



Report from the Waikato Biodiversity Forum held on Friday 30 November 2012 at Te Rahu

Purpose

The purpose of this day was to:

- Work together to maximise outcomes for wetlands
- Network and share ideas with others who undertake wetland protection
- Highlight the future plans for the National Wetland Centre at Rotopiko/Serpentine complex
- Provide a set of top tips which would benefit a new wetlands project in Waipa district

Introduction

Around sixty gathered at Te Rahu Hall near Rotopiko/Lake Serpentine to network and share ideas on wetland restoration in the Waipa district. The Forum was opened by Charlie Maikuku a kaumatua from Ngati Apakura. He blessed the day for a productive time together.

The presentations began with Julian Williams from the Waikato Raupatu River Trust detailing aspects of the tribe's connection to the Waikato River. He spoke about how water quality plays a significant role in the way that Iwi exercise their roles as kaitiaki and effect their mana whakahaere e.g. ceremonial and kai gathering. To be effective as kaitiaki, and community partners, Iwi must be directly engaged in water quality management through decision making at the highest level, determining allocable and non-allocable status of water bodies, identifying and protecting significant wai taonga and incorporating matauranga maaori into catchment management plans.

Dave Klee from Fish and Game gave an interesting presentation on constructing wetlands and showed slides of before and after the construction work. He detailed the successes of this work around the Waikato.

Monica Peter who has worked with the NZ Landcare Trust ran through the vegetation monitoring section of the WETMAK. The kit is a valuable tool for community groups to measure success and includes guidelines on creating a management map, photopoints, wetland WOF check, mapping wetland vegetation, weed survey and vegetation plots.

Lucy Roberts Programme Manager Whangamarino Wetland/Waikato River with the Department of Conservation presented on the importance and value of partnerships when undertaking wetland restoration. She gave an overview

of work carried out Te Matapuna Wetland, at the southern edge of Lake Taupo and the benefits of working with local a contractor to build capacity to carry out willow control. Lucy also detailed the work being carried out in the Whangamarino wetland under the Arawai Kakariki Wetland Restoration Programme. Lucy's take home messages were to identify what you/your organisation can and can't do effectively and efficiently before starting the project / idea and clarify roles, who and which organisation is doing what and when right at the beginning of the project.

Leon Mackey's presentation detailed his and Te Awamutu Primary School involvement with the Mangaohoi Stream which began in 2009 when 11 classes went on a school trip to the stream. They walked the banks of the Mangaohoi stream and did a treasure hunt. Involvement continued with more class trips, activity days and student forums where students from local schools met and shared ideas and the vision for the stream. Leon's presentation was a highlight of the day. It was so inspiring to hear from such an environmentally knowledgeable young person.

Robyn Irving who works in environmental education gave a description of the environmental work schools are undertaking around wetlands in the Waipa. The two main aspects of environmental learning for children involves taking action and understanding the connections.

Corinne Watts from Landcare Research highlighted the importance of invertebrates found in and around wetlands. They are a valuable component of biodiversity and provide recycling services, food for other animals – birds, mammals, reptiles, other invertebrates, eat plants, pollinate plants and disperse seeds. Her take home messages were the importance of thinking about other ecosystem components e.g. invertebrates and the roles they play in the quality of wetlands and to tap into available resources especially the Wetland Restoration handbook.

Finally Lynette Benson the QEII representative for the south Auckland and north Waikato gave a brief description of the Trust's work in protection of wetlands through covenants.

The Forum participants visited Rotopiko/Lake Serpentine to hear future plans for the National Wetland Centre. There will be a National Wetland Education Centre built on the site which is great news for Waipa District. Board walks will be developed around and over parts of the lake to allow access to view the habitat and species of the area at closer proximity.

The Forum day wrapped up with discussion on tips for working together to benefit new wetlands and lake projects in the Waipa District. It is intended that the Forum coordinator will look for opportunities with existing groups and/or help establish a new group to carry out wetland restoration in the Waipa District as a follow up to the day.

Top tips for Waipa wetland projects
Important to share techniques for weed and willow control
Importance of islands of biodiversity for restoration
Catchment management Changing practices
Larger buffer zones
Sharing knowledge and resources
Contributions at all levels
Commitment to involvement in a project
Prioritise areas Do some well rather than scattered around
Tell the story-publicity
Develop regular events –with rewards
Get community buy in
Knowledge of drainage and how to improve hydrology
Obtain knowledge of resource consent rules or ask
Importance of fish passage in relation to culverts
Getting everyone on board - positive partnerships
Rates relief if restoring and maintaining a wetland
Importance of a Management Plan
Don't forget the bugs
Fresh input/people/ideas
Involve lots of organisations e.g. iwi, schools conservation corps community groups
Use handbook and resources that are available e.g. Wetland Restoration A Handbook for NZ Freshwater Systems edited by Monica Peters and Beverley Clarkson
Control water levels
Involve kids
Plant what would naturally grow in wetlands-ecosourced plants
Stick to natural landforms
Use big yellow machines sparingly
Have a clear vision –think it through thoroughly
Monitoring important
Think about the sustainability of the project
Whole catchment –nutrient management
Clearly define roles
Can't do it all by yourself
Ask yourself “What is your end result?”
Monitor –encourage people to be involved
Think about all your biodiversity at the site when carrying out management e.g. effect on insects of spraying for weed
Ask yourself “Can you realistically achieve your aim?”
Practical tip for weed management
Carry glysophate 360 in a squeeze sauce bottle (with label). Nick gorse with a knife and squeeze glysophate into the cut.

The ppt presentations are available by emailing Moira m.cursey@xtra.co.nz