



Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter May 2017 Number 54

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
- Organised two GPS workshops in Whitianga and Hamilton
- Organising the next Forum event to be held in Hamilton city
- Assisted groups with Small Scale Community Initiative Fund in relation to the new online grant application form
- Presented to the Waikato, South Waikato and Waipa District Councils on the Forum's work and biodiversity in their district
- Assisted WRC staff with their funding display at the Waikato Funders Expo
- Visited groups on the Coromandel to update data and map information
- Attended Waikato Ecological Restoration Trust meeting as Trustee
- Edited information on Nature Space for community groups
- Gave feedback to Hamilton LIBS contractor on community group's work and their location in Hamilton City

Project Tongariro

Project Tongariro's (PT) 2016/17 Biodiversity Internship programme, very kindly supported by the Craters of the Moon Trust, allows New Zealand students to come and join the PT



team for about three months. PT provides accommodation, transportation, a living stipend and a fantastic opportunity to get a 'real hands' on conservation experience in the Central Plateau. This year they were joined by

Sonny and Leigh, who've just finished their Ecology degrees at Palmerston North's Massey University. During their stay with us they were supported by Nick Singers, Shirley Potter and myself. Their main piece of work this year was wetland bird monitoring at the Waimarino Lagoon. This study will give PT an excellent indication of how the wetland restoration project (Te Matapuna Wetlands) is progressing. Nick and Shirley have been keeping the

students very busy with work in and around the wetland and Nick has also treated them to other special areas such as the head waters of the Waimarino River, while hunting for whio as part of another restoration project Nick has initiated. The photo shows Leigh and Sonny releasing whio in the Waimarino River. Kiri Te Wano

Waikato Weedbusting Squad

The Waikato Weedbusting Squad was established through DOC as a pilot for setting up a community volunteering weedbusting group. It was trialed through DOC (Hamilton) in 2015 and the squad started their weed working bees in a reserve near Ngaruawahia later that year. Now the squad is operating independently of DOC under the umbrella of the Waikato



Ecological Restoration Trust (WERT) which was formed earlier this year. It is hoped that the success of this initiative will be replicated in other regions of NZ and the Waikato. The Squad works with QEII to clear weeds from various covenanted sites across the Waikato Basin. Squad members enjoy the comraderie, the variety of sites, the satisfaction of seeing the results of a team effort and knowing they are having a real influence in

restoring indigenous biodiversity. The Squad welcomes new members and members say it's a great opportunity to visit unknown bush sites which you wouldn't normally have access to. Contact Jude Tisdall 021947815 for more information.

Otama Dunes Weed Warriors

Coromandel Dunes are no longer a safe place for weeds. In Term 1, 75 Weed Warriors were unleashed onto the Otama Dune system. With cries of "this means war!" they undertook a search and destroy mission. Mercury Bay Area School Deputy Principal, Anne-Maree



McDougall, and local Department of Conservation (DOC) staff are leading their troops in the War on Weeds. They have joined forces and become 'Dune Buddies' for 2017. Their aim is to restore our dune ecosystems, removing exotic weeds so allowing native species to thrive. On this trip, students focused on one section of the dunes and throughout the

year, two more Dune Days will see the entire Otama dune system cleared. Over 150 Year 5 and 6 students will get the chance to learn about what makes Coromandel Dunes so special and what we can do to protect them. Look out Coromandel, your dune weed days are numbered! Alaine Holdom DOC Whitianga

Kauri 2000

At the end of March representatives from international financial institutions were brought to Whitianga by our major sponsor, the BNZ, to mark the 10th anniversary of the bank's



launch of Kauri Bonds. For every bond issued, the BNZ sets funds aside to purchase kauri – and then joins us to plant them. The visitors were formally welcomed by our tangata whenua, Ngati Hei, and then taken to see “their” trees. It was impressive to see how interested these people were in what we are doing to restore kauri forests, and to realise their funds are contributing to real conservation action. Want to join our volunteers on Saturday 10 June, this year? Please contact co-ordinator Janet Munns on 07-866-0468 or email info@kauri2000.co.nz

We plan the usual sausage sizzle and drink afterwards – we'd love to see you. Janet Munns
Photo of Andrea Dore (World Bank) and John Marsh (BNZ Wellington) cutting the cake.

Grandview Community Nursery – Nga Rongoa Conservation Project

The Nga Rongoa section of the gardens has battled through heavy rainfall due to the recent



cyclones in New Zealand. However, despite this, with careful, consistent maintenance, our forest continues to prosper. On 2 April 2017, we gained a new volunteer Dan (*pictured left below*) who is a student at Waikato University. He, along with Tim and a few other volunteers used the truck load of wood chips (*picture right below*) to align a new path for our mini forest. In our most recent session on 7 May 2017, we cleared away the Tradescantia and will continue to clear away the Convolvulus. Upcoming working bee date_11 June 2017 Sunday 3:30-5:00pm. Please

email or phone Grace if you take an interest in helping: amxgrace@gmail.com

Address: Grandview Community Garden Trust (behind the Salvation Army)
180 Grandview Road, Nawton, Hamilton

Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society:

We are thrilled that Waikato Regional Council have recently approved funding for the first year of kokako translocations to Mt Pirongia. Once we gain permissions from DOC, which



are currently being processed, we could begin capture of the first birds to re-establish a population in our 1,000ha pest control area. Pureora Forest is the expected source of kokako founders in year one, but we are also keen to return birds with Pirongia lineage currently on Tiritiri Matangi Island in

subsequent years. The last kokako on Mt Pirongia were captured in the 1990s in the hope they would breed successfully elsewhere and now it is a very special privilege to reach a point where their descendants could be welcomed home. Watch our project video here, thanks to funding from Chalky digits: <https://vimeo.com/213610507>.. We are also grateful to WWF and the Tindall Foundation for funding our pest control costs. Clare St Pierre

Mangaiti Gully Restoration Group

Opening up our restoration area with tracks and bridging streams is one of the first things we do as part of the process. Mangaiti gully has a flood prone gully floor that is part of



Hamilton City storm water system. This means during heavy rain the water level rises quickly, but equally, as soon as the rain stops the water level quickly recedes. This, and the fact that Hamilton City Council do not approve of fixed structures across their storm water network, led us to design our bridges that would survive these conditions.

We are building our bridges out of H3 70 x 100. We put

25mm spacers between each and bolt the whole thing together using galvanised threaded rod that can be purchased in 36 inch (yes inches) lengths. We then secure the bridge in place by chaining it to posts each side of the stream so that in a flood the bridge floats up. This achieves council's wish and takes the pressure off a fixed bridge that is prone to damage during floods. Rex Bushell



Flightworks is a company that undertakes the following services using aerial drones:

- Aerial mapping and 3D imaging
- Weed and vegetation analysis
- Precise aerial spraying
- Aerial project monitoring

They are happy to provide a free appraisal around the best tools for your needs (which may not always include drones). They are certified by the Civil Aviation Authority. You can visit their website to learn more about the services above. <http://www.flightworks.nz/>



Predator-Free Hamilton is a charitable Trust set up to help control pest animals in Hamilton, working alongside Hamilton City Council and Waikato Regional Council. Its members include scientists, community environmental groups and Hamilton residents.

Waikato Regional Council's HALO project has helped increase numbers of native birds in the hills and bush areas around Hamilton. Planting by Hamilton City Council and environmental



groups has increased habitat for birds in the city. We are now seeing far more tui in Hamilton than we have for many years, and there's been a recent sighting of a korimako (bellbird).

However, possums and rats in the city take way too many eggs and fledglings. To get more native birds we need to control the numbers of possums and rats in the city. Hamilton City Council and Waikato Regional

Council are already controlling predators in some areas and community groups are doing the same at Hammond Park in Riverlea and at Mangaiti Gully. This work needs to go hand in hand with predator control people do on their own properties. We want to set traps for rats and possums in the gullies and on properties next to the gullies. At the moment, we are setting up a pilot project in the Onukutara Gully, from Hukanui Road to Crosby Road. To help plan the pilot project we have investigated the numbers and location of rats and possums and how far they travel. This will help us figure out where traps are needed. Some

are on public land and some on private property, where owners are keen to be involved. We will continue to track pest numbers to see how effective the programme is.

If the pilot goes well we will set it up in other areas, modifying the approach as necessary.

Eventually we hope the whole city will be covered.

If you would like to be kept informed, sign up on our website:

<http://www.predatorfreehamilton.org.nz/> Kemble Pudney

Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park

A BIG thanks go to Waikato Regional Council which through its Natural Heritage Fund, has funded around 75% of Waiwhakareke's planting costs for the next four years with a total grant of \$314, 378. That will take the park up to near two thirds completion of pioneering planting with enrichment planting coming along progressively as the pioneer plants achieve canopy closure.



WRC staffers Judy van Rossem and Alan Saunders provided great support and help through the process. Arbor Day planting at Waiwhakareke this year is on 2 June from 10 am. For registration and more information see <http://www.hamilton.govt.nz/our-city/parks/parksandgardens/waiwhakareke/Pages/Arbor-Day-at-Waiwhakareke.aspx>.

Join the cast of thousands for the best day out:



The Piako Catchment Forum is holding a Community Discussion Evening *Water our Way*. They have special guests and interesting community discussions lined up with the theme of "What do you want the Piako River to look like in 10 years time?"

Wednesday 7 June 2017

7-9pm

Morrinsville Rotary Clubrooms

Campbell Park

RSVP to Anita at piakocatchment@gmail.com

Or on their Facebook@PiakoCatchmentForum

Moira Cursey Waikato Biodiversity Forum Coordinator