

# NELSON NATURE



Nelson City Council  
te kaunihera o whakatū

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## Landowners doing hard yards

Many Nelsonians living and working on rural properties are doing their bit to protect and improve the environment.

As part of Nelson City Council's Nelson Nature biodiversity programme, support is available to assist landowners who are keen to restore native habitats and return their land to its former natural glory.

Nelson Nature is an all encompassing environmental programme that dedicates \$6 million over the next 10 years to addressing issues across all land types and their associated ecosystems. The programme aims to restore indigenous vegetation and wildlife on both public and private land. By working together with landowners, the Nelson Nature programme ensures native species survive and thrive across the Nelson landscape.

Council can provide support to landowners by way of; herbicide gel to target weeds such as old man's beard and banana passion fruit, traps on short or long-term

loan to get rid of pest animals such as rats, stoats and possums, and eco-sourced native plants to restore the land to native forest and help improve pockets of existing vegetation. Council also provides grants to encourage landowners whose properties adjoin streams and rivers to fence and plant the margins to help improve water quality and provide fish habitat.

Across Nelson, land holdings comprise a number of working farms and many lifestyle blocks where landowners are working tirelessly to create healthier forests and improved bird life by weeding, trapping and planting on their properties. Listed on this page are a few of Nelson's environmental heroes.

➔ Please contact Environmental Programmes Adviser Lynne Hall, phone 03 546 0308 or email [lynne.hall@ncc.govt.nz](mailto:lynne.hall@ncc.govt.nz) to discuss assistance for improving biodiversity on your rural land.

## Working tirelessly to control pests

**GRAHAM, MARJORY AND CLINT FERN**  
(DELAWARE BAY)

The Ferns of Delaware Bay have 6 hectares of remnant native bush on their property, most of which is protected under a QEII covenant.

Attracted by the bush and picturesque location on Maori Pa Road, the family bought the property in 1999 and moved there in 2004. Since then, they have worked tirelessly trapping pest animals, carrying out weed control and replanting areas of native bush.

Graham says they carry out pest control twice every week, walking round the 6 hectare property checking the traps. In the last three years, the family has caught 1312 mice, 390 rats and 147 possums.

"Bird life has increased no end," he says. "After 30 odd years, weka have returned. We also have moreporks, tui, fantail, bellbirds, grey warblers, kereru and pukeko."

The family has also replanted thousands of trees by taking cuttings and seeds from their bush including titoki, tawa,



Marjory, Graham and Clint Fern in Delaware Bay.

pukatea and nikau. Due to the heavy clay on the property, they provide seedlings to Nelmac in exchange for high quality soil.

"Many titoki trees in Nelson have come from our property," Graham notes.

They also built a clay house 'to do their bit for climate change' and often host school and environmental groups, who help out with the trapping.

## Recreating what once was

**RUDY ZONDAG**  
(TODD VALLEY)

It was about six years ago when Rudy spotted an article in a local paper urging people who wanted to get bird life on their property to contact Nelson City Council to see whether they would be eligible to receive native plants.

He picked up the phone and organised a visit from a Council staff member, who advised that a fence would first need to be built on his 3.5 hectare section of the Todd Valley hillside to protect the plants from wild goats.

Since the fence went up four or five years ago, Rudy estimates he has received 500 native plants from the Council every year. Along with his contribution, more than 6000 native plants have gone into the property.

"The only thing here was kanuka, the rest was rubbish. We had banana passion fruit, blackberry and gorse.

"It's been a lot of hard work to get on top of it but I'm trying to recreate what might have been here originally. Many of our neighbours have the same vision,



Rudy Zondag in the Todd Valley.

so hopefully this whole hillside will be covered in natives in the future."

He adds: "Now that I'm getting

somewhere with the weeds, it's much easier to look after the property. The bird life is definitely coming back."



Ian and Ann Thomas at their Lud Valley home.

## Looking after their environment

**IAN AND ANN THOMAS**  
(LUD VALLEY)

After marrying 43 years ago, Ian and Ann Thomas took over their 15 hectare block in the Lud Valley from Ian's parents.

A key focus has been fencing off the Lud Stream and its smaller tributaries on the property from stock, and replanting the stream margins with natives.

The pair were devastated during the 2011 floods when a big slip destroyed their hayshed and a newly fenced and planted area. "We had to replant the whole lot," Ian recalls.

"Several thousand mostly native plants have gone in since then."

Ian says the main motivation to carry out the work is to look after the environment and make the property easier to manage using break fencing.

"Once the stream is fenced off, there is a cost involved to provide water to stock through the reticulated supply, which can get affected by floods."

They're currently working on developing a corridor of native plants between the stream and the forestry block that neighbours their property.

"We have a terrific amount of bird life up here now. Wood pigeons are back, so are tui and bellbirds."

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