



Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter August 2015 Number 47

Kia Ora/Greetings

Forum work over the past three months has included:

- Attended the Healthy Rivers Environmental Stakeholders meeting
- Ran invertebrate activity at Waipa Earth Champion Day in Te Awamutu
- Prepared Coromandel Trapping workshop evaluations report
- Worked in the children's area of the DOC Fieldays display tent
- Wrote article on invertebrates and Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park for the Hamilton Press
- Prepared material for the funding workshop with Maniapoto Maori Trust Board Environmental Project Manager
- Liaising with WWF re provision of a Health and Safety workshop in the Waikato
- Prepared 2015/16 workplan and 2014/15 achievements
- Attended Maniapoto funders workshop and offered support for funding application preparation
- Assessed the SSCIF applications and met with WRC staff to approve
- Presented to JUNATS on biodiversity and Bhutan
- Attended the meeting for setting up a care group for the Puniu River
- Met with WRA staff re the River Clean Up fund and assisting groups with applications
- Attended the Project Manu's AGM in Te Kuiti
- Organising the next Forum event at Ngatira Marae in partnership with the Mokaihaha Kokako Recovery Project
- Liaising with groups to transfer data to Nature Space
- Attended the first Waikato Weedbusters Squad weeding at Waingaro Reserve
- Edited SWDC biodiversity brochure
- Met with Waikato Weedbusters Squad coordinator, Landcare Trust and QEII reps to identify sites that need weeding
- Prepared Forum activity and briefed helpers for the Hamilton Zoo Education Day

Kauri 2000

The Kauri 2000 Trust along with students, parents, teachers and many loyal volunteers have just completed planting another 2,500 kauri at Matarangi Reserve, Coromandel Kauri Hill, Chelmsford, Sailors Grave and Hutchinson Reserve near Paeroa. A big thank



Kauri 2000 Trustee Mark Mentzer – planting demonstration with Mercury Bay Area School Students

you to everyone who helped.

Mercury Bay Area School - year 7 and 8 students along with parents and teachers

Coromandel Area School students, parents and teachers

Keith Stephenson and his Coromandel volunteers

Paeroa's Miller Ave School students and teachers

The Whangamata Lions for digging holes at Hutchinsons Reserve

Coromandel Outdoor Language Centre students

Tairua School students along with parents and teachers

A huge thanks to our tireless volunteers who help out each year and we welcome the many new ones.

Percy Temple – Chief Sausage Cook! And thanks to Mercury Bay Meats for creating their famous 'Whitianga Banger' for us.

Our tree suppliers, contractors who prepare the sites, and volunteers who help unload and lay out trees for planting

The Department of Conservation

Corporate sponsors, the BNZ, and their teams from Auckland and Whitianga.

Supplied by Barb Ritchie

Restoration Plants

There's never been more of a focus on ecological restoration in the Waikato. It's driven by a range of factors, including the need to clean up the Waikato River, mandated by the Waikato-Tainui Raupatu Claims (Waikato River) Settlement Act 2010; the dairying industry's efforts to improve its environmental performance; community and local government support for major restoration projects like Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park; coastal restoration programmes; and many smaller scale restoration efforts.



All of these projects need plants – in total, many, many plants. Biodiversity principles suggest strongly that they should be eco-sourced plants. This raises a question: are there enough eco-sourced plants available, of the right species, at the right price and at the right time? If not, what can be done about it?

I have been engaged by Waikato University's Environmental Research Institute to attempt to answer these questions and also look at related issues. I am speaking to many people and organisations about this question and I am keen to spread the net wide. If you have any thoughts or comments,

please get in touch. Kemble Pudney, 11 Bellwood Place, Chartwell, Hamilton 3210, Ph. 07 8525290, Mob. 027 747 0442 email pudneyquinn@vodafone.co.nz

Te Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society and *Dactylanthus*

Our Society is excited to be embarking on a new project with the threatened species *Dactylanthus taylorii* and is forming a group to



work on this. This intriguing endemic parasitic plant is present near Mt Pirongia's summit where plants are caged to prevent possum browsing. We met recently with DOC staff and plan to build knowledge of *Dactylanthus* and monitor the plants on Pirongia in the hope of collecting seed and sowing onto suitable host species in more accessible locations. *Dactylanthus* may also be present lower on Pirongia but is simply undiscovered so searching for it could also be undertaken, especially as it was previously widely present throughout New Zealand. At our recent AGM Avi Holzapfel highlighted the importance of *Dactylanthus* as an ecosystem driver producing large quantities of nectar which is an important food source. Please contact Clare St Pierre on 027 3248195 or clare.stpierre@gmail.com if this interests you.

Project Echo update



Spring has sprung....which means that pekapeka, our long-tailed bats, will soon be waking from their winter slumber ('torpor'). So it's timely to remind people about ways we can protect our bats. Hamilton is very unique in that it is one of only a few urban centres nationally to have a local population of long-tailed bats.

Project Echo is a group dedicated to helping protect Hamilton's bats through education and advocacy. Some of the key things you can do include "checking before you chop", planting species that will live for a long-time and become cavity forming (to provide roosts) and undertaking animal pest control.

Project Echo loans out hand-held bat detectors for free to people who want to go bat detecting, or use them to check that trees aren't a home for bats before felling them. Also keep an eye out for the Waikato Museum's guided bat tours which will be taking place in the coming months.

For more information on Project Echo, see our website and facebook page!
www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/projectecho. www.facebook.com/projectecho.

Waikato Weedbusters Squad (WWS)

The inaugural gathering of the Waikato Weedbusters Squad (WWS) took place on Tuesday August 11 at Waingaro. WWS is a volunteer squad who plan to hold monthly weeding sessions at a variety of worthy but weedy sites within an hour's drive of



Hamilton. Tuesday's target was vigorously regenerating privet at the entrance to the Waingaro Reserve. By the end of the morning, after two energetic sessions separated by a sunny, chatty morning tea break, a large pile of defeated privet was wilting in a heap waiting for the Waikato District Council to remove it. Jan Simmons, Volunteering Coordinator, based at DOC Hamilton, organised this group to provide a weeding service for conservation projects that would benefit from some vigorous attention. Target projects include QEII covenant areas and reserves that do not have resident care groups.

The Waikato Weedbusting Squad is an ideal activity for people who enjoy the outdoors and the exercise, who like to work with an agreeable group of conservationists, go somewhere different each month and who value the satisfaction of fighting the weed war.

If you would like to get involved or know of a project or site that might benefit from an intensive weeding session contact jsimmons@doc.govt.nz



Let the planting begin! Waikato RiverCare projects ready for a makeover. A new 1150m long 4 wire electric fence and flood gate has been constructed by Barakat Contractors Ltd at the Taupiri Ki Weanganui project in May. Completion of this fence is a significant milestone for Waikato RiverCare which has successfully excluded all stock access from the Waikato River for the 4.9km between Taupiri



and Huntly on the true right bank. Thanks to the completion of the fence and weed control, Taupiri Ki Weanganui is ready for the next stage. The beginning of August marked the start of Waikato RiverCare's 2015 planting programme with 10,445 plants going in the ground at the Taupiri Ki Weanganui project, and a further 13,089 plants at three other Waikato RiverCare projects. Local Taupiri contractors, Waterside Planters, have been engaged to undertake the project planting which is expected to be completed by the first week of September. By the end of this year's planting season, Waikato RiverCare will have planted 31,749 native plants on six different projects throughout the Lower Waikato River catchment. Check out the website at:

www.waikatorivercare.co.nz

The team from Waterside Planters Limited enjoying a beautiful frosty Waikato morning after a wet start to the week.

Forest and Bird (Thames)

The Society continues its protection for the mile-long strip of marsh, fescue prairie and mangrove formed along the West bank of the estuary of the Waihou, above and below Kopu bridge. This work was begun in 2002. This year the group has given closer attention to the many pohutukawa, ngaio, flax and smaller plants that had earlier been established. Pohutukawa had flourished in some places but in others had struggled, raising questions of soil levels, fertiliser and shading from mangroves. The planting programme for this winter comprised replacement trees and new sites particularly upstream from the new bridge. These trees were pohutukawa, ngaio, flax, cabbage tree, giant umbrella, muehlenbeckia, coprosma propinqua and some karaka.

The presence of bird life in the area is difficult to measure but in general it cannot be said to have changed much over the decade-long project. The only sighting of remark has been the appearance of a banded rail with two semi adult chicks in Nov 2014. Protection from predators has been reduced by the withdrawal of the single cage trap in Jan 2015. The remaining single DOC250, Fenn, and two Timms traps have accounted for 3 rats, 1 rabbit, and 3 hedge-hogs. Cats are an ongoing threat and cannot be reduced with present equipment. The Society is encouraged by the proposed construction of a bicycle way between Kopu and Kaiaua over the coming year as this may provide for a degree of stricter predator control.

The Society has this year celebrated World Wetlands Day by holding a public walk through the area along the Waihou Estuary. This was led by John Rich of DOC and attended by 15 visitors from the wider Thames community. Ken Clark, Forest and Bird (Thames).

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