



Forest & Bird

GIVING NATURE A VOICE

Upper Hutt Branch Newsletter

Feb/Mar/Apr 2016

PO Box 40 875 Upper Hutt

Meetings held at the Spinners and Weavers rooms

7.30pm Trentham Railway Station,
the 4th Tuesday of each month

Tuesday 23rd February 2016

Date: Tuesday 23rd February 2016

PICNIC!!!

Location: Maidstone Park, behind the shadehouse

Time: 5.30 p.m. onwards

Discussion: What will we do for the 50th anniversary for Upper Hutt as a city?



Rata flowers - Photos - Allan Sheppard

Tuesday 22nd March 2016

Date: Tuesday 22nd March 2016

Speaker: Marie Brown - Env. Defence Soc.

Subject: Vanishing Nature

Location: Spinners' and Weavers' rooms

Time: 7.30pm

Tuesday 26th April 2016

AGM!!! ☺

Date: Tuesday 26th April 2016

Location: Spinners' and Weavers' rooms

Time: 7.30pm



Bellbird



A satisfying evening's releasing

On yer marks... (for 2016)

Twenty sixteen is already flying past. The shade house resumed operations On Tuesday 19 January with 14 volunteers. It's great that everybody is so keen.

For those who don't know the Shade House is situated at the North end of Maidstone Park and is inside the Upper Hutt City Council depot along with the Rural Fire Service and the UH Amateur Radio Club. The facilities we use are remaining from the days when Council had its own nursery and staff looking after its Parks and Reserves. These facilities are the envy of the three other Forest and Bird nurseries in the Wellington Region.



Milking time! (Gastrodia orchid and 'friends')
Do you have this orchid in your garden?
Photo - A Sheppard

We have space for potted plants, security, accessibility, a large shade house, automatic watering, our own lock up for gear, and are able to use the toilet and kitchen.

We are very grateful to Upper Hutt City Council for allowing us to utilise these existing facilities. It enables us to do our job easily. We grow some 6,000 plants annually from locally sourced seed that we gather and process ourselves. The natives we grow are mostly planted in the Upper Hutt area either by us or by other groups: Scouts, schools and Greater Wellington Regional Council to name but three.

Our plants are growing happily in Barton's Bush, Trentham Memorial Park, Moehau Park, Ecclesfield, Tulsa Park, Kingsley Heights, Hull's Creek, Te Marua Bush and a small section of the river trail down by the weir.

Anybody is welcome to join us at the shade house on a Tuesday morning. There is always another weed to pull. We offer morning tea and convivial company.

Thank you again to our Mayor and Councillors, council staff as well. We appreciate your support very much.



If only if we could imbibe of the nectar of youth... Photo - A Sheppard

Hort. Report

Weed spraying at Moehau & Hull's Creek

The last two years have been particularly good for weed growth (blackberry especially) and despite a lot of extra hours put in between our monthly working bees we have been losing the weed control battle in places.

Moehau Stream

As Moehau is part of GWRC 'Key Native Ecosystems' in conjunction with Trentham Memorial Park, regular inspections are done and assessment of the state of invasive weeds is made by GWRC Biodiversity section. During 2015 weed spraying was carried out in Barton's Bush, Domain Bush and also around the rest of the bushy areas of TMP. In November Moehau

was also inspected by Rob Masters of the Biosecurity section. Evan Gwerder Of UHCC and Sue also went along to discuss control measures needed. Just before Christmas, Katrina Merrifield from the Biosecurity team spent 2 days spraying blackberry, convolvulus, honeysuckle and old man's beard. There is still a little more to be done when Katrina can fit it in, but the sprayed areas look so much better. Katrina lives in Holdsworth Rd and their property backs on to Moehau so she has a personal interest in the revegetation work being done there as well as a lot of enthusiasm for the whole Park area!



Parsonia flowers. Photo - A Sheppard

Hull's Creek

There are a number of sites in this 2 km long, creek-side planting that have thick, solid, blackberry growth invading plantings, as well as a number of invasive weeds causing problems. We decided to ask a contractor recommended by GWRC to have a look at the whole area and give us a quote for the work needed. Daniel Coombes from NZ Biosecurity Services came and walked the length of the creek with Graham and Sue, as well as looking at some other local problem blackberry patches at Silverstream Straight and Hulls Creek/Hutt River plantings. The area is long and in places rather overgrown. Some of it is not accessible from a spray vehicle and needs to be carried in using knapsack sprayers. In the case of the Himalayan Balsam, spread in patches along the stream edges, we had already spent a morning pulling this by hand,

but had not been able to reach it all. Since then Daniel has been along the creek itself and completed this job before the seeds ripened and spread the problem further. The rest of the spraying will be done as weather and other jobs permit.

The quote for this work was under \$4000.00, which we felt was good value for the amount of work needed (which is essential for our plantings to grow and thrive) and the nature of the site. Daniel was impressed with the planting that we have done in the area.

Earlier on in our revegetation work we had GWRC grants which covered the costs of getting an approved spray contractor in to deal with weeds. We do not have any grants now, but do sell enough plants each year to cover spraying costs if this is needed, as well as the costs of producing all of the plants we use on our projects. Weed control in plantings is always an ongoing problem, though less so than in the first few years when small plants are easily overgrown by weeds. We now have a large area of plantings and regular checking of all of these is needed, with action taken where necessary.

Editor's note

The day Sue and Graham walked Hull's Creek with the contractor was extremely hot and Sue paid the price with crippling cramp all night, so thank you Sue and Graham for that very difficult job.

The weedspraying along the River Trail has now been done.



3 little girls are we... Photo - A Sheppard

Freshwater Conference

Summarised by Lynne McLellan

Late November last year a conference was held at Silverstream Retreat. It was organised by the Science Communicators Association of NZ and looked at citizen science among other themes. Conference goers were taken on a one day tour of Te Awakairangi/ Hutt River from its headwaters to its mouth. Greater Wellington Regional Council staff organised the event led by Mark Heath and Summer Greenfield. Mark has been researching the toxic algae benthic cyanobacteria known as Phormidium for some years. Summer has been involved with our branch recently when we decided to take up NIWA's offer and learn about water monitoring and citizen science. Richard Storey our liaison person from NIWA was also present.



Sue was invited to speak at the confluence of the Mawaihakona and the main river stopping place about our water monitoring efforts over the last 18 months. The team of Kathryn Hicks, Allan and Glennis Sheppard, Lynne McLellan and Margaret Craigie were there as well. Keep us away! No chance.

There were two large buses of attendees including some from Australia and they asked lots of questions guided by Elsemieke Kin who had done the research evaluation with us last year. These were answered professionally and

with humour by Margaret Craigie after being passed down the chain of command from Sue to Kathryn to Lynne. Talk about buck passing! Seriously we did each answer at least one but Margaret did the lion's share. We're so proud of her. Anyway the audience seemed suitably impressed. One of the Australians commented that there was nothing like that happening in Oz and we were to be congratulated. It was satisfying to get the positive feedback.

Allan's superb photos were put to good use in the field trip booklet and in an advertising poster for the event.

So we are now the proud owners of our water testing kit worth some hundreds of dollars and are looking for volunteers to carry on the water monitoring role once we know where it can be best used. The data is needed to contribute to a bigger picture.

Newsflash - The Time has Come...

The time has come for fresh blood into the Editors' roles.



Due to personal circumstances, Lynne and Margaret will be stepping down from this position at the AGM.

Communication with the membership is a vital function of our branch and support will be given to the lucky contenders to help ease them into the role.

Heading to the River?

Check the water quality on the Greater Wellington website:
www.gw.govt.nz/summer-check



Rescuing a totara from the strangling grass and blackberry along the River Trail by the weir. Photo - Allan Sheppard.

- all species loss halted (threatened species recovering and their habitats protected).
- NZ to have reduced gross greenhouse gas emissions by 70% or more from the 1990 baseline, to be carbon neutral and with measures in place that increase biodiversity resilience and ensure against climate disruption.

Karearea sightings in the Valley

Last month we asked for sightings of karearea, and we have success! Pat van Berkel from Elmslie Rd in Pinehaven, has been enjoying watching karearea hunting above his property this summer. It is the first time he has seen this event.

There have also been karearea observed at Korokoro landing for a rest on a private deck.

Working Bees & Potting Shed



Hull's Creek Triangle - Photo A Sheppard

From Head Office

Environment Aotearoa, a new state of the environment report produced by the Ministry for the Environment and Statistics NZ, contains sobering figures about our native species. And for the majority of issues in the report, NZ's environment is going backwards.

By 2040, Forest and Bird wants:

- the **eradication** of introduced rodents, mustelids and possums from NZ, and conservation land to be secure from all significant pest and weed threats.
- healthy indigenous freshwater, estuarine habitats and species.

DoC Emergency numbers

After hours - 0800 DOCHOT (0800 362 468).
During office hours - your local DOC office.



If you're happy and you know it, dig a hole!!

Working Bees - Thursday evenings

Keep the following dates and times free:

Thursday 28th Jan 2016

Thursday February 25th 2016

Thursday March 31st 2016

SATURDAY 30th April 2016

Morning tea or supper provided

Tel: Sue Millar 526 7440

Potting Up - Tuesday Mornings

Restarted on 19th January 2016. Sue 526 7440

Editors' Note

The deadline for the next newsletter is:

Sunday 3rd April 2016.

Please send any items to Lynne or Margaret, preferably by email (so we don't have to wear out our fingers typing!) Thanks ☺

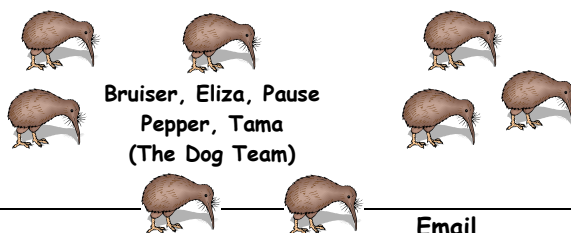


*Teatime - we've earned it. Hull's Creek Triangle.
Luke Brown, Lynn Smith, Sue Millar, Sue Pidford, Graham Bellamy
Photo - A Sheppard.*

Calendar of Events

| Month | Date | Time | Event | Contact |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| MEETINGS February | Tues 23 rd | 5.30 pm | Picnic Maidstone Park | Lynne McLellan 526 7775 |
| March | Tues 22 nd | 7.30pm | Branch meeting Trentham Railway Stn | Barry Wards 526 4963 |
| April | Tues 26 th | 7.30pm | AGM Trentham Railway Stn | Barry Wards 526 4963 |
| February | Tues 16 th | 8am | Committee Meeting Park Street | Kathryn Hicks 526 7881 |
| March | Tues 15 th | 8am | Committee Meeting Park Street | Kathryn Hicks 526 7881 |
| April | Tues 19 th | 8am | Committee Meeting Park Street | Kathryn Hicks 526 7881 |
| WORKING BEES | | | | |
| Thursday | 28 th Jan | 5pm - 7pm | tba | Sue Millar 526 7440 |
| Thursday | 25 th Feb | 5pm - 7pm | tba | Sue Millar 526 7440 |
| Thursday | 31 March | 5 pm - 7 pm | tba | Sue Millar |
| SATURDAY | 30 April | 9am - noon | tba | Sue Millar 526 7440 |
| POTTING SHED | Tues 19 th Jan onwards | Tuesdays 9am-11.30am | Park Street | Sue Millar 526 7440 |

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Forest and Bird as a whole. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy. Any errors or omissions are regretted. Correspondence should be addressed to P O Box 40 875 Upper Hutt



Current Branch Committee

| | Phone | | Email |
|------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
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| Graham Bellamy | 526 3053 | Treasurer | gbellamy@kinect.co.nz |
| Sue Millar | 526 7440 | Horticulture | fantail.chick@gmail.com |
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