

Cape pondweed

Cape pondweed (*Aponogeton distachyos*) is an introduced plant from South Africa and has been present in Waiwhetu Stream for many decades. It is the dominant, sediment-rooted, aquatic species and was present in approximately 3.8 km of the stream bed from Hamerton St to beyond the end of Hayward Tce. It is considered an environmental weed in Waiwhetu Stream and various methods have been used to try to control it; in the past Diquat gel was used but this does not kill the plant. The current management method is council contractors manually cutting the stems near their base with a scythe every few weeks although the plants regrow within two weeks.



Cape pondweed in flower, Waiwhetu Stream



Cape pondweed diggers with supporters on the berm bagging plants

Greater Wellington provided four sets of waders and gloves for a small but keen group of Friends of Waiwhetu Stream volunteers to start manually removing the plant by digging out the tuber root. The people in waders are supported by volunteers who pick up the plants and bag them for disposal. Hutt City Council arranges for the collection of rubbish removed from the stream. In addition a small group of staff volunteers from the Open Polytechnic began digging it out above and below the Birdwood Rd bridge as a Friday lunchtime activity with support and waders provided by the CEO.

A large amount of domestic, construction and other rubbish has also been removed from the stream bed.

PROGRESS CHART

Key locations	Date	Total completed (km)
Hamerton St (start)	20 Nov 2011	0
Tilbury St bridge	26 Feb 2012	0.39
Norton Park Ave bridge.	5 April 2012	1.01
Rossiter Ave bridge	20 May 2012	1.7
St Ronans weir	11 Aug 2012	1.9
Birdwood Rd bridge	2 Nov 2012	2.1
Te Whiti Park footbridge (northern)	4 Aug 2013	2.8
Whites Line E	12 Jan 2014	3.3
Wainui Rd to Hayward Tce	28 April 2013	3.8
Hayward Tce to Whites Line E (finish)	4 May 2014	4.3