



Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter August 2014 Number 44

Kia Ora/Greetings

Forum work over the past three months has included:

- Worked in children's corner at the DOC Fielddays exhibit
- Prepared letters to Councils who fund the Forum. These letters contained details of the work the Forum had carried out in their district
- Prepared report for Partnerships Manager on support the Forum gives DOC
- Responded to Small Scale Community Initiative Fund application enquiries
- Visited four sites in the Waikato and Waipa districts with the Ecosystem Restoration Project to access sites for a Forum initiated restoration project
- Contacting community groups to update data and gain permission for developing a page for their group on Nature Space
- Met with Taranaki Regional Biodiversity coordinator to share information on how the Forum operates in the Waikato
- Prepared submission on the Dog Bylaws for Thames Coromandel District Council –focus on protection of kiwi and shore birds
- Attended a Kiwi for Kiwis hui for Coromandel Kiwi care groups in Coromandel
- Prepared for and facilitated four kauri dieback workshops with Kauri 2000 Inc at meetings for the public and community groups on the Coromandel
- Met with Maniapoto Senior Environmental Project Manager to go over funding options for marae based groups undertaking restoration
- Prepared Annual report
- Attended Conservation Volunteers' predator control workshop at Ngaruawahia
- Wrote achievements into the 2013/14 workplan to report to the Focus Group
- Met with DOC partnership rangers to plan a Conservation Week activity in November – a Forum partnership event with DOC
- Planning workshop for central Waikato – Weed surveillance and control and another topic (TBC)



Waikato District Council is involved in improving the natural environment throughout the district by undertaking a range of activities that include supporting groups involved in ecological enhancement activities and improving systems, processes and undertaking projects specifically aimed at improving habitats. The Council also participates in the Lakes Accord, Healthy Rivers, the State of the Environment reporting and other focus groups. The Council is involved in the following

activities:-

- Working with Waikato Rivercare which plants a kilometre of riverbank at a time. Work includes weed control, stock exclusion, fencing, planting and maintenance of tens of thousands of plants
- Installing silt traps on all incoming drains, planting of native species to improve the habitat and controlling weeds at Lake Kainui
- Working with a variety of stakeholders to improve the habitat in gullies, esplanade reserves and other council administrated properties
- Working with local schools to educate children about native plants and their environment at sites such as the Hakarimata ranges.
- Managing the Lake Rotokauri Reserve jointly with the Hamilton City Council with input from the Rotokauri lake committee. Activities include upgrades to the pathway network and jetty bund, as well as ongoing ecological improvements through planting and weed control
- Managing a project at AroAro Bay in Raglan to establish an estuarine marsh wetland through the inundation of land with saltwater, weed control and suitable native species plantings.
- Working with local interest groups and the Regional Council to rehabilitate, restore and create natural dune systems along the coastlines from Raglan to Port Waikato.



- Working with local native habitat restoration contractors Forest Flora to restore a one hectare wet woodland remnant leading into the Kimihia catchment

Funding Advice

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

Biodiversity Drones

Flightworks is a Tauranga-based company providing services with drones, or unmanned aircraft, for biodiversity management. The



Managing Director, Hamish Kendal, is an ecologist who sees great potential for the new technology.

“Drones provide high resolution aerial images from a low altitude perspective” he says. “They can be used to detect and waypoint weeds, monitor wildlife, map natural and landscape features, and provide overview photographs or video of project sites in 2D or 3D.”

“The Civil Aviation Authority governs the regulations for flying drones, and people must be aware of these and make safety their primary concern. It requires a lot of skill, an

understanding of aviation, and an awareness of airspace to safely operate these aircraft.” Flightworks is also developing spot-spraying technology from drones to access difficult and dangerous places for weed control. Please contact Hamish if you wish to discuss any potential use of drones. See: www.flightworks.co.nz

Barnett Reserve Management Committee

Barnett Reserve is 25 ha of good bush on Waotu South Road, Waotu. It is an amalgam of 2 Reserves, one covenant, and some bush on adjacent farmland, established in the early 1990's. Whilst vested in the District Council, it has been run largely by a Community Management Committee. It is ancient forest, being magically missed by the Taupo Eruption ash shower of 186 AD.. In fact, the full Maori name was 'he waotu tahi nga rakau' meaning 'the tall forest that stands all by itself'. As late as 1900 AD, it had superb stands of rimu, totara, mangleo, tawa, miro and other emergent trees, The heavy timber was extracted 100 years or so ago. At the time the reserve was formed, about 3 ha were in pasture. However, replanting is now almost completed, many thousands of trees being financed and mostly planted by Forest and Bird. There are about 5 km of good tracks, 2 toilets, water laid on, a generous mown picnic area where anyone is welcome to camp or overnight in caravans or mobile homes or eat their sandwiches at the originally designed tables. Corrections Department 'volunteers' come regularly to maintain and update the tracks. Some of these tracks follow the old tramways left from the milling era. Extensive pest control is undertaken annually by volunteers from July to December, and bird life has recovered. One treasure is a totara estimated at 1000 years old, left by the loggers because its top had been blown out. The Waikato River Trail now runs through the Reserve, with those tracks strengthened to accommodate bicycles. Come and visit us ! Gordon Stephenson

Spring has sprung in a QEII Covenant

In our QE 2 covenant spring has certainly begun because things are all go. The other day we were going down to there and three native pigeons flew out of the hawthorns. They must have been looking for the new shoots coming out of these trees. Recently I woke up to a tui in the tree outside our bedroom singing his heart out !! This is magic. Another thing that is happening down in the bush is the nikau flowers. They come out of the rings on the trunk and have a big pod on them which drops off and then the amazing flower comes out. Pigeons eat the nikau berries then the seeds go through them and germinate in the bush, like ours. Nikau seedlings are coming up everywhere. Through trapping and baiting I think we are beating the predators !! Margaret and John Hodge.

Pukemokemoke Bush Reserve

Many of us have been startled by the whoosh of wings of a kereru and the friendly chatter of a piwakawaka, and while we hear that tui are not responding as we might have wished, they still have a significant presence, especially when the totara and kahikatea are fruiting. But it is the bat story and more recently the invertebrates that are gaining attention. We now have several bat nesting boxes in the reserve and the numbers of bats both in the reserve and in the quarry area continues to be of interest. More recently International Moth Week held a couple of evenings in the reserve. We visited with them and were astounded to see the diversity of moths and other invertebrates such as spiders and wetas. We have plans to hold a bat, moth, glow worm evening sometime in the spring. Alan Leadley



Symposium: 50th anniversary of rodent eradications

(Biodiversity and Biosecurity, Biological Sciences)

10 September 2014

8:30am - 5:30pm

Venue: Engineering 401-439, City Campus, University of Auckland

Location: 20 Symonds St, Auckland

Contact email: rateradication@auckland.ac.nz

Website: <http://www.science.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/our-research/rateradication.html>

Tui 2000 Inc :- Friends of Waiwhakareke Potting Group

Many people will be aware of the Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park reconstruction project that is taking place on 60 hectares of farmland opposite the Hamilton Zoo. See www.waiwhakareke.co.nz for further information. The project requires the planting of about 2 million native species over 20 years in areas appropriate to their ecological needs eg swamp, semi-swamp, hillslope and



ridge crest. Planting started in 2004 and is ongoing. Many of the colonizing plants (eg kanuka, flax and cabbage tree) plants are raised at the Hamilton City Council Nursery but the successional/enrichment species (eg miro, kauri, mahoe etc) that need to be put in after the colonizing plants, come from seed collected within the Hamilton Ecological District.

The Friends of Waiwhakareke Potting Group meet every month (usually the 3rd Friday) at the nursery in Devine Road, Hamilton managed by Jan Simmons on behalf of the Tamahere Nursery Gully Care Group. We average about 10 hardworking and friendly 'Friends' at each session. Potting mix is bought in bulk for the Tamahere Nursery operation and the Friends benefit from a reduced cost of mix through this bulk purchase. We use donations to the Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park project (through Tui 2000) to purchase potting mix and plants. Looking back through the Potting Group diary, I see the Friends have supplied about 1500 plants for the 2013-2014 planting season. We hold in the nursery at this time another 1400 plants of various sizes and species.

For anyone interested in helping with this project please contact Catherine Smith, Convenor, Friends of Waiwhakareke Potting Group on 07 8558296 or at email 2smiths@wave.co.nz

Northland Pest Control Best Practice guidelines

This is a very useful guide covering all aspects of animal pests from wasps through to pigs and everything in between.

http://www.kiwicoast.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Pest-Control-Guideline_June-2013.pdf

International Funding Society

Outreach Grants The British Ecological Society encourages its members and others to promote ecological science to a wide audience. To this end, they offer **Outreach Grants** of up to £2,000. Application Deadlines 08 September 2014. They aim to notify applicants if they have been successful or not within two months of the deadline. **Ecology** The Society defines ecology as the scientific study of the distribution, abundance and dynamics of organisms, their interactions with other organisms and their physical environment. It is therefore essential that applications promote and engage the public with the science of ecology. Grants will not be awarded for purely nature conservation purposes or any activity that does not promote the science of ecology. - See more at: <http://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/grants-awards/outreach-grants/> I'm aware that the deadline is too late for this year but maybe worth a try next year.

Conservation Week 1-9 November 2014

This website contains information about this year's conservation week. The site has a space to register any events you may have planned and a list of events that will be happening around the country. <http://www.doc.govt.nz/getting-involved/events-and-awards/conservation-week/>

Opito Bay Environment Group –Coromandel Peninsula

The valley behind our properties on Black Jack Rd in Opito Bay is on a section of retired farmland. After some initial coastal revegetation was carried out in the late 90's by the owners with pohutukawa, flax, karo and ngaio the Opito Bay Environment Group was given permission in 2002 to carry on with the revegetation/restoration project. Since then over 17,000 native trees have been planted. This year we carried on with our programme and planted over 350 kauris, 250 flaxes and an additional 200 trees namely, whau, kowhai, rewarewa, totara, tawapou, taraire and puriri. These have been planted amongst the emerging manuka, kanuka, flax and hebe stricta.



In addition to the planting we have been carrying out an extensive pest plant removal. Cotoneaster has been particularly invasive with seeds being spread by birds from back owners' gardens in the Bay. Funding from the Waikato Regional Council has allowed us to purchase weed control gels and liquids for which we are very grateful. Other weeds managed/controlled are pampas, tobacco weed, wilding pines, ginger and arum lilies. Animal pest control has also been carried out and funding again from the Waikato Regional Council has allowed us to purchase traps and baits for possums, rats and stoats. Pig numbers are also increasing dramatically in the pine forests behind the Bay. Pigs are known to root out kiwi eggs from their nests if they can. In addition to our own trapping a dedicated individual living in the Bay has reported the following number of kills for 2014 : -stoats 38, possums 247, rats 204, hedgehogs 29. Wilding pines are an issue along Black Jack Rd and we will organise a day in October/November to pull out and cut down small wilding pines between the Bay and Kuaotunu before they get too big. A particularly invasive species is the Pinus Contorta (recognisable because of the long needles). Chris Severne

Photo Dragging a trolley up steep hill with 100 kauri seedlings on board.

Mangaiti Gully Restoration Group

We had a challenging gully slope 80m long and 15m high to clear of blackberry and plant. The issues were the steepness of the slope, the very loose nature of the soil structure due to large quantities of old potting mix having been dumped there some years back and new houses recently built on the gully top (concerned neighbours). Last summer we cleared the blackberry by having a team of people grubbing it out starting from the top and rolling it down to the bottom as we went. We then pegged old dead ponga trunks horizontally in areas of concern to control washout from heavy rain. As soon as the autumn rains came we sowed the slope in a mixture of ryegrass, lucerne, white and red clover seed to further stabilize the slope. This winter we completed the project by planting 500 natives. These native plants will shade out the ryegrass and clovers after a few years but in the meantime the gully slope's integrity should be maintained. The "concerned neighbours" had their minds put to rest knowing we had a structured plan that we were working to. Rex Bushell



Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society Inc

Native bat monitoring on Mt Pirongia was undertaken in January 2013 and 2014 using 12 automatic bat monitors (ABMs). These record the ultrasonic echolocation calls emitted by bats (frequencies of 28 kHz and 40 kHz). Committee members Dianne and Peter were trained by Kessels Ecology to use DOC's Bat Search Software 1.02 and to classify calls into one of four categories (search, feeding, social and multiple calls). The results of the monitoring show that the native long-tailed bat is present around 9 sites, and the number of calls is particularly high in two locations. No short-tailed bats were detected. Processing the bat data is a very long process and the 2014 data is still to be completed. The group appreciated the help of Melia Rodriguez and Kessels Ecology staff with the processing of the data. From the Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society Inc. Newsletter June 2014.