

THE FRIENDS OF MANGEMANGEROA
SOCIETY INC

Summer Newsletter 2005



Chairman's Ramblings by Allan Riley

I trust that you all had the very best Christmas and Festive season that you wished for.

While I was one who would have liked a bit more quality weather at the beach, our many tree seedlings planted last season have certainly benefited from the weather. Cloud cover, rain and warmth did a lot for the 'strugglers' in cleared ground. All the Friends plantings have had a very high success rate. Very little 'release' among new plantings is necessary.

Revegetation

We are about to put together a count of seedlings being raised for planting from May onward this winter but with the addition of Star of the Sea and Bucklands Beach Intermediate schools joining in, we know it will exceed the 2005 plantings. All the propagation units are full.

We would like to plant many cabbage trees in the damp and slip-prone areas of the southern valley above the Rotary Loop slippage area in 2007. If you are able to help raise some seedlings from 'cabbage tree duff' (with DIY instructions from Graham Falla), please contact me at work ph: 2734970 or on my mobile 021-795-280.

Its great to see Graham Falla back on deck after his health setback last year. Graham's a great contributor and I value his experience and considered counsel. Is there someone out there who would like to work with Graham and learn from his considerable technical and practical conservation experience?

Naming of tracks

Thank you to the members who suggested names for the 'middle' and 'northern' tracks. Please accept this as my personal 'thank you' for your ideas. We now need to discuss this further with MCC Parks. The committee remains keen to improve on 'middle' or 'first' when it comes to identifying these two sections of the Mangemangeroa Walkway. We agree that Mangemangeroa is the most appropriate name for the overall walk. Personal names for these two tracks is not favoured by the Parks department. However, the committee feel that over time the placement of new seating and outdoor furniture is the way to recognise the efforts of the recent 'pioneers' and advocates who have worked for the conservation of this reserve.

Article In Chinese Newspaper

A prominent Chinese newspaper has printed an article on 14th January prepared by Song Lam Wong with help from Sally Barclay and organised through James Lee. We hope to print an English translation in the next newsletter. This educative article was to explain the differences between 'parklands' and 'native bush reserves' in the New Zealand context and what can and cannot be done there. My thanks go to these two 'advocates' for their excellent work following the damage which occurred last year through 'pruning' of several vines.

Restoration Plan

We are close to receiving the 'final' draft of The Restoration Plan for Mangemangeroa Reserve. It will be the guideline for the bush restoration (and natural regeneration) over a 20 year period. Our plantings and those of MCC Parks will be guided by it. However, it will be a living document with the planting schedules being reviewed every second year.

Opening of Rotary Loop

A most pleasant opening of the Rotary Loop, by Sir Barry Curtis was held Sat 29th Oct



I would like to acknowledge here the support given over the years to the reserve and community development by retiring City Manager, CEO, Colin Dale. Along with our Mayor, Sir Barry Curtis, Colin has helped foster a culture of community development in which the establishment and development of the Mangemangeroa Reserve has been one of the beneficiaries. We all wish Colin a well earned retirement after steering the growth of Manukau City for over 20 years –it won't be as quiet as his wife and family may imagine!.

Management Plan

Finally, to the 'Biggie'. The review of the draft Management Plan for Mangemangeroa Reserve. There has been a tremendous amount of work completed by Austin Gate in working with Malcolm Page in developing the framework for consideration in this review. As many of you will know, Austin gives the 'lie' to retirement. The future Plan will incorporate the Chisbury Reserve and Haley's Reserve (off Point View Drive) with the Mangemangeroa into a single Plan. This is logical when the adjoining lands, are integral within the Mangemangeroa catchment.

More will be said when the review is ready for public comment. We shall ask the Howick Community Board to convene a public meeting to explain what is being proposed and to seek your thoughts on the final nature of the plan.

Cheers
Allan Riley
Chairman

Bird of the Season: Kotare or NZ Kingfisher

By G. Falla

Kotare (*Halcyon sancta*) belongs to the group known as forest kingfishers and is closely related to the Australian sacred kingfisher.



It is a bold and spectacular bird, whether perched on its chosen lookout of branch, fence-post, power-line or clothesline, or diving for prey, when only the falcon can rival it as a living guided missile. Plumage on the upper side from head to toe features in a combination of brilliant blues and greens trimmed with black, contrasted with undersides in varying shades of buff, all these colours richer in the male. A good deal of its 24cm length is taken up by a large head and truly formidable black bill.

The call of kotare, commonly heard in spring and summer in forests or where trees abound near the coast, is loud and unmistakable, a bit like the incessant yapping of a small dog. A wider repertoire includes loud screams and soft croaking.

Kotare is a keen-sighted and efficient hunter of worms, large insects, lizards that dare to sun themselves, small fish that swim too shallow, unwary mice and helpless chicks. In winter mud-crabs in low-tide estuaries are a favourite diet. Mangemangeroa with its mangroves serving as kotare perches is a good setting for observing the bird.



Nesting can be hard work, with the need to dig out a tunnel and nesting chamber unless an old tree with a ready-made site can be found, as is sometimes the case at Mangemangeroa with very old puriri. Otherwise the excavating can be done in rotting tree-trunks or clay banks, which you can see riddled with old nest-sites above the northern section of the Mangemangeroa walkway. More than one brood of 4 or 5 chicks may be raised between October and February. Kotare is notorious for neglecting to clean the nest, and fledglings may occasionally be found trapped, their feet firmly concreted into accumulated guano.

It needs a brave or clever predator to take on the kingfisher, but chicks in the nest are vulnerable. A decline in kingfisher numbers since the myna became established in northern NZ seems to be more than coincidental since mynas are practised nest robbers and find abandoned kingfisher nests ideal for their own use. Despite this the kingfisher, always sparser in the South Island, remains fairly common in the North Island.

Plant of the Season: Mangrove or Manawa

By S. Barclay

Mangrove (*Avicennia marina* var. *resinifera*) The mangrove was named (according to Poole and Adams) because of the kauri resin which became trapped in its roots.



Estuaries formed as the sea rose rapidly some 6500 years ago. Since then estuaries have slowly infilled with sediment from land and sea. Studies (including those carried out by Andrew Swales NIWA) show that the sedimentation rates are at least 10 times higher than before the forest was removed. (over the last 150 years). However research has also shown that this sediment is delivered to an estuary during a few floods each year. It is this sediment (mud) in which mangroves grow.

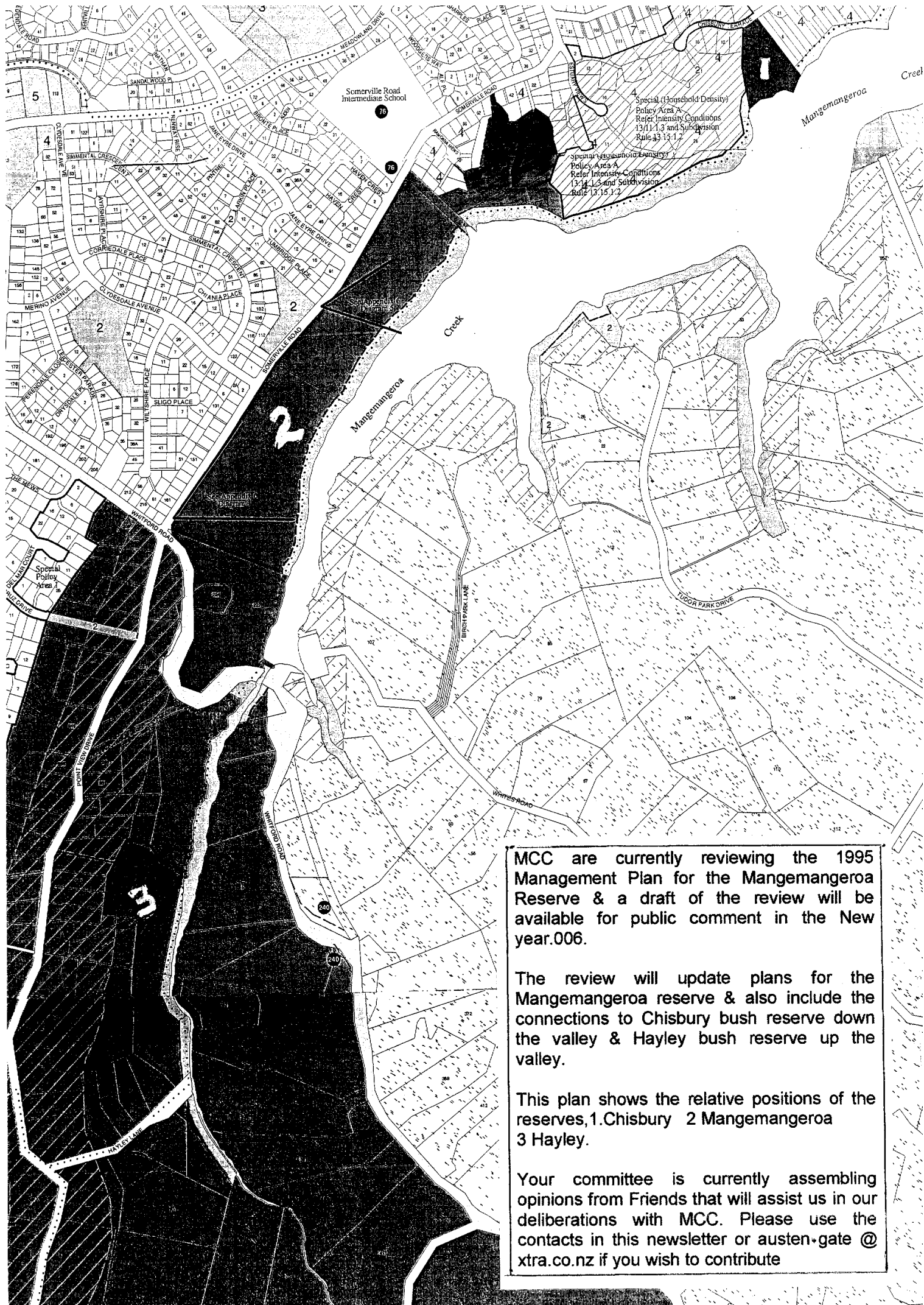
Although a tough looking species mangroves are unable to tolerate frosty conditions. Thus they are found in tidal estuaries from Kawhia north. The leaves are of a thick leathery nature, the tomentum (hairs on the back of the leaf) helping it to survive in a salty environment.

The largish seed of the mangrove begins germination while still attached to the parent plant, thus when it falls into the tide the root is able to anchor quickly into the mud. Mangroves are dispersed widely by floating on the surface of the water

The mangroves produce upright aerial roots called pneumatophores which enable the plant to obtain oxygen. It is these roots which trap the sediment eventually raising the level of the mud until it is above the tidal level. This "built up" ground is then inhabited by plants less tolerant of sea water. The spread of the mangroves within the Mangemangeroa estuary is of concern because it indicates the considerable amount of silt being deposited as a consequence of development on land in the higher reaches of the valley.



Peka a waka a tiny grass like orchid, clinging precariously to the bough of a tairaire, quite near the track, produced a mass of tiny "yellow" flowers at Christmas It is our most widespread epiphytic orchid, *Earina mucronata*.



Special (Household Density) Policy Area A Refer Intensity Conditions 13/11.1.3 and Subdivision Rule 43.15.1.2

Special (Household Density) Policy Area A Refer Intensity Conditions 13/11.1.3 and Subdivision Rule 43.15.1.2

MCC are currently reviewing the 1995 Management Plan for the Mangemangeroa Reserve & a draft of the review will be available for public comment in the New year.006.

The review will update plans for the Mangemangeroa reserve & also include the connections to Chisbury bush reserve down the valley & Hayley bush reserve up the valley.

This plan shows the relative positions of the reserves, 1. Chisbury 2 Mangemangeroa 3 Hayley.

Your committee is currently assembling opinions from Friends that will assist us in our deliberations with MCC. Please use the contacts in this newsletter or austen-gate @ xtra.co.nz if you wish to contribute

Revising the Management Plan of the Mangemangeroa Reserve

In 1995 the "Mangemangeroa Reserve Management Plan" was drafted. This was specifically referenced to the Mangemangeroa Reserve. It is now time to review this plan.

Austen Gate on behalf of the Friends of the Mangemangeroa has been liaising with Mr. Malcolm Page (Senior Parks Strategic Planner of Manukau City Council) to look at the possible ways of doing this. It is suggested that the plan should be extended to include Hayley Reserve and Chisbury Reserve. A management plan for the wider valley rather than just the reserve is seen as most appropriate at this time. This would mean that the Mangemangeroa Reserve, Hailey's Reserve and Chisbury Reserve and the land up to but not including Pt View Drive reserve would all now come under the new management plan.

A major benefit from this consideration is that pest control (both plant and animal) should be more successfully achieved if managed over a wider area. As well groups interested in the Valley would each be working under the same management plan.



During the process of review Austen has undertaken to clarify some of the points in the 1995 draft. These include

- view shafts to be correctly defined and mapped.
- more specific wording of the dog laws; the present plan states

"Policies

Dogs are prohibited from Mangemangeroa Reserve except for seeing eye dogs and approved working and stock handling dogs.

Dog control will be enforced in conjunction with Council's Animal Management Control Service.)"

the changes suggested here are

"Dogs on the reserves and the connections must be on a leash at all times. Suitable warning signs will indicate when active animal pest control strategies are underway. Further restrictions will apply in the birdlife breeding season in the lower estuarine area."

It is important to note that the dog bylaws come over the top of the Management Plan as indicated with the present "dogs on lease" signs now displayed along the entrances to the walkway

- stating what is meant by "scenic reserve status for Mangemangeroa"
- updating of areas planted since 1995 and the map indicating the vegetative areas
- giving preference to educational values. Excessive promotion to attract tourists to be discouraged
- continuation of cattle grazing on the open space area on the Mangemangeroa Reserve to be the preferred management tool. The open area will be progressively be reduced as planned revegetation into the steep gullies progress:

Included in this extended plan is "Development of a walking track from Rotary Loop to Haley Reserve and secure access to the reserve from Pt. View Drive".

Under the umbrella of the Management Plan is the more specific "Mangemangeroa Reserve Restoration Plan" which focuses on the Mangemangeroa Reserve

The draft review is expected to be available for public comment in the first quarter of 2006.

Volunteer of the month



Jim has had a love of wood for as long as he can remember. His hobby remains woodturning and the making of furniture paying particular care to choose the correct woods for the right finish. Because of Jims love for wood he has spent his life nurturing the native trees of New Zealand.

Jim retired from farming and moved into Howick. His farming experience taught him just how damaging weeds such as gorse are to the survival of our native species, hence Jim can often be found, kneeling spade in hand, grubbing gorse.

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**Link to other conservation
groups in the Auckland
Region: www.manawa.org.nz**

**See also www.arc.govt.nz for
upcoming events in the
Auckland Region.**