



Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter August 2008 Number 20

Kia Ora/Greetings to all Forum Members

Today feels like spring has sprung today as I write this newsletter. It is a good feeling that some warmth is returning especially to dry some sodden land around the Waikato.

Biodiversity Advice Waikato (BAW) Report

Biodiversity Advice Waikato is provided and supported by Waikato Biodiversity Forum. Telephone: **0800BIODIV (0800246 348)**

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Service operates Monday to Friday 9am-6pm, and has an after hours phone.

Email: biodiv@bioforum.org.nz

Website: www.waikatobiodiversity.org.nz

The rains have arrived and with the moisture we have become energized to plant natives on our land. It is exciting to hear the number of people wanting to plant natives 'in their backyard' whether that be a 300 ha farm or a residential property. This will result in more native insects, nectar and berries, therefore more feed available for the native birds. The insects will benefit the insect feeders like fantail (*Phipidura fuliginosa*, piwakawaka) and Tomtits (*Petroica macrocephala*, Miromiro). Tui (*Prothemadera novaeseelandiae*) and Bellbird (*Anthornis melanura*, Makomako) feed insects to their young for protein. Gardens planted with native plants will provide healthy 'stepping stones' for New Zealand's native birds to spread throughout the Waikato.

Forum Report

Over the past three months **Biodiversity Advice Waikato** has provided:

- Encouragement and on-site assistance with native planting.
- Funding options to people working at improving ecosystems within the Waikato region conservation projects.
- Support to conservation volunteers by provision of Environmental factsheets, links to the appropriate government department personnel.
- Support to District Council staff by providing information and on site visits to residents for native planting, funding advice

Over the past three months the **Forum** has:

- Worked with District Councils to help with biodiversity and planning
- Held Forum in Turangi
- Written submissions e.g. Marine Mammal Sanctuary West Coast North Island
- Organised the next Forum in Paeroa for October
- Worked with the Sustainable Business Network to pilot a Community group and Business partnership
- Prepared Forum Annual report
- Updated community group database
- Provided Waikato Times with information for biodiversity feature

Calendar of Events pages on Website

Janice (Biodiversity Advice Waikato) and Moira (Waikato Biodiversity Forum) would like to provide a regional notice board type calendar on the website. The Waikato Biodiversity Forum is a regional service so we'd like to include events from the range of areas across the Forum's boundaries. The Forum's event page <http://www.waikatobiodiversity.org.nz/events/> is



one of the highest hit pages on the website so people must be interested in finding out about biodiversity related events/working bees.

So if you have events, working bees or trips planned over the next few months and would like them advertised outside your group they can be forwarded to the Biodiversity Forum co-ordinator for inclusion on the website. When the date is passed the event is automatically deleted from the event page.

National Wetland Trust

The National Wetland Trust has employed an Executive Officer to progress the aims and objectives of the trust. Here are Karen's contact details Karen Denyer, Executive Officer, National Wetland Trust, Mobile: 021 031 2716
Email: karen.denyer@wetlandtrust.org.nz www.wetlandtrust.org.nz

Matamata-Piako District Council

Matamata Piako District Council is working with local land owners on ways to protect the district's significant natural features. Landowners who think they have a significant site on their property can apply for either a rates remission or funding towards fencing the site from the Significant Natural Features Grant. This grant was established to encourage and assist landowners and members of the community to protect, manage and enhance the significant natural features in the District. Examples of significant natural features include wetlands and native bush areas.

Applications for funding will be available late September from Matamata-Piako District Council offices, or on www.mpdc.govt.nz. For more information phone Customer Services on 0800 746 467.

Eco Issues page Waikato Times

Jeff Neems from the Waikato Times has offered to put in information or notices about conservation events, working bees etc in the briefs column of Tuesdays Eco Issues page. Email jeff.neems@waikatotimes.co.nz with your information.

Biodiversity Contestable Advice and Condition Funds (open late October 2008)

New National Community Biodiversity Fund

This new fund is for community groups working on restoration projects on **public land** that protect indigenous biodiversity. The fund complements the existing Biodiversity Condition and Advice Fund that funds projects on private land. The new fund is particularly targeted at restoration and protection projects on publicly owned riparian (river and stream bank), coastal and dune land and projects aligned with the Statement of National Priorities for protecting rare and threatened native biodiversity.

The Community Diversity Fund will:

- Cover restoration projects on land in public ownership that is managed by territorial authorities (councils), LINZ and the Department of Conservation
- Encourage partnerships between community groups and the agency responsible for the land to work closely together on biodiversity projects

See <http://www.biodiversity.govt.nz/land/nzbs/pvtland/conditionapps.html> for details. The next funding round will be around the end of October 2008.

Waihi District Walkways Inc

Waihi District Walkways Inc has been working in and around Waihi township for 8 years. The Millstream walkway was the first stream walkways the group worked on. This work began with clearing invasive weeds, domestic



rubbish and debris from the river bank and planting and maintaining the area in native vegetation common to the area before it was removed. .

The work has also involved building walkways beside and bridges over the stream. The group works with local groups such as the Scouts, Keas and Cubs and schools when there is a planting day.

Other projects include Riverbank Terrace where consultation has led to a fence being built to exclude stock and the opposite bank planted in flaxes. A valuable lesson learnt is that the larger flaxes have been unable to establish sufficiently well before being tested by flood waters and the group are now attempting to stabilise the bank using smaller flaxes and sedges. Go to www.waihiwalkways.org.nz to find out more detail of the group's work.

Pukawa Wildlife Management Trust (PWMT)

It's been six years since a group of mostly retired residents of Pukawa, a small holiday home settlement on the south eastern shores of Lake Taupo, began trapping and killing vermin to help attract more native birds.

Over the years the group has developed into an effective and efficient environmental force and it's definitely not good to be a rat or mustelid if you want live at Pukawa.



The efforts of PWMT have to date killed 2,625 rats, 350 stoats, 102 weasels, 104 ferrets, 25 hedgehogs, 162 rabbits and 70 feral cats. Back in 2002 the group was keen to increase the native birdlife in their own backyards and get rid of the predators causing their demise. To achieve this they knew they needed integrated and sustained animal pest control. They contacted the Department of Conservation for assistance and like the bush, the relationship between the two groups has flourished ever since. DOC's biodiversity team liaise closely with the group to provide technical support, advice and occasional labour. The group also works to identify and control problem plant species and their animal pest control work has greatly

helped a rare native mistletoe, *Tupeia antarctica*. This white mistletoe is especially palatable to possums and the pests need to be controlled to very low levels for the plant to remain healthy, flower and reproduce. It's now thriving at Pukawa. The group are now sufficiently well equipped to have a series of permanent trap lines and bait stations. Jean and Russell Stanley both original members of the group have given over their garage to store most of the equipment. As well as trapping pests on land managed by the Department of Conservation, the group has negotiated access to private land and land managed by the Taupo District Council. The group has also managed to rally residents from the 70 or so holiday homes to assist from time to time which is a considerable achievement. In order to carry out the pest control work the group has had to learn many new skills and become knowledgeable in a range of regulations – how to handle and store toxins, clear and set traps, monitor tracking tunnels, mapping and using GPS. Tuis, bellbirds and keruru are commonplace at Pukawa and Jean Stanley says that the New Zealand falcon appears to have established a territory nearby and whiteheads and grey warblers are now seen over a wide area. Two strategically placed seats will soon allow the public to sit and enjoy some quiet bird watching.

Lianne Fraser (former DOC Community Relations)

If you want to contact people whose details are not in the newsletter you can go through the Contact Us page on the Forum website and send an email to either Moira or Jan for their details.

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