

6 Torbay St  
New Plymouth.

The Editor,  
Daily News.

Dear Sir,

5/5/95  
Presence of a location of 40  
springs discharging into the Park from  
the racecourse plateau.

The occurrence of serious flooding coinciding with publication of my letter pointing out that sealing in the Pukehura Brook lands, <sup>catchment</sup> enhanced just such a possibility may have served well to highlight one of my concerns but for the same token, taken attention away from the far more critical issue that of the progressively diminishing summer flow threatening water quality. The lesser issue of path sealing destroying aesthetic values may also have been lost in the drama.

My prediction of the increasing risk of flash flooding seems, under the circumstances, to have gained for me a mantle of apparent wisdom to which I am not entitled. The simple fact is that the exceptional intensity of rainfall in this particular storm would have created serious flooding, regardless. To have the main lake in Pukehura overflow is very rare, if indeed it has ever happened before. The fact that flooding in central New Plymouth was comparatively light reflects great credit on those responsible for

planning & recent introduction of flood control measures. Effort & cost seem to have been justified in a single test of enormous potential consequence. Hopefully those same skills will now be utilised to save the park.

My casual observations of flow rates through the park, together with those of changing plant & waterfowl populations compel me to dare to suggest that we are perhaps within as little as ten years away from total summertime death of the lakes. This would mean no waterfowl, black repugnant-smelling water, no boats.

Expressions of concern should be backed with constructive solutions or alternatives. In the case of path sealing, that is very simple. Stop! According to the Management Plan 1993 (12.0) we are destined to have all major paths, which I take to be the lake walkway & Bandstand area, sealed. The previously meandering Saxton Walk between Tea House & Bowl has already been transformed into what might be described as a highway in comparative terms, complete with brick edging. The factions are already quipping about the need for traffic lights.

Finding a means of improving the summer water flow is far more complex but it may well be that the developments on the high plateau which is shared

between the Racecourse & Highlands Intermediate School could hold the key to salvation for Pukehura Park but lateral thinking is required. Any effort to speed drainage from this plateau will strike the death knell for the park. In fact, a form of **UNDRAINING** is required.

My observations reveal that at this moment, between Filthip & Upjohn Streets, the park's lifeblood is bubbling from no less than forty visible springs which are fed from the plateau. There is an impressively even spread of seventeen between Filthip St & the Bowl, nineteen between the Bowl & List St & four beyond to Upjohn St. The majority originate from non-residential land & continue to serve the eastern reach of the Pukehura, Brooklands, Marauni watercourse throughout summer.

It is my contention that if all the stormwater that accumulated on the plateau could be first channelled into a system of dispersed underground reservoirs from which it could slowly permeate into the water table sustaining the forty springs, an engineering masterpiece would be the result because not only would the risk of flash-flooding be reduced, even in the Roagan St area, but the high level water table vital to the future of the park would be replenished. Too costly? What price Pukehura Park?

There is more. In the Maranui watercourse there are three path cross-overs which with very little modification could be transformed into retention dams. There are two more in the Tuhū Kiri Bell. Collectively, they are capable of impeding the flow of large volumes of flood water, a proportion of which would help replenish surrounding water tables. An investment paying double dividends.

My objection to the sealing of paths may be interpreted as ~~was~~ emotional & personal. But I do believe that money used on this questionable project would have been much more wisely spent researching the catchment very thoroughly in efforts to resolve the summer water-flow problems. Or even servicing the silt traps vital to retaining lake depth & purity. The Management Plan statement (18.2) that '--- accumulated debris & silt will be removed from the lake systems' seems to have been neglected. Installing those traps was very costly. Filling the main lake with 38000 cubic meters of solid fill would also be costly.

The values I defend are those which exist but may not be recognised by others until their absence makes them obvious.

George Fuller.  
5/5/95.