AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

Secretary
14 Park Road
Titirangi
Auckland 7

8 July 1982

The Town Clerk
Mt Roskill Borough Council
P.O. Box 27-061
AUCKLAND 4

Dear Sir

MANAGEMENT PLANS, MT ROSKILL BOROUGH COUNCIL RESERVES

One of our members has drawn the Society's attention to your notice of 13 March 1982 asking for suggestions concerning the production of management plans for the Council Reserves. While we realize that the closing date for comment is officially past we hope it is not too late for us to provide some comment. Our particular concern is for those areas which retain a remnant of the native coastal forest and coastal cliff communities that once grew on the Auckland Isthmus. Although much of the coastal slope from Hillsborough Bay to Blockhouse Bay has been modified by suburban expansion, some areas are sufficiently unchanged to warrant preservation in their wild state. Indeed this stretch of coastline includes the most significant pieces of native vegetation remaining on the isthmus. Areas of particular importance include parts of the coastal forest of Waikowhai, Wattle Bay and Goodall Street Reserves and the steep coastal cliffs from Duck Creek to Wattle Bay. These areas have been visited regularly over the years both by our members as individuals and on Society field trips.

Obviously the first step in planning the future of such 'wild' areas is to ascertain where they are and what is present in them. Mr A.E. Esler (Regional Botanist, DSIR, Private Bag, Auckland) who is based at Mount Albert Research Centre has examined most of the area as part of his research on the botany of Auckland city. He will be able to assist your staff in identifying those areas most worthy of preserving. While some such areas, such as the foreshore, may be Crown owned or in private reserves, the MRBC will be able to take a lead in co-ordinating reserve planning of the whole area.

Once identified the wild areas will have to be managed to preserve their integrity. Details will have to be decided for each area but general management should include:

1. Preventing rubbish, including in particular garden refuse, from being deposited on the reserves by unthinking neighbours.
2. Removing and controlling the spread of aggressive weeds where these pose a threat. It would be naive to think that all exotic plants could be removed. Indeed certain exotic species are now well established and form an integral part of the communities. Their presence does not detract from the wild nature of the areas.
3. Preventing damage to all plants and animals in the areas; trail bikes are particularly damaging to tracks and enhance erosion on steep sites.
4. Allowing the areas to regenerate naturally. In the wild areas no attempt should be made to "assist" Nature by planting native trees and shrubs. Such plantings will reduce the biological value of the areas (there will undoubtedly be scope for planting of both native and exotic species to enhance other parts of the reserves).

5. Establishing and maintaining selected tracks for visitor access.
6. Providing information leaflets on the natural features of the area including its geology, botany and zoology.

We believe that if such wild areas are appropriately managed they will provide in perpetuity:

1. a significant recreation resource in the borough for those citizens with an interest in walking and in natural history
2. areas of considerable value to the local schools for teaching ecology and biology
3. important localities for scientific study.

The sort of coastal reserve that could be established along the southern coast of Mt Roskill is shown by the Tahuna-Torea Nature Reserve in the Tamaki Estuary which is administered by the Auckland City Council assisted by an advisory committee. A copy of one of their leaflets is enclosed. This example provides a challenge to your Council. Indeed, we can envisage a series of small wild areas linked by a coastal path extending some 5 kilometres from Hillsborough to Blockhouse Bay !

Members of our Society would hope to be able to assist by providing more information and suggestions if requested. Names of some of those who live in the borough are listed below.

Yours sincerely

J.A. Mackinder
President

Dr R.E. Beever Mr A. Wright Associate-Professor J.A. Rattenbury

The following 3 pages, sent to Mt Roskill Borough Council by Alan Esler, contain some interesting information on areas of particular importance noted in our submission. Our thanks to Mr Esler for allowing us to reproduce them here. - Ed.