



From the Chair: Why was Northcross Bush destroyed?

Recently a two-hectare area of bush in Browns Bay was destroyed in order to cram 30+ houses onto the steep site. The bush is contiguous with Northcross Reserve and adjacent to Northcross Intermediate and Sherwood Schools.

Why are they still destroying bush on the North Shore when we know the benefits of preserving it? Bush provides wildlife habitat, cools and cleans the air, prevents flooding and siltation, and stabilises the land. It is a visual amenity and boosts positive mental health.

A series of deliberate actions have allowed the destruction of this bush.

1. In 1997, the government told schools that if they had “surplus” land, the Ministry of Education could sell it. The schools would then take half the profit – a significant carrot dangling in front of schools.

2. In 2008, Northcross Intermediate and Sherwood Primary School decided that Northcross Bush was surplus to their needs and that the schools could use half the selling price.

3. In 2012, the government changed the Resource Management Act (RMA) so that Auckland Council could no longer legally protect all areas of bush in the District Plan. Auckland Council contested these changes in an attempt to ensure protection for at least some of the remaining North Shore bush. The government responded with several further amendments of the RMA to make absolutely certain that bush was not protected.

4. When Forest & Bird and the Environmental Defence Society put up expert opinion that Northcross Bush met the criteria to be a Significant Ecological Area under the new Unitary Plan, the commissioners who were appointed by the government took no heed of the evidence and declined to assign SEA status to the land.

5. In 2014, the Ministry of Education put the land on the market. When the land sold for about six million dollars,

many locals and environmental groups were devastated.

6. In 2015, the owner applied for Resource Consent to destroy the bush and build 30+ houses.

7. The commissioners who heard the consent application took no heed of the local public opposition or the fact that the bush was an important part of the North West Wildlink, which council promotes. They allowed the development to proceed.

Another factor in the failure to save this two-hectare area was the state of the bush. It had much native vegetation and bird life but was dominated by pest plants – pines and wattles. If the schools or the neighbours had looked after this bush, had worked on restoring it by slowly removing pest plants and controlling predators, then the area would have been more highly valued and may still be standing.

There is a lesson here for us all – each of us must work to protect and restore public land (including education land) so that it is more highly valued.

Your branch actively reviews notified consent applications and has been instrumental in making residential land developments more environmentally friendly. In particular, Peter Hassell has been leading the charge with RMA issues for many years, involving hours of reading, and developing and speaking to submissions. Peter has recently retired from this position and I would like to thank him on behalf North Shore Forest & Bird for his dedication to this important task.



Bush destruction underway at Northcross Bush, February 2018. Photo by Shirley Jones.

Tuff Report

We managed to dodge the rain this summer and keep weeding at Tuff. The main focus has been to hunt moth plant seedlings and to revisit places where we have had moth plant before. So far so good, as we have not found too many plants and only one major flowering in the crater.

One recent Thursday we did work in properties near the crater as there was a very large infestation of moth plant over four properties and a smaller one nearby. It was a case of pull, dig or paste and then bag up the pods. Once you are at a site it is amazing how many nearby ones you see.

Weeding around newly planted trees and plants is another activity at present as kikuyu and other smothering grasses have been growing very quickly with the warm, wet summer.

Our Thursday morning working group can always use more pairs of hands, as can our monthly Saturday working bees. If you are interested, please sign up on our website or call Anne Denny on 480 5570. **Anne Denny**



View north across Tuff Crater from Kōwhai Point.

F&B Youth Update



F&B Youth in the field

My name is Charlie and I'm 16 years old. As a fresh face to Forest & Bird Youth, I'm glad to be part of a nationwide environmental initiative aimed at our young people. This is a crucial group to target because we are the leaders of the future.

The environment has been an enormously influential part of my childhood. Spending days on end out on the beach and in native bush opened my eyes to how important our natural world is and taught me to care about and love the environment. Growing up, I spent every holiday on Aotea (Great Barrier Island) where I saw our beautiful flora and fauna on a daily basis. It was a great opportunity for me to learn about how important our animals are from a young age. I have a huge passion for birds and hope one day I'll be able to work with the Department of Conservation.

New Zealand's youth are capable of

some extraordinary things. It's great to be getting people with such passion and similar interests together to work towards helping our environment and sustainability. **Charlie Thomas**

Editor's note: Forest & Bird Youth are continuing to grow. Keep an eye out for more exciting initiatives they have planned for this year.



F&B Youth and the North Shore branch committee planning for 2018.

Tuff Crater Weekend Events

We run a working bee at 9 am on the second Saturday of each month:

April 14

Weed control

May 12

Weed control

June 9

Planting day (part 1) on bank below Canon, Warehouse Way

July 14

Planting day (part 2) on bank below Canon, Warehouse Way

To be on the email list for Tuff Crater Saturday events please sign up on our website: <http://www.forestandbird.org.nz/what-we-do/branches/north-shore/projects/tuff-crater-restoration-project>

Tuff Crater Thursday

We also run a weekly working bee on Thursdays at 9:30am, supervised by Paul Pyper and Anne Denny.

To be on the Thursday email list please contact us on northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz

Phone Paul on 021 0842 9255 if you are in doubt about where the workers are meeting at Tuff.

WHAT'S ON — Meetings, Trips & Activities

Public Meetings

Take place on the first Monday of each month excluding January, including public holidays.

Venue Takapuna Senior Citizens' Hall, The Strand – through the courtyard at the rear of the Takapuna Library.

Time 7:30 p.m., starting with Native of the Month and Weed of the Month and environmental updates, followed by our guest speaker.

Admission A koha/donation is appreciated to cover costs. Please give generously. Non-members are welcome. Do join us for supper afterwards. For further information, phone Christine Ovens on 479 7627.

Speakers: April to July 2018

Our Extraordinary Eels Mon 2 April (Easter Monday)

Laura Torre is an environmental educator and finds that eels are a great way to inspire people to look after our local streams, rivers and seas. Eels are fascinating; they have special adaptations, amazing senses and unusual lifecycles. What makes good eel habitat? What threats do eels face in today's world? What can local people do to protect eels? Come along to find out from Laura.

Lizards Monday 4 June (Queen's Birthday)

Chris Wedding is a senior ecologist with Bioreserches, a specialist ecology and environmental consultancy. He designs habitats in and around the structures of our city (such as pipelines, subdivisions, marinas) that are useful to native animals. Chris will be talking about lizards, their roles in urban ecology and the dangers they face in suburbia.

To be confirmed Monday 2 July

The speaker for our July event is still to be confirmed. Please see Habitat Extra for more information closer to the time.

Pest Free Peninsula Monday 7 May – AGM

The Hibiscus Coast Forest & Bird branch have the ambitious aim to make the Whangaparāoa Peninsula completely pest free. To succeed they need at least 1 in 3 households participating in the project. **Pauline Smith** will talk about the project's difficulties (so we can learn from them) and its successes so far (so we can celebrate).

Notice of AGM Forest & Bird North Shore branch

The 2018 AGM for the will be held before our speaker's presentation on Monday 7 May 7:30pm, Senior Citizens' Hall, Takapuna.

Richard Hursthouse is standing down as Chair after 7 years in the role. Nominations are called for Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and committee members.

If you would like to join our committee and have the time to get involved, please contact us with a brief CV and your reasons for getting involved at northshore.branch@forestandbird.org.nz.

Trips: April to July 2018

Stream Fish and Invertebrate Monitoring

Sunday 29 April

On Sunday, 29 April, at 10:00am, we will be 'fishing' in the Eskdale Reserve for invertebrates, testing the quality of the stream and checking to see what Brett (our scientist) has caught in his traps.

If you wish to join us on this fascinating expedition, then please meet at the entrance by the substation on Eskdale Road. If you turn right into Eskdale Road from Glenfield Road (travelling south), about 1 kilometre along, at the bottom of the hill, is the entrance on the right-hand side.

This will take place wet or fine. The trip is suitable for all age groups and a moderate amount of fitness is recommended. Please contact Jocelyn Sanders if you wish to join us: jocsanders52@gmail.com, or 027 290 4826.

June: No trip

Planting at Tuff Crater on Saturday 9 June.

Auckland Botanic Gardens

Sunday 27 May 10:30am

Join us for a trip to the Auckland Botanic Gardens in Manurewa. Our visit will be led by Rebecca Stanley, known as Bec, who is a Curator at the Botanic Gardens. With her expert knowledge as a botanist specialising in native flora, Bec will be able to provide us with an insight into her workplace from a personal perspective.

Meet at the entrance of the main building at 10:30am. This will proceed rain or shine. Contact Claire Stevens at claire.stevens@xtra.co.nz or phone 419 1233.

July: No trip

Planting at Tuff Crater on Saturday 14 July.

Notice: Can you join our RMA team?

We need people to help our branch follow up on resource consent applications, prepare submissions and help follow through to hearings if necessary. This would suit someone who is passionate about our environment and who has some

RMA knowledge via law or planning. It is also open to anyone who is keen to learn what is required.

If you would like to help out please contact our Chair, Richard Hursthouse, at richard.hursthouse@gmail.com or 021 216 1296.

Committee members and assistants 2017/18

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