

Friends of Te Atawhai Whenua Reserve – April 2011

Report from John – On the ground several days a week - In the summer of 2010 we had a severe drought which had quite an impact on the reserve. This year (2011) has brought a tropical cyclone and the heaviest deluge of rain the reserve has ever seen. This has also had quite an impact!. A number of trees were lost to the drought but thankfully not as many as we feared. However with the large amount of leaf drop and consequent extra light getting through, grass and weed growth has escalated - particularly honeysuckle and paspalum around track edges.

With the availability of a Forest & Bird and Gulf Trees grants for tree purchase we were able to purchase approx 400 trees the majority of which were planted in the 'Top /Block' above the old drive on the West section.

Interpretive signage has been put in along various tracks of the East and West sections. The feedback we have received is that they are popular and appreciated by the many walkers. There has been a notable increase in track usage this summer due in large part to the 'Sculpture in the Gulf'.

As a result of taking on Community Services workers, organised and run by Judy Coutts, we were eligible for another Grant so we have replaced some of our aging tools. Judy continues with her support for Atawhai Whenua with her focus recently being on Lot 51, Council owned property between the East and West sections. She is working on controlling blackberry, moth-plant and honeysuckle, which are all potential problems for the reserve.

Rhonda, as well as working with myself, is now into her sixth year of rat baiting and is this year trialling on the East section a new bait (Ratibate) which has a low risk of secondary poisoning and a short half life in the environment.

As a result of the heavy deluge of rain in January there have been a number of very large slips. There have been four slips around East landing, one in Josephine's gully and another above the old drive by the lockup. The East landing slips have taken out the 'Mid track' carrying on down to cover the 'Low track' and in one instance out onto and over the road. Both tracks are currently closed. It will not be feasible to open the lesser-used Mid track as damage is too severe, but the popular Low track should be reopened by Easter.

Friends of Te Atawhai Whenua Charitable Trust - registered charitable entity CC20741, MED 1751638. Solicitors: Tetley-Jones Trustees: Flynn Washington - 3728150, Marta Fisch – 3729274 (martaf@xtra.co.nz), Jessica Chapple – 3761549 (jessica@infotools.com), 77 Warnock St, Westmere, Auckland 1022. Waiheke Bank Account = Kiwi Bank 38-9003-0984114-00 ('Friends of Te Atawhai Whenua Trust' account). *Please put in reference details with any deposits so we can send receipts.* All donations are tax deductible. Please let Jessica know if you would like to be added to the newsletter mailing list!

From Marta (Trustee) - Don Chapple was a systems thinker. His dream of protecting Matiatia valley's ecosystem, including the waterway down to the bay, saw fruition after the last big storm. Without the thousands of trees and underlying vegetation, tonnes of earth would have slid onto Ocean View Road, blocking traffic to and from the ferry (not that Don would've minded that!). He wasn't just planting trees because they look pretty and bring birds!

From Jessica – Trustee. A few thanks from me...

- John (and Rhonda) - you are wonderful and make the Trustees' lives much easier. Having you passionate and hands-on for so many years now is much appreciated and reassuring while I get on with my life back in the city.
- Our donors – without your support we would not have the reserve we do. The grants we apply for require a 'base' of fundraising and you provide that. A special thanks for your ongoing support – most of you have been with us for many years now, and we are very grateful.
- Helpers and workers – Judy you are a star. And to all the others who come and do weeding etc, thanks so much.
- Tetley Jones – for your ongoing support (donated legal fees). We appreciate your generosity.
- Martin Rees Financial Services – for minimal price annual financial accounts, despite them having no connection with Waiheke and the reserve at all .

Financials - Our annual accounts are submitted to the Charities Commission for public viewing: www.charities.govt.nz (Registered charitable entity CC20741). After 3 years of no successful Grant applications, our accounts are looking better – we were awarded 3 Grants in the past year. In the past financial year (which runs June to June), we received the following: Grants (ASB Community Trust Grant \$12,350, Heritage Fund grant – ACC \$1,200, ARC EIF \$999), Monthly/annual donations from individuals \$7000, part 2 of Enid Chapple bequest \$9,000, Forest and Bird \$2000 of trees, Gulf trees \$400 of trees, Book sales \$340, Next Step Trust (for plant signs) \$1700, Format Interiors Ltd (for brochure printing \$800).

The Future - The recent climatic extremes (droughts and floods causing big slips) further reinforce this will be an ongoing project. We expect that we need to maintain the current 15-20 hours per week for the next few years, and even beyond that – weeding/pests and path clearing are all ongoing, and weeds are continually encroaching our boundaries. In the next year we plan to design and install some 'Story/History of the Reserve' signage, and Janet Hunt (author of 'A Kindness to the Land') has kindly agreed to help us. It will be good for the general public to visually learn more about reserve's history.