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Return Address:

# Ben Rudd's Management Trust

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*Benjamin Rudd*

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Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter, No 8

( Stamp )

7 November 2001

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Welcome to the eighth Friends of Ben Rudd's Newsletter. This issue lets you know about the next picnic, which is soon!!

### **Joining the Friends, Donations of money, time or expertise**

- If you know of anyone who might be keen to join the Friends of Ben Rudds, please let them know about us, what we do, and how we can be supported. We are grateful to everybody on the current mailing list, for paying subscriptions. There are very few who have not paid for this year. Please, if you are still interested, contact us or Peter M.
- With this newsletter, we thank the following for making generous donations: The (now defunct) Otago Peninsula Walkers, who on winding up, disposed of its remaining funds, including \$300 to the Ben Rudds Trust (thanks to Jane Bruce for thinking of us!); Edith Mercier, who donated \$250 as a first instalment, for the erection of a new seat; Beth Larkins; Judy Russell; Teresa & Arthur Blondell. Thank you all for your generous support. Recent newcomers to the Friends are: Dave McLean & Jenny Winter, 62 Oxley Cres, Broad Bay, Phone 478 0491; Gavin McArthur, 37 Hargest Cres, Dunedin, Phone 455 0027; and Christine & Dave Still, 439 South Road, Caversham, Dunedin, Phone 487 9158.
- REMEMBER: Donations help the Trust and the Friends in the important work of rehabilitating Flagstaff for indigenous ecology and, importantly, for trampers. Money, or offers of assistance or expertise, are always welcome. Subs are \$5 per year per membership. Membership can be individual, family or club. Please send any money to the above address.

### **This year's picnic**

The 2001 picnic will be held on Sunday 18 November. As usual an OTMC day trip will arrive via Spiers Road and will descend by the Davies Track. Why don't you join the Club for this option? Meet at the OTMC rooms, 3 Young St, South Dunedin; leader Richard Pettinger phone 487 9488. If you want to attend the picnic only, people will be leaving from the Bullring from 10.30 onwards. Things to do while there include laying about in the sun, chatting, visiting Big Rock or Bruce Campbell's rhodie dell down the realigned Jim Freeman Track. You can check out the new "Douglas seat" down there, and debate the future site of a new seat (by the shelter)!

### **Revegetation Objectives and methods**

A while back I asked the New Zealand Ecological Restoration Network (NZERN) folk to comment on the issue of genetic purity in native re-vegetation projects, and nobody explained why it's important. I asked Ken Mason to assist the Ben Rudd's Trust and our Friends, as I had never heard it explained here in Dunedin. Since nobody seemed to be putting it into words (maybe it was thought that everyone knew?) I have come up with the following (reviewed and amended by Dr Kelvin Lloyd of Landcare Trust):

The gorse or broom are not species that can cross with the adjacent natives. If you make an undertaking to manage land compatibly with adjacent reserves and other neighbouring land where the local natives are growing, it would be unwise to plant a foreign plant that could hybridise with the true locals. This could bring in foreign genes to the local populations, with unknown effects on their viability. It also could result in the production of vigorous hybrids that compete with the local species, perhaps even more so than gorse and broom.

So the message is, tolerate the weeds, until you have a native plant seed source in place that is genuinely local, and is more likely to succeed when the weeds vacate the land. This will ensure compatibility among the vegetation in the area, and complete visual and genetic integrity in the landscape. This also helps ensure there is something of scientific value for botanists in the future. The following of genetic variation and its processes is an emerging and very important field of scientific study, and it is wise, if we can achieve it, to prevent the "muddying of the water". We should conserve the present genetic diversity of our species, and that could be endangered by the introduction of hybrid-forming relatives.

So, this leads to the question: "what is 'foreign'?" The above discussion of what can happen points to the answer to the question. And, this is exactly what the likes of NZERN and other well-informed restoration groups have been doing for years. If the plant species is already present on or near the land, then one should use plantings of material only of that exact variety. If the plant species is totally absent, then any introduction of plant material must be from the nearest naturally-occurring population of that species. Garden-origin natives would normally be seen as suspect. Anything of dubious origin can only be considered *potentially unwanted weeds* in the context of the ecosystem in question. Introducing a plant that would not normally grow on the site (including a NZ-native) might do one of two things: not establish at all, or go mad and stage a take-over.

Then, there's the argument that one should not be too precious or purist about an ecosystem, when there is scarcely one on the planet that has not been modified by humans, either directly by, for example, introducing gorse or, indirectly, for example, through global climate change. The response to this is that there's no *need* to make things any more modified, and it is *very easy to avoid* deliberate actions that could lead to genetic contamination.

The Trust would like to reiterate: Please contact the Trust's Project Officer, Ken Mason, if you would like to help with any kind of work on Ben Rudd's property, from native plant establishment to pest control and track cutting.

Richard Pettinger

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### **COVENANTING OPTION – OTMC AGM APPROVES**

As you know from the previous newsletter, the Trust has approached the Queen Elizabeth II Trust about the possibility of placing an Open Space Covenant on the entire Rudds property. The September OTMC AGM voted without dissent in favour of the Trust applying for one, with the details of the covenant to be approved by the OTMC, at a General Meeting.

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#### **Other news:**

- The track to the shelter is reportedly well used, but there are still fires being lit inside the shelter.
- The Jim Freeman track sign has been repositioned to help avoid people still getting off-track after heading off to the water hole.
- The Trust would like the help of someone with a GPS to assist in getting a precise fix on a couple of spots on the property. Please contact Ken Mason, Phone 476 7100.
- Ken says some of the areas of broom are taking off again. If it is not controlled, all our planting work is a waste of time. There is a possibility of cooperation with the Dunedin City Council Parks & Reserves Dept on a joint fire protection programme, and, as they are very keen to have ecological cooperation and management compatible with the Flagstaff scenic reserve they manage, they are willing to share through their contracting system, provision for any helicopter spraying in GPS-defined areas.
- The planting day on 28 July went well. All 46 Silver Beech trees (ex Flagstaff Ck) were planted. Thanks to all who attended. Remaining snow tussocks have now been planted. The next move is to attempt reintroducing *Celmisia densiflora* to the property.
- Bevan Blackmore has reported on recent planting by him, and the pest eradication by the approved shooter. 56 trees (kowhai, cabbage trees and lancewood) were planted, of which 16 appear to have been removed, and another 9 have been destroyed by browsing. Two Hunters have bagged 13 pigs, 1 goat, 1 deer (red) and an unknown number of possums on the Ben Rudd's land.

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### **SEE YOU AT THE PICNIC – 18 NOVEMBER!!**

Please contact me if you have any contributions, advice, suggestions, etc, for these newsletters. I can be emailed at richard.pettinger@orc.govt.nz, or phoned at home at (03) 487 9488.

- Richard P.