



Meaning and design of nature for the urban built environment

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POSTER ABSTRACT:

Urban Streamscapes : What do people want to see in their neighbourhood?

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NIWA stream ecology researchers asked over 1000 people at the Manukau Home & Garden show in Auckland “Which of these streams would you like to see in your neighbourhood?” This research aims to see whether stream restoration can achieve the twin goals of giving the public what they want to see and providing good ecological function. It is intended to help city councils with their urban planning. The photographs and survey results are displayed in this poster. Visual appeal was a strong determining factor for the most liked streams, particularly vegetation and a view of the water were important. Safety (for children) was of utmost importance to some, and lack of safety barriers was often a reason for disliking a stream. People generally preferred tidy vegetation that was not overgrown with weeds. Few people mentioned habitat or ecological aspects of the streamscape, but natural appearance and native vegetation and foliage were important. Structured, concrete channels were generally seen as boring or sterile. Children wanted to get into the water, but adults wanted to keep them out! We were encouraged to find overlap between what people like (e.g. healthy native vegetation, naturalness, and clean water) and features that help to restore the ecological values and functions of urban streams. Adding safe walkways and positions for water views would enhance human appreciation and enjoyment, and may increase the perceived value of urban streams.