



Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter

November 2017 Number 56

Kia Ora/Greetings

An update on some of the work undertaken over the past three months:

Waikato

- Held and organized Biodiversity Forum event in South Waikato, with a focus on sustainable management of plantation forests.
- Adding and updating forum members.
- Met with Piako Catchment Forum to update information on community group data base.
- Participated in Landcare Networking day at Mangapiko Hall, Pirongia.
- Appeared on Raglan radio's "DOC slot" to promote the Forum and discuss forum activities.
- Liaised regularly with Moira Cursey to help guide my transition into the coordinator role.
- Working with Project Echo steering group on advocacy for bat habitat protection in Hamilton.
- Met at Landcare Trust, Hamilton to discuss future of Plants for Gullies programme.

Coromandel

- Working with Otama Beach Reserve Group to get a plan in place for work in the Otama Wetland Reserve
- Working with Predator Free Hauraki Coromandel working group
- Working with 3 other community groups
- Provided article for the Mercury Bay Informer Summertime newspaper
- Responded to 11 enquiries for assistance from Forum members and the public

Unprecedented level of river funding

The Waikato River Authority has increased the funding available for the restoration and wellbeing of the Waikato and Waipaa river catchments from \$6 million to \$7.2 million. Authority Chief Executive, Bob Penter, says "the quality of applications deserving of funding this year had greatly exceeded that amount. The Board then decided that this year it could lift the available funding to \$7.3 million, as result of a lower funding amount awarded last year".

A total of 47 projects will receive funding in the 7th round. One such project is the restoration of the upper Kukutaruhe Stream and gully in the Hamilton suburb of Fairfield (shown in photo). The multi-year project received \$101,000 of funding from the Waikato River Authority in this year's funding round.



Once completed, this gully system will be one of the largest areas of restored biodiversity within city boundaries. The project site is closely connected to Fairfield College, the Donny Park Reserve and Aratiatia marae, making it strongly linked to environmental education of students and the local community. In the past seven years of funding, the Waikato River Authority has allocated

more than \$38 million to 248 projects. For further information contact:
Philip Burton, Communication Advisor, Waikato River Authority
021 428748 or 07 8397966

Ecological enhancement news in the Waikato District October 2017

Rotokauri ecological enhancement programme:

Year 3 of the programme has seen the largest single planting – over 30,000 native plants have been installed on retired grazing land, to establish around four additional hectares of native species dominated swamp and kahikatea forest habitats. This project is supported by the Hamilton City Council and the Waikato River Authority.



Before



After

Linking the ocean to the hills – the Kirikiripu catchment care group initiative:

Working with the local community and the Regional Council, Waikato DC's ecologist is helping to implement a habitat restoration initiative on reserve land in Raglan, trying to link the stream coming out of the hills to the ocean via Lorenzen Bay.

Puketirini – the rehabilitation of a disused coal mine:

Habitat enhancement continues along the main inlet stream and supplementary plantings of native climax tree species have been installed under the existing canopy.

Biocontrol in the spotlight – WWF Conservation Innovation Award finalist 2017:

Waikato DC is working in partnership with the Regional Council and Landcare Research to develop a district wide biocontrol programme, using biocontrol agents to help control some of the most invasive plant pests. This idea has been accepted as a finalist for the WWF Conservation Innovation Awards 2017.

Owhango Alive

Owhango Alive celebrated World Rivers Day in September at the Ohinetonga Reserve. The weather was misty but just right for planting 200 native trees to the accompaniment of birdsong from toutouwai (robin) and riro riro (grey warbler).

Nick Singers, a freelance Ecologist and Conservation Entrepreneur, was the guest speaker stressing the importance of keeping data which helps show whether our conservation efforts are working, and introduced everyone to on-line programs which allow everyone to see the trapping data, or send a photo from your smart phone of plants to be stored as a record, or just for identification purposes.



We have been running a trap library for more than a month now which has given us an insight into how many people in the area are making an effort to reduce predators. Meanwhile our own members doing the trap lines in Ohinetonga on a weekly basis reported mainly mice in October with one wily individual clever enough to avoid capture while regularly stealing the bait canisters (pill

bottles) from several traps. During the nesting season we are not seeing our usual toutouwai friends but shining and long tailed cuckoo were very much in evidence. Marion Johnston, Secretary.

Karioi Maunga ki moana

The dream to restore seabirds to Karioi Maunga came a step closer when a burrowscope used to survey seabird burrows along the Karioi coastline produced a pleasant surprise – a recently hatched Grey Faced petrel chick!

Auckland University students assisted the Karioi team when they recently brought along their burrowscope to check the contents of the coastal burrows. A burrowscope is similar in design and function to an over-sized endoscope and is widely used in conservation research and management in New Zealand, particularly in studies of burrow-nesting seabirds.

While the burrows have been intensively managed by the Karioi biodiversity team during the last few months it was an amazing surprise to discover a total of five healthy chicks.



Karioi Maunga Project manager and A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand Co-Director, Kristel van Houte, said “These are the first chicks that we know of to have survived this long into the breeding season for many years. It was a super exciting and very emotional moment to finally see chicks happily tucked away in their burrows after many years of hard work. Implementing large scale intensive predator control along the coastline and across Karioi Maunga has contributed to this success – an achievement that everyone involved in the project to date can be really proud of!” Thanks to Waikato Regional Council, WWF New Zealand, Tindall Foundation and DOC for supporting our monitoring and predator control work.

Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society

Apart from our usual pest control, work has been underway on two special projects on Mount Pirongia: to track the 20 kokako released on Mount Pirongia in June, and to translocate seed of the rare plant *Dactylanthus*. 11 kokako have been located inside the predator control area to date, and one outside; however only one pair has been found so far. Seed was recently collected from the underground, parasitic native plant, *Dactylanthus taylorii*, growing on top of Mount Pirongia to sow it lower down along the Mangakaraa



Nature Walk. Because it produces large volumes of energy for ecosystems via its nectar, it is an important species to re-establish, but it will be several years before we know if the seeds have germinated. To volunteer for our activities, please email Dianne June at djune@xtra.co.nz or via www.mtpirongia.org.nz. The photo is of the seedheads of *Dactylanthus Taylorii*, a rare native plant on Mt Pirongia which has been the subject of some field work for us recently.

Photo credit: Miranda Baptist. Update by Susan Emmitt.

The annual Landcare Networking Field Day for 2017

The annual Landcare Networking Field Day for 2017 organised by the NZ Landcare Trust and Waikato Regional Council, in conjunction with the Lower Mangapiko Streamcare group, started with heavy rain during the morning session. Approximately 100 people came together at the Mangapiko Hall to network, share ideas and learn from one another. They were well rewarded with informative speakers and a wonderful morning tea and lunch supplied by Pirongia Plunket parents (who are fundraising for a new children's playground in Pirongia). The rain cleared to warm sunshine after lunch, when the group were able to visit Don Macky's farm along the Lower Mangapiko Stream and could see firsthand the riparian planting, possum, rat and stoat control and hear more about the slow release P fertiliser trials on farm also. Many thanks to everyone who came along and supported this networking event. Nardene Berry.



Participants on Don Macky's farm alongside the Lower Mangapiko Stream. Credit NZ Landcare Trust

Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park

Horseshoe Lake and the surrounding land near Hamilton Zoo was bought by a forward thinking Hamilton City Council in 1975, but it wasn't until 1989 that the land came into the City. The property arm of Council was then tasked with disposing of 'spare land' and eyes were focused on Horseshoe Lake with the intent to sell the surrounding land for housing. At the instigation of the Parks and Gardens group, it was my privilege to lead the public consultation process with a range of organisations and individuals to identify how much land was needed to maintain the integrity of the lake. I'm sure we are thrilled with the outcome today.

Thousands of volunteer hours in planting and releasing over the past 13 years is rewarded in the growth of a regenerating forest – an ongoing project that will reward us for centuries. All ages contribute through Arbor Day plantings, Open Days, and Working Bees at Waiwhakareke (contact Stephanie at shammond7@gmail.com) and at our nursery at Mystery Creek (contact Catherine at blchsmiths@gmail.com).

For more information, see our Facebook page;
<https://www.facebook.com/waiwhakarekenaturalheritagepark/>
Stephanie Hammond – Friends of Waiwhakareke Co-ordinator



Native Plants for Urban Restoration workshop

Eighty people from across the Waikato region attended a fascinating workshop on 'Native Plants for Urban Restoration' on November 11th 2017 at the Mystery Creek Nursery, Ohaupo. The event was co-hosted by the University of Waikato's *People, Cities & Nature* Research programme and the Waikato Ecological Restoration Trust with support from Hamilton City Council.

Professor Bruce Clarkson opened the event with an inspiring vision for conservation and ecological restoration in New Zealand. Local experts then presented a range of workshops ranging from native plant identification to restoration planning and pest plant control. Workshop attendees enjoyed the high quality of workshops and networking opportunities and contributed to many interesting discussions.

Catherine Kirby.

The Friends of Te Whanganui-A-Hei Marine Reserve Trust

The trust was created to protect, maintain, enhance, develop and promote Te Whanganui-A-Hei Marine Reserve and associated terrestrial public reserves at Hahei.

The Marine Reserve covers 9 square kilometres between Cathedral Cove and Hahei Beach. It is administered by DOC in partnership with Te Whanganui-A-Hei Marine Reserve Committee, with fundraising activities undertaken by The Friends of the Te Whanganui-A-Hei Marine Reserve Trust.

One of the main reasons for setting up the Trust was so that funds could be raised to develop the educational potential of the reserve. We are extremely pleased to be able to help with the funding needed to deliver The Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust's programme Experiencing Marine Reserves (EMR) to local area schools. The focus of the EMR

programme (www.emr.org.nz) is to provide quality education opportunities, increasing awareness, and encouraging action and support for marine conservation in New Zealand. We are a Charitable Trust. Anyone wishing to make a donation to help with the operation of the trust and EMR programme can contact the secretary - Barbara Ritchie at barbritchie@xtra.co.nz For information about the EMR programme in Hauraki contact Amber Boyd hauraki@emr.org.nz



Derek Boyd Eulogy

Derek called out to our community 20 years ago. As a bushman and a hunter he saw the destruction of the coastal forest by goats and possums, the pohutukawa dying everywhere and the decline in the birdlife by stoats, weasels and rats.

The Whenuakite forest is a 1000ha block of regenerating native bush that extends to the coast just north of Tairua. Derek began culling goats and organised possum control. He involved land owners surrounding the forest, DOC, pig hunters and the local Tairua and Whenuakite communities. He set up tracks and traps through the DOC land and organised a team of people to provide the labour. He taught them to set and service traps and safety in the bush. This was the foundation of Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group, which is now one of the most successful kiwi conservation groups in the country.

And so our friend: thank you for your work and knowledge, your care and love. Go in peace. Haere haere haere. Tairua Conservation Community.

Opoutere Ratepayers and Residents Association ORRA

In early March torrential rain caused a significant slip on the side of Maungaruawahine. A large portion of the summit track was destroyed, houses on Ngahere Terrace were inundated with mud and rocks and a vast open slip face was left behind. This area is vulnerable to weed-strike but ORRA member Gordon Ikin devised a planting plan to revegetate this area. The goal is to reduce the chance of ginger, pampas, elaeagnus or ink weed getting established. Gordon sourced funding and plants, coordinated with engineers and council representatives and expertly supervised the planting day – we are grateful for his time and energy! Queen’s Birthday weekend saw a cheerful gang carting young native plants up the summit track to take part in stage one of Gordon’s plan. Young and old scrambled up the challenging terrain (special thanks to Jocelyn Nicholson who did several slippery treks up the hill with seedlings) and after two hours of digging and planting the hillside was transformed. ORRA holds regular weed-busting sessions and maintains an extensive network of bait stations and traps to keep the animal predators under control. See more information on ORRA www.opoutere.org.nz Victoria Spence



Arthur Hinds Eulogy - Whenuakite Kiwi Care Group

With a great sense of sadness we honor and hold up the life of Arthur Hinds. We have lost a leader and a friend who has inspired us with his vision, commitment, & hard work. Since the inception of our group in 2001 when charged with conserving the habitat of the Coromandel Brown Kiwi, Arthur has chaired our meetings.



He has travelled widely liaising & sharing our successful methods of pest-control, as we tripled the kiwi population & saw an explosion of other bird life in the monitored 4000ha. of Whenuakite regenerating bush.

Arthur's enthusiasm, his hands-on care & love for the land, and his belief in the importance of the preservation of our unique heritage has been caught and lives on in his family, friends and fellow workers. We too share his vision as sustainers of the environment and are charged to continue on with this work in the spirit he so ably demonstrated. Go well Arthur, you live on in our memories.

Photo: Kiwi caught on the Hind's farm being relocated to Motutapu.

Marion Johnston
Secretary