



Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter February 2017 Number 53

Kia Ora/Greetings

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

- Met with GIS staff at WRC to transfer updates to the community group map
- Wrote Pirongia Forum report
- Wrote article on Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park being a finalist in the Society for Ecological Restoration Australasia award for Restoration Excellence
- Prepared reports on the \$\$\$ value community groups contribute to HCC Waipa and SWDC districts through their volunteering
- Prepared presentations to Waipa District Council, South Waikato District Council and Waikato District Council
- Organising GPS/GIS workshops
- Prepared draft Restoration publication edits
- Wrote article for the Hamilton Press on torrentfish and Mangakotukutuku Streamcare Group
- Visited new groups on the Coromandel to gather data for the Forum's map and database and updated existing group boundaries
- Preparing ideas for the next Forum event to be held in or near Hamilton city
- Briefed and tested the new Smartygrant application process for WRC funding applications

Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust Fund

The Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust is now seeking applications for its 2017 funding round for ecological enhancement projects in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments. Applications close on 31 March 2017. Funding will go towards assisting organisations, agencies and individuals with projects that foster and enhance the sustainable management of ecological resources in the Lake Taupo and Waikato River catchments.

Since 2004, WCEET has distributed over \$4.3 million throughout the Waikato catchment with a further \$1.4 million committed over the next four years. WCEET supports projects throughout the catchment that maintain and enhance indigenous biodiversity, sports fisheries and game bird populations. Projects funded previously have included riparian fencing, improved fish passage, pest trapping, native tree cultivation and planting.

In 2016 WCEET distributed grants to organisations throughout the Waikato such as: Whaingaroa Harbour Care, Ngati Haua Mahi Trust, Waikato River Trails, Howick Tramping Club, Waikato RiverCare, Waikato Regional Council, Coulter Family Trust, Fish & Game Eastern Region and Auckland/Waikato region, Waituhi Kuratau Trust, Waikato District Council, Mercury, Kurt and Katharina Bucher, Greening Taupo, Puketapu Downs, The Pukawa Wildlife Management Group, and Beebox. As in previous years, WCEET will continue supporting both small and large projects in 2017.

Dr Verkerk said WCEET was made up of a wide range of Waikato organisations that have a close association with the Lake Taupo-Waikato River catchment. "Members of the Trust include representatives from Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, Department of Conservation, Fish and Game New Zealand, Mercury and the Advisory Committee for the Waikato Regional Council", she said.

To obtain an application form or further information about the Waikato Catchment Ecological Enhancement Trust email: enquiries@wceet.org.nz or visit www.wceet.org.nz

Kauri 2000

Kauri 2000 is “going digital”. Since 1999 Kauri 2000’s volunteers and sponsors have planted more than 47,000 kauri seedlings. Recording them all is increasingly difficult so we will be digitally mapping future and historic plantings. As part of this project we are removing tags from trees in historic plantings because they are now strangling the trees as they grow.



Pictured is Thomas Lloyd, a member of the Handley family, with trees planted in the Handley family grove at Maratoto in 2000 when he was a small child. Some are now 6m tall! The Handleys are also digitally mapping their trees. Working bees to clear honeysuckle and grass also act as family gatherings.

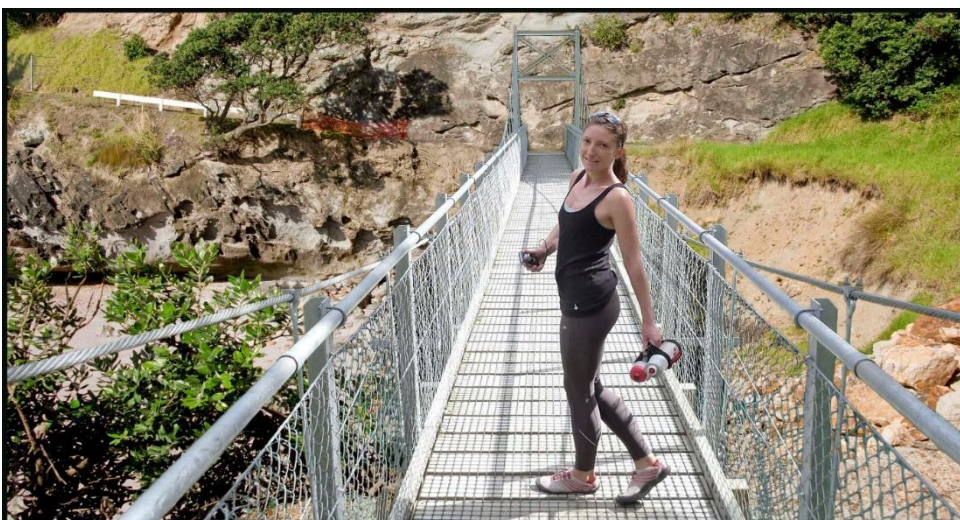
Would you like to join us in our digital mapping? No dates have been set but, if you would like to join us, please give your details to our co-ordinator, Janet, at info@kauri2000.co.nz or call 07-866-0468 or

Rings Beach Coromandel -Conservation Project and track – Bluff Road Circuit

The popular shorter circuit of the Rings beach track, which consists of a walk over the ridge from Matarangi then down to Rings Beach and return via the Bluff Road has been disrupted by a rockfall, forcing the Thames Coromandel District Council to close access under legal advice due to perceived danger of further slips. This closure of the Bluff Road has impacted mostly on those walkers of perhaps lesser fitness who enjoyed the shorter circular route but also on those walking the 2 hour circuit.

While the Wetland conservation group regret the affect it has had on many of their patrons they are prepared to await legal advice on the many points raised by proponents of reopening the road for pedestrians, albeit with suitable signage to devolve the risk to walkers who can then make their own choices.

However, in the event that TCDC feel unable to adopt such a course the group have a viable alternative that should be supported by all parties in the erection of a suspension bridge (see photo) or gantry across the affected bay to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists.



A possible solution for continuing access by courtesy of Photoshop!

Expert advice has been sought, estimates given and it appears that funding may be available to achieve what would be an interesting feature of the circuit.

The track has been extremely well patronised over the holiday period, it would be a huge step forward if it could again be made more inclusive of all standards of fitness and ability.

A program of eliminating wilding pines from the entire Bluff Hill has commenced and will progress as funds allow over the next several years. The exposure to direct sunlight and increase in available moisture

allowed by this tree felling causes an immediate and dramatic increase in the growth rate of natives and between the planting efforts of the Wetland group and Kauri 2000 in time the hill should be restored to its original condition of prime native forest. Ian Patrick Matarangi Reserves Group

Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society

Pirongia Restoration Society has been focused on its predator control areas on Pirongia and at Okahukura (northern Pureora). Volunteers have worked hard recently to clear bait from these areas at the end of the baiting season. Pirongia rat numbers post operation were disappointing at 8.3% but this is not untypical of



the season. We have also been monitoring *Dactylanthus taylorii* on Mt Pirongia. Seven volunteers worked at the summit in January, flying up by helicopter thanks to funding from Waikato Regional Council. Staying two nights at the Pahautea hut saw a good amount of work done mainly focusing around Hihikiwi. 18 female and more than 90 male inflorescences were found there and seven plants were hand pollinated. Eight new clumps were detected, most of which were caged to protect from possums. Fund-raising for our kokako translocation is underway. Please see the website for details of how to support this project.

<http://www.mtpirongia.org.nz/kokako>

Once this program is complete, the way will be clear to increase the trapping perimeter with the aim of eventually eliminating all predators. With the support of DOC the complete reserve could resemble an inland island sanctuary. Clare St Pierre

Project Transformation“From the Roots Up”

The Transformation Project started in 2015 in Partnership with Hamilton City Council (HCC) and funding for tools through Waikato Environment Center. Gerard Kelly is the Community Planting Program Coordinator from HCC and Shepherd Isaac acting assistant and creator of Project Transformation. The aim of the project is to restore and beautify an open space area with indigenous native trees.

The location of the Project is by Wairere Drive in between Kirikiriroa Marae and Deer Hunters Hall.



The actual project started in 2012 by Knighton Primary School, it was to help extend a previous native planting which is actually located within school grounds. The indigenous native plantings are made up of five Zones; the zones represent each year of native plantings. There has been a few Community Events mainly planting, mulching, weeding and hopefully this will

continue into the near future. The project has monthly gatherings every second Saturday of the month starting with 11th March 2017

Volunteers meet every Wednesday at 9.30am to 12pm by Deer Hunters Hall (Green buildings).

Anyone interested can contact Shepherd for induction. There is also a registration process for Volunteers on HCC website or Waikato Volunteers website. Shepherd Isaac, Mobil Number: 022 3920912, mail: southtornado@gmail.com

Small Scale Community Initiative Fund Smartygrant application process

Waikato Regional Council (WRC) have implemented an online system to manage funding applications and the first fund to use this will be the Small Scale Initiatives Fund which opens on the 1 March 2017.

The system is called SmartyGrants and is a proven system based on sound funding management principles. Hamilton City Council, Auckland City Council and Community Waikato have been using this for a few years now and received great feedback from both their customers and staff. The SmartyGrants system has many benefits, including:

- Increasing accessibility to applicants across the region
- Increased applicant accountability [by capturing project accountability reports from funded applicants]
- SmartyGrants user accounts which store a history of your applications and allow you to easily apply to any funds which are put through this system
- Better reporting which allows better information for future planning.

When the fund is opened an "Apply Now" option will be available on this WRC internet page:

www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/community/whats-happening/funding-and-scholarships/small-scale-community-initiatives-fund/

The page also includes fund criteria, policy and where you can go for help. Please contact Moira Cursey on 0800246348 or m.cursey@xtra.co.nz if you still need help with the application form after you've checked out the help online. **Please note that I will be available up to 22 March.**

Lower Mangapiko Streamcare Group

In November 2016, the Mangapiko Stream Care Group and a bunch of keen volunteers undertook planting



at the Macky & Johnson farm. It was a great turnout!

Approximately 7,500 plants were planted between the two properties, thanks to the support of various organisations who believe in enhancing the characteristics of the environment and protecting our waterways. Each year the Mangapiko Stream Care Group, as it has been over the years put in a lot of effort and energy behind a lot of these initiatives and take real pride in

showcasing it too! A tour of the Macky farm post-planting along with a committed group of local farmers was a great experience to see the wealth of knowledge and history they shared amongst themselves, as they reminisced about the changing times and how far they have come with their efforts.



Last week a Forum members attended a presentation by one of the web designers of 'Way Wiser' which was originally a website for crazy adventure sports people to meet up and do stuff together but it has morphed to include community groups. The average age of the users is 25 to 35. She thought it might be a good way for community groups to advertise events like working bees and rustle up some new volunteers. Worth a try. Here's the link: <https://waywiser.co.nz/>

RESTORE – advocacy in action.

RESTORE is a community advocacy group intent on achieving a swimmable Lake Rotoroa. RESTORE's strategies include lobbying Hamilton City Council for greater focus and attention on the lake water quality,



and engaging the community in advocating for this change. RESTORE's members include a number of water quality and ecological experts. The collaboration between these experts and community members has added to the strength and possibility of RESTORE's advocacy. RESTORE has been able to communicate to Council and to the wider community that water quality is an issue and that there are

very viable solutions at hand that can be implemented. RESTORE's work has been picked up in a number of ways, including by a Lake Residents Group who were able to draw on the advice of RESTORE in developing their recent submission to the Lake Domain Management Plan. RESTORE was also instrumental in motivating City Council to expand their lake water quality sampling program.

RESTORE receives administrative and organisational support from the Waikato Environment Centre. If you would like to be involved in RESTORE please contact Anna on anna@envirocentre.org.nz

Moira Cursey Waikato Biodiversity Forum coordinator