

Report from the Waikato Biodiversity Forum

Saturday 30 October 2010, Tamahere

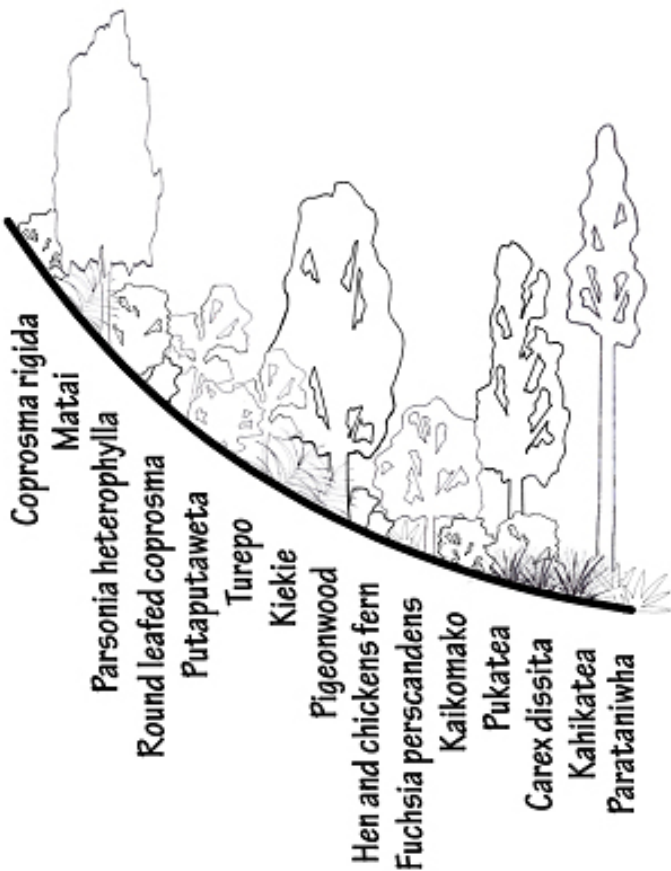
Purpose

The purpose of this Forum was to provide information to Tamahere residents and beyond about the unique biodiversity in the gullies of the Tamahere area. It was also an opportunity for participants to learn about the value of the biodiversity in the gullies. Workshops provided practical skills for the ecological restoration of Tamahere gullies.

Introduction and presentations

The Forum began at 9.30am with a welcome from facilitator the Moira Cursey. Sixty participants took part in the day mostly residents from the Tamahere area.

Wayne Bennett has completed an 'Assessment of the Tamahere gullies'. He showed slides of the vegetation types to be found in the various levels of a gully including the crest and hill slope, foot slope, back swamp, levee, stream, alluvial terrace, foot slope and crest and hill slope. The following diagram details types of vegetation found along the slope and the bottom of the gullies.



Allan Turner gave an update on Waikato District Council thinking for the Tamahere gully system. The assessment of the Tamahere gullies will help the council understand the big picture – understanding of what works is required and what could be achieved. This helps the council weigh up the value of a project and be sure the gains will be permanent. The



Coprosma propinqua
Mapou
Baumea tenax
Kahikatea
Astelia grandis
Swamp Maire
Manuka
Gahnia xanthocarpa
Pukatea
Mapou
Carex secta
Carex Virgata
Astelia grandis
Kahikatea
Coprosma tenuicaulis
Baumea tenax

current budget is \$10,000 per year and this is being spent mainly on employing a contractor to undertake works on council land. The council would like to involve locals in such works as much as possible but they use a contractor to ensure works are undertaken and maintained. The council looks more favourably upon requests for help when local people are making a contribution. The extent to which subdividing landowners should be required to undertake gully works as part of subdivision consent is currently being reviewed. The council will tend to spend more money in gullies where there is public access, for example undertake restoration works when a walkway is formed.

Leo Koppens lives on a property that has a 1.5ha gully. He planted his first gully in the mid 1970's. In 1995 he began planting the present site after a grove of pines were felled. He has pukatea, swamp maire, NZ beech in the bottom of





the gully and rimu, tanekaha, kauri, toro, miro and kowhai on the slopes. Leo has had to be mindful of the amount of water that flows through the gully floor at times. He has deliberately planted with plenty of space between trees to avoid damage from debris that comes through in times of flood. In the last 15 years Leo's focus has shifted slightly to providing food for birds. Tui now visit the area and stay for months. Leo is hoping they will start breeding in the area. The tui feed on both native and exotic nectar bearing plants.

Tim Newton spoke about the Hamilton City Council Gully Restoration Programme and what the programme provided to gully restorers. The programme includes a free comprehensive guide to gully restoration publication (Gully Restoration Guide), regular mail outs to contacts and contractors, tours and workshops run annually, a plants for gullies programme, aerial photos for boundary definition, profiling restorers via the media, provision of information and promotion of rat and possum control. A survey of gully owners say that they value their gullies because they are peaceful and private, a place to look at the trees, hear the birds and experience nature, an oasis that allows a retreat from the stresses of city life free of traffic noise a place of beauty, a wonderful spot to read a book or eat lunch. The highest reasons and reward for undertaking the work is enjoyment of planting and gardening and stabilization of the banks.

Ben Paris presented on the biodiversity in the gullies and spoke about the Environment Waikato Hamilton Halo Project, the bell bird translocation, Project Echo to protect bats in the gullies and fish in the streams. The Hamilton Halo project involves

rat control being carried out in tui breeding sites, such as, Pukemokemoke Bush near Tauhei. It is hoped to increase the chance of tui successfully breeding and consequently more tui within a 20km "halo" of Hamilton. These tui will visit and start breeding in the city and close environs including Tamahere. Project Echo is studying the habits and location of long-tailed bats. They have been detected in the Mangaonua gully systems, with regular 'sightings' (using bat detectors) at Hammond Park along the river margin. Bats prefer to live in riparian and gully habitats meaning connections between Hamilton and remnant bush patches are vital. They avoid open pasture, high density housing and light.

Gully visit

The Forum visited a gully off Bollard Road where a group of landowners have joined together to restore and protect their gullies. The gully contained a wetland area and indigenous vegetation clothed the steeper slopes. A group of gully owners contribute to a fund and they employ a contractor to carry out maintenance in the shared gully. It was a great example of how a gully can be restored and maintained and provide a higher functioning habitat for flora and fauna and a beautiful vista to enjoy.

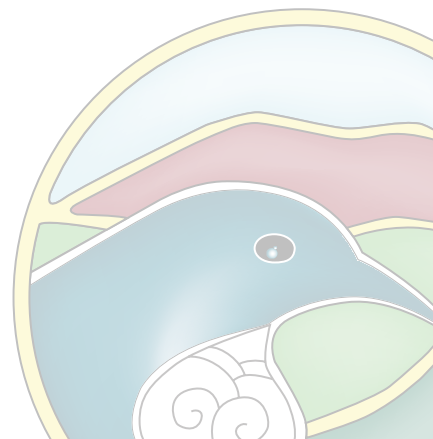
Workshops

The Forum attendees all took part in the following workshops.

- Gully access and tracks.
- Propagation of plants and collecting and growing from seeds.
- Plant ID and planting in difficult areas.
- Providing protection for flora and fauna in the gullies.

Here are links to information provided at the Protecting Fauna workshop:

- www.batcon.org/pdfs/bathouses/SingleChamberBHPlans.pdf
- www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/home-and-garden/build-a-weta-motel/
- www.predatortraps.com/downloads/ratkillsystem1.pdf
- www.goodnature.co.nz.s522o6.gridserver.com/news/?cat=13
- www.philproof.co.nz/index.htm
- www.ew.govt.nz/Projects/Hamilton-Halo/Planting/
- www.whatbird.co.nz/



Key recommendations

Actions	Who
Follow up with members of the community to plan how to support gully restorers in Tamahere –hold a meeting with key community people early in 2011.	Moira Cursey and Tamahere residents to organise meeting to discuss the actioning of the recommendations.
Extend Tamahere Gully Care and try to get more people involved in the Community Nursery Tamahere Gully Care jsimmons@doc.govt.nz.	
Establish a weedbusters group.	
Provide getting started information.	
More publicity re gully planting.	
Grow and plant with plants that purify water.	
Provide information for purchasers of gullies on how to restore – part of LINZ.	
Neighbourhood approach talk to neighbours – local initiatives.	
Community service – PD workers to help.	
Accessing funds for pest control – find out what resources are available.	
Place article in 'The Link' a Waikato District Council publication.	
Link in with other organisations to help.	
Useful contact Ecosourced Waikato wayne@forestflora.co.nz.	

Detailed report and the full powerpoint presentations

For a copy of all the detail of the days discussion points and the powerpoint presentations email Moira Cursey m.cursey@xtra.co.nz or phone 0800BIODIV (246348).

For those of you who didn't attend the Forum day aspects of the above recommendations and outcomes will be relevant to other projects with which you are working.

