



## Winter Newsletter 2023 Number 78

**Kia ora tātou,**

**An update on some of the work undertaken over the past three months:**

- Edited, published and gathered articles for the Winter edition of the Forum Newsletter
- Chaired and took minutes for Forum Focus group meetings
- Sent bio-forum emails with latest notices, and updated website and facebook page
- Responded to enquiries from email and 0800 bio div service
- Organisation of the Landscape Scale Restoration Workshop - November 8th
- Participated in on-going National Science Challenge Co-design hui: Scaling collective action through shared learning

### Greening Taupō Day 2023

Greening Taupō Day has fast become more than just an Arbor Day planting event. It has blossomed into a festival of Environmental Education for the region and a day of celebration that the whole community engages in. Every school and numerous kindergartens take on environmental projects during the week and hold a 'dress in green' fundraising day.

The Arbor Day event this year started with an unexpected downpour of rain which had the thousand people in attendance ducking for cover and our coordinators huddled under an umbrella with the mayor trying to get the microphone to work. Our plans for a big opening kōrero and planting demonstration abruptly changed. We quickly said a few words then declared the day open. Many attendees chose to brave the elements to plant, and the 3000 trees were planted in an hour. These were added to the 4500 trees planted at last year's event to become the beginnings of a native forest.

Robyn from Greening Taupō did a fantastic job of organising the planting aspect of the day. Trees that Count and funds raised at last year's event funded the trees, Mynoke generously donated vermicast, Taupō District Council (TDC) and the Department of Conservation (DOC) did the site preparation, Wicked Weeder volunteers and students from Taupō Intermediate unloaded the plants and put them, along with vermicast and fertiliser, in all of the holes ready for the day.

Over 40 local businesses and organisations had stands onsite with activities for the children. Most of them had an environmental education message. Participants could learn about native bats from DOC, build a trap with Forest and Bird, investigate freshwater macroinvertebrates with the Tongariro Trout Centre, shoot predators using nerf guns with Contact Energy, find out about bird banding with Maungatautari Sanctuary Mountain, dissect owl pellets with Wingspan, guess the native plant species with Ngaroma Nurseries, hunt for worms like a kiwi with Save the Kiwi, learn about native bees with Huka



Honey Hive, repurpose old books with Taupō library, play a recycling game with TDC, and take part in a wetland experiment or see the kauri dieback model with Waikato Regional Council. There was bug hunting, fungi on display, bush tea tasting, and obstacle courses. Children could ride bikes on the new pump track with Kids Bike Taupō or have a go with a frisbee thanks to Taupō Disc Golf. There were fire engines and police cars to check out, and face painting for kids. Local author/illustrator Donovan Bixley painted a beautiful karearea and signed books. These were just some of the fun activities offered.

The food served on the day was a massive collaborative effort. In order to be more sustainable, Epro sent an employee to hunt wild deer, resulting in 500 donated venison sausages. DOC contributed another 400 sausages and Trev Terry Marine not only provided another 500 sausages, but also supplied the gear and staff to cook them all. Countdown Taupō donated bread, sauces and buns. Those buns were served alongside soup made by The Bistro, with rescued vegetables from Misfit Garden, whose staff were also there handing out free fruit to children. Biodegradable cups donated by Mynoke for the soup could be taken to the Mitre 10 MEGA stand and used to pot up a plant to take home.



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## Bush to Burbs – Empowering Community-led Biodiversity Protection through Predator Control

The Bush to Burbs (B2B) project managed by Go Eco, focuses on protecting biodiversity spillover from Maungatautari by reducing predator numbers in the adjacent rural landscape. The 11,200ha project area is located on the Northern side of the maunga, stretches to the outskirts of Cambridge and is abounded by the Waikato River. This is a community driven project supported by Go Eco's Biodiversity Community Organiser, Karen Barlow, with traps funded by Waikato Regional Council through the Natural Heritage Fund (2022-2025).

The aim to have 75 landowners participating in this project after the first year, was exceeded with 102 landowners now part of B2B. This higher-than-expected uptake clearly demonstrates landowner awareness, willingness to support our native taonga species through trapping (and habitat restoration) and the importance of coordination and financial support to achieve the national goal to be predator free by 2050. Through regular communication, hub events/talks, the residential and mustering powers of the steering group and attendance at local community events, such as the Horahora Hare Hunt, this project supports the efforts of the local community. Karen has also had the pleasure of working alongside Ngāti Koroki Kahukura to set up traps at the kura and is looking forward to continuing to korero, support and learn.

401 traps have been given out, with a total of 901 traps operating within the project area. 4772 ha (43%) of the total project is now under predator control, with 1,742 ha of predator control occurring within the buffer zone ie. within 3km of the predator proof fence line. Well over 2,300 pest species have been removed in the first year, including almost 1,000 possums. Not all landowners have the capacity to record their results on Trap.NZ and some landowners are undertaking predator control but are not part of the project. Therefore, the true numbers are likely significantly higher.

B2B complements other Waikato landscape scale restoration projects such as Taiea te Taiao, a project driven by NZ Landcare Trust to connect Maungataurai and Pirongia maunga with an ecological corridor of native forest habitat; and Hamilton Halo, which was launched by the regional council in 2007 to increase the number of tui and bellbirds that survive in bush breeding areas within 20 kilometres of Hamilton city.



Overall, the first year has been very successful and shows the importance the community plays towards the PF2050 goal. The commitment to this community project, with so many landowners coming onboard with enthusiasm, has been incredible. This project wouldn't be possible without the B2B steering committee, the incredible efforts of 102 B2B landowners, the support by Ngāti Koroki Kahukura and the funding support from Waikato Regional Council. We look forward to continuing to work alongside this incredible community! Thank you for your support!



## Purangi Conservation Trust - Weathering the Winter

Without harping on, it has been wet here. The weather issues we experience on the Coromandel make trapping a little more challenging. A lot of mud on certain tracks can make trapping life a bit slower. If you are finding it hard to motivate yourself to attend to trapping at this time of the year, I can relate, especially when there is so much else to do. The weeds are also proving to be a formidable enemy. There's nothing that motivates me more to set my traps than hearing a rat in the roof space, looking for a warm, rent-free residence over the winter. Happily, I've had great success, with two rats trapped in one night last week – plus a better night's sleep (no such thing as a perfect night sleep at this age). We have found a few tips useful for winter trapping, some of which might help our volunteers and resident trappers.

### Winter Trapping Tips Summary -

**Bad Trap Spots** - Compost bins, chicken coops and veggie gardens are already full of tasty rat food, so they're terrible spots to put a trap. Rats will just ignore them and go for the food they already know and love.

**Great Trap Spots**- Under the house, in the garage, behind the wood pile and in the attic are all great places to put your trap. Rats will feel hidden and safe, and the only thing for them to eat there will be the lure in your trap.

If you would like to set up a trap (bait with peanut butter, mayo or an egg for visual), this T-Rex trap is simple to use, and when in the box, is safe, away from kids and pets.



Bait Station - A safe, lockable bait station is another option, particularly if you are away from your property often. Run through bait station: (lockable) – safe from accidental poisoning from non target species. Please never disperse toxin loosely, without a recommended station. This method is dangerous and outdated and does not effectively control rats, and can not be monitored.



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## Black Maire Seed Collection Adventures

With Jude Tisdall, Te Aroha Drummond, Jason Kete, Rosemary Davison, John Linstead and Nardene Berry. Friday 11th August 2023. As a frost was expected that morning, and we didn't want to be crawling around on our hands and knees in an icy paddock, we organised an arrival time and place a bit later than initially determined.

Although the sun was out, the wind was very cold. We loaded our vehicles with buckets, a ladder, pruning pole, thermoses of hot drinks, food and, most importantly, donuts and muffins bought specially for the trip.

After a short drive, we arrive on farm and squish into one ute. The paddocks are very waterlogged, and we manage to get through the first gate and over a culvert before we get stuck in the mud. Having to abandon the vehicle, we carry our equipment across boggy pasture to the fenced off lone Black Maire.

Historically, Black Maire/ maire raunui / *Nestegis cunninghamii* was much more widely distributed and more common in lowland forest than it is today. Unfortunately, it's a fine timber for burning, so, upon the arrival of Europeans to Aotearoa, it was cut down for firewood, and to power early stream trains. Therefore, it is now extremely rare in the Waikato and difficult to find a tree, let alone one that has fruit on it. So, to find this tree, in a relatively easy location to gather seed was fantastic. It was in the shade, and the wind was very cold, so we needed to rug up warmly and then get on our hands and knees (or lie down) to gather the seed.

As we weren't coming back, this was our one chance to get as much seed as we could. We all know the importance of gathering seed from different trees to help maintain the diversity of the resulting seedlings. However, despite other Black Maire trees nearby, the tree we found was the only one bearing fruit. The grass under the tree was quite thick, so we had to run our fingers through the grass to find the seed and then collect it in our vessels. Our fingers quickly went numb from the cold ground.

There was friendly competition over who collected the most seed, with us all getting very similar amounts in the end. We had a break for lunch and to warm up in a sheltered spot beside a barn. Then managed to get the ute unstuck before we carried on collecting more seed.





Jude clipped the seed directly from the branches and we gathered a mix of green, ripe and overripe fruit. According to the NZ Plant Conservation Network, the seed is “easily grown from fresh seed.”<sup>1</sup> But experience from those assembled, found this was not the case. Rather, the seed seems to be variable and not easy to germinate. The bounty of seed was therefore distributed amongst the group to share with native plant nurseries to propagate, with the hope of a successful strike rate. Five hundred seeds were also sent to AsureQuality for assessment. The team at AsureQuality feel the Black maire will be quite a challenge as the seeds have an “oily” coating, which may prove difficult to germinate. Maire trees are in the same family as olives – Oleaceae. The seeds are assessed using a “tetrazolium viability test or an x-ray to identify if there are viable endosperms present.”<sup>2</sup>



The long term ambition is to have more Black Maire planted across the Waikato, as they provide fruit over winter for our native birds/manu, Kererū in particular. “Black maire are thought to be the longest lived of our native Angiosperms. Long lived species are common amongst podocarps, but unusual among Angiosperms.”<sup>3</sup> We have been told they can grow as old as 700 years, so are an important species to include in restoration projects. If anyone knows of other Black maire trees in the Waikato, which bear fruit, please get in touch. Story and photos by Nardene Berry.

## Pestival Kirikiriora - Learn how we can play a pivotal role in the ambitious Predator Free 2050 goal.

By collaborating for a shared goal, individuals, iwi, councils, businesses and community groups create a powerful force, accelerating progress towards the predator-free vision and ensuring a vibrant and resilient natural heritage for future generations to enjoy. To learn more about the Predator Free 2050 goal, and to get involved in your backyard, or neighbourhood - come to along Pestival in the Tron 2023 hosted by Go Eco on the 9 September at Western Community Centre, 46 Hyde Ave, Nawton.

There will be free talks, stalls, conservation displays and free activities for the kids to enjoy, with a focus on learning about the native species in our region, like tuna (eels), pekapeka-tou-roa, geckos and birds, and predator control. Attendees will also have the opportunity to buy, build and take home a trap tunnel box with T-Rex rat trap. Doors open at 9.30am with talks starting at 10am. Kids activities run from 10.30-12.30pm. The event is supported by NZ Landcare Trust and sponsored by Predator Free Hamilton, Forest and Bird - Waikato Branch, Hamilton City Council and Titoki Landcare.”

PROTECTING OUR NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA

**PESTIVAL IN THE TRON**

SAT 9 SEPTEMBER

OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF  
CENTRAL WAIKATO  
PREDATOR FREE HUB

9.30AM-3PM SAT 9 SEPTEMBER  
WESTERN COMMUNITY CENTRE  
46 HYDE AVE, NAWTON, KIRIKIRIORA

FREE!

EXPERT TALKS / INFO STALLS  
KIDS CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES  
PREDATOR FREE GROUPS

GO ECO

SPONSORS: TITOKI LANDCARE, NZ LANDCARE TRUST, PREDATOR FREE HAMILTON, Forest & Bird, Hamilton City Council

**PESTIVAL IN THE TRON**

**DOORS OPEN 9.30AM**

**10-10:45  
BIODIVERSITY AND PREDATOR CONTROL**

- Biodiversity and conservation in the Waikato basin  
Kate Richardson (Waikato Regional Council)
- Why do predator control?  
Andrew Styche (Department of Conservation)
- Q&A for all speakers

**11-12:00PM  
PREDATOR FREE COMMUNITY SESSION**

- Launch of the Central Waikato Predator Free Hub  
Krissey Barnes & Karen Barlow (Go Eco)
- Restoring Hakarimata  
Greg Townsend (Predator Free Hakarimata)
- One Wild Year: successes and lessons learnt  
Alison Ewing, Rod Berry, Robyn Richardson (Predator Free Tamahere)
- Q&A for all speakers

**12.30 - 2PM  
TECHNICAL SESSION**

- How can genetics aid decision making in pest management, and what have we learnt?  
Andrew Veale (Manaaki Whenua)
- Managing animal behaviour to improve trapping success  
Cam Speedy (Wildlife Management Associates Ltd)
- Expert panel discussion  
Andrew Veale, Cam Speedy, Carolyn (Kim) King, Janelle Ward, John Innes

**2.15 - 2.45PM  
PRACTICAL TIPS WITH CAM SPEEDY**

**DOORS CLOSE 3PM**

**FREE KIDS ACTIVITIES 10:30-12:30**

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## The Taia te Taiao Project

The Taia te Taiao project builds on the work of the Lower Mangapiko Streamcare Group and is on track to add 60,000 plants this year to an ecological corridor connecting Maungatautari to Pirongia te Aroaro o Kahu Maunga. Close to 200,000 plants have been planted in the two years since its launch. This is a fantastic collaboration with private landowners, council, mana whenua and a range of funders who have been inspired to link the two maunga sanctuaries to see native species flourishing, not just up isolated mountains also but through the rural and urban landscape.

Most of our work is focused in stepping stones, which follow cultural sites identified with mana whenua. Mātauranga around cultural sites is being shared online and at our events. Check out our Story Map for a Corridor Map of our boundaries, wāhi tapu sites and stepping stones.

Weed control as well maintenance and follow-up planting keeps the project busy. Landowners have put in 15 kilometres of fencing and also started engaging in predator control. Over the next three years, the project will further support landowners with predator control near the maunga to help protect the birdlife already spilling out. Meanwhile, the establishment of Predator Free Te Awamutu and the newly created Predator Free Pirongia gives everyone a chance to be a caretaker in their own homes and schools.

Monitoring is also helping people connect to the project. Pekapeka/bat monitoring has shown presence of long-tailed bats across the corridor. eDNA monitoring, available publicly on the Wilderlab website, gives everyone a chance to know more about our waterways alongside maramataka/lunar calendar monitoring for tuna/eel. Landowners, mana whenua and local groups can get on board by joining us on Facebook to keep in touch @ecologicalcorridor. Residents can start trapping or add their existing traps to Trap.NZ. Anyone can be a citizen scientist and share native biodiversity sightings on iNaturalist (a really cool app to check out!). And we invite the rural community to get in touch about planting waterways and wetlands. Please email the Taiao te Taiao team at: [taiaotetaiao@landcare.org.nz](mailto:taiaotetaiao@landcare.org.nz)



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## Kirikiroa Restoration Groups and Working Bees

"Kia ora everyone! Volunteer restoration community work offers many benefits such as personal growth, community development, environmental preservation, and the creation of a more sustainable and vibrant future.



In the spirit of Conservation Week, in which this year's theme is 'Take Action', why not try out volunteering in a local restoration group in our amazing gully systems?

There are many active groups around Hamilton with working bees happening throughout the week, please see attached poster to find one near you!"

## **KIRIKIROA RESTORATION GROUPS & WORKING BEES**

### **Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park**

Brymer Road, Rotokauri  
9-12pm Last Saturday of each month  
[www.waiwhakareke.co.nz](http://www.waiwhakareke.co.nz)

### **Mangaonua Gully**

Opposite 11 Silverdale Road, Silverdale  
9.15-11.15am Every Thursday  
[tinyurl.com/mangaonua](http://tinyurl.com/mangaonua)

### **Barrett Bush**

Meet at end of Barrett Road, Temple View  
9-12pm First Sunday of the month

### **Jubilee Park Care Group**

Boundary Road, Claudelands  
9-12pm Second Saturday of each month

### **Friends of Seeley Gully**

12 Armagh Street, Hamilton East  
9.30-12pm Every Monday  
[www.facebook.com/AJSeeleyGully](http://www.facebook.com/AJSeeleyGully)

### **Manga Waitawhiriwhiri Kaitiaki**

Waikato Table Tennis Association, Edgecumbe Park, Whitiara  
9-12pm Every Saturday  
[tinyurl.com/mangawaitawhiriwhiri](http://tinyurl.com/mangawaitawhiriwhiri)

### **Riverlea Environment Society Inc**

Malcolm Street, Riverlea  
10-12pm Last Saturday of each month  
10-12pm Every Second and Fourth Thursday  
[resi.org.nz](http://resi.org.nz)

### **The Fairfield Project**

College Place, Fairfield  
9-12pm Third Saturday of each month  
[www.thefairfieldproject.co.nz/](http://www.thefairfieldproject.co.nz/)

### **Mangaiti Gully Restoration Group**

2 Grenache Place, Rotorua  
8.30-12pm Every Wednesday  
[gullyrestoration.blogspot.com](http://gullyrestoration.blogspot.com)

### **Mangaiti Youth Climate Action**

2 Grenache Place, Rotorua  
Meets every weekend during school term  
Contact Emily 022 650 2083 for times



### **Hillcrest Stadium**

138 Wairere Drive, Hillcrest  
10-12pm Every Wednesday

**Te Nuia Rural Service**, with links to Ngāti Wairere, are undertaking restoration in Mangaiti gully. contact [carolyn.hopa@gmail.com](mailto:carolyn.hopa@gmail.com)

**Ngāti Hauā Mahi Trust**, [facebook.com/nhmtnz](http://facebook.com/nhmtnz) contact [mike.paviour@nhmt.org.nz](mailto:mike.paviour@nhmt.org.nz)



Go Eco Waikato

New volunteers welcome  
No experience required  
Boots and gloves recommended

Thanks to **Hamilton City Council** for their support of gully restoration across our city

**Healthy Environments / Thriving Communities**  
[www.goeco.org.nz](http://www.goeco.org.nz)