

RETURNING NATURE TO THE VALLEY

Community action continues to restore the native reserves of Marsden Valley

School Community Beginnings

Nelson school students of the early 1990s will have fond memories of Marsden Valley tree planting days – not only an opportunity to escape the classroom but thrown in was a morning tea of burgers, drinks and apples, all sponsored by local businesses. Today's Marsden Valley Memorial Walk and adjacent areas are testimony to planting efforts of many people, including those of Nelson, Stoke and Richmond school students.

Marsden Conservation Reserve was vested in the Nelson City Council after district boundary adjustments were made in 1989. Earle Norris, as District Science Advisor with the Education Department, was approached by Council for assistance with the restoration of the area. Teaming up with conservationists Waveny and David Bolwell, the project began to gather momentum.

Science Lessons with a Grubber and Stake

In the 1980s, Stoke resident Earle Norris was aware that old man's beard, banana passionfruit vine and other weeds were smothering the native plants in Marsden Valley. Liaising with the Nelson City Council and schools, Earle began a tree planting programme that kick-started the transformation of this Valley.

Students not only carried out useful planting but had lessons on forest regeneration. For many, awareness of the future might not have extended past their burger and drink at morning tea, but some twenty years later the hand-grubbed, nursery-raised seedling and wooden-staked efforts are maturing to a sustainable forest with emergent kahikatea and totara.

Planting Extended up the Valley

After Council assumed control and maintenance of the area in 1989 they were able to extend the 'School Plantings Project' up the valley with the securing of a covenanted strip of land. This helped join the Marsden Conservation Reserve with other Reserves. For a time the volunteer group *Nelson Tree Planters*, under the umbrella of the Nelson City Council, took responsibility for the schools' planting areas. School planting continued until 2005.

Today Nelson City Council continues planting native trees up the valley, in areas that join with the Brook Conservation Reserve and the Roding Water Reserve. Maintenance of these significant forest wildlife corridors is currently being supported by the Marsden Valley Trapping Group volunteers.



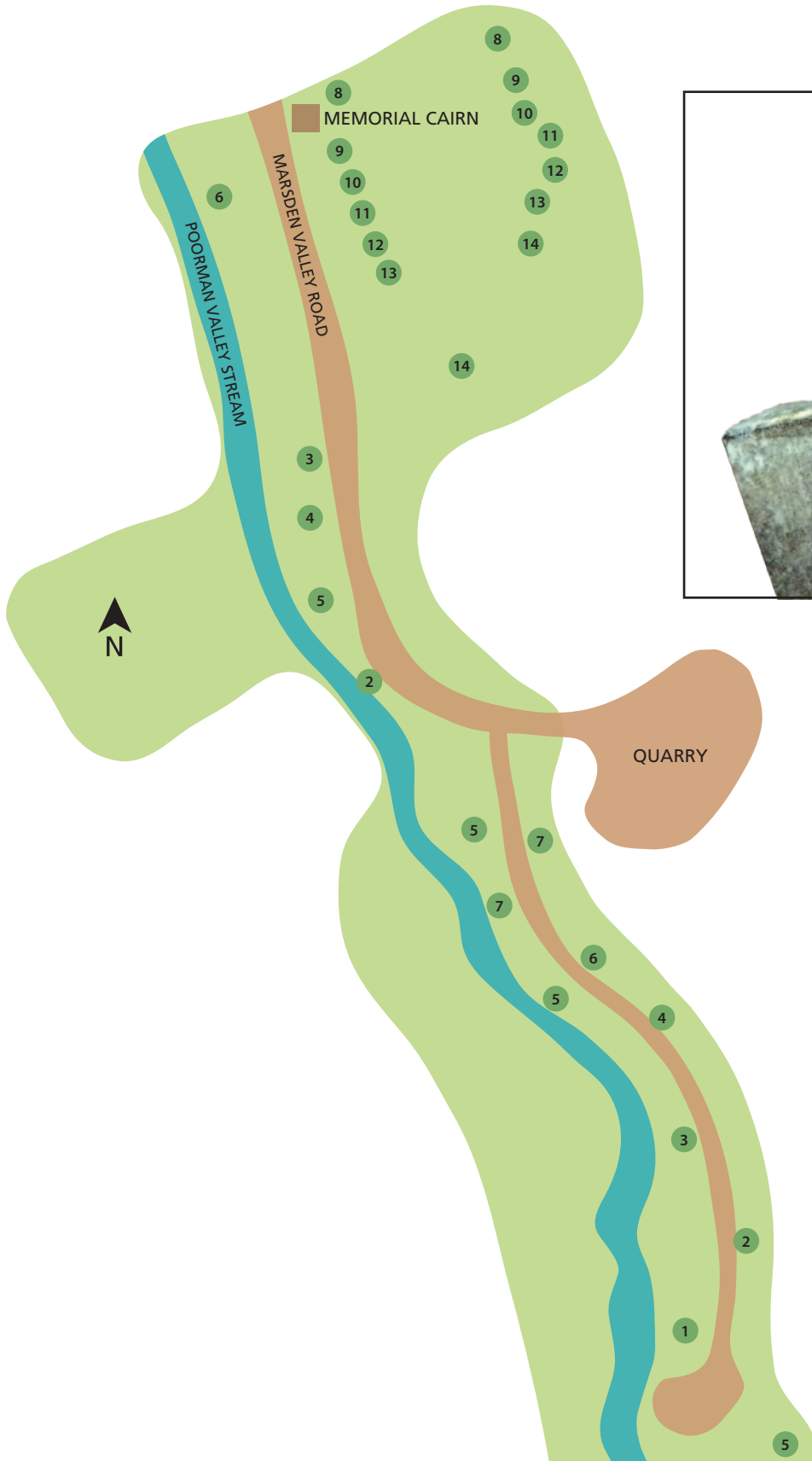
ABOVE Earle Norris, seen here in January 2015, co-ordinated the first planting of the Marsden Valley Conservation Reserve with school students in 1989. A member of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Earle was also a key figure behind the establishment of the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary.



RIGHT In the 1980s the native forest in Marsden Valley was being smothered by the climbing weed *Clematis vitalba* commonly known as old man's beard. It is a problem plant, due to its vigorous growth (up to 10 metres a season) and its ability to produce over 100,000 seeds per plant. These are easily spread by wind and water. Old man's beard and other weeds are still a problem today.

Sketch map showing areas planted by participating schools 1989–1994:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Kiwi Conservation Club | 8 Waimea Intermediate |
| 2 Henley Primary | 9 Birchwood Primary |
| 3 Nelson College for Girls | 10 Nayland Primary |
| 4 Auckland Point Primary | 11 Enner Glynn Primary |
| 5 Victory Primary | 12 Stoke Primary |
| 6 Richmond Primary | 13 Tahunanui Primary |
| 7 Nayland Primary | 14 Broadgreen Intermediate |



RETURNING NATURE TO THE VALLEY



ABOVE Marsden Valley Trapping Group member Don Sullivan re-sets a 'DOC-200' design stoat trap. Don altered the original design to open from the base to make it easier to use and safer to set. Eggs are used to lure stoats. The entry hole for the stoat is sized and positioned in a way that prevents harm to the inquisitive weka.

BELOW Members of the Marsden Valley Trapping Group. There are around 10 trap lines in Marsden Valley with over 600 traps. Each line has a variety of traps and is checked weekly.

When the group first started in 2007, they carried out a survey that recorded a total of 33 birds. A 2012 survey of the top sections of the valley counted 195 birds. Species such as kea, kaka, brown creeper, falcon and weka, not seen for decades, are now returning to Marsden Valley.

The Marsden Valley Trapping Group has over 30 active members and has won several community conservation awards.

The Marsden Valley Trapping Group

A group of motivated volunteers set up a programme in 2007 with the aim of controlling noxious weeds and enhancing bird life in the region. The many accessible and well-used walking and biking tracks made it easy for this group to start this programme.

The Group aims to keep pests as low as possible, to eliminate weeds and to restore a chorus of bird song for all visitors to enjoy.

New volunteers are welcome.

Forest Regeneration

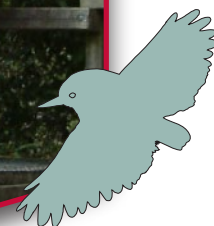
The Marsden Valley Trapping Group sets traps for pests and removes unwanted plants. They are helping to eliminate animals such as rats, mice, possums, weasels, stoats, ferrets, hedgehogs, goats and pigs. These introduced animals cause severe damage to the forest and are competing with the native species for their plant and food supplies. They also eat lizards and the eggs and chicks of native birds and by doing so they degrade the natural biodiversity of the forest. If young forest seedlings are prevented from thriving, the forest will not survive. Native birds are particularly important in regenerating this forest.

What you can do to help

- Take all rubbish away with you.
- Respect the work of the volunteers and do not disturb traps.
- Become a member of the Marsden Valley Trapping Group.
- Make a financial donation.



For more information on the Marsden Valley Trapping Group email: marsdenvtg@gmail.com



BARNICOAT RANGE WALKWAY

When biking or walking in this area please remember

Safety

Mountain bikers should follow the Mountain Bikers Code, give way to walkers and stay in control of their bikes.

Tracks and roads will be closed from time to time due to management operations or fire safety; temporary closure signs will be put in place. For your safety follow instructions on all signs.

Water Catchment

This trail passes through land that supplies water to Nelson. Please respect this and follow the environmental care code at all times.

Rubbish

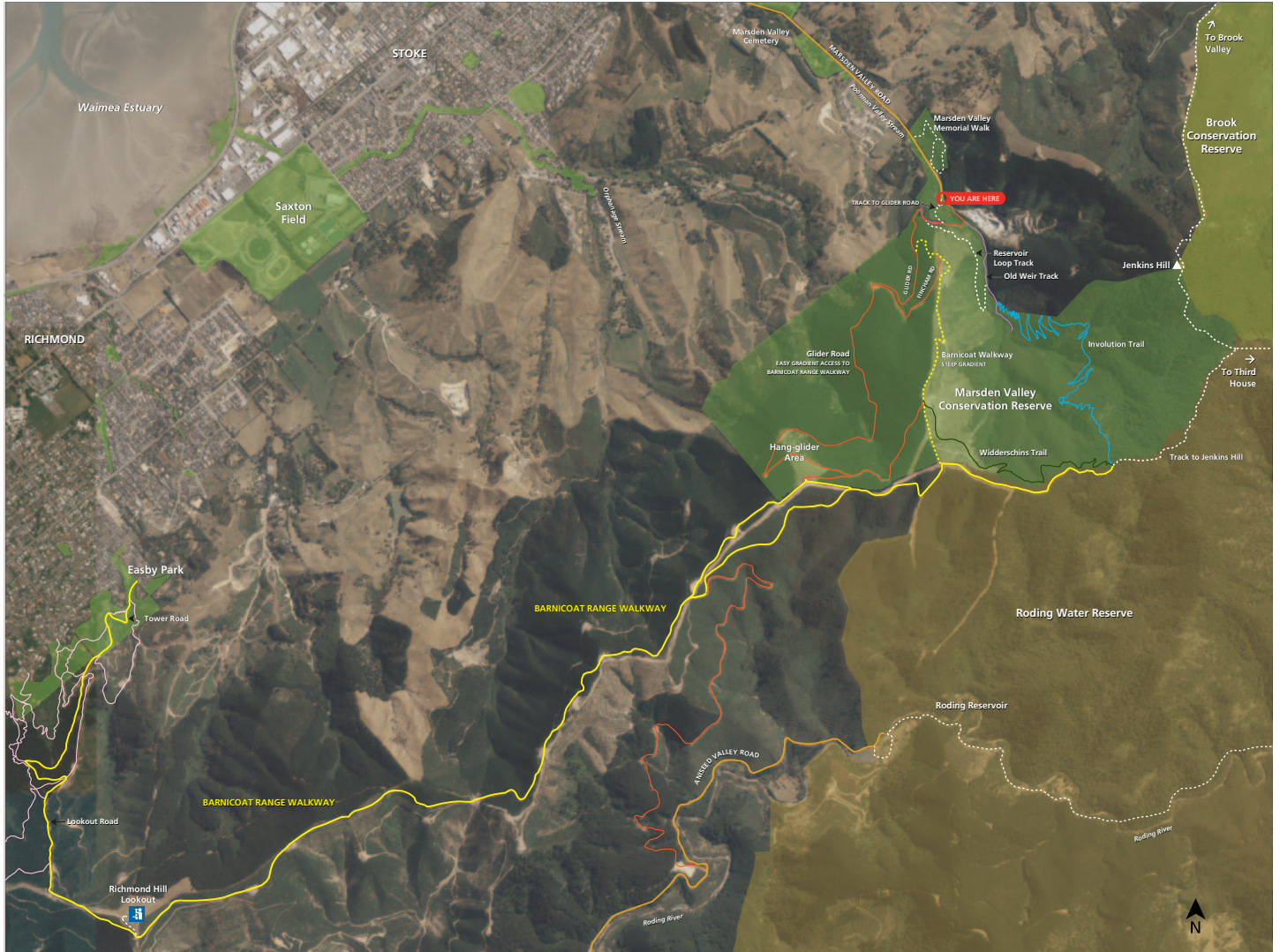
Do not litter. Take your rubbish away with you.

Marsden Valley Trapping Group

Please do not disturb traps or trapping line marker tapes. Trapping areas extend throughout all Reserves.

Private Land

Please respect private quarry, farm and forestry land.



MAP LEGEND

- Barnicoat Range Walkway
- Barnicoat Walkway
- Public Road
- Access Road (locked gates)
- Richmond Hills Tracks
- Viewpoint

mountain Bikers code

Respect others	Respect the rules	Respect the track
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in control. • Give way to walkers. • Signal your approach and pass with care. • Ride shared-use tracks in small groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride only where permitted. • Obey permission free private land owners. • Leave gates as you find them. • Be prepared - take food, water, tools, first aid and warm clothes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't drink, eat, converse or push on bars. • Avoid riding in the mud and ruts. • Take vehicle home, close and lock to prevent spreading seeds.

NEW ZEALAND ENVIRONMENTAL CARE CODE

- Protect plants and animals**
Treat New Zealand's forests and birds with care and respect. They are unique and often rare.
- Remove rubbish**
Litter is unattractive, harmful to wildlife and can increase worms and disease. Do not litter. Carry out what you carry in.
- Use toilets provided**
- Keep to the track**
By straying to the track you lessen the chance of damaging fragile plants.
- Consider others**
People visit the backcountry and rural areas for many reasons. Be considerate of other visitors who also have a right to enjoy the natural environment.
- Respect our cultural heritage**
Many places in New Zealand have a spiritual and historical significance. Treat these places with consideration and respect.
- Enjoy your visit**
Enjoy your outdoor experience. Take a last look before leaving an area, will the next visitor know that you have been there?
Protect the environment for your own sake, for the sake of those who come after you, and for the environment itself.
- Tohū te Whenua (Leave the land undisturbed)**

For more information on Reserves, walks and bike tracks visit: www.nelson.govt.nz



More Nelson stories are featured on www.theprow.org.nz

This information is contained within an interpretation panel located in Marsden Valley, Stoke, Nelson, at the car park for the Barnicoat Range Walkway and mountain bike tracks.

MARSDEN VALLEY PANEL DESIGN: Janet Bathgate art&design 2015