

Who does the work?

Department of Conservation staff overview all work on the reserve. Since the project began, Task Force Green workers, Periodic Detention workers and supervisors, Conservation Corps, work-experience students, women prisoners, conservation volunteers, school students, the local rūnanga, and keen individuals have all assisted with a variety of tasks. These include clearing weeds and willows, constructing the bridge and boardwalks, and planting and caring for the native vegetation. Offers of help are always welcome.

Cultural considerations

Eat food within the grassed area by the carpark where there is plenty of room for picnicking. Please do not eat within the memorial site.

Remember

- As this is a wildlife area, no dogs, even on leashes, are allowed.
- Remain on the boardwalk or the marked track at all times.
- Dress for the weather.

Note

- No public toilets are available
- No drinking or washing water is provided on site
- Please take your rubbish away.



NEW ZEALAND
environmental
CARE CODE

- Protect plants and animals
- Remove rubbish
- Bury toilet waste
- Keep streams and lakes clean
- Take care with fires
- Camp carefully
- Keep to the track
- Consider others
- Respect our cultural heritage
- Enjoy your visit
- Toitu te whenua (Leave the land undisturbed)



Further information

For more information on Ōtukaikino reserve, please contact Mahaanui Area Office, Department of Conservation, Nga Mahi Rd, Sockburn, Christchurch, phone 03 341 9100.

For information on the Living Memorial programme, contact Lamb and Hayward, phone 03 359 9018.

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Ōtukaikino



CHRISTCHURCH



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Te Papa Atawhai

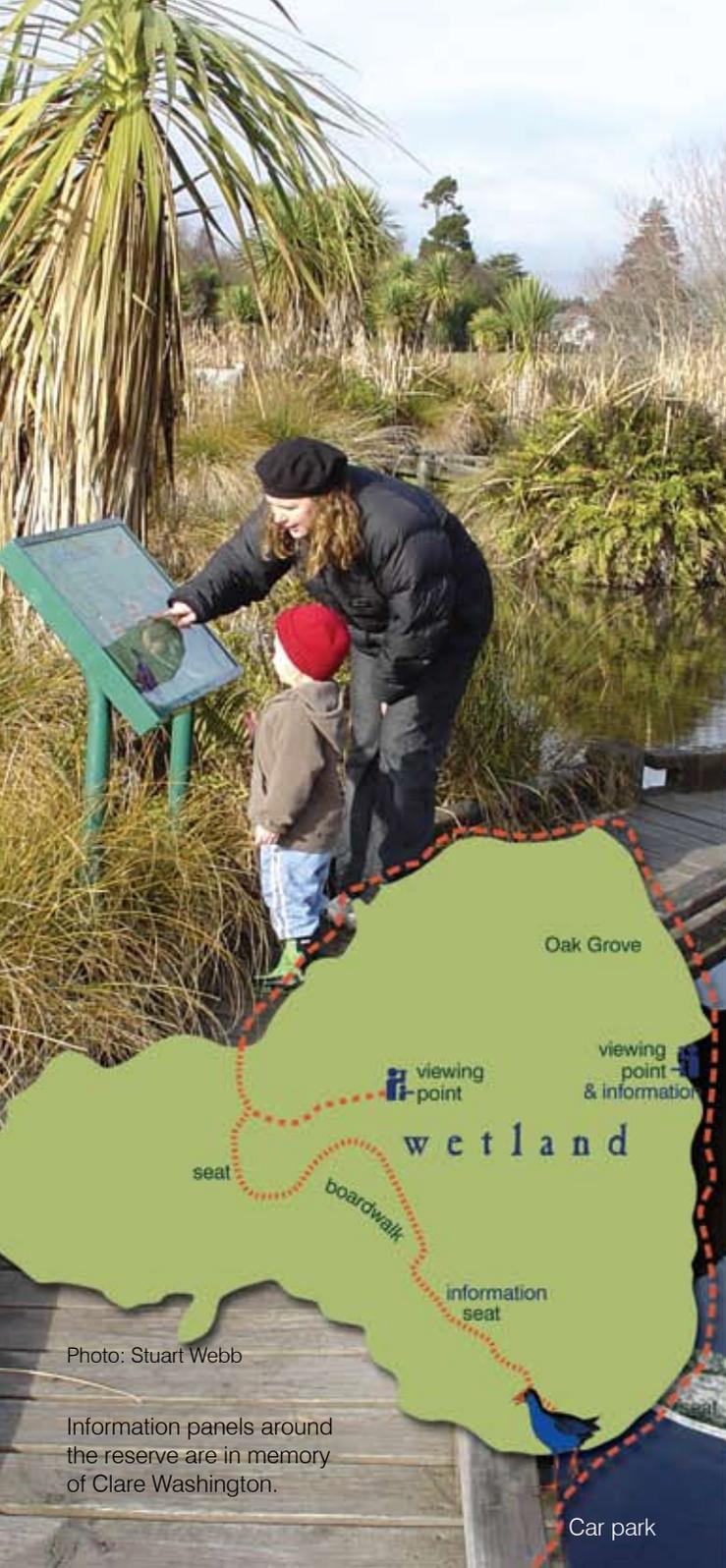


Photo: Stuart Webb

Information panels around the reserve are in memory of Clare Washington.

Car park

Introduction

Ōtukaikino is a 13-ha freshwater wetland reserve to the north of Christchurch, at the southern end of the northern motorway. The entrance is off Main North Road between Chaney's Corner and the Belfast end of the motorway. It is one of the few remaining original wetlands that were once common around Christchurch.

The reserve is also known as Wilson's Swamp, named after Robert and Margaret Wilson, the first European settlers on the land in 1854. Wilson descendants remained there until 1961, when the land was acquired for the building of the northern motorway.

A Living Memorial

Over the years most of the original native vegetation around the wetland disappeared. However since 1992, in a unique partnership between the Department of Conservation and Lamb and Hayward Ltd (funeral directors), supported by Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga, the area is being restored and managed as a 'Living Memorial'.

The concept is to plant a New Zealand native tree to commemorate the passing of a loved one. It is summed up in its Māori title – Mau Mahara – remembering you. For each funeral they conduct, Lamb and Hayward donates funds to the Department of Conservation for trees to be planted and cared for. There are no burials within this reserve, and specific trees are not dedicated to any one person. Each year families and friends are invited to attend an interdenominational memorial service on site. All the plantings of the past year are dedicated as memorials to those who have died over the year. A boardwalk and tracks, taking approximately twenty minutes, meander around the wetland through tall raupō, flaxes (harakeke) and grasses and beside pools. Visitors can stop and reflect at sitting areas placed along the walkway and read the interpretation panels.

Ngāi Tahu significance

Ōtukaikino is significant for Ngāi Tahu whānui and especially appropriate for a living memorial. This wetland was once used for burial preparation and is designated a Wāi Tapu site. The water, vegetation and mud were used by Tohunga (priests) for embalming purposes.

The restoration process

A restoration plan guides work on the reserve. Exotic plant species are being gradually replaced by natives with the aim of restoring the wetland community as closely as possible to what it would have once been. Some native species such as raupō, toe toe, tall tussock sedges (pukio), blechnum fern (kiokio), cabbage trees (tī kōuka), kōhūhū and karamū, managed to survive through the years. Seedlings from some of these remnants are now springing up in different parts of the reserve where exotics have been removed. More plants of the surviving native species are being put in, along with others such as kahikatea, kānuka, tōtara, mataī, ribbonwood (manatu) and lancewood (horoeke). All new plants are genetically sourced from the original native plants in the reserve or, where the species have disappeared, from the closest original sources.

Wildlife

Pūkeko, shoveler (kuruwhengu), grey teal (tete), marsh crake (koitareke) and even a bittern (matuku) have been spotted in and around the wetland. There are also long- and short-finned eel (tuna), upland and common bullies, native snails (pūpū) and a variety of aquatic insects. As the plantings become established, more native wildlife is being attracted back.