urban & Rural Elements: Overcoming barriers to integrate biodiversity into cultural landscapes".

One telling comment that Colin made was that "we have a history in NZ of rezeroing areas, chopping down all their life and starting again". He then asked, "are we actually going to have a history or will we just keep re-zeroing because we can?"

I thought it a deeply relevant question to ask in terms of the red-zone land along the Avon and what "clearance" of the land means. It highlights the importance of the audit work we are seeking to coordinate and complete.

Another point he made that has direct relevance to the river park/reserve concerned riparian planting and biodiversity corridors. He stressed that the wider these corridors are the better they function as nurseries for biodiversity.

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Manaaki Tangata Care for the People

INAUGURAL SPRING RIVER FESTIVAL

2012 IS THE INAUGURAL YEAR OF THE SPRING RIVER FESTIVAL to be held each Labour weekend on the lower Avon corridor, estuary and beaches – the playground of the city!



40 ACTIVITIES From the City to the Sea

Initiated and promoted by Avon-Otakaro Network

This exciting programme, packed with almost 40 recreational and community events, is taking place on **20 and 21 October**, **2012**. With event hubs at New Brighton, Ferrymead, Wainoni, Burwood/Travis, Shirley and Avonside, the festival showcases the vitality and potential of the east as "Otakaro: place of the game".

There is something for everyone, whatever their age, ability or interest: a diverse range of activities embracing sport and recreation, culture and heritage, environment and gardens, and entertainment and community.

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Haere Whakamua
Go Forward...

AVON MEETS MINISTER BROWNLEE

OUR HARD WORK AND PERSERVERANCE has finally paid off. We recently met with Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee - the start of what we hope will be an ongoing dialogue.

This is a major coup and acknowledges the fantastic efforts of the Network and the importance and popularity of the AvON vision to the recovery of the east and Christchurch as a whole.



We spent several months collecting over eighteen and a half thousand signatures, then presented our petition to Parliament and followed up with written and verbal submissions to the Local Government and Environment Select Committee.

When Co-Chairs Mark Gibson and Evan Smith gave a joint verbal submission to the Select Committee in early August it was received with enthusiastic applause from MPs of all the parties represented.

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Colin Meurk's beautiful award-winning biodiversity bush garden (Ellerslie Flower Show 2012)

Biodiversity networking day Continued from Page 1...

If a green corridor is less than 100m wide it will be subject to a two-edge effect and the breadth of bio-diversity that can be sustained will be limited.

It was useful to visit three biodiversity restoration sites in Lincoln. A Ngai Tahu subdivision development, the Liffey Stream and Mahoe Reserve. The Ngai Tahu development incorporates an artificial wetland system including swales for the filtering and holding of stormwater - an element we want to see in the Avon river park.

In the afternoon after a superb lunch provided as part of Landcare hospitality Tamsin Page from ECAN walked us through the new Bio-diversity Strategy for Canterbury. AvON will need to work with this strategy and find ways of making a connection with the local committee responsible for the whole city. What became clear from the overview is that the Canterbury Water Management strategy will eventually drive the biodiversity strategy. Things are moving in the direction of adopting a whole watershed focus.

Mark Gibson

RED ZONE TREES & GARDENS

FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AvON has been working with a number of different groups and individuals to undertake audits and surveys of the Avon River Residential Red Zone (RZZ) to identify 'assets of value' and monitor the changing ecology of the lands.

These include our on-line asset register; street survey's undertaken by John Clemens (Curator Botanic Gardens) and Robert Watson (Landscape Architect); a community survey with Riverside Community Group; geospatial analysis using LiDAR data by Canterbury University geography ongoing ecological postgraduates; sampling evaluations by Colin Meurk with ecology students from Lincoln; proposed forestry and soil sampling investigations by Scion Research; and proposed soil surveys and growth trials under the supervision of School of Forestry and Sustainability House.

The Riverside survey of the block of land bordered by River Road, Banks Ave, Woodchester Ave and Medway St identified over 450 plants of value:

about a third indigenous, a third exotic fruit trees and the remainder mature exotics.

In addition The Press has been featuring a weekly "Trees of the East" in their Gardening section — thanks to the advocacy of Di Madgin.

One of the really encouraging aspects of this work has been the fantastic support and enthusiasm of the scientific communities including researchers from both Canterbury and Lincoln Universities along with Landcare Research and SCION Research. There are real opportunities here for scientists, academics and communities to work together for the benefit of all.

On this note two other projects were carried out recently by Geography 309 students: on biodiversity mapping and on processes for the geospatial allocation of land for future uses.

So where has this all taken us? It has demonstrated that we need to flip things on their head!

The CERA RRZ Operations team initially indicated that the land would be cleared of all buildings, vegetation, fences and trees and grassed over. If we wanted to retain mature trees we would have to make a case for protected status for each, tree-bytree.

We have argued that the default position should be that there is intrinsic value in all the mature vegetation, gardens and trees in the RRZ lands and that all should be retained unless there is a good case for their removal eg invasive weed species.

CERA has now moved considerably in their stance and have agreed that indigenous trees and shrubs, exotic trees over 6m and other mature exotics that the community has identified as of value (eg fruit trees) will be retained. This is a real success – it is important now that we set about identifying those exotics of value under 6m in height.

Evan Smith

Have you tried: http://naturewatch.org.nz yet? Your one stop shop for recording any plant, animal or fungus - even if you don't know what they are – just upload a good picture(s) and ask for an ID.



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COMMUNITY GARDENS: ENRICHING THE CITY

SO FAR THE CANTERBURY COM-MUNITY GARDENS ASSOCIATION (CCGA) supports AvON by endorsing its Charter and helping with the audit of trees and other plants in the residential red zone. We would like to be able to do more in due course.

Our priority is the identification of fruit and nut trees because only when we know what exists can we work out a way of ensuring that it isn't needlessly cut down.

We also have the beginnings of several interesting community gardens in the residential red zone. Let's work together towards bringing new life to these spaces. We want to see people with a passion for food joining us in developing proposals and building support behind them.

Imagine taking your children for a bike ride along the Avon and being able to forage freely for apples and plums, walnuts and raspberries and other hidden treasures on the way. Imagine being able to pick a bunch of wild flowers to take home. Imagine being part of a team who revived urban farming in Christchurch. Imagine such memories! It is possible.

Community gardens are created and maintained by groups of people who share similar aims. The flowers, fruit, nuts, herbs and other edibles grown in this way enrich our city immeasurably. Helping to make a community garden brings people together on a shared enterprise. It provides a creative outlet for anyone wanting to join in. Such gardens carry memories of the past while contributing to the building of a more sustainable future.

Contact Bailey Peryman on 326 6927 or email <u>gardencity2.0@community</u> <u>gardens.org.nz</u> if you are interested in being involved.

You can find out more and look at design proposals for community gardens via the link below. Or contact Diana Madgin for more info on 385 3559 www.lucas-associates.co.nz/water/the-lower-avon-heritage-recovery-trail/



PACKE STREET PARK & COMMUNITY GARDEN

An example of how old domestic gardens can be developed and managed for the on-going benefit of everybody:

Packe Street Park and Community Garden came into existence in an unusual way.

In 1995 two adjacent houses in Packe Street came on to the market at the same time. Children had discovered that the old orchard hidden behind one of these properties was a nice place to play. Also the only three big trees in our block were sited on this land and would probably be lost if the land were to be subdivided.

A campaign was started to persuade the Council to buy the land for a pocket park. It took a year and with support from our local councillor – Garry Moore – the land was bought as a reserve in 1996. Because there was no available CCC budget for development we, "The Friends of the Park at 125–129 Packe Street Incorporated" offered to have a design drawn up and create the park in partnership with the Council. That partnership was established under the Adopt-a-Park scheme.

The first step taken by our society was to employ Di Lucas, landscape architect, to listen to us and to draw up a plan. It was her suggestion that sessions should be run over a six week period to find out what the children wanted. The outcome is a design that has stood the test of time.

Council cuts the grass and takes the

big prunings that we cannot compost on site. They also do their audits, maintain the play equipment and service the rubbish bin. We plant and weed, water and prune, collect any litter, deal with stray dog droppings, put on events and generally provide a benign presence in the park. Parents say that they are happy for their children to play there unsupervised because chances are one of the gardeners will be in there working.

Ours is a Pick-and-Share Garden. Being a reserve it is open to everyone all of the time. Horticulturally it is a very rich place: you will find pears, apples and crab apples; Mediterranean fruits such as olives, figs and various grapes; South American foods such a feijoa, oca, mashua, and ugni; plums, quinces, red and, black currents, raspberries and strawberries; peaches, apricot and several nectarines, walnuts and hazelnuts. Then there are herbs including a bay tree and all sorts of flowers to pick. We have a recycled lock-up shed and plenty of tools.

At present we are building raised beds so that we can produce more vegetables above dog-leg-lifting height. In summertime there are beans, tomatoes, zucchini, and salad greens but we can never keep up with needs. Our main social events are Matariki in June and Carol Singing in December. For the last 16 years our weekly working bee has been held on Thursday afternoons. Our park is a heavily used and wellloved asset in the community. The key to its success is the relationship between CCC, City Care and our Society.

Peggy Kelly

Bailey Peryman





Inaugural spring river festival Continued from Page 1...

Regattas, concerts, seminars, tours, fairs, and markets will be in full swing.

New Brighton will be buzzing with activities on the beach front, including two concerts, two markets, a kite fest, 3x3 basketball, kite surfing, sand painting and the festival opening ceremony and regatta on the river at Owles Terrace.

Brighton's Carnaby Collective has put together two exciting concerts. A free daytime waterfront gig features local acts Merchants of Flow, One Waka, Medway Roots, Soul Manor, Ryan and Emily, and the New Brighton Pirate Ukulele Band.

The evening concert, B-Town Rocksteady, is a licensed ticketed event. Cornerstone Roots and Taos are headlining, with support from RDU's Messenjah featuring SILVA MC and Aleon.

Carnaby Collective has been busy preparing the evening site, working with local young people to replace barren tagged walls with immense graffiti art murals that bring the place to life.

Community fairs, markets and picnics will draw in the crowds at Avonside, Shirley and Ferrymead, while Burwood will rock with a Jump Jam Jamboree. Travis Wetlands will be showcased in several Sunday activities.

Meanwhile bus tours will take in community gardens on Saturday and on Sunday follow a heritage trail throughout the east. A 'Grand Bum-buster Stopbank Bike-a-thon' is also planned.

At all the main event hubs you will have the chance to 'share an idea for the east' at 'eastern visions' stalls. Mimicking the successful Share an Idea campaign run by the Council for the CBD, this initiative is run by the community and the results will be available to all.

This is a fantastic opportunity for everyone to explore the future playground of the city – and your chance to have a say in what it might look like.

We have received generous sponsorship from two local supermarkets Wainoni Pak'nSave and Stanmore New World. **Evan Smith**

AVON PRESENTATION TO THE ZONE COMMITTEE

RECENTLY THE AVON OTAKARO NETWORK PRESENTED to the Christchurch West Melton Zone Committee.

The presentation covered the concept of the Avon Otakaro River Park as a multiple use reserve and specifically addressed how water quality could be improved through wetland treatment and the improved compatibility of non-residential land use with liquefaction and flooding risk.

The Christchurch West Melton Zone Committee is part of the community based groups making recommendations to the regional council on the implementation of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy.

This Zone Committee is developing its recommendations for the Zone Implementation Programme. In particular the Zone Committee is looking for projects to support as part of the "Immediate Steps" biodiversity programme.

The Avon Otakaro River Park concept is highly compatible with the criteria for such projects.

Bryan Jenkins



AvON & Minister Brownlee

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More than a dozen Strategic Steering & Advisory Group members representing the diverse communities of interest that make up the AvON Network were included in the meeting with the Minister which took place in September.

The meeting was very positive and constructive and was held in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cordiality. The Minister was very supportive and demonstrated a willingness to work with us to explore opportunities.

We look forward to continuing our discussions with Mr Brownlee in the future.

Other Strategic Meetings

IN ADDITION to the Select Committee submission and the meeting with the Minister, AvON has recently also:

- Met with members of the Labour Caucus.
- Met with various CERA staff including members of the Strategy Planning and Policy, Community Wellbeing, Communications & Operations teams.
- Submitted on the CCC Draft Annual Plan and met with CCC Strategy and Planning staff.
- Participated in the Natural Environment Recovery Programme workshops facilitated by ECan.

In all these meetings our aim is to further the objectives of the AvON vision.

INCREASINGLY HOWEVER we are finding that our current strategic priorities are consolidating our network and taking steps to greatly improve the two-way flow of information with our diverse communities of interest.

To this end we are actively pursuing options for funding a Communications Coordinator, website development and a means of publishing proposals and projects that support the AvON vision. **Evan Smith**





CASE FOR A RECREATIONAL AVON CORRIDOR

Talk about the world's greatest cities and there's always mention of their 'heart'. What actually delivers much of the attraction - despite much less attention - is their 'artery.'

In Christchurch, this is our Avon. The Avon River traverses a natural environment that is unlike anywhere else in the world.

The Avon environment is characterised by ocean, river, estuary and earthquakes - which have created new land use on either side of the river.

The Avon of our future could play a drastically different role than we remember from the past. It could create an opportunity for the South Island's largest city, unmatched by any other city in the world.

The new Avon Corridor may be recognised as more than a natural feature of eastern Christchurch, but a unique Canterbury icon holding appeal for locals and visitors alike.

After all, the Avon Corridor is a resilient channel linking our city to the sea, from Hagley Park to the estuary, along the seaside suburbs of Sumner and Scarborough. It could evolve as a pathway of opportunity that enhances the already unique eastern suburbs environment with their wetlands, Bottle Lake Forest Reserve and coastline.

The Avon's unique natural environment could enable Christchurch to create a world-leading corridor that has opportunities for nature and culture, leisure and commerce. The river's banks could be buzzing with farmers' markets, cycling tracks, science class trips and international events. These are only examples - and only part of the proposed corridor's appeal.

A new Avon Corridor could feature a manmade lake, conceived to mitigate risks in the event of local flooding. It could realise its potential as a natural wetlands habitat, home to diverse birdlife. It could host training and competition for various water sports.

It can inspire - festivals, farmers markets, family picnics. It can be fun. Imagine paddling, cycling, walking and even wedding parties on the tree-lined banks.

It could be buzzing - with cafes, cycle shops, rollerblade hire and weekend events.

The change that has already taken place has created this unique opportunity. The new Avon Corridor could promote learning, leisure, recreation, sport, commerce and community. It could play an important role in active transport, supporting Christchurch's aspirations as a cycle-friendly city.

The test of a great city comes down to simple questions after all. For example: Is this a city where you would want to raise your family?

A city that balances business with pleasure, promoting access for everyone and active transport options, is a city that sets itself apart in the world.

Geoff Barry CEO, Sport Canterbury

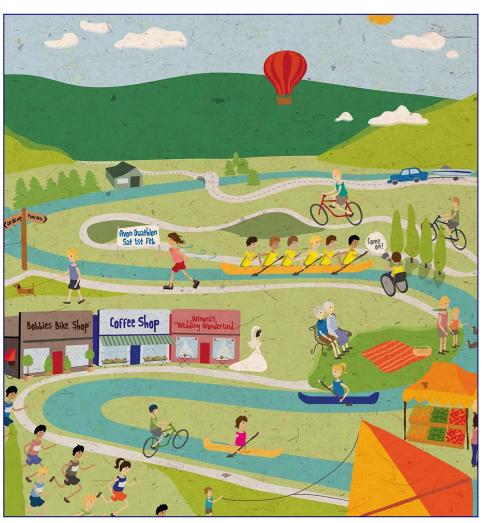
FUNDING SECURED FOR COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

AvON has been successful in its application for over \$20,000 from the Pacific Development & Conservation Trust to commission a six-month Cost Benefit Analysis of the Avon River vision.

The project is endorsed by the NZ Institute of Economic Research and will be conducted by Dr Peter Tait of the Environmental Economic Research Unit under the supervision of Lincoln & Canterbury University.

The analysis will consider the costs and benefits of three scenarios for the Avon River residential red zone lands: Option 1: Land lies fallow; Option 2: Land is remediated and rehoused; Option 3: Land provides a range of social, recreational, economic and ecological services (ie the AvON vision). We look forward to the report in due course.

Evan Smith





AVON-ŌTĀKARO NETWORK & THE AVON RIVER PARK

The Avon-Ōtākaro Network (AvON) vision calls for red-zoned areas on the banks of Christchurch's Avon River to be turned into a multi-purpose reserve for the benefit of the people.

The Avon River Park would create a reserve corridor from the city to the sea as an alternative to pursuing remediation and redevelopment of riverside land for residential housing in the future. The area involved is steeped in historical and cultural significance and boasts a variety of natural environments, some of which give rise to its undeniable status as a natural hazard zone.

All these factors point to the sense behind the AvON objective as an option befitting the future use of this land. This is a rare but real opportunity to achieve multiple benefits through the colocation of much needed community facilities compatible with the environment.

The AvON vision is shared by many and yet will need the backing of central government to succeed. In an initial show of support, more than 18,500 people signed the AvON petition to Parliament to pledge their support for the vision. Many individuals and organisations have already joined the Network by signing the AvON Charter – see the link below. In the next stage, more organisations all around the country are being asked to show their support by becoming signatories to this AvON Charter.

The Charter sets out the vision and outlines the objectives for creating an asset for the benefit of all New Zealander's. All organisations who would like to support the people of Christchurch achieve this vision are invited to join the Avon Ōtākaro Network by becoming signatories.

In addition to confirming the level of support for the vision, people and organisations within the network are developing projects to put the vision into action.

The network has an open invitation for projects compatible with the Avon River Park vision to collaborate and create

something special. A series of Reference groups exist to help facilitate the formation of new projects as well as the synergies between existing projects, all of which have the potential to add value to the concept of a River Park.

the Avon River Park vision can generate more value for the community than a residential development, which for the sake of housing might be better situated elsewhere. Nonetheless, the costs and benefits of all



There are already many projects contributing to the vision. These include ideas for temporary facilities providing benefit to the community such as community gardens and landscapes, and much needed areas for sport and recreation.

As valid alternatives to a large land management problem should the area be left vacant, many see these concepts as obvious win-wins for the government and community alike.

In addition, others are working on the potential location of significant future community assets within the River Park area. Although there will certainly be many more ideas to come forward, some of those already up for consideration include the Lower Avon Heritage Recovery Trail, a flat-water sports venue, an eco-sanctuary, and the use of red-zone land for stormwater and flood mitigation facilities.

Before pursuing highly engineered solutions for protection from inevitable natural hazards AvON is addressing land use solutions which are more compatible with nature and which celebrate the abundant natural and cultural assets of the area.

Believing that this approach may well pay off in the long term, a back-of-the envelope calculation indicates that potential elements of an Avon River Park are important, and AvON work on that analysis has just begun.

The hope is that slowly, but surely, an optimal land use providing many benefits will emerge to breathe life and prosperity back into the community for years to come.

To support the Avon River Park:

The AvON Charter and an Endorsement form for supporting organisations are available at: www.avon.org.nz

Individuals can register their support on our website (click the "Get Involved!" button).

All people and organisations interested in contributing to the Avon-Ōtākaro Network are also invited to make contact at:

avonotakaro@gmail.com

Shane Orchard

NEXT AVON FORUM:

6:00 – 8:30 PM
TUESDAY 13 NOVEMBER
GRACE VINEYARD CHURCH
111 Seaview Rd, Brighton

