

Appendix 7.1

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sarah Hunter

FROM: Trevor Freeman, District Conservator

DATE: 16 February, 2001

SUBJECT: Langford-Fallon Reserve

As you are aware this area of land was formerly in pasture and was purchased after Cyclone Bola so it could be planted in trees to afford better protection to the adjacent houses. Flooding and erosion debris had caused problems downslope during the Cyclone (and to a lesser extent during earlier storm events) and the concern was this could occur again. Farm ponds thought to accentuate the risk were drained and the whole area planted in trees. Species were selected for specific areas with consideration for future amenity use as well as the need for early protection.

The trees are now sufficiently established to afford a high level of protection with the possible exception being behind 63-69 Seddon Crescent where the chosen varieties are present in sufficient numbers but have been slower growing. Willows in the Southern area are under attack by Willow Sawfly. This is a newly introduced pest, the effects of which are still being evaluated. So long as these trees survive, they will provide adequate soil erosion protection.

Where evergreen trees have now formed a closed canopy, they could be thinned. This would also enhance tree health. A minimum stocking of 500 stems per ha is recommended at this stage to retain the soil conservation function, except perhaps for selected ridge top areas that could be cleared to give views. Pruning to enable mountain bike passage beneath would be acceptable.

Earthworks to reform drained dams or form new holding areas for runoff water are not recommended.

There is quite a network of tracks which are now overgrown and difficult to see. Outside of this much of the area is suitable for development of bike tracks. This would require a D.P. Chapter 6 resource consent. A minimal track width is recommended. Runoff controls will be critical to avoid concentrating water from ephemeral watercourses or the track surface itself that can then initiate surface erosion and sediment transport downslope. Assuming lengthy very steep sections are likely to be attractive to mountain bikers and therefore cannot be avoided; these may well require a hardened surface or engineered cutoffs as bikes in particular are very good at creating runoff channels.

While there has been some weed control carried out this has been mainly near existing tracks. There are substantial areas of gorse and blackberry, which have choked out other ground cover, and while the Regional Pest Management Strategy requires only property boundary control, this must detract from amenity value. The land is too steep for mechanical control and chemical control will be ongoing and expensive. A permanent total tree canopy can suppress these plants, but this may not be what you wish to achieve. Grazing, with cattle initially and sheep only later should be considered to restrict weed growth, make access for recreation and weed control easier and also reduce the considerable fire hazard. Tree pruning or thinning will of course produce more ground slash and stock would help to break this up.

Trevor F