



Waikato Biodiversity Forum Newsletter

February 2010 Number 26

Kia Ora/Greetings to all Forum Members

Hope you are all enjoying the summer. It has been a noticeably wetter summer which is of benefit for biodiversity. Here is another quote from one of my favourite conservationist. He was so ahead of his time writing this in 1949.

"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect". ~Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, 1949.

Calendar of Events and Working Bees pages on Website

If you have events, **working bees** or trips planned for 2010 and would like them advertised outside your group forward them to me for inclusion on the Forum's website. <http://www.waikatobiodiversity.org.nz/events/>

Biodiversity Contestable Advice and Condition Funds

The funding round is now closed. It is anticipated that the Funds will be open in **June 2010** for applications and www.biodiversity.govt.nz/biofunds

Anyone proposing to submit an application, prior discussion with Fund staff is recommended. So if you have any questions or wish to discuss any aspect of your project or proposed application please feel free to call Katrina or Susie on 0800 86 2020.

How to apply You need to familiarise yourself with the Biodiversity Fund Guides and Exclusions for funding.

<http://www.biodiversity.govt.nz/land/nzbs/pvtland/conditionapps.html>

ONLINE APPLICATIONS: As with previous funding rounds you are encouraged to submit applications online using the appropriate form for the Advice Fund or Condition Fund. www.biodiversity.govt.nz/apply Refer to the online application guide for helpful notes and hints

http://www.biodiversity.govt.nz/land/nzbs/pvtland/Guide_4_Electronic_Online_Applications.pdf

MANUAL APPLICATIONS: If you are submitting an application manually applicants must use the appropriate and revised application forms for this round.

<http://www.biodiversity.govt.nz/land/nzbs/pvtland/conditionapps.html>

Funding Advice

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

Tarariki Reserve Paeroa Outcomes from Forum

The Waikato Biodiversity Forum was successful in gaining funds to undertake plant pest control in Tarariki Reserve. This money along with a contribution from Hauraki District Council will enable the control of gorse, eleagnus and pampas along the end of the road and at the beginning of the track. A quote for this work is being undertaken by Hauraki District Council.

Better Biodiversity for West Coast Rivers and Streams

Environment Waikato's Draft Annual Plan is likely to include a proposal to improve water quality and stream health the region's West Coast catchments (the draft plan had not been finalised when this newsletter was written). West coast catchments make up nearly 20 per cent of our region and include harbours of significant recreational and economic value, plus outstanding native ecosystems. Yet despite this natural wealth, very little river and catchment management work occurs in the area. Even the Clean Streams programme, that has done so much for Raglan Harbour, was cut back last year.

Unlike the rest of the region, there is no overall catchment management plan or a way for people to raise catchment issues directly with EW. The Draft Annual Plan is likely to propose changing that by launching a catchment management plan process through a new EW subcommittee made up of people who live on the West

Coast. The proposal is expected include a specific targeted rate to partly fund integrated river and catchment work. Currently, the general rate, which is paid all across the region, funds the limited work done on the West Coast. For more information on how water quality and stream biodiversity can be improved visit www.ew.govt.nz. The Draft Annual Plan should be available toward the end of March.

Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society

Pirongia Te Aroaro o Kahu Restoration Society has completed its second extension to their bait station grid and it now covers over 470ha. The image below gives an overview of the location and extent of the control area which is currently serviced by about 50 community volunteers. Rat monitoring completed just before Christmas by St Paul's Collegiate Hillary Challenge group returned a fantastic result of 1.25%, down from an index of 72% (taken in Winter 2009). The Society is already considering another extension for the coming year of approximately 100ha and is gearing up to take on native bat protection too. This will involve training volunteers for bat monitoring and possibly installing Henry stoat traps near roost trees. Reports of increased numbers of five different native bird species in our control area has been encouraging news. Anyone wishing to join our teams is welcome to contact Clare St Pierre on (07) 8719133 or stpierre@xtra.co.nz.



Location and extent of bait station grid on Mt Pirongia, 2009. Photo taken from Bell Rd, Pirongia.

Bovine TB control in the Waikato region

The Animal Health Board (AHB) is an incorporated society, legally responsible for managing and implementing the National Pest Management Strategy (NPMS) for bovine tuberculosis (bovine TB) in New Zealand. The AHBs 2009/10 bovine tuberculosis (TB) control programme in the Waikato is on track and is set to complete a \$5.2 million vector control programme on schedule by the end of June. The total value of AHB programmes in the region is approximately \$9.7 million.

This year's programme will see around 300,000 hectares of land treated for possum control and 430,000 in 2010/11. Environment Waikato on behalf of ratepayers collects and passes on to the AHB a targeted rate which contributes to the control of TB vectors, primarily possums, across the region.

The regional contribution for 09/10 was approx. \$650,000 so for every dollar of ratepayer contribution to the AHB programme, the programme delivers approximately another \$9 of biodiversity benefit to the region through matched funding from central government and the farming sector. As funding for AHB programmes from industry and crown partners is dependent on regional funding the loss or reduction of regional funding levels would have an immediate and dramatic affect on AHB programmes in the region. The Environment Waikato draft annual plan submission process is due in mid March, at this time it will be necessary to have positive support from ratepayers to ensure the targeted rate is retained for the upcoming 2010/11 programme.

AHB encourages all ratepayers who have an interest in biodiversity protection and enhancement to consider a submission in support of continuing the rate. AHB vector control programmes have contributed significantly to the biodiversity gains in the Waikato region in recent years. The Maungatautari Ecological Island project is one such project born on the back of AHB programmes. Vector control is used by the AHB to reduce TB infection levels in wildlife as the disease can be passed to farmed cattle and deer. This helps protect the \$7.2 billion pastoral production generates for the regional economy. Currently the Waikato has 11 infected herds, 8 dairy and 3 beef, compared with a 21 in February 2009. New Zealand's national TBfree programme serves some 75,000 cattle and deer herd owners nationally and involves disease testing and movement control programmes fully funded by

direct industry contribution and a large communications programme to assist farmers to understand and comply with TB regulations. Frank Pavitt, Regional Coordinator, Northern North Island, AHB

Kaimai Mamaku Campaign – Events and Activities

5 Peaks (3 left) – a series of guided day walks to 5 high points within the Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park. Length and grade varies.

| Date | Details |
|---------|---|
| 27.2.10 | Kakarahi and Queen Victoria's Head - (6 and a ½ hours return - tramping track) DIRECTIONS - Please meet at the road end of Hot Springs Road (just south of Katikati of SH2) at 9 am. |
| 20.3.10 | Wairere Falls - (3 – 4 hours return – walking track) DIRECTIONS - Please meet at the road end of Goodwin Road (off Old Te Aroha Road) at 10.00 am. |
| 10.4.10 | Otanewainuku - (1 and a ½ hours return – walking track) DIRECTIONS - Take Oropi Road south from Tauranga and turn onto Mountain Road just past Oropi. There is a small car park, public shelter, toilet and picnic area by the road. Alternatively, access Mountain Road from No 2 Road near Te Puke. |

See www.kaimaimamaku.org.nz for more details re these activities and for general information on the campaign. You can also ph Al Fleming on 575 8478 or 021 988 295.

Franklin District Council

Franklin District Council has monitored 300 Conservation Covenants over the past year, with a 75% compliance rate. We would like to acknowledge the efforts of the FDC staff and hope that this level of effort is maintained in the new Auckland Council, Waikato District Council and Hauraki, who will all be inheriting Conservation Covenants from the Franklin District.

Valuing community group contributions to conservation

By Ned Hardie-Boys

Science for Conservation 299. 68 p.

Community groups make an important contribution to the conservation of New Zealand's natural and historic heritage, yet we do not have a clear understanding of the economic significance of this contribution or the conservation achievements it brings. Therefore, 362 community partners of the Department of Conservation were surveyed to find out about the types and benefits of their partnership arrangements, and to estimate the value of the resources they contribute to conservation activities. In total, 201 (56%) of these community partners responded to the survey. Almost half (47.5%) of these had informal partnership arrangements, while 43.5% had a formalised agreement. Groups carried out a wide range of activities, with 58.3% involved in ecological restoration, 57.8% in conservation awareness and publicity, and 55.3% in pest control.

The groups had a total annual income of around \$12 million, but this income was unevenly distributed, with five groups (3.6%) accounting for 50.8% of all income. For every \$1 of government funding, groups received, on average, \$1.34 of income from non-government sources. The groups involved 6232 volunteers who gave 174 812 hours of labour over a year. This equates to around 233 full-time equivalent volunteers, or 21 850 workday equivalents. Thus, the total financial value contributed by the groups over 12 months was estimated at \$15.8 million, which represents a return of \$3–\$4 for every \$1 of government funding contributed through grants or contracts. In terms of conservation outcomes, groups were making the greatest contribution to increasing community participation and the least contribution to improving historic/cultural heritage. Groups identified a lack of funding as the main obstacle to their success. While acknowledging that the full implications of the results are not yet known, the report concludes by identifying 29 recommendations to support improvements in policy making and planning, and service delivery in relation to working with the community and voluntary sector.

The above new publication is now in press and can be downloaded from:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/science-and-technical/sfc299entire.pdf> (462 KB)

Driving Creek Sanctuary

The loan for the vermin proof Xcluder fence around the Driving Creek wetlands is now paid off so this has been cause for celebration. The Trust has been busy renovating an old hay barn to become an interpretation centre as increasing people are requesting to visit the sanctuary and request information about the wildlife present. Mice were found to be present in the enclosure and a programme of trapping begun and daily inspections of the perimeter fence. Rain streaming over the metal cap at the top can erode soil away at the bottom of the fence and expose the edge of the skirt so small rodents could find their way inside the fence. Local support is growing for the Sanctuary with local business contributing to the project such as, the Lions Club donating \$2000 for a Herpatorium especially designed for viewing skink and gecko.

Thames/Hauraki Branch of Forest and Bird

Over the period Jan 2008 to Nov 2009 the Thames/Hauraki branch of Forest and Bird has continued with the care of selected portions of the riverbanks of the Waihou and Kauaeranga Rivers. Support for this work has been received from: Donors Pub Charity, and Community Conservation Fund, Local government DOC, Environment Waikato, and TCDC, Community individual volunteers and community groups, (schools, Lion's Club, etc). On the West bank or Orongo side of the Waihou an established group of volunteers have continued weed control, track maintenance, and care of those trees already planted along the 1 km riparian strip. The tree/plant varieties found to be most successful in withstanding the salinity of the terrain are flax, jointed wire rush, ngaio and karaka. The flax are now putting up flower spikes but no natural regeneration of flax or ngaio seems to have occurred yet.

A predator control programme has been restricting the number of possum, rabbits, hedgehogs, rats, and mustelids. Three stoats were caught. But most of the destruction is probably caused by rabbits and hedgehogs. Although nesting sites of mallard ducks are now better protected their population has still not shown any sign of recovery. A small colony of skinks is surviving on part of the drier area around the stopbank. An unanticipated extension to the Society's work on the Waihou appeared in the plans for the replacement bridge at Kopu. Construction began in the middle of 2009. The Society was pleased to note that provision is made for over 500 kahikatea and over 200 totara, besides liberal numbers of other dominant trees such as puriri and pigeonwood. Some thousands of smaller plants (manuka, five-finger, native grasses, flax, whau etc) too will be put in along the 2 kilometer roadway of the new bridge, between Hauraki Rd and the Kopu Marae. These plantings of 2k East to West by Transit will intersect very nearly at midpoint and at right angles to the 1 k of plantings by the Society along the riverbank. Their most easterly point will also connect with about 2k of informal bird corridor which follows SH25A up the Kirikiri Valley to the Western boundary of the Coromandel Forest Park. (The great majority of landholders in this corridor, too, are supportive of conservation).

If you want to contact people whose details are not in the newsletter you can go through the Contact Us page on the Forum website and send an email to me. I'll put you in touch with them.

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

Cheers Moira