

*The real work begins. Each of the Nelson schools is responsible for keeping their strip of land free of weeds once the hard work has been done.*

Photo: DoC



least one or two colonizing native trees each on cleared ground this year. Each school strip is to be labelled, as are individual plants with type and planter's name.

All classes returned to the area in November to clear away unwanted regrowth. This year the strips will be extended.

A working day for adults was organised by the Nelson branch of Forest and Bird in April, and they tackled the problem plants in the head of the valley. It was encouraging to see about 50 people, aged 14 to 80 plus, making good progress in helping to save a diverse coastal forest remnant. Another further successful work day was needed in November.

Through these efforts, Marsden Valley can regain its original charm. Children have

observed mature pukatea, matai, titoki and many other coastal natives; they have also observed seedlings on the forest floor, which, given a chance, will grow to maturity. Marsden Valley is thought to have the most southern stand of pukatea in New Zealand.

Perhaps past attempts to control old man's beard have failed because they tended to be "one-off" attempts at solving the problem. It is the view of those involved in the Marsden Valley Project that with a co-ordinated community effort over a period of time the problem in this area can be controlled. 🐦

*Earle Norriss is a district adviser with the Department of Education in Nelson. He has been an active Forest & Bird member for many years, having played a large part in the founding of the Ashburton and the Waitaki branches.*