

Bringing Nature into the City: Open space planning in Hamilton

A guide urban greenspace planning field trip

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Field trip Guide

BRINGING NATURE INTO THE CITY

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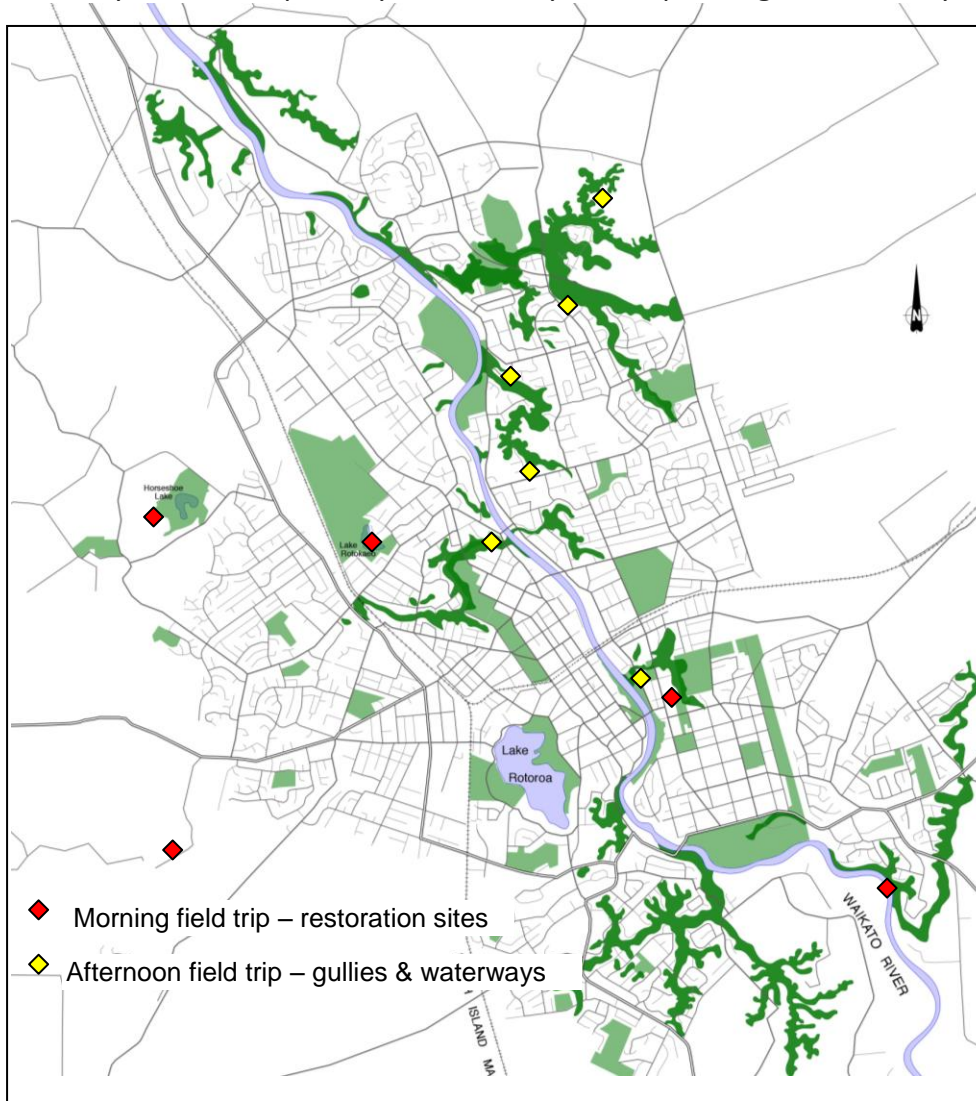
Waikato Branch of the NZ Geographical Society

The aims of this field trip are to:

- demonstrate the importance of environmental management for urban sustainability;
- demonstrate how the management of green space can add to or subtract from a sense of place;
- illustrate examples of ecological restoration in Hamilton;

The structure of the field trip

The field trip is broken into two parts, a morning phase and an afternoon phase, each of them different. These may be taken separately as a half-day field trip, or together as a day trip.



ITINERARY

Morning: 9am – 12 noon: Eco-restoration

This field trip focuses on eco-restoration of Hamilton's natural vegetation and wildlife. It will show how our ideas of restoration have moved from planting a restricted variety of native plants without much thought to their ecological context and function, to increasingly sophisticated efforts to recreate viable and sustainable ecosystems.

9am Bus departs from the Gate 1 carpark off Knighton Road

9.15 – 10am. Hammond Bush and Riverlea gully restoration: bus stops at Silva Crescent and group walks down to Hudson Street Gully and riverside walkway to Hammond Bush; walks back towards Riverlea Gully and gets picked up by the bus at the end of Riverlea road (see attached map)

10.00 to 10.30. Tills Lookout: this site is an example of native planting which paid little heed to ecological principles but it gives an excellent view of the City and its ecological isolation from areas of native vegetation within the Waikato basin.



10.45 to 11.15am. Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park: an example of recent ecological restoration projects which seek to recreate communities of plants that are natural to the ecological conditions of soil and hydrology.

11.15 to 11.45am Forest Lake at Minogue Park: an older example of ecologically informed native restoration surrounding the small remnant peat lake of Forest Lake.

11.30 to 12.15. Seeley's Gully: Dr Alwyn Seeley purchased a local grazing property in the 1950s and over the next 30 years slowly restored the area to native bush. The site is an example of an individual's passion and patient progress (and learning) over the years.

Lunch from 12 to 1pm is at the University – It can include a brief overview of the history and function of the campus lakes and, if there is time, a stroll to several sites of restoration on campus, including a fernery and a stretch of stream restored from a former drain.

The afternoon, from 1.00pm to 3.00 or 3.30pm: Gullies and their social, physical and ecological functioning.

This field trip takes you to a selection of Hamilton's gullies, all in various states from highly managed to neglected natural. It will demonstrate the significance of Hamilton's gully systems for stormwater, recreation and biodiversity.

1.00pm The bus departs from Gate 1 Carpark off Knighton Road

1.10 to 1.30 Memorial Park stream; a stream that has been highly modified for aesthetic and recreational purposes.

1.30 to 1.50 McNicol's place – a neglected section of gully

1.50 to 2.10 Donny Park to Opal Street:

2.10 to 2.30 Hukanui School: restoration of a part of Kirikiriroa gully by Hukanui School

2.30 to 3.00 Mangaiti Gully: St James Street, Rototuna.

3.00 to 3.30 Edgecumbe Gully on the Waitawhiriwhiri system.

Open space planning in cities

Cities are grounded and supported by natural ecosystems. Sustainable cities depend on maintaining clean air, water, soil and vegetation. Attractive cities also need to be beautiful.

While cities such as Rome, Paris, Amsterdam and Barcelona are famous for their magnificent buildings and public squares, many of New Zealand's cities receive their beauty and sense of place from their natural and physical surroundings: Auckland with its harbours, beaches and volcanic cones; Wellington and Dunedin with their harbor, hills and town belt; Napier with its beaches and its bluff; Christchurch with its Avon River and the magnificent Hagley park. An important element of Hamilton's natural, physical and social/recreational character is its system of gullies, and increasingly, its areas of restored native planting.

In a process of collaborative social learning, the City Council, University, Wintec and voluntary groups have cooperated to bring back some of the native plants, birds and ecosystems that used to be here. Starting with the small remnants of native bush and wetland that were left, Hamilton residents have become increasingly sophisticated in their knowledge, understanding and management of natural forms and processes. They have also become more and more aware of the multiple values that natural features may have: gullies do not just have to be drains for getting rid of stormwater; they can also be corridors and networks for people, plants and animals. Similarly, parks and reserves do not just have to provide for sports fields; they can function as wild spaces for spiritual renewal, aesthetic beauty, and places for native wildlife. The field trip is intended to illustrate some of this learning by doing that Hamilton's residents have engaged in for the past 15 to 20 years.

<http://gullyguide.co.nz/files/Gully%20Book%20Mar%202007.pdf>

<http://www.waiwhakareke.co.nz/>

http://gullyguide.o.nz/files/booklet_fin.pdf

