



Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter August 2012 Number 36

Kia Ora/Greetings to all Forum Members

Forum work over the past three months has included:

- Presented Hauraki District Council oral submission to their LTP
- Assisted community groups with the Regional Councils Small Scale Community Initiatives Fund applications
- Facilitated workshop (Funding and Sustaining Volunteers) and attended Coromandel Community Group hui
- Liaised with Thames Coromandel District Council to organise District Plan consultation with community groups on the Coromandel
- Attended WWF workshop Community Conservation Monitoring Toolbox Project (The purpose of the project is to develop a nationally agreed community conservation monitoring toolbox for groups who are participating in entry-level biodiversity outcome monitoring)
- Prepared for and organised Forum workshop "Reflection and Direction"
- Met and talked to a selection of Forum members to seek their feedback into the workshop
- Wrote Waipa District Plan review submission
- Met with DOC's GIS staff re Facebook, google documents, blogs and Youtube as a way for the Forum to communicate with community group, Forum members and the public
- Wrote Forum annual report
- Organised Conservation Week activity with DOC
- Wrote Forum workshop report
- Briefed future Forum Focus Group members
- Met with DOC staff re priority ecosystems and sites of community groups projects
- Met with NZ Landcare Trust re their publication Restoration Management Planning
- Met with WRC re review of Pest Management Strategy to provide future feedback.

Funding Advice

The Forum's website has a comprehensive list of funders. Moira is available for funding advice.

Omori/Kuratau Pest Management Group -Tip for Lure Protection

The group has been having trouble with mice – a species so fiendishly cunning that they have defeated my ingenuity for years. It's probably more accurate to say that mice are simply more intelligent than I and the fly screen tube debacle was a well intentioned but useless attempt at out-smarting them that proved this point. However, a great brain has been at work, and we are now having great success



Take a bow Graham Pilet. The man has shown his true genius by coming up with the (pink) hair curlers. They shall henceforth be known as **Pilet's (Pink) Protectors**. We have been using them on our Pukawa line for a couple of weeks and on the Dennis Whio Whio line. If they are placed over the lure on the nail they make a really snug fit and no mouse has managed to remove them or eat the lure.

Better news still is that they really work. So far this week we have caught 5 rats and 1 stoat in traps that have had the Pilet Protectors fitted – so the scent obviously gets out and the lure hasn't been touched in the other Pilet Protected traps. Bill, Graham, Peter and Dennis now have Pilet Protectors on their lines and we have ordered some more from the \$2.00 Shop in Taupo (probably about a week away) for Will and Patrick and a few more for Bill.

In one trap on our Pukawa line without a nail, mice have tried to move it out of the trap but the lure was still perfect. Also I have been asked how long a lure should last and the answer is about 3 weeks before it needs to be replaced. Pre the Pilet Protectors it was about once a week or less. Russell Shaw

Forest and Bird (Thames)

Beginning in 2004 a group of volunteers from Forest and Bird have been fostering the recovery of a strip of land along the West bank of the Waihou, adjacent to the Kopu bridge. The work was designed to improve the appearance of the main gateway to the Coromandel (via the bridge) and to support habitat for bird life of the area believed to be achievable through a greater diversity of plants and trees, and in reducing predator numbers. The area was dominated by fescue, ribbonwood, and mangroves. These have been left in place but have been augmented by flax, ngaio, and pohutukawa. Plants were donated by several organisations or bought through funding by Pub Charity. Initially about 10 volunteers worked on the site. Some weed control was needed but flax and ngaio needed little care after planting, with only pohutukawa still needing follow-up. Bait stations were set out at 5 points, for rats, possums, and rabbits and a different flavour of poison for hedgehogs. The line is now down to a single trapping point plus a few bait stations and one Fenn trap (other traps were lost in tides and floods or have fallen into disrepair). A family of black skinks seems to be thriving around the approaches to both old and new bridges. Two pairs of grey warblers and two pairs of fantails seem to be permanent residents. Many of the original volunteers in the project have had to drop out, perhaps only one now remaining. But recently new members have shown interest. If their support is confirmed the Branch would like to continue the work on this site with further plantings of varieties of trees which have been tested in the wetness and salinity of an inter-tidal zone. Ken Clark

Moehau Environment Group

It's been a busy winter for us! In June we won the Green Ribbon Awards in the 'Protecting Our Biodiversity' Category. It's a huge honor to be nationally recognized for our work, and we all feel really proud. We also hosted a weekend for Coromandel conservation groups. It was a fantastic event, with over 45 people attending. With so many groups involved in conservation

in the Coromandel, it was inspiring to hear what others are up to and share knowledge and expertise.



Kiwi Avoidance training held in Coromandel in August saw 16 dogs trained to avoid kiwi in the bush. We've also been tree-planting with Colville School. The kids got their hands dirty and planted 60 pohutukawa trees in the MEG Children's forest.

Two MEG members recently completed a study on the impact of Saltwater Paspalum in the Waikawau

Bay estuary. The weed is rapidly spreading, and altering the ecosystem as it builds up silt and "suffocates" the ground beneath. Natalie Collicot

Matarangi Reserve. Biodiversity Restoration Project

We have worked fulltime up to the age of 70. Our sons now run the businesses we established over 40 years ago. Modern technology has advanced beyond our capabilities, but work ethics, planning and achieving have not. We look around at our age group, some are healthy, some are not, and some are not even here any more.



We asked ourselves “What’s next?”

An opportunity to diversify, to have fulfilment, to be productive, to utilize our skills, our knowledge and our enthusiasm – to be useful in our retirement.

The Waikato Biodiversity Forum has given us a platform in which we can do these things. We are actively involved in a Wetland Biodiversity Restoration Project, and we know this would not succeed without the many volunteer hours and the enthusiasm and commitment of the Golden Age group within our community, our families and our grandchildren. Over the last 2 years we have focused on a full menu of project activities and honed our collective skills in:

- Networking
- Planning
- Fundraising
- Weed control
- Pest control
- Tree planting
- Monitoring
- Wetland survey
- Invertebrate and Bug survey
- Bird life observation

All of this has resulted in us having increased mental stimulus, more knowledge, new friends, greater fitness and a deep sense of satisfaction. For the community, a sense of pride in their area having such an ongoing project that they are part of. For our grandchildren, a wonderful heritage, a developing native forest, an awareness of the value of biodiversity, conservation, the return of native bird life - and they have been part of this. We thank the Waikato Biodiversity Forum, DOC, WRC, our local Iwi and our community. Thanks for the opportunity and for us: **What’s next?** Bruce Smith & Ian MacDonald

WETMAK Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Kit.

WETMAK is now available on the NZ Landcare Trust website. WETMAK has its own dedicated area on the NZ Landcare Trust website: www.landcare.org.nz/wetmak

Contact Nardene Berry Nardene.berry@landcare.org.nz or James Barnett James.Barnett@landcare.org.nz if you have questions about the kit.

Kokako Recovery in the Northern Pureora

Since 1997 the Howick Tramping Club has volunteered with predator control in the 1000ha Mangatutu Ecological Area. The project was begun by Laurence Gordon and when his funding ended in 2003, the HTC successfully applied for funding and helped manage the project. Rosemary Gatland added a further 500ha and kokako numbers have grown from 7 pair in 1995 to 111 pair in the 2012 DOC census. All birds have benefited including kaka, rifleman, kakariki, karerea and NI fernbird. NI robins have been translocated to support other projects such as Waitakere Ranges, Puketi and Mt Pirongia.

When kokako were confirmed in the nearby Tunawaea in 2010, 11 kokako were translocated to the Waitakere Ranges, and Rosemary took responsibility for developing a further 800ha bait station network here. Invaluable funding is currently being provided by The Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust, the World Wildlife Fund/Tindall Foundation and DOC's Waikato Community Conservation Fund. Volunteers come from other tramping clubs as well as many individual volunteers, and their commitment has ensured the ongoing success of the project. Our reward is the wonderful sound of the dawn chorus and the magnificent bush of the Northern Pureora.



Colleen Grayling
Chair
Howick Tramping Club Conservation Subcommittee

Nature Space Ecological Restoration in Aotearoa Web Portal

Nature Space is a new web portal for groups, individuals and landowners undertaking ecological restoration in New Zealand. The website offers information and resources, such as setting up a new group and promoting your group. There is also information about some of the community restoration groups and individuals working throughout New Zealand. It has been designed to allow restoration groups and individuals to store information about their projects and to promote themselves and their work and to learn more about



how to undertake restoration work most effectively. It will also allow people to connect with and learn from each other. The website has been developed by the Department of Conservation in conjunction with local councils with assistance from QEII National Trust and WWF NZ.

If you would like to be part of this online restoration website:

- 1) Visit the site at www.naturespace.org.nz.
- 2) Click on Add My Group.
- 3) Fill in the form, and submit your details.

Once you have submitted your details, Nature Space will create your own page and send you a username, password and user manual. From there on in it is up to you to add to and edit your own page. Please contact email info@naturespace.org.nz if you have any queries.

Pukemokemoke Bush Reserve Report

To all those who participated in the 'tree-athon' on 21st July, a very sincere thank you. As Warwick has said, all the plants were planted and all the planters enjoyed the day! A flood a month ago buried some of the new trees in silt and debris, but I think all these have since been re-established with stakes and a bit more hard work. The photo is of Warwick among some of the recent plantings showing the height of the recent flood water. A number of projects are underway: the continued extension of the Mangatea track and the building of boardwalks over flood-prone stretches; enrichment planting along all the edges of the forest where the privet has been removed and grassed areas established as well as understory planting in the forest stands; improving the signage in the riverflat area and provision of more visitor amenities. Working bees are Saturday 1 to 5 pm, 15



September, 20th October. Bring a spade for planting and a sickle or hedge-cutters for weed clearing. Visits to the Reserve by groups to study and work: Wintec (Wednesday 12 Sept) and Ecoquest students (Thursday 18 October) Friends are welcome to come and join in and work alongside our guests on these days. Alan Leadley

Opito Bay Environment Group

A trapping program is well established at Opito Bay through to Otama comprising 240 traps. Dotterel



nesting sites are well covered in this program with traps being set and monitored year round.

Results since February 2012 have been impressive:

Rats –133
Hedgehogs – 102
Stoats – 88
Feral Cats – 7
Possums – 158

Opito Bay residents have noticed an increase in bush birdlife as pest species are being reduced. A particularly satisfying

trapping exercise was the setting up initially of 25 traps, beefed up to 50 around Te Paki Point in June to kill off a large group of possums that were killing the pohutukawa trees and browsing on the regenerating plants. This action has virtually wiped out the resident population. A great result! This and other vulnerable areas will continue to be monitored.



Recently we were fortunate enough to receive a grant from the Waikato Regional Council for further weed and mammalian control products which will be put to good use in spring as pampas, tobacco weed and ginger start to grow in the warm weather. In addition to pest control we have planted an additional 300 native trees in the Bay this winter (kauri, taraire, tawapou, pururi, mahoe, kawakawa, flax, lancewood, pigeonwood and pukatea)

Chris Severne

The photo is of regenerating dune grasses planted in 2010 by OBEG.

Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society

Bait station filling is about to start on Mt Pirongia. The Society is very grateful for funding from Waikato



Regional Council and the Department of Conservation which has allowed the society to complete the latest extension of the bait station grid (near the Ruapane peak) and to fund the purchase of baits. 1000 hectares of pest control has now been achieved on the maunga and this is a minimum requirement to be able to re-introduce the Kokako ... so that is being looked into now. The rat tracking results of our work have been excellent with monitoring showing the index reducing from

75% to 2% or less over the last five years, and native bird numbers are definitely benefiting. New volunteers are welcome to help us with the filling of the bait stations on Saturday mornings. We can

accommodate fitness levels from slightly fit to very agile and aim to be out of the bush by 10am. Please contact Clare St Pierre on (07) 8719133 or clare.stpierre@gmail.com if you would like to be involved. A bonus will be the chance to sight some of the recently released North Island Robins while on the mountain.



The work on the new envirocentre in Pirongia village is progressing well. The access ways have been completed, thanks to a grant from the Southern Trust. The next phases are the painting work and tidying up inside and out. Volunteers interested in helping with the envirocentre or developing suitable programmes for it are welcome to contact Clare St Pierre as detailed above.

For more photos see:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Pirongia-Te->

[Aroaro-o-Kahu-Restoration-Society/145527248817282?sk=photos](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Pirongia-Te-Aroaro-o-Kahu-Restoration-Society/145527248817282?sk=photos)

NZ Landcare Trust Publication 'Community-owned Rural Catchment Mangement: A Guide for Partners'

The target audience of this publication is professional resource managers and those working on the management of catchment scale projects. It offers a realistic account of the opportunities and challenges associated with engaging communities in this work. The guide shares the experience gained over 16 years of practical Landcare in New Zealand. Information in the guide includes: Rural Catchment Management in New Zealand, Local Ownership, Being Strategic, Collaborative Planning and Management, Well Designed Incentives and Regulation Backed by Effective Compliance. In addition the guide will form the reference point for master classes to be delivered by NZ Landcare Trust in November.

Here is a web link to more detailed information on the guide www.landcare.org.nz/catchmentguide

Wrights Bush Planting Day

On Saturday 14th of July the neighbours of Wrights Bush on Marychurch Road enthusiastically got together to have a Planting day. Robert Hos and Barry Christiansen had been chipping away since



December at the Barberry, Privet, Hawthorn, Tobacco weed and Jerusalem Cherry to a point where you could see the ground again. Barry and Janice Christiansen donated in excess of 250 native trees and shrubs consisting of flaxes, kahikatea, Mahoe, Wineberry, Cabbage trees, Coprosma, Pseudopanax, Pittosporum and Akeake. These were mostly planted along the fence line where we had cleared the Barberry and the Kahikatea planted in a low lying area around the pond. Fifty odd flaxes had just

been planted a month or two earlier around the ponds and were already showing signs of growth. This remnant block of Kahikatea on Marychurch Rd date back as far as 350 years according to core samples taken back in 2000, but similar to a lot of small blocks the understory has been grazed and opened up for weed infestation. It has been fenced off for past 10 to 15 years or more and in some areas it is starting to show signs of regeneration where the weeds are not so numerous. Young Pukatea and Tawa are starting to dominate patches of the forest floor with small Titoki and Kahikatea showing up on the eastern side. It has been suggested, that thanks to the relentless pest control from

Barry for the last 5 years, the Tawa berries have had a chance to germinate before the rats devoured them. This will pay dividends in the years to come as the understory starts to thicken up again and fill in the holes.



Waikato Regional Council has generously helped out with a grant to assist with the pest control. This had previously been funded by the adjoining property owners. A tally is being kept of the possums, hedgehogs and ferrets being trapped showing there has been a steady decline of the invaders in the stand. This we hope will encourage the Tui

and Wood Pigeon that visit, to possibly nest locally this season. Another hope is to borrow some ultrasound equipment and find out if we have some local bats in the area. With native bats being found in the Tamahere area we would hope they can find refuge on Marychurch Rd.

So a big thank you to all the neighbours that turned up to lend a hand, Barry and Janice for supplying the trees and organizing the day, the Waikato Regional Council for helping with pest control funding and Lynette Benson from QE11 trust for the encouragement and advice. Rob Hos

Study the Flora of Aotearoa

Renew your appetite for learning and passion for the environment with the University of Waikato. Are you fascinated by nature? Would you like to learn more about New Zealand's flora in a university environment, without committing to full-time study? BIOL226 – Flora of Aotearoa/New Zealand is a 200 Level paper offered by the Faculty of Science & Engineering. There are no prerequisites, making this the perfect paper for adult learners. The formal portion of the course runs 16-24 November 2012, beginning with a field trip to Pureora and followed by classes at the Waikato University campus in Hamilton. Students will hand in their project, a detailed reference and visual diary, shortly after the formal portion of the course concludes. Throughout the course students will learn the origin of New Zealand's unique flora; basics of plant taxonomy; modern methods of plant classification and identification; and how to identify plants in the field. Course tutors include one of New Zealand's foremost authorities on ecological restoration Professor Bruce Clarkson; botanist Dr Chrissen Gemmill; forest ecologist Dr Daniel Laughlin and plant biologist Dr Michael Clearwater.

For more information contact Chrissen Gemmill. Phone (07) 838 4053 or email c.gemmill@waikato.ac.nz

Patumahoe Walkway – Community Effort



In Patumahoe a new walkway is currently under development and it has been a real community, team effort. The walkway leads down through Auckland Council Reserve land just north of the School into an area of bush. It will then be heading across private land to link to the Henry's Bush Reserve on Hunters Rd. The walk provides stunning views over the Valley, Henry's Bush and the Whangamaire Stream. A spring also features that has been brought back to life. It is recognised as WaahiTapu and was used by Maori prior to land confiscation in 1859.

Most of the track work has been completed with forming a high quality metalled track zigzagging down a steep slope. This has been a challenge but the key has been to make the walkway accessible to as many people as possible. It has been a real team effort and every child at Patumahoe School has



played their part with dragging bags of rocks from the top down to the spring at the bottom to help protect it and make it a truly special place. The local community have been involved with several working bees with track construction and planting. As well there has been excellent support from Wecks and also MIT with their Park ranger students helping out.

The track is yet to be named and will be opened before Christmas. Go on to www.patumahoe.org.nz to have your say. It will be a must do activity for the wider community and will be a great asset to Patumahoe with being right on the village doorstep.
Andrew Sinclair (Whakaupoko Landcare Group)

The newsletters are all placed on www.waikatobiodiversity.org.nz for easy access. Cheers Moira