



Ngaio School Landscape Masterplan Consultation

BACKGROUND INFO

A landscape masterplan - why?

A year ago a group of Ngaio School parents started 'looking after the arboretum more'. We were all volunteers, who'd helped with projects in the grounds before, or were just keen on the tree area that the kids love.

Once we got into it, we found there were bigger issues to consider: about other areas of the school that might need more care, or could be changed in cool ways. It highlighted issues like teachers and parents not knowing who was meant to look after areas such as the special gardens. We realised groups of families did things, and then moved on, and no-one maintained or even knew about their project. We found ourselves in need of 'a plan' that would give us a set of goals the whole community could work to, so that individuals' efforts would amount to real long-lasting gains.

The parent group – now called the Ngaio Environment Group (Nestegg) – included people who work in this area, including Kerei Thompson who runs a landscaping company, and Ralph Johns, a landscape architect. The PTA commissioned Ralph's firm Isthmus to draw up what's called a 'landscape masterplan'. Isthmus laid out the bare bones – a structure for a plan so the community can set out clearly what we want to do over a period of years.

So what's in this draft version?

During the last few months Nestegg has put 'flesh' on that skeleton. We've come up with a overarching goal (a vision), worked out what seem to be the key elements of our school environment, and identified areas to focus on in the next few years.

We based this on what we've learned together, and on what we've heard from the children (Bush Builders and earlier Enviro Groups). We've linked up with other community groups to learn about planning cooperative projects. We've had input from the school's Maori whanau group, and from the teachers, the principal, and the Board.

Now it's the whole school community's turn.

How does a landscape plan fit in with other school plans?

Ngaio School hasn't had a plan for the development of its grounds before. Few primary schools do. We're lucky to have parents who can show how landscape planning can help focus community and management efforts.

Nestegg and the overall PTA and the Board are talking together to make sure things knit together well. The aim is for the landscape masterplan to sit alongside the Ministry/Board's plans for the built structures, with a comprehensive maintenance schedule covering all.

At this stage, the landscape masterplan is driven by the community, and its projects (like the arb planting) are funded through PTA fundraising, or separate project-specific fundraising.

Deadline for feedback: 31 October 2013

See PTA News page on www.ngaio.school.nz for links to the plan and more info