

Draft Bushy Point Restoration Project

**Annual Report 2024/25
(1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025)**



2024/2025 - Summary of Progress

This report details the progress made on the Bushy Point Restoration Project. The Project is the flagship project of the Otatara Landcare Group (OLG) – www.otataralandcare.org.nz.

The report also contains some wider OLG information where relevant.

- **Planted 1200 locally grown native plants and covered with combi-guards for rabbit control.**
- **Maintained the previous 24 years plantings**
- **Managed major pest control operation with volunteers every 2 weeks from 2007 (6km of trap network for possums, mustelids and rats over 90 hectares).**
- **Work on tracks continued throughout the year.**
- **Continued weed control in planting areas.**
- **Continued grazing horses and pasture management (no baleage 2023).**
- **Otatara School plantings and other group visits.**
- **Environment Southland Award 2024 – for Bushy Point for Environmental Action in the Community**



1. Aim of the Bushy Point Restoration Project

The aim of the Bushy Point Restoration Project is to restore a 14 hectare area of rough exotic pasture between two remnants of nationally significant native totara forest to provide a habitat linkage for native birds and to enhance existing forest remnants and other ecosystems. Also, to raise public awareness of the importance of native forest remnants and to provide a practical long term ecological project for residents of Otatara and Otatara and Invercargill schoolchildren to be involved in.

The project is progressively turning the area of exotic grasses into a functioning, self-sustaining native ecosystem with features and educational opportunities that can be enjoyed by the public of Otatara and Invercargill for the future.

The project is managed by the Committee of the Otatara Landcare Group, an Incorporated Society established in 1999.

The Mission Statement of the Otatara Landcare Group is:

- **To focus attention of Otatara residents and others on the natural features and ecological values of the Otatara environment, especially native forest and wetland flora and fauna.**
- **To promote and, where possible, facilitate the protection, restoration and creation of such features in the interests of scientific appreciation and intrinsic worth and to encourage community appreciation of these values.**

2. Administration

- Annual Report completed by Chris Rance for 2024/25 including compilation of trapping statistics
- Annual accounts separate Bushy Point income and expenditure. Audited accounts to 31 March 2025 presented to the OLG AGM on 16 May 2025.
- Monthly Timesheets collated by Barry Smith.
- Corresponded with DOC over Pest Permission and new Community Agreement
- Updated OLG website and Pestbusters information to OLG. Website content and updated publications and news and events.

3. Bushy Point Caretaker

- Caretaker Barry Smith spent 164 hours working at Bushy Point during the year. Barry officially retired from this role in December 2024, but continues to clock up many volunteer hours. Barry has been a key figure in ensuring the new initiatives have been successful and key ongoing management tasks and liaison is undertaken.
- Main jobs included: plant area maintenance, releasing and weed control, tree planting, supervising pasture and track maintenance, preparation for planting –

positioning plants, track preparation, and planning activity for public planting day (15 September 2024). Pest trap line maintenance and pest rabbit work. Planning and organising for other visits.

- Liaison with landowners, grazers, Invercargill Rifle Range, DOC, Local Authorities, schools and report writing and maintaining monthly activity spreadsheet.
- Using the Mulcher Mower machine for track work, weed control and maintenance of Living Legends year 2 planting area (in addition to Oreti Totara Dune Forest track work).
- Health and Safety continues to be a focus with Bushy Point being looked at in different ways to try and determine differing H&S issues. The hours spent this year reflect the hours specifically looking and fixing H&S issues. Health and safety is always a consideration when other groups are in doing voluntary work, in these instances the H&S time is included in the project associated with the groups visits.

4. Restoration and Planting

- Plant maintenance and weed control continued throughout the year.
- The 15 September 2024 major planting event (1200 plants) was successful despite atrocious weather with with 69 people attending. The bbq was cancelled due to the weather. A big thanks to Central Baptist Church for attendance.
- Thanks to Barry's meticulous record keeping we know that we have planted a grand total of 36765 plants at Bushy Point since the year 2000.
- A number of ceremonial plantings have taken place for Joyce Telford, Glenda Graham and Kevin Laidlaw, a picnic table for Maymie Laidlaw and seats for Glen Webster and Russell Evans.
- Preparation spot spraying of Living Legends 2024 area by Barry and release spraying of the previous years' plants.
- Growing of 1200 eco-sourced plants by Southland Community Nursery, Otatara
- Combi-guard plant covers bought and used to cover plants for rabbit control.
- In February/March 2025 weeding sessions were organised by Douglas Black and plant maintenance continues to be an issue as it is not as popular an activity as planting! Thanks to Douglas and Kathy for continuing this for another year. Other volunteers Sally and Gordon Duston, Chris and Brian Rance, Brian Denny, Geoff Dembo and Chris Rowe continue to undertake volunteer weed work (see weed control section for more detail).

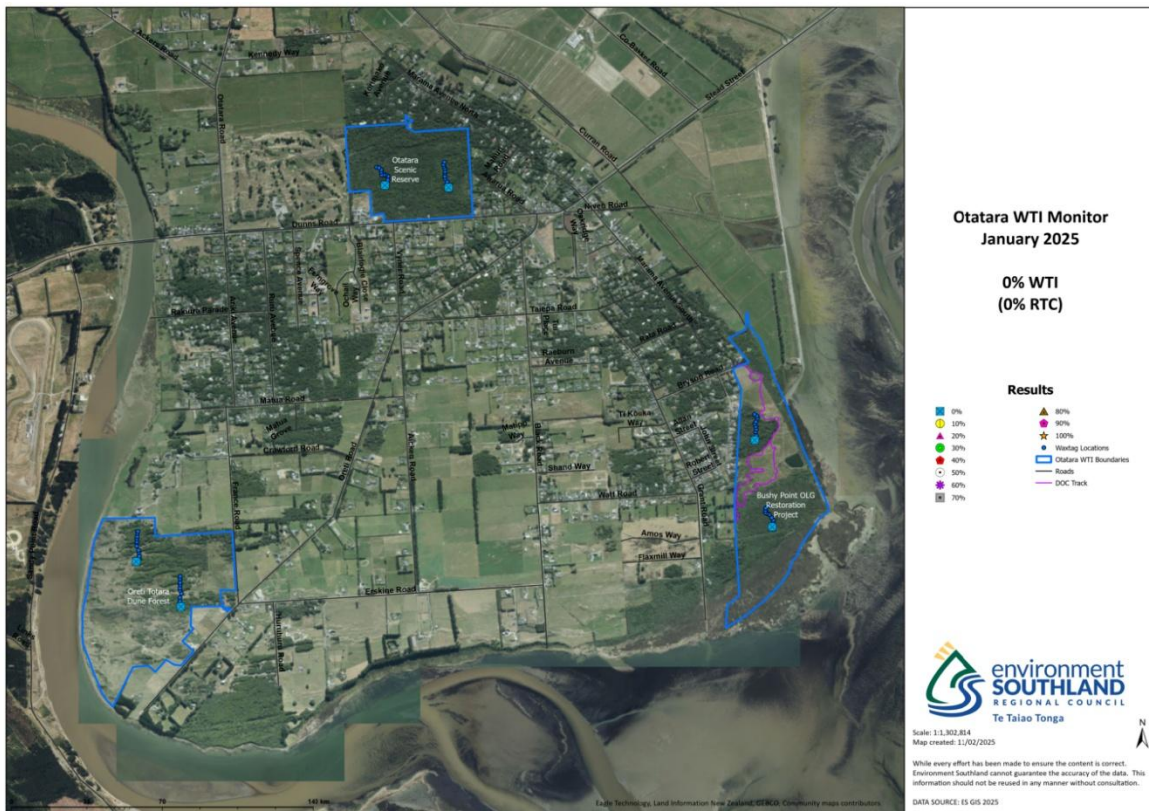
5. Animal Pest Control and Monitoring

Intensive pest control operation continues, taking in the whole of Bushy Point area (90 hectares) has taken place since 2007. The rat, mustelid and possum control at Bushy Point is aimed at protecting the nesting fernbirds, kereru, tui and bellbirds as well as other birds, lizards and insects and plants.

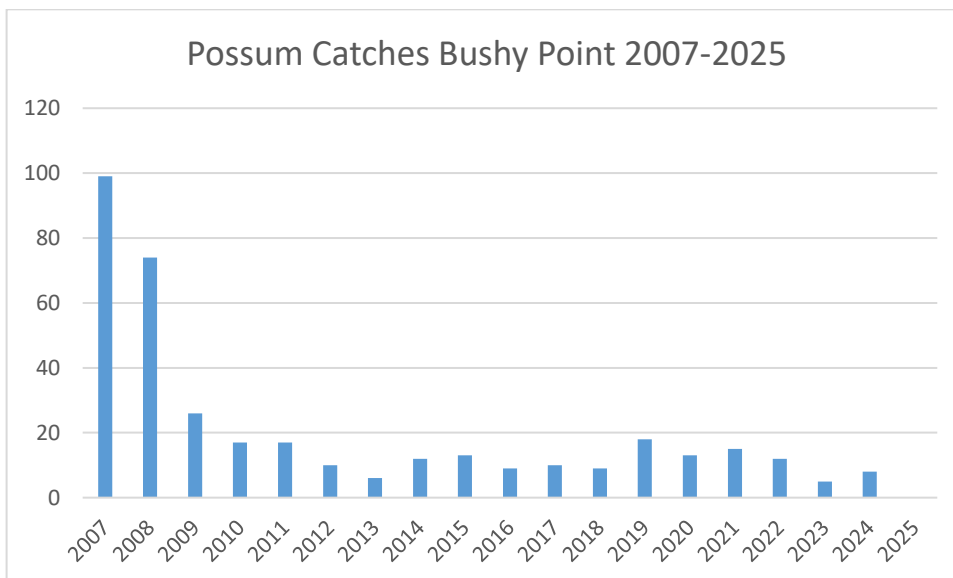
The pest control continued as follows

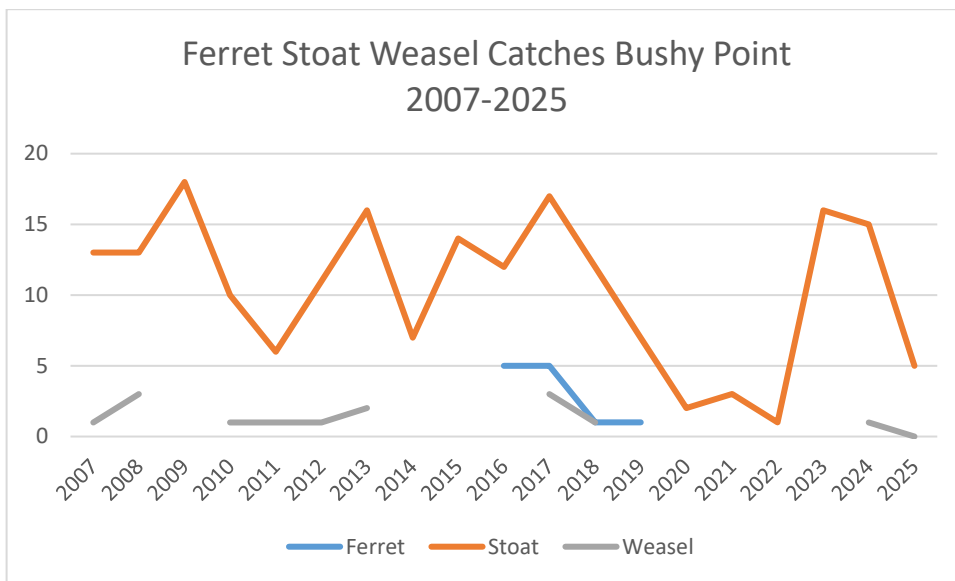
- Maintained 8 trap lines through Bushy Point covering over 6 kilometres of track, containing - 90 rat bait stations, 49 possum traps, and 14 stoat traps. Bait stations are set at 50 metre intervals along each track. Added rat traps at each poison station. Bought and placed 2 self-setting traps. This year we replaced all the possum master traps with Flipping Timmys as requested by DOC. Environment Southland EEF funding allowed us to do this replacement.
- Over the year 375 voluntary hours spent on pest control in 2024/25 by Ian Gamble, Pauline Macalpine and Allan Leddington, Don McMurtrie, Brian Rance, Nate Chandrakumar, Anna Harris and Michael Hargraves, Megan Bogisch and Chris Rance. This year we did not undertake the huge job of cutting back tracks that was done the previous year, thereby reducing volunteer hours compared to last year. It is a job that will need doing in 2025.
- Trap lines continue to be serviced on average every second week by volunteers, with results since start of trapping in 2007 as shown below. Although possums have been markedly reduced, stoats continually re-invade and rat poison continues to be taken. Rat traps were added to the mix in 2023 while the DOC poison Permission was renegotiated and lots of mice have been caught in them since.
- In addition, an extension to trapping along the estuary edge called the buffer project was established in 2019 and maintained.
- Five Minute Bird Surveys by Kiri Pullen undertaken annually, funded by ES and rat and mustelid monitoring continued at Bushy Point were discontinued by Environment Southland in 2024 and that is a real loss for the group. One rat monitor was done by OLG volunteers in November 2024 with good tracking results but monitoring is an additional job volunteers now have to do in addition to all the trapping effort.
- Environment Southland did monitor possums in 2025 and results in all three areas of Otatara including Bushy Point resulted in a zero possum catch.

Possum Monitoring Results Otatara January 2025



Possums and mustelids caught at Bushy Point by calendar year were as follows (note that the 2025 figures are only up to March 2025).



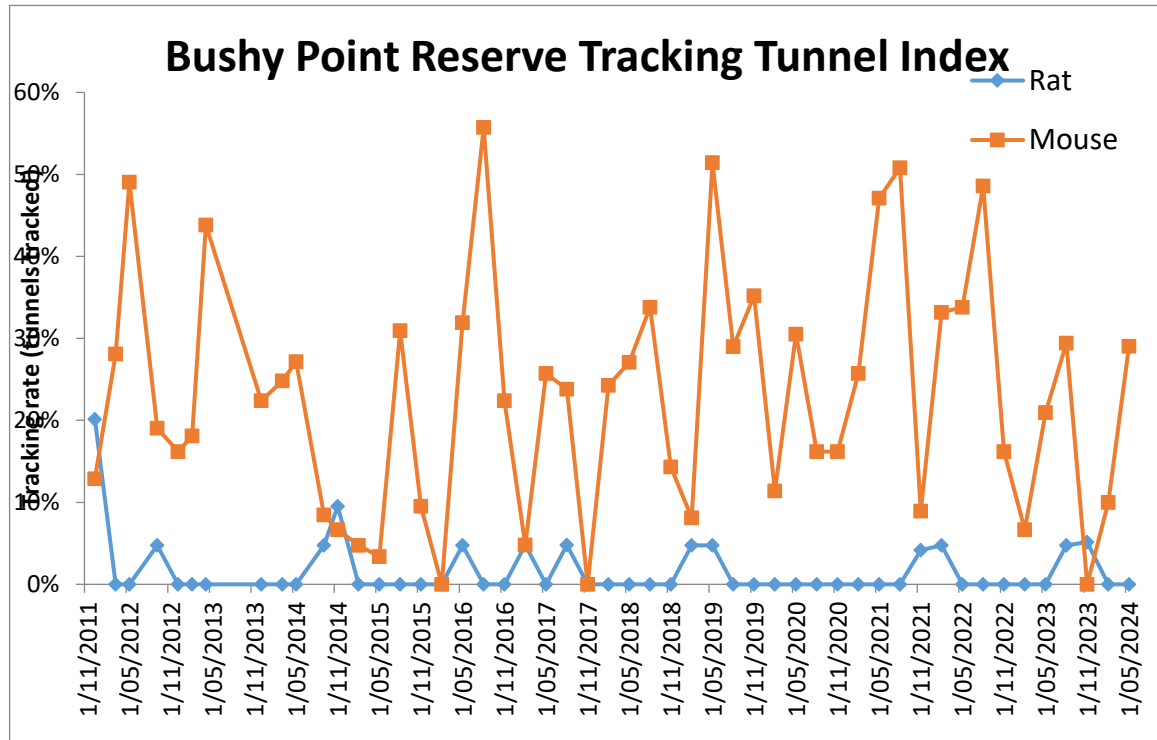


- Trapping results are also recorded on the Trap NZ website. Statistics and maps can now use 18 years of data to establish trends in trap catch at Bushy Point. Information on trapping is collected in the form of spreadsheets and this information is available for further analysis.

Example of Stoat Catches from TrapNZ -1 April 2024-31 March 2025



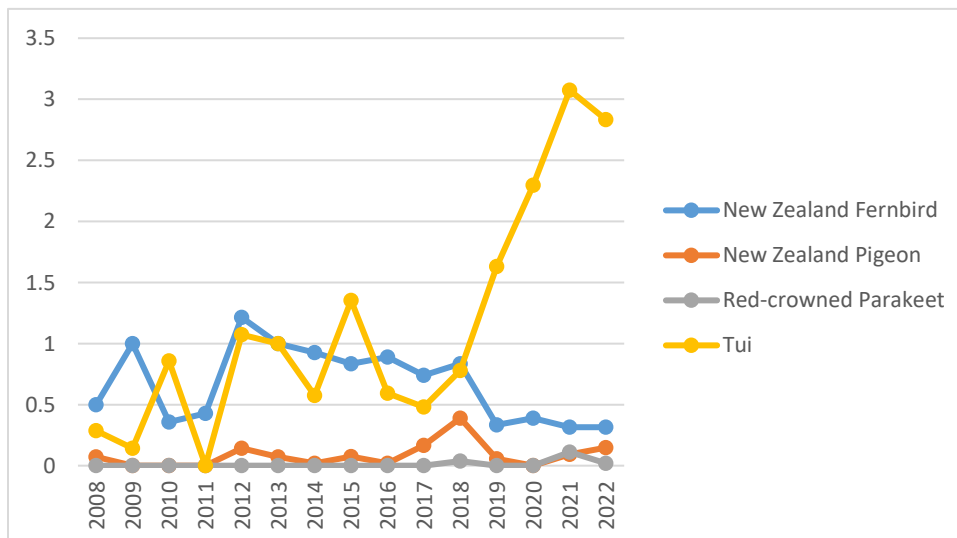
Tracking Tunnel results 2011-2024



Other Monitoring

- Lizard artificial covers, weta motels and seedfall traps are still in place but monitoring by Environment Southland has ceased.
- Bird counts were discontinued by Environment Southland in 2023 but stations are still in place if in the future this is continued.
- Rat, mouse and stoat monitoring by Environment Southland was discontinued in 2024 but volunteers undertook this work in 2024 with a very low rat and high mouse count.
- Thanks to Anna Harris, Michael Hargraves, Nate Chandrakumar, Raoul Thomas and Ali Meade of Environment Southland for ongoing support and advice with pest control in 2024/25.

BUSHY POINT BIRD MONITORING 2006-2022



Wider Otatara Pest Control – Otatara Pestbusters

Otatara Pestbusters (which encourages pest control on private land by their owners), was continued throughout 2024/25. This project (a sub-group of the Otatara Landcare Group) now run by Dallas Bradley has nearly 300 members, most doing pest control. Dallas provides a lot of advice to residents. The project builds on the 90 hectares of control at Bushy Point with 45.5 hectares of Invercargill City Council Reserves, the 20 hectares Otatara South Reserve, the 8 hectare Buffer Project along the Estuary margin, and 40 hectares of golf course. Pestbusters supply traps and bait to property owners at a subsidised price. Each person actively engaged in pest control receives a letterbox sign and regular newsletters.

The Invercargill City Council Reserves at Otatara have under Pestbusters since 2013/14 and traps are being serviced by volunteers. A Memorandum of Understanding is being negotiated between OLG and ICC.

The Otatara South Scenic Reserve was included into the intensive pest control in 2012. Department of Conservation funding ensured that this reserve has been intensively trapped for possums, stoats and rats since 2015/16. Thanks go to Peter Simpson for initially spearheading the pest control in Otatara South Scenic Reserve and now Colin Lawrence and Dave Toole supported by Pestbusters.

6. Weed Control

- Gorse, broom and blackberry control continued, particularly at the Bryson Road entrance to Bushy Point
- Hand weeding of plantings from previous years by volunteers in February/March 25 – organised by Douglas Black.
- Spot spraying of areas in preparation for 2024 planting – by Barry Smith.
- The mulcher mower utilised for gorse control in the plantation area
- Continued maintenance at other times by volunteers in their own time
- OLG members Chris and Brian Rance continually advising residents on weeds by visiting their properties
- Annual Chilean Flame Creeper night at Bowman Bush February 2025

7. Infrastructure

- Bushy Point Track mowed monthly as required, track improvements made.
- Equipment shed, and tractor shed
- Track around pond maintained.
- Posts and track markers for self-guided activity trail
- Posts for new track alignment and interpretation
- The mulcher mower utilised for trackwork
- New picnic area constructed near pond with picnic table and chairs

8. Interpretation and public access

- The Bushy Point walkway continues to be used by individuals and groups.

- Five Interpretation Signs maintained on-site, new brochures for Bushy Point walks produced by Cathy McFie and Helen Stewart placed at Bryson Road entrance.
- Geocaches including a multi geocache were placed in Bushy Point in 2015
- Group visits include Orienteering events, Number 10 and Reforest Southland Groups, Southland Ecological Restoration Network, NETS Conference and Planning Institute Conference members, Duke of Edinburgh students engaged in tree releasing in 2025.

General Information and Advocacy

- Otatara Pigeon Post Newsletter published and delivered to all Otatara residents quarterly, hard copies delivered thanks to ICC funding and digital versions on website at <https://www.otataralandcare.org.nz/publications/>
- OLG website updated regularly with events, and includes a “Pestbusters” section - www.otataralandcare.org.nz
- The OLG email account (otatara@gmail.com) is the avenue for communication with the OLG and items are put onto the Otatara Notice Board Facebook Page to promote events.

9. Volunteers and Public Involvement

- Number of hours for the year – 1119 hours (20887 hours in total for the project).
- Otatara School visited for a planting day on 5 September 2024
- An Orienteering event was held on 20 August 2025 with 100 individuals attending
- 8 Pest lines (over a 90 hectare area) maintained every 2 weeks by a group of dedicated volunteers.
- A number of groups eg NZ Planning Institute Group 26 March 2025, Ministry for the Environment and NETS Conference delegates.

10. Grazing/pasture management

- Horse grazing has continued in 2024/25
- No sheep grazing, but baleage taken off 2024/25.

11. Funding

- DOC Funding finished in 2023 and no funding was applied for in 2023/24
- A successful application for funding for 2024/25 was made to Environment Southland’s Environmental Enhancement Fund and this was expended in this financial year. Thanks to Catriona Gower ES for assistance and oversight of this funding.
- The OLG is actively pursuing funding for 2025/26.

12. Expenditure and Income 24/25

- General expenditure for Bushy Point 2024/25 was \$26637

- Public Liability Insurance was \$956
- Bushy Point Pest Control Expenses were \$6530 (mostly replacement possum traps)
- Pestbuster Expenses \$4733 (income \$3330)
- Plants and covers were \$9098
- Labour and Materials were \$7599
- Pigeon Post Newsletter \$3169
- Total grazing and baleage income for Bushy Point 2024/25 was \$2340

13. Key Tasks for 2025/26

1. Transitioning from Barry Caretaking role or dividing the tasks for different people, eg track mowing now undertaken by Tim Simpson on contract
2. Major Fundraising required – Lotteries in train
3. 25th Year Celebration Event Saturday 18 October 2025
4. Other planting as the opportunity arises, closer liaison with Otatara School
5. Integration of existing and new planting areas (Removal of fences / weed control)
6. Spray releasing of recently planted areas
7. Work days – plant and site maintenance
8. Replace and upgrade the Entrance Interpretation Sign at Bushy Point
9. Improve directional signage within Bushy Point
10. Health and Safety – yearly facilities check, Health and Safety Plan to update
11. Up to 4 Orienteering events a year.
12. Other advocacy events as part of restoration events, school visits and workshops
13. Pest Control Permission with DOC to renew August 2025
14. Trapline maintenance required
15. Annual Report for 2024/25 to be completed by July 25
16. Annual DOC Meeting
17. Advocate to ES for monitoring.

14. Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Department of Conservation, Environment Southland, Invercargill City Council, surrounding landowners, OLG Committee, Bushy Point volunteers for their efforts in making 2024/25 another very busy and successful year for the Bushy Point Restoration Project.

The Otatara Landcare Group owes a huge debt to Barry Smith who stepped down from the role of Bushy Point Caretaker this year after 24 years steering this community project. Barry Smith will be impossible to replace but the good news is that he is still committed to the project. However, he may be able to influence the project without doing all the work in future. Barry's outstanding contribution will be formally recognized at the 25th Celebration Event on 18 October 2025.

Richard Johnson, Chair OLG – July 2025

Planting Day 2024



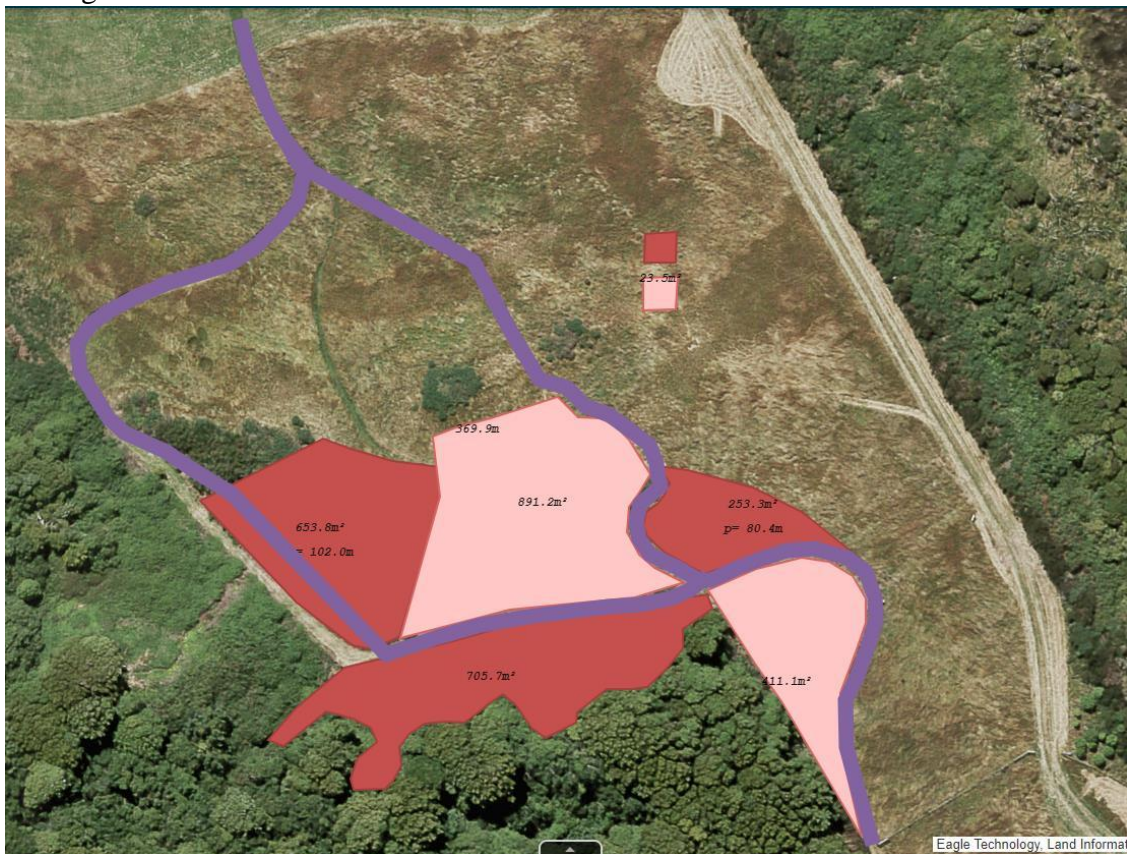
Planting Day 15 September 2024



Planting area 2024



Planting area 2023 below



Otatara School Planting 2024



Other Group Visits

MfE visit with Catriona Gower Environment Southland



NZ Planning Institute Conference Field Trip

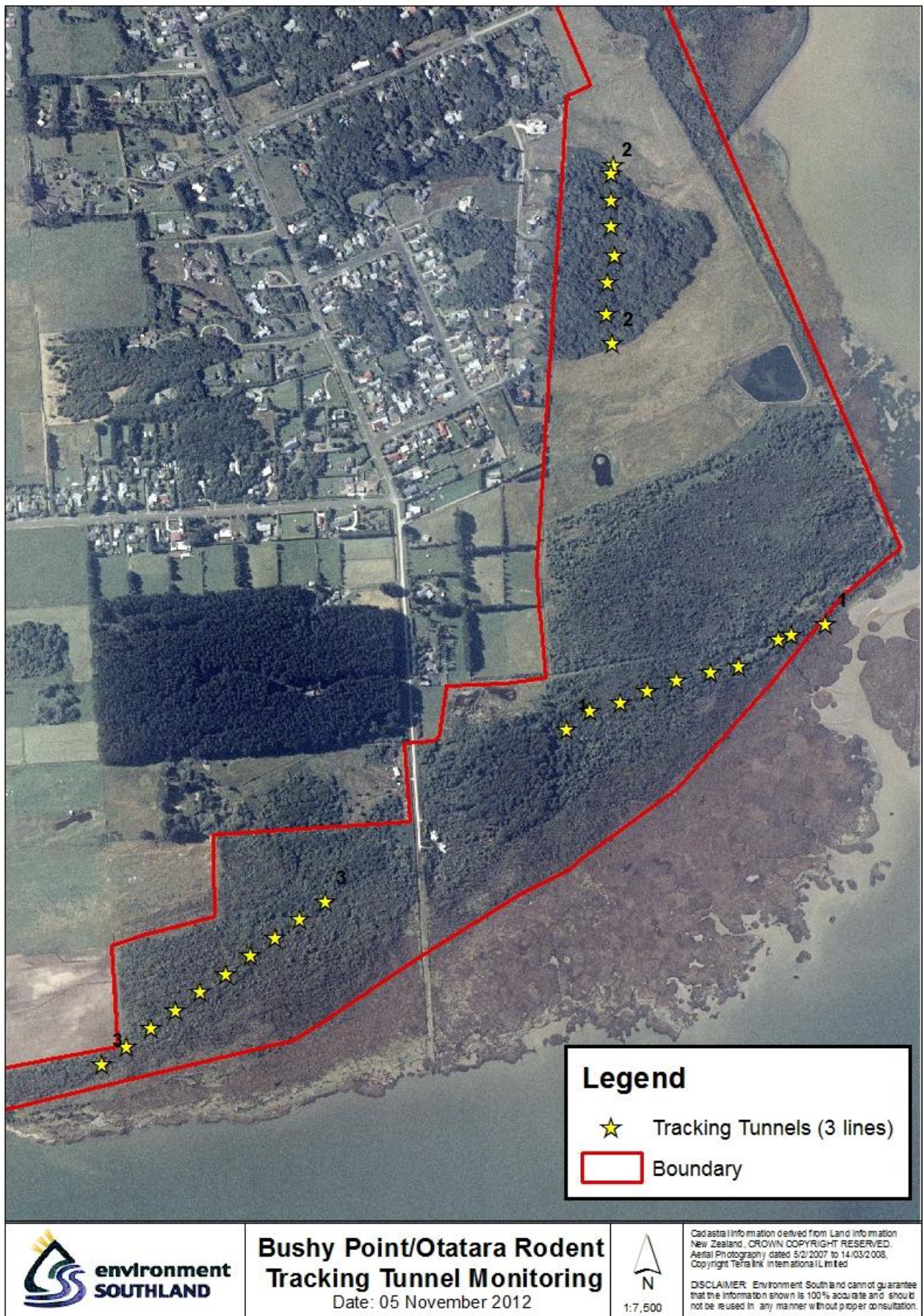


Tree Releasing Nights February/March 25





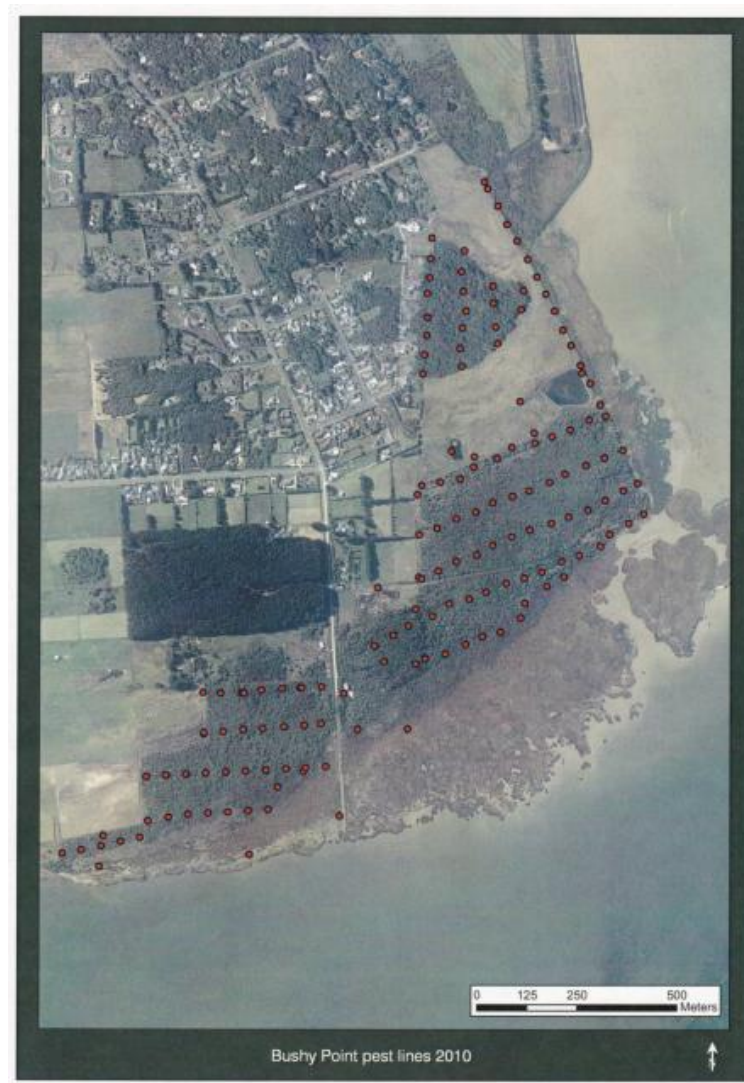
Rodent Monitoring lines at Bushy Point



Map of Bird Count Locations at Bushy Point 2017/2024



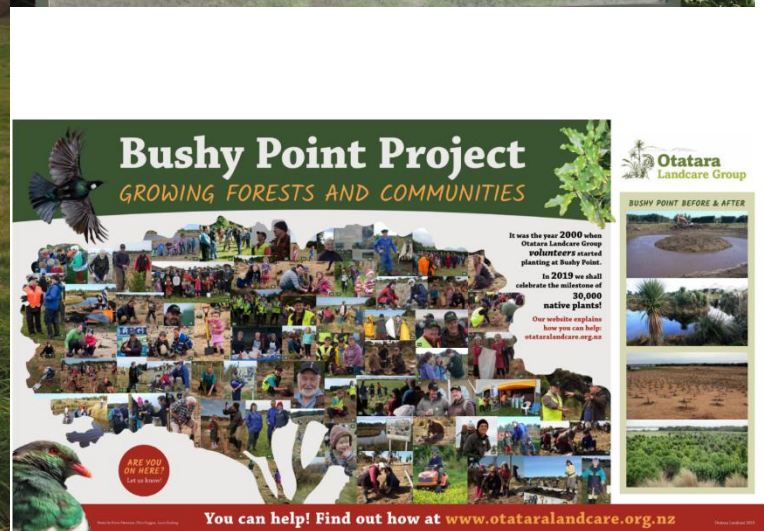
Bushy Point Pest Control Traps and Bait stations 2007-2025



Replacement Possum Traps – Flipping Timmys



Interpretation Signs



Walk Brochure Bushy Point

A place of history and a living legacy

This is a walk that provides an insight into Otatara as it used to be. It highlights current activities and introduces the restoration project that is progressively restoring paddocks back to native forest and wetland.

Walking times: One-way from Bryson Road at a leisurely pace:

- To viewpoint: 10 minutes
- To pond and interpretation sign: 30 minutes

1 Pest control

Introduced animals harm both native plants and wildlife. A study of Otatara's tūi and kererū showed that 86% of their nests were attacked by predators. The interpretation panel shows the pests we are controlling over the 90 hectares of land around Bushy Point. Monitoring since 2007 has shown consistently low number of rats and increasing bird numbers. Poisons are used in bait stations; please keep dogs on leads.

2 Check out the view!

The white trig structure on the hill marks one of Invercargill's high points, 20m above sea-level. The rolling hills are all that remain of sand dunes which date from the stabilisation of sea levels after the last ice-age some 6000 years ago. Most of the dunes were levelled around 1910 with sand removed as fill to create the embankment that carried a tramway across the estuary from Stead Street to Otatara. The work was done using prison labour.

The estuary is fringed by salt marsh. Jointed wire rush/oio dominates the tidal zone then gives way to coastal scrub, including cabbage tree/tī, mānuka and flax/harakeke. Listen for a short metallic 'tchick' which gives away the presence of rare fernbird/mātā (left).

3 Tōtara forest remnant

Tōtara forest on sand dunes is a nationally significant ecosystem and we are lucky in Otatara to have some of the best remaining examples in New Zealand. Tōtara is a highly significant tree to Māori and its uses are many. Tōtara lives for hundreds of years and provides food in the form of berries and nesting sites for a wide range of native birds and insects.

4 It's planting time!

In September 2011, a three year "Living Legends" national planting project was sponsored by the Tindall Foundation. The project here at Bushy Point saw 10,000 locally grown native trees planted over that time. Planting continues to this day with a total of over 30,000 native plants planted by local volunteers since the year 2000. Check out the Otatara Landcare Group website for planting dates and how you can help!

5 Creating a pond

In September 2006, a pond and wetland area was created. The pond margin features flax/harakeke, sedges and scattered shrubs, including thickets of coprosma to attract fernbird/mātā. As planting extends outwards, it will provide a vegetation sequence from the pond to adjacent wetland and podocarp forest. The wetland is already attracting waterfowl, white-faced heron, black and little shag/kōau and kingfisher/kōtare. Two picnic areas have been created by the pond.

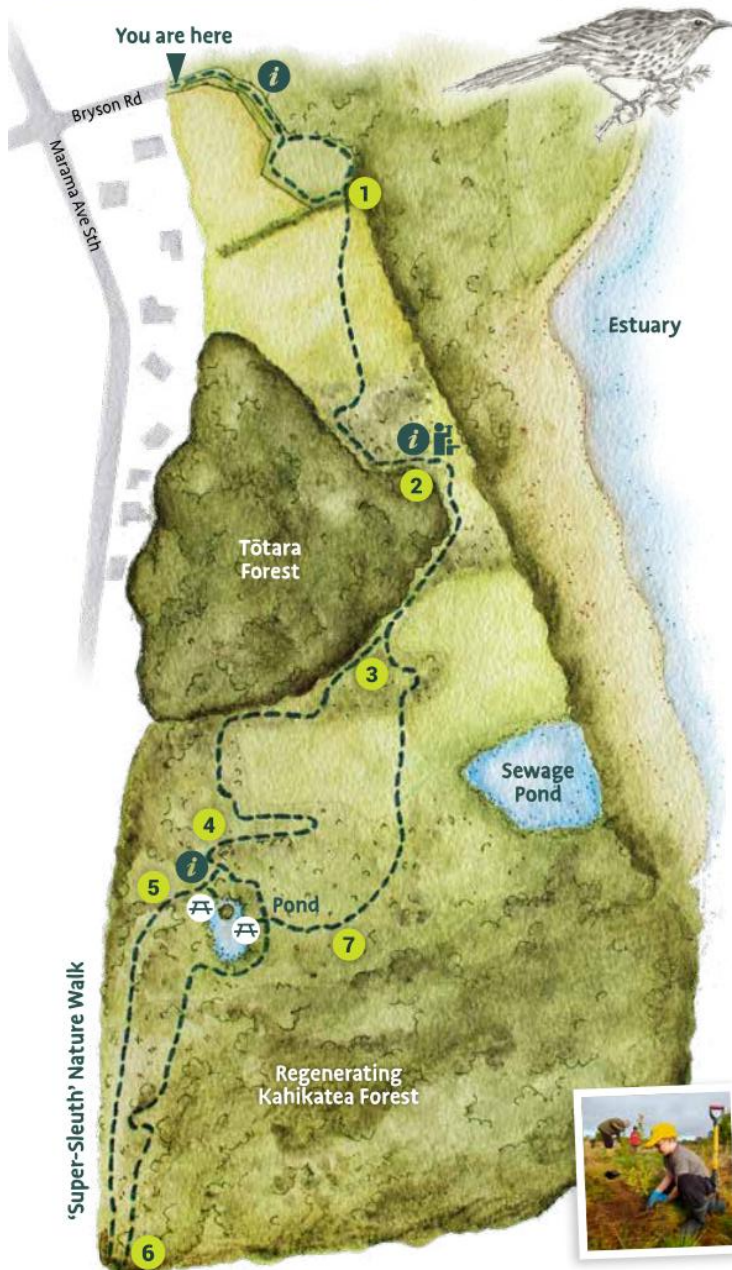
6 Views of the original forest

From here you can look south to see tall kahikatea, mataī and rimu - a reminder of the original podocarp forest that once covered much of Otatara. You can be part of restoring this.

7 Get Involved!

Otatara Landcare Group volunteers have now planted over 30,000 native plants at Bushy Point. Volunteers also service pest lines surrounding Bushy Point every two weeks. If you can help with weeding, planting or pest control, please contact us through our website, below.

www.otataralandcare.org.nz



Learn more about Bushy Point

Follow the yellow topped posts. You'll find interesting information in this brochure specific to each site.



Once you've reached the interpretation sign by the pond, pick up another brochure for our 'Super Sleuth' walk. Follow the fantail numbered posts.

Learning activities

See our website for more fun activities you can enjoy while walking at Bushy Point or at your place:

www.otataralandcare.org.nz



Scan this QR code on your smartphone to take you straight to our website



This project would not be possible without generous financial and material support. Contributors include:

- Department of Conservation
- Environment Southland
- Community Trust of Southland
- Invercargill City Council
- National Parks and Conservation Trust (Transpower)
- ILT Foundation
- Pub Charity



Please return this brochure to the dispenser for other walkers to enjoy

Photos by Jason Hosking, Chris Rance, Janet Hodggets;
Sketches by Gordon Duston, Lloyd Esler; Watercolours by Helen Stewart

Bushy Point

Past, present, future




A self-guided walk

Public conservation land managed by




Otago
Landcare Group

OLG Website - www.otataralandcare.org.nz








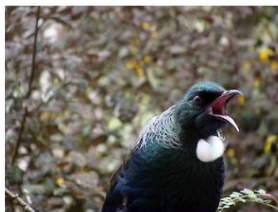


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Otago is a very special place to live.

The area is a natural playground with a rich variety of plants and birds. It has native forest, bush walks, sand dunes, a river, estuary shoreline, pine forests, many restoration projects – all this in an area shared with over 1000 households, close to Invercargill City.

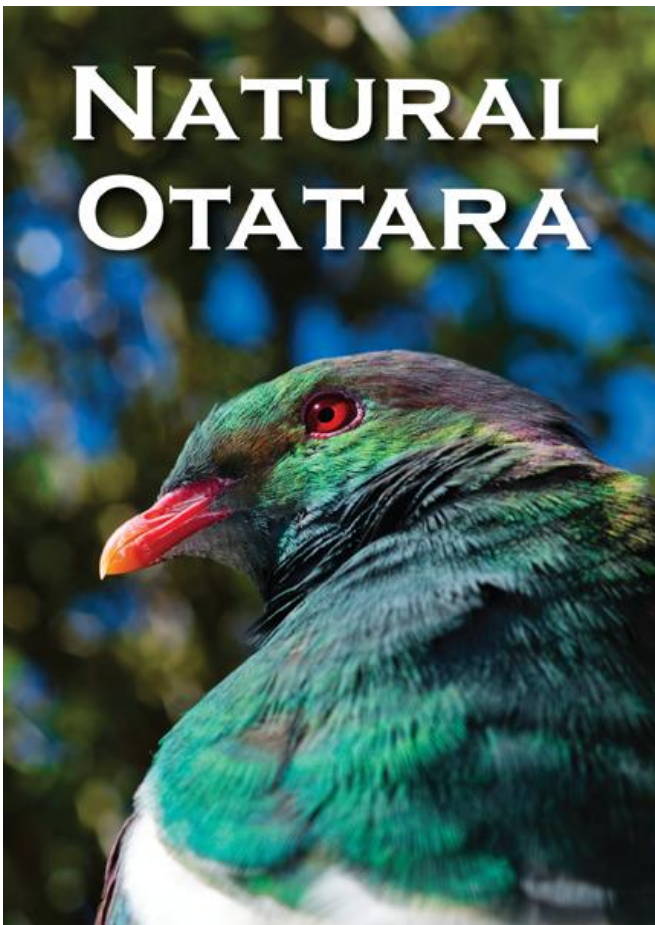
Latest News & Events

The Autumn Pigeon Post in full colour

The Autumn Pigeon Post is out in full colour here

[Read more...](#)

General Advocacy - Natural Otatara Booklet, Kereru Road Signs, Otatara Pestbusters, Otatara Pigeon Post Newsletter



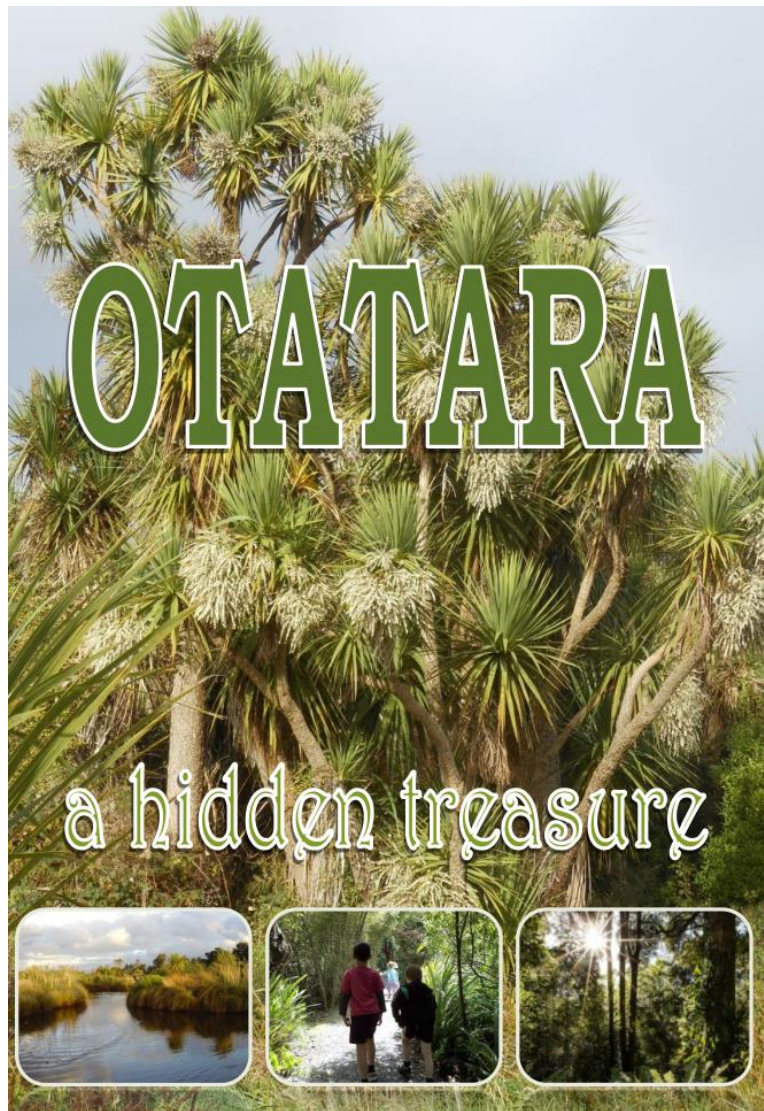
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The full colour version of this publication is available on www.otataralandcare.org.nz under 'publications'.



A draft master plan for the Sandy Point domain for 10, 25 and 50 years has been made public. The plan is open for submissions, with a deadline of January 31 2024. The story on the draft master plan is on page 4.





<https://www.otataralandcare.org.nz/publications/>