



Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter August 2017 Number 55

Kia Ora/Greetings

An update on the main work undertaken over the past three months:

- Held Forum event in Hamilton with focus on biodiversity and Hamilton City
- Prepared draft Waikato Ecological Restoration Trust Strategic Plan and lead discussion with the Trustees
- Edited information on Nature Space for community groups
- Completed article on Waikato Mobile Weedbusters Group for the Hamilton Press
- Wrote Annual report
- Wrote Hamilton Forum report
- Prepared Standard Operating Procedures for Forum activities
- Met with WRC staff in Whitianga to brief them on my workplan
- Attended Green Drinks in Whitianga
- Met with Cooks Beach Care Group re updating information for the community group database
- Prepared a draft submission for Coromandel groups on the draft Threatened Species Strategy
- Met with Coromandel Kauri Dieback Forum Chair
- Met with new groups on the Coromandel re funding advice
- Update the Forum's Home page with new features.

Mangaiti Gully Restoration Trust

Tips for Installing service tracks

The first thing the group does when opening up a new area to clear and plant is to put in a service track.



Where there is surface mud (that is when walking over the area in gum boots you don't sink in over your ankles) the group builds a shingle track using mud stop as a base. In deeper mud they build duck boards.

The specs for tracks are:

- Track width 800mm (the most economic use of the mud stop material)
- Timber for the track sides 100mm x 25 H4
- Pegs 50mm x 50mm x 600mm x H4
- Mud stop matting on the base
- Shingle over the matting.
- Total material cost should be less than \$8 per lineal metre.

When designing a track the group has them meandering rather than straight. This is more aesthetically pleasing and helps to give people a connection with the surrounding natural area.

Mangaiti Gully Restoration Trust. <http://gullyrestoration.blogspot.co.nz>

Cooks Beachcare Group

Cooks Beachcare Group consists of local residents and ratepayers working in conjunction with the local and regional Councils and DOC to protect our valuable dunes. The group works to replace invasive exotic weeds with naturally occurring native plants in consultation with local residents, and without significantly restricting views or beach access. The group plants the dunes in native plants to help protect them and repair storm damage. The native plants also support native birds, lizards and insects such as the coastal copper butterfly

The group has a regular weekly working bee usually on Wednesdays or Thursdays from about 9am to 11am to target the removal of noxious weeds and rubbish, as well as some planting when supplies allow. There are also larger community plantings during autumn and spring. One of their recent projects has been to restore the eastern end of Cooks Beach (near the Purangi River) where the Cook Memorial marks the site where Captain Cook observed the transit of Mercury in 1769. In 2019 celebrations will celebrate the 250th anniversary of this event. The group designed a restoration plan which involved earthworks to remove pine trees and rubbish removal and reshape the dune. The Thames Coromandel District Council (TCDC) paid for this work. This was followed up by the planting of 6,500 plants supplied by TCDC and Waikato Regional Council.



Six months after planting



Ten months after planting

Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society:

On 20th June 2017 a pair of kokako were released on the Mangakaraa Nature Walk, witnessed by around 100 people. This was a significant historical event as kokako haven't been seen at Pirongia since the 1990s, and a huge milestone for the society. The pair were named 'Rongomau' and 'Rangimarie' by Ngati Apakura. Birds have been gradually translocated from Pureora Forest, with a total of 20 for this stage of the project. DNA testing gives the sex ratio as males:12 and females:7 with one result uncertain and this ratio is satisfactory. Funding from Waikato Regional Council and private donations is really appreciated.



An app has been developed by Thundermaps which can be downloaded by anyone, so that any sightings of kokako can be recorded. This will provide helpful information to determine where birds eventually settle, information which is needed to determine whether our bait station network needs to be extended. By Susan Emmitt

The photo is of a captured kokako eating some banana, a favourite food. Photo credit: Amanda Rogers

Rings Beach Conservation Project (Matarangi Reserve)

Rings Beach (Matarangi Reserve) Coromandel has a network of 280 traps eliminating 5000 predators in 5



years, volunteers ably assisted by local schools have planted over 4600 native trees, selected to provide a food source for native birds re-establishing themselves in this bush reserve.

In a 276 Ha area that was clear felled and farmed till the 1950s, forest regrowth will be accelerated by an ambitious program involving total removal of wilding pines. Eliminating pines and exposing native trees to clear sunlight is visibly speeding growth to the benefit of our future generations. Application

has been made for a significant funding boost from the Minister of Conservation's "War on Weeds" program. In an effort to increase the educational value of the project 50 botanic labels identifying tree species are in the process of being erected along the main walking circuit with the generous support of Forest and Bird's Valder Trust. The Rings Beach track and wetland conservation project is now enjoyed by locals and visitors in increasing numbers, a track counter installed by DOC recorded over 16000 walkers last year and still increasing. The ultimate result of 10,00 volunteer hours to date restoring the forest to its former glory will provide the greatest benefit to future generations, and should present a glimpse of how New Zealand's native forest looked like before the apex predators from Britain colonised this country in the 19th century.
Ian Patrick

Moehau Environment Group

Winter has been hectic here on the Coromandel. Our winter Lecture Series has been extremely popular, with

free talks held each month covering a range of conservation topics: from Zealandia bird-counts to the Godwits migration. Coromandel Area School's Year 5/6 class built 27 stoat traps for us in June. Kids and parents helped install their traps in our Coromandel Kiwi Project and had a blast smearing mud on their faces, and hurtling at speed down treacherous clay tracks. We are the proud owners of a vehicle! A 4WD Holden ute which will prove invaluable for transporting the team, tools and traps, plus volunteers around rugged terrain. Just in time too, as we're gearing up for our spring baiting operation



which will span 3,300 hectares of private land surrounding Port Charles. We'll target possums and rodents using a combination of 1080, diphacinone and cyanide. Natalie Collicot

Whakaupoko Landcare Group

Whakaupoko Landcare Group are mainly about enhancing biodiversity on private land on a semi coordinated basis on land between Pukekohe and Waiuku. They have been operating over 12 years and continuing to grow with over 200 in an email loop. The group undertakes pest control that works. It also undertakes simple monitoring / citizen science with over 1500 bird survey results showing over a 400% increase in tui from an already good base. The group also developed a Chew Card protocol for use by Landcare groups. They



coordinate riparian plantings and community events such as volcano walks and bird evenings. One of their other activities is creating walkways such as, Te Ara O Whangamaire combining access on both Council & private land right on the Patumahoe village boundary. The latest project is Predator Free Patumahoe which is a Kiwi Bank sponsored initiative working in with the local schools. The group is a 100% volunteer effort. The group recently updated their bird survey form as they like to have regular surveys done to see what the effect of pest control is on bird life around the area. The bird surveys will be a good way to measure the effect of the predator control. Bird surveys are

important aspect of the groups monitoring and are carried out three times a year when the school holidays start (except the summer holiday). The surveys only take 5 minutes and can be done at any place around Patumahoe. People can obtain forms and feed their results back to the group. Based on the findings the group will send overviews of the area and after the second bird count a historic overview can be provided. Bird counts are a way of accessing the effect of pest control and will be used to get funding for providing traps or bait at no cost for the participating people. See this website for details of the groups work. <http://patumahoe.org.nz/environment-nature/> Email whakaupokolandcare@gmail.com for details of the bird survey including the 5 Minute Bird Count Data Sheet. Andrew Sinclair

Moira Cursey Waikato Biodiversity Forum Coordinator Coromandel