



Forest & Bird

GIVING NATURE A VOICE

Waikato Branch NEWSLETTER February 2019

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Waikato Branch AGM Tuesday April 16th

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Please let us know if you have an email address and would prefer not to receive hard copy newsletters. This saves the branch in printing and mailing costs - money better spent on conservation projects.

Contributions are always welcome. Photos should be at least 300kb. Email to waikato.branch@forestandbird.org.nz



<https://www.facebook.com/forestandbirdwaikato/>

Chair report 2019

Our overwhelmingly sad event this year was the sudden passing of our very valued committee member, Jon Wenham in July. We miss him greatly at meetings, and his behind the scenes catching up with everything and everyone. However we have welcomed two new members, with Keith Holborow coming on the committee at the AGM last year and Kristina Barnes joining us in September.

The committee has been busy as usual organising trips, events, and looking after our reserves. A special thanks to Keith Holborow who has spent countless hours at Walter Scott Reserve helping Neil Fitzgerald with pest control in the reserve, with good results after the baiting season. We also have amazing new track signage in the reserve thanks to Keith's penchant for using challenging new equipment.

Before his death Jon had designed a seat to go in Walter Scott in memory of Dave Lee who died in 2016, and he and Keith had built it ready to be installed, so that has now been done, thanks to Bruce Dean and Keith.

Another of Jon's special interests was Ruapehu Lodge so the committee has been active in carrying on with the jobs he was keen to get finished. Thanks to Jane McLeod and team for doing a wonderful job of sprucing up the Lodge in October, and sending a list of suggestions to Head Office for repairs and maintenance, some of which have already been completed. Also thanks to Keith for doing work on the drainage outside and repairs inside. DoC has been very helpful in supplying shingle and advice. We hope Jon will be pleased with our efforts. Forest and Bird are naming

the main room in the lodge the Jon Wenham room in honour of his memory.

Our other reserve at Waitekauri, the Morgan Reserve has been closed due to Kauri Dieback, as Forest and Bird has made the decision to close all reserves with kauri in them.

Some committee members had to resolve a problem at Morgan Reserve with a neighbour, regarding some old macrocarpa which were felled out of the reserve without permission from Forest and Bird. This was a wakeup to the importance of having good communications with our neighbours, over time and changing committee members.

We had another reasonably successful plant sale this year, but are finding it harder to get plants from nurseries, and as it is a lot of work for a few people we are reassessing what we will do ongoing. There will not be a May plant sale this year.

The branch had a site at the Waikato Show and even gained an award for the display so well done to all involved. We were also at Fieldays once again and thanks to those who come and volunteer at our site.

We were pleased to be able to give out Valder Grants once again to recipients, including Elizabeth Elliot-Hogg for materials for her research on restoration in urban areas, Friends of Mangarakau Swamp in Nelson for roofing of a visitor centre, MEIT for doing an Asset Management Plan and Kapiti Mana Branch of Forest and Bird towards an outdoor classroom. Grants are awarded annually, and we encourage members to put in applications for projects which comply with the objectives of the organisation.

Committee members have attended the national AGM in Wellington in June, the North Island meeting in November at Aongatete, as well as the Piako Catchment Forum. We also submitted on the Peacocke Rd subdivision

to support Riverlea Environment group with concerns regarding effects on the adjacent bat population.

At the AGM Monica Peters from Waikato Branch was elected onto the Executive of Forest and Bird so we are pleased to have a Waikato representative. She has been busy coordinating a committee to look at how our democratic processes work within the Society, and hopefully people have been able to have their input by now.

Waikato Branch has recently changed our banking to Kiwibank, after a request from the national organisation following reports of the unethical behaviour of Australian owned banks.

Good numbers of members and families have enjoyed our usual annual camps, with quite a contrast between off-grid Lions Hut in Te Urewera for Easter, and Shakespeare Park in Auckland at Labour Weekend. We hope many more will join us this year, at Ohakune for Easter and Pureora for Labour weekend. Attendance at monthly walks and bi-monthly talks has been a bit variable, but enjoyed by those who have come, so I hope members will make an effort to support the events the committee organises this year.

Lastly thanks to a hard working and supportive committee with everyone helping to make our events well organised and successful.

Katherine Hay

Welcome to our new Waikato Committee member - Kristina Barnes

Krissy holds a Master's Degree in Ecology and has a clear passion for the work she does in the environmental arena. Before moving to New Zealand in May 2018, she spent the last three years working as an EU Conservation Policy Officer for our German Forest & Bird's partner organisation



BirdLife Germany, where she worked on conservation and agriculture policy, a variety of biodiversity issues as well as private land conservation. She loves hiking, gardening and Moreporks (...and of course all the other NZ native species), and spends as much time as possible exploring the beautiful Aotearoa. Krissy continues her work in the environmental sector in New Zealand and is very excited about joining the committee and to be able to contribute to the work of our branch.

Ruapehu Lodge Spring Clean 2018

Jon Wenham, responsible for the design, construction and furnishing of the Lodge, had suggested another thorough indoor clean not long before he passed away. Claire, responsible for Lodge bookings, blocked out 3 nights in October. When the first of us arrived a DoC officer told us the water tank supplying the village had just emptied. Fortunately repairs were made and water back on by 7. Next day the six committee members and 4 volunteers worked hard to complete the detailed job list. The place

sparkled when we'd finished! We were however pretty impressed with the way members are taking care of it. We celebrated with dinner at the Pihanga and the next day walked the Taranaki Falls loop before heading home in increasingly wet weather. Keith H. will return to do some repairs on bunk attachments and cupboards as well as completing some outside work. Waikato Branch has a special interest in the Lodge because it reminds us of Jon and his special skills.

Jane McLeod

Committee Members	Phone	Mobile	Email	Responsibilities
Katherine Hay		021 267 2773	khaypear.co.nz	Chairperson, Newsletter.
Philip Hart	07 856 7992		prhart@waikato.ac.nz	Secretary, Trips
Bill Vant	07 856 2505		vantbill@gmail.com	Treasurer
Adua Geremia	07 843 3375		aduageremia@yahoo.co.nz	Membership, Publicity
Bruce Dean	07 827 2874			Morgan Res, Walter Scott
Jane McLeod	07 856 2505	021 146 7789	jane.mcleod64@gmail.com	Minutes secretary, Publicity, Trips, Meeting catering contact.
Julie Dorofaeff	07 8435430	022 408 2163	jfdorofaeff@xtra.co.nz	Rosters
Miles Barker	07 856 3778	027 673 8660	mbarker@waikato.ac.nz	Valder Grants
Kevin Collins	07 859 2606	021 341 749	kevcollins20007@yahoo.com	Submissions, newsletter
Keith Holborow	07 853 9377	027 698 6514	kjholborow@gmail.com	Walter Scott
Kristina Barnes		022 436 0646	kristina.barnes.kb@gmail.com	website/FB page KCC

Please address all correspondence to 'Secretary, PO Box 11092, Hillcrest, Hamilton' or waikato.branch@forestandbird.org.nz

Please - Let us know if you have changed your email address!

Welcome to our digital magazine

You can now read Forest and Bird magazine online. If you would like to receive a digital version of the magazine please contact membership@forestandbird.org.nz Please contact editor Caroline Wood at editor@forestandbird.org.nz with any further questions or feedback.



TRAP LIBRARY

Now open - contact Go Eco if you would like to get a trap for your property in Hamilton
admin@goeco.org.nz

Ph: 07 839 4452
188 Commerce St,
Frankton, Hamilton

GO ECO

www.goeco.org.nz
Mon-Fri:
10am - 4pm
Sat: 9am - 1pm

To our walkers and campers -

Please note: for health and safety reasons we ask everyone coming on trips or camps to let the leader know they are coming and their emergency contact details and any relevant health problems before the trip.

While we do take a PLB and first aid kit we expect that members will take care of their own personal requirements.

From the Forest and Bird Executive Board

F&B Board to consult branches for feedback on proposed changes to our electoral process

Hello all

As a part of my Board responsibilities, I am leading the review of Forest and Bird's process for electing the Board. At present, a very few members (i.e. councillors only) can make key Board election decisions. This places the organisation behind many other membership-based organisations e.g., the Sierra Club (USA), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (UK), Wilderness Society (Australia) and the NZ Youth Hostel Assn., and NZ Caravan and Motorhomes Assn. Each have versions of direct elections by members, overall increasing the democracy of the organisation.

Several models for increasing wider Forest and Bird member engagement in Board elections were presented at the South Is Gathering in late October, but it's important for the Board to have a broad range of feedback and engagement in this process (it's about democracy after all!). We (the Board) would like to know what your preferred model is, but also what other questions about this process you might have that need to be addressed.

In tandem with the electoral review process, the Board is also looking at membership (i.e. what constitutes a member for voting purposes).

Summary of voting models:

1. Status quo - Branches elect/put forward one or two Councillors (dependant on Branch size). Councillors elect all Board positions. General members are not included in the voting process.
2. Councillors elect key Board roles i.e. President, Deputy President & Treasurer. F&B members directly elect NON-KEY Board positions
3. Staged process - Councillors elect most Board positions, with 2-3 Board members elected by membership
4. F&B members elect ALL board positions including Chair, Deputy Chair and treasurer - Board themselves decide on who has which position, or members decide on all positions. Council key role then focusses on remits.
5. Council system disbanded – will require a change to the constitution, direct election of Board by members.

In April we will be emailing branches and individual members with a link to an online survey asking for feedback on five different voting options. **If you would prefer a hard copy, please call 0800 200 064 or email membership@forestandbird.org.nz.**

If you have any questions, please email Monica Peters, Electoral Working Party

Ruapehu Lodge

Ruapehu Lodge continues to be a challenge for national office and the Board. Significant

costs will shortly be incurred relating to the proposed sewage scheme for Whakapapa. Income from Lodge use continues to be less than annual outgoings, without additional significant costs such as the sewage levy.

Ruapehu Lodge is a key asset for the Society and is very close to the heart of several North Island branches. In the past year an online booking system, and



a mechanism by which people can become temporary members to allow them to book at the lodge, have been trialed. The result sadly has not been a marked increase in patronage of the lodge.

For the next Board meeting the Chief Executive will prepare a paper outlining costs and options for the future of the lodge. This will serve as a basis for discussions to be held with central North Island branches in the coming months. Input from all branches will be valuable to inform a future Board decision with regard to the ongoing viability of the lodge.

TRIP REPORTS

9TH SEPTEMBER
2018
WAIHI

Sue Lean lead a small group off up into the hills behind Waihi beach, veering off the track that runs up past the reservoir, to scramble up a stream bed, crawling under fallen trees, and using tracks through the bush put in for pest control by a local group in the area. We were passing through typical cutover regenerating coastal forest, with lots of seedling mangleo, and some young matai under pohutukawa and old pine canopy. And some magnificent huge puriri. Fortunately the weather was fine, and in fact the walk over and down to Orokawa Bay was stunning. It is such a beautiful beach with nikau palms, white sand and pohutukawa perfectly placed for our lunchspot. And some NZ dotterels on the beach. We returned to Waihi via the lovely coastal track. Thanks to Sue for taking us on an interesting excursion, which wasn't quite as hard as we thought it might be.



Orokawa Bay

(below) Spider orchid on Whakamarama walk.



14TH OCTOBER WHAKAMARAMA

Once again Keith Wilkinson lead us up a garden path, taking us to entirely new and unexpected walks which we hadn't been to before. (not exactly Otanewainuku but close) Firstly we stopped at the Puketoke Reserve, which is quite a short walk through the old Whakamarama timber mill area, from which rimu were milled and carted out to the coast. Just inside the reserve, and in one or two other places there are remnants of a tramway - a railway line used to remove the timber that was milled in the area in the 1920's-30's.



Easy walking through the regenerating bush, where alsueosmia and perching orchids (*Earina mucronata*) were spotted in flower.

A short drive further to the end of Whakamarama Road brought us to a carpark at the start of the Pa Kereru walk and then on to the Leyland O'Brien Tramline. We stopped for a breather on a seat looking across an upland bog area to where the tramline is on the other side which we subsequently walked through. Vegetation consisted of a mixture of low fertility plants such as lancewoods, gleichenia, rushes, tanekaha. Corybas orchids were seen flowering, as was *Clematis paniculata* in the car park.

Back to a nice spot beside the river for lunch and the close examination of an MG sports car which happened to be there for lunch as well.

Thanks to Keith for an interesting day.



Leyland O'Brien tramline



TRIP REPORTS

LABOUR WEEKEND CAMP SHAKESPEARE PARK, AUCKLAND



Handball at the Lodge



Walk in the Regional Park



Perfect weather at Tiritiri Matangi



Waitawheta swing bridge and
kauri log waiting for the train



11 NOVEMBER WAITAWHETA TRAMP

Phillip was the leader, Bruce was the photographer so, because there were only three in the party I got the job of writing the report.

Not a promising day. Actually it was promising but it wasn't promising the weather we wanted. Misty rain. As we made our final preparations at the end of Franklin Road we chose denial and optimism as our watchwords. I like the first part of the Waitawheta tramp. Marshy riverside paddocks, cattle, lichen on the fence posts and a stile. How lucky we were to have access across a working farm.

Twenty minutes upstream, where the track enters the bush, the tramway bed becomes obvious. Occasionally, rusted rails lie at the side of the track and sometimes a dog still protrudes from the rock. (Philip said it was a dog. It looked like a bolt to me but Philip knows about this stuff so a dog it is.) Always the gradient is easy. A path with long straights and slow curves. Sticking with optimism we decided to aim for the Waitawheta Hut for lunch.

DOC have put a lot of effort into this track. Frequent story boards explain its history and wonderful swing bridges keep boots dry and offer mid-river views of the towering bluffs. We paused at a kauri log that was waiting on its two bogies for a train that will never come and had a break.

The track is at its best in the gorge. This is beautiful bush. It was logged for timber but was never burnt so a wide range of seeds survived. Regeneration has been strong. The several new river crossings, with the foundations of the original tramway bridges clearly visible in the river, add interest. Small areas of flat land near the track are overgrown, but hint at sidings and building sites. History submerged in the vegetation.

At the top of the gorge the track takes a detour up a gully to avoid two difficult river crossings then settles on the east bank and gradually climbs away from the river level. Near the hut it crosses, for the last time, at a narrow cut in the edge of a lava flow where the water tumbles into a deep pool below the bridge. It is a spectacular end to a wonderfully scenic track.

The weather celebrated our arrival at the hut with a sharp drop in temperature and a matching increase in rain intensity. We huddled on the deck, taking on fuel for the return trip, then headed down to the bridge for a quick inspection of the partly restored timber mill. The crisp new timbers installed among the weathered old beams and scattered remains of the machinery seemed out of place after their brief helicopter ride.

No chopper for us but the return journey was easy. When you tramp up-river all morning it is downhill all the way home. We had barely noticed the climb but now we appreciated the helping hand of gravity. That rocky rail bed does get hard by late afternoon, though.

Nineteen kilometres in the rain. Healthy, dense bush. A clear rocky stream. Open fields, a deep gorge and a winding valley leading to a hut. Waitawheta has it all. You should have been there.

Keith Holborow

**FEBRUARY 10TH 2019
RUAKURI AND KOROPUPU**

The February walk was a double header but, as it turned out, it was much more than double the fun.

The first walk was at Ruakuri Reserve, Waitomo. The 1 km loop track follows the stream and climbs up to a bluff before entering a narrow tunnel that emerges into a gorge overhung with bush clad limestone cliffs. The track highlight is a dark, sloping tunnel that emerges onto a viewing platform inside the Ruakuri Natural Bridge. There are stalactites and stalagmites and a noisy stream tumbling over rocks way below you.

The track then curves gently down the gorge, in and out of the occasional tunnel and across a bridge before ending at the picnic ground and the car park. Comfy picnic tables, too. That track builder has certainly packed a lot of scenic appeal into one cute little package. It is the ideal walk for your overseas visitors.

There was a bit of travelling to get to the second walk. A winding, gravel road. Katherine sped ahead and the rest of the convoy, choking in her dust, clung to the fading hope that she hadn't turned into a driveway without us seeing. Fortunately she waited for us on the sealed Oparure Road. (Don't ask me where that is. Look it up on Google Maps.)

The Koropupu Scenic reserve is on private land at the end of Waipapa Road. The Mangawhitikau Stream does a disappearing act there and it is fun to see how.

When you first see it, the stream is flowing across grassy flats in a shallow valley. After a short distance the valley appears to be blocked by a steep, bush covered limestone hill. To follow the stream it is necessary to clamber down and either walk on the sand and gravel banks or wade in the water.

The stream's path follows a tortuous cutting into the hill. The sides quickly turn into high cliffs with wet greenery and a narrowing glimpse of sky.

At one point a small side stream of beautifully clear water gushes from a deep crack in the cliff. At other points there are the remains of rock falls and tangles of decaying trees that have either been carried down or fallen from above.

Finally the rock walls meet overhead. You are in a cave. But a hundred metres further the stream falls silent and the way is barred by a large pool. All illuminated eerily by thousands of glow worms.

Yet the final thrill is to shine a narrow light beam vertically into a giant fissure in the ceiling like an unstable fault line overhead, waiting for the next quake. Some unkind person whispered "Thai soccer team."

Everyone had fun. Especially the kids who were heroically adventurous. And the botanists found *Teucrium parvifolium*. And the zoologists studied caddisfly larvae. And the Canadian visitor had a swim in the pool but didn't recommend it.

See, much more than double the fun.

Keith Holborow



Events Calendar

WALK - Sunday 10th March

LAKES NGAROTO/ROTOPIKO

KCC Easy

Meet at Lake Ngaroto carpark at 10am at the end of Bank Rd (off Paterangi Rd) It is about 30mins from Hamilton East.

We will learn about the issues for the peat lakes, and do the easy walk around Ngaroto and see what is being done to improve the water quality in the lakes.

Lunch at Rotopiko under the trees, and then we'll go on the discovery trail walk.

This will be an excellent family outing.

Anyone coming must contact leader Jane McLeod phone 856 2505 or email jane.mcleod64@gmail.com

TALK - Thursday 21st March

7.30pm

Chartwell Room, Hamilton Gardens

* See box for details for ordering a catered meal beforehand.

Speaker: Dr Rebecca Stirnemann

(Forest and Bird Central North Island manager)

Is it time to get action on marine conservation in the Waikato?

Following the landmark court decision in the Bay of Plenty we can now achieve a massive win for our marine spaces. This is the story of where we are at and about what we can do right now. Saving seabirds and the food they eat, for them and for us.

* Meal - See box for details

WAIKATO SHOW 5 - 7 APRIL

We will once again have a stand at the Waikato Show to raise public awareness of the objectives of Forest and Bird Society, and encourage involvement in the activities of the Waikato Branch.

Volunteering on the stand is a great way to interact with the public, and promote our cause.

If you would like to be involved please contact Julie Dorofaeff email jfdorofaeff@xtra.co.nz or phone 022 408 2163.

WALK: Sunday 14 April Bendigo Battery and Beyond (Waiorongomai goldfield)

There are several possibilities, depending on the weather and levels of fitness. Leave Hamilton at 8.00 and travel via Te Aroha (turn right at clock tower) to meet in car park at end of Waiorongomai Road. at 9am. (let Philip know if you are coming!)

The EASY walk will only take the morning to do (hot pools afterwards?): walking along the Lower Road to the remains of the Bendigo Battery and then returning along the old tramway.

A MODERATE walk will continue further up the valley to the site of the New Era Battery (involves wet feet).

The HARD walk involves climbing up the very steep New Era tramway to the county tramway and exploring the Bendigo mine (torches needed).

Leader: Philip Hart (assisted by DoC ranger, Warren Gerahty) - 07 856 7992, or phhart1940@gmail.com

AGM

TUESDAY 16TH APRIL

7.30pm, Chartwell Room,
Hamilton Gardens

Speaker: John Innes

John is a well known Wildlife Ecologist with Landcare Research, with vast knowledge and experience in species recovery, predator impacts on birds, and importantly for Hamilton, urban tui.

He will talk about the state of the restoration movement in NZ, and discuss contributions by sanctuaries of various kinds, Predator Free NZ, aerial 1080 and species recovery programmes.

* Meal - See box for details

Easter Camp 19 - 22 April

OHAKUNE

We'll be staying at the Station Lodge, which we have full use of so we are hoping to get a good number attending for the full three nights - and this is a great place for families to come to. Even has a spa pool!

There are lovely walks in the area for all abilities, including the Old Coach Rd, (which we would walk one way from the Horopito end back to Ohakune via the viaducts), the Mangawhero walk, Lake Rotokura, Waitonga Falls and others.

Remember that our branch sponsors children up to 15 50% of the cost.

Deposit for camp \$40 each

Forest and Bird Waikato Branch

06-0369-0036337-00 (Ref Easter camp)

and email me when you have paid.

Leader Katherine Hay 021 267 2773

khay@pear.co.nz

* Join us for a catered meal on Talks nights, 6.15pm. Bookings for dinner prior to the talk to Jane McLeod by the previous Sunday \$15.00 per person, phone 856 2505 or email jane.mcleod64@gmail.com

WALK - 12th May

KARIOI - WAIRAKE TRACK

Moderate

The easier and shorter route up Karioi. Great views from the summit.

Meet at the parking area at the end of Karioi Rd, 10am. Anyone coming must contact leader Jane McLeod phone 856 2505 or email jane.mcleod64@gmail.com

WALK - 9th June

TAUPIRI/HAKARIMATAS

Meet in the carpark on SH1 opposite Taupiri Mountain 10am.

Anyone wanting to come must contact the leader.

Leader Katherine Hay 021 267 2773

khay@pear.co.nz

WALK - 14th July

KARANGAHAKE GORGE, PAEROA

Easy+

Today's tramp will start at the new Karangahake Hall and then we will walk alongside the Ohinemuri River up to the junction of the Waiawheta River then along the old pipeline track across a swing bridge up the stairs to the "Windows" (A torch will be useful) Through windows passing ore roasting pits x 3 out the other end and head ofr Waikino, back to the Hall via the old railway tunnel.

Lunch on old Woodstock Battery foundations.

Then drive to Waikino and visit the Victoria crushing battery site, the museum and go under the ore roasting pits and maybe for a ride around the site on the small yellow train.

Depart: L&P bottle by the Bridge and toilets at Paeroa 9.30am.

Return: approx 4pm.

Leader Keith Wilkinson Ph 07 8474399 or TXT 0273666194

Bring lunch, drink, torch, and extra money (Entry fee to museum is \$10)

TALK

Thursday 18th July 7.30pm

ECO-SOURCING

Details to be confirmed

See box* for meal details prior to the meeting.

TALK

Thursday 19th September

CONSERVATION WEEK TALK

(Conservation Week is 15 - 23 September) Update on DoC's activities for 2019.

See box* for meal details prior to the meeting. All welcome.

Car Pooling

Help protect our planet from the effects of climate change and pollution (and reduce costs) by carpooling when going on Forest and Bird trips and camps.

Please phone the leader of the trip a couple of days in advance to organise if you need, or can offer, a ride. Please do offer the driver a reasonable contribution towards their petrol costs.

Cancellation of Walks

Walks will go ahead unless there is a really adverse forecast, but check with the leader if unsure.



Return Address
Waikato Branch Forest and Bird
PO Box 11 092
Hillcrest
Hamilton

