

Trelissick Park SMF Evaluation Report

Highland Park Progressive Association
Trelissick Park Group



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Manatū Mō Te Taiao

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Introduction:

This report relates to the Adopt a Spot Project which has received funding from the Minister for the Environments Sustainable management fund which is administered by the Ministry for the Environment. The Trelissick Park Group (TPG) received funding in 2006/2007 for a paid coordinator to boost the existing Adopt a Spot Scheme. This funding was received through the Highland Park Progressive Association.

This report includes numbers and details that are not relevant to the general public. It is to be read in conjunction with the 'Trelissick Park Adopt a Spot Summary, June 2007'. This is an evaluation of the success of the Adopt a Spot Project. Some resources referred to are saved on a CD which will be posted with this document.

Objectives of the Project:

Objective One:

Raise the public profile of Trelissick Park and the Adopt a Spot Scheme.

Objective Two:

Find volunteers to adopt ten of the thirty identified new spots, and five of the dozen existing spots.

Objective Three:

Facilitate the Adopt a Spot Scheme.

Objective Four:

Ensure the Adopt a Spot Scheme is self sustainable.

Analysis:

Objective One:

The public profile of Trelissick Park has increased dramatically over the past twelve months. Five articles in local newspapers, and radio advertisements have meant that people outside of the immediate neighbouring suburbs are aware of the project. I have not carried out a quantitative study of this, but friends and colleagues from around

Wellington have commented on seeing or hearing about the Adopt a Spot Scheme. Most people I have met in the last month have heard of the Scheme.

Objective Two:

There are currently approximately 30 sites being cared for in Trelissick Park. There are over 35 volunteers working regularly in the park as many sites are cared for by families, couples, or groups of friends. Four or five of the existing sites have been taken over by new volunteers to ease the load on the existing volunteers. Not all of the identified 'new sites' are being cared for, but many are, as well as a couple of unidentified sites. Adopt a Spot volunteers will plant over 1000 trees this season.

Objective Three:

I have spent on average ten hours a week over the past twelve months working to facilitate the Adopt a Spot Scheme. This has involved meeting with new spotees, responding to requests for more information by phone or email, responding to specific questions from spotees, and passing on requests to various council staff at Greater Wellington Regional Council (GW) and Wellington City Council (WCC). I have developed information sheets for new spotees including Health and Safety guidelines.

I have also put together a monthly newsletter to inform spotees, volunteers, council staff and other interested individuals about what activities are occurring in Trelissick Park. Part of the newsletter was an information sheet with a 'weed of the month' and a 'plant of the month'. Past newsletters are available to be downloaded from the website www.trelissickpark.org.nz.

Objective Four:

The Adopt a Spot scheme is much closer to being self sustainable, however it will be difficult for an unpaid coordinator to continue such a high level of support. The expertise that Spotees have will be very beneficial to the TPG and how the project progresses over the next few years. Some volunteers are able to offer more than they currently carry out, it is just a matter of asking and waiting for responses. Both WCC and GW will do all they can to support the group to be self sustainable.

Finances:

I have dramatically under spent on the original proposed budget. This is partly because I did not purchase stakes or tools as nobody asked for this assistance. This means that there is no issue about retrieving tools once a person leaves the scheme. Also, there was no need to purchase nursery resources or potting mix as the trees were supplied by WCC. TPG volunteers also carried out a lot of this work on their own initiative, with personal resources. My thoughts here were that it is best for the Spotees and the Trelissick Park Group to be as self sustainable as possible. I was unable to secure an ongoing supply of seedling for the future of the scheme. This unfortunately means that the group and Wellington City Council will need to work out a solution for the future.

I also worked fewer hours than proposed. I did however spend time in the Park for other activities and found this to be a good way to ensure I knew what was happening in the Park. I was always contactable by cell phone and email so time away from Wellington did not impact on my accessibility.

Weed control:

Volunteers carried out weed control themselves. Often the amount of weed control set the boundaries of the site. Tradescantia was the biggest problem in Trelissick Park. This has to be pulled out, carried to a park entrance and taken away by the council. Volunteers filled bags and left them near the track. Other volunteers or members of the public then carried out these sacks when they were walking through the Park. This spread the load and meant volunteers did not need to lift too much, or over extend themselves. Each person carried out part of the job so it was more manageable. WCC then sprayed the land after a site was cleared to ensure the Tradescantia did not return.

In the same way, TPG volunteers with Grow Safe certificates carried out more heavy duty weed control which required the use of vigilant at various Adopt a Spot sites. This overcame the barrier of individuals not being allowed to use chemicals on public land.

Plant Supply:

At present members of TPG and Adopt a Spot volunteers are happy to hold plants at their homes. Support is available from WCC and GW to supply some trees, but the group will need to approach other funding mechanisms if they want to purchase seedlings or trees in the future. The group is at a stage where they are sustainable at the size they are at. If more people join the Adopt a Spot scheme they may need extra assistance.

Trees:

I can't comment on the survival rate of trees, as I began the project at the end of last planting season, and have just delivered the plants for this season over the past fortnight. The tree species we chose came from recommendations from past research in the Kaiwharawhara Catchment including lists from Otari Wilton's Bush and Ngaio Progressive Association. These were primarily Cabbage trees, Makomako, Coprosma Robusta, Ngaio, Hebe Stricta, Flax, Rimu, Lemonwood, Mahoe, Five Finger, Tutu, Red Matipo, Kowhai, and Manuka. We also had some Macropiper Excelsum to plant at sites where canopy cover was complete.

Photos:

Over the past twelve months I have created a number of powerpoint presentations aimed at specific audiences. These are all on the CD. I have spent a lot of time collecting photographs to keep a good record of the progress in the park. These are also on the CD.

Advertising:

The Adopt a Spot scheme does not need more advertising as such, however it is important for the group to maintain a public profile. This means the Adopt a Spot Coordinator or the TPG will need to approach local newspapers regularly to ensure the project stays in the public eye. Both WCC and GW provide regular publications outlining activities and contact details of the community groups. TPG should aim to appear in each of these magazines on a regular occurrence.

It is also very important that the website is kept up to date, and that other websites are invited to include links to our pages. A web presence allows people from outside the local community to learn about and support activities in Trelissick Park. It also attracts people to the area who may otherwise not have known where Trelissick Park is located.

A regular newsletter would help continue to build a sense of community. It is easy to put together an electronic newsletter, however a paper version may need to be printed for a small number of interested parties who do not receive emails. My mailing list for newsletters has included 120 email contacts, and 20 individuals who receive printed copies.

The Adopt a Spot Coordinator should be easy to contact and available to meet new spottees. This person should regularly check emails and ensure a high level of 'customer service' is upheld. It is important that volunteers feel they are needed, but not necessary. It is difficult to balance this relationship and to keep people involved, but a newsletter is a good start.

Other Volunteers:

I have hosted almost 200 individuals carrying out volunteer work in Trelissick Park. Many of these have been corporate volunteers. I do not expect a voluntary Adopt a Spot Coordinator to carry out this task, instead I expect that Greater Wellington will continue to include Trelissick Park as a site for their Corporate Volunteer Programme with close coordination with the TPG.

Training:

Some volunteers may require training in weed control, plant care, seed collection or propagation. Greater Wellington and Wellington City Council should be approached to host specific training days for community volunteers. I recommend that the Adopt a Spot Coordinator arrange a suitable training day when there is demand from Spottees.

Lessons:

The time frame for a twelve month Sustainable Management Fund Grant is a very tight one, particularly for a planting project. I found it difficult stepping away from the project at this time of year, as people are beginning to plant trees and will start to face more complex problems. I appreciate that MfE has now increased the funding time to three years. This will make a significant difference for groups, and will allow them to become more sustainable as they will have three years to problem solve and work out solutions. Over twelve months most of my time was managing issues as they arose, and working out how to deal with them next time. I have done all that I can to ensure that major problems I could anticipate will not happen next year, and to educate the TPG of issues that may arise, however the group are still left with the problem of where to source trees for next year.

Information about survival rate of plantings and species use is being collected by the Global Volunteer Network. This information will be forwarded to GW and WCC to ensure it is appropriately disseminated to community groups in the Kaiwharawhara Catchment.

My only recommendation to other groups is to plan for next year from the very beginning of the project. This should be a key focus of your work with the group. Distribute plants earlier so you can follow the process for the first month after planting and ensure it is all working smoothly.

Phases:

I found it difficult to stick to the Phases outlined in the Schedule. Volunteers were approaching me from my first week in the job, so I was matching Spotees to sites from early on in the process. In the same regard, advertising was carried out throughout the project. In my last week I gave a talk to a local group promoting the Adopt a Spot scheme.

Conclusion:

The Adopt a Spot Project has been a worthwhile undertaking. The Trelissick Park Group has gained the extra support they required which will spread the work load between more people, and allow the group to achieve more in Trelissick Park. This will make it easier for the community to continue to care for Trelissick Park and continue their role in battling environmental issues in the Lower Kaiwharawhara Catchment. The people involved with the project are enthusiastic about what they can achieve, and as long as they are supported and involved with the development of the Adopt a Spot Scheme I am sure many of them will continue to care for their sites for a number of years. This is a great success for the lower Kaiwharawhara Catchment and the Wadestown, Ngaio, Khandallah and Highland Park Communities.