

Rotorua Forest & Bird Committee

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If you have any contacts with people who would be interesting and informative speakers, or thoughts about places for a field trip please let one of the Committee members know.



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ROTORUA BRANCH NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2011—JUNE 2011

MEETING AND ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

We encourage families, particularly KCC members to join us, as well as friends of members, and, where there are no group limitations, non-members are also welcome. Activities marked ^{KCC} are especially suitable for families.

We really appreciate it when members book in for field trips and other outings in advance, as it makes organisation so much easier and more enjoyable for us. Always let the trip leader know if you have any relevant medical condition, and always come prepared for unpredictable weather. For most day trips you will need to bring a waterproof parka, sturdy footwear, drink, and lunch.

Tuesday 22nd February 2011

Rotorua Women's Club, Hinemaru St, near Princes Gate Hotel at 7.30 pm.

Guest Speaker: Nicola Douglas, Area Manager, Rotorua Lakes, Dept of Conservation. Nicki is of Te Arawa Descent (Tuhourangi, Ngati Rangiwewehi, Ngati Whakaue), Ngati Raukawa and Ngati Porou. Her background is varied, having worked in Justice, Maori Radio, & for the last 9 years for DOC based in Rotorua. She is married & has 4 children. Nicki says "As an Area Manager for DOC, I see my role as facilitating conservation outcomes for this Area and primarily through involvement of the wider community. I look forward to meeting with Forest and Bird

members in February, where I will talk about **The Department's Vision - New Zealand is the greatest living space on earth - how we are working towards that in a local context and what that means for conservation and the community.**

At the beginning of this meeting we will also have **Harm Zuidmeer** speak briefly about "**An Environment Centre for Rotorua?**" Read about the concept on page 4.

Everyone is welcome to attend meetings. We usually provide supper after the meeting, a gold coin donation (koha) is appreciated to cover the cost of supper and room rental.

Wednesday 9th March 2011 at the **Mokoia Community Association**, 297 Vaughn Rd (behind the Te Ngae shops) at 7.30 pm

“ Our wild rivers”

View **Whitewater NZ’s** film, **A Tale of Two Rivers**, contrasting Meridian’s plan for a destructive hydro-dam on the Mokihinui River with a hydro scheme proposed for the nearby Stockton Plateau that would benefit the Ngakawau River. This will be followed by **Craig Potton’s Mokihinui River** from the TV series. Remember the phrase, ‘Beware there is a dam coming to a river near you?’ **Entry fee:** Gold coin donation to pay Mokoia Community Centre for hireage of room. Everyone welcome.

^{KCC} Weekend Field Trip to Ruapehu Forest and Bird Lodge from Friday to Sunday, 15-16 April 2011

The new Ruapehu Forest & Bird Lodge is situated at Whakapapa and was opened last year –check the web-site www.forestandbird.org.nz/what-we-do/lodges/ruapehu-lodge.

Last year when **Judy Gardner** attended the North Island F & B meeting, she saw whio (blue duck) in the river across the road from the Lodge. There is plenty to do with walks of all grades and lengths, and the Park information centre. See separate booking sheet for more information. Ph Judy 345 7477, email pete.judy@clear.net.nz

Wednesday 25th May 2011

Rotorua Branch of Forest & Bird **AGM** in the Rimu Room, SCION, 49 Sala Street, Rotorua at 7.30 pm
“ **A remarkable conservation success story” Ark in the Park – Waitakere Ranges Regional Park**
Guest Speaker: John Staniland is Chair of Waitakere Branch of Forest & Bird, and one of the founders of the Society’s **Ark in the Park** ‘Mainland Island’ in the northern Waitakere Ranges which has become one of the premier Forest & Bird initiatives in the country. This fence-less forest restoration project commenced in 2003 and has now exceeded its original target of 2000 hectares, pushed along faster recently by the refusal of the translocated kokako, some of which have already produced offspring, to all remain within the area we had designated for the ‘Ark’.



The project is fortunate to have a large base of volunteers to carry out trapping, and servicing bait stations. Monitoring has proven that rat numbers in the forest are very low, and an extensive array of mustelid traps keeps those predators at bay.

**Do you forget to come on our activities?
If you would like an email reminder please send your email address to margaret.dick@scionresearch.com**

SAVE ON PAPER AND POSTAGE
Would you prefer to receive your newsletter electronically?
If so please email:
margaret.dick@scionresearch.com



New Zealanders are urged to support Wild Mokihinui River Campaign

Forest & Bird has launched a campaign to give New Zealanders the chance to urge Meridian Energy to withdraw its proposal to build an 85-metre-high dam on the pristine **Mokihinui River** on the West Coast. Forest & Bird is asking New Zealanders to send a Forest & Bird e-card to publicly-owned Meridian, asking the company to live up to its stated environmentally-friendly ideals by leaving the Mokihinui alone. Meridian’s proposed dam would create a 14-kilometre-long reservoir covering 330 hectares of rainforest and riverbed along the Mokihinui River gorge in New Zealand’s largest ever drowning of conservation land by a hydro project.

The dam would threaten 16 endangered bird species, including the blue duck or whio, as well as at least two unique species of giant land snails and the critically endangered long-tailed bat. “We are asking Meridian to do the right thing and enhance its reputation as a generator of renewable Energy by leaving this non-renewable river in its wild state,” Forest & Bird General Manager Mike Britton said. “Our plea to Meridian is to walk the talk on their brand and save this magnificent river.” To find out more about how you can help with supporting the **Wild Mokihinui River Campaign**, and another F&B campaign of **saving the MacKenzie Country**, visit www.forestandbird.org.nz

Tikitapu Pest Control Report - continued

In December "First Word in Fauna" was contracted by Bay of Plenty Regional Council to carry out a bird count survey and compare results with previous surveys done at the start of the pest control project. Eight volunteers assisted with the survey following a training session, and thanks to them for taking part. Although the results were difficult to compare with previous surveys as they were conducted at different times of the year and by different observers with varying experience, much useful information was gained.



A good number of keystone bird species were monitored during the project and it

was determined that kereru, bellbird, tui and silvereye could all be used as indicator species for sustaining bush vitality in the Tikitapu Scenic Reserve. Tomtit could also be used as an indicator species for bush intactness in the Tikitapu Scenic Reserve as it is sensitive to environmental changes in its habitat. It is recommended that bird monitoring is conducted annually for a least three to five years.

During the next couple of months the work plan for 2011 will be submitted for DoC's approval and then the programme of working bees put together. A combined

meeting between DOC, BPRC and F&B has already been held and the results from 2010 reviewed and suggestions for 2011 put forward.

I would like to thank all the volunteers involved in 2010. This project would not exist without your input and it is very satisfying to see the improvement in the bush and mistletoe, and the increase in birdlife.

I would also like to thank DoC and BPRC for their input and guidance with the project, and BPRC for once again supplying the ingredients for a BBQ for the volunteers, following the clearance of the bait stations in December.



If anyone would like to become involved in this project in 2011, I would be delighted to hear from you. Reasonable fitness is required for the working bees in the reserve but there are also other jobs to be done such as helping pack the baits, rat tracking, and checking and maintaining the Mistletoe and Nature walks.

Frances Blakely ph 362 8480

Hence the Ark has been entrusted with translocated whitehead, robin, stitchbird and kokako, and more re-introductions are planned.

John will give a power point presentation on the scope and success of this restoration story.

Wednesday 15th June 2011

Rotorua Women's Club, Hinemaru St, near Princes Gate Hotel at 7.30 pm. **Guest Speaker: Johlene Kelly from DoC : What is Monitoring? Why Monitor? Monitoring within the DoC framework. Types of Monitoring.** Johlene works at the Department of Conservation, Rotorua Lakes Area Office. She is part of the biodiversity team and specialises in undertaking monitoring within the Rotorua Area. Johlene undertakes a diverse range of work across many disciplines including vegetation monitoring, threatened plant monitoring, freshwater work, species work and many other monitoring tasks. There will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions. Everyone is welcome.



Kiwi Conservation kids carrying out rat tracking in Tikitapu

ACTIVITY REPORTS

Violet Bonnington Reserve Conservation Week Tree Planting – September 2010

Conservation Week in Rotorua in September 2010 saw volunteers having to enjoy/endure the brunt of equinoxial wet weather but this was perfect for the plants. Rotorua Branch of Forest & Bird applied for money from Flooring Xtra & Forest & Bird Tree Partnership Funding scheme in 2010 to purchase 300 native trees for the Violet Bonnington Reserve. For every metre of carpet that the Flooring Xtra branches across New Zealand sell, they donate a dollar to Forest and Bird National office.

Violet Bonnington reserve is at the entrance to the Jubilee Track up on Mt Ngongotaha. The reserve had once been part of a farm and began just as pasture. There is a steep pastured slope on the reserve with some native trees which had been planted in previous years.

Unfortunately for the tree planters this year, most of those earlier planted trees were on the lower slopes. So the 300 Flooring Xtra trees and an additional 80 provided free of charge by the Rotorua District Council, had to be carried up the slope. Then the long pasture grass had to be cleared, holes dug and trees planted. Some staff from Van Dyks Rotorua Flooring Xtra came to assist us with the planting. They brought along biodegradable carpet squares to place around the newly planted trees.

These carpet squares will help to keep the weeds and grass down and prevent the soil and plants from drying out in summer. About fifteen hardy souls in wet weather gear had the 380 trees planted in a couple of hours, in spite of the wind that was whistling around Mt Ngongotaha. We were all happy when the job was completed. Our thanks to all the volunteers who came to help, and thanks also to Van Dyks Rotorua Flooring Xtra team for their support.



Preparing for planting at Violet Bonnington Reserve, Conservation Week, September 2010

L to R: Tony Young DOC (at rear) Brian Law, Jim Rofe

An environment centre for Rotorua?

The potential for Rotorua to develop an environment centre, and the means to do so, is currently being explored by a group of committed volunteers. There are several such centres around the country, providing a venue for, and bringing together groups with an interest in the environment and sustainability.

The aim of an environment centre

would be to educate the community of Rotorua about humanity's (necessary / increasingly obvious) role to act in a sustainable manner; to support and empower those in the community (businesses, NGOs, individuals and Government bodies) who are already undertaking these activities ; and to facilitate the development of more projects and greater participation. An environment centre in the CBD would act as a focus for discussion, debate, information and dissemination surrounding sustainability issues; as a meeting place for groups and activities; and as an impetus for further action and change of behaviour of the local population towards greater sustainability lifestyles.

Various community groups in the Rotorua area are currently active in promoting environmental awareness and have involvement in a diverse range of projects. It is envisaged that an environment centre would support and further empower these community activities. Meeting rooms for large and smaller gatherings would be essential to a centre, and would provide places for interactive workshops, and education. This would not only be for local sustainably minded groups but also the education sector in the area.

At the first meeting for 2011 (22 February) Harm Zuidmeer will outline the concept. See Page 1 of Newsletter for more details.

**TIKITAPU SCENIC RESERVE
PEST CONTROL PROJECT
REPORT**

Another successful spring baiting took place in 2010, again using the combination of Pindone and Feratox® in the bait stations from September to early December, as shown below.



Considering the expense of having a contractor doing a pre baiting possum trap catch, it was agreed not to have it done each year.

The majority of possums found in the residual trap catch in December were in the top corner of the reserve, adjacent to Tarawera Rd and probably a result of re-infestation from across the road.

(Report continued on page 6)

RAT & POSSUM NUMBERS PRE & POST BAITING					
Year	Toxins	Rats	Rats	Possums	Possums
		Pre Baiting	Post Baiting	Pre Baiting	Post Baiting
2004	Ditrac & Feratox Baits	45.56%	11.11%	36.10%	7.30%
2005	Ditrac & Feratox Baits	58%	17%		9.10%
2006	Confrac & Feratox Baits	58%	51%	30.50%	4.40%
2007	Pindone & Feratox Pellets	78%	6%		2.00%
2008	Pindone & Feratox Pellets	59%	8%	7.30%	1.00%
2009	Pindone & Feratox pellets	78%	2%	5.70%	1.40%
2010	Pindone & Feratox® pellets	40%	0%		7.33%