

Strategic Weed Initiative Project 2006/07

Lake Wainamu/ Waiti stream, pampas control summary report

In Mid 2006 Bethells residents raised concerns about the amount of pampas in the Waiti stream and along the Lake Wainamu walking track. The pampas had increased over a number of years to the extent where it now was the dominant species. Residents were concerned about pampas blocking the walking tracks and stream as well as being a fire danger in summer. Earlier in 2006 the ARC started a SWI pampas control project in the Bethells dunes as well as on going control of pampas on the parkland around Lake Wainamu. Therefore controlling the pampas along the Waiti stream towards Lake Wainamu would complement the parkland control work and link to the dunes pampas control project.

Waitakere City Council were approached to work jointly on the project as they owned part of the land along Waiti stream. The two Councils agreed to jointly fund the project. ARC would fund the treatment of the pampas and WCC would fund native replantings.

The project covers approximately 15 hectares, including 10 private properties, WCC land & ARC parkland. All of the residents were supportive of the project but several concerns were raised that had to be addressed before the project could start.

Issues

1. Fire danger

Several residents were concerned about the amount of dead pampas that would be present after the control work and the fire danger this posed.

The project was divided up into four management areas, the control of pampas in the management areas was spread over three years. This would reduce the amount of flammable plant material present per year and also spread the cost of the project over three years allowing us to target a much larger area than originally intended. Treatment was also scheduled for autumn which would mean that the dead pampas would die and mulch down over the winter period with the least fire risk.

2. Erosion

One resident was concerned that once the pampas was removed from the stream edge the stream might change course and erode the bank of his property. Erosion was a valid concern and council staff discussed areas of particular concern with the landowners. One corner of the stream and the start of the walkway were of specific concern. We agreed that these areas would be planted in 2007 and then treated in 2008. This would give the new plants time to establish and they would assist with stabilising the soil once the pampas was treated.

3. Alternative control methods

Some residents preferred alternative methods to foliar spraying with herbicide. One resident was concerned that manuka would replace pampas on the flood plane & become an issue when the stream floods. Therefore they felt the beginning of the walking track should be cleared of pampas by slashing regularly. The ARC could not commit budget for slashing the walking track pampas, the matter was referred to WCC as they are the landowners of this particular section of the track. In the past WCC contractors have slashed the pampas but WCC also agreed that this was not a good use of resources and preferred a targeted spray program. Both ARC & WCC

favoured herbicide application and then replanting of the site to assist with natural regeneration. To help address the residents concerns about plantings restricting the movement of flood water across the flood plain and or diverting flood water into private property the natives chosen for the plantings were all relatively low growing, suited to growing on the sandy soil and would move with flood waters and not divert or impede flood water from using the flood plain. The natives chosen for the site were oioi, whau, *Cyperus ustulatus*, *Carex flagillifera*, *Cortaderia fulvida* Replanting will also provide privacy for the houses close to the walking track. The walking track will be kept clear of vegetation. We have met on site several times with residents to discuss the replanting plan and all parties seem happy with the final solution.

4. Chemical free tenant at one property.

The concerns of this resident were discussed and it was decided that the area of pampas around this property would be targeted early in the project. The tenant was happy for the spraying to happen as long as they were not present at the time. The tenant was contacted the day prior to the contractors visit which gave them time to organise to be absent from the property while the spraying took place. The rest of the work is not near this particular property so will not be of concern to the tenant.

Management Areas

In October 2006 Management Area A was treated. The results were very good with 99% of the pampas dead within several months. Management Area B was treated in March 2007 also with very good results.

In October 2006 & February 2007 accidental fires were lit near the beginning of the Lake Wainamu walkway. In both cases the fires were near residential houses and started in the pampas beside the walking track and spread to other vegetation. Residents asked ARC & WCC to reassess the control program potentially bring forward the treatment of Management Area C.

The start of the track was scheduled to be replanted in July 2007 and then treated in Late February 2008. Residents felt that the fire risk the pampas posed especially the pampas close to the houses, was too great to wait until the following year for treatment. By bringing forward the treatment of the pampas in Area C to April 2007 we were able to treat the pampas before winter allowing the majority of plants to decompose over winter reducing the fire risk next summer. To assist with the decomposition of the dead pampas which still poses a fire risk Waitakere City council agreed to fund a contractor to mulch some of the dead pampas before the site was planted.

Replanting

In July 2007 a community planting day was jointly organised by ARC and WCC to replant the area at the start of the walking track. About 35 locals and Council staff attended the day planting about 2000 plants in a couple of hours. The planting day was followed up by further planting by ARC staff and 3 days of planting by Corrections Department community service workers. In total around 10,000 plants were planted along the banks of the Waiti stream, a further 2000 plants were given to local residents for planting up and down stream where individuals had undertaken their own weed control projects.

The community planting day was considered a great success and good feedback has been received from the community.

Replanting issues

The time to plant the site was slightly underestimated. The Corrections Department were able to supply Community Service Workers on 3 days to assist with replanting, this work was done free of charge. Coordination of the replanting was divided between the two councils involved and perhaps in the future it would be better if one council took full responsibility for replanting, including, supplying plants, organising community days and contractors.



Community Planting day



Near the start of the Lake Wainamu walking track



Looking towards Bethells bridge



Start of Lake Wainamu walking track

Action plan 2007/08

Treatment

Areas A, B and C have already been treated but will require some follow-up maintenance work this season. As well as follow-up pampas treatment the project should also address some of the other environmental weeds in Areas B & C. Small amounts of gorse, ginger, periwinkle, wattle & velvet groundsel have all been recorded. A complete pest plant survey of the Areas B & C will be completed by Biosecurity staff. These pest plants will then be included in the follow-up work.

Area D is the next area of pampas to be treated, this was originally scheduled for 2008/09. The project is ahead of schedule having treated Area C in 2007, therefore we are able to start treating Area D in 2007/08. As the budget for 2007/08 is only \$3000 the control of Area D will be split over two years. Area D is the largest area of pampas to be controlled and is estimated to take a budget of \$8000. Starting at the Bethells road end of Area D and working towards the lake the contractor will treat as much of the area as the budget allows. The corner of John Wheelers property which was replanted in July will be included in the 2007/08 treatment work.

Planting

Previously no further replanting had been proposed for the project. Around 600 *Cortaderia fulvida* root trainers that were too small for planting at the Waiti stream site in July have been grown on by the ARC Botanic Gardens. With the aim of replanting these at the site to replace any losses and bulking out the planting on John Wheelers corner. This replanting would take place in July 2008 and could be done by ARC on a team day.

Budget

Task	Cost
Follow-up work Areas B & C, plus starting Treatment of Area D & Wheeler property	\$3000
Replanting	Nil
Total cost	\$3000

Management Areas

