

**Robinsons Bay  
Recreation Reserve  
Management Plan**

**Banks Peninsula District Council 2006**

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# Robinsons Bay School Reserve Management Plan

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## 1 Background Information

### 2.1 Legal Classification

<b>Gazette notice:</b>	First Gazetted 1954 Re-gazetted as a Recreation Reserve in 1998
<b>Legal description:</b>	Res 4706 Blk. XX Pigeon Bay SD
<b>Land area:</b>	0.7840 ha
<b>Classification and status:</b>	Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977

### 2.2 Location & Access

The reserve is situated 150 metres from the Akaroa Highway (SH75) on the western side of School Road. School Road is a steep, narrow, single lane, no exit gravel road graded and maintained by the Council. A gateway and steep gravel driveway runs off School Road into the eastern end of the reserve. The driveway is difficult to negotiate and adjoins the entrance to a neighbouring property. In summary, vehicular access and parking are strictly limited and inappropriate for general public access.

Public access is therefore available on foot only, from a suitable parking area 150 metres away at the junction of School Road and State Highway 75.

### 2.3 Description & Landscape Character

The reserve is mostly flat or gently sloping to the southeast, with the exception of a steep bank along the boundary with School Road. Approximately half of the reserve is densely covered with native trees, either planted or naturally regenerating. The remainder is largely grassed. Exotic trees planted along the boundary to provide shelter for newly planted native species have since been removed.

There are no buildings or structures within Robinsons Bay Reserve except for fences. The site is fenced along all boundaries, with an internal fence approximately 40m up from the access gate. The reserve is currently used primarily by the Reserve Management Committee as they continue to plant and weed the area. It is not yet commonly used by the public.

Apart from School Road adjoining its southern boundary, the reserve is surrounded by farm land. One house lies to the east and 2 other houses on 5-acre blocks lie to the south.

### 2.4 History

The Robinsons Bay School Reserve began as the site of a government-established school, replacing the local mill school in 1877. The school was closed in 1947 and the local children transported to Akaroa to attend school. The land on which the school was situated remained in Crown ownership.

In 1954 the land was gazetted as the Robinsons Bay Domain, to be administered by the local Domain Board. In 1962 the first recorded planting of trees took place by the local community. Over the next 5 years 100 more trees were planted. Honorary rangers were appointed under the Reserves and Domains Act 1953. In 1966 Mr. Ged Foley was appointed to the Domain Board and remains a member of the current Reserve Management Committee.

During the 1970's the Domain Board planted more trees in the reserve, with many of the seedlings grown by Domain Board Members. In 1973 the Domain Board's stated aim for Robinsons Bay Reserve was *"for eventual use as a public picnic ground in a setting representing specimens of the original forest trees"*.

During the 1980's the Domain Board focused on the maintenance of trees and the removal of weeds in the Domain. In 1982 the Lands and Survey Department sought to disband the Domain Board and requested the Akaroa County Council to administer the reserve directly. The Council declined, resulting in board members having their terms of office extended until 1985. Eighty-four more trees were planted in 1983 with the help of local children.

Approximately ten years later, the Council decided that the reserve was surplus and should be sold. The residents of Robinsons Bay opposed the idea and in 1998 a Reserve Committee was appointed to manage the reserve.

Robinsons Bay Domain was reclassified as a Recreation Reserve in 1998 and vested in the Banks Peninsula District Council on the 29<sup>th</sup> May of that year. At that time it was renamed 'Robinsons Bay School Reserve'. Since then more indigenous trees have been planted and exotic species culled completely.

## **2.5 Administration & Management**

The reserve is managed and maintained by the Robinsons Bay School Reserve Management Committee. This is an interest group of the community and not an official Council sub-committee. The aim of the group is to restore the reserve's indigenous vegetation and then make it available for the enjoyment and education of the public.

## **2.6 Regional Context**

The reserve is somewhat unique, being dedicated to the restoration of former indigenous ecosystems and of a small scale more common in neighbourhood reserves. The mill and government school associations also lend the reserve an historic interest. The Committee envisages the reserve being used primarily for historical and environmental education, with interpretive signs to explain the cultural and natural history of the reserve and its setting. This role is likely to become more valuable over time, as the vegetation matures and the number of residents and visitors to the Bay increases.

# **2 Management of the Reserve Environment**

## **2.1 Vegetation Management**

The top half of Robinson's Bay School Reserve is totally regenerated with indigenous species and contains a number of mature trees. The lower half of the site is grassed, with some native vegetation from locally-sourced seed stock. The taller trees on site are up to 15 metres high. Sheltered areas of the site have a dense cover, whereas more exposed areas with coastal aspects are more sparsely vegetated. A large stand of mature oak trees has been removed from the back of the reserve and the area where they stood left to regenerate naturally. The wood from the oaks is being removed by the Lions Club and local residents.

Regenerating plants are establishing well, especially on the damper, sheltered parts of the reserve. The removal of the mature oaks has let more light into the reserve, aiding the native plants. The committee is monitoring the revegetation to determine the most successful species. Conspicuously successful species so far include ngaio, lemonwood (*Pittosporum*

*eugenoides*), karamu (*Coprosma robusta*), cabbage tree, totara, broadleaf, toe toe, kowhai and lancewood.

The Committee have deferred further planting until a landscape plan is drawn up, specifying the location of paths and walkways throughout the site.

The native plants in the reserve already attract a variety of bird life, including grey warbler, wood pigeon, rifleman, fantail and bellbird. Their numbers are expected to increase as the bush becomes more established.

Past problems with rabbits and wandering livestock are under control and the Committee has ordered traps to control possums, feral cats and mustelids (2005). The Committee completed a major re-fencing project in winter 2004, provided for through fund-raising.

Weed control is an issue at the reserve, especially periwinkle, thistle, iris, nightshade and blackberry. Control is currently carried out by spot-spraying or manual removal. Saint Andrews school students regularly remove exotic elm, plum and oak seedlings and suckers from the open grassed areas.

A seasonal spring emerges from the hillside above the reserve and runs through the site during winter.

**Objectives:**

*To manage the reserve vegetation for passive enjoyment, education and the enhancement of native flora and fauna.*

**Policies:**

See also General Reserve Policies 5.8 Tree Control, 5.12 Fire Control and 7.4 Tree Planting on Reserves.

1. Preserve and enhance the existing native flora and fauna.
2. Ensure further plantings of native flora are from locally-sourced seed and plant stock. Select particularly for native species that will act as a food source for native birds.
3. Encourage school groups to assist in replanting, maintenance and protection of the Reserve.
4. Control weeds, especially wilding exotic trees, periwinkle and blackberry, to reduce the impact of weeds and over-competitive species on regenerating native species.
5. Control rank grass as much as possible to reduce fire danger.
6. Control animal pest species through trapping.

## **3 Management of Services, Structures & Facilities**

### **3.1 Signs and Visitor Information**

The reserve is not currently signposted. Once the reserve is in a suitable state for taking visitors it should be signposted from the main road (SH 75) and have a name sign at the reserve entrance.

The Reserve holds both botanical and historical interest: The committee view it as a 'teaching bush' and propose to install a series of interpretive signs containing information on the site's, and hence the area's, history, flora and fauna.

**Objectives:**

1. To provide adequate directional and informational signs for visitors to locate and enjoy the reserve.
2. To interpret the history and ecology of the reserve.

**Policies:**

Refer also to General Policies 6.9 Signs & 5.13 Heritage Conservation

1. Provide signs that enable visitors to locate the Reserve from SH 75 and School Road.
2. Erect interpretive signs within the Reserve with information on the history, flora and fauna of the site and the Duvauchelle area.
3. Develop an appropriate image and sign style consistent with other banks Peninsula Reserves.

### **3.2 Access, Parking and Tracks**

Vehicular access to the reserve is difficult and unsuitable for public use. The Committee therefore proposes a car park on the nearby Robinsons Bay Road, with foot access from there.

The current internal access track from the front to the back boundaries is negotiable in summer only. It would be useful to maintain it to a sufficient width and surface for summer access to service and emergency vehicles.

The reserve as yet is little used by the public. The Committee views it as a work in progress that should be promoted to schools and the public once the car park, walking tracks and infrastructure are in place. Meanwhile public involvement has been limited to working parties from schools (St Andrews provide a monthly work party) and the local community.

**Objectives:**

*To provide public vehicle access and car parking near to but not in the reserve.*

**Policies:**

1. Restrict vehicular access to the reserve to authorised service vehicles.
2. Maintain an access agreement for access across adjoining land to the reserve and its future water tank in the event of fire at the reserve.
3. Maintain a safe and accessible bus and car parking area on Robinsons Bay Road and encourage pedestrian access to the reserve from there.

### **3.3 Paths & Walkways**

A basic track runs from the front gate, up the north-western boundary to the back of the reserve. The surface of this needs upgrading. The committee has plans for two additional loop tracks through the bush feeding off this main track.

Walking and education are the primary intended uses of the Reserve. The Committee does not wish to develop areas that encourage the use of the reserve for picnics (a) in order to minimize the likelihood of vandalism or accidental fire and (b) because of the close proximity of an adjoining house.

**Objectives:**

*To provide safe pedestrian access to enhance the use and enjoyment of the reserve.*

**Policies:**

1. Develop an overall landscape development and revegetation plan for the reserve, preferably with assistance from a landscape architect.
2. Plan and develop walking tracks, consistent with the above, which enables visitors to gain access to and appreciate selected features of the reserve.
3. Ensure that the main track remains wide enough to give access by fire appliances and for maintenance.

### **3.4 Fences & Gates**

It is important that the reserve is well fenced to prevent stock from threatening the regenerating bush. The Committee upgraded and/or replaced all the boundary fences in winter 2004.

**Objectives:**

1. *Provide fences for public safety and the protection of flora and fauna.*
2. *Retain vehicle gates for service and emergency vehicles only.*

**Policies:**

See also General Policy 5.10 Fencing.

1. Maintain all fences in a sound, stock-proof condition.
2. Retain gates for vehicle access at the front and rear of the reserve.
3. Provide a separate pedestrian gate at the front of the reserve.

## **4 Fire prevention**

Fire would have a devastating effect on the Reserve. The committee intends to place a 25,000 litre water tank at the top of the reserve, gravity-fed from the local Council tank, to use in the event of fire. The Committee has also arranged emergency fire-appliance access to the reserve across a neighbouring property. These measures obviate the need to form a proper vehicle access road within the reserve proper, although emergency access via the main pedestrian track would still be available, weather permitting.

## 5 Schedule of Works

Action	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2
Develop a landscape development plan									
Maintain fences and gates.									
Erect directional signage from the main road and from Robinson's Bay Valley Road									
Erect interpretive signs within the Reserve with information about the site's history, flora and fauna									
Erect a name sign at the front of the reserve.									
Construct a parking area on Robinson's Bay Valley Road.									
Construct walking tracks through the Reserve									
Control rank grass to reduce fire danger.									
Control weeds regularly									
Maintain fences, walkways and signs									
Plant additional native plant material in open areas									
Release native plants regularly until established.									
<b>Estimated Annual Cost</b>									



## 6 Purpose & Scope of Reserve Management Plans

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The Banks Peninsula District Council, as an administering body under the *Reserves Act 1977*, is required to prepare management plans for the reserves under its control. A management plan outlines the Council's general intentions for use, development and maintenance of a reserve. The *Reserves Act* (and subsequent amendments) is the main legislation that determines how reserves should be managed. It covers issues such as the classification and purpose of reserves, revocation, management planning, leasing of reserves and public consultation. Section 3 of the Act states that reserves will be administered for the purpose of:

*(a) Providing for the preservation and management for the benefit and enjoyment of the public, areas of New Zealand possessing-*

- (i) Recreational use or potential, whether active or passive; or*
- (ii) Wildlife; or*
- (iii) Indigenous flora or fauna; or*
- (iv) Environmental and landscape amenity or interest; or*
- (v) Natural, scenic, historic, cultural, archaeological, biological, geological, scientific, educational, community, or other special features or value:*

*(b) Ensuring, as far as possible, the survival of all indigenous species of flora and fauna, both rare and commonplace, in their natural communities and habitats, and the preservation of representative samples of all classes of natural ecosystems and lands which in the aggregate originally gave New Zealand its own recognisable character:*

*(c) Ensuring, as far as possible, the preservation of access for the public to and along the sea coast, its bays and inlets and offshore islands, lakeshores, and riverbanks, and fostering and promoting the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment and of the margins of lakes and rivers and the protection of them from unnecessary subdivision and development.*

The management plan and policies set out how the Banks Peninsula District Council intends to achieve this purpose.

### 6.1 Management Planning

Section 41 of the *Reserves Act* requires that every recreation reserve has an operative management plan. The purpose of these is described in Section 41(3), which stipulates that:

*"The management plan shall provide for and ensure the use, enjoyment, maintenance, protection and preservation, as the case may require, and, the development, as appropriate, of the reserve for the purposes for which it is classified."*

If a reserve does not have a management plan, no part of that reserve can be leased without public consultation. In practice this means that every time a recreational organisation makes an application to lease part of a reserve, that proposal must publicly advertise for submissions. The production of a management plan can avoid this repeated public notification process, provided that the management plan specifies the areas available for lease.

## 6.1.1 Management Planning Procedure

Recreation Reserve management plan preparation procedures are that:

- a) The public is consulted on what future use they would like their reserves put to.
- b) The public response is combined with general objectives and policies and further background information into a draft management plan document.
- c) This document is made available to the public for further comment. This is the opportunity for 'fine-tuning' of policies to produce a final document that accurately spells out how the reserve will be managed in the future.
- d) After hearings (if required) the draft management plan is amended accordingly and is then put before Council for approval in its final form. Once approved by Council it becomes the operative management plan.
- e) The Reserves Act provides for the management plan to be reviewed continuously so that it is adapted to changing circumstances. However, if the review involves major changes, it must again be opened for public input and comment.

Section 120(3) of the Reserves Act allows Council to determine its own procedure for hearing submissions received as a result of public consultation. However, Council is required by Section 120(1)d to give full consideration to every objection or submission received before deciding to proceed with the proposal.

The Reserves Act requires that full public consultation take place whenever land is declared to be reserve, whenever a reserve is classified, reclassified or revoked, whenever a management plan is prepared for a reserve, and whenever a reserve that has no management plan is leased.

The statutory minimum level of consultation is that a notice of the intended action be published once in the local daily paper, and a period of one month be given in which submissions may be made in response. The exception to this is the notification of draft management plans which requires a two month period for submissions.

## 6.2 Reserve Classification

Section 16 of the Reserves Act 1977 requires that reserves are classified according to their principal or primary purpose, and sets out 7 kinds of classification. This Reserve is classified as a Recreation Reserve, created:

*"For the purpose of providing areas for the recreation and sporting activities and the physical welfare and enjoyment of the public, and for the protection of the natural environment and beauty of the countryside, with emphasis on the retention of open spaces and on outdoor recreational activities, including recreational tracks in the countryside." (S. 17 Reserves Act 1977)*

More specifically, Recreation Reserves are to provide for (S.17[2]):

*"Freedom of entry and access by the public;*

*Management and protection of scenic, historic, archaeological, biological, geological or other features or indigenous flora or fauna or wildlife;*

*Conservation of the qualities of the reserve which contribute to the pleasantness, harmony, and cohesion of the natural environment and to its better use and enjoyment; and*

*Maintenance of soil, water and forest conservation values".*

## 7 General Reserve Policies

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The *General Policies for Reserve Management* prepared by Rob Greenaway and Associates are in a separate document. They are integral to reserve management and are intended to be read with management plans.

Where any issue on a reserve is addressed by both the *General Policies* and a management plan specific to a reserve, then the specific policy takes precedence. Conversely, where a management plan is silent or incomplete on an area of policy, the general policy shall apply.